

LONDON BRIDGE HAS FALLEN DOWN



SPACE

1889

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Credits

An adventure by Kieran Turley

Editors

Nicole Heinrichs, Stefan Küppers

Editor-in-Chief

Stefan Küppers

Cover Artwork

Thalia Brückner

Interior Artwork

Rich Longmore, Eric Lofgren

Map Artwork

Markus Holzum, Daniel Jödemann

Proofreading

Daniel Bluff, Daniel U. Thibault

Layout

Bettina Scholten, Christian Hanisch

Special thanks to *Jonathan Friebe*

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London Bridge Has Fallen Down

By Kieran Turley

Nations: British, or at least sympathetic to the British Empire (see note below).

Archetypes: Especially Adventurers, Explorers, Reporters, Scientists, Soldiers, but also Criminals, Hunters, Engineers.

Other Allegiances: This scenario assumes that the PCs are sympathetic to the British Empire; however the adventure can be adjusted to accommodate characters with different ideologies. The station could easily have been built by Germany, Russia, or Belgium.

Scenario Background

"*London Bridge*" was the codename for a research station built by the *Cartographic Office* in orbit around Mars. The station was home to some of the best optics this side of Earth and to a highly questionable psychological experiment. Three months ago the station was sabotaged by forces unknown and plummeted into the Martian wilderness, somewhere in the lands nominally controlled by the Boreosyrtris League.

The PCs are contacted by *Lady Edith Tillington*, a secret agent of the Crown and wife of one of the scientists, who begs them to find her husband and recover his life's work hidden deep in the bowels of the station.

During the course of the adventure the PCs may discover that Lady Tillington is not a true servant of the Crown, but instead a double-agent working for the Tsar. As the PCs seek the missing scientist they find that they are not the only ones on the trail and the Hungry Sands of the Isidis Desert hide more than ancient waterways. The Mylarkti lord *Doshoor Miabare* seeks *London Bridge* for his own ends and the station fell into the heart of an ancient secret.

Why an Orbital Station?

London Bridge was built with two functions: firstly it was to spy on the planet's surface using its advanced optical telescopes, secondly it was to perform psychological experiments that the British didn't want the Martian governments—or anyone else—finding out about.

The official function of *London Bridge* was that of a research station working on new technologies for faster and more reliable communication through the ether. In reality, the station played home to a group of researchers responsible for creating a new generation of weapon: Martians mentally dominated by a combination of pharmaceuticals and psychological techniques. The scientists called their creations *drones*. The ultimate goal was to create agents that could infiltrate all levels of Martian society, though that concept was years of research away.

The station personnel were also charged with using advanced telescopes to spy on the Boreosyrtris League and the Oenotrian Empire. The station was responsible for keeping an eye on troop movements and at the same time trying to map the Boreosyrtris League's spice plantations. Messages were sent to the surface using a mirror and intercepted by an agent of the Crown at the Mars Heliograph station, *Foresage*. If the League were to find out about the spying it would badly damage relations between them and the British Government on Mars. If the Oenotrian Empire were to find out they would use the information as leverage to encourage the League to take up arms with them against the red invaders.

Before the station fell, its last transmission to *Foresage* mentioned a hidden Martian artifact. The station detected a gap in the sands in the Isidis Desert, a gap that, allowed the advanced optics on *London Bridge* to somehow interact with the Chasm Crystal. The Chasm Crystal drew the station down out of orbit with a massive beam of electromagnetic force.

The Children of the Sand and the Chasm of Thloom-Mogh

Beneath the Hungry Sands of the Isidis Desert lies a massive hidden chasm, an early failed experiment by the Canal Builders in using crystal lenses to construct canals. The chasm is called Thloom-Mogh by the inhabitants, an old Martian phrase meaning "last home" which has a double-meaning as tomb or grave. At the base of the chasm lies a mammoth crystal lens that projects a strange electromagnetic force-field that serves as a roof for the chasm. The energy field moves the sand above it in slow waves, allowing shafts of sunlight to break through the darkness.

Over the years a tribe calling themselves the Children of the Sand formed from those unlucky enough to become trapped beneath the shifting desert. The tribe did whatever they could to survive, growing fungus and other plants in the limited light afforded by the intermittent light filtering through the sandy vault. The group practiced a limited and ritualized form of cannibalism, eating their dead for nutrients. The arrival of Scottish Red Captain Jack McDonald (see p. 24) and his crew shifted the tribe from a relatively peaceful group into a vile dictatorship.

Chapter 1: Agent of the Crown

Before the scenario starts Lady Edith Tillington (for stats see p. 22) contacted the PCs by letter (See **Appendix 2**, p. 22) requesting their aid in a matter relating to her missing husband Lord Edward Tillington. You can have the letter sent to each PC or to a lone PC who has a good reputation with the British Empire. The letter mentions a reward for simply meeting with Lady Edith; you should adjust this reward based on the PCs' finances. The scenario assumes that the PCs would be interested in helping out this woman either for the reward, for honor, or for the Empire.

Lady Edith is an agent of the British Empire and has been since before her arranged marriage to Lord Tillington, so she is ideally placed to deal with the *London Bridge* situation. The secret service believes that they have a mole and so don't want to use their normal agents to track down the missing station; hence the PCs are brought in to deal with the situation. As the letter indicates, the PCs are given fast transportation from wherever they may be to the grim city of Mylarkt on the borderlands of the British colony on Mars. Depending on where the PCs start out you may wish to include additional encounters. If not, the action starts in the drawing room of the British Embassy in Mylarkt. Use the information provided in **Appendix 1** (starting p. 17) to give the PCs a feeling for Mylarkt and its people.

Edith has been ordered by the Crown to destroy all the evidence in the station after recovering the last of its reports and photographic plates. However, Lady Edith has been playing a rather dangerous game; she is a double-agent for the Russian Okhrana and has orders to bring evidence of British wrong-doing to her masters.

Lady Edith is dressed in a black gown and veil, indicating she is in mourning. This is only half the reason, however; she knows that her presence in Mylarkt calls attention to her mission so she's using the veil to disguise her identity. Lady Edith plays the part of a delicate English rose very well and is not above using her charms to ensure the PCs trust her fully. After some small talk and the required cups of tea and buttered crumpets Lady Edith goes into detail about what she actually wants the PCs to do.

Edith tells the PCs that her husband, a noted alienist (psychiatrist), was working on a new form of treatment with the support of the British government. Lady Edith explains that her husband was traveling on a ship called *London Bridge* en route to Syrtis Major when it crashed. After three months she doesn't expect to find her husband alive but wants to recover his body for a Christian burial. She tells the PCs that she would conduct the investigation herself but she found after a few enquiries that the Mylarkti refuse to deal with her for reasons unknown.

Lady Edith knows that the "ship" fell somewhere in the Isidis Desert but the private airship she sent to locate the crash site returned empty-handed. Lady Edith tells them that the only information she could find was that a local scavenger called *Waldoon Kokoposp* recently sold a piece of a British difference engine

which she believes came from her husband's ship. She proposes that they start by locating this scavenger, either at his abode in

the "Scourings" district or by talking to *Neb Sollos*, the merchant who bought the salvage. Lady Edith warns the PCs that her husband's work was valuable and that others may stop at nothing to get their hands on it.

The final kicker is that Lady Edith wishes to accompany the PCs on their mission. She promises not to interfere in any way, claiming that she has some skills they may find useful such as a good knowledge of Martian culture and language.

If the PCs ask why the British government isn't helping to search for her husband if his work is so valuable, she responds with a quick smile and says "What makes you think they aren't?" Lady Edith only definitively reveals her position as agent of the Crown if the PCs are persistent in their questioning or if one of them has a positive relationship with the British government. Even then, she only admits that she used to work for the government herself and that they are bankrolling her search.

Lady Edith effortlessly creates multi-layered intrigues and hides her status as a factor for the British Empire as a means of concealing her deeper allegiance to the Okhrana. A PC with a vast knowledge of the intelligence community may have heard of Lady Edith's reputation as a daring and slightly scandalous spy. Used to charming others, Lady Edith uses compliments and ego-stroking to make the PCs like her. When playing Lady Edith, never gloat or make snide comments; always admire the PCs' strengths and play down their failings. If one PC displays impeccable manners, Lady Edith notes them with obvious pleasure, if another runs down a thief she commends his bravery. It is all a grand game to this master spy.

On leaving the embassy the PCs spot *Haltia Nunrombo*, assassin and major domo to Skiff Lord *Miabare*, scrutinizing the characters quite openly. *Haltia* has been watching Lady Edith for the last day, while her own agents seek out *Waldoon Kokoposp*. *Haltia* doesn't let the PCs get close to her, vanishing into the crowd if they move in her direction. At the Gamemaster's option she may approach one of the PCs later, while they are alone and ask them if they trust Lady Edith. Having sown the seed of mistrust, the assassin then leaves to prepare for her journey to find *London Bridge*.

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Chapter 2: Finding Waldoon

More than a few Mylarkti men and women make a decent living scouring the Isidis Desert for old junk and Martian artifacts, selling what they find to the highest bidder. One of these people, a Hill Martian called *Waldoon Kokoposp* (for stats see p. 24), made the mistake of selling a few pieces of a British-made difference engine and a map to where he found them to a local merchant. *Waldoon* found the difference engine parts and a number of other pieces of British technology





scattered over a 16 kilometer, or 10 mile, wide area deep in the Isidis Desert.

The merchant's servant, a spy for Skiff Lord *Doshoor Miabare*, stole Waldoon's map and passed it on to his true master. The Miabare family has been secretly allied with the British for many years, which is why the Miabare Market (see **Appendix 1**, p. 19) doesn't sanction illicit trade in Bhutan spice. The Skiff Lord, aware of the crashed British "ship" due to his contacts in the British government, put two and two together and immediately launched an expedition to find the crash site. Miabare couldn't simply send his people out of the city without drawing the attention of the other Skiff Lords so his agents are employing an old underground canal to sneak out unnoticed.

Miabare made it clear through his underworld contacts that any native guide working with humans would find himself drinking deep of the Sludge (see **Appendix 1**, p. 20). The Skiff Lord also tried to have Waldoon kidnapped, just in case he might prove useful later. Waldoon escaped capture and is hiding out on the upper floors of an abandoned tower. Miabare believes that the ship was a secret courier; he has no idea it was a station or the nature of the research undertaken there.

Miabare knows Lady Edith from past dealings and does not trust or like her. The Skiff Lord has deliberately tried to keep Waldoon from the British agent because he believes that he will get a much juicier reward from the British if he recovers the crashed ship himself. Doshoor is in fact wrong; having the knowledge of the station's secrets fall into Martian hands is a nightmare for the British, and Doshoor would likely have signed his own death warrant.

The PCs have to locate Waldoon, who is hiding on the upper floor of an abandoned tower (see **The Weeping Tower**, p. 8), while fighting off agents of the Skiff Lord. The agents managed to grab Waldoon briefly outside his home and before he slipped away he managed to overhear some of Miabare's plans and so knows where the Skiff Lord's group is leaving from.

Miabare's agents have orders not to kill Waldoon but they're not above trying to have the PCs killed or following them to find him. The agents follow the PCs from a distance if possible but it should be fairly easy to avoid them if the PCs are cunning enough.

Wandering Mylarkt

The best way to get around Mylarkt is on foot or by punt. The city has no functioning public transport but a series of smaller canals radiate from the main canal and allow for the movement of goods or people in relative safety. Humans are obvious but due to the locals wearing masks (see **Appendix 1**, p. 17), disguises are an easy affair and someone with a decent grasp of one of the local Martian languages can easily pass himself off as a local.

The air in Mylarkt is mildly toxic and smells acrid, like burning plastic. Respiratory ailments are common and the marketplaces are punctuated by the quick reports of the hacking coughs common to those who can't afford air filters. The lighting all over the city is dim at best and lends a greenish tinge to everything. Sound is muffled and the stench of ruptured sewer pipes is everywhere.

Beggars and thieves are commonplace while street gangs may charge a nominal fee for passing through areas they control. The PCs should be aware that this "extortion" is actually considered normal in Mylarkt and that the gangs are actually a sort of unofficial police force. Anyone attacking the PCs after they've paid off a gang might be surprised to find a group of gang members helping them and even apologizing for the attack.

You can use Miabare's agents to inject a sense of urgency into the proceedings if you feel that they are lagging. The PCs might arrive at *Neb Sollos'* shop to find him getting roughed up by Miabare's thugs or locate Waldoon's brother *Kahol* only to find him dying of a stab wound while his would-be assassin stands above him, bloody knife in hand.

The four locations the PCs are most likely to visit in their hunt for Waldoon are outlined below.

The Merchant

Neb Sollos is an overweight merchant working out of the "Memory Market," a small marketplace that covers a corner of the third floor of one of the giant towers that overlook the canal. The market plays host to booksellers (antiquarian and contemporary), scribes, and purveyors of ancient Martian artifacts. The market has its own security force and a gated entrance. To gain entrance to the market one must be a regular, be on a list, bribe the guards, or display enough obvious wealth to convince the guardians they are intending to make a purchase. Humans are usually waved through as the merchants see them as easy marks and have ordered the guards to let them in.

Neb's Shop is easy to locate with his name above it and greetings in English, German, and French. The shop is dimly lit by a couple of gas lanterns which Sollos believes creates an atmosphere of mystery and has the handy side effect of making flaws in artifacts harder to spot. Thick cloth shutters doused with sweet-smelling chemicals prevent the noxious gasses from outside the tower from penetrating into the shop.

Neb wears a mask of light black gauze with blade-like white ceramic sides decorated with two black gems. The mask leaves most of his face slightly visible through the gauze and marks him as coming from the Phobos district where the market is located. Sollos is slightly overweight but carries it well. He is slightly annoyed at the loss of Waldoon's map, which his servant Kanno stole and gave to Doshoor Miabare. However, Sollos doesn't realize that Kanno stole his map and simply assumes he misplaced it in the mess that fills every corner of his store.

When the PCs arrive Sollos is cleaning the piece of the English difference engine that he purchased from Waldoon Kokoposp. Sollos curses loudly as his clothes get splattered in oil and mutters about "That worthless Kanno, off in the Nine Briars getting his brain rearranged." When he notices the PCs, Neb hastily pulls a cloth over the engine, more to hide the dirt than anything else. He gives the PCs a wide nervous smile and launches into a splattering of Earth greetings.

Neb Sollos specializes in a range of ancient Martian salvage. Much of his stock is interesting to look at but has no practical use; the perfect gift for an Earthman to send back home. Much of Neb's stock comes from the scavengers who comb the city and the Isidis Desert beyond for anything of potential value. Neb also deals with the desert tribes on occasion and has recently paid for a shipment of ancient devices with a crate of stolen human rifles.

This last point makes Neb especially nervous when the PCs arrive on his doorstep. The merchant is paranoid and believes that the PCs may be agents of the local British garrison. He peppers his conversation with comments like "Those look like very practical boots, where did you get them?" and "You have the bearing of a military man, am I right?" If the PCs ask about weapons he starts to stammer and turns pale.

Sollos' goals in this scene are to sell the PCs something and to make sure he doesn't get in trouble with the British for "arming the natives." Neb is more than willing to talk about the difference engine, happy to divert attention away from the firearms shipment. He tells the PCs that he bought the engine and a map to where it was found from Waldoon Kokoposp. He rather shame-facedly admits that he can't find the map since his assistant *Kanno* usually attends to the organization of the shop. If the PCs ask where Kanno can be found, Sollos directs them to the Nine Briars Emporium, a drug den and bordello for those with money to burn. Sollo tells the PCs that Kanno occasionally persuades his rich aunt to give him money and the Nine Briars Emporium (see **Appendix 1**, p. 7) is where he likes to waste it.

If the PCs make a purchase Neb becomes quite charming; if they make it clear they don't want to purchase anything the merchant turns slightly cooler. You can use the objects in Sollos' shop as a springboard to further adventures. The merchant may have maps to ancient sites of interest, objects which have unusual functions or unassuming stone idols that turn out to be containers for ancient secrets.

Waldoon's House

Waldoon's house lies in the Scourings, an abandoned district meant to serve as a buffer between the Embassy Quarter and the

rest of the city. The area is dotted with sinkholes but is surprisingly pollution free, a fact that attracts the poor to the district. The Skiff Lords declared the area off limits after unlicensed criminals used it to strike at the Embassy Quarter. Every six months or so human soldiers clear out the dwellings here, burning down the shanties and driving the population out. This "scouring" has given the district its colorful name. The Scourings lacks an official statue to the first builder, the original district statue having been devoured by a giant sinkhole. In place of a statue the locals erected a ragged scarecrow with a rag mask stained with blood.

Travel through the Scourings is fraught with danger; the locals don't care for humans and are quick to act on this. The PCs might find themselves pelted with stones from the shadows or led down blind alleys and drenched in toxic liquids. Those disguised in Martian clothing or with a local guide might fare better but they might face the dangers of swarms of beggars, pickpockets, or a sudden sinkhole.

Finding Waldoon's home is easy enough; any street urchin can be bribed to lead the PCs there for a modest sum. Waldoon shares a small house with his brother *Kahol*. The building is in strangely good repair for the district and has barred windows. The sturdy door hangs open on one hinge and as the PCs arrive a group of locals are busy looting it. Miabare's men kicked down the front door a few hours ago looking for Waldoon—they found nothing—and the locals took this as a sign the house was fair game. Previous to this, Waldoon paid a local gang for protection but the Skiff Lord's men have invalidated this protection as far as the natives are concerned. The looters don't want to leave the house until everything is gone and the PCs must either negotiate with them or drive them off by force. The second option can lead to trouble later on at the GM's option.

Kahol hid a note here behind a loose brick. The note tells Waldoon that Kahol has taken the remainder of the difference engine to the Nine Briars Emporium to trade for a good time and that Waldoon should meet him there. If the PCs fail to uncover the note you can always have one of the locals offer to give it to them in exchange for a hefty fee. The locals can also tell the PCs why the door was kicked down and by whom, if sufficiently motivated.

The Nine Briars Emporium

In the heart of the Miabare Market, this opulent building serves all manner of drugs to a discriminating clientele. The three story building is decorated in the Martian style with rounded corners and cube glyphs suspended from metal arms at each door promising delights to those who enter. Devil's Onion, opium, and even gin all the way from Earth are all available here for the right price. The Emporium's ground floor is mostly open plan, divided by diaphanous drapes and filled with calming music. Humans and Martians recline on couches enjoying their poison of choice. A host of private rooms above the main floor offer other experiences to the paying client.

Yarini, a scandalously-dressed Canal Martian hostess, greets the PCs on entry and offers to take their clothing and baggage. After a warm greeting that might make some more conservative humans uncomfortable Yarini asks the PCs how she may best meet their needs. She offers them a bewildering array of drinks and drugs as well as promising all manner of "other" pleasures available upstairs. If asked about Kahol or Kanno she declines to answer but shows her open palm, waiting for a bribe. Sufficiently motivated, Yarini leads the PCs to a private room and tells them to wait. A few minutes later she brings the requested NPC to the PCs' room warning them not to start any violence.

Kanno indulges in opium while Kahol's tastes run to Devil's Onion. Both men are more than a little incoherent and pliable, hence Yarini was able to lead them to the PCs with ease. Kahol absently clutches an oil-stained satchel which he used to carry the difference engine part. Kahol, when he realizes that his brother is mixed up in something dangerous, tells the PCs about a secret place he and his brother used to hide when their father was in "one of his rages." The hiding place is known as the Weeping Tower (see below) on the outskirts of Mylarkti.

Miabare's Townhouse

Unlike the other Skiff Lords, Doshoor Miabare doesn't maintain a large estate but rather keeps to a modest townhouse overlooking the Miabare Market. Knowing the PCs are working with Lady Edith, the Skiff Lord will not permit an audience. Visiting PCs are turned away and told the Skiff Lord is away on business. Putting pressure on the Skiff Lord through the embassies might allow them an audience but Doshoor is unlikely to be happy about this and simply refuses to answer any questions, instead diverting the PCs to other topics and casting aspersions on Lady Edith's motives.

The Weeping Tower

The Weeping Tower is a well-known landmark in the city and is avoided by all but the most desperate. The tower itself is unique amongst Martian architecture in that it lacks the monolithic solidity characteristic of the Canal Builders' work. Unlike the poorer districts of the Hand of Fohshoon or the Scourings, this place doesn't rely on the locals to give it a bad reputation; it is inherently dangerous and unstable. The tower lacks a proper internal support structure and shivers in the wind, regularly shedding small chunks of masonry which plummet to the ground below with bone-shattering force. Not needing the space, the Mylarkti have simply abandoned the area surrounding the tower.

Unknown to all, the Weeping Tower is not simply another example of Mylarkti's decline but is instead a symptom of a much darker illness. The Weeping Tower lies above the gas storage tanks for the old Mylarkti mass transit system. A few years ago the Burning Men (See **Appendix 1**, p. 20) discovered this lost structure and after much experimentation managed to disable the safety protocols that prevented gas from building up to critical levels. This buildup of gas has also caused the loss of pressure experienced by the Tunnel Runners (See **Appendix 1**, p. 20) as well as the ground tremors responsible for the Weeping Tower's instability. The Burning Men plan to let the gas build to a critical level before detonating the tanks in a massive fireball that may well turn Mylarkti into a smoking crater.

If you wish, you may have the PCs encounter the Burning Men at this point. The Burning Men's plot is outside the scope of this adventure but you could use this encounter to lay the groundwork for further adventures in Mylarkti and hint at the danger they pose to the entire city.

Waldoon Kokoposp has hidden himself on the first floor of the multi-story edifice. Terrified of Doshoor Miabare and convinced that the Skiff Lord wants to kill him to silence him, Waldoon has laid a trap for the unwary and attacks those coming into the tower with little or no provocation. It will take a good diplomat to talk Waldoon down to the point that he's willing to cooperate with the PCs.

Waldoon's trap is a tripwire that lies across the main stairway that runs around the inner side of the exterior wall. Noticing the

All This and the End of the World?

The Burning Men's plot to destroy Mylarkti is part of the city's "big picture" but here it seems like little more than a footnote. You can make more of this by replacing Lady Edith's Okhrana masters with the Burning Men. Perhaps the leader of the Burning Men practices some ancient Martian brainwashing technique that he used to turn Lady Edith into his instrument. This form of mind control could foreshadow events with the Drone later on in the scenario.

If you want to use this idea then the Burning Men have some idea of what lies beneath the sands at Thloom-Mogh. In fact, the Burning Men need a sliver of the lens to ignite the gas storage tanks since some ancient security measure prevents them from simply tossing in a burning rag. In this case Lady Edith probably doesn't know the nature of the Burning Men's plan. You could also inject a horror element when the characters discover the hideous concealed burns that cover every inch of Lady Edith's body.

trip wire requires a Tough *Perception* roll. Waldoon has rigged one of the active lanterns to explode when someone pulls on the wire. Though not deadly, the sound of the explosion will notify Waldoon of the approaching PCs and might, at the GM's option, trigger follow-on explosions or structural failures.

Waldoon is nervous and looking for a way out; if the PCs calm him down and explain they are not assassins working for Miabare, he relaxes and becomes much more reasonable. Like many people in Mylarkti, Kokoposp is motivated by money; offering him a large sum of cash for his help in locating the fallen station makes him very happy. Waldoon knows a few things of interest to the PCs: firstly he knows the rough location where the station fell, secondly he knows how Miabare plans to get to the station quickly, and thirdly he knows the desert between Mylarkti and the wreck very well. While captured, Waldoon overheard Haltia Nunrombo discuss using an old sub-canal, hidden beneath a bunker near the Painted District, to leave the city in secret. The scavenger is more than happy to point the way to the bunker.

If the PCs have not managed to avoid Miabare's men they might choose this point to ambush the PCs, perhaps waiting until the

Troubleshooting

If the PCs end up killing Waldoon it is not the end of the adventure. They can divine the location of the wreck from the punch card Kahol possesses, or through a sketch of the map drawn from memory by Kanno. The desert is dangerous to travel by airship but they might be able to persuade a captain to take them to the desert edge (maybe even arriving ahead of Miabare's expedition) if they have enough money or diplomatic pull. So, while Waldoon is useful he is not vital to the mission.

PCs emerge from the building. If the PCs have managed to shake off Miabare's agents, they might encounter a group of them here, noisily exploring the tower and perhaps getting caught in the trap mentioned above. Use either the thugs or the assassins-in-training stats from **Appendix 3** (p. 25-26) depending on the difficulty you want to set for the encounter.

Lady Edith and the Okhrana

Okhrana agents shadow the PCs in Mylarkt and beyond. The Okhrana uses local agents in Mylarkt, switching to a mix of Russian and Martian mercenaries in the desert regions. The Martian agents in the city are mutes who can only write in a code taught to them by the Russians, thereby preventing them from giving away secrets.

Lady Edith "accidentally" gives away the group's position in the desert by throwing a bundle of scented wood on the fire. If questioned on her motives for doing this, she claims that the scented wood should drive away insects and lend a fresh scent to their clothing. The wood gives off thick clouds of smoke which are easily spotted from a distance. If the group is disinclined to light a fire, Lady Edith fakes an illness that requires her to be warmed. For emergency signaling Lady Edith carries a relatively newly, invented flare gun.

Chapter 3: Passage to Thloom-Mogh

The PCs can travel to the Isidis Desert in a number of ways: the most obvious is to follow Miabare's agent Haltia Nunrombo and take the underground canal that she used. The second way would be to hire an airship to take them to the edge of the desert. The Isidis Desert is difficult to traverse at the best of times but this is the season of winds where brief and furious sandstorms can tear the skin from exposed flesh and rip apart ships. No sane airship pilot would plot a course over the desert at this time of year but one may be persuaded to drop a group at the edge.

The Skiff Lord's expedition left the city by a tunnel that was part of a subsidiary canal that used to feed the steppes to the southeast of the city far back in the early days of the canal network. Haltia Nunrombo, a Canal Martian from an ancient and proud line of assassins, leads the expedition. Access to the old canal network is through a bunker at the edge of the Painted District. Entrance to the network is prohibited and the tunnels are guarded by men in the employ of the Skiff Lords. This is a rotating duty and eight of Miabare's own men happen to guard the entrance to the network at the moment (use the Thugs from **Appendix 3**, p. 26). Miabare has ordered his men to deny access to any outsiders. The guards are easily defeated as they are disinclined to fight to the death; killing or injuring half of them forces a surrender.

From the bunker entrance the PCs travel down a wide staircase to a dock littered with boats in various states of repair. The canal here is a raging torrent of water, something that should stun anyone used to the lazy canals of Mars. Normally this sub-canal would be dry as a bone but the Skiff Lord bribed an official to open the under-city water reserves so that the tunnel would partially fill with water, forming a small but fast-flowing river. The tunnel beyond

the city is normally filled with all manner of dangerous wildlife but most of it was drowned or crushed by the rushing torrent.

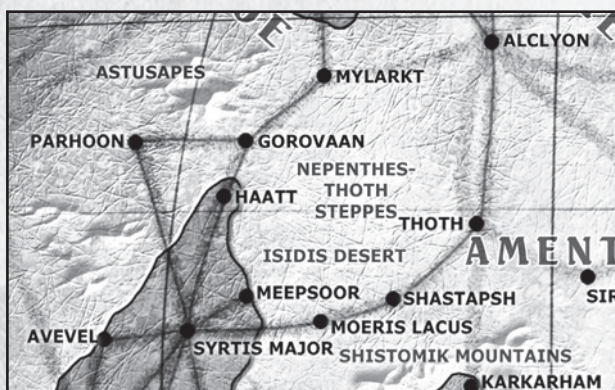
The boats at the dock belong to the various Skiff Lords; an insurance policy in case they should wish to escape the city for any reason. About half the boats are in decent repair; the others have been either vandalized or left to rot. The flat-bottomed boats are built to take 10 or so passengers, directed by a single tiller. The short-lived river should allow the PCs to travel for 3 days (covering roughly 500 kilometers, or 300 miles) before emerging in the scrub hills far south of Mylarkt, just at the desert edge. The crash site lies about a week's travel across the Isidis Desert.

The tunnels are relatively safe; most of the wildlife has been washed away by the torrent. However, there are some obstructions that the PCs will need to navigate around. Unless the PCs have sufficient manpower to keep their boat manned for 24 hours a day they'll need to pull over to rest and eat. Manning the boat requires a watchman with a lantern on the bow and a tiller man at the stern. There are some gas lanterns mounted on the walls but only about one in thirty still functions, leading to small pools of eerie green light every few miles. There are multiple "lay-bys" in the canal where boats can stop; these were used for boats to pass each other in times past but now serve as handy rest points. If the Gamemaster wishes, he can include a number of optional encounters at these rest points. The Gamemaster can include one or more of these encounters depending on the group's progress and requirements:

- **Old Smuggling Port** The PCs pull into one of the heavily silted transit lanes only to find the quay filled with all manner of boxes and crates. This place was used as a smuggling way-station until about a decade ago, before something burrowed up from the depths and ate the inhabitants. An examination of the scene paints a picture of a savage animal attack that left nobody alive. Pieces of alien chitin serve as tantalizing hints to the nature of the beast that attacked but it is like nothing that roams the surface of Mars. Bloodstains and a few fragments of Hill and Canal Martian bones remain but nothing close to a complete corpse. The crates mostly contained perishables, but a few pieces of stolen equipment might still be salvageable at the GM's option. Most of the crates lie on carts, ready to be wheeled up to the city proper.
- **White Water** The tunnel roof partially collapsed at this point. Ordinarily it would be easy to climb over it but for a boat in a fast-flowing river it forms deadly rapids. The PC at the helm needs to make a Difficulty 3 *Pilot (Boats)* check to navigate the water successfully. The watchman can aid the pilot by shouting instructions; each success on the watchman's *Perception* check adds a die to the pilot's pool.
- **Gas Pocket** The flow of gas to the lanterns is still on but most of it leaks harmlessly into the air and out of hidden air ducts. The gas pipes in this area suffered catastrophic failure and the ventilation ducts can't keep up with the contamination. If the PCs are using open flames for light, their lanterns suddenly flare as they enter this area. If not doused immediately the open flames ignite a massive gas pocket and cause an explosion dealing 4 L damage. You might foreshadow this explosion with scorch marks on the walls, recently inflicted when Haltia Nunrombo's group passed this way.
- **Prize in the Water** An object of value bobs in the water. This might be a sealed barrel of gunpowder, a corpse with valuables on it, or anything else you think the party might need or use. It's also possible that the object is a dead specimen of an unknown Martian species; or maybe one that only appears dead. Lastly, the object could be a trap, a simple booby trap left by Haltia Nunrombo's expedition.

- **Durge Fly Nest** Durge flies (see **Core Rules**, p. 76) have taken over one of the waystations. The flies emerge from this nest once a year to wreak havoc on the desert above. The creatures are currently in hibernation but stir from their slumber when exposed to light and noise. The nest is intertwined with multiple gas pipes and one clever shot might blow up the entire swarm before it becomes a threat.
- **Surface Tunnel** This transit lane connects to a surface tunnel that the PCs can use to judge the distance they have traveled. The tunnel leads to a concealed entrance in a small bunker that might have other occupants such as a lone hermit or a small tribal group.
- **Fanatics** A group of High Martian Worm cultists have taken up residence in one of the old transit lanes. They use a tunnel to the surface to strike at local tribes. They might have valuable Hill Martian or even human captives. You could use these captives as a launching point for further adventures—such as returning them to their people—or perhaps they might invite the PCs to join them on a quest. The Worm cultists are not happy to see humans in their “sacred temple” and act accordingly. The cult leader has an ancient stone tablet that shows lost tunnels under Mylarkt, tunnels that lead to what might be a central control chamber for the city services. This information could either save or doom Mylarkt forever. Use the attributes for Riders of the Nepenthes-Thoth in **Appendix 3** (p. 25) for the cultists. Adjust the number of cultists to your group.

After three days of riding high, the water flow dwindles away as the Martian sands drink deep of it, and the PCs’ canal boat eventually beaches itself close to Haltia Nunrombo’s skiff. The boats come to a halt less than a kilometer, or half a mile, from a surface entrance. The PCs can judge the size of Nunrombo’s group by the footprints left behind in the wet sand. If the PCs have forgotten some gear, you could have extra supplies left behind by Nunrombo. Alternatively, if your PCs enjoy combat, the assassin may have left a few ambushers behind; use the apprentice assassins from **Appendix 3** (p. 25).



The Isidis Desert

- After exiting the canal tunnel the PCs have to confront the dangers of the Isidis Desert. If the PCs chose to take an airship then they are dropped off at a similar point; no captain is foolish enough to get too close to the desert at this time of year. The desert, like many on Earth, is scorching hot during the day and freezing cold at night. The desert is a vast red salt dune sea, with the occasional rocky plain stretch.

The Gamemaster should use the Exposure rules from page 215 of the **Space: 1889 Core Rules** when running this section of the

scenario. The Survival skill is vital here and while Lady Edith and Waldoon Kokoposp both have it, the PCs should be taking center stage if possible with the NPCs only assisting. The crash site is over 300 kilometers, or 200 miles, away across dangerous terrain ranging from scrub-hills to stony desert. The travel time is approximately 3 weeks but can be shorter if the PCs push themselves or if they manage to get their hands on Gashant mounts.

Following in Another's Footsteps

The adventure assumes that the PCs are a day or two behind Haltia Nunrombo's group. Haltia's people benefited from slightly faster flow in the canal, know the desert terrain, and acquire mounts from the Riders of the Nepenthes-Thoth early on in their journey. Of course, if you want to increase the tension or if the PCs did particularly well in Mylarkt, then Haltia's group can be mere hours ahead. Catching Haltia's group mid-desert can lead to some great drama and gives the PCs Waldoon's map, which could be useful if the scavenger isn't with them.

The Locals are Restless

This encounter should occur within a day of the PCs exiting the canal tunnel. A small group of Hill Martians (for stats see Riders of the Nepenthes-Thoth in **Appendix 3**, p. 25) on Gashant mounts trail the PCs for a few hours, circling them at a distance. PCs with experience of Martian tribes or a relevant Academics skill can identify the small group as members of the Isidian tribe, one of the tribes that collectively make up the Riders of the Nepenthes-Thoth. The riders can be identified as warriors and appear to be dressed for war.

The warriors were part of a larger group that confronted Haltia Nunrombo's group and demanded tribute as the desert tribes are wont to do. Typically such an exchange leads to a bargain where the travelers pay a modest fee to the tribesmen but Haltia was in no mood to deal with them and her men attacked the warriors, killing over half their number before the rest fled. Haltia then took the dead warriors' mounts for her own use. Now the survivors are watching the PCs and trying to figure out if they are part of Nunrombo's group. After a few hours a single warrior approaches the PCs, watched closely by his comrades.

The tense meeting can end in combat or with the group helping the PCs depending on how they are dealt with. The warrior's name is Alhoorm, the most level-headed of the Hill Martian warriors watching the party. Alhoorm has a noticeable graze from a bullet on his forehead and looks very tired. The warrior has spent the last few hours convincing his fellow tribesmen not to attack the PCs out of hand and now needs to prove himself right by brokering a deal. Alhoorm's warriors are two days from their camp and could use some supplies. One or two of them require medical attention. Alhoorm first demands to know the PCs' business in his tribe's land, and then what relationship they have with the Canal Martian party that passed by earlier. If the PCs answer truthfully Alhoorm can provide them with the spare Gashant mounts his group have with them and offers to come along to tend to the beasts. If the PCs encounter Haltia Nunrombo at a later time Alhoorm launches himself at her in a murderous fury.

Alhoorm's men need to return to their tribe before they leave their camp so they cannot stay and fight for the PCs, much as they thirst for vengeance against the Canal Martians. If the PCs volunteer medical attention and supplies, Alhoorm's men cautiously accept. If the PCs refuse to answer questions or are overly aggressive or rude, Alhoorm and his men depart without further incident. If the PCs attack then the Hill Martians fight to the death.

Desert Encounters

After the meeting with Alhoorm, the PCs exit the remnants of the scrub hills and enter the desert proper. If they are riding Gashant mounts they should have an easier time of things and be able to carry their gear with ease. Without the Gashants the journey is much more painful and the Gamemaster should ask for more Survival skill checks. During the desert trip the PCs may encounter any number of oddities; the Gamemaster should choose a few encounters from the list below that most suit his group's resources and style of play.

- **Hidden Treasure** Inside a ruin carefully disguised as a cluster of boulders the PCs find a functioning deep well. Knowledge of this water source is a valuable bargaining tool and a kingly gift for any tribe in the area. The water source may have guardians such as a Roogie pack (Page 72 of the **Space: 1889 Core Rules**) or a fearsome Steppe Tiger (Page 74 of the **Space: 1889 Core Rules**). The ruin could also be home to a hermit; perhaps a little unhinged by his time alone in the desolation.
- **Words in the Sand** The ground ahead is a smooth sheet of stone marred by hundreds of arcane-looking symbols, some of which cover acres. The geoglyphs don't resemble any existing Martian language and are closer to Mayan symbols. Are they the work of some ancient alien or simply the demented scrawling of a lost and sun-maddened scholar? The glyphs prove impossible to date due to the constant rubbing of sand over their surface.
- **Lost City** After days of traveling through the trackless desert the PCs find themselves walking along an ancient roadway. The almost unidentifiable ruins of hundreds of buildings line the pathway. Who built this city and how old is it actually? Is the city a remnant of the pre-canal Martian civilization or a smaller city that died when its canals dried up? The ruined walls only stand a few inches high but there might be underground basements or sewers containing tantalizing hints of lost Martian cultures. You can use this city as a launching point for further adventures.
- **Sandstorm** One of the Isidis Desert's famous shredding storms appears on the horizon; with less than half an hour before it hits can the PCs find shelter in time? This might be a good encounter to combine with another such as the *Lost City*, *Merchant Caravan*, or the *Fallen Airship*. These short yet violent storms typically last an hour or so but can shred exposed flesh, and tribesmen usually dig holes to survive them. Airships crossing swords with one of these storms find their exposed cloth ripped asunder and liftwood plates scoured. Most ships are dashed to the desert floor in moments.
- **Fallen Airship** The decaying carcass of a crashed airship peers from the sand. At the Gamemaster's option the ship might be home to a predator or contain treasure in the form of conventional wealth or supplies. Another option is for the crash to be relatively recent with injured passengers who require help. Lastly, the Gamemaster may rule that the ship may not be a complete write-off and could be made airworthy

with a few days of work. Of course, traveling further into the desert on such a vessel would be foolish but it might make for a quick way home.

- **Stampede** A massive herd of Gashants rumbles across the terrain, causing the earth to shake. Their panicked cries echo through the air punctuated by a terrible roar. Can the PCs survive the fear-crazed animals as they trample everything in sight? What do the PCs do when confronted with the source of the fear, a massive Steppe Tiger (Page 74 of the **Space: 1889 Core Rules**)?
- **Injured Animal** Life is hard on Mars, and nowhere more so than the Isidis Desert. The PCs come across a Bush Monkey (page 71 of the **Space: 1889 Core Rules**) curled up and whining. The creature has a wounded limb and the PCs must decide if they wish to let it suffer, help it out, or put it out of its misery. If tended to, the Bush Monkey proves quite gentle and may imprint on its savior, following him or her from a distance and leaving "gifts" of food or other objects.
- **New Species** Mars is a vast landscape with many unexplored regions. Hundreds of life forms lie hidden in the wilds. As the PCs camp for the evening they encounter one of the more deadly creatures, a cross between a snake and a scorpion with an unusual means of attack. The creature is so rare that it has no name, giving the PCs a chance to name the beast if they survive. See the entry for the *Vacuum Scorpion* in **Appendix 4** (p. 27) for details of the creature.
- **Quicksand?** While traveling over an unremarkable patch of sand the PCs suddenly find themselves sinking with startling rapidity. The patch of sand is more correctly described as a sinkhole since it forms an open hole and dumps the PCs over 12 meters, or 40 feet, downwards into an ancient cavern. A successful *Survival* skill check (Difficulty 2) can spot the dangerous sand and avoid it. The cavern below was part of a natural network of underground rivers, long since dried up and collapsed. If the PCs explore, they locate a band of crystals similar to Moabite Fire Jewels in what was once a river bed. The crystals are a strange purple color and their discovery may, at the Gamemaster's option, trigger a "gold rush" in the region with others seeking to find more of the strangely beautiful gemstones.
- **That Which Blooms in Adversity** While sleeping on an exposed plain for the night, have each PC make three Difficulty 2 *Resistance* checks: for each one they fail they take a wound from extreme dehydration. The PCs awaken from a fitful sleep to find themselves surrounded by a vast meadow of foot-tall light-brown stalks tipped with fist-sized bulbs. Anyone checking on their water stores realizes that the canteens



are missing notable amounts of water. The strange plants are absorbing water from the air at a staggering pace. An hour after dawn, or if the stalks are disturbed at all, the pods on top burst open to reveal a shower of bright red floating seeds that blow away in the wind. If Waldoon or Alhoorm are in the party they can identify the flowers as the rare Martian Blood Pods (see **Appendix 4**, p. 27).

- **Water Thief** In the depths of night a freelance tribesman (a warrior from a Hill Martian tribe who has sworn himself to a mission and left the tribe to complete it) tries to sneak into the camp and steal some of the PCs' water and rations. The freelancer bears the PCs no ill will and only steals enough to sustain himself until he can reach a nearby tribal holding. You can develop this NPC more as required; for example, his mission may coincide with the PCs' goals in some way. (For stats see *Riders of the Nepenthes-Thoth* in **Appendix 3**, p. 26)
- **Expedition** A small group of British scouts got turned around during a sandstorm and have become lost in the desert. The scouts, headed by Sergeant Ian Evans of the Martian Colonial Forces, lack supplies and are desperate enough to attack the PCs if they don't offer to share. There are enough sun-addled soldiers to provide a minor challenge to the PCs though most have taken a few wounds due to dehydration and surrender if the PCs manage to kill or wound half of them.
- **Merchant Caravan** A caravan train with laden Gashants winds its way through the desert sands. The Canal Martian merchants seem friendly enough but a few of them watch the PCs closely. They fob off questions concerning their cargo with vague replies; further pressure results in harsh words or even violence. No merchant would willingly travel these wild lands; this is a smuggling caravan carrying Bhutan spice to a secret rendezvous. If the PCs ask too many questions they'll end up with a fight on their hands. The smugglers are very interested in what the PCs are doing way out in the desert and are concerned that the PCs are some kind of anti-smuggling task force.
- **Ancestor Burials** The Riders of the Nepenthes-Toth bury their dead in small cairns of rocks and earth. These mounds are usually isolated as the practical riders don't waste travel time on the dead. The PCs come across gently rolling terrain filled with mounds as far as the eye can see. The place is an old battlefield where two clans managed to wipe each other out, something almost unheard-of in Rider history. The carnage was terrible and the whole place is marked with taboo markers warning travelers of evil spirits. No Martian tribesman would willingly walk through this place.
- **Bone Yard** A recent earth tremor caused a massive chunk of stone to fall away from an escarpment revealing a cliff face dotted with all manner of fossils. This could prove to be the paleontological find of the century. Of course, making any money from this find would require contacts, an expedition, and a sponsor of some kind. If word were to get out about this, the PCs might find themselves shanghaied into an expedition for the British Museum.

Chapter 4: The Chasm of Thloom-Mogh

The Chasm of Thloom-Mogh lies hidden in a shallow valley. The valley is 25 kilometers, or 15 miles, wide and nearly 50 kilometers, or 30 miles, long and would be barely noticeable were it not for the spine-like rock outcroppings that mark its furthest edges. The valley sees little or no traffic under normal circumstances and the border stones are marked with Hill Martian warnings that speak of "Hungry Sands." Igneous rock out-

croppings dot the landscape with the occasional patch of hardy scrub breaking up the monotony. Locating *London Bridge* in this valley seems like a lot of work but there are a number of ways the PCs can find it. Haltia Nunrombo's group have already located the hidden rift and made their way inside.

Firstly, the PCs could simply follow the Skiff Lord's party; Nunrombo hasn't been subtle and her people have left a trail visible for those with any tracking expertise. Waldoon Kokoposp had a good idea that there was a hidden space beneath the desert sands, but his map didn't point this out, for he believes that he could make money from that extra detail. Instead, Waldoon's map leads Haltia Nunrombo and her fellow criminals around to various smaller impact sites. Smart PCs can also figure out the pattern of these sites to determine where the main bulk of the station fell, saving them the effort of tracking Nunrombo as she and her people raced back and forth across the valley.

If the PCs carry compasses (unlikely) or other devices with electromagnetic components, they can use them to triangulate a massive magnetic anomaly. They might suppose this is due to the large metal framework that held the "ship" together but in fact it is the electromagnetic shield over the chasm (see p. 15). Martian technology owned by the PCs might also serve as a crude compass or at the Gamemaster's discretion offer some other strange insights.

The local Hill Martian tribesmen (including Alhoorm if he is with the party) know the area quite well and can give the PCs a rough idea of where to look. In fact, being forced to walk across the "Hungry Sands" is sometimes used to prove innocence among the tribesmen.

It is possible that the PCs simply stumble into the chasm because of the path they follow. This is probably less desirable but is a valid choice. They might also spot a hole in the shield which happens occasionally, usually in response to a weight being placed on it suddenly. Sand and other material is pushed around the shield making strange patterns that are visible when the party is close by. Due to the shifting of the sand, the amount of sand covering the shield varies from less than a millimeter in places to several feet. Gaps in the covering appear and disappear but they are never larger than a few meters.

Finding the shield and puzzling out a way down might take some time. The PCs may figure out that a certain amount of weight triggers a collapse by listening to tales from the natives about caravans disappearing while single men could walk across with ease. A scientist character might figure out a way to deliver an electrical charge to the shield, momentarily disrupting a small section. A sharp blow with a piece of iron might also do the trick. A nice idea giving a pseudo-scientific explanation should be rewarded by the Gamemaster.

Getting down can involve ropes at the edge of the shield, some kind of winch, or floating down using liftwood contraptions or even rocket packs. Alternatively anyone falling through the shield by accident finds themselves carried down surprisingly gently ... apparently there is some sort of energy field surrounding the ledge as well, slowing down the fall like an air bag. If the PCs descend stealthily (that is, without accidentally drifting down) they can meet the Children of the Sand on their own terms, otherwise, they end up surrounded and possibly in a great deal of trouble.

Layout of the Chasm

The chasm runs for about 1.5 kilometers and is almost 1 kilometer wide at its widest point (i.e. 1 x 0.5 miles). The rift has two levels; the ledge and the almost inaccessible depths.

The Ledge

The ledge is where the Children of the Sand have their settlement; this flattened outcropping runs around the entire chasm about 90 meters, or 100 yards, below the shield. The ledge is about 140 meters, or 150 yards, wide with lean-tos and repurposed ruins along the cliff face while fields and open space adjoins the rift down to the depths below. Scaling the cliff face to reach the shield is almost impossible due to the cliff's glassy sides and the erratic and persistent waves of force that push down on those getting close to the top. If the PCs have tied a rope to the top of the chasm they might manage to climb back up but it would be very challenging, akin to scaling a rope with someone else constantly jerking on your shoulders. Without a rope the climb is impossible.

The ledge is dimly lit by sunlight which filters down from above through the thin layer of sand that covers most of the shield. The two most obvious features are the shattered remains of an aerial gunboat and a massive construction that looks like some kind of hoist, which sits at the edge of the cliff (the lift to the bottom of the chasm).

The Children of the Sand (see **Appendix 3**, p. 25) dwell in the ruins away from the dizzying cliff edge with the bulk of the ledge being used for farming lichen and fungus. A sizeable population of bat-like creatures make their home in the chasm walls and the chasm-dwellers hunt them for food, either with slings or traps. Insects and grubs that crawl up from below are an important source of nutrition.

The aerial gunboat wreckage lies close to the edge of the cliff; this is *The Bloody Bess*, Captain Jack McDonald's vessel. The ship has been here since the captain's ship crashed here during a seasonal storm last year. The whole ledge shows signs of recent damage, the most notable being dozens of heavy metal girders scattered like twigs, some of which are buried upright in the ground. A large I-beam neatly impaled *The Bloody Bess* during the fall, ruining Captain McDonald's hopes of repairing his ship. Anyone who has spent any time on Mars recognizes *The Bloody Bess*; there is a substantial reward offered for the captain for his repeated and violent attacks on shipping along the Martian canals.

Before the coming of Captain McDonald the community consisted of just over 200 men, women, and children. Between the Red Captain's brutality and the fall of *London Bridge*, the population has dropped to less than 100 souls, mostly Hill Martians with a scattering of McDonald's human privateer crew. Before the coming of the pirates the Martians practiced a form of ritualized cannibalism on their dead; the pirates didn't like waiting for their meat, however, and started killing anyone who dared to gainsay them.

McDonald (see description and stats in **Appendix 3**, p. 24) controls the only lift to the bottom of the chasm (in reality an oversized bucket for dipping into the pool far below) and after *London Bridge* fell he sent down a party of explorers to find out what was going on. Those men never returned nor have any that he has sent since. McDonald now believes that there is some form of poison gas at the bottom of the chasm or perhaps a monster released by the crashing station. In reality, McDonald's men were killed by the Drone (See **Appendix 3**, p. 24), whose warped brain drives him to kill.

As the PCs arrive, most of the community is clustered around McDonald's ship. Haltia Nunrombo and her apprentices crossed under the shield by accident, their combined weight with their Gashant mounts causing the shield to give way beneath them. This rather obvious entrance caught the attention of McDonald's men (for Pirates' stats see **Appendix 3**, p. 26) and a brief tussle ensued. Haltia's men were killed, as were three of McDonald's. The dead Martians have been stripped and they now hang upside down over large basins where their blood gathers. McDonald and his men are not nice people and cannibalism barely fazes them; after all, it's not like they are eating humans.

McDonald has tied Haltia Nunrombo to a stake and is threatening to cut her throat unless she reveals what she is doing here. The Red Captain hopes that someone will come looking for her or at least that she knows what is going on with *London Bridge*. McDonald is secretly claustrophobic and living down in this pit has driven him to greater insanity and violence. The loss of his partially repaired ship drove him completely over the edge.

The PCs can negotiate with the insane Red Captain and his rather cutthroat crew or choose to attack. McDonald wants out of the chasm and the PCs can use this to their advantage. The captain isn't the most stable of men, however, and is likely to stab them in the back at the first opportunity.

If the PCs choose combat, the Martian tribesmen prove to be surprising allies: they hate the captain and will not fight for him. If the PCs look like they are winning the Martians actively help them. The fall of *London Bridge* weakened the captain's position and killed a great many of his followers. The fight with Haltia killed a few more and now there are only a handful of pirates left. If the PCs choose to fight, you should include enough pirates to give them a decent fight.

If the PCs defeat McDonald, Haltia isn't above begging for her own life. She remains loyal to Miabare but is a woman of her word and values honor so she obeys the letter and spirit of any agreement she makes with the PCs. Lady Edith protests against setting Haltia free and strongly argues against any Martian descending into the depths, claiming that her husband's ship may contain diplomatic documents that shouldn't be seen by non-humans. In reality she doesn't want to risk word of the experiments on *London Bridge* to spread.



Chapter 5: The Depths

The base of the Chasm of Thloom-Mogh lies 180 meters, or 200 yards, below the lip of the ledge above. Called “the depths” by the Children of the Sand, the chasm floor is a smooth glassy mess about 460 meters, or 500 yards, long. In antiquity the cavern walls were repeatedly melted and reworked as the Canal Builders tested their prototype burrowing technology. Why the ancients finally abandoned this site and why they left behind the crystal are questions that may never be answered. A large shallow pool sits at one end of the Chasm, *London Bridge* station occupies most of the cavern’s center, and the crystal glows brightly at the far side.

The Pool

The lift from the ledge deposits the PCs into the center of the waist-deep water at one end of the depths. The pool is cold and quite refreshing after the desert heat. Tiny glowing creatures no bigger than dust motes swim through its depths. The edge of the pool is stained with human and Martian blood. A search of the 9 meter, or 10 yard wide pool reveals that the bottom is covered in a layer of humanoid bones, all gnawed and cracked open. The Drone killed the people that McDonald sent down here and threw their bones into the pool after it had finished feeding.

The PCs can clearly see *London Bridge* station from the pool, its metal superstructure outlined in light from the Cavern Crystal. The red-pink radiance lends a sinister look to the seemingly haphazard arrangement of metal beams.

London Bridge

London Bridge was a dark enterprise; a station built to exploit Mars and its people. The men who worked here were brilliant and disturbed in equal measure. The Drone project was a sick enterprise; the breaking of a free mind through the application of experimental surgery, chemicals, and the worst kind of psychiatric methods. When the Chasm Crystal pulled *London Bridge* from orbit it tore chunks from the station, leaving them to burn up in an uncontrolled descent. The descent into the chasm, while vastly slowed by the ancient technology, was still bone-crushing in its force. No room in the station survived intact, fragments of difference engines, glass beakers, chemical puddles, and other artifacts lie scattered all around the station’s final resting place. A mighty fire spread through *London Bridge* on impact, further gutting it so that only metal and glass remains.

The Drone was imprisoned in a padded cell when the station fell; the tight bonds that prevented it from moving broke on the final impact but at the same time saved its life. Free from its bonds and with its prison cracked open like an egg, the Drone fled to the cool water of the pool while *London Bridge* burned.

The lack of a constant stream of drugs left the Drone highly unstable and prone to terrible rages. The poor creature lacks the ability to speak and its IQ is that of a bright animal. The Drone is animalistic and highly territorial; only an expert in psychology or animal interaction could have a hope of dealing with it without violence. As an added complication the Drone has a deep-seated terror of human males and the mere sight of one is enough to drive it into a homicidal rage.

The PCs need to make a moral decision on what to do with the poor creature; do they leave it to die, kill it themselves to hide the secret of what happened here, or take it with them? Lady Edith favors the latter since she wants to have living proof of



the British experiments. She also insists on exploring the station supposedly “seeking her husband’s body” but in reality looking for any documentation that may have survived. A smart PC quickly notices that Lady Edith isn’t searching any of the burnt skeletons that dot the station but is instead searching footlockers and burst safes.

Exploring the gutted station is a dangerous proposition with sharp twisted metal everywhere. Anyone moving about the snarled superstructure must make a Difficulty 3 *Balance* check (**Space: 1889 Core Rules**, page 149) or suffer a point of damage from the razor-sharp metal. On a *Science (Engineering)*, *Pilot (Ether Flyer)* or similar Skill roll with 4 successes or more, it can be deduced that the wreckage is not the remains of an ether flyer—or at least not a typical model.

The following locations are still somewhat intact within *London Bridge*; the others were smashed almost beyond recognition in the crash:

The Cellblock

The Drone wasn’t the only victim of these scientists; this cellblock once held half a dozen patients including two High Martians, three Hill Martians, and a single Canal Martian (the Drone). The bodies of two warders can be found in the corridor, partially dismembered by the violence of the crash. The warders carry saps, clubs, and revolvers, all still in working order.

The bodies in the cells are in better condition and one cell is empty with its door forced open from the inside. It is obvious that the scientists used chemicals to control their victims; pipes carry knockout gas to the cells and the remaining bodies show signs of countless injections. All of the cells show scratch marks where the prisoners carved the passage of time into the walls. These marks become less frequent and cruder as time progresses. At the Gamemaster’s option one of the prisoners may have

left an important message scrawled on the wall, perhaps a map to a secret that only they knew or a secret that could change the face of Martian politics.

Telescopic Array

The station's second secret lies in this shattered room, for it was in this chamber that members of the secret service catalogued troop movements and tried to map the Boreosyrts League's spice plantations. The advanced optical telescopes, once capable of picking out individual troops on the Martian surface, lie smashed and burnt and the difference engines that encrypted the messages for transmission are little more than scrap with the ashes of punch cards still embedded within. A small door here leads to the photographic development room, the chemicals from which were consumed in the fire, contributing to the devastation.

Hidden in the wreckage is a small safe which is still intact; breaking into the safe requires a Difficulty 4 *Larceny* check (nothing but the best for the Queen's men). The safe contains broken photographic plates of Martian landscapes with detailed documents on troop movements and suspected sites of Bhutan spice plantations. These documents are enough to cause a major diplomatic incident or even trigger a war.

Private Quarters

Somehow one of these well-appointed staterooms survived virtually intact. While there isn't anything of particular interest for those seeking scandal, this private cabin belonged to the station's chief of security and contains a heavy footlocker filled with weapons intended for use in case of a prison break or outside attack. The footlocker is well secured, requiring a Difficulty 3 *Larceny* check to open—though one could always take the key from around the neck of the corpse of the security chief who is lying nearby. The locker contains 4 Lee-Metford rifles, 8 Webley Mk I revolvers, and 12 sticks of dynamite intended to blow up the station's critical points in case of a no-win scenario. It is a testament to the skill of the footlocker maker that the dynamite didn't explode.

Laboratory

This chamber is like something out of a horror movie. Electroshock machines, rack-like examination tables, and cabinets of surgical tools compete for space with broken chemical bottles and scorched texts on psychology and Martian physiology. A trio of burnt and mangled bodies lies scattered around the room; one of them is Lady Edith's husband, identifiable by a smashed pocket watch with the inscription "To my darling Edward, love Edie."

A safe bolted to the bulkhead contains scorched scientific notebooks that detail the grisly experiments conducted here. The safe was warped during the crash and popped open. The notebook writers never speak of their victims in terms of sentient beings; instead they speak of "subjects" or "drones". Driven by their lack of success, the scientists here seem to have gone to further extremes. The PCs must decide what they want to do with these journals; they have the potential to cause a massive upheaval, though they also contain enough information to identify those who ordered the building of *London Bridge* and convict them of high crimes. If members of certain Martian factions were to get hold of the journals and the Drone, many humans on Mars would be in terrible danger.

One small benefit comes from reading the notebooks; the details of Martian physiology provide a +1 bonus to *Medicine* rolls when treating Martian patients. Of course, publishing even the physiology sections of the notes would lead to some serious questions.

Command Center

This chamber was once the beating heart of the station, monitoring communication, altitude, and power for what was essentially a small community in the dark void of space. The great fish-eye glass windows here melted and cracked as the station plummeted into the Martian atmosphere. The metal shutters closed automatically but too late; now the control room is a scorched mess that acts as a final resting place for three unrecognizable corpses. At the Gamemaster's option, some of the controls here might still function in some way and playing with them could cause disaster.

The Drone and London Bridge

The Drone regards *London Bridge* as its exclusive domain but at the same time it is terrified of the place. Characters exploring the fallen station drive the Drone into a killing frenzy but it won't try to enter the station proper, instead focusing its attacks on anyone who waits outside. If the characters all enter the station then the Drone waits for them to emerge before launching a brutal assault. The Drone focuses its attacks on one character at a time, killing him or her before moving on to the next.

If the characters can get the Drone to back off for a moment, perhaps by using a loud noise or flash of light, then a character with the *Diplomacy*, *Empathy*, or *Animal Handling* skill can try to calm the poor tortured soul. Handle this as an Influence roll (**Space: 1889 Core Rules**, page 147) with the initial attitude of Enemy (-2 Penalty). Calming the Drone is one thing, keeping it calm is another; each time the characters encounter a new situation or something that might frighten a wild animal they must calm the Drone once more, requiring a Difficulty 2 *Diplomacy*, *Empathy*, or *Animal Handling* check. If calmed, the Drone follows the characters around in a manner similar to that of a skittish wild animal.

Haltia Nunrombo, if she is with the PCs, attempts to kill the Drone and steal the journals; she has orders from Miabare to recover anything of importance to the British government.

The Crystal

In the darkness at the bottom of Thloom-Mogh lies an ancient secret, an early prototype of one of the lens-like devices used by the Canal Builders to create the canal network. *London Bridge's* fall has destabilized the delicate balance of power within the crystal, setting up a dissonance that will eventually result in the

crystal and the entire chasm detonating in a fiery explosion. The Chasm Crystal appears as a giant pinkish-red lens, pointed at the sky, with a massive iron girder through its heart. The girder is glowing red hot and shedding a bright light. The crystal sits on a circular stone platform and is held in place by a strange metal armature. A control panel operates the armature and controls the crystal in some strange manner.

Previous to *London Bridge's* fall the lens vaporized anyone approaching it; that power is now focused inwards and it is safe to touch. PCs examining the crystal may learn something about the workings of ancient Martian technology since this is a simple prototype rather than a finished piece. Figuring out the basics of how the crystal operates requires a Difficulty 5 *Science (Physics)* or *Engineering* roll. This roll enables the PC to drop the force field above the chasm, causing it to rain sand, and incidentally increasing the deterioration of the crystal lens so that it explodes in a matter of hours. Figuring out that there is something wrong and that the crystal is going to blow up requires a Difficulty 2 *Science (Physics)* or *Engineering* check. Simply fiddling with the control console has no effect; using the crystal requires very complex and precise commands. A second Difficulty 5 *Science (Physics)* or *Engineering* check enables a character to turn the power of the crystal inward on itself, melting the crystal and the controls but preserving the cavern and the community above.

Chapter 6: Getting Out and Aftermath

Once the PCs disable the Chasm Crystal it is a relatively simple matter to return to the ledge and from there to scale the chasm walls to the surface. Without the shield pushing down on a climber the ascent to the surface is merely difficult and not impossible. On returning to the ledge the PCs must figure out what to do about the Children of the Sand; their home is about to be destroyed (unless the PCs managed to turn the crystal's power inward on itself) and the PCs only have hours to evacuate them.

Industrious PCs may wish to get *The Bloody Bess* working again. This is a challenging task but it is possible using some parts from *London Bridge*. A *Craft* check with a Difficulty of 5 can get the vessel airworthy for a few hours. After that time the remaining parts give way and the ship drifts back to the ground. Another, yet less comfortable way, is to tie together some liftwood planks

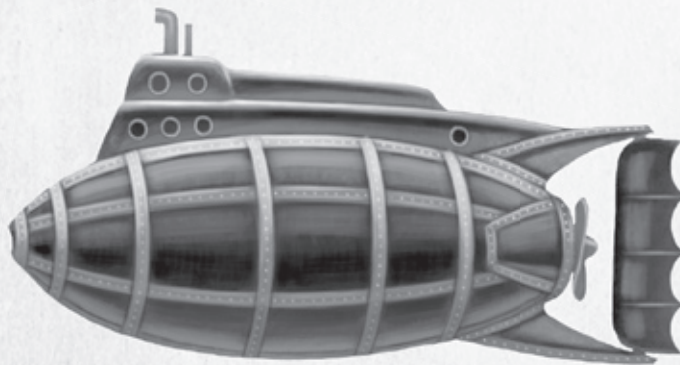
and make them lift a climbing rope to the upper edge of the chasm. The first to climb up can then anchor the rope on the chasm slope to afford the others a secure climb.

After leaving the chasm the PCs may have to deal with the Russian expedition if they haven't already figured out Lady Edith's treachery. If the PCs have McDonald and the Children of the Sand on hand, the fight against the Russians might be a little one-sided (they only have 12 soldiers, see Russian Soldiers in Appendix 3 p. 26 for details). If she is in danger of being captured Lady Edith may take a cyanide capsule or surrender in the belief that she can charm her way out of it later. This decision is left to you as Gamemaster.

If the PCs choose to save the Children of the Sand they must figure out how to get 100 people through the desert to safety. If Alhoorn is with the party he can lead them to secret sources of water, making the journey home a little easier. You can include additional desert encounters from Chapter 3 if you wish (starting p. 11). Some of the Children of the Sand may choose to stay together and form a new tribe, bonded together by their time in the chasm. Others may decide to return to their relatives, opening the way for further adventures if you want the PCs to get involved in the tribal politics of the steppes.

Once the PCs get back to civilization they must decide what they want to do with the information they have found. Depending on who has survived and what they know, some of this might be taken out of their hands. The reward from Lady Edith is unlikely to be forthcoming but the PCs could sell details of some of what they know for quite a bit of money. Of course, finding a buyer for such information could be risky and the characters may be better off hiding what they know and keeping quiet about the whole affair.

If the characters approach the British Embassy about Lady Edith they are met by Arthur Edmonson, coordinator for the secret agents on Mars. Arthur comes across as a really decent person and everyone's favorite uncle but under it all he's both ruthless and a keen judge of character. He assesses the characters' statements and if he thinks they are being truthful and can keep a secret, he offers them twice the payment agreed on by Lady Edith and offers them the possibility of further work for the Crown. If Arthur believes they are untrustworthy, the characters' lives are likely to get very "interesting" in the near future.



Appendix I: Mylarkt

Mylarkt has been an active trading hub since the early days of the Canal Builders. Once the nexus of three canals, the old Al-cyon canal is long-since dried up and the remaining canals, particularly the one to Meroe, are falling apart. The city is one of the oldest on the planet and is showing its age quite badly. Most of the buildings here are in terrible condition and the local Skiff Lords, as the locals call their ruling class, have little interest in preserving or repairing these structures. The population of Mylarkt runs to about 150,000 Canal Martians with a few hundred humans and other Martian sub-races.

The city once had a single Canal Prince, *Prince Fohshoon*, but half a millennia ago he and his successors died in the disaster that turned the royal compound and its surrounding towers into the Hand of Fohshoon. A succession war erupted almost immediately with a dozen families claiming the city as their own. The family heads, each claiming the title of Skiff Lord (a kind of regent), spent decades exhausting or destroying resources until they finally reached a stalemate. The remaining five Skiff Lords of Mylarkt have been locked in a cold war for succession for over five centuries.

The Skiff Lords' neglect has resulted in city politics deteriorating to the point where most of the lords are little more than crime bosses. The former noble assassin guilds and grand armies have become a ramshackle collection of gangs while the once proud plazas and towers are left to rot. This cold war is one of the reasons why the British or Germans didn't simply conquer Mylarkt; the city infrastructure was barely worth holding and the Skiff Lords were so corrupt that no government lasted more than a handful of days. The current Skiff Lords are *Doshoor Miabare*, *Astagos Quuglaani*, *Iteeny Priblimnu*, *Soofnam Mumdut*, and *Zeefram Norobiz*. Each one heads a family which includes both criminal elements and blood-relatives.

Mylarkt is constantly covered in smoke. While this miasma offers some relief from the direct rays of the sun, it fosters all manner of chest troubles in those not used to it. Humans are very susceptible and being sent to Mylarkt is considered a punishment by soldiers and diplomats alike. The last two British envoys sent to the Skiff Lords died of chest infections so their embassy here is run by a group of very demotivated administrators. Nobody willingly lives in the higher levels of Mylarkt's towers due to the shroud of toxic fumes.

The acrid smoke issues from massive underground vents, cracks in the ancient foundations of the city that lead to the Lord knows where. Rumors say that the narrow chasms run down to a continually burning fire in the city's ancient waste disposal facilities. Those venturing down into the vents are quickly overcome by noxious fumes. Before the succession wars drained their coffers the Skiff Lords would pay vast sums to cover up the cracks but this hasn't happened in centuries.

A recent expedition by the British Corps of Royal Engineers—sponsored in part by the Skiff Lords—mapped the state of Mylarkt's deterioration, hoping both to gain insight into the construction of Martian cities and to see if one of their nearest neighbors were going to suddenly explode. The report was sealed by orders from the Home Office and some whisper that the document only gave Mylarkt a year or less to live. More sober voices note that the city has stood for countless centuries and is unlikely to simply detonate overnight.

Mylarkt's marketplaces are a clearing house for illegal goods, stolen items, and objects smuggled from around the solar system. If you want something illegal you can probably find a trader willing to sell it to you. For this reason agents of the various Earth governments flock to the city seeking lost Martian technology, spices, and the most valuable resource of all, information. In recent years there has been a marked increase in Bhutan spice smuggling due to the British monopoly which has forced the traditional traders to seek alternate suppliers.

There are four major marketplaces in Mylarkt, each one operated by a different Skiff Lord; the Priblimnu family does not operate a marketplace, being the only Skiff Lords to have clung to the older notions of lordship. These marketplaces are shady locations, covered in vast awnings that make them darker still. More than one Earthwoman has found herself stolen away to become part of some distant Martian harem while innocently browsing the stalls and shops.

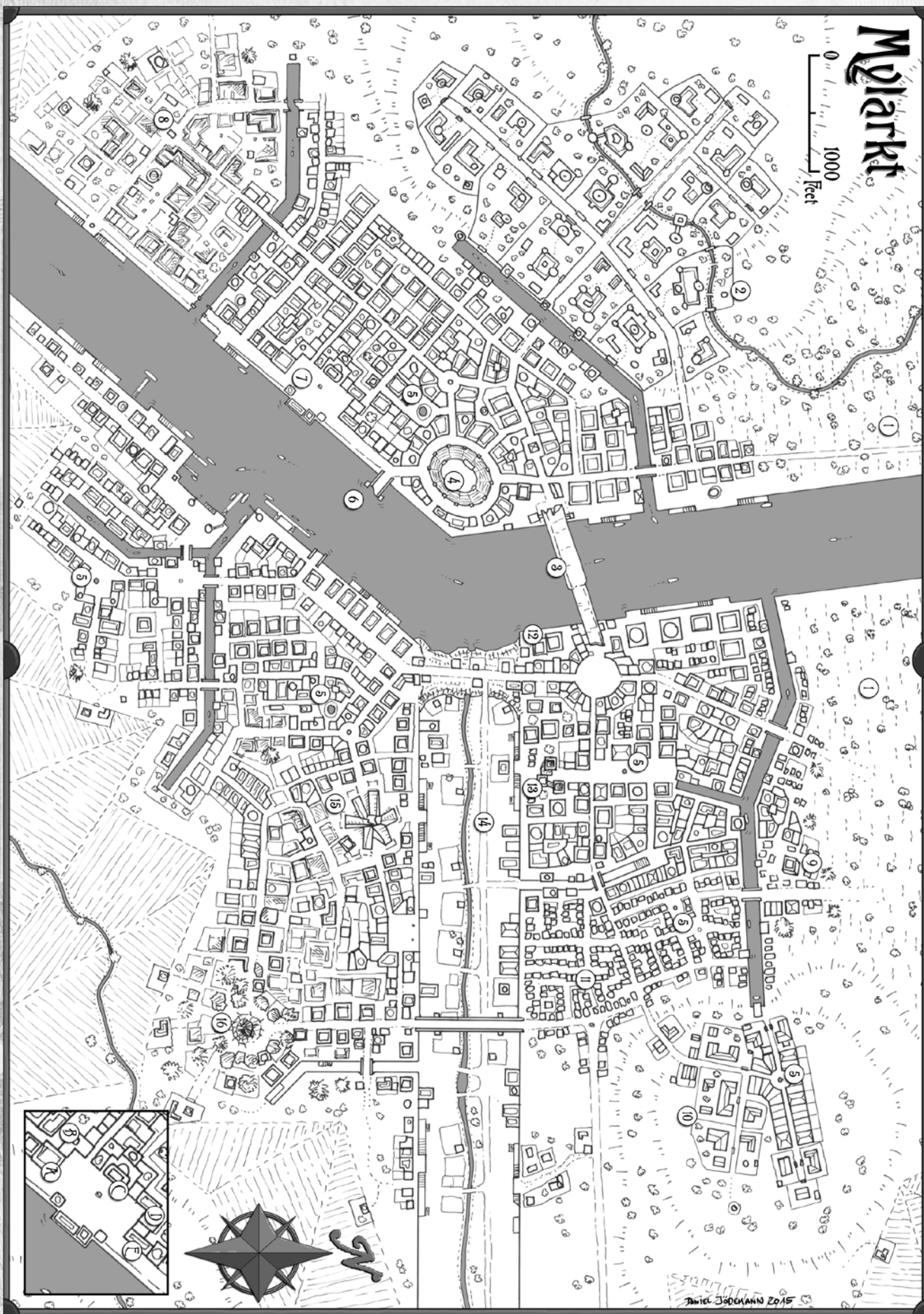
Culture

Little thrives in the way of culture in Mylarkt, but the city folk do pride themselves on being part of one of the oldest cities on the planet. They claim to be descended from the "first builder" and statues of this faceless Canal Martian are one of the few common decorations in the city beyond gang signs. Each statue bears a distinctive carved mask and these statues often are the only landmarks in the otherwise chaotic city layout.

The Mylarkti, as the locals call themselves, are noted for wearing masks that cover their noses, mouths, and lower jaw. These masks serve to denote status, loyalty to a Skiff Lord, profession, and even the city district the wearer comes from. The masks also serve to filter out the noxious fumes common throughout the city; to not wear one marks you immediately as an outsider. Some Canal Martians place bags of sweet smelling herbs inside their masks; others put narcotics and spend their lives in a mild drug-fueled daze. To remove someone else's mask is considered a mark of intimacy between lovers or family members; for anyone else it is a terrible insult.

Large lizard-like creatures called Penukhit are commonly kept as pets and guard animals. The stubby-tailed lizards are about 30 cm or 1 foot in length and bond strongly with their owners. Mylarkti believe that owning a Penukhit is a sign of an even-tempered person since the creatures quickly abandon abusive owners. Penukhit belch a concentrated form of oxygen leading to street performers using them in "fire belching" acts.

The citizens of Mylarkt have less reverence for the past and less interest in record keeping than more traditional Martian city-states. The only records which are kept under lock and key are those proving the various claims to succession by the Skiff Lords. These records are prime targets for thieves and are the subjected to regular burglary attempts. The Mylarkti disinterest in the past means that the city is the primary source of many of the genuine Martian artifacts and texts that find their way onto the black market. More traditional Mylarkti citizens claim that Mylarkt is selling its past at the expense of its future.



Mylarkt-Key

- 1 The Sludge
- 2 Painted Quarter
- 3 Priblimnu's Crossing
- 4 Blood Pit
- 5 Water Holes
- 6 Collapsed Bridge
- 7 Miabare Market
- 8 Koning's Station
- 9 The Weeping Tower
- 10 Embassy Quarter
- 11 The Scourings
- 12 Memory Market
- 13 The Scorched Archive
- 14 Old Aldyon Way
- 15 Hand of Fohshoon
- 16 Fireworm Point
- A Anatato's Elixirs
- B Miabare's Townhouse
- C Nine Briars Emporium
- D Mylarkt Armory
- E The Explorer

Key Locations

The Hand of Fohshoon (15)

When a sinkhole opened up between several towers the massive edifices collapsed inward simultaneously. The towers propped each other up and now form a tent-like shape on the skyline. Black smoke pours from the cracks in the ground beneath the towers. The Hand of Fohshoon—known to the locals as “the Hand”—is home to the worst of the worst criminals and the poorest of the poor. Only the Scourings comes close to the Hand for desperate people.

In recent years the district has been plagued by a vicious killer dubbed “Fohshoon’s Wraith” by the locals. The killer dismembers his victims leaving their arms and legs carefully arranged in public places. No heads or torsos have even been found, making identification difficult. Since the killer only preys on the poor, the Skiff Lords have ignored the issue; this may prove to be a mistake as some locals believe that the wraith might be a Skiff Lord or one of his children in disguise. Terrified residents of the Hand have flooded into the neighboring districts causing tensions and even a small riot.

Miabare Market (7)

A vibrant marketplace marked by a massive statue of the “first builder” holding a glass lens in his hands. The market adjoins

the canal and traders sell directly from barges and riverboats pulled up alongside the market. The boat traders have an undeserved reputation for shady dealing, with locals claiming that they “sell and float away” before you realize you’ve been duped.

In reality, the boat traders mostly operate in an aboveboard manner, especially when compared to the land-based stalls. As the name, suggests the market operates under the patronage of Skiff Lord Doshoor Miabare. The crime lord forbids all illicit trade in Bhutan spice in the market on pain of death. Nobody seems to know the reason for this strange exception to Mylarkt’s otherwise “anything goes” approach to trade.

Notable stalls and shops include:

- **Anatato’s Elixirs (A)** A dusty and spacious shop that sells all manner of chemicals, powders, balms, and tonics. Whether you are looking for a remedy to baldness, a poison for a rival suitor, or something to put on a sun burn, Anatato’s has it. The shop is a family business run by four siblings who between them know a staggering amount about medicine and chemistry.
- **The Mylarkt Armory (D)** weapons shop run out of a former series of residential units which the current occupant has joined by knocking doorways through internal walls. The design gives the impression of a poorly lit labyrinth. Weapons are everywhere, mounted on the walls, stacked in barrels, hanging from the roof, and behind glass-fronted cabinets. Truly heavy weaponry and explosives are conspicuously absent; though it is rumored that these can be purchased for the right price. The owner of this establishment is Forixi; an elderly Canal Martian with only one hand. Forixi is a collector of human military memorabilia and has been known to exchange weapons for a rare uniform, medal, or flag.
- **The Explorer (E)** This open-fronted building has been painted to resemble a Martian wasteland. The Explorer caters to those outfitting expeditions into the wilderness. The shop has everything you could need for a long desert trip, from rope and packs to clothing, rations, and even Gashants (not kept on site). The owner, Oestios, is a Hill Martian who gets most of his gear from the local tribes. He emphasizes that his gear is “the very same as used by the Riders of the Nepenthes-Thoth.” Oestios also sells pamphlets with survival advice for the desert.

Priblimnu’s Crossing (3)

Another fallen tower, this one seized by the Priblimnu family over 300 years ago. The tower collapsed intact and lies across the canal at a height of over 20 meters, or 65 feet, above the water level. The tower is the last remaining means of crossing the canal following the destruction of the only other bridge during the “Battle of Mylarkt” (see Core Rules, p. 23) when stray British cannon fire blew out a crucial support strut. The Priblimnu family makes a decent living charging a premium for use of the bridge. An attempt to tax canal trade two centuries ago almost destroyed the Priblimnu family and now they wisely choose only to tax foot traffic. Most of the ferrymen operating in Mylarkt pay a regular tribute to the Priblimnu. The bridge has two rope bridges for foot traffic and two associated ferries complete with Gashants to pull them across the canal.

A few of the Skiff Lords worry that Priblimnu’s Crossing will one day collapse into the canal, blocking it entirely. In true Canal Martian fashion the Skiff Lords try not to let the concerns of the future weigh too much on the present.

The interior of Priblimnu's Crossing is a confusing mess with former walls now turned into floors and ceilings. Gaps in the interior have been bridged with wooden construction or rope bridges. The lower sections of the tower are dark and used for storage or prison cells.

The Undercity

Mylarkt's tunnel networks are extensive and more than a little confusing. Old transport tunnels, steam chambers, sewage pipes, natural fissures, and storage bunkers all war for space beneath the city. Toxic gasses are common and packs of roaming roogies and swarms of durge flies make moving through the tunnels a dangerous proposition. Rumor has it that tunnels extend far beyond the city, part of an underground irrigation network abandoned long ago when Mars's drying accelerated.

The tunnels under Mylarkt don't follow the same geometric pattern found in other Martian cities, pointing to their great antiquity. Rumors of lost troves and ancient technology drive masses of treasure hunters into the labyrinth each year; most never return. A gang calling themselves the Tunnel Runners operates out of the tunnels and makes a reasonable living as messengers, smugglers, and guides.

The Tunnel Runners have a secret; they have access to one of Mylarkt's still functioning but long-lost mass transit system trains. The gas-powered train allows the Tunnel Runners to move quickly and quietly between the city districts. The trains have slowed in recent years and the Tunnel Runners blame the work carried out by Arnout Koning (see *Koning's Station*, p. 21). It is only a matter of time before they decide to take action against him to prevent him from removing their "competitive edge." In reality it is the Burning Men that have caused the slowing (see *Fireworm Point and the Burning Men*, p. 21).

The Sludge (1)

The Sludge is an oddity on Mars; a patch of swampland that covers an eighth of the farmland at the edge of the city. The sludge is the result of poorly maintained water pipes and a malfunctioning sewage system. The entire area was farmland less than two centuries ago but now is a toxic wasteland. The Skiff Lords encourage rumors of monsters, mutated animals, and swamp-dwelling misfits while using the swamp to dump objects and people they want to forget. A few years ago a French scientist called Hector DuPont was lost in the swamp while following a map he found purporting to lead to a lost Martian archive.

The Embassy Quarter (10)

Home to the British, Belgian, and German embassies, this quarter is home to most of the humans living in the city. This enclave has a lower crime rate than most of the rest of the city due to the hefty protection fees paid to the Skiff Lords. The British embassy is a desolate place, lacking an ambassador following the death of the previous one a year ago. The staff here divides its time between plotting against the Belgian embassy and trying to figure a way of getting reassigned to somewhere else.

The Belgian embassy is little more than a front for smuggling of Bhutan spice and tension between the Belgians and the British occasionally breaks out into violence. The Belgian ambassador, Fredrik Deforest, is the only diplomat in Mylarkt not being punished by his posting. Deforest believes correctly that securing a

stable supply of Bhutan spice will earn him a high position in the Belgian government. The ambassador has a significant gambling problem, however, and owes quite a lot of money to Skiff Lord Soofnam Mumdut. It is only a matter of time before the Belgian government realizes that the massive sums of money they are pumping into their smuggling operation are not producing the desired effect.

The German Ambassador, an aging aristocrat called Alexander Althaus, ended up with this post due to his wife Ingeborg's actions as an outspoken member of the ADF (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* or General German Women's Association). Althaus was secretly delighted with the posting due to his "interest" in Martian women. Ingeborg has no idea what the ambassador is up to in his free time, being much more interested in her letter-writing campaigns and her friendship with *Iteeny Priblimnu*, matriarch of the Priblimnu family, who displays a keen interest in the role of women in Earth cultures.

The Painted Quarter (2)

The most affluent district in Mylarkt is home to gang leaders, the remnants of the city's ruling class, and wealthy traders. The area gets its name from the strange and colorful geometric patterns that randomly appear and vanish on the towers and buildings here. The Martians have never investigated the origins of the beautiful patterns and the few human scientists and art lovers that took the time to view them left confounded. Street crime is almost unheard of here, with the few desperate perpetrators ending up beaten to death by Skiff Lord enforcers and dumped in the Sludge or at Fireworm Point (see p. 21).

The Painted Quarter lacks the large towers common to early Martian construction and is instead divided into a series of walled estates. A single winding watercourse runs through the entire quarter, known as the Blue River because of the blue tiles that line it and which glow softly at night. The river is perhaps the best source of clean water in the city though less than one percent of the population has access to it.

The Blood Pit (4)

This bowl-shaped amphitheater once played host to grand operas and theatrical displays. Today the pit is a crude arena where criminals and the desperate fight to the death. The only nod to the building's past is the ritualized nature of the combat and the "play-bouts" where the fighters serve as part of a story or play. Human spectators are not uncommon here and gambling is fierce. The Blood Pit is under the control of the Norobiz family which gets a percentage of tickets and anything sold or wagered in the arena. Being sentenced to be a gladiator is the highest punishment that the city gives out. The current champion of the arena is Conril Duufaii, a High Martian who believes that he can use his popularity to spread his beliefs in the Cult of the Worm.

A whole industry surrounds the capture of new gladiators and monsters for the games held here. Mylarkt's Skiff Lords constantly try to out-do each other with new and horrific monsters found in the depths of the desert. Anyone finding a truly unique and horrifying creature is likely to earn a pretty penny. No human has competed in the games yet but it is only a matter of time until someone angers the Skiff Lords enough to get sentenced to the games.

The Water Holes (5)

Clean, unpolluted water is a rarity in Mylarkt. Whereas most cities on Mars have running water in every home, in Mylarkt only a few select areas have water that can be drunk or used for washing without treatment. All city districts with the exception of the Painted Quarter rely on central pump houses for their clean water. These “water holes” have become the beating heart of the city where people gather to talk politics, complain about the toxic clouds, and exchange information. Agents of merchants, the Skiff Lords, and anyone who wants to communicate to the masses use the walls of these pump houses as giant notice boards. Paint stains every inch of the ancient plaster, advertising everything from cheap brothels and bargain furniture to job placements and public meetings. The graffiti changes so frequently that the locals joke that the walls are now 90% paint and 10% plaster.

You can hire professional graffiti artists, called paint scribes by the locals, to create eye-catching displays. These paint scribes are loosely organized into guild-like gangs and don’t take well to those who defile their “spots.”

The Old Alclylon Way (14)

Once a grand canal ran between Alclylon and Mylarkt but this dried up some time in antiquity. Today the old canal bed serves as a road for merchants who still want to continue trade with Alclylon. The city merchants use the Old Alclylon Way, as the canal bed inside the city is known, for storing caravans and stock. Merchants also handle recruitment for drovers and other necessary caravan personnel in this district. Livestock pens and warehouses litter the sides of the canal and a small river runs through its heart. Astagos Quuglaani and his family own most of the land surrounding the Alclylon Way and are known to be involved in extortion and protection rackets.

Prostitution and drug use are more common here than anywhere else in the city as the gangs cater to the needs of the caravans. The murder rate is surprisingly low but violent crime is quite high. If one wishes to be beaten up and robbed while surviving the event, this is the place to come to.

Fireworm Point (16) and the Burning Men

At the farthest edge of Mylarkt, surrounded by the rubble of a dozen collapsed towers, lies the great sinkhole the locals call Fireworm Point. The pit continually belches great clouds of smoke and tongues of green flame. The Mylarkti use the pit for disposing of objects that the normal waste facilities can’t handle. The city waste collectors’ guild, known as the Burning Men for their many obvious burns, tip plagued bodies, hazardous material, and miscellaneous garbage into the sinkhole. More than one murder victim has found his final rest in the viridian flames.

The Burning Men have a great secret that few suspect: they are in fact a splinter faction of the Cult of the Worm. The burns the cultists display proudly are not accidental but are in fact a form of ritual scarification. The cult believes that a great burning worm dwells beneath Mylarkt and that only by destroying the city can it be finally freed from its millennia-long imprisonment. Of course, finding a means to totally destroy the city is no easy matter but the cult’s members trawl the undercity seeking

out lost chambers that might hold the key to Mylarkt’s demise. The cult has over a hundred devotees who scour the city for sacrifices; not all the “corpses” the Burning Men dispose of are actually dead.

A few of the city movers and shakers suspect that the Burning Men are more than a simple guild but the cult knows where “the bodies are buried”, figuratively speaking, and moving against them would be unwise. The leader of the Burning Men is a mysterious figure known only as The Pure One; his body is said to be a mass of burnt scar tissue.

Koning’s Station (8)

Arnout Koning is the young heir to a Dutch shipping company who possesses a burning interest in ancient Martian technology. Arnout sought and was granted permission—after parting with a large sum of money—to excavate a collapsed mass transit station in a mostly abandoned district. For the last two years Koning has dug deep into Mylarkt’s infrastructure seeking the secrets of the ancients. While he has learned much, Koning has yet to uncover the secrets of Martian crystal technology; something he believes will gain him figurative immortality akin to that of Edison, Da Vinci, or Archimedes.

Koning has set up a small museum just outside his dig site and charges a nominal fee for those interested in the “wonders of Mylarkt.” The museum has proved popular much to Koning’s surprise and human scientists travel from Mars and beyond to examine the artifacts and listen to Arnout’s theories. The museum has occasionally been the site of protests from more traditional Martians unhappy with Arnout profiting from their ancestors and “defiling” their past.

Koning resembles the popular image of a hands-on scientist: an unkempt appearance, dirt-stained hands, and a slightly distracted look. Arnout is popular with his diggers as he is a fair taskmaster and has taken the time to learn the Martian tongues and customs. In addition, Koning’s enthusiasm is infectious and if you let him speak he’s likely to carry you into his dreams of crystal power plants and a green Martian landscape.

The Scorched Archive (13)

This vast library began life like many other archives found in Martian cities across the planet. Mylarkt’s grand archive once covered three interlinked towers. A few centuries ago a massive fire ripped through the archive destroying or damaging some of the best records of ancient Martian life. Today the archive takes up but two stories in one of the three interlinked towers. A shadow of its former glory, the collection contains only a few rare pieces that don’t show fire damage.

Interestingly enough, the “culling by fire” revealed a number of lost records in metal and crystal. Most of these records cannot be read without Herculean efforts and access to the appropriate technology (a quest worthy of the greatest explorers). The librarians of the Scorched Archive are hardly worthy of the name and are closer to prison guards, preventing anyone from removing records and thereby further compounding the losses. Someone would have to gain the permission of all the Skiff Lords to access the collection, though that same person might just as easily bribe a dishonest archivist to arrange a “private viewing.” In either case such a person would never be allowed to remove a text from the collection.

Appendix 2: Lady Edith's Letter

*Lady Edith Tillington,
Care of the British Embassy,
The Embassy Quarter,
Mylarkt,
Mars.*

Sir/Madame,

You may wonder what strange quirk of fate has brought this letter to your hand. Please understand that it is not random chance but instead your previous conduct as an honourable and capable individual which has carried this missive to your care.

But I get ahead of myself; I am Lady Edith Tillington, wife of the eminent alienist Lord Edward Tillington. You may already be aware of my husband's recent disappearance and it is on this matter that I wish to converse with you. I cannot say more in open correspondence so I would presume upon your goodwill and honour to ask you to visit me in the city of Mylarkt on Mars. I have included first-class tickets from your location to Mylarkt in the hope you will take me up on this offer. You may contact me via the British Embassy on your arrival.

Should you choose to hear my request—with no further obligation—you will be provided with suitable reimbursement for your time and inconvenience. If you are moved by my plight and agree to help me in this matter we can discuss further payments.

I remain, yours truly,

Lady Edith Tillington

Appendix 3: Dramatis Personae

Lady Edith Tillington

Lady Edith Tillington is strong, smart, and beautiful; a combination that makes her one of the most dangerous spies in the solar system. Her early life is a mystery and nobody truly knows where she comes from. She was recruited by the British Home Office over a decade ago and has spent most of that time cutting her way through high society across Earth and Mars. She is one of the most sought-after dinner guests in the solar system. No mission is too dangerous for Lady Edith and while her husband gives her a veneer of respectability, few have ever met Lord Tillington. Nobody at the Home Office realizes that Lady Edith is actually a Russian double-agent or that she's about to steal one of their greatest secrets.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 2	Dexterity: 4		Strength: 1	
Charisma: 4	Intelligence: 3		Willpower: 4	
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0	Move: 5		Perception: 7	
Initiative: 7	Defense: 6		Stun: 2	
Health: 6				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Bureaucracy	3	1	4	(2)
Con	4	4	8	(4)
Diplomacy	4	3	7	(3+)
Empathy	3	2	5	(2+)
Firearms	4	2	6	(3)
Investigation	3	1	4	(2)
Larceny	4	4	8	(4)
Linguistics	3	1	4	(2)
Performance	4	2	6	(3)
Stealth	4	4	8	(4)
Streetwise	4	3	7	(3+)
Survival	3	1	4	(2)
Talents				
Attractive, Lucky				
Equipment				
Seemingly unlimited amounts of currency, flare gun				
Languages				
English (mother tongue), Russian, Parhooni				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Derringer	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Pocket Revolver	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L

Haltia Nunrombo

Haltia comes from an ancient tradition of assassins known as the Nur-Thet. In the early days of Mylarkt this house of noble assassins were feared and respected over all of Mars. Those days are long since passed and now Haltia is the last member of her order, the others dead from centuries of internal conflict borne out of Mylarkt's own political strife. Haltia serves Skiff Lord Miabare because he has promised to provide her with the resources to resurrect her order. She doesn't really believe the Skiff Lord's promises but doesn't see any other way forward. Haltia is slightly fatalistic and possesses a grim demeanor at best. The assassin scorns weapons for close-in combat, preferring instead the deadly martial art techniques of her sect.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 4		Dexterity: 4	Strength: 4	
Charisma: 2		Intelligence: 2	Willpower: 2	
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Move: 8	Perception: 4	
Initiative: 6		Defense: 8	Stun: 4	
Health: 6				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Acrobatics	4	2	6	(3)
Athletics	4	5	9	(4+)
Brawl	4	5	9	(4+)
Con	2	2	4	(2)
Intimidation	2	4	6	(3)
Melee	4	2	6	(3)
Ride	4	2	6	(3)
Stealth	4	4	8	(4)
Survival	2	2	4	(2)
Streetwise	2	2	4	(2)
Talents				
Knockout Blow 2, Lethal Blow 2				
Equipment				
Robes over tight-fitting clothing, key to a hidden cache around her neck				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	9 N	(3+) N
Throwing Knife	1 L	0	7 L	(3+) L

Waldoon Kokoposp

Waldoon grew up on a tiny farm at the edge of Mylarkt but spent a great deal of his younger days hunting and gathering to supplement his father's rather poor crop. When his father lost the farm to his debtors, Waldoon and his younger brother Kahol were forced to spend more and more time scavenging the surrounding desert for objects to sell. Years later, Waldoon is now a moderately successful scavenger and guide, sought after for his intimate knowledge of the Riders of thev Nepenthes-Thoth.

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Dexterity:** 4 **Strength:** 3
Charisma: 2 **Intelligence:** 2 **Willpower:** 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move:** 7 **Perception:** 4
Initiative: 6 **Defense:** 7 **Stun:** 3
Health: 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Animal Handling	2	2	4	(2)
Archery	4	3	7	(3+)
Athletics	3	2	5	(2+)
Brawl	3	3	6	(3)
Diplomacy	2	2	4	(2)
Ride	4	4	8	(4)
Stealth	4	3	7	(3+)
Survival	2	4	6	(3)

Talents

Direction Sense

Equipment

Desert clothing, amulet marking him as a friend to the desert tribes

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bow	2 L	0	9 L	(4+) L
Punch	0 N	0	6 N	(3) N

Jack McDonald

Captain Jack McDonald is a beast of a man, covered in thick black hair and never speaking unless it is to roar. McDonald's upbringing in Liverpool was rough but it produced a man who sailed the seas with the Royal Navy for ten years before heading to Mars and taking up a command there. Jack is smart and ruthless, a combination that made him a hit with colonial governors back on Earth. These qualities got him into trouble on Mars though, and after killing the son of a major Canal Martian lord Jack found himself on the run with his crew. The captain spent the last three years attacking shipping along the canals of Mars using his stolen (Aphid class) Aerial Gunboat to wreak havoc.

Primary Attributes

Body: 2 **Dexterity:** 3 **Strength:** 3
Charisma: 3 **Intelligence:** 3 **Willpower:** 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move:** 6 **Perception:** 7
Initiative: 6 **Defense:** 5 **Stun:** 2
Health: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Acrobatics	3	3	6	(3)
Firearms	3	3	6	(3)
Gunnery	3	3	6	(3)
Intimidation	3	4	7	(3+)
Melee	3	4	7	(3+)
Pilot (Air ships)	3	5	8	(4)

Talents

Quick Draw, Fearsome 2

Flaws

Claustrophobic

Equipment

Navigation instruments, old British naval uniform, expensive pocket watch

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Cutlass	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
Pistol	2 L	0	8 L	(4) L

The Drone

The Drone is a horrific sight, with scarring all over its body from surgeries and torture sessions. It was once a male Canal Martian of impressive physique. Now the Drone's muscles are powered by a primal will to live, coupled with a deep-seated terror of male humans. The Drone's skull in particular shows layer upon layer of scarring with small brass plates screwed on for easy access to its brain. The Drone has been systematically abused for months and while it can no longer talk, it has a basic understanding of speech. Its intelligence is rudimentary and animalistic at best, the surgeons having cut deeply into its brain.

Primary Attributes

Body: 5 **Dexterity:** 2 **Strength:** 5
Charisma: 1 **Intelligence:** 1 **Willpower:** 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Move:** 7 **Perception:** 4
Initiative: 3 **Defense:** 7 **Stun:** 5
Health: 10

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	5	2	7	(3+)
Brawl	5	4	9	(4+)
Stealth	2	3	5	(2+)

Talents

High Pain Tolerance, Robust

Equipment

Ragged pair of trousers, perhaps some identifying tattoos

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	9	(4+) N

Apprentice Assassins

Haltia Nunrombo has a cadre of assassins-in-training who have pledged their life to her in exchange for training in the ancient techniques and traditions of the Nur-Thet assassins. Each would-be assassin is already a skilled warrior and they have a reputation for swift retribution in Mylarkt.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 3	Dexterity: 3	Strength: 3		
Charisma: 2	Intelligence: 2	Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0	Move: 6	Perception: 5		
Initiative: 5	Defense: 6	Stun: 3		
Health: 6				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Acrobatics	3	2	5	(2+)
Athletics	3	4	7	(3+)
Brawl	3	4	7	(3+)
Intimidation	2	2	4	(2)
Melee	3	4	7	(3+)
Stealth	3	3	6	(3)
Streetwise	2	2	4	(2)
Talents				
Dual Wield				

Equipment				
Dark robes, copy of ancient book of Nur-Thet rituals				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Dagger	1 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Punch	0 N	0	7 N	(3+) N
Throwing Knife	1 L	0	8 L	(4) L
Short Sword	2 L	0	9 L	(4) L

Riders of the Nepenthes-Thoth

These Hill Martians belong to an old and proud tribal culture. They have just seen half their group murdered by a group of Canal Martians and seethe with righteous fury. If helping the PCs results in pain for the Canal Martians then the Riders are more than willing to lend assistance.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 3	Dexterity: 4	Strength: 3		
Charisma: 2	Intelligence: 2	Willpower: 2		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0	Move: 7	Perception: 6		
Initiative: 6	Defense: 7	Stun: 3		
Health: 5				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Acrobatics	4	3	7	(3+)
Animal Handling	2	2	4	(2)
Archery	4	3	7	(3+)
Athletics	3	2	5	(2+)

Brawl	3	3	6	(3)
Melee	3	4	7	(3+)
Ride	4	6	10	(5)
Stealth	4	3	7	(3+)
Survival	2	3	5	(2+)

Talents

Alertness, Combat Aptitude

Equipment

Gashant, bridle, tent, jewelry

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Lance	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
Bow	2 L	0	9 L	(4+) L
Sword	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
Punch	0 N	0	6 N	(3) N

Children of the Sand

The Children of the Sand are a tribe formed from those unlucky enough to become trapped beneath the shifting desert. The tribe did whatever it could to survive, growing fungus and other plants in the limited light afforded by the intermittent sunshine filtering through the sandy vault, and hunting small animals with slings and traps.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 2	Dexterity: 3	Strength: 2		
Charisma: 2	Intelligence: 2	Willpower: 2		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0	Move: 6	Perception: 6		
Initiative: 6	Defense: 6	Stun: 2		
Health: 5				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	3	3	6	(3)
Athletics	2	2	4	(2)
Brawl	2	3	5	(2+)
Melee	2	3	5	(2+)
Stealth	3	3	6	(3)
Survival	2	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness

Equipment

Primitive tools and weapons made of what they could get hold of

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	5 N	(2+) N
Sling	1 N	0	7	(3+)
Stone Dagger	1 L	0	6 L	(3) L

Pirates

The crew of *The Bloody Bess* are deserters and criminals whose tastes run to bloodshed, violence, and wholesale slaughter. Six months cooped up in a small community has driven an already unstable crew to new depths of depravity.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 2		Dexterity: 3		Strength: 3
Charisma: 1		Intelligence: 2		Willpower: 2
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Move: 6		Perception: 6
Initiative: 5		Defense: 5		Stun: 2
Health: 4				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	2	5	(2+)
Firearms	3	2	5	(2+)
Melee	3	3	6	(3)
Intimidation	1	4	5	(2+)
Survival	2	4	6	(3)
Streetwise	1	3	4	(2)
Talents				
Alertness				
Equipment				
Ragged clothes, handful of stolen trinkets				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Cutlass	3 L	0	9 L	(4+) L
Punch	0 N	0	5 N	(2+) N
Pistol	2 L	0	7 L	(3+) L

Thugs

These Canal Martian street thugs are loyal only to power and wealth. They work for the Skiff Lords because there is nobody more terrifying in Mylarkt.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 3		Dexterity: 2	Strength: 3	
Charisma: 1		Intelligence: 2	Willpower: 2	
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Move: 5	Perception: 4	
Initiative: 4		Defense: 5	Stun: 3	
Health: 5				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	4	7	(3+)
Melee	3	3	6	(3)
Intimidation	1	4	5	(2+)
Streetwise	1	3	4	(2)
Talents				
None				
Equipment				
Blackjack, Mylarkt mask, handful of coins				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	7 N	(3+) N
Blackjack	2 N	0	8 N	(4) N

Russian Soldiers

These men have spent the last three weeks trailing the PCs across a trackless wilderness. They are angry, tired, and really want to return to the airship they have waiting at the desert edge.

Primary Attributes				
Body: 2		Dexterity: 3	Strength: 2	
Charisma: 1		Intelligence: 2	Willpower: 2	
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Move: 5	Perception: 4	
Initiative: 5		Defense: 5	Stun: 2	
Health: 4				
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	1	3	(1+)
Firearms	3	3	6	(3)
Melee	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	2	2	4	(2)
Talents				
None				
Equipment				
Uniform, miscellaneous survival gear, home-made alcohol				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Knife	1 L	0	5 L	(2+) L
Punch	0 N	0	3 N	(1+) N
Military Rifle	3 L	0	9 L	(4+) L



Appendix 4: New Martian Flora and Fauna

Vacuum Scorpion

The Martian wilds play host to all manner of forgotten species as this dangerous creature shows. The Vacuum Scorpion is human-sized, with a scorpion-like carapace and tail and a pair of shovel-like limbs that it uses for digging and to pull itself along. The creature is an ambush predator; covering itself in sand and waiting for an unsuspecting victim to walk by. The creature's stinger does not inject poison, instead it forms a vacuum seal on any injury it inflicts and then internal bladders draw out moisture from its victim. The attack can drain the blood from a human in a matter of moments. The only way to break the seal is to kill the creature.

The Vacuum Scorpion is a slow-mover (resembling a walrus in its manner of movement) and rarely pursues its prey if the initial attack misses. The creature lacks a discernible head or mouth and senses the world through a vibration-detecting gland. The creature is a strange case, an evolutionary dead-end left over from a time when Mars still had oceans.

Animal Companion 2

Archetype: Animal **Health:** 8

Primary Attributes

Body: 4 **Charisma:** 0
Dexterity: 3 **Intelligence:** 0
Strength: 4 **Willpower:** 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative:** 3
Move: 7 **Defense:** 7
Perception: 6 **Stun:** 4

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	4	4	8	(4)
Stealth	3	5	8	(4)
Survival	0	4	4	(2)
Athletics	4	0	4	(2)

Talents

Alertness, Skill Aptitude (Stealth +2)

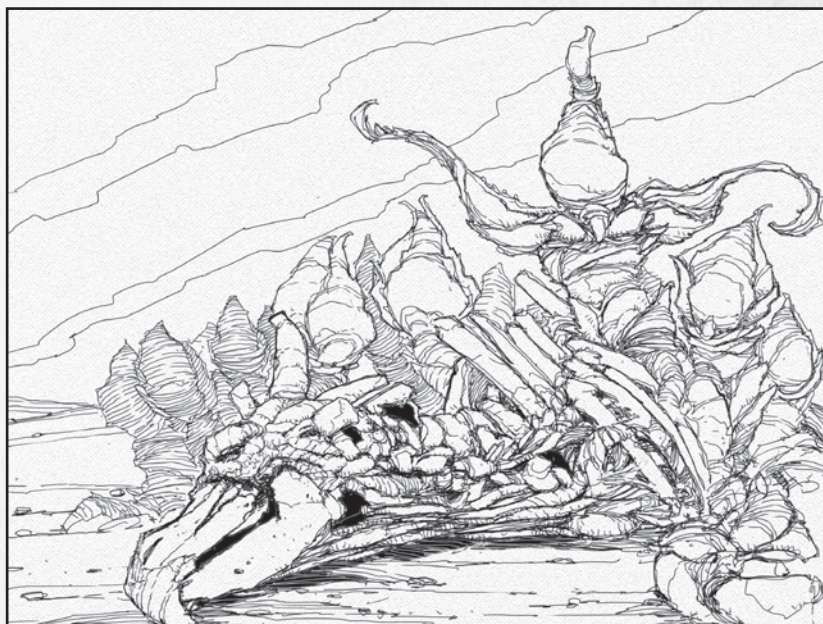
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Stinger (Initial Hit)*	2 L	0	10 L	(5) L

* After the stinger hits it forms an almost unbreakable grapple and 1 L is inflicted automatically each round as the creature sucks the moisture from the target.

Martian Blood Pods

These strange plants lie dormant under the Martian desert sands, only blooming when they find a source of water to absorb. A field of these plants can drain the water from a whole herd of Gashants, and Martian tribesmen have learnt to look for the distinct bumps in the ground that indicate the presence of a Blood Pod meadow. In its dormant form the plant consists of a flower pod with a flexible stalk coiled beneath it. The stalk fills with absorbed water and straightens, causing the pod and stalk to thrust from the ground. Shortly after the stalks emerge the pod explodes open, sending a shower of bright red floating seeds high into the desert air. The explosion of red has been compared to a spray of blood, hence the plant's name.

The plants cannot survive in overly wet surroundings and thrive only in deserts or arid plains. The chemicals in the stalks that absorb liquid may have industrial uses if anyone were to look into it. Spending two hours in a field of Blood Pods requires a difficulty 2 resistance check, if failed the victim takes 1 damage from dehydration. Anyone foolish enough to eat the plants in an attempt to get back the lost liquid is in for a nasty surprise; the plant material retains its absorbercy after digestion and anyone ingesting it takes 1 point of damage an hour for four hours as the fibers first absorb digestive juices and then expand.



Everything Jules Verne could have written.
Everything H. G. Wells should have written.
Everything Arthur Conan Doyle thought of
but never published – because it was too fantastic.

SPACE

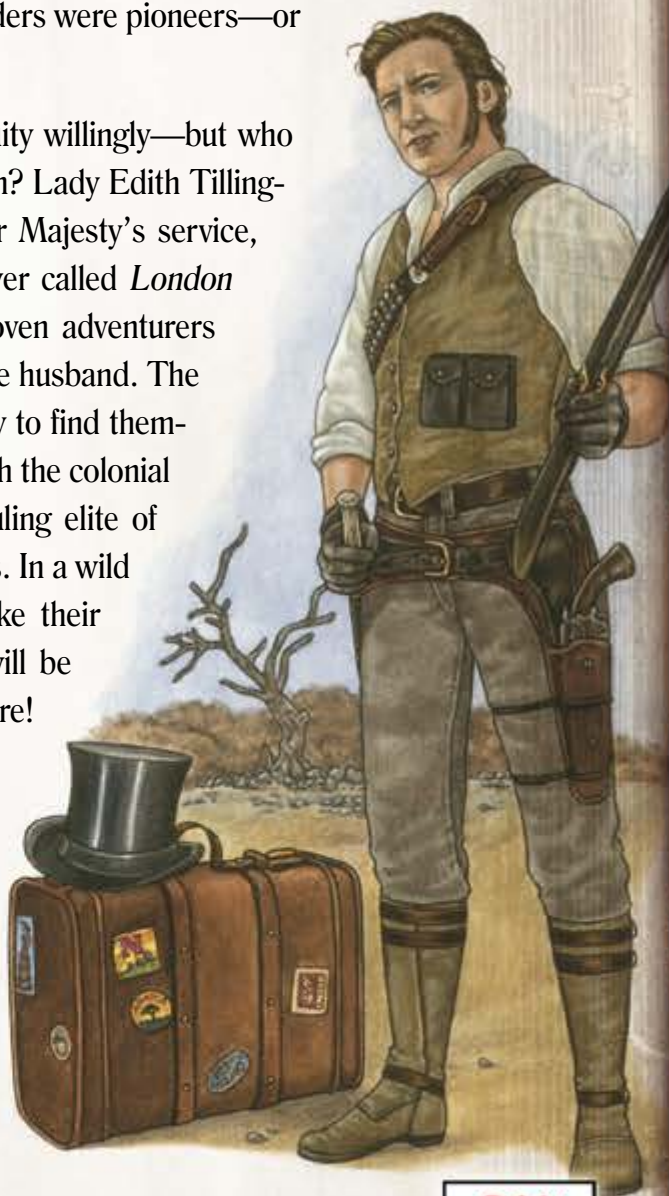
1889

London Bridge Has Fallen Down

Mylarkt—Mars' oldest city, home to a proud and fading race. But that pride masks a rot festering in the cracks of the city's decay, an underworld teeming with smuggled goods and ancient artifacts sold at the behest of local crime lords to be shipped out along the ancient canals of which the city's founders were pioneers—or so the inhabitants claim.

No sane Earthman would enter this pit of iniquity willingly—but who can refuse the request of a grieving noblewoman? Lady Edith Tillington is mourning her husband, a scientist in her Majesty's service, who crashed in the desert onboard an ether flyer called *London Bridge*. She is now in need of bold, Mars-proven adventurers willing to help her recover the remains of her late husband. The characters arrive at the ancient Martian city only to find themselves at the very heart of the city's quarrels, with the colonial powers, local smugglers, assassins, and the ruling elite of Mylarkt all playing out their own selfish schemes. In a wild chase, they will find themselves forced to make their way deep into the Isidis Desert, where they will be confronted with the best kept secret of the Empire!

This adventure includes a detailed description of the city of Mylarkt, including a city map, with additional locations, factions, and thrilling plot hooks providing inspiration for further adventures in and around Mylarkt, a city with a long history and powerful interests at play.



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