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GENERAL DIRECTIVE #3

From the desk of Quinn Sebastian

To all Storm Knights: Protect Core Earth Hardpoints!

We're fighting to preserve as much of our world as we can, and hardpoints are our reality's strongest line of defense. Archimedes Division has narrowed down how these phenomena work. They are usually focused around physical items or structures with a significant historical and emotional imprint.

Two things are important about that: The imprint is only significant if there are people there to remember it, and physical objects can be destroyed. The High Lords are specifically targeting our hardpoints and vandalizing them or forcing their evacuation. When either happens the hardpoint collapses.

Moving things around can have the same effect, so if you find a new hardpoint let Archimedes know so they can log it, then leave it alone. If High Lord forces are nearby, eliminate them or draw them away if possible. We need all the pieces of home we can hold onto!

Quinn Sebastian

CEINERAL DIRECTIVE #4

From the desk of Quinn Sebastian

The Delphi Council is looking for more information on a group calling themselves "The Cult of the Void." We know almost nothing about them at this point, including whether they represent a new threat or a potential tool to use against the High Lords.

Quinn Sebastian

COSM: LIVING LAND LOCATION: THE GULF OF MEXICO

Lagniappe (pronounced LAN-yap) is a word chiefly used in southern Louisiana and southeastern Texas: something given or obtained gratuitously or by way of good measure, a bonus. Akin to a baker's dozen.

The Delphi Council needs to set up a chain of semipermanent bases for reconnaissance operations and resupply points across the Gulf, just outside the reach of the Living Land's boundaries. The Storm Knights are called in for what is expected to be a milk run. They join the Cajun Navy off the Mississippi coast to reclaim and abscond with an offshore oil rig for redeployment as a base closer in to enemy territory. Hurricane Mark is rolling in, intel is sparse, and time is of the essence. The Storm Knights' duty is to clear the platform, and to protect and assist the Ords as they prep the rig and haul it off with a small fleet of tugboats. This is the first attempt of its kind and could help turn the tide in favor of the North American resistance against Baruk Kaah's forces.

DELPHI BRIEFING

Standard Scene. Read or paraphrase the following orders, delivered by a Delphi Council messenger:

"This covert operation requires that the rig is recovered intact and with minimal collateral damage. Specifically, as a seagoing vessel, damage to the hull would render it useless. Structural damage or loss of the legs or facilities would significantly reduce the rig's utility as an offshore base. We'll be sending field experts with you, rig workers and tugboat crews to facilitate and expedite the mission. These brave women and men from the Cajun Navy have volunteered their services to the Delphi Council at great personal risk. Their safety is critical to the mission and in solidifying ties with this influential civilian organization. In addition to guarding the people and the rig, all three tugboats need to be protected to ensure the platform can be effectively moved in the rough, stormy waters.



The Shroud and Anishaa face a big problem in the Gulf of Mexico.

Intel is limited; we do not know who or what you'll be up against. We found out about the potential to acquire the rig 36 hours ago, but reports indicate that it has been radio silent for over a week. With Mark rolling in, we can hope the occupiers have abandoned the rig and fled to safety. We are up against the razor's edge on timing. It is now or never."

APPROACHING THE RIG

The triangular drilling rig platform is perched on three steel latticework legs 30 feet above the water's surface. The rig is in 350 feet of water and can be seen from the coast as a smudge or point of light on the horizon depending on the time of day. However, this rig doesn't appear as welllit as most of the others. Note: there is a perfect 360-degree view from the rig. If the group wants to approach undetected, it has to be done under cover of darkness to hide the tugboats.

Since a crew lives aboard the rig full time there are several levels of facilities including crew quarters, the galley, recreation room, gym, sick bay, offices, and laundry. The platform also has a helipad (bow), a derrick (aft), a maintenance workshop, a crane, a flare boom used to burn off excess methane, and the central nervous system of the drilling operation: the control room.

GAME MASTER'S BRIEFING

The mission requires that the Storm Knights safely escort the Ords onto the rig so that the platform can be lowered and the legs raised for transport. Once that is completed the tugboats can start to pull the platform southeast out of Mark's path.



6

Part Charles

INFILTRATING THE RIG

The team can infiltrate the rig in many ways but they must get at least one of the Ords onboard with them. Only the Ords have the skills necessary to operate the rig's equipment. Characters can use *stealth* to board the rig but, at a minimum, once the generator is turned on (Step B in the Dramatic Skill Resolution) their presence is known.

On board there are several Rustjaw edeinos. These edeinos are different though. They have transformed to Core Earth reality and now the edeinos can use and understand some mechanical technology. The group is led by Cogeye, an edeinos Gotak. There are twice as many Rustjaws as Storm Knights, plus two Rustjaws and Cogeye somewhere in the crew quarters building.

If anyone falls off the rig while it is still elevated they suffer a 10 meter fall when they hit the water's surface. If they are still conscious and alive they can climb the steel lattice legs and rejoin the fight in two rounds. (See **Falling**, **Swimming**, and **Drowning** in the *Torg Eternity* core rulebook.)

• War-Scarred Rustjaws (2 per hero): See page 10.

MOVING THE RIG

When the party arrives on the rig floor two things are apparent: The hurricane is much closer than it should be and there is an alarm going off on the rig. Use the Drama Deck and refer to the **Dramatic Skill Resolution** rules in *Torg Eternity*.

One of the Ords, Justin "Savvy" Savoie, hurriedly informs the Storm Knights that something is terribly wrong. The "pressure safety high" alarm means the well soon starts spraying highly flammable oil and methane onto the rig. If left unchecked it could bring down the whole rig.

STEPS

Step A: Escort "Savvy" to the control room. Suggested test: *Dexterity* DN 12.

Step B: The rig is currently running on emergency power. The Storm Knights need to turn on the generator so the rig move can begin. Suggested test: *Mind* or *science* DN 12.

Once step B is completed the edeinos definitely

become aware of the intruders. If not already discovered, the last two Rustjaws in the building take actions to thwart the characters. These countermeasures may not be overt, and could come back to bite the characters later if they don't thoroughly clear the rig.

Step C: Power up the generator. Suggested test: *Mind* or *water vehicles* DN 10. Note that skill adds increase *Mind*, not *Dexterity*, in this case. Once the generator is powered up, a savvy Storm Knight or NPC can go through the rest of the preparations to move the rig without a test.

Step D: Attach the tow lines at each corner of the platform. Test *Dexterity* or *water vehicles* DN 16. Players can negotiate different skills for different approaches, but the DN may increase. If the team is cooperating on this test, members can use different skills as desired.

If a Critical Problem Dilemma occurs, the well was not "killed" in time and a high-pressure mix of oil and methane sprays from beneath the derrick and lights on fire. The Storm Knights can only successfully put out the fire after Step C is completed. Otherwise the additional fuel reignites right away.

If the team took multiple Ords with them onboard the rig, they have to protect them, but the Ords can also help significantly. Each character who works with an Ord gets a –2 penalty on tests related to operating the rig or the tugboats (max one Ord per character).

When the rig is powered it is possible to use the crane or drilling equipment. Before the rig is separated from the well there is a large flare boom burning off methane from the side of the platform.

There is a Sikorsky S-76 helicopter on the helipad. This is a crew transport vehicle so it isn't armed. Flying it with hurricane winds would be a Very Hard *air vehicles* test with DN 16.

"WE NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN SPIN THE DEAD THING ON THE OTHER DEAD THING." -LEENA

WHAT LURKS BENEATH

The team lowers the platform only to discover that one of the rig's legs is stuck and does not lift.

The tugs can only move at a snail's pace with the rig as long as the leg is dragging below the water. One of the Storm Knights has to go into the water to determine what the problem is and free the obstruction.

This is the Storm Knights' mission, with the Ords assisting at significant personal risk. The rough waters driven by the oncoming hurricane are too much for an Ord to handle. Sending one of them into the water requires a rescue mission at best and is more likely a death sentence.

• Swimming: Make a Hard *Strength* test (DN 14) against the rough waters.

• Find: A Challenging *find* test (DN 12) to locate the obstruction. The Storm Knight finds a shredded Zodiac boat in the lifting gears. If they carefully inspect the Zodiac they find a very large shark's tooth.

• Dexterity/Kinesis/Science/Strength: Make a Heroic test (DN 18) to remove the obstruction. This may require that multiple Storm Knights work together or use tools to remove the obstruction. Using the crane or a tugboat would reduce it to a Standard test (DN 10).

While investigating the damaged Zodiac a very large, dark shadow passes close enough to alert the person in the water. Bodies of dead foes floating in the water, possibly cast overboard, or blood from swimmers who have taken one or more Wounds cause the shark attack to begin.

SHARK ATTACK

When there is either a character in the water or once towing begins, a giant shark attacks the flotilla. See the stats listed below.

The shark may sever one of the tow lines in an attempt to get at the people on one of the tugboats. The cable has one Wound and Toughness 9.

If any Rustjaws escaped the previous fight they may appear riding the shark or elsewhere during this fight.

SAVAGE MEGALODON

Attributes: Charisma 5, Dexterity 12, Mind 5, Spirit 10, Strength 17

Skills: Dodge 14, find 7, intimidation 13, maneuver 13, taunt (10), trick (10), unarmed combat 15 Move: —; Tough: 18 (1); Shock: 14; Wounds: 4 Equipment: —

Perks: -

Possibilities: Never **Special Abilities:**

- Armor: Thick skin +1.
- Bite: Damage Strength +3 (20).

• Feeding Frenzy: Once a Wound is done (either to the megalodon or anything else in the water) the creature becomes Mindless (immune to *intimidation* and *taunt*) and must All-Out Attack on its action each round.

• Swim: Move 18 in water.

• Very Large: These massive sharks are 20 meters long and weigh 60 tons. Attackers gain +4 to attack rolls due to its size and bulk.

COGEYE'S FATE

Cogeye's goal is not to confront the Storm Knights and fight to the death. Her goal is to escape and continue her work. The "bright island" had ignited her curiosity and was a well-equipped and isolated place to work. Once the platform has been lowered, or during the shark attack, Cogeye attempts to make her escape.

There is a second Zodiac boat tied to the rig by a loose line. If there is time, she pulls the boat in close. Otherwise she jumps into the water and swims out to the boat. If the characters attempt to thwart her escape, that is when she uses her miracles against them. Her focus is on creating a distraction so that she can get away.

She would be a valuable asset to turn over to the Delphi Council for intelligence on Baruk Kaah's expansion plans. If she's captured, *intimidation* or *persuasion* can coax Cogeye into telling her plans. How much she shares is based on the success of the roll.

On a Standard Success things the characters already suspected are clearly confirmed or refuted. A Good result provides information about Cogeye's plan to use mechanization to break away from the Living Land. An Outstanding Success reveals that the Rustjaws are a renegade faction at odds with Baruk Kaah. Cogeye wants to uplift her people and learn about Core Earth. There are indications that she may be willing to organize additional resistance against Kaah.

If she escapes or is killed, some of the plan is discoverable on smartphone camera footage recorded by one of the (now deceased) members of the original rig crew. Everything is spoken in edeinos but can be translated by anyone who knows their language. A character searching for more information can make a Hard computer test (DN 14) to find the footage saved either on a phone or backed up on the main computer system. Since the rig worker did not understand what was being said, compare the computer skill success level to the intimidation success chart for results to see how much was filmed or omitted.

AFTER THE FIGHT

In the rough seas and high winds, if the team has lost one of the three tugboats or one or more lines are disconnected, the rig capsizes due to being top-heavy while the legs are up. In this situation the team has five rounds to take some kind of action to prevent capsizing (e.g., reattaching a severed line or lowering the legs).

INSPECTING THE BODIES

In the heat of battle the Storm knight may not have thought much about the modifications to the war-scarred. If the bodies are inspected, heroes easily notice the replaced jaws. If anyone explores the crew quarters or offices it becomes clear that the edeinos have been living onboard for a week or two. There are signs of a struggle but no sign of the rig workers, unless the galley is thoroughly inspected. The sick bay has been used.

WAR-SCARRED RUSTIAW

SUCCESS

The rig is secured. If the team successfully reclaims and moves the rig out of the way of the hurricane, the Delphi Council asks the team to rename the platform for redeployment as the original offshore base. The team just secured an asset worth over \$200 million.

• One or more edeinos escape: Surviving members of the Rustjaw clan move into the bayous and swamps along the coast and plan their next move. If Cogeye is killed and word of her work gets back to other Gotaks, she becomes a folk hero and others may seek to replicate her work.

• All edeinos are eliminated: The team has not only acquired a valuable asset, but it has kept the rig move secret. This is an important step forward in thwarting the spread of the Living Land.

• Cogeye is captured and all other edeinos are captured or eliminated: The Delphi Council is exceptionally pleased with the Storm Knight's work. They begin the process to flip Cogeye and possibly the Rustjaw edeinos. When the platform is set up in its final location, the team gets word from Troy, the Cajun chef, that they are invited for a crawfish boil. The Council grants the team time for rest and relaxation. The team can negotiate a "favor" promised by Quinn Sebastian.

FAILURE

The rig capsizes or is substantially destroyed. The Delphi Council is disappointed in the team. This was an asset worth over \$200 million and of substantial strategic value to resisting Baruk Kaah. Countless other platforms have already been lost to the destruction caused by being inside the Living Land zone. This reflects badly on the team and means they have heavy oversight on their next mission "to ensure everything is done right."

Additionally, Cogeye or other edeinos escape. The Rustjaw clan grows and seeks out its own territory in Core Earth. The incursion of Rustjaw edeinos into North America employs vehicles and increasingly more technology as they learn. This is a wild-card faction that could help or hinder the fight against Baruk Kaah, whatever is to their advantage.

"THEY USE GUNS?! LIKE THEY WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH WITH JUST POINTY STICKS."

<u>-ZHI ZHANG</u>

THREATS AND VEHICLES

COGEYE

Cogeye is a potentially important renegade leader. Her vision is to uplift the edeinos by adapting to Core Earth and claiming territory for her Rustjaw clan. In order to do so she seeks to understand technology, specifically mechanization, in order to escape Baruk Kaah's influence. She has used rudimentary mechanical knowledge to modify the elite war-scarred who have joined her. This fusing of metal with living tissue is cursed in the eyes of Lanala, so her new clansmen cannot return to the Living Land where their modified bodies would crumble. She is not necessarily opposed to an alliance against Baruk Kaah, but her loyalty is to whatever is best for her Rustjaw clan.

Attributes: Charisma 7, Dexterity, 9, Mind 10, Spirit 11, Strength 10

Skills: Dodge 10, faith 14, find 8, fire weapons 10, intimidation 13, maneuver 11, melee weapons 11, reality 12, survival 9, unarmed combat 11

Move: 9; Tough: 14 (4); Shock: 11; Wounds: 3 Equipment: .45 Colt automatic (Damage 13), Kevlar vest (Armor +4)

Perks: Miracles (*bless, curse, ward enemy*) **Possibilities:** 3

Special Abilities:

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).

WAR-SCARRED RUSTJAW

These former members of the Redjaw clan have been modified by Cogeye, who has worked to fuse metal into their bodies and form an offshoot clan known as the Rustjaws. Rustjaws are easily identified by their metallic maws, sharp metal teeth, and the rusty saliva that has stained it all red.

Attributes: Charisma 8, Dexterity 10 (–1), Mind 9, Spirit 11, Strength 12

Skills: Beast riding 12, dodge 12, faith 12, find 8, fire weapons 12, intimidation 12, maneuver 12, melee weapons 14, stealth 12, survival 8, tracking 8, trick 11, unarmed combat 13

Move: 11; Tough: 16 (4); Shock: 11; Wounds: 1

Equipment: .308 Hunting Rifle (Damage 13), Kevlar vest (Armor +4)

Perks: Star Eyes, Whip Tail

Possibilities: Common (2) **Special Abilities:**

- **Bite/Claws:** Replaced metal jaw and upgraded metal-tipped claws. Damage *Strength* +3 (15).
- Heavy Metal: Any tests made to swim are at a +2 DN due to the added weight of the metal.
- **Iron Tail:** Steel cables woven beneath the skin of the tail. Damage *Strength* +1 (13).

RIG AND TUGBOAT CREW

Justin "Savvy" Savoie, Michelle Kelley, Raymond Smith, Shaw Yazzie, Dickie Eberhardt, Laura Ikerd, Chip LaLuz, Elaine Ramirez, Troy Dolan, and Lorelei Bonin.

- These are professionals who are highly motivated and have all volunteered.
- Attributes: Charisma 7, Dexterity, 7, Mind 9, Spirit 8, Strength 8
- Skills: Dodge 8, find 8, fire combat 8, intimidation 8, melee weapons 8, science 10, taunt 8, unarmed combat 8, water vehicles 9

Move: 7; **Tough:** 11 (3); **Shock:** 8; **Wounds:** -

Equipment: 9mm pistol (Damage 13), stab vest (Armor +3)

Perks: -

Possibilities: Never **Special Abilities:** —

TUGBOAT

The engines of a tugboat generate much more power than it needs for itself, so they can move at a good clip when not towing or pushing another vessel.

Speed: 40 kph (10); Tough: 18; Wounds: 3

• Passengers: 18.

• Maneuverability: -2 penalty to *water vehicles* for defenses or chases.

•**Reinforced:** A tugboat gains an extra 5 Toughness against collisions.

• Very Large: Attacks against the tugboat gain a +4 bonus due to its size.

OFFSHORE OIL RIG

The oil rig is not self-propelled and requires other vehicles in order to move.

Speed: 0 kph (0); Tough: 22; Wounds: 5

- Fast: Speed grants a +2 bonus to complete steps in a Chase or a –2 penalty to be hit.
- Passengers: 50.

• Maneuverability: -6 penalty to *water vehicles* for defenses or chases if it has external propulsion.

• Very Large: Attacks against the platfom gain a +4 bonus due to its size.

SIKORSKY S-76

This civilian passenger helicopter was stationed on the oil rig and has sat exposed on the helipad since the edeinos took over. It may require maintenance to operate correctly. Use an *air vehicles* test based on *Mind* in place of *Dexterity* to get it working.

Speed: 280 kph (14); Tough: 17; Wounds: 3

• Fast: Speed grants a +2 bonus to complete steps in a Chase or a –2 penalty to be hit.

• Passengers: 8.

• Maneuverability: -2 penalty to *air vehicles* for defenses or chases.

• **Very Large:** Attacks against the helicopter gain a +4 bonus due to its size.

COSM: LIVING LAND LOCATION: LAKE LANIER, GEORGIA

The location of this adventure assumes that the heroes are deep inside Living Land territory, but spending much of their time in a Lost World. You may wish to locate this Lost World in a familiar real-world location, such as a famous lake in your favorite city, but any area with a body of water the heroes can use as an entrance to the Lost World will do.

Deep behind enemy lines, the Storm Knights have met with two allies in need of their aid. Megan Darrow is an intrepid reporter, and her friend Dahwen is a Bluespine edeinos who has been serving as a guide. Dahwen, "Dwayne" to her friends, has led the heroes to a lake surrounded by marsh.

DELPHI BRIEFING

Standard Scene. The Delphi Council's contact, Megan Darrow, has requested help for a rescue mission and the recovery of a Eternity Shard. The Storm Knights must enter the lake, bypass some territorial dinosaurs, and make their way into a network of caves.

Darrow's friend Dahwen, a Bluespine edeinos, has managed to escape from a Lost World that is connected to a vast underground network of tunnels, some of which are flooded. She has gathered enough deepweed to help her friends escape, but needs the help of the Storm Knights to get the civilians past a megapredator that is guarding an Eternity Shard.

When the characters arrive on the scene, Megan points to the lake and gives the Storm Knights a brief summary:

"There, see that red and blue glow shining in the water? Beneath the surface is the entrance to the Lost World. We need to hurry; Lost Worlds don't last long. With luck, our friends will still be there, but there's no knowing how long they'll be safe. There's also the Eternity Shard to recover, so we have no time to waste."



What waits in the dark water below the surface?

Megan and Dahwen can take turns answering the questions of the Storm Knights, but what they know is:

•Dahwen was helping escort a group of civilians from behind enemy lines when they discovered an underground network of tunnels that led to the Lost World.

• The civilians (a group of biologists and soldiers providing escort) are trapped inside, as the entrance they used collapsed while they were exploring.

• The entrance she used to escape is flooded, so Dahwen needs to bring the deepweed to the civilians if they are to leave the tunnels safely.

•Dahwen gathered the deepweed between escaping the tunnels and meeting the Storm Knights.

•All the cavern entrances are flooded or collapsed now, but there is a large crystalline cavern in the network of tunnels that opens into a "Lost World." • The Lost World looks out into an undersea ruin, which features an ancient Core Earth shipwreck.

• The shipwreck clearly has an Eternity Shard within it, but the wreck is guarded by a massive megapredator. One of the civilians named the creature "Scylla" after the Greek myth.

KILLER CROCS

Standard Scene. After the heroes have eaten the deepweed, Dahwen leads them toward the lake. Hiding in the lake is a family of territorial crocodiles, which surface and attack anyone in the shallow water. As they enter the water, have the heroes roll a *find* test against the crocodiles' *stealth* skill (DN 8). Any hero who fails is taken by surprise when the crocodiles attack.

• Crocodiles (2 per hero): See Torg Eternity.

DEEPWEED

Deepweed is a kelp-like plant used by the Bluespine tribe of edeinos to "train" their bodies how to breathe underwater.

While the Bluespine edeinos are known for having used the plant so long they no longer need it, it can be used by any species to enable them to survive underwater for long stretches with some minor side effects.

After eating a handful of the chewy, almost rubbery leaves, a character may breathe underwater for eight hours before they need to eat a second dose. While breathing water, a hero takes +1 Shock from any Fatigued results due to the additional exertion.

When the heroes have clearly gained the advantage over the crocodiles, the surviving creatures swim away toward the far end of the lake.

If the team tries to swim past the crocodiles without battling them, the crocodiles attempt to grapple and crush them in their powerful jaws. The crocodiles clearly have the advantage against most swimmers, so the Storm Knights are hard pressed to outmaneuver them in the water.

THE CRYSTAL TUNNEL

Standard Scene. At the bottom of the marshy lake, scintillating red and blue lights beckon the heroes closer. The entrance to the Lost World is a large, artificial-looking underwater cave festooned with glowing crystals. Read the following:

At the bottom of the lake, there is a strange, circular entrance to a shimmering tunnel. Passing through the entrance, you feel a strange shift, as if reality around you hiccups slightly. As you swim down into the crystal cave, a sense of vertigo passes over you. Dahwen beckons you deeper. As you follow, your sense of direction shifts and you find yourselves climbing up and out of the water into a rising tunnel. The partially flooded chamber seems to be carved from smooth, chalk-white stone inset with long, crystalline windows. Shimmering light filters in from the strange windows, and through them you look out into a foreign ocean. Red and blue lightning flickers from above the surface of the water, and you sense a distant reality storm raging above the alien sea.

The crystal tunnel continues upward along a ridge under the alien sea. As the heroes press onward, they see a massive shape swim up from a crevasse that runs alongside the tunnel. It is a massive eellike creature, at least a hundred feet long and with a head the size of a tractor. If the Storm Knights are being stealthy, have them roll a *stealth* test against Scylla's *find* (DN 8). If she notices them, she turns and slams her head against the window, causing it to crack.

If she doesn't notice them, the heroes have a sense of dread as she passes by, sensing great malice from her.

Either as a direct result of Scylla smashing into the mountainside, or after moving forward after her passing, the heroes feel a lurching beneath their feet as the cavern around them begins to collapse. Treat the collapse as an explosive attack, with the heroes attempting to dive for cover to avoid being crushed. Anyone failing a *Dexterity* test suffers 12+1BD damage from falling rocks.

The tunnel behind them isn't sealed, but it is becoming progressively more dangerous to linger.

"Come on, Storm Knights! The Lost World won't last much longer! Our friends are in the observatory just ahead!"

BEYOND UNDERDOME

The heroes emerge into a large dome-shaped crystal room in which the civilians have camped. There are several tunnels leading out from this central chamber, but they all seem choked with rubble now. The dome itself overlooks a set of strange, cyclopean ruins and an old shipwreck. Beyond the ship, there is a boiling, seething portal under the sea. Anyone with a telescope or binoculars can try to see through the portal, and may catch glimpses of the lake shore they left behind.

In the middle of this chamber is a large "moon pool." This opening in the floor allows direct access to the ocean and ruins outside, and is the only remaining exit from the room. Some mysterious force keeps the water from rising into the chamber and flooding it, despite the room being deep under the ocean's surface.

In the makeshift camp, there is one civilian for every two heroes, and one of them is busy sketching in a moleskin notebook. This man, a biologist, has been filling his notebook with observations about the incredible alien world outside the dome. His name is Doctor Andrew Cheney, and he is bursting with excitement. Barely patient enough to introduce himself, he attempts to explain his findings, pointing out into the ocean while Megan moves to join him at the window:

"Look! Look! Those stones are not natural! Ruins of some kind! And that ship? It's a pirate ship from Earth, at least 300 years old! If I'm not mistaken, that is the Fancy II, flagship of the famous pirate captain Henry Avery!"

Dahwen interrupts here, and also points to the ship:

"Something inside the ship shines with energy. What you call an Eternity Shard must be within the dead thing. There is a portal near the ship we can use to return to the land above, but we must hurry before this place collapses around us."

The scientist jumps in,

"An Eternity Shard? What is that? Can we collect it using this deepweed of yours?"

Doctor Cheney grills the Storm Knights on what they know of Eternity Shards and promptly insists on helping them retrieve it. He is not particularly capable in combat or exploration, but his enthusiasm for the adventure should ensure the players know he won't be left behind. The other civilians, a mix of soldiers and scientists who were exploring the Living Land when they came upon the Lost World, follow the Storm Knights' lead as well. If the heroes are unsure, have one of the civilians mention, "With the tunnel collapse, that portal is our only way out, right? We need Storm Knights to make it through safely."

Spend the rest of the scene letting the heroes help Dahwen distribute the deepweed to the civilians, explore their surroundings, and make a plan for escaping the collapsing Lost World.

BETWEEN SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

Dramatic Scene. Once the heroes have entered the water, they need to race to the *Fancy II* and recover the Sextant of Henry Avery in order to pass safely through the portal. The dangerous swim through the Atlantean ruins and past the great sea serpent Scylla are treated as segments of a Dramatic Skill Resolution.

Along the way, heroes may encounter the following setbacks:

• No one left behind: One of the civilians is pinned beneath some falling masonry and must be freed. This takes a Very Hard (16) *Strength* test to successfully move the stone enough for a person to swim free, or a Standard test if the hero uses a decent lever.

•Swept by the tide: One of the characters, or one of the scientists guided by them, loses their footing, or otherwise is pushed toward the whirlpool by the mad currents rushing through the ruins. A hero may try to use a standard *Strength* test to pull themselves back into position, or a *maneuver* skill test to find a way around the current. They may use the same skill tests to attempt to catch or rescue one of their charges.

Possible complications that might arise include the sudden awakening of undead pirate skeletons! If the heroes are inside the *Fancy II*'s wreckage, some of the skeletal crew animate and move to attack or prevent the heroes from seizing the captain's sextant. They use grasping, skeletal hands to restrain the heroes and pull them away from their goal.

A Critical Problem means one of the heroes has caught the eye of Scylla, and she attacks them directly. They may need to escape her fearsome grapple, or find a way to evade her attacks and distract her from attacking, somehow.

Step A: Into the Maelstrom. The water around the ruins is rushing with swirling currents that shift and change due to the pulsing size of the undersea portal. Moving safely through them is a Standard *Strength* test, increased to Challenging if a given Storm Knight is assisting one or more of



More danger lurks beneath the waves than just the threat of drowning..

the scientists (by pulling them or guiding them with a rope). Rather than measuring time in turns, we telescope out a bit here to allow one skill test to measure a minute or so of time as they struggle across the sea floor.

As heroes arrive at the edge of the ruins, they are able to grasp the edges of marble columns and hide in the lee of masonry, which grants them some safety until Scylla begins attacking the ruins to try to flush them out in Step B.

Step B: A little off column A, a little off column B. Scylla or debris from the whirlpool begins to ram some of the taller ruins, sending strange, rune-covered rocks slowly toppling toward them. To make it to the shipwreck of the *Fancy II*, the heroes must succeed at a Hard (DN 14) *maneuver* test, or a Very Hard (DN 16) *stealth* test. A hero with a solid understanding of construction or engineering may make substitute an appropriate *profession* skill test to find a safe(-ish) path through the tumbling debris.

Step C: Find the Captain. Once at the sunken treasure ship, *Fancy II*, the heroes need to find a path through the murky shadows of the upturned vessel. They must succeed at a Hard (DN 14) *find* test, even though the artifact is giving off brilliant flashes of blue and red light because of its proximity to the portal. On a Good Success or better, they notice the many figures of skeletal pirates who perished while locked in combat with each other, covered with a layer of muck. They look like they could animate at any moment, but they don't.

Step D: Henry Avery's Treasure. The corpse of Captain Henry Avery still clings to his greatest treasure, even as the escalating reality storm pushing through the whirlpool-like portal begins to tear the wreckage of the ship apart. As the heroes reach for it, the captain animates and struggles to hold onto his treasure, swinging a rusty old saber to defend it. The heroes must make a Good Success or better with a Standard *melee weapons* or *unarmed combat* test to snatch it away from the sluggish skeleton.

Their way out is now through the nearby portal underwater, which leads them to the lake where they met Megan and Dahwen. Whoever holds the sextant, and anyone they lead by hand, automatically succeeds at a *reality* test to pass through the storm. Anyone else must make a Challenging (DN 12) *reality* test or suffer the effects as a reality storm from *Torg Eternity* as they fall into the portal. The portal closes behind them.

SCYLLA, THE GREAT EEL

In Greek mythology, Scylla was a dragon-like monster which guarded one side of a strait, forcing sailors to brave the narrow space between her and a deadly whirlpool named Charybdis. Doctor Alexandra Pramas, one of the marine biologists trapped in the Lost World observatory, named this giant sea monster Scylla after the myth.

Scylla is a monstrously huge eel, whose gaping maw is filled with prehensile, snake-like tentacles that can grab smaller prey and drag them into her throat. Her standard attack is to open her jaw and attempt to grapple targets, drawing them into her maw and swallowing them whole. Attributes: Charisma 3, Dexterity 12, Mind 3, Spirit 10, Strength 17

Skills: Dodge 13, find 8, intimidation 15, maneuver 13, reality 12, trick (8), taunt (13), unarmed combat 16

Move: 12; Tough: 19 (2); Shock: 14; Wounds: 5 **Equipment:** —

Perks: –

Possibilities: 3

Special Abilities:

- Armor: Thick, slippery skin +2.
- Bite: Strength +2 (19) damage.
- **Grapple:** Scylla attempts to Grab targets with the snake-like tentacles in her mouth. Any Good hit or better from Scylla's Bite also Restrains the target until they can break out against her 17 Strength.

• Swim: Move 12 in deep water.

• Very Large: Scylla is a megapredator, over 20 meters long. Attackers gain +4 to their attack rolls because of her size.

ALLIES AND TREASURE

DAHWEN, THE BLUESPINE SCOUT

Dahwen (sometimes called "Dwayne" by her friends) is friendly, especially for the normally reclusive Bluespine tribe. Her travels led her to discover kindred spirits among humankind, and a desire to help them free their world from the tyranny of Baruk Kaah. As a Bluespine, she is skilled in navigating wetlands and undersea areas, and has become a specialist in helping Storm Knights find safe paths behind enemy lines. She loves stories about explorers and foreign lands, and often trades tales with talkative Storm Knights.

DOCTOR ANDREW CHENEY

Doctor Andrew Cheney is a biologist with some modest survival skills. A friend of Dahwen and Megan Darrow, he has been traveling with them to document as many of the different kinds of dinosaurs as he can in the Living Land, as well as making notes about the plantlife and other strange phenomena. He keeps his notes in a moleskin notebook in a ziplock bag, hoping to return them to Core Earth for publication. He is excitable and adventurous...probably more adventurous than he should be considering he isn't Possibility-rated.

MEGAN DARROW

Prior to the Possibility Wars, Megan was a welltraveled ace reporter for a prestigious newspaper. She is perky, energetic, and an incurable optimist. She has a strong faith in the inherent "goodness" of humanity, and offers her trust easily — perhaps too easily. Megan genuinely believes in the mission of the Delphi Council.

THE SEXTANT OF HENRY AVERY

Cosm: Core Earth **Possibilities:** 3 **Tapping Difficulty:** 14

Purpose: To find safe paths through storms.

Description: Henry Avery was a notorious pirate in the 1690s, who managed to steal the greatest treasure haul of the age, inspiring pirates for generations. However, his ultimate fate is unknown and many different theories of what happened to him exist. With the aid of this sextant, he was able to find a hidden sea route that took him safely away from the ships hunting for him, leading him toward the legendary treasure of Atlantis. Unfortunately for him, his crew mutinied and the ship caught fire and sank right atop his ultimate goal, leaving his sextant lost for generations. It appears as a golden sextant decorated with rubies and sapphires, which glimmer when held by a *reality*-rated character.

Powers: When the pilot of a vehicle uses this sextant to help guide them, they can find safe paths through reality storms (reducing the difficulty of traversing them to a Standard test, in most cases). They can also use this sextant to find shelter against inclement weather when outdoors. Peering through the sextant when it is held toward the horizon reveals five red-and-blue stars that are invisible without the use of the sextant, which acts to guide the user toward safety.

Restrictions: The sextant's Possibilities may only be used for *survival* or *vehicle* skill tests related to avoiding storms, seeking shelter from storms, or finding safe paths through storms.

COSM: LIVING LAND LOCATION: SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

After Baruk Kaah's earthquakes destroyed the resistance in Seattle, the area has grown quiet. A few hardy souls have moved back into the ruins of the city, which extend down into the famous underground portion. Sinister forces are closing in on these survivors.

MISSION BRIEFING

"Ghost" Burton shows up at a point near the end of the current mission the Storm Knights are handling—preferably in some spot that only the heroes have access to. (As she states dryly to any queries as to how she got there: "Don't ask.")

Simply put: As soon as they're done with their current mission, the Delphi Council wants them to head to Seattle to handle something that's just come to their attention there. If asked what the mission is, Burton states, "It's complicated."

Aren't they all?

With as few words as possible, she continues:

"We have word of several things happening in Seattle. Not only has Pan-Pacifica's Kanawa mapped a way through deep cave systems to Seattle for its own reasons, but also Nile agents are in place to snag a Wonder that recently transformed a creature into something...unusual. The monstrosity itself is on target to destroy a hard-won settlement in the Seattle Underground. Apparently, it eats a lot of dirt and is only getting bigger as it does so.

"Your goal is to stop the creature, keep the Wonder from being claimed by Nile, and destroy the survey team from Pan-Pacifica. If you can somehow sabotage the Pan-Pacifica data, you're golden.

"Think that's enough excitement for you?"

Burton sticks around only long enough to reiterate that she has to keep this short, plus arranges for transportation to Seattle as the Storm Knights wish—immediately after their current mission.



A massive beast was sighted threatening survivors in the ruined remains of Seattle.

PURPLE GLASS

Standard Scene. After the Storm Knights get to Seattle, they're set down in a rubble-strewn street with a directive of sorts: Look for the purple glass in the ground. There should be some nearby.

The amethyst-hued glass served to allow light into the underground back when Seattle was restructuring the city after a fire. While parts of the underground did get damaged further in the recent devastation, the Delphi Council figured out that the spot the heroes currently stand in is close to where some intact underground architecture remains.

It doesn't take long to find some of the glass set into the cement next to a crumpled building. A bit of investigation and an Easy (DN 8) *find* or *tracking* test shows a way down into the depths of the underground. Just then, a young lookout named Rhias pops out of a makeshift alcove, demanding to know who the heroes are.

It doesn't take much convincing to have her lead them to the main settlement—unless the heroes seem hostile. She can be suspicious, but the settlement could use more help.

Once among the settlers, the Storm Knights can find out more about what's going on from Leisha, the community's current leader. Each bit of information leads to a section that describes it further.

• Rhias and others have seen a strange worm moving around the areas outside their settlement. Rhias insists it's getting bigger. (See **The Nature of the Wonder** sidebar.)

THE NATURE OF THE WONDER

The Wonder that has appeared near this settlement has a form, plus several curious abilities that morph based on the needs of nearby sentient life.

Right now, one of the traits it has is the ability to draw a creature to it, increasing its size as it approaches. The creature affected was a simple earthworm, which has only just started working through the outer areas of the collapsed Seattle underground. It's on a trajectory to the settlement, but first circling a bit as it grows in size.

The Wonder in its current form looks as if it were crafted from twigs bound together by tough vine to take the shape of a six-pointed star, and it has other abilities based on things you ask the players before you begin playing. Answer these questions, in any order, picking one player per question. Take notes so that you can assign other powers to this item. The players' answers determine the Wonder's current other latent one-time abilities.

- 1. What power did your Storm Knight dream about in his or her last dream?
- 2. What magical ability did the last musician sing about within your Storm Knight's hearing?
- 3. The last book your Storm Knight looked at featured a hero who had what special ability?
- 4. When your character was growing up, what super power or magical ability did he or she want?
- 5. The villain in your Storm Knight's favorite tale has what ability?

The sixth ability of the star Wonder is already in place thanks to Rhias, who found it a few days ago while exploring nearby passages that have opened up over the past few weeks.

(Continued on next page...)

• Recently, the tunnels beyond their settlement, which were mostly collapsed, have started opening on their own, expanding into some places where the geometry doesn't seem quite right. (See **This Place Is Getting Weird**.)

•A group of people in high-tech suits are camping in one of those locations nearby. They tried to kill off the local edeinos tribe, which had just started to make overtures toward them. That action on the part of these strangers has put everyone on high alert now, which Leisha finds regretful. (See **The Neighbors Seemed Friendly at First**.)

• A shadowy form showed up a couple of days ago. It *"bampfed* around the area, then left." Leisha feels like it was scouting. They never got a good look at it. (See **The Bampfing Scout**.)

THIS PLACE IS GETTING WEIRD

Before the Living Land and the destruction that followed in Seattle, the underground spaces in the city were open for tours. Over time, parts were closed off due to safety concerns. More recently, though, the passages and areas below became one of the safer places to be in Seattle—for a variety of creatures.

Of late, some areas that had been rubble-filled opened up, seemingly on their own, and now lead to underground streets that lead deeper into the earth. Hazy storefronts from yesteryear line these streets, and occasionally ghostly horses fall onto spirits that roam the streets, mimicking incidents from Seattle's early-1900s past.

Each day that passes bring these storefronts into sharper focus, but where you might expect an old-time haberdashery or general store, observers instead see places selling items that are slightly off in some way. Instead of ghostly children grasping peppermint sticks or sucking on horehound drops, there are feline bipedal creatures rubbing sachets against their whiskers and faces.

The edeinos live down a side street on the right. The Pan-Pacifica explorers are camping in an old storefront that has mostly phased into being down the street and to the left. The worm's passage soon takes it straight down this newly created underground main street.

THE NEIGHBORS SEEMED FRIENDLY AT FIRST

A group of Kanawa explorers has set up camp in a storefront, nearly opposite a side street that leads to the local edeinos encampment. The edeinos are currently on guard against them due to the explorers' attempt to clear them out a few days ago, and the Pan-Pacifica group has people watching the area. They have made no attempt to travel farther—yet. They are in the process of organizing their travel information into something they can send back to their managers, plus keeping an eye on the area.

A group of edeinos warriors is also nearby, watching the road to the Core settlement and the Kanawa explorers. They are likely to attack whichever side gains the upperhand early.

The Storm Knights can attempt to disrupt the Pan-Pacifica group. Doing so brings the edeinos to their side quickly, creating a bond of sorts that the Storm Knights can transfer to the settlement. If the heroes instead take time to use some sneaky means to sabotage the Pan-Pacifica faction's information, set the DN to Challenging (12) for any tests they make to sneak in and change any data the group is organizing.

• Kanawa Security Troopers (2 per hero): See below.

• Ghost Clan Mistwalkers (5): See page 80.

KANAWA SECURITY TROOPERS

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 8, Mind 8, Spirit 8, Strength 8

Skills: Dodge 10, evidence analysis 9, find 10, fire combat 10, first aid 9, intimidation 11, land vehicles 9, maneuver 10, melee weapons 10, stealth 10, streetwise 9, unarmed combat 9

Move: 8; Tough: 12 (4); Shock: 8; Wounds: -

Equipment: Kanawa security armor (+4), katana (*Strength* +3/11), SC Kyogo T11 (Damage 14, Long Burst, Range 50/100/200).

Perks: -

Possibilities: Rare (2) **Special Abilities:** —

THE NATURE OF THE WONDER (CONT.)

She has already seen the worm a couple of times as it has grown larger and larger, and she has this dream about riding it out of Seattle and to safer places, taking all her settlement companions with her.

If you have more than five players at the table, you can ask other questions to involve everyone, including these, in regard to their Storm Knight characters: What's your Storm Knight's favorite scent? What color is magic? What is your hero's favorite food? What tactile sensation does he or she love most? Use these things to describe what happens if the Wonder is used by Rhias again and appeal to the senses of taste, sight, and smell results due to the additional exertion.

THE BAMPFING SCOUT

The Nile Empire, aware of a Wonder in this area, has sent a scout and some shocktroopers to try to figure out the nature of it, plus secure it if at all possible. To that end, they sent a Masked Marauder who has a gadget that allows her to pop around areas in a cloak of darkness.

The Marauder has already figured out that Rhias holds what she sees as the key to the Wonder, but she hasn't yet figured out her approach. She's bound to make a move soon—probably when the Storm Knights are dealing with the Kanawa group, the edeinos group, or the giant worm. In other words, use this encounter as a pacing technique or if the current encounter seems too weak to challenge the heroes.

• **Dark Victoria:** Use the Masked Marauder from *Torg Eternity*. Use the Masked Marauder from Torg Eternity. In addition to the listed powers, she is enveloped in a cloak of darkness with a 1 meter radius that gives enemies a -2 Darkness penalty to hit her, and she may move out of close combat without becoming Vulnerable. Her attacks against a foe in close combat are Favored.

• Nile Empire Shocktroopers (2 per hero): See Torg Eternity.

THE WORM APPROACHES

The biggest problem for the Core Earthers right now is a sense that the worm they've seen is destined to demolish their settlement, forcing them to find a new place to live. While Rhias protests this if she's around for the conversation (she tries to be!), the others are ready for the worst. So when the rumbles of the approaching worm herald its arrival, they each go to their stations behind the stone-and-wood barricades they've built over the preceding months. If the Storm Knights helped the underground settlers gain the edeinos' friendship, they join forces. Both settlements have nearly equivalent barriers up for protection, so it's up to the heroes to help Leisha broker which area they defend.

When the worm arrives, Rhias and the Storm Knights have only a minute to figure out how to control it—a Hard (DN 14) *willpower* test which requires the use of the star Wonder she carries with her. Whether the Storm Knights help her focus or persuade her to part with it so that one of their number can use it is up to the party.

If the worm comes under the full control of the user of the star, it could potentially be ridden as a mount. If the heroes choose to fight it instead, be sure to describe how the worm flows into and out the earth to attack and dodge.



Giving the refugees in Seattle a little hope could make or break the mission to save them.

THE AFFECTED EARTHWORM

Attributes: Charisma 3, Dexterity 6, Mind 3, Spirit 9, Strength 15

Skills: Dodge 10, find 6, maneuver 9, taunt 7, unarmed combat 10

Move: 8; Tough: 17 (2); Shock: 11; Wounds: 4 Equipment: —

Perks: -

Possibilities: None **Special Abilities:**

• Armor: Scaly skin +2.

• **Burrow:** The creature may move through rock underground at the same speed it moves on the surface.

• **Smash:** Damage *Strength* +2 (17), Reach 10 meters, Favored.

• **Swallow:** Damage *Strength* (15). This attack counts as Favored against any creature smaller than Very Large.

• Very Large: This worm is over 40 meters in length and six meters in diameter. Attackers gain +4 to attack rolls to hit due to its huge size.

THE AFTERMATH

The Storm Knights are victorious if they keep the locals—both Core and edeinos—from losing their shelter. They can also attempt to recruit Rhias, who is a potential Storm Knight, and bring her star Wonder to the Delphi Council with her in tow. Otherwise, she reluctantly gives it up while attempting to somehow keep the worm as a mount. Whether she does so or not is up to the GM, but it could be fun for Seattle to have a worm-rider trying to help set the place to rights!

As for the other groups, if the heroes disrupted the Kanawa exploration efforts, keep track of that—you could make use of that later in another game. And if they thwart the Nile Empire, they can have fun dealing with the repercussions there, too!

GHOST CLAN SCOULT

"CORPORATE SPIES, VILLAINS FROM THE NILE EMPIRE, AND GIANT WORMS...SEATTLE IS WEIRD."

-AIDEN

COSM: LIVING LAND LOCATION: PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

The beleaguered city of Philadelphia is bracing for a major offensive by the forces of Baruk Kaah. The historic site near Independence Hall in Philadelphia is full of important Core Earth artifacts that have created a hardpoint that extends a Mixed Zone in a 10-kilometer radius around the historic building. The city's resident Storm Knights have been drawn into a diversion or killed.

The city is in peril, and needs Storm Knights to come to its aid.

MISSION BRIEFING

A Delphi messenger arrives with urgent orders for everyone in the area to head for Philadelphia as quickly as possible.

Air travel may be an option but the Deep Mist has appeared around the city, which makes navigation and landings very difficult. Sea travel up the Delaware River is also a possibility, but fraught with dangers from edeinos bands, giant monsters, and the axioms and World Laws of the Living Land itself.

 \triangleleft

PHILLY OR BUST

Standard Scene. When the Storm Knights arrive out of the mist and enter the Philadelphia hardpoint, read or paraphrase the following:

The jungle and the mist suddenly part, exposing a baseball field. There is a large building off to the right, with a sign reading, "Cherry Hill High School West (Go Lions!)." The field is somewhat overgrown with both Earth and alien plants, but there is no jungle and much less decay. The elements of the environment are still the Living Land, but they are now mixed with something familiar, something comforting: the reality of Core Earth.

The Storm Knights have arrived in the Philadelphia suburbs of Camden County, New



The defenses of Philadelphia.

Jersey. The historic site near Independence Hall is full of important Core Earth artifacts, including the Liberty Bell (see Living Land Sourcebook), that create a hardpoint that extends a Mixed Zone roughly 10 kilometers out from the historic building.

As the party approaches the town, they see lights in the taller buildings across the river. The Betsy Ross Bridge has been destroyed to the north, and the Walt Whitman Bridge has been completely blocked and barricaded along its entire length by the defenders to the south. The Benjamin Franklin Bridge is open, but heavily guarded on the west side of the river by barricades and a makeshift gate.

The defenders are wary but reasonably relaxed around obvious Storm Knights. They have all had friends or family die by some strange plant or vanish into the mist, never to be seen again. They are frightened by the horrible sounds coming from the impenetrable jungle or worse, the stories about the monsters roaming the suburbs.

The militia questions the Storm Knights before letting them in. They become excited, even hopeful, when they hear that the group is made up of Storm Knights. If the team asks about the local Storm Knights, or ask to see the leadership, they are escorted to City Hall to meet the mayor.

The city itself is bustling: people moving and storing supplies, training in small arms and first aid, and turning every green piece of land into a garden for food. Here and there, generators are running and solar panels are installed on every rooftop, providing electricity for vital services, but for the most part the citizens of Philadelphia are using low-tech tools and techniques to conserve energy. The mood is grim, but optimistic.

CITY HALL

The team is led to the City Hall. The lights are out to conserve energy (the city has only three small power plants that are rationing fossil fuels), and every room and hallway is lit by daylight and hand-cranked survival lanterns.

Mayor Bradley Bowen is glad to hear of the heroes' arrival. The Philadelphia Free Militia, a group of Storm Knights who make up the core of the city's defense forces, were drawn away by reports of an Eternity Shard to the west. There has been no news of the militia for three weeks, and sightings of a mass of edeinos approaching has put everyone on edge. He is very glad to have new Storm Knights visiting, and listens to them with great interest.

There's a very good reason for this: There is very definitely an army of Baruk Kaah's forces marching toward the city from the direction of New York. Given the absence of the Free Militia, Bowen believes the current situation is unsustainable. His plan is to gather everyone together, take what historic artifacts they can (which canny Storm Knights know would obliterate the hardpoint), and try to get out. On the other hand, if the heroes would be willing to lead the city's forces in defense of Philadelphia, he is ready to stand fast. Either way, he offers the team a place to rest and get food and drink at the aid stations in Love Park across the street where they can plan their next move.

TALES OF ADVENTURE

As the group rests, give the players a chance to roleplay the Storm Knights' conversations about what has come before and what to do next. As they talk, locals begin to be drawn near them, curious about the travelers' story. At an opportune moment, a teenager approaches and asks the group to tell them the story of the world beyond the edge of the jungle, and what has happened to the world; the other Philadelphians nod in interest.

If the heroes tell their amazing stories, the audience becomes rapt. More and more people come to listen. They ask for details, gasp in wonder, laugh, weep, and even sing along if songs are sung. The Storm Knights give them a sense of community, and of hope.

The crowd parts and Mayor Bowen approaches the heroes to ask for their help in leading the defense of the city. They are the most qualified people in the entire area to set the defenses, and the people, the mayor included, believe in them. If the Storm Knights agree, there is a jubilant cheer from the crowd and they are escorted back to City Hall to plan.

THE SITUATION

The city has the following forces at its disposal.

• Philadelphia Defense Force: An untrained militia comprised of 800 citizen volunteers, thrown together over the last two days. They are disorganized and led by a retired Air Force sergeant in her mid-50s. Everyone is armed, but ammunition is scarce so these defenders can't hold out long against determined edeinos. Every 100 militia count as a Defense Line (see sidebar).

• Pennsylvania National Guard: There are about 150 troops left after the former commander's excursions resulted in the loss of more than half the unit and herself. The ranking officer is a first lieutenant financial management officer. He merged the remaining Army and Air National Guard troops into a single command, but hasn't done much else yet. Each 50 guards count as a Defense Line.

• First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry: The First City Troop is a unit of actual horse-riding cavalry 50 strong. The unit has a history that goes all the way back to the American Revolution. One of their traditions is that they elect their own commanding officer, and proudly tell the Storm Knights that they have unanimously elected one of their number (choose the most appropriate from among the player characters) after hearing about the heroes' exploits. The First City Troop has been vital in scouting the areas near the jungle — when fuel is rationed for critical uses only, it's good to have a horse to get around. Every 25 cavalry count as a Defense Line wherever they fight.

THE FRONTS

Available forces, including the Storm Knights themselves, may be stationed at various key defense points.

• Betsy Ross Bridge: Although the bridge is destroyed, edeinos might attempt to swim or fly across this point of the river. Any who try are Very Vulnerable and quickly wiped out...so long as a line of defenders are present.

• Walt Whitman Bridge: This bridge is completely blockaded and counts as three Defense Lines on its own. If left completely unmanned the edeinos switch tactics and try to batter through the debris and cross here.

• Benjamin Franklin Bridge: This bridge counts as a Defense Line on its own, and is where the majority of the edeinos attack is expected. Only one line can fight at a time, but reserves can quickly move from Downtown (see below) to reinforce the bridege.

• **City Hall:** The heart of the Philadephia hardpoint. If edeinos raiders manage to vandalize it the Core Earth Mixed Zone falters and fails, rendering all Ord defenders useless.

• **Downtown:** The majority of the city's people and resources are spread throughout the area surrounding City Hall. It may not be the main focus of an attack, but edeinos are known to target civilians if they have an opportunity.

•Camden Suburbs: Abandoned and unnecessary to defend, but an advanced force could cause serious disruption to any edeinos attack—at the potential cost of all the brave people surrounded by swarms of enemies. Any Storm Knights fighting here get to fight Theeklik and one Attack Wave of opponents of *every* type. The benefit is each hero and Defense Line of troops used here counts as an extra Defense Line on the first attack at every other location.

When evening comes, an army of edeinos with dinosaurs and gospog breaks out of the trees and marches toward the city. If left alone, the edeinos make camp about five kilometers from the river and begin a long night of chanting and drumming.

DEFENSE LINES

When the attack comes, some of the forces are fought by the Storm Knights, while others are canceled out by the city's defenders. Each "Defense Line" removes some portion of the attacking force, and enough layers can hold a position indefinitely with no help at all. Storm Knights understand roughly how many troops constitute a Defense Line when they're distributing their forces, described with each troop type.

The attack comes on multiple fronts and in multiple waves. A Defense Line becomes "exhausted" after facing an Attack Wave. An exhausted line is no longer able to contribute to the battle, either because it's out of ammunition or suffered significant casualties.

A DN 20 *persuasion* test between attacks can inspire an exhausted line to reform and fight again.

THE DRUMS OF WAR

Dramatic Scene. The edeinos have just been waiting for dawn to begin their attack. When they do, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

Dawn breaks and a red sun rises over the City of Brotherly Love. In the distance, drums begin to pound, and a cacophony of inhuman cries rises up from the east.

Nearby defenders quietly check their weapons one final time. One trooper, a young man of maybe 19 or 20, looks up at you and grins. As one, the city awaits the approach of the invaders.

The setup for this scene relies entirely on the plans laid by the Storm Knights. They might dig in to defend the Franklin Bridge. They might cross the Delaware under the cover of darkness to set up ambushes in the streets of Camden. They might march out to engage the army head-on.

This scene describes the invaders' side of the battle. It's up to you, the Game Master, to play out the scene, whether it's a battle or a siege.

THE EDEINOS' PLAN

The edeinos aren't known for deep strategic planning, especially thanks to the low Social Axiom of the Living Land. The leader of the war band, Theeklik, has her own ideas about how to run the battle.

She plans to first send in the majority of her gospog as shock troops. The main assault is aimed at the Franklin Bridge. The width of the bridge only allows for about 20 gospog in the front rank at once. The gospogs' orders are to destroy the barricades and kill every human they find. The first five waves attack alone to draw defenders to the bridge.

They come in ten Attack Waves of 100, and every Defense Line destroys one Attack Wave before becoming exhausted. There's time between waves to replace an exhausted Defense Line with troops from somewhere else. If all Defense Lines are exhausted the Storm Knights can fight a battle against the gospog to hold the bridge, or pull back and allow the gospog to enter downtown where they disperse seeking humans.

After the gospog come the triceratops riders. If the Walt Whitman Bridge is lightlynmanned Theeklik commits her triceratops to that location while the gospog attack the Franklin Bridge. Their job isn't hard: It's to smash through anything in their way and then head for City Hall. If the Whitman Bridge looks defended or if the gospog broke through she sends them to the Franklin bridge.

Once the defenses are down or both the gospog and Triceraptios have failed the Redjaw troops attack with the intent to slaughtering every human they can sink their spears into.

They spread through Downtown in warbands of 20. Any remaining Defense Lines eliminate one warband each before being exhausted. If the defenses are not broken by the gospog or the triceratops riders, they abandon the bridge and swim across the Delaware in the same warbands, coming up all along the coast. Remaining Defense Lines take out two Attack Waves each before being exhausted in this scenario.

Meanwhile, the lakten riders fly over the battlefield in three Attack Waves of ten, throwing javelins into enemy units. One of these groups harasses Storm Knights at any position. Another attacks City Hall and vandalaizes it if no defenders are present. The third remains in reserve until the final battle.

Theeklik herself walks the battlefield mostly staying aloof from combat. She knows that if she were to fall, the rest of the army would panic and flee. Heroes who sneak through enemy lines or fight in the Camden Suburbs may also get a direct shot at her. Theeklik is usually accompanied by the last Attack Wave of gospog, Redjaws, and Lakten. If she falls, any remaining edeinos break and flee back into the jungle.

• Edeinos Gotak (10): Use Whitespear Gotak, page 52. One with each wave of Gospog.

• **Gospog of the First Planting (1,000):** See *Torg Eternity*. Ten Attack Waves of 100.

• Lakten (30): See page 59.

• Lakten Riders (30): Use Edeinos Beastriders, see page 80.

• **Redjaw Warriors (160):** Use Edeinos Warriors (see page 80). Eight Attack Waves of 20.

• **Triceratops (30):** See page 80. Three Attack Waves of ten.

• **Triceratops Riders (30):** Use Edeinos Beastriders, see page 80.

• War Leader Theeklik: See page 29.

FIGHTING THE BATTLES

If no characters are present each Attack Wave simply exhausts one Defense Line, and then the Storm Knights have a brief window to move their remaining Defense Lines to different locations.

If the Storm Knights are present for a battle they either play it safe or lead the charge. Playing it safe results in the Defense Line becoming exhausted as usual. Leading the charge plays out as a fight between the Storm Knights and half the Attack Wave. Players of characters who aren't there can use Ords from the group of defenders. If the Storm Knights win the Attack Wave is elimianted without exhauting the Defense Line.

Heroes recover Shock between waves, but they start each new battle with one Fatigue result for each battle they've already fought that day. If the Storm Knights didn't tell tales or inspire the crowd during scene one, any Ords start the battle Fatigued. A last-minute pep talk (and a successful *persuasion* test) allows that Shock to recover.

THE OUTCOME

If the battle is won the survivors cheer and celebrations begin. The dead are buried, wounds bound, and reconstruction begins. The largest bastion of Core Earth on the United States Eastern Seaboard stands strong. If the hardpoint falls, the edeinos are preoccupied with tearing down the city and its artifacts. The survivors slip away, but they have a long and dangerous trek ahead of them.

THEEKLIK

Theeklik is a particularly tall warrior with crimson patterns painted onto her scales like blood splashes. The patchy red on Theeklik's scales covers the fact that they're thicker than normal and a dark, grayish color. Her hands are an even lighter gray, ending in long black talons.

Quote: "This death-place is a desert that needs rains of blood so life may grow!"

Attributes: Charisma 7, Dexterity 10, Mind 6, Spirit 10, Strength 12

Skills: Beast riding 11, dodge 12, find 7, faith 11, intimidation 12, maneuver 11, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 11, reality 12, stealth 11, survival 9, taunt 8, tracking 8, trick 9, unarmed combat 12

Move: 10; **Tough:** 14 (2); **Shock:** 10; **Wounds:** 3

Equipment: Hrockt-shoot spear (Damage *Strength* +2 / 14)

Perks: Death Claw, Stone Skin, Vengeful, Whip Tail

Possibilities: 3

Special Abilities:

• Armor: Stone Skin +2.

• **Bite/Claws:** Damage *Strength* +3 (15), AP 2.

PHILADELPHIA'S DEFENDERS

Generally, the forces the Storm Knights array against the invasion serve to reduce the number of foes faced directly by the characters. However, a player may need a character to play drawn from the ordinary defenders.

• Philadelphia Defense Force (800): Use Untrained Militia below.

• Pennsylvania National Guard (150): Use Human Soldiers (see page 80).

> • First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry (50): Use Human Soldiers (see page 80). Each also has *beast riding* 8, and is equipped with a horse (Move 13, Toughness 13) and a sabre (*Strength* +2/11 damage).

UNTRAINED MILITIA

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 6, Mind 7, Spirit 7, Strength 6

Skills: Dodge 7, find 8, fire combat 7, land vehicles 8, melee weapons 7, taunt 8, trick 8

Move: 6; Tough: 6; Shock: 7; Wounds: —

Equipment: .38 revolver (Damage 12, Range 10/20/40), Knife (Str+1/7) Perks: —

Possibilities: Never Special Abilities: —

COSM: CORE EARTH AND THE LIVING LAND

LOCATION: LAKE CHAMPLAIN, VERMONT

This mission dispatches the Storm Knights to Vermont in the northeastern United States. Specifically to the eastern shores of Lake Champlain, which forms part of the border between Vermont and New York State to the west. It is also the boundary between the border of the area claimed by the Living Land's reality and the Core Earth region of New England.

MISSION BRIEFING

The Storm Knights receive the following message from the Delphi Council:

"Most recent intelligence reports two kinds of increased activity along the storm front of the Living Land in the Lake Champlain Valley. The first are sightings of small groups of edeinos in boats on the lake. They are clearly hostile, but in such small numbers that we think it is unlikely they are an invasion force, more likely scouts of some kind.

"The other sightings are of an aquatic dinosaur of some type, which Vermont locals are associating with legends of 'Champ,' the Lake Champlain Monster. While this is more likely one or more Living Land creatures, we hesitate to dismiss the power of local legend, which has so often come true in the wake of the invasion.

"Investigate the sightings and activities on the lake, and take action if you discover evidence of an imminent edeinos threat."

0 0

BURLINGTON

Standard Scene. Although it is Vermont's largest city, Burlington was only home to just under 50 thousand people before the start of the Possibility War. Now, like many border areas, it is a city under seige, with an influx of refugees from Core Earth



Is Champ a dinosaur, a cryptid, or something else entirely?

areas, particularly neighboring New York, but with a number of residents who have fled deeper into Core Earth territory, farther away from the expanding borders of the Living Land.

Generally, the hardy people of Vermont have embraced the legacy of their Green Mountain ancestors, and have dug in to repel a potential attack. Fortunately, Baruk Kaah's attention has largely been elsewhere than the northeastern borders of the Living Land, and the natural barriers of the lake and the greater Champlain Valley have minimized contact with the edeinos.

A few Living Land creatures have found their way into the Lake and across to Vermont, and there have been increasing unusual sightings, as mentioned in the Delphi Council briefing. Of potential interest to the Delphi Council is evidence of a stela in Vermont. Its location has yet to be pinpointed. Scouting and surveying parties are on the lookout for it, and council agents have standing orders to investigate any leads as to the location of the stela, since uprooting it would strike a serious blow against the Living Land in the northeastern United States.

In truth, the stela is just west of Vermont. There's effectively no chance of the Storm Knights coming across it during this adventure, but it makes an effective hook and something you can pick up on for a future adventure in the area.

THE INVESTIGATION

The Delphi agents can go about their investigation largely however they want. Feel free to improvise any scenes involving their arrival in Burlington; the small airport to the east of the city is still operational, as are the major roads. Likewise, feel free to improvise some encounters along the lakeshore, if the Storm Knights choose to investigate on foot initially. In particular, they might visit or run across a small ornamental plaque about Champ in the parkland along the lake, if you want to drop hints or get the players thinking about the cryptid lake monster.

Sooner or later, the Storm Knights need to get out onto the water to continue their investigation. They can rent or hire a boat in Burlington, the equivalent of a motorboat (see *Torg Eternity*). If none of the



characters have the *water vehicles* skill, they might also want to hire a pilot. Fortunately, a young man named Stanley Sorrell is available.

STANLEY SORRELL

Stanley is of mixed European and Abenaki heritage, and knows all of the local legends concerning Lake Champlain, including stories about Champ, whom the Abenaki called "Tatoskok."

Attributes: Charisma 7, Dexterity 9, Mind 8, Spirit 9, Strength 7

Skills: Dodge 10, find 9, fire combat 11, first aid 9, intimidation 9, maneuver 11, melee weapons 10, stealth 10, survival 9, taunt 9, unarmed combat 10, water vehicles 12

Move: 9; Tough: 8 (1); Shock: 9; Wounds: 1

Equipment: Leather jacket (+1 Armor), machete (Damage *Strength* +2/9), 12-gauge shotgun (Damage 14, Range 10/20/30)

Perks: Strong Willed **Possibilities:** None

Special Abilities: -

MEETING CHAMP

Once the characters have left shore, they sail into the becalmed waters of a mist-shrouded Lake Champlain. A heavy fog covers the lake on most days, including when the Storm Knights investigate, lit by occasional distant flashes of multicolored lightning from the western reality storm front, and peals of thunder that roll and echo across the lake. Otherwise, the waters and the mist are quite still, and there is little sound other than that of the boat's engine. Although the characters might believe otherwise, this is not the Deep Mist of the Living Land, just a heavy and otherwise mundane fog—a creation of the Deep Mist, the reality storms, and conditions on the lake.

Nevertheless, progress through the mist-covered waters is slow, since visibility is sharply limited, and the group is reliant on their onboard compass to know what direction they're moving in, since they quickly lose sight of shore and any other landmarks. You may wish to roll some dice out of sight of the players, consult the results, and describe occasional vague, distant noises or shapes out in the mist to set the tone for their slow progress. If you want, feel free to add an additional encounter here, either with an aerial or aquatic Living Land creature, or with a smaller scouting party of Bluespine edeinos—no more than four which may attack the Storm Knights or slip away into the mist to inform the Optant Sorek Thon of their presence, unless the characters manage to stop them.

After a few hours of searching, characters hear movement in the water and feel waves rocking their boat as a shadowy bulk rises up, barely visible in the mist ahead, moving toward them!

Flip the first card on the action stack when Champ appears. The lake creature does not attack the Storm Knights or their boat unless they attack first, in which case Champ fights to defend itself. The creature is actually more intelligent than the characters might imagine and is curious about them. Its initial attitude is neutral, but if an edeinos is with them the edeinos outsider modifier of -4 on *persuasion* tests applies to the whole group. A Standard Success with a persuasion attempt means Champ remains curious and cautious. A Good Success or better leads to a friendly gesture, such as lowering its head and allowing the character to touch it. The group can also use magic, miracles, or psionics to establish communication with the creature.

CHAMP

The long-necked creature appears similar to a plesiosaurus, although its leathery hide is a dark brown with a band of red around its neck near the head, and a white star-shaped patch between and just above its dark eyes.

- Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 11, Strength 14
- Skills: Dodge 13, find 7, intimidation 12, maneuver 13, reality 12, taunt (11), trick (11), unarmed combat 14

Move: 7; Tough: 16 (2); Shock: 13; Wounds: 5 Equipment: — Perks: Negation

reiks. Negation

Possibilities: 5

Special Abilities:

• Armor: Thick skin +2.

- Bite: Damage Strength +2 (16), Reach 4 meters.
- Large: Champ is eight meters long. Attackers gain +2 to attack rolls due to its size.

• Swim: Move 13 in water.

UNWELCOME COMPANY

Dramatic Scene. Just after the Storm Knights have made friendly contact with Champ, or a fight has broken out, the lake creature seems to seize up, a strange reddish light glowing in its eyes, and the characters can hear a guttural, hissing chant emerging from the mist.

A kind of crude longboat approaches, crewed by Bluespine edeinos led by Sorek Thon, an edeinos optant. Thon is enacting a unique ritual to gain power over the lake creature, but it takes time, and the edeinos need to ensure the Stormers cannot interfere.

The optant's ritual is a **Dramatic Skill Resolution** (see *Torg Eternity*) using Sorek Thon's *faith* skill, with a DN of 11 (Champ's *Spirit*). He has completed step A. Once step D is complete, the lake creature is under Sorek Thon's command and does whatever he wishes. Until then, Champ is stunned, struggling against the ritual and unable to act.

Any round Sorek Thon takes an action against the heroes, he cannot take an action to further the ritual, unless he takes a Multi-Action (see **Multi-Actions** in *Torg Eternity*).

If Thon stops furthering the ritual for more than a round, he has to start over again at step A.

The edeinos warriors dive into the water to swim toward the heroes' boat and attack in close combat. They generally act to defend Sorek Thon, but once they are in the heat of battle, the sata eaters don't concern themselves with anything other than destroying their enemies.

The heavy fog on the lake leaves everyone virtually blind: They take a –6 penalty for blind fire on ranged attacks.

The Storm Knights can hear Sorek Thon's chants out in the mist, and the splashing of Bluespine warriors swimming toward them, but it's difficult to see or target anything beyond the bounds of their boat. The fog also allows you to play with the edeinos' numbers: If two per Storm Knight proves too easy, you can simply have another wave of Bluespine warriors appear out of the mist to attack.

If Sorek Thon manages to complete his ritual, he commands Champ to destroy the interlopers as the first strike against those who would defy the Saar of Takta Ker. The heroes can fight Champ, possibly knocking out or killing the creature, or try to free it from Thon's control. A Player's Call using an interaction skill breaks the optant's control, as does the same level of success with a commune with animals or ward enemy miracle invoked for that purpose. At the GM's discretion, heroic acts on the part of the characters, including carefully avoiding harming Champ or even protecting it from the attacks of others, can provide a bonus on these actions. If the characters need a bit of advice or guidance in dealing with Champ, and Stanley Sorrell accompanies them, he makes a good mouthpiece for communicating hints to the players.

If Sorek Thon is knocked out or defeated, the effects of the ritual end and Champ is likewise freed. In either case, if Champ is freed from the ritual it attacks any remaining edeinos to drive them off, focusing particular fury on Sorek Thon if he is still alive.

- Sorek Thon: See below.
- Bluespine Sata Eater (2 per hero): See below.

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT ALTERED REALITY?! HOW COULD IT ALTER REALITY, IT'S AN ANIMAL!"

-CARTER DIXON

BLUESPINE SATA EATER

Edeinos are trained in combat from the day they're born. They grow up with a spear in their hands and are ferocious in their pursuit and capture of prey, which they rip apart with their savage teeth.

Attributes: Charisma 5, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 8, Strength 11

Skills: Dodge 10, faith 9, intimidation (15), maneuver 10, melee weapons 11, stealth 10, survival 8, taunt (10), tracking 8, unarmed combat 12

Move: 9; Tough: 11; Shock: —; Wounds: 1 Equipment: Hrockt-shoot spear (*Strength* +2/13) Perks: Vengeful

Possibilities: Rare (2)

Special Abilities:

- Berserker: These edeinos ignore Shock.
- Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (13).
- Swim: Move 9 in water.

SOREK THON

This optant is quite fond of Deepweed, as most Bluespines are, but hasn't indulged in the dangerous sata root that his warriors use.

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 11, Strength 10

Skills: Dodge 10, faith 14, find 8, intimidation 13, maneuver 11, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 11, reality 13, survival 9, unarmed combat 11

Move: 9; Tough: 12 (2); Shock: 11; Wounds: 1

Equipment: Hrockt-shoot spear (Damage *Strength* +2/12), hrockt-root armor (Armor +2, Torso)

Perks: Optant, Miracles (*bless, call animals, commune with animals, shape plants, strike, ward enemy*)

Possibilities: 3

Special Abilities:

- Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).
- Swim: Move 9 in water.

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

Ideally, the Storm Knights prevent the forces of the Living Land from co-opting Champ and undermining the defenses of the Champlain area.

Perhaps they also make friends with the lake monster, further ensuring Champ's assistance in protecting the people along the lakeshore. Many of the people of Burlington are delighted to hear proof not only of Champ's existence, but of its goodwill toward them.

More than ever, the lake monster becomes the city's mascot and ally, and the locals look to continue communicating to the best of their ability. A rescued Champ certainly remains a determined foe of invaders encroaching upon Core Earth territory. If you wish to extend or expand this scene, perhaps Champ's actions against the invaders are motivated by something other than just a desire to protect Core Earth's reality:

• The lake monster might, for example, have immature offspring to protect, or be safeguarding some treasure (like an Eternity Shard) hidden at the bottom of Lake Champlain or in cave or secret cove along the shore.

•As a *reality*-rated cryptid, Champ might have unusual insights into the actions of the invaders, or even the placement of Living Land stelae.

• There could be an aquatic ruin or entrance to the Land Below along the storm front between the two realities, either leading the heroes to new adventures, or revealing a new danger poised to rise up and threaten the people of Burlington and the surrounding area.
COSM: LIVING LAND

LOCATION: A SMALL AIRPORT NOT FAR FROM THE MONTANA-IDAHO BORDER

A shift of a few kilometers doesn't mean much on the world map, but it means everything to the small border towns and camps caught up in the change. One such transition has trapped refugees and an Air Force crew, and only a brave team of Storm Knights can get into the area and bring everyone back out again.

MISSION BRIEFING

The Delphi Council sends an urgent message to the Storm Knights, who currently find themselves somewhere in the western United States. The message follows:

"The Riverbend Municipal Airport lies about 150 miles east of the border between Idaho and Montana. Hunters and outdoorsmen use the airport to fly into and out of the area. Locals who own small private planes sometimes fly to circumvent the long drive to Butte or Spokane.

"Up until now, the Living Land cosm has not affected this rural site, despite its proximity. But two days ago, this changed when the borders of the cosm suddenly shifted. We suspect Kaah activated a backup stela, so the valley turned into a primeval landscape. However, satellite pictures indicate the airport did not change, suggesting that it is a hardpoint.

"The US military has asked for our help. The change in the cosm's borders caused a reality storm which forced a military transport jet to make an emergency landing at the airport. The soldiers got a message out, asking for help, before the shifting cosm cut them off. The people trapped there can't simply fly back out, so your mission is to get there and rescue anyone trapped at the airport—either by flying the military plane out, or failing that, driving them out in a truck or bus."



The affected airport.

RIVERBEND MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

Standard Scene. The Riverbend Municipal Airport sits on top of a small hill overlooking the surrounding countryside. The local county sheriff's office is at the foot of the hill, on the road leading to the airport. A small trailer park stands at the foot of the hill below the airport. The airport is not actually in the town; it's about five miles away, up a winding road.

Riverbend is a tiny town with fewer than 500 residents. It sits about 175 miles (280 km, about two and a half hours by car) northwest of Butte, Montana along I-90, right in the center of the Lolo National Forest, near the Flathead Indian Reservation. It offers easy access to camping, fishing, hiking, off-

roading, and hunting, which makes the airport a great spot for outdoorsmen to fly into from around the west. Spokane, Washington lies about 150 miles northwest of the town, but is fully within the Living Land's cosm.

The Riverbend Airport covers an area of about 110 acres; a high chain-link fence with barbed wire on top surrounds it. It features six hangars, suitable to store private planes during the winter or in harsh weather. Each holds up to five planes. The airport rents out about half of the hangar spaces at any given time. There's a mechanics shed where pilots can take their planes for basic repair work, though it's not capable of handling complicated repairs. The terminal contains a few small offices for local businesses (including a flight training facility and a skydiving school), a vending machine cafeteria, and the tower. Riverbend Airport has only one runway, which points roughly east-west and is about 4,500 feet (1,500 meters) long and 75 feet (25 meters) wide. It's not suitable for landing large planes even on good days, so it's a miracle the military transport jet was able to safely put down here.

At the foot of the hill is the Mineral County sheriff's office, which consists of one large building with offices, a temporary holding facility for prisoners, and a motor pool. A narrow, sinuous road winds up the hill from the sheriff's office to the airport.

Near the sheriff's office stands a trailer park. It's a nice, though not upper-class, neighborhood with about 30 trailers. Residents range from retired couples to single moms to extended families.

Getting to the airport is difficult. Western Montana—already a remote area—is cut off due to the shifting border and the resultant reality storms. The heroes might fly there, but it's not easy. The reality storm still rages, making flight a dangerous proposition. During reality storms, the cosms change back and forth, and not just to and from the invading reality; things can get really weird. The Storm Knights might also fly into Butte, then drive most of the way to the Riverbend Airport. This takes longer but is safer.

The trip to Riverbend can be a cool opportunity for the Game Master to add short adventures for the Storm Knights, introducing things to the game which might foreshadow later adventures or give clues to help the heroes face off against the invaders. But don't take too long—the people trapped at the airport can't hold out forever!

THE STORY SO FAR

A military transport plane was flying south from Canada, skirting along the edge of the Living Land but far enough away from the border that they thought they were safe, heading to LA. But a reality storm drove it off course and forced it to make an emergency landing at the only airport it could safely reach—Riverbend Municipal. Because the airport runway isn't designed for large planes, the transport barely managed the landing. The pilots sent a signal out to their superiors, who contacted the Delphi Council to send help. Shortly after the landing, everything around the airport changed into a primeval landscape. The people who live nearby panicked and rushed to the sheriff's office for help. During the confusion, edeinos attacked the airport. The soldiers, deputies, and civilians defended themselves. The edeinos, not expecting such resistance, fell back—but not before both sides suffered heavy casualties. Now the soldiers and civilians find themselves trapped at the airport.

Since the attack, the soldiers and civilians have put together a line of static defenses to protect the airport. They've moved cars and trucks along the road to prevent the edeinos from utilizing it. They've blocked the front gates of the airport with more cars and sandbags. Additionally, they've set up a field hospital for the injured inside the airport terminal, which they're using as the command headquarters. They have a pretty good view of the surrounding area from the airport tower, but the jungle is thick enough to hide what the edeinos are doing, so they don't have a good idea of what they're facing. Though they've abandoned the trailer park and the sheriff's office, twice now a small group has gone there to scrounge for supplies; those brave souls have not returned. The edeinos have tested their defenses for the last two days, but haven't attempted another full-on attack.

Luckily, between the soldiers, the deputies, and the residents of the nearby neighborhood, they have a fair number of guns. Unluckily, their guns become little more than fancy clubs if they leave the hill, so they're stuck until help arrives, and they're running low on ammunition and other supplies. The slope is steep enough that the hill is easy to defend, but there aren't enough people to defend all of it at once. What it boils down to is the defenders can hold on for now, but another major assault—even if it fails—completely depletes their supplies and leaves them helpless.

WARLORD DRAAHAH

Warlord Draahah of the Ghost Clan is huge, a towering mountain of muscle and fury, but he is cunning as well. He knows he must build up his forces to attack the airport again. He lost too many warriors in the first assault, which ended up a disaster on both sides. The edeinos were not prepared for the level of resistance they faced. Now, his warriors probe the hill's defenses while Warlord Draahah prepares for the coming attack.

Quote: "The pink-skins have fought a good fight, but they cannot withstand our strength!"

- Attributes: Charisma 7, Dexterity 12, Mind 10, Spirit 11, Strength 13
- **Skills:** Dodge 15, faith 12, intimidation 14, maneuver 15, melee weapons 17, reality 12, stealth 17, taunt 8, trick 12, unarmed combat 15

Move: 12; Tough: 13; Shock: 11; Wounds: 3

Equipment: Hrockt-shoot spear (Damage *Strength* +2/15)

Perks: Chameleon Skin, Relentless, Skin Shifter, Sprinter, Vengeful

Possibilities: 3

Special Abilities:

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (15).

THE EDEINOS

The edeinos keep close tabs on the hill. They've ambushed and killed or captured any humans they have found, particularly anyone leaving the airport (either to escape or to scrounge for supplies). Warlord Draahah is not above using torture to learn everything he can about the airport's defenses.

Among his forces are two triceratops, equipped for war, which he intends to lead the assault and which the human defenders have no way to fight. But he grows impatient, so he won't wait much longer. He attacks a few hours after the heroes arrive at the airport, leaving them little time to get out or prepare beyond what the defenders have already done.

He also counts dozens of edeinos warriors and Ghost Clan mistwalkers among his forces, who are fiercely loyal to him and eager for battle. Draahah doesn't know why Baruk Kaah wants the Talisman; he just knows it's his duty to capture this hill.

The GM can adjust this if the opposition is either too strong or too weak to stand up to the Storm Knights.

- Triceratops (2): See page 80.
- Edeinos Warriors (24): See page 80.
- Ghost Clan Mistwalker Scouts (24): See page 80.

WHATPS REALLY GOING ONP

Why didn't the airport change when the border of the Living Land shifted? As the Storm Knights quickly discover, Riverbend isn't nearly populated enough to support a hardpoint, nor does it contain any sort of significant artifact or monument which would focus Core Earth's Possibility Energy. In fact, even its residents would admit the area is rather drab and ordinary.

What the heroes learn is that the army jet was transporting an Eternity Shard (see *Torg Eternity*) from Alaska to Los Angeles, to help with the upcoming battle of LA. The military believes this artifact can resist the expansion of Baruk Kaah's realm, and they're right.

Baruk Kaah wants it, and he will stop at nothing to get it—including the expenditure of some of his personal Possibility Energy. To capture it, Kaah triggered a backup stela on the edge of his border. This initiated a severe reality storm as it changed the border, enveloping the transport within his territory and trapping it there. Now he's sent one of his most powerful and trusted warlords to take possession of the artifact.

THE DEFENDERS

A ragtag group of soldiers, deputies, and civilians defends the airport. Dozens of non-combatants (mostly children, the old, and the infirm) tend to other jobs, such as preparing food or caring for the wounded. Morale is low, because these people do not know when or if help will arrive.

CAPTAIN GRAHAM PORTER

Captain Porter graduated from West Point, and has led troops against the invasion since the beginning. He's smart, brave, and knows what he's doing. However, what's happening here is beyond his experience. He's terrified of what might come, but his training allows him to keep his emotions in check and continue moving forward. He's putting on a brave face to preserve the morale of his soldiers and the civilians they're protecting. He became injured in the first battle shortly after they landed; his left arm is in a sling.

Despite the fact that they are at an airport and have several qualified pilots available, he's afraid to fly out. He knows if they leave the protection of this hill, the plane's engines may stop working, dooming everyone aboard. Porter knows they are transporting a talisman but is unaware of how powerful it truly is. He just knows it's vitally important to the war effort, and would die to protect it.

He has six soldiers under his command, alive and uninjured. All of them are combat vets, and all of them trust Captain Porter implicitly.

Quote: "OK, people. This isn't the kind of thing we're trained to do, but it is the thing we need to do. So let's get to it."

For Captain Porter, use the stats for the Officer in *Torg Eternity*. For the six men under Porter's command use the stats for Soldiers. They have standard small arms (M-4 rifles and pistols), but no heavy weapons or explosives.

SHERIFF ROBBY GUIFRIDA

Sheriff Robby Guifrida is a small-town sheriff who has lived in this area for most of his life. He knows the county like the back of his hand, and most of the people too. But this? This is well beyond his experience. He's tamped down his fear because Captain Porter seems to know what he's doing, but Guifrida and his deputies are scared. They want to make a break for it, get to the next town—or even as far as Butte—and get help. They haven't done anything but talk about it yet, but if another big attack comes they might try to escape.

Guifrida has four deputies under his command right now. Additionally, he's in charge of 14 civilians with access to firearms.

Quote: "Look, I'm used to checking hunting permits and keeping the peace, not fighting dinosaur-men!" Use the stats for Police Officer in *Torg Eternity* for Guifrida and his four deputies, and Untrained Militia from page 29 for his armed civilian help.

THE BOX

The soldiers are transporting the object currently keeping the cosm around the hill stable. They know their mission is of vital importance, and they will die to protect the object, but their superiors did not explain its significance. Porter believes it's a talisman, but doesn't know anything beyond that. They keep it inside a locked box that weighs about 50 pounds: It's easy for two men to carry, but a bit trickier with just one man. The box does not block the object's effect.

The box is made from safe-grade steel and has an advanced combination lock, making it difficult to break into. There are at least two soldiers guarding it, around the clock. Captain Porter does not have the combination and objects if the Storm Knights try to open it.

The box is deliberately Near Impossible to open (–10 penalty/DN 20), but Storm Knights are tenacious and capable of nearly anything once they set their minds to it. Opening the box does not grant the Storm Knights any additional benefits, but it may make the object in the box more difficult to keep track of. Once they find out what it is, a group of survivors (such as Sheriff Guifrida's men) might try to escape the airport using it as a piece of Core Earth's reality they can take along with them.

What is inside the box? It contains an Eternity Shard that acts like a talisman, creating a hardpoint with a 25 meter radius as long as it doesn't move. The Game Master should decide what form the shard takes, making it meaningful for one or more of the Storm Knights. Some potential objects might be:

- A moon rock brought back from Apollo 11's visit to the Moon.
- John Lennon's glasses.
- A piece of rock from Mount Rushmore.
- A baseball signed by Babe Ruth.
- Eisenhower's Stetson hat.
- The golden spike used to join the rails of the first transcontinental railroad in the US.

• An original animation cell from Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

• A program from Ford's Theatre from the night Lincoln was shot.

• A lifejacket from the R.M.S. Titanic.

• A hand-annotated copy of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

• The last double eagle coin, minted in 1933.

The military knows (or at least suspects) what they have, which is why they want to keep it quiet. The Delphi Council has a prior claim on any Eternity Shards, but the army wants to keep it for their own use. Captain Porter has orders to bring back the box's contents without entangling the Delphi Council. Persuasion attempts against him are DN 16, but gain a +4 bonus if the standing orders regarding Eternity Shards are invoked.

RESOLVING THE ADVENTURE

Warlord Draahah's forces are nearly ready to begin the assault and are just waiting for a sign. Once the Storm Knights arrive on the scene, the edeinos won't wait long before they attack. The soldiers and civilians at the airport have entrenched themselves as best as they can, but their nerves are fraying and tensions are high. Draahah attacks shortly after the heroes arrive, during the cover of darkness when the mists rise up to hide his warriors' movements.

Draahah plans to charge the triceratops to knock the defenders' static defenses aside and absorb most of the humans' firepower. The majority of his warriors, led by Draahah himself, follow behind, killing anyone who wasn't crushed in the initial assault. A smaller group of mist walkers attack from the opposite side of the airport, both to draw off reinforcements and to cause confusion in the defenders' ranks.

The heroes' goal is to get everyone (including the Eternity Shard) out of here safely. There are a number of possible endgames:

•Every person trapped at the airport can fit inside the military jet (though it's a tight squeeze), but taking off is a problem since the runway isn't designed for planes of its sizeit's short even under good circumstances, and these aren't good circumstances. Because of the difficulty getting this big a plane off the ground, there is a –4 to the *air vehicles* test, and the transport has a –4 MR, so the DN to take off is 18.

• Another option is to take multiple aircraft. The airport houses 16 small airplanes in the hangars and plenty of fuel. But most of them only fit four or five passengers, including the pilot, and there aren't enough pilots to fly all the planes they would need to escape.

• The heroes could also try to break through the edeinos' lines and get everyone to safety over land in a truck or bus, though this path is fraught with peril.

• The heroes can try to discover the location of the backup stela that caused the borders to shift, and destroy it. Doing so pushes the Living Land's border back to where it was before all this began, though it might cause another major reality storm.

•Let the Storm Knights come up with creative solutions to this adventure! If they fail and Baruk Kaah gains access to the Shard, he destroys it and absorbs its Possibility Energy, and takes away one of the weapons Core Earth's defenders could have used against him.



COSM: LIVING LAND LOCATION: YUCATÁN PENINSULA

A mad Nile Empire villain is gathering materials from the ancient meteor impact that formed the Yucatán Peninsula. A strange talisman creates a Nile Empire Mixed Zone, similar to the one recorded outside Kali Station in India.

MISSION BRIEFING

Standard Scene. The Storm Knights are on a Delphi-owned cargo vessel, the *Blatant Lie*, anchored 10 miles off the coast of the Yucatán peninsula, safely in Core Earth waters. The ship acts as a resupply stopover-floating hospitalcommunications outpost for Storm Knights and other Delphi personnel and national armed forces. It's fully equipped for any eventuality, and boasts a helipad and a collection of small boats.

Just as the Storm Knights are preparing to leave on their next mission, the ship's radio operator comes in with an urgent dispatch:

"This is a top priority mission override. For the past month, an airship has been intermittently spotted drifting approximately 10 miles northeast of Merida. We have reason to believe that this is a Nile incursion. All current assignments are placed on hold until you can ascertain if Nile forces are in the Yucatán, and why, then stop them. Permission granted to take one of the Blatant Lie's catamarans in order to make for the Yucatán shore. A new river has been created thanks to the axiom wash, and we recommend you sail upriver in order to travel inland faster. When done, it's imperative that you report back to the nearest Delphi outpost or facility as soon as possible. End transmission."

The Delphi Council gives the party a catamaran (see below) to use to make landfall on the Yucatán Coast, near the mouth of the new river. Other gear may be requisitioned normally from anything the ship might reasonably have aboard.



The village on the route to the mysterious new pyramid.

CATAMARAN

This small, hand-built sailing vessel has proven stable within the Living Land's Tech Axiom. The Delphi Council suspects such craft are good down to Tech Axiom 5, but there's been no way to verify that yet. Catamarans are small and reliable, but susceptible to storms and attacks by the large predators common around the Yucatán.

Speed: 20 kph (8); **Tough:** 12; **Wounds:** 2

• Passengers: 6.

• **Maneuverability:** –2 penalty to *water vehicles* for defenses or chases.

• **Reinforced:** A catamaran gains an extra 5 Toughness against collisions.

• Large: Attacks against the catamaran gain a +2 bonus due to its size.

OH, THE SHARK BITES...

Standard Scene. This encounter take place as the group is within visual distance of the shore, roughly 50 meters. A megalodon attacks the boat!

If the boat is destroyed each hero has a long swim for shore ahead, and a Difficult (DN 12) *Strength* test to make it without suffering 2 Shock worth of fatigue that won't recover until after they've dealt with Azt'Nra and the Bluespine village below. After the encounter, the Storm Knights notice a single figure frantically waving to them from the shore, where the mouth of the newly discovered river lies.

• Savage Megalodon: See page 8.

AZT'NRA OF THE JUNGLE?

Standard Scene. As the Storm Knights reach the shore, they see an edeinos waving at them in greeting. He eagerly gestures for the Storm Knights to join him. The stranger is named Azt'Nra, and in halting English he describes himself as King of the Jungle.

If pressed for details, Azt'Nra says that he was once part of a tribe of Bluespine edeinos, but they exiled him after he changed. If asked to elaborate, he says that a member of his tribe, on a routine scouting mission, found a stone carving that resembles a divine edeinos, a godly figure. It was placed in the center of the village in a place of holy honor. When Azt'Nra touched it, he...changed. He was still the same edeinos, but he felt different, as if he should begin a crusade and wander through the jungle, aiding those who needed help, befriending the local wildlife, and so forth. The tribe leader instinctively realized the change, and suggested that Azt'Nra leave and not come back.

He has seen the "big flying bladder" drifting near the "mountain made of piled stones." He says that if the Storm Knights follow the river, it leads them to his former village, then further onward to where the "stone pile" is. The stone idol concerns Azt'Nra, though he doesn't ask the Storm Knights to do anything overt about it.

GMs may wish to keep his dinosaur companion out of sight for now, saving it for a dramatic reveal later.

AZT'NRA

Azt'Nra has been affected by the stone idol, which is in fact a Nile talisman in the shape of Sebek, the crocodile god. It has sparked a transformation in the edeinos where he now fancies himself more of a pulp-inspired King of the Jungle heroic personality. In fact, his exile from the village was also brought about thanks to the talisman, as the exile adds a dramatic detail to his background.

Quote: "I defend the jungle and the innocent from the ravages of invaders, no matter where they are from!"

- **Attributes:** Charisma 5, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 8, Strength 11
- Skills: Dodge 12, faith 9, intimidation (15), maneuver 12, melee weapons 12, reality 10, stealth 10, survival 10, taunt (10), tracking 12, unarmed combat 12

Move: 9; Tough: 11; Shock: -; Wounds: 3

Equipment: Hrockt-shoot spear (*Strength* +2/13) **Perks:** Vengeful, Animal Companion: Gark the Ankylosaur

Possibilities: 3

Special Abilities:

- Berserker: Azt'Nra ignores Shock.
- Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).
- Brachiating: Move 12 by swinging on vines.
- Swim: Move 9 in water.

GARK (YOUNG ANKLYOSAUR)

Attributes: Charisma 3, Dexterity 7, Mind 3, Spirit 10, Strength 13

Skills: Dodge 8, find 6, intimidation 11, maneuver 8, taunt (8), unarmed combat 10

Move: 10; Tough: 17 (4); Shock: 10; Wounds: 1 Equipment: — Perks: — Possibilities: Never Special Abilities:

• Armor: Shell and scaly skin +4.

• Club Tail: Damage Strength +2 (15).

• Large: These dinosaurs are the size of a small car. Attackers gain +2 to attack rolls to hit due to its size and bulk.

Once Azt'Nra imparts all the information the Storm Knights can use, he announces he's leaving and vanishes into the jungle by swinging way on a handy vine. However, in fact he shadows the party discreetly to make sure they don't get into too much trouble.

IDOL CURIOSITY

The Bluespine edeinos village lies seven miles upriver, situated on the right bank. There are 36 edeinos living here, with the "altar" located at the exact center of the settlement. The Sebek idol projects the Nile reality in a boosted 100-meter radius, making the area a Living Land/Nile Empire Mixed Zone.

These edeinos bear no ill will toward the Storm Knights, nor are they positively inclined toward them. How they react to the strangers rests totally in the latter's hands. However, there *is* the matter of the idol or to be exact, the Nile talisman.

The talisman is one of a series of 10, possibly created by Doctor Mobius (hence the power boost), and fashioned in the shape of various Egyptian gods. The talismans were sown throughout the world in an effort to sow chaos and strengthen Nile influence. The first talisman was mentioned in the *Delphi Missions* book chapter, **Kali Station's Gone Dark**.

There's always at least one Bluespine discreetly keeping watch on the Sebek idol. It's up to the Storm Knights whether or not they want to do something about it. Bear in mind, the edeinos have no intention of parting with the idol.

As a side issue, if the Storm Knights experience overly great success in befriending the edeinos and the GM wants to be a total rat to them, there is a special ritual reserved for only the best of friends of this Bluespine village.

The overly friendly edeinos excitedly suggest that the honored visitors select one from their ranks to experience the ultimate honor: becoming one with nature and Lanala. To refuse would be an insult, and guaranteed to turn relations very sour and very violent.

This honor entails being marched about 200 meters into the dense jungle on the village's north border, where a giant carnivorous plant referred to as Thaka'zod lies waiting. To be fed to this plant is the symbol of perfect union with the natural world!

THAKA'ZOD

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 10, Mind 8, Spirit 13, Strength 15

- **Skills:** Dodge 12, find 10, intimidation 15, reality 14, unarmed combat 14
- Move: 1; Tough: 15; Shock: 13; Wounds: 5
- Equipment: Possibilities: 5
- Special Abilities:
 - Bite and Tentacles (2): Strength +3/18.
 - Fear: The plant causes fear.
 - Immunity: Magic.

• Large: This plant spreads out over 10 meters. Attackers gain +2 to attack rolls to hit due to its size and bulk.

• **Relentless:** Ignores Shock; Fatigue has no effect.

PYRAMID SCHEME

Following the river farther inland, the Storm Knights eventually catch sight of the top of an ancient step pyramid, towering over the jungle. A Very Hard *find* test (DN 16) shows a sturdy metal pole of some sort attached to the top of the pyramid, the mooring mast for the Nile dirigible that patrols the area. The mooring mast is a talisman, projecting Nile reality in a 100-meter radius.

The Nile Empire has an encampment at the base of the pyramid, but this is strictly for convenience's sake. The pyramid itself serves no other purpose than to be a great place to moor the dirigible; the Nile forces have no actual interest in anything the pyramid may or may not hide. There are 16 shocktroopers and 12 Gospog of the First Planting stationed here, with the latter digging three large holes.

If the Storm Knights take any time at all to study what they're doing, it becomes apparent that several of the shocktroopers are sifting through the dirt that the gospog are digging up, as if looking for



something specific. Occasionally, a shocktrooper grabs a fistful of small rocks and places them in a large bin.

If the party can somehow do such a job of stealthy movement that they can get to the bin, they notice that it's filled with nodules and blobs of black and green glass-like stones. A Hard *science* Test (DN 14) identifies the debris as tektites: natural glass that's formed in the aftermath of an asteroid strike on the Earth.

This entire tableau should be handled carefully and slowly, allowing the Storm Knights the chance to sneak about and gather some information, thereby allowing the tension to build for....

DREAD ZEPPELIN

Dramatic Scene. While the Storm Knights are interacting with the base camp in whichever way they deem best, at the best dramatic moment, a zeppelin glides into view and heads for the mooring tether located atop the step pyramid.

WAR ZEPPELINU

The Cloudmaster's zeppelin is equipped with weapons, and he's happy enough to cruise just out of spear-throwing range and blast anyone foolish enough to get in his way.

Move: 100 kph (12); Tough: 15; Wounds: 4
Armament: Two .50 caliber machine guns (Damage 16, AP 2, Range 500/1K/2K, Long Burst), one 75mm tank gun (Damage 28, AP 6, Range 500/1K/2.5K, Medium Blast).
Fast: Speed grants a +2 bonus to complete steps in a Chase or a -2 penalty to be hit.
Flammable: The Nile Empire favors dangerous hydrogen for their lighter-thanair craft. If a fire attack causes a Wound to the zeppelin it ignites and suffers another Wound every round until it is destroyed.

• Maneuverability Rating: -6 penalty to *air vehicles* for defenses or tests.

• **Passengers:** 24. Currently there are only four crew aboard and four shocktroopers to man the weapons. The other shocktroopers are stationed at the temple.

When the Storm Knights reveal themselves (most likely when they initiated hostilities against the airship, unless they have already attacked the camp), a figure appears either from a large window in the zeppelin's gondola if the dirigible is still hovering, or atop the pyramid if the ship has docked.

This is the Cloudmaster, a minor Nile villain who has thrown in with Doctor Mobius. As may be inferred by his name, airships are his passion, his vocation as well as avocation. He gives the following dramatic speech to the Storm Knights, conveniently giving them the information they desired in the first place.

"Fools! Do you realize where you are? Do you realize the significance of where you stand? We are in the Chicxulub Crater, the blast radius resulting from the asteroid collision that killed off your world's dinosaurs eons ago! Such a life-altering incident, a true extinction-level event that changed the history of your world irrevocably! And if such a site isn't rife with Possibility Energy, then I don't know where is!

"It's in the tektites, you see! The odds are extremely likely that during the massive, Earth-shaking detonation, some of them absorbed Possibility Energy, just waiting to be tapped by my master, the Wise and Mighty Doctor Mobius! YOU shall not have the tektites! They are OURS! And now, behold! My ground escort has caught up to us, and brings your doom!

"Gaze upon the power of the shocktrooper velociraptor raiders! Gaze, and despair, for they are the last thing you shall ever see!"

And sure enough, emerging from the underbrush are a group of large velociraptors, each with a Nile shocktrooper rider.

During all of this, especially if the Storm Knights appear to be overwhelmed, help arrives in the form of Azt'Nra, swinging into battle on a jungle vine, letting out a loud war cry as he joins the fray. His faithful companion, Gark, comes crashing out of the jungle, ready for battle as well!

The Cloudmaster does his best to escape should the Storm Knights prove to be overwhelming, but feel free to sprinkle his speech with expository comments regarding the mission. Bottom line, Doctor Mobius researched the world's history and deduced that there could be huge amounts of Possibility Energy in any major historical incident that changed life as we know it. He sent Cloudmaster and a small detachment of forces to the Yucatán to find and sift through the tektites at the impact site, and see if any of them retained the Possibility Energy released from that world-changing collision.

• Large Raptors (2 per hero): See page 47.

• Shocktrooper Raptor Rider (1 per Raptor): See page 47.

LARGE RAPTOR

There are many different species of raptor dinosaurs, and these are large enough for a brave or foolhardy human to ride atop.

- Attributes: Charisma 5, Dexterity 10, Mind 5, Spirit 8, Strength 11
- **Skills:** Dodge 12, find 8, intimidation 9, maneuver 11, stealth 11, taunt (10), trick 8, unarmed combat 12

Move: 12; Tough: 12 (1); Shock: 8; Wounds: 1 Equipment: —

Perks: -

Possibilities: Never

- **Special Abilities:**
 - Armor: Scaly hide +1.
 - Bite/Claws: Strength +2 (13).
 - Ornery: On a Setback one raptor manages to eliminate its own rider and flee.

SHOCKTROOPER RAPTOR RIDER

This elite squad operates as an escort to the dirigible, shadowing it along the ground.

- Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 7, Mind 7, Spirit 8, Strength 8
- Skills: Beast riding 8, dodge 8, find 8, fire combat 8, first aid 8, heavy weapons 8, intimidation 9, land vehicles 8, maneuver 8, melee weapons 8, streetwise 8, survival 8, taunt 7, trick 8

Move: 7; Tough: 8; Shock: 8; Wounds: -

Equipment: Club (*Strength* +2/10), MP-40 (Damage 13, Range 10/25/40, Short Burst).

Perks: -

Possibilities: Rare (2) **Special Abilities:** —

pecial Abilities.

THE CLOUDMASTER

Formerly known as Doctor Dirigible, this minor Nile pulp villain serves Doctor Mobius and looks for any excuse to ride around in his war zeppelin. He's rather obsessed with airships, and has a voice that sounds a lot like Peter Lorre. He relies on his belt-mounted force field and his jetpack to bail him out of any direct danger. The Cloudmaster is desperately trying to reinvent himself (hence the name change) and become a force to be reckoned with, despite his rather limited, narrow expertise.

Quote: "He who rules the skies, rules the world!"

Attributes: Charisma 7, Dexterity 10, Mind 12, Spirit 12, Strength 6

Skills: Air vehicles 15, evidence analysis 13, find 15, fire combat 13, scholar 15, science 16, taunt 12, unarmed combat 11

Move: 4; Tough: 6; Shock: 12; Wounds: 4

Equipment: Mauser pistol (Damage 13, Range 10/20/40), war zeppelin, jetpack (Tech 20, Top Speed 320 (14), MR 0, Wounds 1, Tough 13).

Perks: Force Field (belt device, 5 charges).

Possibilities: 5

Special Abilities:

• **Gloater:** When *taunt* or *intimidation* are Approved Actions the villain may affect the entire party without a Multi-Target penalty. Affected heroes lose a random card from their hand.

• **Minions:** Cloudmaster may transfer any hit to a lackey within a few meters if he succeeds at a *reality* test.

AFTERMATH

The big question here is: Are there any tektites charged with Possibility Energy? That's up to the GM.

So far, none of that kind have been found by the Nile forces, but further searching may yield a different result. Enough tektites grouped together operate like an Eternity Shard with one Possibility and a Tapping Difficulty of 14:

If the Storm Knights intend to search for these tektites, the GM should make sure that no more than four of them are found at the crater site regardless of the amount of time spent searching, or level of success.

COSM: LIVING LAND

LOCATION: FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Whitespear edeinos are drawn to an unnoticed hardpoint in Chicago, and seek out the "holy" bones of a famous tyrannosaurus skeleton.

MISSION BRIEFING

The Storm Knights begin this scene as Alice "Ghost" Burton appears to hand them the missive below. As they review the communication, she touches her forehead in salute, steps back into the shadows to vanish once more.

A large community of Core Earth civilians inhabit the Field Museum in Chicago. The building interior is a hardpoint, as the museum is as much an icon of Core Earth as the relics it contains. These holdouts have set up a sophisticated hydroponics operation and venture out into Lake Michigan and the flooded parks nearby only rarely. We received irregular updates from them about edeinos movements in the area by radio, but their communications ceased about a week ago. Worse, we received news from another Storm Knight team of heightened patrols of edeinos worshiping Rec Stalek the edeinos god of death—scouting around the Field Museum in the last couple of days. These Storm Knights didn't know to check in on the Field Museum, as the community there is keeping such a low profile.

Two kilometers south of your current position is an ultralight helicopter. Take it low over Lake Michigan to the Field Museum. There's just enough room for your group, supplies of hydroponic nutrients, and some weapons. Land on the top of the museum and head in from the roof. Make sure those people are OK, warn them about the increased patrols if they don't know already, and see if you can find out why the death worshippers are suddenly so interested in the area.

This is Alpha Clearance and urgent. Safe flying, Storm Knights.



A fate worse than undeath awaits Sue if the Whitespears have their way!

The helicopter is waiting where the missive indicates, with a map to the Field Museum taped to its central console. If none of the Storm Knights have the *air vehicles* skill or a Tech Axiom of 23 or greater, an affable Delphi Council pilot named Nina Harbrick waits with the helicopter. Nina is not a combatant and has been ordered to remain with the vehicle. The helicopter also carries several duffel bags with disassembled machine guns, ammunition, and other supplies—500 pounds in total.

The journey in the helicopter is uneventful. The Storm Knights arrive safely atop the Field Museum of Natural History, built on the shore of Lake Michigan in downtown Chicago. As Chicago is part of the Living Land, the city skyline is overgrown with vegetation and several buildings have collapsed onto others. In addition, flooding has turned the eastern side of the city into a sodden wash of debris. The Field Museum stands above the flooding, separated from much of the downtown by a misty marsh that used to be Grant Park.

ATOP THE FIELD MUSEUM

Standard Scene. The central area of the Field Museum is Stanley Field Hall. Large skylights, many of them cracked or fallen in, reveal the floor 25 meters below. Stanley Field Hall is enormous, at 25 meters wide and more than 100 meters long. Although the hall boasts Native American totem poles and a life-sized diorama of fighting elephants, the most impressive display by far is Sue, Core Earth's most complete tyrannosaurus rex skeleton.

Sue is the reason the edeinos have taken such an interest in the Field Museum recently. One of Thrakmoss's lieutenants, a cadaverously thin edeinos gotak named Husk Bone-Eater, recently learned of Sue's existence. Husk believes that an animated dinosaur skeleton native to Core Earth would possess powers from both realities: In addition to being Possibility-rated (unlike most animated dead), the beast would combine the ferocity of the Living Land with the ingenuity of Core Earth.

The civilians living in the Field Museum have converted much of the floor space in Stanley Field Hall into a hydroponics facility, capitalizing on the abundance of natural light from the skylights. At any time, at least a dozen civilians are in the hall. Once they notice the Storm Knights up on the roof and, after realizing they aren't under attack, greet the heroes cheerfully.

Impatient heroes may try to descend directly to the hall below. Several broken skylights are large enough for a person, but not the helicopter. If the Storm Knights have at least 25 meters of rope, they can reach the bottom without making a test. Otherwise, they can climb down through a broken skylight to a balcony with an Easy (DN 8) *Strength* test. Failure results in falling damage as normal.

Any character who looks spots the rooftop access door. It's locked, but quickly opened with an Easy (DN 8) lockpicking test.

Alternatively the Storm Knights can call down to civilians below, and a perky 17-year-old named Mara Elliott runs up to unlock it for them.

The civilians use the roof access door to observe the surrounding city from time to time, but they don't post a permanent watch so as to keep a lower profile.

HUSK BONEFEATER

THE CIVILIANS

The Storm Knights are greeted warmly by the civilians in the Field Museum. In all, over 50 people live in the museum now. Many are high school kids from Lane Tech College Prep who were on a field trip with their science teacher, Rose Vanderven, when the invasion hit. Miss Vanderven's scientific knowledge has proven particularly valuable to the survivors here. The community's de facto leader is an energetic young man named Quentin Winter, a track star from the University of Chicago who helped rescue several additional civilians from Grant Park during the flooding.

Although none of the civilians chose to live in the Field Museum, all have come to accept their fate and build a life they enjoy. They know they are providing a valuable service in keeping the relics here out of the hands of the edeinos and by providing updates on the invaders' movement. A week ago, a lightning strike knocked out the group's powerful radio, cutting off their communication with the outside world. None of the survivors have had any luck trying to fix it, but helpful Storm Knights can do so with a Hard (DN 14) *science* test.

QUENTIN WINTER

A fast, lean young man in his early 20s, Quentin Winter grew up on tales of superheroes that instilled the importance of helping others. Quentin tends to leap into action without thinking, but he is a natural leader and his energy and enthusiasm are infectious. Many of the young people in the Field Museum idolize older Ouentin, and even residents appreciate his positive attitude and willingness to work hard for their community.

A Storm Knight with a *Romance* card could easily earn Quentin's affections, and a Storm Knight with a *Connection* card might already know him.

Quote: "Sure, let me take a run at it."

If Quentin's statistics are needed use the **Untrained Militia** on page 29.

Rose Vanderven

A severe-looking woman in her 40s, Rose Vanderven appears every inch the science teacher, with horn-rimmed glasses and a stern look to wither foolishness. She insists on being called "Miss Vanderven," even by people older than she is. Despite her appearance, Miss Vanderven has a good heart and cares deeply for the community here. A Storm Knight with a *Romance* card might break through her stern demeanor and find that she is a warm and loving person, and a Storm Knight with a *Connection* card might be one of her few old friends.

Quote: "What proportion of nutrients to water? (sigh) No, you're not correct. Calculate it again."

If Rose's statistics are needed use the **Untrained** Militia on page 29.

WHAT THE CIVILIANS KNOW

The civilians are aware of increased edeinos presence in the area, although they don't know why. The edeinos wear bone armor and carry bone spears, and are led by a particularly thin specimen that looks like a walking corpse. These edeinos have been seen primarily to the west and north of the Field Museum, and the residents are worried that the edeinos know the community is there and are scouting to get more information. They haven't been able to tell how many edeinos are in the group, as they only see one or two at a time.

The Storm Knights probably know that the edeinos' armaments are distinctive of the Whitespear tribe that has taken over Chicago. The civilians here don't know there are any other kinds of edeinos, as they've only ever seen Whitespears.

The civilians don't currently have many weapons, but they believe themselves to be very wellfortified behind the marble walls and steel doors of the Field Museum. They haven't yet had to

IDEAS FOR COSM CARDS

During this scene, cosm cards may have the following effects:

Dino Attack!: A flock of three feral lakten swoop in through the open skylights, forcing the Storm Knights to defend the civilians and their hydroponic farm. See the statistics for lakten in *The Living Land* source book.

Lost Treasure: A robotic frog the size of a human head hops up to the Storm Knight. A survivor of some lost reality consumed by the Living Land, this robot's primary purpose is to distill nutrients from the environment and provide them to its owners. The robot's bellyaccessible through its hinged mouth, which it opens wide when anyone approachescurrently contains three doses of a viscous jelly. Each dose heals 1 Wound when spread on an injury. Alternatively, the jelly can expand the yield of the civilians' hydroponic farm-a fact Rose Vanderven quickly realizes. By consuming and processing organic matter or stagnant swamp water, the frog produces an additional dose of jelly each week (to a maximum of 3 stored doses at a time).

contend with any groups of edeinos yet—only the occasional curious scout—and they worry that the Whitespears are preparing for a large assault. They are therefore particularly thankful for the Storm Knights' arrival, and for the weapons provided by the Delphi Council. Assembling the weapons takes some time, but the civilians get right to work.

ASSAULT OF THE WHITESPEARS

While the Storm Knights interact with the civilians in the Field Museum, Husk Bone-Eater and his war band infiltrate the Field Museum through underground access tunnels. The civilians believe they have all such access points well-sealed, but Husk's scouts recently discovered a door with badly-rusted exterior hinges. Husk arrives with a handful of devoted Whitespear warriors and a few skeleraptors he's created as "practice" for animating Sue.

Husk and his warriors remove the door and skulk through uninhabited parts of the museum, reaching a gallery of Chinese artifacts east of the main hall. From here, all the enemies storm out in a rush. Although there are several skeleraptors under Husk's command, each Storm Knight need only test for their Fear ability once.

Once Husk is in the hall, he looks at Sue and stands momentarily overcome with religious rapture at the looming skeleton. He looks back and forth between his skeleraptors and Sue, giving no doubt as to his ultimate plans with the tyrannosaurus rex skeleton.



These enemies intend to eliminate any opposition in Stanley Field Hall, starting with whomever puts up the most determined resistance—that is, the Storm Knights. As the hydroponics tables sprawl across the hall, it's easy to gain cover or even sneak around during a fight here.

The hall is ringed by a large balcony six meters above the floor. Wide stairs at the north and south ends of the hall lead up to this balcony, and climbing up to it requires a successful *Strength* test. Storm Knights on the balcony might find it to be a good point to snipe down at their enemies.

- Husk Bone-Eater: See below.
- Whitespear Gotak: See below.
- Skeleraptors (1 per hero): See below.
- Whitespear Warriors (1 per hero): See below.

HUSK BONE-EATER

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 11, Strength 10

Skills: Dodge 10, faith 14, find 8, intimidation 13, maneuver 11, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 11, reality 13, survival 9, unarmed combat 11

Move: 9; **Tough:** 12 (3); **Shock:** 11; **Wounds:** 3

Equipment: Boneforged armor (+3), boneforged spear (Damage *Strength* +2/12) **Perks:** Deathclaw, Gotak, Miracles (curse, *mend corpse, sculpt bone, unlife, ward enemy*) **Possibilities:** 3

Special Abilities:

• **Bite/Claws:** Damage *Strength* +3 (13), AP 2.

• **Minions:** Husk may transfer any hit to a lackey within a few meters if he succeeds at a *reality* test.

WHITESPEAR GOTAK

These priests channel the power of death. The Whitespears have turned to Rec Stalek, forsaking Lanala completely.

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 11, Strength 10

Skills: Dodge 10, faith 14, find 8, intimidation 13, maneuver 11, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 11, survival 9, unarmed combat 11

Move: 9; Tough: 13 (3); Shock: 11; Wounds: 1

Equipment: Boneforged armor (+3), boneforged spear (Damage Strength +2/12)

Perks: Gotak, Miracles (*curse*, *strike*, *mend corpse*, *sculpt bone*, *ward enemy*)

Possibilities: Rare (3)

Special Abilities:

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).

WHITESPEAR WARRIORS

Typically, edeinos who are prepared for battle wield a hrockt-root spear and wear no armor. Others may be armed with blowguns or woven hrockt-root shields. Those of the Whitespear clan often adorn themselves with bone armor and their namesake—bone spears.

- **Attributes:** Charisma 5, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 8, Strength 10
- Skills: Dodge 10, faith 9, find 8, intimidation 11, maneuver 10, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 11, stealth 10, survival 8, taunt 8, tracking 8, trick 9, unarmed combat 10
- Move: 9; Tough: 13 (3); Shock: 8; Wounds: -

Equipment: Boneforged armor (+3), boneforged spear (Damage *Strength* +2/12)

Perks: Relentless

Possibilities: -

Special Abilities:

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).

SKELERAPTORS

These creations were little more than bones animated by foul miracles, composed of the bodies of slain velociraptors. Dubbed "skeleraptors" by those Storm Knights who survived facing them, these uncanny creatures are tireless hunters and trackers. Although they have no flesh, they can still somehow sense prey through supernatural means, and strike with blinding swiftness. Attributes: Charisma 5, Dexterity 12, Mind 4, Spirit 5, Strength 12

Skills: Dodge 15, find 8, maneuver 14, stealth 14, trick (9), unarmed combat 14

Move: 12; Tough: 12; Shock: —; Wounds: — Perks: —

Possibilities: –

Special Abilities:

- Bite/Claws: Strength +2 (14).
- Fear: Test willpower or Spirit or become Very

intimidation and taunt interactions.

• Relentless: Skeleraptors ignore Shock.

• Undead: Skeleraptors are immune to poison and other effects that require breathing, eating, or other "living" processes.

THE AFRENKLAND

Once Husk Bone-Eater and the skeleraptors are defeated, any remaining edeinos scatter. They conclude that the gotak was on a fool's errand and the resistance at the Field Museum is too strong. Although the edeinos may return to test the museum's defenses another time, the weapons that the Storm Knights brought with them allow the civilians to ably defend themselves.

If the Storm Knights fall, Husk Bone-Eater and the Whitespears don't waste time slaughtering them. They instead work quickly to cart away Sue's bones for the animation ritual elsewhere. This ritual takes several hours. The GM might give defeated Storm Knights a chance to recover and salve their wounded pride by going after the Whitespears to interrupt this ritual—or might decide that Husk animates Sue as a true terror, the focus of other adventures to come!

COSM: LIVING LAND LOCATION: BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

The Storm Knights must dash up the Mississippi river to stop an imminent attack on a "Cajun Navy" vessel running supplies.

MISSION BRIEFING

Standard Scene. The group manages to arrange a one-day layover in New Orleans as a sort of impromptu break between missions. However, after a fabulous lunch of gumbo and jambalaya, a different waiter brings them their check and a familiar looking envelope from the Delphi Council. Inside is a handwritten note and a briefing packet.

I know I promised you a day off, but get your food to go. We've had word that a convoy of supplies heading up the Mississippi into the Living Land is going to be attacked. Meet Captain Richard Landry at the Port of Baton Rouge. -Q

While very detailed, the briefing breaks down to the following:

•Due to the problems of ground travel through the Living Land, the Delphi Council, the US government, and other relief agencies providing support to survivor communities in the Living Land are increasingly reliant on river travel. While river monsters and similar hazards are a problem, it's simply much easier to move copious quantities of goods on river barges.

• An allied Bluespine edeinos Stormer called "Proud Mary" by the river captains (who have trouble pronouncing her real name) has been instrumental in helping these river captains circumvent those hazards.

•Storm Knights fighting hostile edeinos in Arkansas received reliable intelligence that a tribe of Redjaws have heard about Proud Mary and are moving overland to kill her and any non-transformed humans she might be assisting.



Bluespines attack!

• Proud Mary is presently helping the crew of the *Majic*, a towboat captained by James Long. Captain Landry is set to provide the group with a towboat named the *Bright Idea* so your group can intercept the *Majic* before the Redjaws do.

RACE AGAINST TIME

Standard Scene. Captain Landry is waiting for the Storm Knights at the Port of Baton Rouge, where he escorts the group to where the *Bright Idea* is docked. If one of the Storm Knights has the *water vehicles* skill, Landry walks them through the boat, showing them where everything is before handing them the keys.

"Take good care of her, mes amis, she's got plenty of gas and plenty of supplies. You bring the luck, non?"

If they don't have a suitable pilot, Landry instead gives everyone the tour so they know what their jobs are going to be going upriver. His people are stretched thin and it's only because he's a friend of Long's ("He still owes me for that last Pelicans game") that he's coming along at all.

THE BRIGHT IDEA

The *Bright Idea* has four decks, three above the waterline and one below. The top deck is the ship's bridge. Supplementing the often-useless electronic navigational instruments are old-fashioned sextants and charts with notes marked all over them. The next deck below is the captain's quarters and storage. The deck at the waterline has crew quarters, galley, and a large open area over the engines with the winches and rigging for lashing

the boat to a group of barges. Below the waterline are the engines, fuel storage, and the bilge.

Speed: 20 kph (8); **Tough:** 12; **Wounds:** 2

• Passengers: 6.

• Maneuverability: -2 penalty to *water vehicles* for defenses or chases.

•**Reinforced:** A tugboat gains an extra 5 Toughness against collisions.

• Very Large: Attacks against the vessel gain a +4 bonus due to its size.

The *Majic* has the same statistics. However, since it is also pushing nine barges of cargo, it can only go around 10 kph (4) and is making periodic stops, so it should be easy to catch up.

RIVER CAPTAIN

If the crew needs Captain Landry to operate the *Bright Idea* use the stats below. The *Majic*'s captain has the same statistics.

Attributes: Charisma 8, Dexterity 8, Mind 8, Spirit 8, Strength 8

Skills: Dodge 9, find 9, fire combat 9, first aid 9, intimidation 9, maneuver 9, melee weapons 9, persuasion 9, streetwise 9, survival 9, taunt 9, trick 9, unarmed combat 9, water vehicles 10

Move: 8; Tough: 8; Shock: 10; Wounds: — Equipment: Club (*Strength* +2/10) Perks: Endurance, Helper Possibilities: Rare (2) Special Abilities: —

AN INAUSPICIOUS BEGINNING

At the beginning of the journey, just before crossing into the Living Land, the heroes encounter a group of survivalists trying to hijack boats (even ones without cargo, as they need the gas and the boats themselves). They have a boat with the

"DRIVING A BOAT IS JUST LIKE DRIVING A CAR. WELL...CLOSE ENOUGH ANYWAY."

-ZHI ZHANG

same statistics as the Bright Idea (see above), and are attempting to set up an ambush. The players should make Hard (DN 14) *find* test to avoid being surprised. The Bright Idea may attempt to flee, but if the survivalists reach Step D first the ship is cut off and forced to fight.

• Gaston Richards: Gaston is a Stormer. He uses the same statistics as the Survivalists below, but has a reality skill of 11, water vehicles 10, and three Possibliities.

• Survivalists (2 per hero): Use the Human Soldier (see page 80) statistics for the survivalists.

RACE FOR YOUR LIFE

To represent the race against time to beat the Redjaws, this adventure uses the Dramatic Skill Resolution system. However, each round is not a standard combat round, but hours traveling upriver.

Keep track of how many "rounds" it takes the group to get to step D, as that will determine how much lead time, if any, the heroes have before the Redjaw attack.

Captain Landry usually pilots the boat, but if he becomes disconnected, or if one of the Storm Knights wants to take the wheel due to their reality bending abilities, he can instead assist the Storm Knight as a Combined Action.

Possible setbacks during Dramatic Skill Resolution include:

• "No! No! No! The one I'm pointing to!" It takes a standard *water vehicles, science,* or a relevant *profession* skill test to fix the issue. Lacking those skills (and remember, someone has to be piloting the *Bright Idea*), a Challenging (DN 12) difficulty fixes the problem.

• "Knight Overboard": An unexpected bout of rough water (or perhaps the boat being bumped by something big and nasty) causes one of the Storm Knights to be accidentally thrown overboard. Determine randomly and award the character in question a (soakable) Wound and an extra Possibility for their trouble. It's also possible the normally placid alligators of the Mississippi are much more aggressive in the Living Land. Use the crocodile stats (see *Torg Eternity*) for the gators.

• A Critical Problem could be something as complicated as a hole in the boat or a Very Difficult (DN 16) engine problem.

STEP A: INTO THE STORM

Piloting a boat upstream through a cosm boundary is always tricky, even for an experienced captain. The *water vehicles* test is a Challenging (DN 12) test.

STEP B: WE GO UP

Even though there is literally only one way to go to catch up to the *Majic*, any number of difficulties can slow down the *Bright Idea*'s travel: random debris in the river, changes in currents due to the wild nature of the Living Land, or even the Deep Mist, making it difficult not to run aground. To avoid problems that might slow the journey down, a member of the group needs to make either a Difficult (–2) *survival* check or a Hard (–4) *find* check.

STEP C: THE LONG, DARK NIGHT

Traveling upriver is difficult even with the light of day. At night it's worse. The players have a choice to make. They can drop anchor and wait for morning, which adds two more "rounds" to the tally of how long it takes the group to get upriver. If they want to push on, the ship's pilot must make a Very Hard (-6) water vehicles test. If they fail, add two rounds to the tally and the entire crew is Fatigued due to the difficulties of getting upriver at night. With a Standard Success, the pilot (and any crew who want to be able to support the pilot with Possibilities or Destiny Cards) is Fatigued for the rest of the adventure. With a Good Success, they managed to pull through but any Fatigue results that come up in events before the Storm Knights can get a real night's sleep cause three Fatigue instead of the usual two. With an Outstanding result, the heroes get through the night with no troubles, possibly thanks to the energizing aura of the Living Land.



STEP D: RACE TO THE FINISH

The final step is a mad dash for the finish line. The pilot must make a Hard (-4) *water vehicles* check. Now, check and see how many "rounds" of Dramatic Skill Resolution the group has accumulated.

•4–5: The group makes it to the *Majic* in time to dock with her and alert the crew as to the danger they're in. They have a short amount of in-game time (around an hour if they took five rounds, more than that if they managed to do it in four, not that they will know this) to prepare.

•6: They arrive with just enough time to pull up alongside to give a warning, and then the attack begins.

• 7+: For every round above six, the *Majic* is in sight of the *Bright Idea*, but 50 meters away, and another 50 meters for each round above seven. The *Bright Idea* travels 20 meters closer each round.

GATORS GONE WILD

Dramatic Scene. Whether the heroes have arrived in time to give the crew warning or are almost too late, the Redjaws attack.

The *Majic* has Captain James Long and a crew of eight. Captain Long uses the River Captain stats above, and the rest use the River Crew statblock below.

RIVER CREW

These hardy sailors have not transformed to the Living Land—yet. The captain keeps four hunting shotguns in a weapons locker in his room. If the *Majic* has been caught unawares, only one crewman is armed.

- Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 7, Mind 7, Spirit 8, Strength 8
- **Skills:** Dodge 8, find 8, fire combat 8, first aid 8, intimidation 9, maneuver 8, melee weapons 8, streetwise 8, survival 8, taunt 8, trick 8, unarmed combat 9, water vehicles 9

Move: 7; Tough: 8; Shock: 8; Wounds: -

Equipment: Club (*Strength* +2/10), shotgun (Damage 13, Range 10/20/30, Shotgun)

Perks: –

Possibilities: Rare (2) **Special Abilities:** –

PROUD MARY

The edeinos scout, called "Proud Mary" by the riverboat captains who can't manage her throatstrangling real name, was unsure about the invasion from the start. She believed in Lanala and wanted to follow the words of her chosen, but was troubled by her own experiences. Certainly, the humans were weak and relied on their faulty tools, but some of them had a palpable faith that spoke to them the way Lanala speaks to her.

Her mission had been to sabotage the supply shipments going upriver, but instead of attacking, she watched and prayed for guidance. When an excited child fell overboard while supplies were being unloaded, she knew she had to help. The survivor communities were initially suspicious of her, but her friendly nature and a thankful parent helped smooth things over. **Quote:** "I thought humans were uncultured savages until I tasted their cooking."

Attributes: Charisma 9, Dexterity 8, Mind 6, Spirit 8, Strength 9

Skills: Dodge 9, find 7, faith 9, maneuver 9, melee combat 10, reality 9, stealth 10, survival 9, unarmed combat 10

Move: 8; Tough: 9; Shock: 9; Wounds: 3

Equipment: Hrockt-shoot spear (*Strength* +2 / 11)

Perks: Bluespine, Farwalker

Possibilities: 3

Special Abilities:

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (11).

• Swim: Move 8 in water.

THE REDJAW ATTACKERS

When the attack comes, the edeinos appear within 50 meters of the *Majic*. The vessel is dead in the water, its engine rotors tangled in a thick trap of vines hidden under the water.

Two edeinos beast-riders on flying lakten harass anyone on deck. They have a supply of spears to throw at anyone using "thunder sticks." Any particularly brave crewman who has been successful in attacking the edeinos is grabbed and tossed in the water.

Another group of beast-riders approach on alligators. Each alligator carries an extra edeinos warrior, and two more swim alongside.

The alligators swim up to the sides of the boats, where the warriors climb aboard. Once they've dropped off the warriors, the beast-riders retreat 10 meters away and throw spears.

While most of the warriors fend off any defenders, a pair of edeinos are instructed to grab the weaker members of the crew and throw them overboard to the alligators. In the water are an additional five alligators that do what alligators do to prey.

Don't forget that depending on the size of the group, one or two of the warriors have Possibilities!

The leader of the attackers is an edeinos optant named Sss'Tok, and he's not interested in taking prisoners.

• Sss'Tok: Riding a plesiosaurus, see below.

• Edeinos Beast Riders (1 per Lakten and Crocodile): See page 80.

• Alligators (1 per hero): Use the statistics for Crocodiles, see *Torg Eternity*.

• Lakten (2): See below.

• Edeinos Warriors (3 per hero): See page 80.

SSS'TOK

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 11, Strength 10

Skills: Dodge 10, faith 14, find 8, intimidation 13, maneuver 11, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 11, reality 12, survival 9, unarmed combat 11

Move: 9; Tough: 12 (2); Shock: 11; Wounds: 1

Equipment: Hrockt-shoot spear (Damage *Strength* +2/12), hrockt-root armor (Armor +2, Torso)

Perks: Optant, Miracles (*bless, call animals, commune with animals, soothe, ward enemy.*)

Possibilities: 3

Special Abilities:

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).

LAKTEN

Attributes: Charisma 5, Dexterity 11, Mind 4, Spirit 7, Strength 12

Skills: Dodge 13, intimidation 9, find 9, maneuver 12, taunt (10), unarmed combat 12

Move: 11; Tough: 13 (1); Shock: 9; Wounds: 2 Equipment: —

Perks: -

Possibilities: Never

Special Abilities:

• Armor: Scaly skin +1.

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (14).

• Flight: Flies at Move 13.

• Large: Most adult specimens have a wingspan over five meters. Attacks against them gain a +2 bonus.

PLESIOSAURUS

Attributes: Charisma 3, Dexterity 9, Mind 3, Spirit 10, Strength 14

Skills: Dodge 13, find 7, intimidation 12, maneuver 13, trick (8), unarmed combat 14

Move: 7; Tough: 16 (2); Shock: 12; Wounds: 2 Equipment: —

Perks: –

Possibilities: Never

Special Abilities:

- Armor: Thick skin +2.
- Bite: Damage Strength +2 (16), reach 4 meters.

• Large: Plesiosaurs are typically around seven meters long as adults. Attackers gain +2 to attack rolls due to their size.

• Swim: Move 13 in water.

KEEP ON BURNING

After the battle, the team can help patch up the wounded and make any repairs needed to either riverboat. GMs may consider extending the adventure. The *Majic* has only started its run upriver, and still has plenty of stops—and opportunities for adventure—along the way.

The *Bright Idea* could be an escort. If keeping track of multiple crews doesn't appeal, with a little work the nine barges could be split between the two riverboats. The *Majic* would have a relatively uneventful trip while the *Bright Idea* could face all sorts of dangers as it continues upriver, farther into the savage heart of the Living Land!

Depending on how well they treat her, Proud Mary might be willing to help the Delphi Council in the future. She could become an ally should the Storm Knights continue to operate along the Mississippi River.

COSM: LIVING LAND LOCATION: MIAMI, FLORIDA

A Nightmare Tree and a living nightmare from Orrorsh threaten edeinos and human spiritual leaders. The investigators must stop the cult surrounding this creature before its influence grows even more.

MISSION BRIEFING

The Storm Knights hear the screech of tires and the acrid smell of burning rubber as a black SUV brakes suddenly near them. Given that emergency and military vehicles are the only ones not on gas rations, the fact that a large civilian car is speeding through the streets of Miami is unexpected.

From the car emerge four men in black suits and sunglasses, telegraphing their identity as federal agents even before they flash their FBI badges. After verifying the Storm Knights' identities, an Agent Neilson informs them that they are working with the Delphi Council and that they're to join them in securing a person of importance.

Weaving through pedestrians who have reclaimed the streets—since most can't afford the fuel that's allotted to them—Agent Neilson hands them a sealed envelope. The succinct letter reads:

We have received intel that Father Albert Martinez is being targeted for assassination by unknown forces. Father Martinez is an influential voice in the Miami community, calming the populace, and inspiring many to do their part in resisting the invaders.

His death would be a blow to the morale of the city. There is a concern that Baruk Kaah is behind the attack, but the information is unclear on this point. Once you secure Father Martinez, the FBI agents will escort him to a safehouse.

This mission is Alpha Clearance, but the Cassandra Division has tagged it as potentially problematic. Stay alert and good luck.

The note ends with the seal of the Delphi Council.



Horrors await humans and edeinos alike near a Nightmare Tree.

The lack of clarity of the intel comes from the fact that it comes from a psychic who "saw" Father Martinez's death at the hands of creatures that looked like edeinos, but weren't. The psychic couldn't be more precise than that as she said that a "cold blackness laid over the scene like a shroud."

Agent Nielson firmly believes in the reliability of the Council's resident psychic, though the other three agents scoff at the Delphi Council's reliance on this type of "mumbo-jumbo."

THE FREE CITY OF MIAMI

Before the war, Miami was a thriving city of millions with cultures and traditions from around the Caribbean and the Americas. More than half of the city remains Core Earth reality due to multiple hardpoints formed by the Freedom Tower, Little Havana, and other landmarks. Fuel and electricity for the citizenry have been rationed, though a thriving Black Market affords some the luxuries of their former lives to those who can afford it.

Miami is a port city that expanded outward concentrically as the population grew. The city is bounded to the west by an immense tropical wetland known as the Everglades.

The Everglades is passable by a main road that cuts across the peninsula, as well as various smaller raised roadways, one of which goes to Shark Valley and the now-abandoned ranger station located there.

TO CATCH A PRIEST

Standard Scene. The two FBI SUVs pull into a church's parking lot where several other vehicles sit abandoned. The rectory building, where the priests live, is separate from the church proper. Unless the Storm Knights have other plans, the four agents move to establish a perimeter while the heroes enter the building and retrieve Father Martinez.

The rectory is a small, two-story building made of concrete. As the Storm Knights approach, they notice the front door is ajar. The bottom floor is unoccupied but appears orderly, as the receptionist's desk has supplies and papers neatly stacked upon it. A gentle breeze wafts in from the open windows, providing the only relief from the hot Miami climate. Due to the energy shortage, the use of air conditioners is strictly prohibited. An adjoining office is likewise unoccupied. Just to the right of the entrance is a stairway leading to the second floor.

The stairs open onto brightly lit living quarters with a desk, a bed and a few cots. On the far side of the room, away from the large windows, is a door, also ajar. Before the Storm Knights can do more than take a cursory look at their surroundings, they hear a high-pitched whine.

A moment later a shadow falls over the room as several edeinos hurl themselves through the windows, landing in a shower of glass. The edeinos immediately attack everyone in their vicinity. Unlike others of their ilk, these edeinos are attacking solely with their claws and bite.

• Tainted Edeinos (2 per hero): See below.

"OF COURSSSE

SSSOMETHING ISSS WRONG

WITH THEM! MY PEOPLE

DON'T USSSUALLY TURN

INTO MUSSSH WHEN

-MOONWALKER

TAINTED EDEINOS

Attributes: Charisma 5, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 8, Strength 10

Skills: Dodge 10, find 8, intimidation 10, maneuver 10, stealth 10, survival 8, unarmed combat 11

Move: 9; Tough: 10; Shock: 10; Wounds: — Equipment: —

Perks: Whirlwind

Possibilities: Never

Special Abilities:

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).

• **Poison:** If the edeinos' bite or claws deals damage greater than the target's Toughness, he's poisoned and suffers 1 Shock each round for a minute.

During the battle, the Storm Knights should make a DN 10 *find* test. If successful, they note that the hide of these edeinos is a mottled black and purple color, like a bruise. Additionally, there is a putrid smell coming from their snouts, as if they had recently eaten spoiled, raw meat. A Good Success identifies these edeinos as belonging to the Bluespine clan due to their webbed fingers and the flaking remnants of turquoise pigments on their bodies. An Outstanding success detects sounds of combat around the back portion of the church grounds.

After the battle, the bodies begin to decay at an accelerated rate (even for the Living Land) leaving only viscous puddles of a wriggling, dark, gelatinous substance. If the Storm Knights take the time to discern what is moving within the goo, they discover a large, white worm in each pool.

FRIENDLY FACES

Once the edeinos are dealt with, the Storm Knights and the agents quickly find Father Martinez. In his chambers, kneeling with his hands clasped in prayer is a man wearing the traditional black clothing of a Catholic priest. The priest identifies himself as Father Albert Martinez and greets the newcomers.

"Thank you. I felt a sudden sense of something dangerous and unholy, and prayed for deliverance. And now it seems you have come!"

Another man enters from the opposite door, carrying a large, futuristic looking pistol. The stranger, dressed in a style of dress usually reserved for near-future sci-fi movies, identifies himself as Michelle Laurent, in thickly accented English. His identification shows him to be a native of Paris and a former officer of Interpol, now with the "Avignon" Church Police.

A quick search shows that he isn't implanted with any cybernetics. He'll drop his weapon (a GWI GodMeeter with a silencer) quickly if ordered to, and the gun complains quietly if he does so.

Michelle explains that he was sent to speak with Father Martinez about aid from Avignon. When he saw the strange edeinos outside he fought them, as "His Holiness values other men of God and peace, and wishes to ensure that they remain safe in these dangerous times."

There are pools of goo behind the church similar to the ones left behind by the Storm Knight's battle, which seems to prove Laurent's claim.

When Agent Neilson arrives on the scene he verifies that this is Father Martinez and asks the Storm Knights to escort Father Albert to the safehouse for debriefing, as the primary mission is to thwart future assassination attempts. They'll even leave them one of the SUVs to get there, and take the other to the report in and get orders relating to this new attack.

Meanwhile he and his agents plan to take Michelle Laurent into custody and investigate whether he and the Cyberpapacy are somehow involved in this. If the Storm Knights offer to tag along, Neilson declines. He firmly believes that protecting Father Martinez is the priority. Plus, the situation with the "visitor from abroad" could have political fallout, and he'd like to keep the Delphi Council away from the situation for now.

In truth, Michelle is completely unrelated to the attack, and was just here to curry favor with Father Martinez on behalf of the Cyberpapacy. This distraction gets the agents out of the way, and leaves the Storm Knights alone with Martinez to find out more about what's really happening.

SAFEHOUSE DEBRIEFING

The safehouse is in an office building downtown, a top-floor space outfitted with cots and other creature comforts. Father Martinez doesn't seem surprised to hear that he's been targeted for assassination, though the shootout and seeing edeinos in the flesh have left him rattled.

Once settled in, the priest explains,

"I try to calm and give hope to the populace, but I also use my prestige to warn against falling under the sway of false idols and demagogues. Many of the citizens of Miami are religious, and more so since the invasion. Besides the mainstream religions practiced here, there are other more exotic faiths, such as Voodoo, Santeria, and many other groups led by charismatic leaders. Most are benign but a few are very dangerous, feeding on their followers' gullibility and fear.

"One such man is Manny Corbo, a dangerous con artist who has taken advantage of the present climate of fear that has shaken the souls of the bravest of men. When Corbo said he could call on a powerful spirit to perform miracles, he garnered attention. According to some, he made good on these miracles. He gathered some of the rich and powerful of Miami, handpicked based on their prestige, power, and wealth.

"I railed against Corbo and his group on my radio program, and managed to turn some of his followers away from him. One of them told me that before he left, Corbo went on a mouth-foaming rant against me. I knew I would be a target for reprisals. But I never imagined Corbo could call on the invaders to do his bidding."

Father Martinez tells the Storm Knights that Corbo and his group meet near the Shark Valley Visitor Center at the entrance to the Everglades National Park, just outside Miami. Agent Neilson adds that the Everglades is an enormous swamp and right on the edge of where technology begins to break down. He won't risk taking his men out there for fear of going "native." If the Storm Knights wish to confront Corbo and his group, they're on their own. Martinez believes they are meeting this evening.

Getting to Shark Valley is simple, as US 41, the road that bisects the Everglades, has a spur accessing the park. The agents can requisition a car and have the Storm Knights there before nightfall.

SHARK VALLEY

Dramatic Scene. Shark Valley is a geological depression emptying out into the Shark River, located at the eastern edge of the Everglades. The visitor center has an unusual looping ramp that glides up to a ranger station and observation tower. The tower stands 45 feet high, with a 360-degree view of the surrounding area.

Assuming the Storm Knights acquire transportation and leave for Shark Valley as quickly as possible, they arrive after sunset. Should the Storm Knights wish to delay in the hopes of setting a trap at their next meeting, Father Martinez urges them not to wait as Corbo and his cult are getting stronger with each passing day.

As the Storm Knights head west, they'll notice that the ambient light of the city begins to diminish until they pass an unmarked line of demarcation; their headlights the only illumination spearing into the darkness. After an hour of travel, a heavy rain begins as their headlights splash against a brightly colored sign announcing the entrance to Shark Valley. As they pass the sign, the Storm Knights enter a Living Land/Orrosh Mixed Zone.

The Storm Knights can either drive down the three-mile-long road to the observation tower or walk. Just before the road ends at a large parking lot, a pair of men armed with automatic weapons are stationed as sentries. If the Stormers arrived in a vehicle, the men gruffly order them to leave, advising them this is a private function. A successful DN 12 *persuasion* test convinces the guards the heroes are late arrivals to Corbo's gathering. Should they instead attempt a DN 12 *intimidation* test, the Storm Knight suffers a –2 penalty; these men are hardened criminals. Otherwise, the Storm Knights need to deal with them.

If the Storm Knights walked here, the sentries are likely unaware of their approach. A successful DN 10 *stealth* test gives the characters surprise on their attack.

If successfully bluffed, the sentries guide the Storm Knights to a parking lot full of very expensive cars and then direct them to follow a dirt path to the gathering spot. They hand heroes a lit torch and warn them not to leave the path as the area is thick with crocodiles and other dangerous wildlife. If combat ensues and the sentries dealt with, the Storm Knights can climb to the top of the observation tower. From that vantage point, they easily spot the torchlight Corbo uses to illuminate the pavilion where his gatherings occur.

If the Storm Knights use some sort of enhancedvision binoculars they see that the group gathered consists of ordinary men and women, as well as several other armed guards.

• Ords: Use the Soldier stats (see *Torg Eternity*) for any Ords encountered.

BATTLE WITH THE CULT

After the invasion, the city of Miami began offering a hefty bounty for the scalps of hostile edeinos. Manny Corbo, former petty thief and grifter, fell in with one of these groups made up of former Columbian cartel members. During a disastrous hunt near Shark Valley, Corbo found himself wounded and on the run, stumbling blindly through the swamp. Exhausted, he collapsed by a huge, withered tree and began to pray for salvation. As the edeinos war party closed in, a beautiful stranger emerged from behind the tree and decimated the attackers. Covered in gore, the woman looked like an avenging angel to Corbo, who practiced the religion of Santeria. He called her La Santisima, and though she never said a word, Corbo knew that this angel could be the answer to his prayers.

Contacting Ricardo Montoya, the head of the Columbian cartel in Miami, Corbo explained the miracle of his rescue and the power of La Santisima. Montoya, his criminal enterprises severely curtailed due to the invasion, saw an opportunity and agreed to join Corbo's growing cult. His men produced the sacrifices La Santisima demanded, while she in turn provided monstrosities that eliminated Montoya's enemies.

As Corbo's influence grew, he handpicked those he would accept into the cult, those of wealth and power who chafed under the rations imposed by the government and desired the luxuries they once enjoyed—luxuries that Corbo, through Montoya's smuggling operations, could supply.

Since La Santisima appeared reluctant to leave the area where he first encountered her, Corbo ordered

a pavilion and stage built for their ceremonies and to provide shelter from the incessant rain.

The mile-long trail to the cult's pavilion is surrounded by a nearly impenetrable wall of darkness. This creates a foreboding atmosphere, moreso now that Orrosh's power is influencing the area. All around the Storm Knights the swamp is alive with sounds of wildlife, from toads croaking to the slow glide of something large moving through the wilderness. Just before reaching the pavilion, a horrendous scream of a wild pig pierces the blackness and is immediately cut off. The swamp appears to hold its breath until a chilling crunch of bone shatters the momentary stillness.

Upon arriving at the cult's meeting place, the Storm Knights notice the men and women are dressed in expensive white linen clothing, with those acting as guards carrying firearms. There is no need for *stealth* tests as the cult's attention is riveted on a small man standing on a makeshift stage—Manny Corbo. Corbo is on a rant, denouncing the priest, calling him a demagogue who uses his newfound popularity to curtail their religious freedoms. Calming down, he points to an older gentleman with a cruel smile and says,

"Once again, we are in Señor Montoya's debt. His men have captured more of these invading creatures and the power of La Santisima will bend them to our will. These beasts will follow our orders, protect our families and eventually, drive out the invaders, letting us return to the life we all enjoyed."

From the darkness behind the stage, a dozen edeinos are dragged, hogtied, onto the stage. The Storm Knights can attempt a DN 14 *find* test, due to the poor lighting and distance, to identify these edeinos as belonging to the Bluespine clan, due to the blue and turquoise pigments adorning their bodies.

A moment later, a woman of unearthly beauty ascends onto the stage. Her long, straight black hair and blood-red lips contrast against her pearlescent



Corbo's hired guns are numerous and ready to protect the foul denizens of the valley.

skin that seems to glow in the torchlight. Stepping up toward the first captive, she raises a long dagger that appears suddenly in her hand and raises it, ready to plunge it into the edeinos's chest.

If the Storm Knights do not spring into action now, she expertly sacrifices the edeinos, one by one, a look of pleasure crossing her otherwise placid face when blood spurts upon her gown. If not stopped, La Santisima invokes a ritual, a deep susurration issuing inhumanly from her, as she slides a large, thick, white, worm-like creature down each of the sacrifice's throats. Once freed of their bonds, the edeinos rise with spasmodic motions, adding additional foes for the Storm Knights to deal with should they have waited this long.

If the Storm Knights attack before La Santisima sacrifices the first edeinos, they enjoy surprise as combat begins, since all eyes are riveted upon the spectacle taking place on stage. Corbo's followers are ordinary people and scatter at the first sign of trouble, except for the hired guns who protect Corbo and his mistress.

• Hired Guns (2 per character): Use Human Soldier stats on page 80. Note that the weapons they use exceed the Tech Axiom of the Mixed Zone, so they are subject to disconnection.

COMPLICATIONS

After the first round, a scouting party of Bluespine edeinos arrives and begins massacring the fleeing civilians. They tracked their fellow edeinos after their capture and are intent on exacting revenge. The Storm Knights have an opportunity to turn these foes into allies. A successful DN 16 *persuasion* test, at +2 if the characters untie the captured edeinos unharmed, gives the characters a chance to recruit the Bluespine as temporary allies against their true enemies, Corbo and La Santisima. Otherwise, they need to defeat the attacking Bluespines.

This fight can be as simple or as complicated as the GM wishes. The panicking civilians should act as a barrier against indiscriminate fire by the Storm Knights, though the guards don't necessarily share their restraint. Unless the Bluespine edeinos were turned into allies, use them as a means of either cutting down the guards (should they prove too much for the Storm Knights), or have the edeinos realize the characters are the greater threat and focus their attacks on them.

• Edeinos Warriors (1 per hero): See page 80.

LA SANTISIMA REVEALS HERSELF

As the tide turns against him, Corbo throws himself at La Santisima's feet and begs her to save him. Bending down, she gently caresses his head, grips it, and in one smooth motion rips it off. She stands there, delighting in the shower of arterial blood, and then reveals her true self.

Appearing as a beautiful woman of indeterminate origin, La Santisima, when confronted with combatants, digs her fingers between her jawline and cheeks. Horrifically ripping off her face as if it were a mask, her gore-covered skull leers at the Storm Knights. Small bumps like tumors swim and undulate beneath her alabaster skin. Upon seeing this, the Storm Knights must succeed a DN 10 Fear test or become Very Stymied.

THE LADY OF WORMS

La Santisima is actually the Lady of Worms, a horror from the cosm of Orrorsh. The creature is a four-foot-long, two-foot-thick white worm that uses a human body as its host, preferring beautiful females to better entice its prey. It feeds exclusively on blood, which it uses to provide nourishment for itself and its brood gestating within the host. Numbering in the many thousands, these resemble smaller versions of itself.

When Corbo stumbled upon the Nightmare Tree, the Lady of Worms planned on feeding on him, but the attacking edeinos offered greater nourishment and provided her the opportunity to undermine Baruk Kaah's foothold in this reality. When it found the man on its knees, promising to bring others to worship at its feet, the Lady of Worms saw an opportunity to spread her brood farther afield.

The attack by the edeinos and the Storm Knights enraged it, and in a pique, it killed Corbo so his blood would empower the Lady of Worms for her fight against the Storm Knights. Attributes: Charisma 6 (13 as La Santisima), Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 11, Strength 12

Skills: Dodge 12, find 9, intimidation 14, melee weapons 12, reality 12, unarmed combat 12, willpower 14

Move: 9; Tough: 12; Shock: —; Wounds: 3 Equipment: —

Perks: -

Possibilities: 3

Special Abilities:

• Acidic Spew: Once per combat, the Lady of Worms can launch an acidic attack in a Medium Blast as a *missile weapons* attack, Damage 12. Anyone who suffers damage is automatically Stymied for one round, as they shake off the hundreds of small worms trying to burrow into their skin.

• **Bite/Claws:** Bony talons erupt from the host body's fingertips. Damage *Strength* +2 (14).

• Darkness: The Lady of Worms gains a bonus to Toughness equal to the current Darkness penalty—none if the heroes waited until the day, or +4 Toughness if the battle occurs at night.

• Fear: Upon first seeing the Lady of Worms in her true form a hero must test Willpower or *Spirit* or become Very Stymied.

• **Relentless:** The host is a meat puppet, allowing the Lady of Worms to ignore Shock.

• **True Death:** After ripping the worm from the host body, it must be covered with rock salt and then set ablaze. Otherwise, even if defeated the Lady of Worms eventually returns to plague the living.

AFTERMATH

The Nightmare Tree rests nearby, an immense tree so thick, eight people could link arms around its circumference. Its leafless branches reach up to the heavens like a dead man's hand, its bark desiccated and brittle to the touch. Destroying the Nightmare Tree could become a campaign goal. It does not burn and any attempt to chop it down is futile, as its blood-red sap immediately seals the wound like a scab.

The Nightmare Tree is planted on a small rise that was the site of a massacre during the Second Seminole War, where dozens of Seminole Indians were ambushed and killed by soldiers in 1840 fertile ground for the Gaunt Man's seed.

With the death of Corbo and the Lady of Worms, the cult disintegrates and no longer poses a threat to Father Martinez or anyone else. The corpses infected by the Lady of Worms's parasitic brood cease to be animate and rot away to puddles of black ooze.

If an alliance between the Storm Knights and Bluespine edeinos is forged, it holds after the Lady of Worms is destroyed. They leave the characters unharmed. Whether the Storm Knights can build upon this tentative truce remains to be seen.

The Storm Knights have made an enemy of Ricardo Montoya this night. The crime lord does not soon forget their interference in his attempt to reconstruct his power base. Montoya proves to be a thorn in the side of the Delphi Council's Miami branch.

COSM: LIVING LAND LOCATION: NEAR ASTORIA, OREGON

The Delphi Council has asked the explorers to enter the Living Land in order to find the source of vinemetal, a living form of metal. The council needs to know if tools or weapons made from this metal fare better in the Living Land than items made from Core Earth materials. The heroes are inserted near Astoria, Oregon. There they are met by an edeinos guide from the Ghost Clan, who will guide them to the vinemetal site in the ruins of Portland, Oregon. The journey takes about a week.

The edeinos guide is a gotak, one whose faith in Lanala is absolute, but whose faith in the Saar Baruk Kaah is shaken. Tyec Ssan questions whether the High Lord truly represents the will of Lanala. Baruk Kaah's wrathful destruction of Seattle did not fit well with Tyec's belief in the sanctity of death as a critical part of honoring Lanala. He is on a First Walk of Gotak, a ritual replication of the origin of the first gotak.

DELPHI BRIEFING

Standard Scene. The council presents the investigators with a gift and a mission. The gift is a .38 revolver and 24 rounds of ammunition. The revolver looks strange; reflections move slowly across the cylinder and barrel independent of the light source. The pistol heats up more slowly and cools down more rapidly than would normal metal.

The council explains that the .38 is made from vinemetal, a living metal found somewhere in the Willamette Valley in the former state of Oregon. The council got a sample from trade with the Ghost Clan. Scientists believe living metal does not decay or break in the Living Land as ordinary metal does.

The council wants the weapon tested, to see if vinemetal weaponry can be used in the war against Baruk Kaah. They want the source of the metal found, and for the explorers to determine if it is a resource that can be exploited for the benefit of Core Earth. The Gray Ones of the Ghost Clan know



Tyec Ssan is a Gotak of the Ghost clan

the location of the vinemetal, and have provided a guide for this mission.

The heroes are inserted near Astoria, Oregon. Astoria is a former port city, now a small fortified camp of about 700 souls. The camp is centered about a hardpoint, the house where a portion of the movie *The Goonies* was filmed. Outside the walls of Astoria the Storm Knights meet their gotak guide.

THE GOTAK'S WAYS

Tyec was marked by Lanala at an early age; wounded animals came into his tribe's encampment and died at his feet. His tribe's optant began training him in the ways of Lanala, at the same time Tyec was learning to hunt. This early training in the ways of life may have tinged his perception of what it meant to be a gotak.

Embracing his role with enthusiasm and fervor to serve Lanala, Tyec joined the Saar's expedition against Seattle. The battle left Tyec's faith in Lanala unwavering, but his loyalty to Baruk Kaah fell with the buildings of Seattle. There was no chance to consecrate such a number of dead, no way to ensure the spirits could find their way back to Lanala, no way to honor the wisdom of the goddess's plan. He is still loyal to his tribe and suspicious of those from other cosms. But Tyec accepted the Gray Ones' request to guide Delphi Council agents. The gotak is going to use that journey as a First Walk, a spiritual journey that tells the story and to an extent replicates the origin of the first gotak of the edeinos. While he is a reliable guide, he is more interested in how the agents do with the first walk, and the discussions during firetalk, than in their destination.

THE CARE AND FEEDING OF VINEMETAL

Vinemetal is a living plant; it needs nutrients and water like any plant. Fortunately care is pretty simple: Let the vinemetal have sunlight during the day, and plant it in the ground each evening. Once planted, vinemetal shoots out tiny roots through which to take nutrients. When pulled from the ground the roots retract. Vinemetal can go for about three days without light and water, at the end of which the metal turns brown and crumbles like a dried leaf.

Vinemetal tools do not rot or decay in the Living Land like tools made from "dead things." However, the technology of the tool can still cause a Contradiction. The .38 revolver is susceptible to this. Vinemetal requires a Spirit Axiom of 16 to live. If it disconnects in a cosm where the Spirit Axiom is less than 16 it dies, leaving a brittle brown husk.

NEW PERK: CLAW WORDS

Prereq: Ghost Clan Jakatt

Claw Words channels Lanala's spirit through bold gestures to increase the effectiveness of a jakatt's spoken word. The edeinos add physical gestures and miming to their sentences. While also for emphasis, spiritual energy bolsters and strengthens the spirit of the words as they are spoken.

The jakatt makes bold, dramatic gestures, movements and sounds that complement her message. She may use *faith* skill instead of *intimidation*, *persuasion*, or *taunt* when the target of the test is a follower of Lanala. The test is Favored.

TYEC SSAN

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 9, Mind 8, Spirit 11, Strength 10

Skills: Dodge 10, faith 15, find 10, intimidation 12, maneuver 11, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 11, unarmed combat 11, willpower 12
Move: 10; Tough: 12 (2); Shock: 11; Wounds: 3
Equipment: Hrockt-shoot spear (Damage Strength)

+2/12), hrockt-root armor (Armor +2, Torso)

Perks: Claw Words, Gotak, Miracles (commune with spirits, banish, bless, curse, ward enemy)

Possibilities: 2

Special Abilities:

• Bites/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).

BEING A GOTAK

The gotak of the Ghost Clan are excluded from most tribal activities. The edeinos' discomfort with the gotak's role in Keta Kalles shows in the extremely rigid way of interacting with them. Tyec Ssan is used to this, and expects the explorers to follow protocol.

NAMES ARE FOR THE LIVING

Once they have taken the shaping oath, other jakatts distance themselves from the priests of death. For this reason gotaks do not use their names when speaking to others. They refer to themselves as "gotak," or "I, gotak" if specificity is needed. They refer to others by the role they perform in the party. When introductions are made at the start of the journey, the gotak is uncomfortable if names are given. He asks, trying to coax the heroes to use a role or title rather than a name,

"Names are for the living. What are you to me?"

RESPECT **D**EATH

Death is a somber, critical part of Lanala's plan. Funerary rites are a critical part Keta Kalles; to ignore these rites disrespects the goddess of the Living Land. Such disrespect can cause a gotak to lose favor, and often causes a reaction from the land itself (See **"These Rocks Hate You"** below).

THE GHOST CLAN STYLE OF SPEAKING

The Law of Life and the Law of Savagery have affected the speech patterns of the edeinos. Their phrasing is direct, active tense, usually short. Everything is alive, even spoken words, so Jakatts often ascribe actions or motives to things Core Earthers consider inanimate. When they use what Core Earthers might consider metaphorical language, the edeinos most often mean it literally. "Your words walk wounded," carries the meaning that what a speaker has said is unconvincing or confusing. But the edeinos see the speaker as one who has damaged his words, which are now too hurt to communicate their meaning to a listener.

When edeinos do not know a word, they have two methods for asking. Each starts with the phrase "What am I?" and ends up acknowledging the word or phrase by saying that they *are* that word or phrase. For nouns, an edeinos points at the person, place, or thing in question. For verbs, the edeinos acts out the action the verb defines. Any other way of asking or learning is reserved for firetalk.

An edeinos might point to a flower, asking, "What am I?" When told it is a *rose*, the edeinos would say, "I am rose," and wait for confirmation from the person. If they are really up on their manners, an edeinos would then thank both the rose and the person who offered the word "rose."

An edeinos who wants to know the word "hunt" would ask "What am I?" and pantomime tracking, chasing, throwing a spear, then downing the quarry. They would act out all parts of the process like a game of charades turned up to 11. When they are given a word, they would say "I am hunt," and wait for confirmation from the speaker of that word. Polite edeinos then thank the speaker for the gift of the word.

Below are a few example sentences to help the Game Master speak in the manner of Ghost Clan edeinos. These sentences are clues to how the edeinos interact with the spiritual nature of the Living Land. Clearly this is not an exhaustive list; the Game Master is encouraged to expand it when she acts as an edeinos character talking to Storm Knights.

"THE JUNGLE LIKES US THIS MORNING"

Jakatts can sense the spiritual calm or turbulence of their surroundings. The presence of wonders, predators, bountiful game, challenging terrain, and native spirits within a day's walk can all influence the spiritual feel of the surrounding land. If an explorer wants to determine this spiritual feel, it requires a *faith* test DN 12. The results are expressed as if the jungle were the actor for the spiritual presence sensed. Threats might be expressed as, "The jungle hunts us," while a wonder might be "The jungle reveals to us" or "The jungle tempts us." Travel difficulties could be expressed as "The jungle challenges us." The sense is not allencompassing; only one salient feature need be revealed on a successful *faith* test.

"THE TREES WHISPER OF ANGER"

The jakatt senses danger hidden in the trees or some other prominent terrain feature. Jakatts generally believe they sense this danger because they are warned by the spirits of the trees, but it is more likely they apprehend the danger with one of their more prosaic senses.

"THESE ROCKS HATE YOU"

Characters who mock or are disrespectful of Lanala and the Living Land provoke a reaction from the spirits of the land. When this happens, a jakatt can often sense the land's displeasure with the individual. A spiteful piece of the Living Land makes the offending character Very Stymied. The modifier might apply to movement, combat, navigation, camping, almost any action a character might take. The land is living, it does not like the character, and it acts accordingly.

Vegetation snaps loudly, making *stealth* tests more difficult. Rocks suddenly become sharp or slippery, making climbing and movement harder. Mists roil in such a way that reveals the character and hides his enemies. Wood may become too damp, extinguishing a campfire. Rain splatters and fills the eyes, making sight difficult. The Game Master should think of the offending character as having stumbled into a haunted house thousands of square miles in size, and run with it.

The offending character must make amends, scrupulously observing the practices and rituals of the jakatt for at least two days and nights, including making a personal apology to Lanala. This apology often takes the form an offering or service provided the goddess. Once this is done, the land forgives her. A Game Master is free to increase the penance if she believes the character has done something heinous or truly blasphemous to the Living Land.

"YOUR WORDS WALK WOUNDED"

A character's words have failed to impress, are incomprehensible, or the hero otherwise did not communicate effectively. A speaker may try again if he adds dramatic movements and gestures to his speech, in order to act out, represent, or otherwise emphasize his meaning. As a Game Master, think of it as charades turned up to 11.

"MY HEART BEATS ITS CHEST AT YOUR WORDS"

Strange to Core Earth ears, this statement makes perfect sense to an edeinos. His heart, his emotional self, is distinct from his physical self, and so would of course beat its chest in agreement and elation if a speech resonated with him. Some edeinos also express other emotional states as living entities taking action.

Among the Ghost Clan in this region, they use the following idiom: "My courage bathes." This refers to the ritual bathing Ghost Clan warriors perform at the instruction of an optant on the eve of a great battle. It means the edeinos is steeling herself, and is ready for the conflict ahead.

"MY CURIOSITY SPRINTS"

This utterance means an edeinos is about to throw caution to the wind and discover what is just ahead. Explorers can bet that an edeinos who says this about to plunge headlong into something, regardless of consequence.

"MY DEATH SINGS"

This means the situation is dire, but fierce devotion stoked by the Law of Savagery might be enough to pull the edeinos through. And if not, it is probably a good death in the eyes of Lanala.

MY WORDS DID NOT DANCE

The speaker's words were clumsy, poorly phrased, or possibly offensive to the listener. The edeinos is apologizing for those words.

EDEINOS PHENOMENA

FIRETALK

Conversations are had and stories told around campfires. This is the one setting in which edeinos relax their rules of conversation, speaking in abstractions or more poetically, particularly when telling a good story. They may still emphasize descriptions, accentuated with the physical movement and gestures of the speaker, but other gentler styles of speaking are also used. One source of cultural tension between natives of the Living Land and visitors is the visitors' tendency to prattle on and on with firetalk at inappropriate times. An exasperated edeinos says, "Where is the campfire?" expecting the visitor to stop speaking inappropriately.

SKYSPIRIT RIVER

Phenomenon in which a long rain produces a semisentient flash flood that flows as a river. The river's sentience is provided by sky spirits, trapped by the rain as it fell to the ground. The frantic flow of the river is the result of spirit's struggle to be free from the watery confines. Eventually, usually suddenly, the spirits win their freedom and the skyspirit river disperses, becoming a temporary bayou that drains away in several hours.

THE FIRST WALK OF GOTAK

The gotak begins the spirit journey of the First Walk as soon as he meets the explorers. The First Walk is a ritual recreation of the journey an edeinos took on her way to becoming the first ever gotak. The gotak answers no questions about the journey until the first evening of firetalk, and he expects the heroes to participate in the journey. He starts by marking the sunrise symbol on the first willing character, and he cannot be persuaded to start guiding them until all Storm Knights have the mark.

Should the Storm Knights force the gotak to lead them while not participating in the ritual, the gotak does not warn them of any dangers he senses, nor use miracles on their behalf.

Each morning the Delphi Council's agents wake to find the gotak busy grinding plants for the pigments for that day's markings. Tyec mimics the bird calls from the surrounding jungle as he grinds. Marks for the First Walk do not wear off until the First Walk is complete, or the marked character dies.

SUNRISE JOURNEY

Standard Scene. Upon first encountering the explorers, the gotak gestures to the pigments he has ready, dipping claws into the first bit of color. On his left arm he draws a line representing the horizon, and a half circle for the rising sun. He says,

"She woke that day filled with life, knowing Lanala's purpose for her that day was joy, and moved fiercely. So shall we."

For the rest of the day, all forms of movement actions are Favored. The gotak takes every opportunity to move quickly, running more than walking, leaping onto rocks, climbing trees, for no other reason than to experience the joy of movement in Lanala's land of life. He takes a handful of berries, leaps, then tosses the berries in a lazy arc so the passing birds can more easily catch them.

The explorers do not tire even after a day's worth of frantic movement. They travel at a threekilometer-per-hour pace through the jungle, but it catches up with them at firetalk. At that time each Storm Knight makes a *Strength* test DN 8. Failure means the character takes four Shock. This Shock represents strains and small tears in muscles, and does not naturally return until the next night's firetalk.

FIRETALK

The gotak now provides more expansive answers to the explorers' questions. His central questions for the heroes are, "In the Delphi Council tribe, how is it decided who shall hunt? Upon the hunting party's return, how is the hunt divided within the tribe?" The gotak is looking for how the heroes' "tribe" handles responsibility for providing for the tribe, and how fair the division of spoils is for the community.

SKYSPIRIT RIVER

Standard Scene. Next morning, as the heroes work out the stiffness from the previous day, the gotak paints wavy lines of blue on the left shoulders of the explorers. He says,

"Lanala skyspirits hurried her. She was not yet gotak, and struggled on the skyspirit river. So shall we."

It starts to rain, and intensifies over the next two hours. Seasoned explorers see the conditions are ripe for a flash flood, but they have time to lash together logs or branches into an improvised raft. A *water vehicles* test at DN 12 ensures the craft holds together long enough to run the length of the skyspirit river. Otherwise failed handling rolls while on the river mean bits of the raft are lost, perhaps ending in individual chunks of wood floating in the torrent. The adventurers face several hazards along the way:

• Swirling Rapids: Requires two characters, one to make a *water vehicles* test at DN 10, and one to make a *Strength* test at DN 10. If both succeed, the raft nimbly negotiates the current. If one fails, each character must make a standard *Dexterity* test (DN 8), or fall in the water. If both tests fail the raft capsizes, dealing one soakable Wound to each occupant.

• **Boulder Field:** This requires three characters, one to make a *water vehicles* test (DN 10), one to push the raft away from the boulders with a *Strength* test (DN 12), and one to keep the raft from spinning with a *Strength* test (DN 10). If both the *water vehicles* and spin test fail, the raft capsizes. If the push fails, the raft strikes the boulders. Each character makes a *Dexterity* test at DN 10 or is catapulted into the water.



It rains more than water in a place as spiritual as the Living Land.

• Falling Forest: The rushing river topples trees over at their roots. This hazard requires three characters, one to make a *water vehicles* test (DN 12), and two to make *Strength* tests (DN 10). For each test that fails, falling branches clip one or two characters, doing 14 damage. If all three tests fail, a falling tree scores a direct hit on the raft, dealing 16 + 1BD damage to all characters on the raft..

• Whirlpools: Furiously spinning whirlpools indicate trapped sky spirits. Keeping the raft upright and moving requires two characters, one to make a *water vehicles* test (DN 10), and another to keep paddling with a *Strength* test (DN 10). If both tests fail in the same round, the raft is sucked down into a whirlpool and lost. As the Storm Knights try to navigate through nearby whirlpools, other whirlpools erupt as trapped sky spirits attack (one spirit for every two heroes). See their stats below.

TRAPPED SKY SPIRIT

Sky spirits trapped in the river are panicked and enraged. They channel their spiritual power through the water that encases them, lashing out at everything around them in their struggle to be free.

Attributes: Charisma 8, Dexterity 11, Mind 11, Spirit 11, Strength 10

Skills: Dodge 12, intimidation 12, taunt (10), trick 15, unarmed combat 12, willpower 10

Move: 10; Tough: 12; Shock: 20; Wounds: 3 Equipment: —

Perks: –

Possibilities: 1

Special Abilities:

• **Drowning:** Trapped sky spirits use tricks to time surges and blasts of water such that the target sucks in a lungful of water. The target is Very Vulnerable until she makes a *Strength* test at DN 12.

• Fluid: A trapped sky spirit is hard to damage; this is reflected in the creature's Toughness and Shock ratings.

• Free At Last: Freeing a sky spirit from its river prison requires that specific intent and a *faith* test at DN 14. A freed spirit explodes from the water, leaving a shimmering rainbow that grows to 25 meters in size and disappears in a gust of fresh, clean air.

• Waterblast: Shimmering waves of water infused with spiritual energy. Deals damage *Spirit* +4 (15). Waterblast ignores armor unless the armor specifically protects against spiritual attacks.

FIRETALK

This evening the gotak wants to know about community rituals of the Delphi Council tribe. Are there birth blessings? Mating sacraments? Rituals of dance where the community strengthens its hunters? Most important of all: How is death consecrated, and how are the practitioners of those rituals treated within the Delphi Council tribe?

HUNT IN THE MIST

Standard Scene. The next morning, the gotak paints on the right shoulder of each explorer a swirling patch of white, with brown talons emerging from swirl. He tries to ask the word for "hunt" by pantomiming a hunt: He is the hunter who tracks, pursues, and throws a spear at his prey, becoming the speared prey at the end of the performance. Whatever word the investigators give him, the gotak uses in place of the word "hunt" in his benediction for that day:

"She woke that day feeling a shiver in the mists. She hunted death that day, as it hunted her. She respected death. So shall we."

As soon as the gotak finishes the benediction, deep mists flow over the campsite and envelop the group.

The roar of an allosaurus perhaps 100 meters behind the party is echoed by a roar about 60 meters to the party's right. The heroes are hunted by a mated pair of allosaurs.

Avoiding the allosaurs is a standard *stealth* test opposed by the allosaurs tracking. A failed *stealth*

test means the allosaurs get two rounds of attacks before the heroes can again try to disappear into the jungle.

The party must find an injured edeinos to whom the gotak can give a chant of passage. This requires a *tracking* test at DN 16. The allosaurs hunt continuously. Once the edeinos is found, the gotak must give a quick chant of passage, which takes five rounds. If a Storm Knight checks out the edeinos, it is obvious that it has taken rifle fire.

No more *stealth* rolls are possible during the chant of passage, and if the two allosaurs find the heroes the fight is on.

ALLOSAUR

Attributes: Charisma 4, Dexterity 9, Mind 5, Spirit 10, Strength 16

Skills: Dodge 12, find 12, intimidation 13, maneuver 11, stealth 11, taunt (10), tracking 13, unarmed combat 12

Move: 11; Tough: 19 (3); Shock: 12; Wounds: 3 Equipment: —

Perks: -

Possibilities: None

Special Abilities:

• Armor: Scaly skin +3.

• Bite: Strength +3 (19).

•Hunting Pair: These beasts are instinctive hunters with uncanny cooperation during a hunt. Whenever one allosaur in a pair attacks, the second allosaur's attack is Favored.

• Very Large: Attacks vs them gain a +4 bonus.

FIRETALK

As the explorers tend to their wounds, the gotak is pleased. The power of the skyspirit river and success of the hunt in the mists provide proof that this is a First Walk provided by Lanala. The Storm Knights walk the path of the first gotak.

This night the gotak wants to know how the Delphi Council tribe decides to go to war, and decides when it is time to end a war. Tyec Ssan also struggles to express a concept unusual in the land of the Law of Savagery. The Battle of Seattle was wrong—war taken too far—to the point of forcing disrespect for the dead. Does the Delphi Council tribe have limits on what it does in times of war? Are there values sacred enough that they are not sacrificed in the heat of battle? He offers a halting, emotional recounting of his vantage point during the Battle of Seattle as a negative example, something he feels compelled to avoid in the future.

ENEMY TRIBE

Dramatic Scene. The Storm Knights waken to a clear day. The gotak paints a pair of red, broken spears on the right forearm of each investigator. He says,

"Lanala embraces death as part of life. She created gotaks to foster respect for death. The edeinos she found was not given that respect by their killer. She went to find the enemy tribe to get that respect, or revenge. So shall we."

The edeinos was killed by survivalists in the nearby colony of Lynville. The regular clear-cutting and burning of the jungle encroaching upon the colony fills the sky with smoke, making the settlement easy to find.

On the way to Lynville, Tyec Ssan says they must either:

• **Take Blood:** This means to kill three colonists in retribution, performing proper consecration rites on those killed, or...

• Gain Respect: Lead a party of colonists back to the bones of the edeinos for a proper consecration of the edeinos's soul to Lanala.

Lynville is a survivalist colony near the former Oregon town of Dundee. They consider themselves independent of the Core Earthers in Astoria. A good number of the colonists have transformed into primitive humans. These transformed humans are still part of the colony, wandering the outskirts and patrolling for enemies. The jungle is kept reasonably clear from the razor-wire borders of the colony out to a range of 20 meters, but sections of wire have succumbed to the Living Land. A functioning water tower forms the heart of the colony, with three Quonset-style buildings and half a dozen tents surrounding it. The water tower is constantly manned by two soldiers. The rest of the soldiers are scattered around the colony, but the water tower has an alarm bell which alerts soldiers, primitive humans, and residents to rise and defend their colony.

LYN BRUSHMAN

The mayor is a grizzled veteran named Lyn Brushman. Originally based in San Francisco, Lyn assigned himself the job of creating and defending Lynville as a forward base and refuge. Some of his platoon-mates joined him. Lyn is an honest leader and a loyal defender of his colony. Although he wages war against the Ghost Clan, he is not a burn-the-village-to-save-it kind of guy. He can be reasoned with if the explorers can come up with a win-win scenario for the party and the colony.

When talking to the party, Lyn wants to know why the heroes are cooperating with a Ghost Clan gotak. He asks,

"Since when does the Delphi Council consort with the enemy?"

If Lyn spots or is shown the living metal .38 special, he is interested in obtaining some of the metal for his colony. A deal might be struck.

LYNVILLE COLONY RESIDENTS

- Two primitive humans per character in the party (See page 80).
- One Human Soldier per character in the party, plus two in the water tower (See page 80).
- Lyn Brushman, a Soldier with two Possibilities.
- 30 Ord residents (see Torg Eternity).

FIRETALK

This firetalk is pivotal in Tyec Ssan deciding to join the Delphi Council tribe, or at least leave the service of Baruk Kaah. He discusses the Storm Knights' decisions and conduct at Lynville. If neither of the gotak's objectives are achieved, he needs convincing that the other goals are worthwhile. If the violence escalates beyond the three deaths required to satisfy the gotak, he wants to know the reason for the escalation.

CLAW, FANG, AND FAITH

Dramatic Scene. This morning Tyec Ssan paints several stick figures on the backs of the heroes, some whole, some in pieces. He says,

"She paid respect to death. This day death paid respect to her. She faced the blasphemous with only claw, fang, and faith—and prevailed. So shall we." The gotak says that the first gotak dealt with the dead of the Ustanah. He says they are to deal with the dead of Baruk Kaah.

The day becomes stiflingly hot and humid. The temperature rises steadily throughout the day, breaking 115 Fahrenheit (46 Celsius) before noon, and keeps rising. The jungle is still—no wind—and soon the birds stop chirping and the insects cease their buzzing. The snapping of the foliage ahead is obvious, and the encounter begins. Tyec Ssann says as gospog begin pouring out of the jungle,

"Lanala's favor is with us. Claw, fang, and faith only. Death sides with us."

Lanala's Favor: If a hero uses only *faith* or *unarmed combat* this fight, Lanala allows *faith* to directly damage the gospog. The attacks are made with *unarmed combat*, and the damage value is the character's *faith* +8. When an attack hits, the heroes feel a concussive shudder and parts of the gospog break off on the other side. A hero without *faith* just uses *unarmed combat*. A hero who attacks some other way than *maneuver*, *trick*, *taunt*, or *unarmed combat* feels suddenly and horribly drained by the heat; they are Vulnerable for the remainder of the encounter.

• **Round One:** Gospog of the First Planting surge from the jungle (2 per hero).

• **Round Two:** The gospog are reinforced by more First-Planting Gospog (1 per hero).

• Round Three: The enemies are reinforced by second-planting gospog (1 per hero). The Game Master may increase this number if there are characters whom "the rocks hate." These extra foes concentrate on explorers who have offended the Living Land.

This fight is very visceral, taking full advantage of the Law of Savagery. Fists get stuck in the oozing chests of the gospog and heads butt rotting skulls as Storm Knights break free from an enemy's grasp. The ground becomes slick from the ichor of fallen enemies. Every war cry sprays blood and spittle. Go into full-throttle Game Master description for this fight.

• Gospog of the Living Land: See Living Land.

When the battle is over the gotak starts funeral rites for the gospog. Characters who help with this task impress the gotak with their respect for Lanala. Those who fought only with *unarmed combat* and *faith* also impress him. If the Storm Knights have been respectful to Lanala during this journey, Tyec Ssan is primed to switch sides and join forces with the Delphi Council. His pride prevents him from asking directly.

FIRETALK

The gotak gets as close as he can to asking if he can join the Delphi Council tribe, asking instead if there are gotaks who serve the Delphi Council tribe, and what use a gotak might be to the explorers' tribe.

LANALA'S WHISPER

Standard Scene. The next morning, the gotak paints ochre lines on the explorers' ears and foreheads. Tyec says,

"As she finishes the first walk of gotak, she now walks with Lanala. She sees death through Lanala's eyes, and reverently helps her tribe to do the same. In the quiet moments, she listens to the whispers of Lanala. So shall we."

The investigators enter the ruins of Portland, heading toward the Willamette River downtown. The closer they get, the more vinemetal they see. The Wonder that allows the vinemetal to grow and thrive is about a kilometer in diameter, centered over the north end of the remains of Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

An hour or so out from the park, each character makes a *Spirit* test (DN 10). With success, a character hears soft voices on the wind, warnings of shattering footfalls, razor teeth, and slicing claws: the vinemetal behemoth. On a Good Success, Lanala grants a vision of the vinemetal grove's heart: the now-living mast of the *USS Oregon*. The mast is choked with vinemetal that is slowly strangling the life from the heart.

With Outstanding Success, the GM can use the description above or have Lanala grant a vision concerning other campaign events. Also, the character momentarily feels Baruk Kaah's attention as the High Lord notices the unusually strong presence of Lanala the hero has garnered.

THE GROVE

Entering the grove in Tom McCall Park is a little like stepping into a mirage. Wavery reflections of silver, blue, and green shimmer from every direction. Every blade of glass, every leaf and barked trunk is gleaming, living metal. At the heart of the grove is the mast of *USS Oregon*. Formerly a war memorial, it is now the 100-ton heart of this ecosystem. The wondrous power that transformed the mast is the life source for the metal in the grove. Atop the mast is a US flag transformed into a fluttering, thin metal sheet. It is colored blue and silver, for there is no red in the palette of the living metal.

The heart is in trouble. Razor vines are growing around and through its base, and are beginning to run up its sides. This is damaging the heart. It will be dead in a few months. With the heart dead, the wonder fades and the metal is once again a dead thing.

The players have at least the following choices:

• Help the Heart: To do this the heroes have to clear the razor vines from the mast. They do this by invocing *banish* or *shape plant* on every fivemeter cluster of vines, then cutting them out. The vines resist with *Spirit* 10 and a Toughness 10. When they attack, they do so in the same way as the behemoth's Razor Vines ability. There are six clusters that must be cleared. So easy peasy...except for the behemoth guarding the heart.

• Harvest Vinemetal: Avoiding the behemoth is easy enough to do if the Storm Knights do not approach the heart of the grove. They could harvest as much living metal as they can carry.

• Attack the Behemoth: For no other reason than because it's there. And they have a gotak handy to bury the Delphi Council agents when it's over.

VINEMETAL BEHEMOTH

The vinemetal behemoth is the guardian of the living metal grove, particularly the heart of the grove represented by the mast of the USS Oregon.

The behemoth took the form of a chupacabra that had been caught in the vinemetal, but it's a chupacabra nearly 15 meters long. Its howl sounds like the baying of a chupacabra mixed with a metal grinder, played at full volume through a stadium sound system. Nothing about the creature is quiet; footsteps reverberate like explosions in a quarry, and its movement sounds like a ship's hull being sheared in two.

Attributes: Charisma 8, Dexterity 12, Mind 12, Spirit 14, Strength 20

Skills: Dodge 12, find 12, intimidation 16, missile weapons 15, trick 12, unarmed combat 15, willpower 14

Move: 15; Tough: 26 (6); Shock: 30; Wounds: 3 Equipment: —

Perks: –

Possibilities: 6

Special Abilities:

• **Dread:** Any fight against the behemoth is a dramatic scene.

• Flechette Stomp: Damage 26. The behemoth can spend a Possibility to attack with a flechette stomp. The stomp explodes the vinemetal around the behemoth into thousands of piercing metal slivers. The stomp is a Huge Blast attack using *missile weapons*, targeting creatures within 40 meters of the behemoth.

• Living Armor: Armor +6. The behemoth is living metal, and its skin and outgrowths are very good at adapting to incoming attacks. When an armor-piercing attack hits the behemoth, the creature makes a free *Spirit* test (DN 12). Success means future attacks from that source no longer pierce its armor.

• Metal Scream: The behemoth amplifies the sound of its movement to unbearable levels. Targets must make a *Mind* test (DN 12), or be Stymied until they make such a test.

• **Razor Vines:** The behemoth can command the vinemetal in the grove to attack an enemy. Razor vines are a *missile weapons* attack anywhere within the sight of the behemoth, as long as the target is in the grove. The vines do 20 damage; a Good Success does 20 + 1BD damage and restrains the target; an Outstanding Success does 20 + 2BD damage and restrains and Stymies the target.

• Very Large: +4 to hit the vinemetal behemoth.

PARLAYING WITH THE BEHEMOTH

The behemoth is extremely intelligent, and knows the heart of the grove is in trouble. However, it speaks not a lick of any language. By this time, our heroes should have some experience with alternate methods of communication that could work. They can try to pantomime their actions out for the behemoth. Or they can try to paint symbols or pictographs on the ground to convey their intentions. Let the players be creative in their solutions. As long as they don't get too close to the tree, and are trying to communicate, the behemoth is extremely patient. If the communication stalls, the behemoth tries to herd them out of the grove. If attacked, the behemoth unceremoniously slaughters everyone it can.

AFTERMATH

When the scene is over, Tyec Ssan tells the heroes they have successfully completed the First Walk of the Gotak. As far as he knows, they are the first non-jakatts to do so. If they so choose, the explorers may keep one symbol as a reminder of their journey. The symbol fades slightly over time, but is permanent otherwise. Any optants or gotaks who see the symbol recognize that the Storm Knight has completed the First Walk of the Gotak.

A Canadian-flagged patrol boat rendezvouses with them at the edge of the Willamette River. If Tyec Ssan has joined the Delphi Council, he hesitantly gets into the loud, dead thing. If not, the gotak gives them a benediction for their journey, and thanks them for giving him much to think about.

If the heroes helped the heart, the behemoth allows others to harvest a limited supply of vinemetal. If intact, Lynville becomes a smithy for all manner of living metal tools and weapons. Relations between Lynville and the Ghost Clan improve, and some of the Ghost Clan learn how to use the *shape plant* power with vinemetal.



The source is near!

Other parties may become interested in the metal. The Nile Empire sees possible uses for weird science. The Cyberpapacy sees living metal as a potential path to more effective cyberwear. And Baruk Kaah would want to eliminate *any* resource his enemies were using.

Finally, what of the stories of smaller "buds" from the behemoth—more normally scaled, gleaming chupacabras—exploring the world and headed toward Mexico for an unknown purpose?

Yeah...that's probably just crazy talk.

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COMMON FOES EDEINOS BEAST RIDER

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 8, Strength 10

Skills: Beast riding 11, dodge 10, faith 9, find 8, intimidation 10, maneuver 10, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 10, stealth 10, survival 8, tracking 8, unarmed combat 11

Move: 9; Tough: 10; Shock: 8; Wounds: -

Equipment: Hrockt-shoot spear (Damage Strength +2/12)

Perks: Beast Rider

Possibilities: Rare (2)

Special Abilities:

• **Beast Bond:** The rider may divert one Wound from an attack to hit his mount instead of himself.

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).

EDEINOS WARRIOR

Attributes: Charisma 5, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 8, Strength 10

Skills: Beast riding 10, dodge 10, faith 9, find 8, intimidation 10, maneuver 10, melee weapons 11, missile weapons 10, stealth 10, survival 8, tracking 8, unarmed combat 11

Move: 9; Tough: 10; Shock: 10; Wounds: -

Equipment: Hrockt shoot spear (*Strength* +2/12) **Perks:** Whirlwind

Possibilities: Rare (2)

Special Abilities:

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).

GHOST CLAN MISTWALKER

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 9, Mind 6, Spirit 8, Strength 10

Skills: Beast riding 11, dodge 10, faith 10, find 9, intimidation 10, maneuver 10, melee weapons 10, missile weapons 10, stealth 14, survival 8, tracking 10, trick 9, unarmed combat 10

Move: 9; Tough: 10; Shock: 8; Wounds: -

Equipment: Hrockt-shoot spear (Damage *Strength* +2/12)

Perks: Chameleon Skin, Skin Shifter, Sprinter **Possibilities:** Rare (2)

Special Abilities:

• Bite/Claws: Damage Strength +2 (12).

HUMAN SOLDIER

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 8, Mind 7, Spirit 8, Strength 8

Skills: Dodge 10, find 8, fire combat 10, first aid 8, heavy weapons 9, intimidation 9, land vehicles 9, maneuver 9, melee weapons 9, stealth 9, unarmed combat 9

Move: 8; Tough: 12 (4); Shock: 8; Wounds: -

Equipment: Ballistic vest (Armor +4), M4 assault rifle (Damage 13, Short Burst, Range 50/100/200). **Perks:** Double Tap

Possibilities: Rare (2)

Special Abilities: -

PRIMITIVE HUMAN

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 7, Mind 7, Spirit 7, Strength 8

Skills: Dodge 8, find 8, intimidation 8, maneuver 8, melee weapons 9, survival 8, unarmed combat 8

Move: 7; Tough: 8; Shock: 7; Wounds: -

Equipment: Improvised club (Damage *Strength* +2/10, become Vulnerable on a miss)

Perks: –

Possibilities: Never Special Abilities: —

TRICERATOPS

Attributes: Charisma 4, Dexterity 6, Mind 4, Spirit 8, Strength 16

Skills: Dodge 11, find 8, intimidation 10, maneuver 7, stealth 7, unarmed combat 10

Move: 8; Tough: 19 (3); Shock: 12; Wounds: 3 Equipment: —

Perks: -

Possibilities: Never

Special Abilities:

• Armor: Bony crest and thick hide +3.

• **Charge:** +2 damage to an attack after the creature moves more than a walk.

• Horns: Damage Strength +2 (18).

• **Very Large:** Triceratops are up to nine meters long and 5,000 kg in weight. Attacks against them gain a +4 bonus.

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