

REQUIRES THE STRANGE COREBOOK FROM MONTE COOK GAMES

STRANGETON HOUSE





WELCOME

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In the strange realm of the Chaosphere, there are recursions of the utmost danger, riches and possibilities; and then there are the other ones. Strangeton House is such a recursion. Created by fictional leakage from various TV-shows and films about 1920s English upper class households, it has little in terms of valuable resources or excitement. On the lists of recursions that the factions of the Chaosphere keep, Strangeton House is close to the bottom, amongst the unimportant, uninteresting and unassuming. Of course, some things doesn't stay unimportant forever.

This supplement contains a scenario in Strangeton House. This is almost a purely investigative scenario, in which the PCs must use all their covert abilities to find their quarry, a vile Ruk agent, amongst the other people in the small recursion. For the GM, this scenario offers a twist. The scenario has several suspects, and instead of the designer deciding the details of the investigation, the culprit changes depending on the players' decisions and how the GM wants to tell the story. Of course, if you prefer to run a more traditional

game, with the culprit set from the start; that is possible too.

The scenario demands its own set of Foci, and during the scenario the PCs can only use the Foci in this supplement. All of this builds up to the main part of this supplement: the Scenario. This also doubles as a description of the recursion and its inhabitants, enabling you to run future scenarios in Strangeton House.

This scenario has been thoroughly researched by hours of watching TV. It is not supposed to accurately describe aristocratic British households, but rather its portrayal in popular culture.

Variable Suspects

Scenarios centered around investigations are always in danger of stalling. If the PCs miss important clues, or get caught up in one suspect, it can turn an exciting session into endless drudgery.

A way to avoid this problem is to have the mystery develop as the PCs explore it. There is no predefined way for the investigators to follow the leads, and important things come into existence as the players pursue them. One way to do this is murder mysteries with variable suspects.

Using variable suspects in an investigation-type scenarios is most commonly found in GUMSHOE scenarios, in particular Terra Nova by Leonard Balsera and Kevin Kulp. It allows the GM to tailor the progress of the story with the actions of the player characters, and avoids the problem of having the PCs finding the right leads

to early — or not at all. By presenting several suspects for the PCs to look into, and narrative mechanics for how to assign them different roles, the game is assured not to go stale. What might be the culprit in one playthrough, might become the prime witness in another, it all depends on how the players approach the scenario and conduct investigation.

New Foci

Strangeton House has five foci the PCs can assume in the recursion. They are designed not just for the recursion, but also with this scenario in particular. The PCs must use one of the five foci below, and may not drag foci from Earth or other recursions. Compared with foci found in other recursions, they may seem underpowered, but they offer the abilities that are valued at Strangeton House.

Note that some character Types give abilities that might be very flashy when used. Remember that Strangeton House is a somber recursion, and some abilities might work poorly or not at all.

Repairs

You're the janitor. Strangeton is keeping with the times, and has several new innovations put into place: electricity, a telephone, and so on. There is a need for a professional to ensure everything is in working order; that is where you come in. A bit rougher than the rest of the staff, you are less bound by etiquette. Your most important responsibility is looking after the Earl's gun, keeping them clean and ready for use.

Tier 1: You are trained in mechanical repair. Enabler.

Tier 2: You are trained in ranged attacks using firearms. Enabler.

Tier 3: You have the key to the Earl's gun box. The box is in his office. Enabler.

Tier 4: After you spend an hour cleaning a gun, it does an extra point of damage for the rest of the day. Enabler.

Tier 5: You are trained in speed defense when defending from a ranged attack. Enabler.

Tier 6: You have rifle in your room. It counts as a medium ranged weapon. Enabler.

Cooks

You work in the household's kitchen, making food for the Strangeton family and staff. In many ways you are the glue that keeps the place together, since without food, all order would collapse.

Tier 1: The cooks are particularly popular with the rest of the staff, since they feed them all. You are trained in all social interactions with other members of the staff. Enabler.

Tier 2: You are trained in cooking. Enabler

Tier 3: You have the key to the storage and knife drawer. Enabler.

Tier 4: Once per day you can make a meal that restores 4 points of Might from anyone who partakes. The meal takes half an hour to make, and requires a successful level 5 Intellect roll. Enabler.

Tier 5: Your constant exposure to food has made you rather robust. You are trained in Might defense. Enabler.

Tier 6 (1 might point): You are fat and sturdy, and

can suck up most attacks. When this ability is active, you can use Might defense instead of Speed defense. Action to enable.

Serves

You serve the household, and is therefore a walking encyclopedia of etiquette and decorum. Always subservient, you know your place.

Tier 1: You are trained in eavesdropping. Enabler.

Tier 2: You are trained in etiquette. Enabler.

Tier 3: Defense rolls against enemies that have a higher level than you are considered one level easier. Enabler.

Tier 4: You are trained in all tasks related to stealth and sneaking. Enabler.

Tier 5: As long as you wield a light weapon, you roll two dice when you defend, using the better result. Enabler

Tier 6: Your speed edge is considered one higher. Enabler.

Drives

Few people of standing know how to drive, but most still want the benefits that motorized travel give. Therefore they hire personal chauffeurs to drive their cars, keep them clean and to care for their maintenance.

Tier 1: You are trained in perception and driving cars. Enabler.

Tier 2: You are trained in lock picking. Enabler.

Tier 3: You have the key to the Earl's garage. Enabler.

Tier 4: You are trained in Intellect defense. Enabler.

Tier 5: You are trained in all tasks relating to intimidating other members of staff. Enabler.

Tier 6 (5 Might Points): The most dedicated drivers know they aren't just supposed to drive, but also protect their passengers. When you activate this ability you get ten points of natural armor. Each time the armor reduces damage, reduce the armor by the reduced amount. Action to enable.

Cleans

A mansion the size of Strangeton House needs an army of cleaners to fight back the ever expanding enemy of dust and dirt. You are a foot soldier in war against entropy, armed with a bucket of water, mop and duster.

Tier 1: You are trained in Searching. Enabler.

Tier 2 (1 Intellect point): You can coat a weapon with acidic fluids used for washing. A coated weapon reduces a target's armor by one when calculating damage. The effect lasts for one encounter. Action.

Tier 3 (3 Speed points): You know where all the good piles of dust are. If required, you can grab one of them, throw them at an enemy at close range, and stun them for one round. Action.

Tier 4: You are trained in Speed defense. Enabler.

Tier 5: Maids are tireless, and their Might edge is considered one level higher. Enabler.

Tier 6 (4 Intellect points): A maid can blend completely into the background. With a successful Intellect room, a target won't even realize the maid is in the room. Action.





THE SCENARIO



Adventurous and daring, The PCs are probably the type of people that would never go to such a tedious recursion as Strangeton House. That is, unless something unusual happened to make Strangeton House rise in importance. Recent events at the Estate has done just that, pushing the Estate's interest in the recursion from totally uninteresting to high priority.

Background

Amongst the Estate's enemies, **The Karum** is high up on the list. With their intention of freeing Ruk by destroying Earth, and the means to do so, the Estate take no chances when dealing with this formidable threat. The most recent clash in the ongoing conflict between the two factions was the ferreting out of a Karum agent within the Estate. The agent, **Alagh-Zahul**, has remained undercover for several years, spreading misinformation and spying for his superiors.

When Alagh-Zahul was found out, the Estate was slow to react. Underestimating to what extent the

organization had been infiltrated, they carelessly allowed Alagh-Zahul to become aware of their investigation. Before the Estate were able to arrest him, he hid in the home of an Estate researcher, **Doctor Max Ellington**. Aware that Estate agents were closing in, and without time to do a proper translation to Ruk, Alagh-Zahul made a desperate move. The poor doctor Ellington was tortured, and before he eventually was murdered, gave Alagh-Zahul the means to flee Earth with valuable Estate property. Doctor Ellington was an eager recursor, and in his position were several advanced recursion keys. It was with one of these that allowed Alagh-Zahul to flee Earth instantaneously.

Since then the Estate has looked into Dr. Ellington's outside-work activities, learning that he enjoyed spending time in a recursion codenamed Strangeton House, and had made several recursion keys which led there. Estate agents in Ruk confirms that Alagh-Zahul has not returned there, so the Estate believes that Alagh-Zahul remains in Strangeton House. The Estate is preparing a crack team, the PCs, to go in after him, both to make him

pay for his crime and retrieve the stolen property. Unbeknownst to anyone except Alagh-Zahul, is that he isn't intending to return to Ruk. He wants to use what he stole from the Estate to position himself as an independent freelancer.

What Alagh-Zahul Stole: Dr. Ellington's field of expertise is artifacts and cyphers, and Alagh-Zahul stole the two he was currently studying.

The first is a cypher the Estate found in the Chaosphere, and it has a high probability of being of alien origin. At the Estate, it has been codenamed: **The Rubrick**. Every time it is used, it immediately reforms itself into a new random cypher. So far its ability to regenerate has proven to be inexhaustible. The cypher has little practical application, its randomness prevents it from being truly effective. The Estate's interest is mainly concerned with how it works; being able to create lasting cyphers would be of great value to the Estate.

The second is an artifact with origins in the Chaosphere itself, and has been codenamed: the **Spark Murker**. It is a sort of cloaking device, which clouds the natural origin of things in a recursion as well as mental scanning or reading abilities. The paradox ability "Eye for the Strange" and similar abilities which allow a person to either see who belongs in a recursion or read minds, does not function within a few miles of the obfuscating artifact.

Running This Scenario

This scenario has three parts: arriving at Strangeton House, the investigation, and confronting Alagh-Zahul. The main obstacle for the PC is that they don't know Alagh-Zahul's identity amongst Strangeton House's many guests, and they can't move against him before they are certain of who he is. Beyond this three-part structure, the scenario is loose, depending on the characters to seize the initiative in conducting their investigation.

There are five suspects, which each have three versions: the **Innocent**, the **Red-Herring**, and **Alagh-Zahul**. You don't have to decide beforehand which one of the character is in what category, but rather let the characters' investigation develop it naturally. One is Alagh-Zahul, one is a Red-Herring, and the rest are Innocent.

When you run the scenario with a variable suspect, it is important to get the timing right. The scenario begins by allowing the PCs to meet all the suspects, and give them some initial leads. Afterwards, the PCs can investigate the recursion, and find some of the generic clues. Pay attention to the players discussion, and who amongst the suspects they are most interested in. At this point, give them some of the Red-Herring clues for that suspect. Having their suspicion strengthened, the Red-Herring returns to the house.

The suspect turns out to be a recursor, but not Alagh-Zahul. The PCs must quickly resume their investigation and look if they hope to catch their nemesis. In the third part of the scenario, the PCs can confront their quarry, and defeat him.

For easy reference all clues connected with a suspect's role as guilty, Red-Herring or Innocent are noted in the text at the location where they can be found and at the end of the scenario under the NPCs entries.

You should feel free to take great liberty with the placement of each clue. If you want the PCs to find a clue, and they have already been at its location, you can easily move it. For instance, if you want the PCs to find the scorecard, but they've already searched the salon thoroughly, move it to the dust bin in the hall. The important thing is that the PCs conduct the investigation, find the clues, and build their case against a suspect.

If you prefer to run this scenario in a more traditional fashion, you can decide beforehand who Alagh-Zahul is, and who amongst the other NPCs are Innocents or Red-Herrings.

The suspects are:

The Foreigner — Kamal Orham

The Hunter — Mr. Ernest Lawson

The Duke — Sir Floyd Hastings

The Colonel — Colonel Ian Merriweather

The Actress — Ms. Sophia White

A detailed description of all the suspects, their background and various versions can be found in the Appendix. The GM should get familiarized with this section before playing the scenario.

Getting the PCs Involved

After Alagh-Zahul's escape, the PCs are brought in, either as Estate agents or freelancers. The team is deemed to have the right balance of covert and force, and is therefore ideal to figuring out the identity of Alagh-Zahul i.

If the PCs are Estate agents they are briefed by their regular superior. If they are brought in from outside, they are probably briefed by one of the Estate NPCs from the core book. The briefing is short and to the point, the Estate want them on their way as quickly as possible. The Estate knows little about Strangeton House, other than it being a 1920s recursion looking like a noble mansion. They share this information readily with the PCs. They are not sure in what situation the PCs will translate into, and urge caution.

The recursion is rarely visited, and the briefer urges the PCs to adapt to the recursion when they arrive. Alagh-Zahul is a master infiltrator, and he has the advantage of having been in Strangeton House for a few days, he has probably adapted to his cover. The briefer therefore implores the PCs to stay in-character when they investigate, and only strike at their suspect when they are sure they are certain of their suspicion. The briefer also tells the PCs about the two objects Alagh-Zahul stole, the Rubrick and the Spark Murker, and how the last one might complicate their work.

When the briefing is done, the PCs are given the necessary items to perform a translation into Strangeton House.

Translating

When the PCs translate, let them pick from one of the available foci in this supplement. Unlike normal translating, a character can not drag a foci to Strangeton House and must use one of the recursion-specific foci.

When the characters arrive in Strangeton House they begin in a servant's room. There are two servants to a room, so a pair of characters appear together.

The characters arrive in the recursion with basic knowledge about it, as described in the "What a recursor knows"-section. While the PCs might be used to calling the shots or solving situations by force, it becomes immediately apparent that such an approach won't work in this recursion. As soon as the confusion of translation starts to fade away, the characters hear bustling in the corridor outside, and the sound of a small gong. It is morning.

Outside in the corridor, the butler is alerting the servants to get ready to serve breakfast. If any of the player characters are either cooks or waiters, they are expected to go to work straight away. The butler is insistent that the other characters probably have chores to perform too, but is less inclined to push them around. Still, there is always some superior who can tell the PCs what to do; if not the butler, than the housekeeper, chef or the first footman. The next hour, until nine o'clock, is spent working downstairs, or being asked why they are not working. There seems to be ample menial work for all PCs, regardless of what Foci they have. The PCs are hard pressed to get any investigation done

A note to the GM

It can not be stressed enough that this scenario require stealth and investigation. If your team are accustomed to more action-filled and direct scenarios, you should take care to make sure they understand the subtle nature of the recursion and scenario.

at all. It is a rude-awakening to the life at Strangeton House.

I've had enough!

Some players may not respond well to the fact that their characters must act subservient and investigate carefully. If any of the PCs act out, remember that most of the NPCs in the recursions are shadows, and will not react to anything that doesn't fit the recursion's atmosphere. Far worse, such behavior will tip of Alagh-Zahul of the characters presence, and will accelerate his attempts to kill them.

The Breakfast

When the menial chores are done, the staff is assembled for breakfast. There is one problem though, which the Butler, **Jenkins**, is explaining when the PCs arrive. The Butler, a thin and impeccably dressed man, explains that the household is currently understaffed, and he needs

extra staff to help in the lounge where breakfast is served. He quickly picks the PCs to help; if the PCs refuse, he seems unable to grasp the concept of them not doing as they're told.

The Butler goes on to explain that there are currently far more people staying at the house than usual. The permanent residents, The Earl of Strangeton, his wife the Countess, and their two daughters are all at home, and there are also five guests, all having arrived recently.

Of the utmost importance to the staff is the big board in the kitchen, which shows the current people staying at Strangeton House. This can provide a major help for the players to keep track

of the important NPCs and suspects, and is provided as a hand-out in the Appendix. The servants should tell the PCs that the five guests all arrived recently, while the Earl and his family, and the staff, as all been here a long time. This should clue the PCs in on where to look for Alagh-Zahul

After a quick change of clothes, the PCs are sent upstairs with the first dishes. This is the PCs first trip upstairs, and a whole new level of luxury. A hallway away from the servants' stairs, the PCs are finally in the Salon. The breakfast is a pleasant affair, the various people around the room engage

What recursion knows about Strangeton House:

- The recursion was created by fictional leakage about media set in British upper class households.
- The recursion consists of the Strangeton House mansion, a nearby village and the surrounding fields.
- Everyone who lives there are either the upstairs residents or their downstairs servants.
- The recursion sometimes create are short appearances by guests.
- The most important skill in Strangeton House is etiquette.

Strangeton House Attributes

Level: 2

Laws: Standard

Playable Races: Human

Foci: Cooks, Serves, Cleans, Drives and Repairs.

Skill: Etiquette

Connection to Strange: A closet in the attic.

Connection to Earth: A well in the forest leads to an old well outside Highclere Castle in Hampshire.

Size: 10 square miles (25 square km)

Spark: 10% (the resident family, none of the servants)

Trait: Polite. Any creature with the spark attempting to manipulate or influence someone without it, have the difficulty reduced by two if they are exceedingly polite.

in quiet discussion. Several tables are spread around the room, containing the food served at breakfast. Everything is of high quality, from the scrambled eggs, to the marmalade, to the tea. The room also has several tasteful and comfortable sofas and chairs.

The guests help themselves to the food, but during the breakfast the PCs are required to make sure the residents and guests have everything they need. This entails keeping their eyes open, moving inconspicuously around the room, and returning frequently to the kitchen; two of three which are already typical secret agent activities.

The Earl and his family: Strangeton House is populated mostly by shadows, the exception being the Earl and his family who have the Spark. Despite having self-awareness, they are still far from becoming conscious about the true nature of their home. The Earl himself is a proud, though kind man, who wants the best for both the staff and his family. Through the years he has been exposed to strangers from outside his recursion, but has always been able to explain it away. His traditional outlook has barred him from taking the imaginative leap required to fully grasp how the world really is. His wife, the Countess, is in much the same position, but she has a more modern sensibility. Not perfectly happy with the way things are, she is closer to finding out about the world outside.

The Earl has two daughters, Felicity and Elizabeth, aged 16 and 18. They have been raised well, know several languages and can play multiple

instruments. They find Strangeton House to be exceedingly boring, and their occasional rebelliousness is a frustration to their father and amusement to the staff. They are self-aware, but has failed to notice their agelessness. They were children once, but for a long time it has been the year after Elizabeth was presented at court, and before Felicity will be. At the moment, the recursion keeps it this way, but as it grows the young women may mature.

Clues at the Breakfast

The breakfast scene's purpose is to introduce the PCs to five suspects in the scenario, give some initial leads, and generally set the mood. There are two issues with this scene that may make it difficult to run. Firstly, the PCs are required to remain mostly passive, which makes the dialog rather one-sided. This can be helped by allowing the PCs to talk amongst themselves when outside the room. Secondly, this scene comes quickly after the characters arrived in the recursion, so the players may be put slightly off balance.

During the breakfast, the conversations between the residents and guests provide the initial leads. They work best as part of a narrative, rather than just being read aloud as written. The clue to this scene is narrowing in on the guests, since the residents of the faction are permanent fixtures, the PCs should figure out that Alagh-Zahul is one of them.

- The Hunter is bragging to the Earl's daughters about a recent trophy. He was in a country far

away, and claims he killed something that was three—no—four times bigger than himself.

- The Foreigner speaks English poorly, and is often misunderstood. He sometimes uses very strange words for regular items on the table.
- The Actress has recently been touring, and is amusing everyone with anecdotes of exotic locations. She doesn't mention specifics, but there is talk about cities with tall buildings.
- The Colonel says he recently returned from the Big War, and is rather tired with the fighting. He hopes to get some good rest, but expects to be sent back, like all good chaps are.
- The Duke is impolite, and is keeps reminding everyone of his position. He claims they know nothing, and only he knows the truth.

Following up on the specifics of the clues with other NPCs is frustrating. Everyone knows there is a war on, that big game can be hunted elsewhere, and that the large city is exciting, but the details are vague. These things don't exist in the recursion, only in the minds of those who belong here.

There is a lot of quiet talk around the room, and you can give each PC the opportunity to eavesdrop on a conversation. This is a level 5 Speed task, and gives a lead depending on who they listen to. Naturally, being trained in Eavesdropping helps this task.

- The Hunter's recent expedition was a success. He encountered a great danger, but managed to survive. He came directly from the expedition to Strangeton, and has the hunt's trophy with him. It is currently in the attic.

Breaking Etiquette

If you want to challenge the PCs a bit further, you can have the roll for if they manage to serve breakfast properly. Have this be a level 4 speed task. There are no major consequences if they fail, rather than sniggering from the guests and a rebuke from the butler, but the players may fear that this has tipped off Alagh-Zahul. This can also work as a GM Intrusion.

- The Foreigner explains how things work in his home country. He uses words that are familiar to a modern listener (internet, cellular phone, computer), but this confuses those he talks to. He explains he has brought items from his home, and wants to show them to the other guests later. He has put them in the Earl's office for safekeeping.
- The Actress sits with the Earl's daughters, and seems to have a close connection with them. They whisper about some secret game she has been playing with the daughters in their room in the evenings.
- The Colonel reveals to the person next to him that he is getting tired of war. He has been discussing this with Earl Strangeton in the library, and worked something out which might mean he is more successful the next time he goes to war. He also eats very little during dinner.
- The Duke refuses all food offered to him, and is

just picking at the food he has on his plate. He never starts a conversation and often refers to himself in the third person, usually as The Duke. He mentions that sign of his supremacy is for all to see in the foyer.

The Butler did it

After the breakfast is completed the PCs are summoned to butler Jenkins, when they enter, **read aloud:**

When you enter Jenkins' office, he is sitting behind a large wooden desk. He asks you to shut the door, but say

nothing more until everyone is gathered around the desk. Without a word he places something heavy on the desk, it is a slick, metal gun. From the looks of it, it is beyond the technological level of Earth, but still within the realm of standard physics. After a few moments, he says, "I recognize recursors when I see one, let's be honest with each other." His voice doesn't sound as sophisticated as previously, but retains all its authority.

As a sign of good faith, Jenkins tells his story first. His real name is Eli Wagner, and he is a former OSR-agent. Having run afoul with his superiors, he fled to the most low-key recursion he could imagine: Strangeton House. Here he has been



hiding for nearly two years, waiting for a time when he felt it would be safe to resurface. He has mostly kept to the servant's quarters, since most recursers translate into someone upstairs.

He has of course no definitive way of knowing that the PCs are recursers, but he knows the recursion very well and picked up on a few tells which indicated to him that the PCs were not shadow servants. He thinks it is peculiar that the PCs are not here as upstairs guests, but they have been understaffed lately.

He realizes that the PCs are here for a reason, but doesn't expect them to tell him why. He only wants them to do what they came to do, and go away. His one wish is that they don't tell their superiors about his presence. He defends himself if attacked, but does his utmost to find a peaceful solution. He is attentive to the characters needs throughout the scenario, and may function both as an ally or mentor should the PCs require it.

Too good to be true

Some players may have a hard time believing that Eli Wagner/Jenkins is there to help them. He is not essential to the story, so if the players want to neutralize him, let them! Still, he provides some helpful clues, so it would be beneficial to let him speak his mind first.

Eli Wagner/Jenkins: Level 5. 15 wounds. 1 armor point. 5 damage at up to long range.

What Jenkins know: In terms of helping the investigation, Wagner has little to offer. He can do little more than confirm what the PCs already know. The permanent residents of Strangeton House have been here forever, and can't possibly be Alagh-Zahul. The five guests in the house are recent arrivals however, and anyone of them could be the Ruk agent.

Help he can offer: Wagner has tried to make himself as invisible as possible, and has therefore little in the ways of material help for the players. If they ask, he can draw a map of all the most important parts of the mansion, basically the map provided in the Appendix. He also has the master key set, which grants access to all the rooms, but not the specialized cupboard and storages.

The House Abandoned

After the breakfast is over, the guests quickly get read for the day's main event, a hunting excursion into the forest around Strangeton House. This is a great opportunity to investigate in the empty house. Some players might want to join the party, to be close to the suspects, but Jenkins makes it clear that this is impossible. It would make no sense for any with the PCs' positions to come with the hunting party, and would arouse suspicion.

Investigating the House

With the servants mostly downstairs, and the Earl's

family and guests outside, the PCs can investigate in the house safely. Use the map hand-out to let the PCs orient themselves in the house. If you feel the need for some social interaction, throw in some cheeky or polite servants who are doing chores around the house. Some of the clues below can also come from them. There is a section below with clues which can be gathered from servants.

During this initial investigation, the PCs should find only the generic clues, and clues that make one of the suspects a Red-Herring. When you feel your players have done enough investigating and honed in on a primary suspect, continue to the next scene: 'The Prime Suspect Returns'. This scene reveals that the PCs were mistaken in their assumption. Be careful not to dole out too many clues at this stage, you want to peak the players' interest in a single suspect before going to the next stage. There will be time for more clue-finding after the Red-Herring is identified.

The next pages detail the house, the area around it, and the clues. After are the scripted scenes which come during and after the investigation in the house.

Finding clues: Each clue can be found in two ways: either by searching at its precise location, or performing a general search of the room and succeeding at a level 3 task. Also, some clues have a skill noted in brackets, which makes finding the clue easier.

Ground Floor

The ground floor of the mansion is where most of the day time is spent. All the larger rooms are here, and they are decorated and furnished to both impress and comfort.

The Grand Foyer

Red aloud

The main entrance of Strangeton House opens up into a majestic hall, where various banners and coats of arms drape the walls. You see the banners of the Earl, but also the Countess' family and even the Duke's. The foyer is clearly designed to impress, with its rich wood fittings and awe-inspiring decorations. The grand foyer also contains a majestic staircase which leads to the floor above.

To most visitors there is little of interest here, and most quickly go through it on their way to somewhere else.

The Duke as the Red-Herring: [Perception]

On the banner of the Duke, a single thread hangs inconspicuously down. If pulled, the entire thing unravels. Someone has painstakingly cut the sowing apart, leaving the single thread the only thing keeping it together.

The Duke as Alagh-Zahul: [Perception]

On the banner of the Duke, a single thread hangs inconspicuously down. If pulled, part of the banner unravels, leaving the war banner of the Karum.

The Dining Room

Read aloud

Most meals are eaten in the sumptuous dining room. It is dominated by a large, wooden table, with several smaller tables on the side to place food on during larger feasts or celebrations. Several large cabinets line the walls, containing the family's china and silverware. Above the table hangs a grandiose crystal chandelier.

The room is cleaned thoroughly after each meal. The last time anyone was here was when the servants cleaned it last night after dinner.

Under the Table: The staff has failed to clean up properly. It looks like The Duke and The Colonel didn't eat anything during last night's dinner, but instead dropped it all on the floor.

The Cabinets: Someone has been in the cutlery, rearranging some and taking others.

The Drawing Room

Read aloud

Adjacent to the foyer and salon is the much smaller drawing room. It is tastefully decorated, with several modern paintings hanging on the walls and contemporary furniture. It has two small tables, some chairs to go with, and a old, leather sofa in one of the corners. There is little here in the form of entertainment, since the room is supposed to be used for private conversation. It smells faintly of flowers, and the small tables have fresh bouquets from the garden.

It is easy to see that the Earl has allowed his wife to decorate this room as she wants to, but hidden inside the armrest of the sofa is a small bar with some bottles and glasses.

Under the sofa is a recording device. Amazingly, it has been constructed entirely from scratch by items found in the recursion. By playing back the wax cylinders on the recorder, the PCs can hear all the conversations the Earl has had in the room for the last couple of days. The voices are very garbled, making it impossible to hear who is talking, even to the point of determining the speaker's gender. Most if the conversations are innocent, but one is clearly of someone from outside Strangeton House—the speaker, in an otherwise harmless conversation uses the word "recursion". The recordings may provide the following clues:

The Colonel as the Red Herring: [Search] The conversation starts normally, but suddenly becomes bizarre. Even the Earl seems to be confused by what he is hearing. The guest is describing the use of weapons which clearly are supersonic airplanes and rockets. The Earl finally ends the conversation by addressing the Colonel by name, and telling him that military service sure has changed since he was there.

The Colonel as Alagh-Zahul: [Search] The recording is similar to the one above, but when the Earl is about to leave, the Colonel responds: You may think I am just a Colonel, but I am more. That is just a part I play. I am really from a land far away. This is an estate much more to my liking. How ironic that I fled one, to hide in another.

Other evidence: With a successful Mechanical Repair role, a character can improve the sound quality of parts of the recording. On the improved part it is possible to hear two servants talking ill of the Earl. The PCs can use this recording to leverage clues from the servants. For the clues gathered from the staff, see below.

The Salon

Read aloud

The social centerpiece of the house, and where guests usually gather before and after eating in the dining room. Breakfast is also taken here. The room is furnished with leather-bound sofas and chairs, and several low tables. By the far wall stands a snooker table, and opposite it is a well-stocked bar, holding both liquor and cigarettes. There is a faint smell of cigarette smoke in the air.

Most of the guests and residents have spent their evenings here. The servants have tried to clean it up, but evidence of the previous night's activities linger. There is a whiskey stain on the carpet and under one of the tables are several cigar burns.

The Actress as the Red-Herring: [Perception]

Someone has been using a mouthpiece and discarded it in an ashtray. Red lipstick stains on it indicates it has been used the wrong way around. The lipstick matches what the PCs saw the Actress wear during breakfast.

The Colonel as the Red-Herring: [Search] At the snooker table is last night's score card. It turns out that the Colonel won every game he played,

some by a huge margin. He must have made some incredible shots.

The Library

Read aloud

An intimate and quiet library. Several large bookcases dominate most of the walls, containing row upon row of old books. It seems it has taken several generations to fill this room with books. There appears to be no principal to how the book is organized, other than that similarly themed books are placed together and that the newest books are placed in the bookshelf closest to the door. Soft carpeting mutes every sound, and three plush chairs with a small wooden table between them provide comfortable seating for the reader. In the corner sits a stuffed owl and raven on perches stuck in the wall.

There are a few books missing. Judging by the theme of surrounding books, they were about etiquette. A more thorough search and a successful level 5 Intellect roll reveals a rather peculiar book between two books about English history. The cover is completely black, and the book is of far better quality than book of this era. The writing is unintelligible, but any seasoned recursion recognize it for the language of Ruk. The book has nothing to do with Alagh-Zahul, but was left here a few years ago by a different visitor, and is an introductory book to Ruk history.

The Foreigner as the Red-Herring: [Perception] There is a pile of books on the table. They are about guerilla warfare, science and chemistry. Someone could use this if they wanted

to militarize the recursion. There is a note on the stack by the Earl, it instructs a servant to bring the pile to the Foreigner's room.

The servants' quarters

Below the ground floor, partly underground, are the servants' quarters, storage, kitchens and workshops. During their investigation, the PCs can benefit by talking to some of the other servants. Note that these clues don't need to be limited to down-stairs area of the house, you can easily have encounters with servants elsewhere in the house or outside.

With the proper keys, the PCs can get into the knife drawers, which provide light weapons; or the storage which holds countless knickknacks.

Questioning the Staff

Depending on what the PCs ask about, the staff can provide different clues. All the clues in this section describe suspicious behaviour spotted by servants, and are only applicable if you consider the suspect the Red-Herring or Alagh-Zahul.

- **Odd things:** Several large kitchen knives are missing. Stolen both from the supply downstairs, and the silverware upstairs.
- **More odd things:** Some servants have vanished recently. Probably leaving Strangeton House for better paid households in the city.
- **The Foreigner:** A servant saw strange lights coming out from under his bedroom door late last night.
- **The Hunter:** He has been spending a lot of time

in the attic, and has borrowed some chemicals from the household supply.

- **The Duke:** During rainstorm a couple of nights ago, some servants swear they saw the Duke standing naked and motionless outside for nearly an hour.
- **The Actress:** She came clearly distraught out of the library last night, shaking with fright.
- **The Colonel:** A servant saw him sorting through the silverware in the dining room.

Outside

The recursion in its entirety includes the mansion, several buildings which are part of the grounds, the fields around it, and a small village. Much of this is of no interest to this scenario, and only exist in the recursion to serve the manor house. If the PCs where to leave the house proper, and inspect the structures around it, they may have the encounters below.

Garage: This is where the Earl keeps his three cars. It is locked, and requires a level 3 Speed test to pick, or Might 5 to force open. Inside are the cars, and the fuel and tools needed to maintain them. In one of the cars the body of a driver is hidden in the trunk. He is the one who delivered the note to the bandits the PCs encounter later in the scenario. The driver has been stabbed multiple times by what an Intellect 5 roll reveals to be a large kitchen knife.

Barn: The barn contains many farm tools, including two axes which can be used as medium melee weapons.

Other servants: The other servants of the house is a bit more relaxed when encountered outside, and might be inclined to share some of the information from the entry above.

Second floor

The second floor is where residents and guests retire for the evening. All the bedrooms are here, as well as the private office of the Earl. It is less majestic, and has a more cosy feel. Most rooms are connected to a central corridor with the stairs from the grand foyer in one end and the servants stairs in the other. On one of the sides is also a large balcony, complete with reclining chairs and blankets.

The Earl and Countess' Bedroom

Read aloud

You enter what must surely be the largest bedroom in the house. Several large closets dominate the left wall, flanked by large standing mirrors. On the right wall stands a huge bed made of dark wood, with a neat pile of laundry laying on the end of it. On each side is a bedside table and lamp. Several beautiful rugs lay on the floor, and the panorama windows give an excellent view of the outside. In front of it stands a small desk.

The Earl's bedroom is the biggest and best bedroom in the house. The Earl and Countess rarely spend time here though, and only retire here to sleep. When not entertaining guests, the Earl prefers to read or work in his office, while the Countess is in the salon.

The Duke as the Red-Herring: [Search] The Countess' diary can be found inside her bedside table. It is mostly uninteresting, except for the very last entry. She bemoans how the Duke have treated her the last few days. She has always felt they had a special connection, but this time he treats her like a stranger, and has even forgotten all the little mutual references they have shared previously.

The Game Hunter as the Red Herring: [Perception] By the pile of laundry are three photos of the Earl and Hunter as young men hunting in a far away land. There is also a note for the servant who is going to pick up the laundry. It requests the servant to bring down some photo albums from the attic. The Earl explains that the Hunter doesn't remember all their previous hunting trips, and wants to show more images to jog his memory.

The Earl's Office

Read aloud

The Earl's office is decorated and furnished to seem professional and simple. A lamp gives ample light on the desk, but the rest of the room is lighted poorly. Except for the desk chair, there is no other seating in the room. A small window, partly covered by a curtain, gives a view of the front steps. There are several books and ledgers on shelves next to the desk. An oddly placed painting of a rose bush hangs on the wall.

The Earl uses the office to work on his correspondence as well as keeping the records of the manor. He believes himself to be both smart

and sophisticated, but his letters show that he is trying too hard.

The Desk: [Search] Underneath the desk mat is a photo of the Earl and the Actress holding each other affectionately. With it is a letter from The Actress to the Earl dated three weeks ago, speaking of her love for him, and how she wants to see him immediately.

In one of the desk drawers is a high-quality pistol case. The key has been broken inside the lock. A Might level 3 or Speed level 3 task is enough to open it. Inside, both the pistol and ammunition are missing.

The secret safe: [Search] Behind the painting is the Earl's personal safe. It is elegant, but not very robust. It can be picked by a successful level 4 Intellect roll or forced open with a level 8 Might roll. Inside are several jewels of oriental design. They belong to the Foreigner.

The Foreigner as a Red-Herring: The safe also contain two dead Nul in glass jars. A nul is a small creature living in the Strange. They are described on page 99 of The Strange Bestiary.

The Foreigner as Alagh-Zahul: The safe also contain half a dozen mundane trinkets. Like a whistle, a cross, an ornate knife, and so on. Closer inspection reveal them to be recursion keys made by doctor Ellington, stolen by Alagh-Zahul when he killed him.

The Daughters' Bedrooms

Read aloud

You feel like you are entering forbidden ground as you step into the daughters' bedroom. You immediately smell their sweet perfume, and everything seems a bit more friendly here. The two rooms are adjoined, but joined by an open door. Their beds are neatly made, and on each of their desks are small stacks of letters and favorite books. There are also several beautifully made origami figures. On the wall are a few paintings, the older sister seems to favor modern art, while the younger has pictures that are fanciful and childish.

The Earl and Countess don't like their girls keeping secrets, so the room is mostly what it seems—with a few exceptions. Both girls have a secret diary in the bookshelf, where they write down their real feelings; and the oldest has hidden some correspondence from a suitor in the city.

The Actress as the Red-Herring: [Search] Underneath one of the beds is a box of games. Originally cards and tokens for everything from poker to backgammon was in the box, but now everything has been altered. The cards have additional marks on them, and some have been altered with new symbols. The content can now be used to play an extremely complicated game of unknown, but unearthly origin. A scorecard in the box show that the Actress and the Earl's daughters have played several games over the last couple of nights.

The Actress as Alagh-Zahul: [Search] Underneath one of the beds is a rudimentary kit

used for brainwashing. It has made it with simple supplies found within the house. It contains equipment to brainwash by giving electroshocks and drugs. The box also contains a photograph which purpose is to instil loyalty in the brainwashed subject towards the photographed person. The photograph is a vanity photo of the actress.

The Guest Rooms

Read aloud

The mansion has ten guest rooms, half of which are currently in use. All the rooms have a similar design. A bed, a desk and a closet. Each room also has a painting over the bed.

The Foreigner's Room

Is the room with the panting of the chinese dragon. In addition to the regular inventory, the room is dominated by a huge traveling trunk. Inside is the diplomat's clothes, both an elegant contemporary three-piece suit, and the attire native to his home country. In addition there are plenty of diplomatic documents and foreign currency.

The Foreigner as Red Herring: [Perception]

The trunk also contain what is obviously a cypher. It is shaped as an old oil lamp. When used, by rubbing it, it allows the user to replenish one of their pools completely. The cypher is level 9.

The Foreigner as Alagh-Zahul: Same as above, but a level 4 Intellect roll also reveals the cypher as being of Ruk design.

The Actress' Room

Is the room with the painting of a large tree. The Actress has travelled lightly. There is only two small suitcases, both filled with her stylish but minimalistic dresses. On the desk is her jewel box and a small book—her diary. It goes back three years, and is mostly about her romance with the Earl.

The Actress as the Red-Herring: The last entries of the diary is written in a strange language, which looks almost like chicken scratches.

The Actress as Alagh-Zahul: The last few entries is written in the language of Ruk. If the players can read it, it describes the crimes of Alagh-Zahul, and how he now plans to kill everyone in the recursion.

The Colonel's room

Is the room with the expressionist painting in black and red. Dress uniforms and evening wear hang neatly in the closet. A book on military tactics lays open on the table, and a locked gun box is pushed under the bed.

Inside the gun box is a light pistol with 6 rounds.

The Colonel as the Red-Herring: The military book has been heavily annotated, mostly pointing out all the flaws in the unsophisticated tactics. The writing is recent, and clearly by a very sophisticated and modern author.

The Colonel as Alagh-Zahul: [Mechanical Repair] The gun in the gun box is missing, as well

much of the electrical wiring in the room. Tucked inside the tactics book is hand drawn schematic of an electrical gun which can be made by items in the recursion. It is obviously inspired by Ruk designs.

The Duke's Room

Is the room with a painting of a beautiful country scene in the summer. Even the most casual piece of clothing is immensely formal. The room is superbly tidy, and there seems not to be a speck of dust anywhere. There is a strange smell though, like sweet incense or something rotting.

The Duke as the Red-Herring: [Mechanical Repair] The inside of many article of clothes have been lined with barbed wire taken from the barn. It makes the clothes painful to wear, but may give offensive or defensive advantages.

The Duke as Alagh-Zahul: [Search] There is a book on etiquette on the desk, stolen from the library. Scribbled inside the cover a map of the Chaosphere, showing how to get from Strangeton House to various locations, including Ruk and Earth.

The Hunter's room

Is the room with the Neo-Classical portrait of Hercules. The room is an untidy mess with cloths and belongings scattered everywhere. There is a wallet on the bed with almost nothing in it, except a few coins and the photo of the Hunter and Earl as young men posing with a dead lion. On the desk is an disassembled rifle.

The Rifle: With a successful level 5 Mechanical

Repair roll, the gun can be put back together. It functions as a heavy ranged weapon.

The Hunter as the Red-Herring: [Search]

There are several strange objects in the closet. A black, glittering high-tech scalemail and a laser rifle, both which clearly don't belong here. The scalemail is a medium armor and the rifle is a medium ranged weapon.

The Hunter as Alagh-Zahul: [Search] In the closet are the decapitated heads of three servants. The insignia of the Karum is carved into their foreheads.

The Attic

Read aloud

The dusty attic stretches the entire length of the house and is filled with old furniture and other belongings. It is windy and dusty, and smells of mold. Most of what is here is covered by white sheets, making one expect that a ghost could pop out at any moment. Only one thing is not covered, an old wardrobe standing in a far corner. A sheet-covered pile of something is lying ominously in front of it. A door on the other side of the attic leads to a room which has been separated from the rest by a makeshift wooden wall.

The household puts everything it doesn't need up here, and over the years has become filled with discarded items as well as belongings to the various staff and guests who have left. While the attic is a treasure trove of antiques, it also has some items of interest to the PCs as well.

The small room: The door leads to a small workshop. It was constructed so it would be possible to make repairs in the attic before items were moved downstairs, but it sees little use. Alagh-Zahul has found use for it however, He is making weapons here, and is currently working on two things. One is making bombs of chemicals found in the house, and the other is some sort of pellet gun.

Dead grandma: A thorough search of the attic uncovers an elderly dead woman sitting in a chair under a white sheet. She is the Earl's mother, and has been dead for several years. When the recursion was younger, there were many storylines about her, but eventually the need for her went away, and she walked up into the attic and died. Over time, the other members of the household forgot about her.

Wardrobe: Opening the wardrobe shows not musty old clothes, but rather looks directly into the Chaosphere. This is one of the few connections the recursion has to the rest of the Strange. Opening the wardrobe also gets the attention of a flock of three Cypher Eaters. They quickly attack through the open gate. Stats for Cypher Eaters can be found on page 263 of the Strange Corebook.

Pile on the floor: The pile on the floor, underneath a sheet, is the Hunter's trophy kill. It is a large brown bear.

The Hunter as the Red-Herring: Next to the brown bear is some sort of monster. It looks like a combination of an eel and a dragon. Curled up it is

about twice the size of the bear, but if it were uncurled, it might be over thirty meters long.

The Hunter as Alagh-Zahul: By the brown bear are three dead Estate agents. Judging by their gear, they look like they are agents specializing in deep Chaosphere reconnaissance. They have been killed most viciously.

Scripted Scenes

The following scenes takes place during the PCs investigations of Strangeton House.

Burglars!

After some time spent investigating, when the PCs are starting to feel comfortable in the empty house, they suddenly find that they aren't the only ones who are where they shouldn't be. A group of burglars are invading Strangeton House, and the PCs comes across them by accident. Depending on where the PCs are, they could enter through the front door, break a window, or climb up through a window on the second floor. Regardless, the burglars and party of PCs become aware of each other at the same time, leaving no options but a confrontation.

The burglars are there because of a note that was delivered to them by the family driver. The note promised great wealth at the manor, and the only thing the burglars has to do in return was to kill the butler. The real sender of the note is of course Alagh-Zahul. A keen recursor, he quickly figured out that the butler was not local, and has therefore

organized his murder. He tricked the driver to deliver the note to the recursion's criminal element, and has since dispatched of his messenger and hidden him in the garage,

If questioned, the bandits do not know the real motivation behind the note, other than it said they could steal anything in the house, if only they killed the butler first, and that it was delivered by one of the Earl's drivers.

The burglars are equal in number to the PCs. Use the stats for Criminals on page 304 of the Corebook.

The Prime Suspect Returns

As the PCs are building their case against a primary suspect, and found some evidence to support their case, the most acute of the PCs sees the suspect walking towards the house. The suspect is limping, and clearly in pain, and stains of blood can be clearly seen across the chest.

When the PCs go nearer, they immediately see that the suspect has suffered a fatal gunshot wound to the back and is quickly bleeding to death. With the resources the recursions offers, there is little that can be done, but a successful level 8 Intellect roll may be enough to render life saving first aid.

Regardless, the PCs have a few minutes to question the Red-Herring before it dies. They can learn the following:

- Their initial suspect clearly isn't Alagh-Zahul.



- If the PCs reveal themselves to be recursors, the Red-Herring reveals its true background. This can be found in the NPC section in the appendix
- The Red-Herring has no idea who attacked it.

With the Red-Herring either dead or unconscious, the PCs must return to Strangeton House to find who amongst the four remaining suspects really is Alagh-Zahul.

The Hunting Party Returns

After finding definitive proof of who amongst the guests Alagh-Zahul is, the hunting party returns to the mansion. Depending on how the PCs behaved during breakfast Alagh-Zahul will think the PCs as nothing else than regular servants.

How the final fight unfolds is largely dependent on how the PCs confront Alagh-Zahul. Regardless, he will not go willingly, and is determined to fight to the death. He is a highly capable adversary, and has even been able to prepare for such a battle beforehand by placing equipment and traps around the mansion. He might even be able to turn other denizens of the recursion against the PCs, accusing them of being rioting, anarchist rabble.

Below are a few suggestions of events that may take place during the fight, followed by Alagh-Zahul's stats.

- The Earl becomes quickened. The experience is emotionally painful, and he sees the PCs as intruders. Unless persuaded, he helps Alagh-Zahul. He is level 4, has 15 health, and do 4 damage.
- The Countess becomes quickened. Things is finally starting to make sense to her, and she sees Alagh-Zahul as a villain. She is level 4, has 10 health and do 5 damage.
- Alagh-Zahul tries to use the family's daughters as human shields or hostages against the PCs.
- Alagh-Zahul has stolen some flammable materials in his room. He tries to get to it, so he can put fire to the entire house.
- Alagh-Zahul tries to flee out the gate hidden in the closet in the attic. He might even have some allies hidden beyond it, who know may come to his assistance. Variokartons on page 297 of the Corebook are a good option for such assistance.
- One of the other suspects the PCs never suspected turns out to a recurser as well. Use

the Red-Herring entry below, and let them join the fight as a level 5 ally to the PCs.

- Alagh-Zahul tries to tempt the PCs. Promising them riches if they join him. First he wants them join his faction, then he tries to convince them they all should leave their factions, and work together instead.
- Armed with his gun, Jenkins comes to the rescue.

Alagh-Zahul 6 (36)

Health: 50

Damage inflicted: 7

Armor: 1

Movement: Short

Modifications: The Spark Murker gives Mental defence at level 8. Stealth at level 8

Combat: Alagh Zahul is an extremely capable combatant, and can make two attacks each turn at up to long range. He also activates the Rubrick once each turn. Roll for a random Cypher on the table on page 312 of the Corebook. Alagh-Zahul uses the effect of that Cypher in whatever way he can. Alagh-Zahul also has some special attacks:

Slip away: Instead of attacking, Alagh-Zahul can try to hide. All enemies must defend against a level 8 Mental attack. If they fail, he manages to slip away, only too...

Attack from the Shadows: When an enemy is unaware, Alagh Zahul can make an attack at level 8, which causes 12 points of damage if successful.

Ending the Scenario

There is really just two ways this investigation ends: either Alagh-Zahul kills the PCs or they kill him. Still, if the PCs find some way to subdue him, they might be able to drag him back to the Estate for proper processing.

Regardless of the outcome, Strangeton House will be forever changed. Many of its inhabitants, at least those with the spark, have seen things which mean their outlook on their home can never be the

same. Perhaps the PCs encounter them again in the future.

With Alagh-Zahul dead or captured, and the stolen cypher and artifact returned, the PCs' superiors or employers are satisfied, and the PCs themselves may find some gratification in seeing justice done. Of course, if the PCs joined with Alagh-Zahul or kept the stolen property, the Estate is less than pleased, and begin hunting the PCs as well.





APPENDIX

This appendix consists of a detail description of the scenario's five suspects. There are three versions of each character: the one the recursion intended them to have, their background if they are the Red-Herring, and how they are as Alagh-Zahul. These entries also include all the clues that point to that suspect, either as Alagh-Zahul or as a Red-Herring.

At the very end are the two player hand-outs: the map of Strangeton House and the list of guests.

The Suspects

Like many recursion created by fictional leakage, Strangeton House creates its denizens to fit with the theme. Almost like characters in a play. By chance, some of these roles have been filled by recursors from outside. Both Alagh-Zahul and other visitors have adapted to their role, and tried to fill its intention as closely as possible. Still, they are not naive to the recursion, and are doing a less than perfect job.

The section below therefore has three variations of each guest. One is the original, how the recursion intended them. It includes the plot line the recursion created, and which the guest is either following or faking. The second version is a Red-Herring. This is a recursor who has traveled to Strangeton House, who the PCs will mistakenly believe is Alagh-Zahul. Finally there is Alagh-Zahul, he too is different depending on which guest he is.

For easy reference each NPC entry also include all clues associated with that suspect. They are divided into those that make the suspect a Red Herring, Alagh-Zahul, or the suspicious behaviour noted by staff which may work for both instances.

Ambassador Kamal Orham

The Foreigner

England has allies all over the world. It is important to keep a good relationship with them, and that is done by catering to their representatives. Kamal has been invited to Strangeton House to see a bit about how English nobility live. His ways are foreign, and he is having a hard time fitting in. There is nothing bad in him, but his awkward ways is making everyone ill at ease.

Suspicious Behaviour

- The staff has seen strange lights coming from his room at night. This is either Ali-bin-Ali toying with his cypher, or Alagh-Zahul practicing with his.

As the Red-Herring

The Foreigner is really a recursion miner from the 1001 Nights recursion. His real name is Ali-bin-Ali, and he has been all over the Chaosphere, even Earth. He enjoys the part the recursion has dealt him, and has stayed, wondering how it plays out.

- He has gone through the library, looking for books that can teach him more. A strange collection of books are still there, with a note for a servant to bring them to his room.
- He is keeping two dead Chaosphere creatures in the safe in the Earl's office.
- Inside his room is an odd lamp-shaped cypher.

As Alagh-Zahul

Alagh-Zahul doesn't understand the historical

backdrop of the recursion, and his manifestation of a foreign diplomat only makes it worse. He has realized that blending in is almost impossible, so he is instead embracing his awkwardness. After several years as a Ruk agent, Alagh-Zahul is finding himself in a position of not being on the job, and he is enjoying it.

- The safe in the Earl's office contains items stolen from Doctor Ellington.
- In the Foreigner's room there is a cypher of obvious Ruk design.

Mr. Ernest Lawson

The Hunter

Mr. Lawson is not of the upper class, but the son of a rich industrialist his life has been one of comfort and privilege. With his unlimited funds, he has spent his life traveling and hunting. Mr. Lawson went to boarding school with the Earl of Strangeton, and they often hunted together when they were younger. The Earl rarely finds the time to hunt anymore, and therefore invites his old friend to visit, so he can listen to his tales of danger and excitement.

Suspicious Behaviour

- The Hunter has been spending a lot of time in the attic, and has borrowed some chemicals in the kitchen. This is either Palamedes using the gate in the attic to launch hunting expeditions into the void, or Alagh-Zahul preparing to conquer the recursion.

As the Red-Herring

Recursions often form around the most epic of stories, and there are few tales as great as the one about King Arthur and his knights. It is no wonder that at least one recursion houses the literary figures of the Arthurian legends. One character from these stories is Palamedes, a Saracen and hunter. Never fitting in at the court of Camelot he has taken his hunting to the Chaosphere.

- In the Earl's bedroom is a note from the Earl to a servant about finding more photos of the Earl and the Hunter together. The Earl complains

that the Hunter has forgotten all their hunting trips together.

- Palamedes is keeping his hunting gear in his room: a laser rifle and high-tech scale mail.
- Palamedes has killed a dragon in the Chaosphere, and is keeping the dead body in the attic next to mundane trophies the hunter has killed.

As Alagh-Zahul

Translating into the Hunter fits Alagh-Zahul very well. As a Ruk agent and infiltrator, it is a part he is accustomed to playing. He even finds it rewarding that he now has to act less, and that to brag about his exploits is expected. The translation is even increasing his bloodlust, and he takes the opportunity to hunt anything he can.

- Three Estate Chaosphere explorers passed close to a gate leading to the recursion. Alagh-Zahul killed them and is keeping their bodies with the hunter's other trophies in the attic.
- He killed three servants for fun, and is keeping their severed heads in the closet in his room.

Sir Floyd Hastings

The Duke

Sir Hastings is a thoroughly disagreeable man. From a long line of aristocrats, he has spent his family fortune, and now leeches on his surroundings. Being a duke, most households are privileged to have him as guest, which he constantly takes advantage of. The sadness at the core of his storyline is that he is dying. With terminal bowel cancer, he knows he has not long left to live. Deep inside he realizes what a pitiful creature he has become, and he deals with this by constantly reminding everyone of his position and status. The only one he respects is the Countess, which he secretly loves.

Suspicious Behaviour

- The staff has seen him walking around in the rain at night, even standing still in it for hours. This can be either Guru Bahadur meditating, or Alagh-Zahul practicing self-control.

As the Red-Herring

The Duke's real identity is Guru Bahadur, a Chaosphere traveler originally from a recursion founded on ascetic principles. He travels the Strange, exposing himself to pleasures of the flesh to see if he is strong enough to resist. His infallible will and fearlessness has so far been enough to keep him from the danger of the Strange. He is not at all impressed with Strangeton House, nor the people in it, and looks forward to leaving as quickly as possible to look for greater temptations elsewhere.

- In the Foyer the Guru has made subtle changes to the Duke's banner. If a thread is pulled, it unravels completely. The Guru has done this to show the impermanence of status.
- In the Countess diary, which can be found in her and the Earl's bedroom, she complains that the Duke treats her like a stranger, and has forgotten all their previous meetings.
- All the Duke's clothes has been lined with barbed wire. They can be found in his room.

As Alagh-Zahul

A egotistical and self-assured man, the part of the Duke was perfect for Alagh-Zahul. He already consider everyone beneath him, and now he doesn't need to pretend he likes anyone.

- In his room the Duke has started to draw a map of the Chaosphere inside the cover of a book, so he quickly can make his escape if he needs to.
- In the Foyer the Alagh-Zahul is pointing his nose at everyone by hiding the warbanner of the Karum. It is hidden within the Duke's banner, and is revealed if a particular thread is pulled.

Colonel Ian Merriweather

The Colonel

Colonel Merriweather is a warrior, but war has not been kind to him. He has suffered a catastrophic stomach wound, and is in constant pain, making it hard for him to do anything, especially eat. He doesn't expect he'll live much longer, and is trying to make some sort of peace with himself before he dies. When he was younger, he became smitten with the Countess. He has remained a distant friend of the family, and has now accepted an invitation by the family, so he may see the Countess one more time, and perhaps tell her how he feels.

Suspicious Behaviour

- The staff has seen the Colonel going through the silverware in the dining room. As the AI, this was to find the cutlery's optimal organization, but as Alagh-Zahul it was to find weapons.

As the Red-Herring

The Colonel is not human at all, but rather an artificial intelligence. The recursion it is from, was created by the ideas of military programmers in the 60s and 70s. The recursion consists simply of simulations of nuclear holocaust. The AI that is the Colonel, somehow developed the Spark, and managed to leave its home recursion. It has since then travelled the Chaosphere, trying to sample as much as possible of what real life has to offer.

The AI finds many things about the human condition both disturbing and disgusting. Eating is one such thing, and of course what happens later as a consequence of it. It has a highly analytical

mind, which it loves to challenge with various puzzles and problems. But it considers human interaction to be the greatest puzzle of all.

- A scorecard in the salon shows the Colonel winning game after game with extremely complicated shots.
- The AI has annotated a tactics book in his room with very advanced military knowledge.
- In a recorded conversation found in the library, the Colonel discusses army tactics with the Earl, and mentions rockets and supersonic planes.

As Alagh-Zahul

Like the Colonel, Alagh-Zahul is a warrior. They both have fought countless battles, and are tired and blasé. What does it matter if some more people need to die?

- The recording in the drawing room has the Colonel revealing he is fleeing the Estate.
- In the Colonel's room some of the interior is missing, including a gun, and there is a blueprint on how to use it to make a gun inspired by Ruk technology.

Ms. Sophia White

The Actress

Coming from a family of minstrels, Sophia White was destined for the stage from an early age. Disgusted by the crudeness of her parent's form of entertainment, she instead struggled to make it as a dramatic and classy actress. She has been successful, and is now both famous and respected. Unknown to most is that early in her career, before she was famous, she had an affair with the Earl. She wonders if the old feelings are still there, and has arranged to be invited to Strangeton House, so she can find out.

Suspicious Behaviour

- Some of the staff saw her fleeing the library clearly distraught. If she is the Red-Herring, this is because she saw the stuffed birds; if she is Alagh-Zahul it was because of the Ruk book.

As The Red-Herring

In reality, ms. Sophia is not even human, but a Kro. She hails from Crow Hollow, and is associated with one of that recursion's many clandestine organizations. Her real name is Fayette Pluck, and has been an agent for the Beak Mafia from the day she hatched.

Her reason for being in Strangeton House is simple, she is assessing the recursion as a possible safe-house or storage. Accustomed to the cutthroat politics of Crow Hollow, her time in Strangeton is the closest she has been to a vacation in years, and she has been drawing out the assignment for as long as possible.

- There is mouthpiece for cigarettes with lipstick in the salon which has been used the wrong way.
- The diary In the Actress' bedroom has several entries written in the language of Crow Hollow.
- In the Earl's Daughter's bedroom is a strange game she has made for them. It is based on a game from Crow Hollow.

As Alagh-Zahul

Used to playing parts, Alagh-Zahul adapted to the part of the Actress easily. He is preparing for one final performance in Strangeton House, and the last scene is to die for.

- The diary in her room has several entries in the language of Ruk, detailing the thoughts of Alagh-Zahul.
- There is a brain washing kit in the Earl's Daughter's bedroom which the Actress has used to make them loyal to her. It is based on Ruk technology.

CURRENT GUESTS

AMBASSADOR
KAMAL ORHAM
-THE FOREIGNER

MR. ERNEST LAWSON
-THE HUNTER

SIR FLOYD HASTINGS
-THE DUKE

COLONEL IAN
MERRIWEATHER
-THE COLONEL

MS. SOPHIA WHITE
-THE ACTRESS

