

CYPHERCASTER

MAGAZINE



ENTER HOLSTENWALL

Issue 002
July 2015

WHERE WILL YOUR GAME TAKE YOU?



Hundreds of new abilities, cyphers, descriptors, and foci—plus the complete Cypher System rules including special rules for a variety of genres. Build new recursions for The Strange—or whole new worlds for whole new campaigns!

Victorian horror or the zombie apocalypse? High fantasy or high-powered supers? Espionage? Galaxy-spanning space opera? The *Cypher System Rulebook* gives you everything you need to launch new campaigns, or to take your campaign of The Strange even further!

Available now from the MCG web store:
www.montecookgames.com



[fb.com/MonteCook](https://www.facebook.com/MonteCook)



[@MonteCookGames](https://twitter.com/MonteCookGames)



CREDITS

Publisher & Layout
David Wilson Brown

Content Editor
Andrew Cady

Lead Editor
Jeremy Land

Cover Artist
[Jeff Brown](#)

Logos & Bannerhead
[John Scott](#)

Contributors
David Wilson Brown
Andrew Cady
Michael Diamond
Michael Fienen
Michael Parker
Marc Plourde
Scott Robinson
James Walls
Jennifer Walls

Interior Art
SS Dabiz
Julian Faylona
Avery Liell-Kok
Eric Lofgren
Lee Smith
Matt Stawicki
Cathy Wilkins

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MCG Summer Product Preview	4
Interview of Monte Cook by Andrew Cady	
Creating a Space Opera Setting with the Cypher System Rulebook	6
By David Wilson Brown & Andrew Cady	
Excerpt from <i>Agents from the Beyond</i>	10
by Michael Diamond	
Oodles of Oddities	15
by James & Jennifer Walls	
Peril in Ismonnig, A Show'em Letter	17
Numenera adventure seed by Marc Plourde	
<i>Broken Fractals</i>	18
An Adventure for The Strange by Michael Parker	
<i>Panacea Box, Part One</i>	29
An original Numenera story by Michael Fienen	
<i>Into the Galvanic Labs, Experiments in Dark Energies</i>	36
A Holstenwall adventure for The Strange by Scott Robinson	
MCG Fan Relations News & Events	50



ON THE COVER:

Shrouded in mists and located on one of the main thoroughfares of the city of Holstenwall, the Galvanic Labs of Auroleus University is host to a number of experiments in dark energies, unbeknownst to most of the city's denizens.

What's up, Cypher fans?

This is a really exciting time to be a Cypher System fan. The Cypher System Rulebook (CSR) is about to release and it is an amazing piece of work. The kind of games that can be played with the Cypher System now are infinite and the tools that the book provides are so cool.

To show what you can do with it, Andrew Cady and I look at some old space opera writing I did and created a setting for it using the CSR. This could be something you could use in a home game or give guidance for creating your own setting for a Cypher System game.

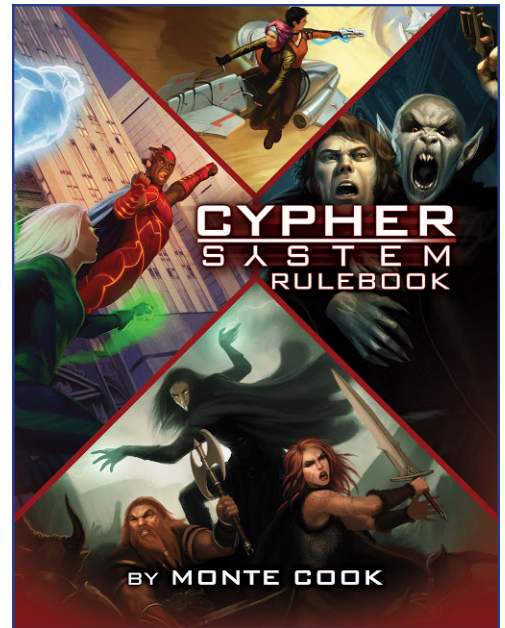
This issue is packed with so much more! We have an interview with Monte Cook himself on the CSR. We have a great excerpt from Michael Diamond's new Numenera novel "Agents of the Beyond." Broken Fractals, Michael Parker's adventure for The Strange, takes you to Crow Hollow to put a stop to a plan that could threaten Earth. Michael Fienen opens the Panacea Box in the first part of his short fiction. Following up on last issue's Holstenwall recursion, we have an adventure located there for you! Enjoy!

David Wilson Brown

Numenera and its logo, The Strange and its logo, Cypher System and its logo, and No Thank You, Evil! and its logo are trademarks of Monte Cook Games, LLC in the U.S.A. and other countries. All Monte Cook Games characters and character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of Monte Cook Games, LLC. Monte Cook Games logos and trademarks, and copyright images and text, are used with permission. CypherCaster contributors retain the rights on their material and any use of their content must be granted approval by the contributors themselves. All other materials and the presentation of this magazine are Copyright 2015 - CypherCast Network.

*Later this month, Monte Cook Games will be re-releasing their third core book in as many years. Instead of being a brand new setting, this 416 page behemoth gives players the building blocks to use the Cypher System in any setting they can imagine. We caught up with **Monte Cook** himself and asked him a few questions about what we can expect from the brand new Cypher System Rulebook.*

Interview by Andrew Cady



Numenera and The Strange were unique settings. What made you decide to take the rules from those games and make a setting-agnostic rulebook for them?

Monte Cook: First and foremost, because people asked for it. A lot of people told us they loved the Cypher System, and they wanted to apply it beyond Numenera and The Strange. Even as I worked on Numenera, way back when, I began to see ways to use the system on other genres, so it really didn't seem all that odd a request.

Both The Strange and Numenera have three character types. Why did you feel the need to split them into four types for the Cypher System Rulebook? Was it as simple as adding a fourth, or did you recreate the other three as well?

MC: The four types in CSR were created from scratch. The three types in Numenera and The Strange were already not analogues of each other (the jack is not the spinner, and visa versa, for starters), and neither group of three was intended to be truly universal. So I created four types that fit different, very general archetypes, but then also made sure that if you reverse engineered them, you could create, say, a Numenera nano or a vector from The Strange, by using these core types. That ensured that they would be more or less compatible with the existing types. (Although the CSR types are, by their nature, far more flexible.)

Another new character creation addition is an element you are calling "flavors." Can you tell us briefly what those are and how that design decision came about?

MC: This is another way to customize characters. It addresses differences in genre and setting, primarily. You can be a fantasy fighter easily enough with the warrior type, but if you're going to be a science fiction soldier, you might choose to give the warrior a tech flavor, for example, giving you access to tech-based abilities like repair, computer knowledge, and so on. You'll also find that modern characters are mostly defined by their skills, so giving a type the skills and knowledge flavor helps distinguish, say, a doctor from a lawyer.

It can also just be useful for player customization. You might want to be a wizard in a fantasy game, choosing the adept type, but you might want to also be sneaky because you grew up on the streets. Working with the GM, you can flavor your wizard with the Stealth type and trade some of your magical abilities for sneaky ones.

Between descriptor, type, flavor, and focus, there are over 73,000 possible characters you can create in this book, but still there are many sidebars, break-outs, and added sections giving players and GMs guidelines for customizing and even creating their own descriptors, types, flavors, and foci. Why did you feel the need to offer these guidelines?

Product Preview - Summer 2015

MC: Because the goal is to have players play the characters they want to play, above all else.

*Cyphers are obviously a huge part of the Cypher System. In *The Strange and Numenera*, you describe and account for their existence rather well. In the CSR, you give great examples of how you can fit them into each genre. You also created something you call "subtle cyphers." Can you describe what those are and maybe the design decisions behind them?*

MC: Cyphers fit seamlessly into most games with a supernatural element, or even high-tech options. But if you're playing a game that doesn't focus on "stuff" at all, you'll want cyphers to be more ephemeral. They don't have to be things at all—they can be blessings from the gods, or something like that. But if you're playing a game where even that's not an option—say, a modern day detective game—then you use subtle cyphers. These cyphers not only do not have a physical presence, but they don't have any overt effects, although they're still very useful. A subtle cypher might represent your character simply gathering up her courage and thus reducing the difficulty of Intellect defense rolls for a time. Or maybe getting your second wind, and restoring some points to your Pools. Subtle effects that fit into all genres that still give characters options to play with.

Shotguns and Sorcery has already licensed your rules and is set to come out soon. Do you expect more third parties to come out with their own Cypher System setting in the near future?

MC: We're in discussions with a number of additional licensees. Exciting stuff!

Now that you have given the public the building blocks to create their own unique campaign worlds in within your ruleset, does that mean we won't be seeing any new and crazy campaign settings coming out of Monte Cook Games anytime soon?

MC: I wouldn't count on that.

Those of us who follow any member of the Monte Cook Games team on social media know that you all have dabbled in running Cypher games in just about every genre imaginable. What home game setting were you most surprised with how well the Cypher System rules fit? What was your favorite?

MC: We just finished a Dark Sun conversion that was a lot of fun. My personal favorite so far was the space opera game that I ran a while back with lots of planet-hopping hijinx.

Yep, that sounds about right—sign us up!





CREATING A SPACE OPERA SETTING WITH THE CYPHER SYSTEM RULEBOOK

Inspired by the Cypher System Rulebook to create my own game setting, I've enlisted my friend Andrew Cady to take an old piece of writing, once imagined for a comic or movie script, and turn it into a CSR setting. When I wrote it, I generically referred to it as "Galactic Empires"—it was influenced by Star Wars and classic Japanimation like Space Battleship Yamato (aka Star Blazers). Andrew and I will comment on how to take the original elements and how to apply them to the Cypher System.

- David Wilson Brown

TERRANS

Led by the popular and young Emperor Justinus, the Terrans are on an upward growth. After tough wars with Valkar and then Azurians, they now share a tripolar balance of power with them. Holy Church is regaining power under leadership of the new Pope. Justinus' parents were assassinated by a Skar (unknown that Pope and Lord Chamberlain, and Azurians were separately involved). Pope planned to rule through his co-conspirator Lord Chamberlain; they knew that Justinus was too popular to kill, so they thought they could use him as a puppet ruler. Justinus is proving himself to be quite a capable leader, to their dismay.

The Terrans fear the Valkar; after two major offensives consisting of brutal attacks, Terrans see the Valkar as evil monsters. The Terrans mistrust

the Azurians despite having a common enemy in the Valkar. Terran strengths are huge energy sources & spirit.

DWB: When envisioning how to play in this world I've created, I feel that it is most likely that your players would be part of the Terran Empire. Looking in the CSR, we can define what the types are that they could play.

Out of the Sci-Fi warrior and explorer types, I like a Soldier and Pilot as respective options.

The adept type suggests power, mystical or magical. I don't see a lot of those being accurate to the setting I had in mind. Maybe need to make some sort technical savant who could use that technology to do powerful things. Techologist maybe?

Maybe have a Diplomat as an option for speakers.

AC: There are many great Flavors that would fit this setting quite well. I would give the players the option to take Technology, Combat, Skills and Knowledge, flavors without hesitation. The Stealth flavor could work as well depending on the type of campaign I was planning on running.

MAJOR TERRAN NPCS

Emperor Justinus level 4 (12): Young heir to the throne; recently crowned; former Shadow Squadron Pilot.

Lt. Commander "Hawk" Masterson level 5 (15): Current commander of Shadow Squadron; good friend and confidant to Emperor; highly decorated pilot.

Lady Adriana level 4 (12): Young aristocrat; pilot in Shadow Squadron; daughter of well-known war hero (founder of Shadow Squad); disguised her identity to fly (as "Falcon"); discovered by Hawk.

Lord Chamberlain Mattheus Stewart level 2 (6)/ level 4 at deception: Middle-aged top advisor to Emperor; manipulative; betrays Empire.

Pope Innocent LXV level 5 (15): Older head of the Holy Church (derivative of Catholicism); manipulative; ultra conservative; constantly trying to boost power of Church and his own power no matter what the cost.

Dr. Katherine Sutton level 4 (12): Older tutor to Emperor; old friend and supporter; "taught him everything he knows"; extremely high intelligence; she acts a little feeble-minded.

AZURIANS

A blue-skinned humanoid race with a society based around the military, like ancient Sparta. Males are raised for the position their class allows, trained from birth. Females are also subjected according to class, with nobility pampered and revered; lower-class women as family oriented housewives. All are genetically enhanced for their specific jobs; noble women are enhanced for beauty and are universally acknowledged to be the most magnificent creatures. There is also a perceived lesser race, known as the "Greens," that are bred as servants, slaves, and military grunts. Their place is well below even the darkest blue-skinned.

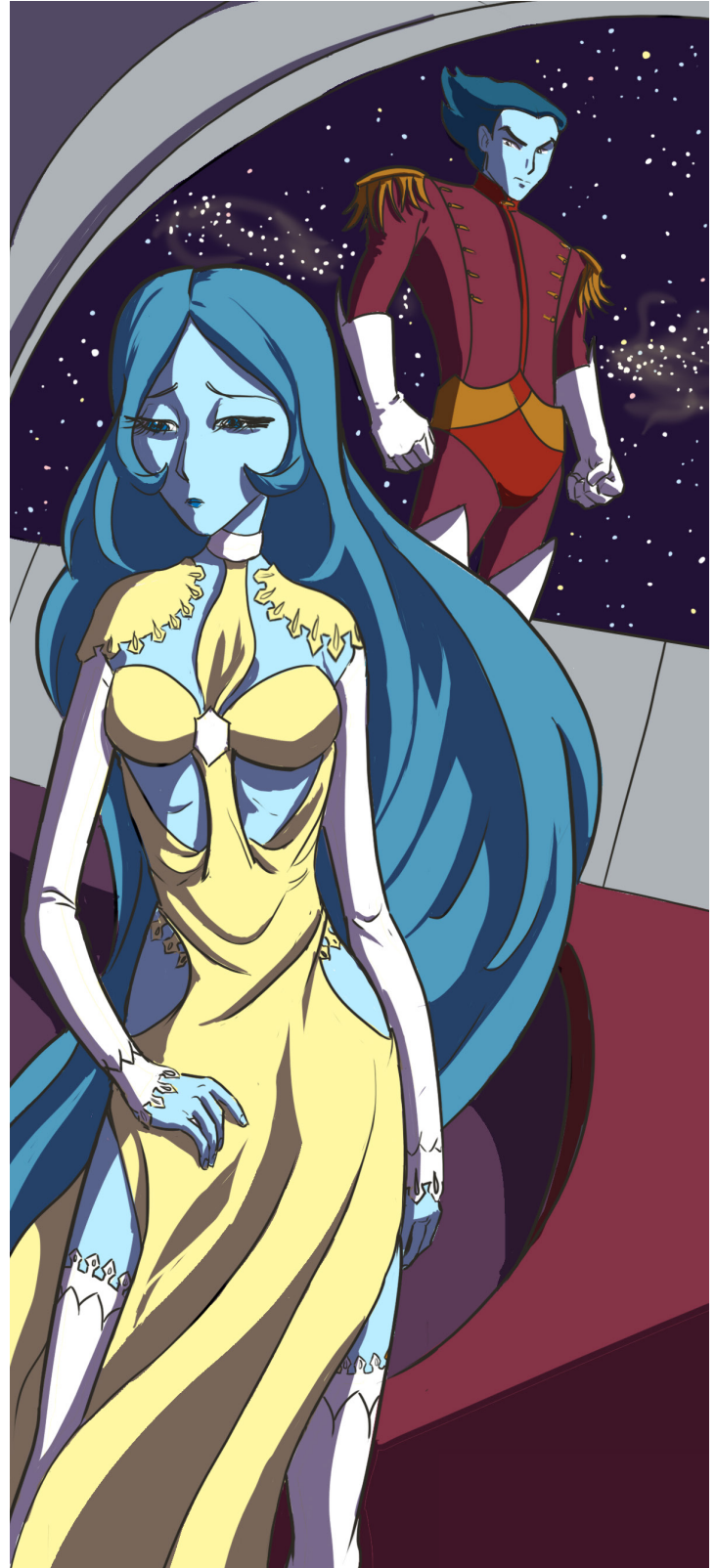
The Azurians fear the Terrans. The "human spirit" is viewed as an almost intangible force that prevents human failure. Azurians' Hak Technology ("Hak Tech") gives them a powerful advantage over the Valkar. Hak Tech is unstable and requires a tremendous amount of energy, something that the Azurian Empire is in short supply of. The Azurian strengths are high level intelligence and

their significant organizational structures.

MAJOR AZURIAN NPCS

Lady Dahlia level 2 (6): An extremely beautiful, very light blue Azurian noble who is part of a powerful family.

High Commander, Lord Larex level 5 (15): Brother to Lady Dahlia & high ranking Azurian; Hot headed; quick to act; slightly immature; in love with Dahlia (incest among aristocratic Azurian siblings is not uncommon), but she loves him only as a brother.



Supreme Commander Delar level 6 (18): Head of military oligarchy; light blue skinned and bald; head strong; intelligent; dangerously calm and calculating.

Fielder Grax level 4 (12): An intelligent and unusually ambitious "Green"; who, with secret Skar support, leads a "Green" rebellion, destroying Azurian society as it was for millennia.

DWB: The Azurians were heavily influenced by the Gamilans of Star Blazers/Yamato with a strong caste system, intended to be a heavy-handed anti-racism part of the storyline. As they are near-humanoids, the potential for Terrans to interact with them was intended to be higher than the more savage Valkar.

A player could play as an Azurian, but likely they'd be an exile or a flat out betrayer of their people. Even if the motivation for the betrayal was done out of their belief in the Terran ways, they are going to be pretty un-Azurian like.

Robotech/Macross Zentradi had a near terror of humans and I liked the idea of a species who is near-human but terrified at the cultures and things that it sees in the other (Terran) species.

VALKAR

The Valkar are a savagely brutal lizard-like race. Their technology is mostly stolen from conquered races and is destruction based. Their lifespans are short, about five years (they mature two weeks after birth), so they have little fear of death fight until death—theirs or yours. They multiply very quickly, so they often overwhelm enemies sheerly by numbers.

Their society is tribal, causing much inner conflict. The "First Valkar Offensive" against the Terrans was stopped because of a major civil war.

They perceive the Terrans as weak, so that's why they attack them. They fear the Azurians because of Hak Tech, originally designed by the Azurians to defend against the Valkar threat.

AC: I really like the idea of a very short life-span alien. It makes their perspective unique. I see them as cannonballing through life as break neck speed. A quick blaze. They would hold a grudge and work towards quick revenge. In a campaign that grunt that escaped in your first encounter will return with a vengeance now leading troops. Advancement must be fast and furious with a 5 year lifespan.

MAJOR VALKAR NPCS

Tribal Leader Thhrrax level 7 (21): most powerful and influential Valkar; uses combined Terran/Azurian threat to unite Valkar.

Tribal Leader Kkasac level 5 (15): Second most powerful Valkar; rival to Thhrrax.

Priestess Jjasc level 4 (12): Eccentric religious leader.

SKAR

The Skar are mysterious. Their origin planet is unreachable by the other races' technology. Their bodies are invisible to the other races, so the Skar often wear black, hooded robes when dealing with them. They use this to their advantage in their ongoing "terror campaigns." They have very long lifespans but are largely infertile. The "Great Secret" is that their race, once corporal, was nearly wiped out by ancient Valkar (who, because of short lifespans and no written communication, are



unaware). They developed technology to travel through black holes to escape the Valkar, but their new home caused them to evolve into their present forms. They no longer fear the Valkar; in fact, they take pleasure in manipulating the weak-minded race and are responsible for the Valkar Tribal War that caused the First Valkar Offensive to end.

AC: I see this race as a mix between John Carter's Therns, Q from ST:TNG, and maybe a little Bene Gesserit thrown in. No idea if they are Benevolent or Malevolent, their end goal unknown. A Skar prophecy may be the focal point of a campaign (not that the players would know about this race for some time).

MAJOR SKAR NPCS

Skar do not recognize individuality, but you can use these archetypes for a Skar encountered:

Skar Infiltrator level 3 (9)/ level 5 at stealth: Stealthy Skar being who can sneak around and spy on other species.

Skar Mind-Bender level 3 (9)/ level 5 at persuasion: Skar who twists weaker minds to do its bidding.

AC: The biggest hurdle for a Space based Sci-fi Setting is the ships. If space combat is going to be a thing, you will need to come up with ships and their stats. For enemy ships simply treat them as 'monsters' and give them certain levels like normal adversaries. The easiest way to create player ships is give them a Might and Speed Pool (Shields/Hull and Engines) and give their weapons a set damage stat. There are more complex rules you can use of course; David and I are currently working on stating out ships and coming up with some optional space combat rules to appear in a later issue.

DWB: You could give those ships an Intelligence stat to represent any A.I. present onboard.

AC: Since the alien races are categorized as Empires, individuals from the races should be treated with fearful/cautious respect. More like Early Star Trek, and less like Star Wars. Even though humanity has been aware and at war with them for some time now, it is not like they intermingle a lot. Xenophobia in this campaign would run wild. If I used a place where humans and aliens coexisted I would make have a Babylon 5, or Defiance feel to it. A route I've rarely seen used in an RPG.

DWB: I've seen comparisons to Romulan/Azurian, Klingon/Valkar, and Skar/Dominion from a Star Trek point of view.

TIMELINE

-300 Third Reformation

Christianity recombines into one ultra-conservative entity known as The Holy Church; done partially by choice, partially by force

-275 Last World War

Final war over territory on Earth; future First Terran Emperor gains popularity as general and war hero of winning side

-250 Establishment of Terran Empire

Popular general is appointed by the people as Emperor for life; rules as enlightened despot, supported by the church; also, establishment of first civilian populated space colonies

-195 First Valkar Offensive

Valkar attack outer rim colonies

-180 of Valkar Tribal War

Secretly started by Skar; brings an abrupt halt to Valkar Offensive

-130 Inquisition begins purges

Church's power and popularity enables it to begin purges of undesirables and infidels, eliminating worship of every other religion

- 60 Second Valkar Offensive

Thinned human population considerably; strengthened Imperial power; weakened Church, massive forces involved

- 45 Azurian Offensive

Attacked Valkar, creating second front which gives Terrans temporary reprieve from Valkar; Azurians turn on weakened Terrans and become sole galactic superpower

- 30 Emperor Claudius III

Coronation of new, unpopular Emperor who, despite adverse conditions, begins major revitalization of Terran Empire

- 20 Skar Terror Campaign

Skar begin terrorist actions, initially aimed solely at Azurians, culminating in assassination of their Supreme Commander; destabilization strengthens Terran and Valkar Empires

- 10 First Galactic War

Tripolar balance of power between Terrans, Azurians, and Valkar, with Skar continuing to play all sides against each other

- 5 Pope Innocent LXV elected

Very popular pope elected by cardinal college, vows renewal of Church's power and influence

- 2 Emperor Claudius & Empress Marianne Assassinated

Multi-layered conspiracy involving Skar, Pope, Lord Chamberlain, and Azurians; Emperor Justinus crowned

AGENTS OF THE BEYOND



MICHAEL DIAMOND

On the windswept Plains of Kataru doom has come to the remote trading post known as The Beanstalk. Arriving at a most unfortunate time are two travelers, a young white haired jack named Aramon'del Windrunner and his stout glaive companion Grom. Scavengers turned respectable traders, the duo have searched the northern Beyond for trinkets and wondrous numenera, all with the hope their hard work will lead to fortune.

But a twist of fate eliminates any chance the two have at recovering enough shins for their trip back to the Steadfast, all while a newcomer confirms their suspicion about the local Aeon Priest. Forced to choose between allowing a deadly situation to unfold the duo act, and they are quickly pulled into a cataclysmic event which shakes the trading town to its very core.

The mysterious newcomer, Syills, is revealed as a powerful nano from the north, who has been promised to King Falton of Nebalich. Enlisting the two men as guides, the new trio plumb their way through the vastness of the Beyond, believing themselves ready for what is to come.

A twinkling jewel, the city of Picalah awaits them, yet safety will not be found there. Deep beneath the surface an ancient being slumbers, but a demented magistrate bent on ruling the Beyond has hatched a plan to shake the land its foundation.

(Below is an excerpt from the novel, Agents of the Beyond, by Michael Diamond)

Wind whistled over the green and yellow fields, forcing shapes into the tall, pink-tipped grasses for a few moments before relenting to a change in direction and tumbling back the opposite way. Each tip of grass held a shade unlike the other closest to it; hues from light to dark moved in an unrecognizable pattern across the field, creating vast swirls and circular bands to pull at the eyes of anyone who dared stay long enough. Time danced on the edge of a blade here, shifting faster forward for those who stood and watched the fields move, or slowing to a crawl for those who fought the Plains of Kataru's seductive offer.

Kneeling in the dirt of the fertile field, Aramon'del Windrunner had no time to watch the fields dance or count tips of the Cataroon flowers which were about to bloom. Their violet, three-forked petals released a shower of golden seeds into the air, swirling into a cloud of thick dust before falling back to coat anything below. The shimmer leftover could sustain a person for two days without food or water, which made them sought after for travelers like Aramon, but events continued to conspire against him, keeping his attention on the task at hand.

"Are you still standing there? We have to be at the Bean before nightfall, you know?" The rough voice came from the opposite side of a black-furred espron which carried their belongings. Its demeanor was calmer than the previous one they'd had, but Aramon

wasn't sure he cared for the creature; it kept looking at him spinning its closest eye back inside the bulbous eye socket to track his movements. The twin horns which sprung from the center of its head made a long, slow curve backward to a keen point, making for a painful reminder if it ever became upset. Four strong legs and powerful hooves kept the beast planted, leaving no trace as they walked through the fields, something he found fascinating. A creature of burden like this would have fit two normal sized men, but with the goods they collected along the journey, only one could ride it at a time.

The voice rolled out of his heavy-set companion, Grom, a daily thorn in the side of all things enjoyable, and the after their most recent encounter with a group of traveling Waste Monks, the lone voice of reason left in Aramon's life. All he'd wanted to do was talk to them, swap stories over a bite of lunch, and find out more about the Jagged Wastes to the far east. Grom would have none of it, threatening to bash his head in and sell him off if he tried to stop the solemn contingent of men. The latter was probably an exaggeration, but Aramon felt it fit in his experiences with the aging veteran of the Ninth World. It was hard not to be impressed by his ability to survive in the harsh climates, given the numerous destructive places they'd been, and so it was better to learn from him than cast him aside. "It's just over the next rise, and you know it. The damned thing isn't going to just walk off – well,

probably not.”

A series of low grumbles filtered their way around the espron, revealing muffled contempt for the younger man’s lack of timeliness. Life was sudden in this world – others were willing to suckle on the teat of an existence spent farming the land but the wild spirit inside him wouldn’t be tamed – and Aramon wanted to experience the depths of it before he was dashed to pieces or split in half by some indescribable creature. Still, to get along with his lone companion and fellow Agent, he had to adhere to a certain amount of structure, forgoing the pull at his heart to stick by Grom until the end.

Brushing the soil from the knees of his tanned pants, he walked back to the flank of the espron, pulling a worn leather water skin from between the purple straps which held it against the beast’s coarse fur. It was fortunate they were so close to the Bean, given the lack of weight in the skin. Burned into the side was the flowing symbol they used as a marker for their work. Bulbous and wide at the bottom, it blossomed to a five-stranded tip, with small accent marks over the top. The strands wove through each other along their journey to the tip, giving it a more official feel, but to Grom it was a status symbol to use with merchants in the Beyond Behind the veil though, there was no leadership or head of their collective, just beings committed to scouting these lands and traversing them for the right amount of money. Grom said the marker gave them a stability other motley groups did not possess, but the people who called the Beyond home rarely looked at any symbol long enough to give it credibility, unless it was part of some numenera or oddity they’d come across.

The espron pressed forward toward the rise, with Grom keeping a fast hold on the blood-red reigns which kept the beast under his control. The trader who parted with the black-horned mount had expressed concern over removing the complex bridle which wrapped around the long snout. Aramon could still hear the heavy concern in the white-haired woman’s voice as she reminded Grom a third and fourth time to keep a hold of it or risk losing the beast to the fields. With shins escaping their fingers at each trading post or shanty along the trail, they couldn’t afford to lose its usefulness.

A few quick strides made up the distance which separated him from the front of the mount, easily drawing even with his slower-moving companion. The beast bleated at his arrival, issuing a powerful sneeze before flicking its long, blue tongue out to lick at the ambient precipitation in the air.

“He knows you don’t care for him,” Grom muttered

in Aramon’s direction, before running a gentle hand over the top of the espron’s short, white mane. There was no one friendlier to the beasts and creatures of the Beyond than the aloof and prickly Grom. It didn’t matter how attractive a human might be, he’d rather spend his free hours with their mount or a passing creature before he’d strike up conversation at a trading post.

“That’s ridiculous, he’s – it is a he, right? – been a wonderful addition to our little adventure,” Aramon said, moving to give the mount a friendly pat. The espron would have none of it though, and shied away from the dark olive hand which came in his direction. This was why he left the matter of mounts and beasts to Grom; he matched their smell more often.

The plains angled upward, elevating the horizon line enough to obscure the details of the path beyond it for a moment. In the distance, a blue hued tip of the Beanstalk flared in the fading afternoon light, its point stretching farther than he could make out, until it melded into the skyline. No one knew who had constructed the massive tower of metal and glass, or how it maintained the massive stone boulders in orbit around its structure, but the community which sprung up around the base was rumored to be safe from the nightmare creatures known to travel in the Beyond.

As they neared the top of the rise, golden fields of wheat lay next to the green and brown bean rows which the people here used for a food supply. Farmers in wide-brimmed straw hats tended the rows, with their young pitching in to help. In the vastness that the Beyond offered, everyone had a hand in their own survival or trafficked in their own demise instead. It was a common thread in the lands of the Ninth World, but here past the jagged slash of the mountains called the Black Riage, lay a land known as the Beyond.

Each collection of beings made up their own aldeia, or village, to call home. Humans mixed with abhumans, concerned more about survival than what someone looked like. Each aldeia had its own rules, the only concurrent one being a healthy distrust of outsiders. Permanent structures like the Beanstalk became known trading posts, and as long as a berk kept out of trouble, he’d be left alone.

“You ever wonder who built it, or why?”

Grom shifted his path to take the espron around a series of large boulders which lay along a corner of the wheat field. Pausing to stare up at the tower, the bearded man wiped the sweat from his brow. “Could have been anyone, I suppose. One time I was here, the needlerain came: nearly chewed through my leathers before I made it to shelter. I remember people running

for cover, bloodied and screaming, the whole time this varjellen in my ear about paying for cover from the storm. I've never seen someone get so green."

Aramon smiled widely at the thought of Grom being pestered in such a fashion. His partner was bereft of complex social skills, easily flustered by erratic emotional states in humans. This left most of the face-to-face trading they did to the younger and chattier Agent, who did his best not to get them into trouble. This failed miserably once, when at a small aldeia, he refused to partake in a meal with the three hunters who sold them water. Aramon could still see the human leg bones they kept in their salt boxes, imagining he'd have been next without Grom's quick spear work.

The Bean served their purposes, though; the people were reasonable enough, offering trade and area to sleep for the night when need be. It also gave them a stable place to locate further work, as foraging from the lands nearby was as lucrative as it was dangerous. The farmers kept to themselves for the most part, with one or two bad eggs waiting to pounce if you weren't sharp.

Tugging at the hilt of his short blade, Aramon made a mental check of all his critical pieces in case of a problem. Unlike most of the settlements which hung around for more than a few years, the Beanstalk had no walls protecting it from the wilds, so the aldeia began as soon as a traveler passed the first series of huts, which meant they were being watched by the hunters and guardsmen who protected their homes.

This wasn't the only concern when in the Bean, though. The Aeon Priests made sure they still sat atop the list of people not to cross. In the Steadfast, the Order of Truth helped hold communities and cities together, like Jyrek, where he'd made his early years. They helped everyone understand what these fragments of the past – the numenera – were and how to best utilize them. Over the years, the style of assistance had changed, moving their guidelines to tenants, as their Amber Pope called the Nine Kingdoms to war against the Gaians from the north. Aramon didn't know what their angle was, but the ones he'd met in the Beyond didn't have a care for anything which happened in the Steadfast, beyond the lip service they paid it. Grom held even less respect for them, but held his tongue out of fear they'd try to bend his mind or enslave him.

The espron nipped at his shoulder before nickering towards Grom, drawing a scratch from the older man. "It's alright, we'll find you some nice feed once we stop, I promise."

The wood and stone structures around the Bean were

held together with a patchwork of fallen metal from past castoffs. Each building differed in size, refusing to carryover the characteristics of the previous one, outside of the red clay shingles which covered them. The rotund main building made up the trading house and Aeon stronghold, giving them a fortified place against the needlerain. This also put them as close to the base of the Bean as one could get, and allowed their paid mercenaries to protect the mysterious secrets from outsiders.

A series of shanty tents and huts came up to the right of Grom, each filled with a different oddity or trade good for the passerby. Aramon could see Jacoby's stand from behind Grom, and marveled at the new pieces he'd come across since they last stopped. The dark-skinned man was kneeling, desperate to open a sealed metal jar with his three gnarled fingers, the others taken by the needlerain one day when he slept.

"Go and help him already, just make it quick," Grom's voice shot over the espron's shoulders.

It was all Aramon needed to hear. Spinning around the front of the mount, he ducked low to avoid a line of clothes set out to dry, pushing his legs faster along the dusty road toward Jacoby's wooden stand. Of all the traders at the Bean, his tent held the most wonder. Curved pieces of strange metals, carved colored glass, and balls which hummed with strange tones. A curator of cyphers and oddities, Jacoby prided himself on having more knowledge than the local Aeons, but he made sure it wasn't repeated loud enough for them to hear.

"Jacoby, I'm back!"

A bolt of energy surged down from the trader's bowl-shaped hat, arcing along his dark-skinned back, forcing him to straighten up. Clear white eyes shot open, flaring with red and purple energy, as he slammed the jar down on the wooden stall counter.

"In the Maker's name, what is that racket?"

Aramon stopped short of the counter, angling his body to dive for the safety of a nearby open stall. "It's just me, Aramon. We're back from the northern fields. I think we've found some things you might be interested in."

The intense glow around the trader's milky white eyes ebbed for a moment before disappearing. Jacoby was a wizard, although he called himself a Man of the Maker, refusing any common title or term someone tried to place on him. He kept to himself, without family or a mate that Aramon had ever seen; solace seemed to be his only companion. The counter was

filled with a line of trinkets, and without hesitation, the young Agent reached for a mirrored piece of metal which caught his eye.

"Do not touch my oddities unless Grom is prepared to pay for what you break." The trader's sharp tongue cut the air between them, "I won't have another incident like the last time. You cost me a pair of desiccation bags I'm still trying to replace."

"Listen, those things are dangerous; you could have been hurt. Did I have too much of Hamring's wine before I stopped by? Maybe. Besides, if I remember correctly, Grom paid for the losses, right?"

Pushing the metal jar across the counter, Jacoby's brow furrowed. "Just help me open this while you're standing here. It's the least you can do while you're in the way of my other customers."

Aramon peered around the other tents and lean-tos, but failed to see anyone outside of other shop owners tending to their goods before nightfall. The jar was interesting though, so he turned his attention back to it. Measuring just larger than his head, the top was fastened with a series of mechanical snaps which appeared to come off after a correct series of movements. To the common traveler, it was a puzzle, sure to trouble their fevered imagination, but to Aramon it was a simple lock. Lithe fingers flexed over the top, moving flanged metal ends back and forth, each one evoking a welcomed click. Catching the gaze of Jacoby, the younger man grinned wide and passed the jar back across the counter to his waiting hands.

"It's all yours to open. Should I stand back?"

With a look of wonder splashed across his face, Jacoby reached out to clutch the jar, inspecting it as he shook his head. "I'll never understand how you can take something so complex and make it so simple. You have a rare talent, my friend."

Be it talent or luck, when it came to mechanical contraptions, Aramon used both, studying them long enough to feel his way toward the solution. Long before he chose to walk with Grom and the rest of the Agents, he honed his skills in Jyrek, working as an apprentice. He could still remember Deien Rober praising his work when disassembling one of the defunct Grey Samplers scouts had encountered.

From the stories they'd told, the massive grey automatons roamed the fields looking to unhinge the first living being with a discernible head, and once the skull was wide open, pull out all the gooey bits inside. When five scouts encountered two of these, they managed to destroy one and cripple the second,

only losing two of their own in the process. After a simple inspection, one scout eyed a shiny metallic box wedged in the Sampler's angular funnel, and decided to drag it back to Rober's shop for extraction.

Aramon could still see the gruesome insides of the funnel when he closed his eyes, with bits of gore stuck to the walls. Behind the Sampler lay a long, metal tentacle, which twitched as he began his work, and Rober opted to bolt it down rather than have a death spasm take any of his students. It took the better part of an hour to remove the turbines the creature used for lift and propulsion, but the hardest part for Aramon was disconnecting the funnel and placing his hands anywhere near the processing area. Two quick plugs separated the first section, but reaching his hand into the still-glowing machine drew gasps from the crowd of onlookers that had arrived. Once removed, a shiny metallic box fell to the floor, evoking cheers from Rober and his fellow students.

Out in the Beyond, the dangers were much more visceral. A simple dust storm could explode with lightning, setting fires or killing a man outright. Packs of deadly carnivores might appear out of thin air during your watch at night, devouring you and leaving no trace. Below the ground, the previous world's inhabitants could have built a complex series of caves, and one wrong step might send you down a shaft with no hope of leaving. Around every corner something new and wondrous could be waiting, its treasures unknown to anyone in the Steadfast. No single day mirrored the last for Aramon, and each time they encountered something new, it felt worth it.

"Are you done yet? We've got work to do, you know," the gravelly voice of his compatriot came from the road behind him. After the last meeting between Grom and Jacoby, he'd tried to avoid the trader's tent altogether, fearing the loss of another eighty shins.



Buy it now on Amazon!

Oodles of Oddities

By James & Jennifer Walls

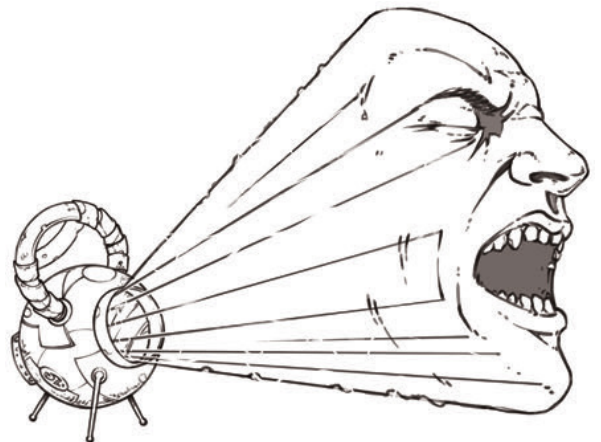
Oddities are scraps and remnants of the Ninth World's previous incarnations, often acquired during the course of an adventure. To the inhabitants of the Ninth World, these pieces of junk, refuse, and ultra-high-tech detritus are wonderful treasures often used as currency. Although they may seem useless at first, every once in a while having a particular oddity can be just as helpful as the most powerful cypher.

A Numenera game master can never have enough oddities, so here are fifty additions that can enhance your own game. Feel free to generate a cache of these bits and pieces of numenera randomly, or perhaps consider placing them as adventure hooks for future play sessions.

1. Living inkwell made of a semi-sentient glassware. Anything written with ink from the well causes the reader to feel a great sense of nostalgia. Occasionally this nostalgia is accompanied by excessive salivating.
2. Clockwork wind-up snail that slowly follows the user. Every seventeen hours a bell sounds from the snail's shell.
3. Small, smooth metal ball that feels perfectly round yet rolls in random directions.
4. Fine-looking leather cap stitched together with pure light. Provides the same illumination as a glowglobe.
5. Four-foot-long (1.2 m) flexible tube that can siphon liquid from a pocket dimension. Liquid has the look and feel of water, but none of the nutritional qualities.
6. A sample of tattooed human skin that is relaxing to touch.
7. A shaving implement that curls the cut hairs into perfect rings.
8. Wooden, rune-covered wand crafted from a gnarled branch. Long used by a grizzled shaman, and thus believed to hold some kind of "magic."

Really, it's just a nice stick.

9. Clay statue of an octopus with real, living, grasping tentacles.
10. Ring that projects the holographic image of a wheeled, slowly spinning vehicle.
11. Potted cactus that produces small amounts of processed meat after blooming.
12. A rugged tome written in a language not yet invented, consisting of histories yet to occur.
13. Ancient mathematical calculating device based on units of thirteen, not 10.
14. Anthropomorphic hand puppet that takes on a disturbing appearance immediately after use.
15. Synth numbered cube that miraculously has seven sides.
16. A windchime that groans with the breeze.
17. An earpiece that plays an infinite countdown being spoken by a crying woman.
18. A can of paint with a color no one can agree upon.
19. A can of paint with a color no one has seen before.
20. Sack made of coarse fabric that is always full of mushrooms.
21. Full set of eating utensils fashioned out of a single sentient automaton. Occasionally the utensils remember their previous "life" and will engage in small talk.



22. Finely crafted whistle that summons forth copious amounts of pollen.
23. Pocket watch that shows the phases of an alien moon.
24. Matching pair of crustacean claw earrings. If worn the claws click and clack repeatedly.
25. Jar of nanite-infused lotion that turns flesh into an illuminated star map for an hour.
26. Costume mustache that causes the wearer to smell his or her favorite relative's scalp.
27. Bone necklace crafted from the remains of a human/visitant hybrid.
28. Mint leaves that accelerate toenail growth when chewed.
29. Fossilized human heart that contains a miniaturized craft, complete with a long dead crew.
30. Preserved otherworldly vegetable pod, containing a fledgeling civilization of microbes.
31. Just a synth pen, with obvious signs of battle damage from parrying energy weapons. The pen no longer has this quality.
32. Device that ends in a living, mammalian togue. The user can "taste" without risk of poisoning themselves.
33. Miniaturized working clothing factory. Could function again if enough millimeter tall humans or other creatures could be acquired as a labor force.
34. Headband that turns the wearer into a pixelated form when worn.
35. Dried spicy fish sausage. An hour after consumption, a living fish is vomited forth.
36. A 4-inch-wide (10 cm) "thunderstorm" that can be held, moved, and carried in a container.
37. A bright green fork that can only pick up green foods.
38. Wooden ear model. Placing the model against a tree allows the user to listen to what the tree is feeling, so long as the user is a plant-based life-form.
39. Octagonal piece of glass that reveals nutritional information of foodstuffs in an ancient visitant language.
40. Rusty length of cable that is as light as a feather.
41. Portable solar panel that would function if only the sun were of a different spectral class.
42. A blue wig that relieves sunburn but turns all body hair blue when worn.
43. A metallic coin that vibrates when within 330 feet (100 m) of a dining establishment that serves alcohol.
44. A clump of semi-sentient moss that repeats the name "Chase Rombek" telepathically to the owner.
45. A soy substitute noodle that can regrow up to 4 inches (10 cm) per day, up to a maximum length of 10 feet (3 m). If completely consumed, the noodle ceases to grow.
46. A silvery, wing-shaped brooch that makes the user think they are flying whenever they are walking.
47. A glass vial of what appears to be sand. Each granule is actually a miniaturized world that suffered a terrible calamity.
48. A ceramic mug that converts water into small, solid—but not cold—cubes.
49. A thin, flexible, plastic card. The owner of this card immediately grows an extra kidney. If the card is lost or transferred, the kidney disappears within an hour.
50. Statue of a long, rodent-like mammal. Anything that touches the statue smells of cooked meat until washed.

My dear friend, and esteemed Maester of Artifacts, Alzu,

I hope that this letter reaches you well, and ahead of the mid summer rains. I also dearly hope that you have not made use of the warp cypher that you wrote me about late last year.

The aldeia is in dire need of help and thus far neither my own expertise nor that of my fellow priests has proven equal to the task. A grievous sickness has taken hold within our community and I have concerns that were it allowed to run its course none would survive where nearly two thousand now reside.

It began scarcely five weeks ago. In the wake of an Iron Wind that passed the village by without harm - thanks in no small part to the magneto-field projector you helped me to repair - a group of hunters returned to the village bearing the form of an unfortunate victim of that mutative phenomenon. This creature, for I dare not guess at the poor thing's gender prior to its encounter with the Wind, was delirious and profusely sweated out a strange substance that was both oily and metallic.

The hunters assured us that none of them had made contact with the creature's skin directly, and after examination they appeared to be hale. That we were wrong I can only assume, for my fellow priests employed all the tricks we knew to isolate the creature as we sought to treat it, and indeed for the next few days all seemed well save for our unfortunate ward who grew ever more emaciated before perishing on the third afternoon.

When one of the hunters came to us complaining of stiffness in her joints I examined her arm and found that her flesh was cool to the touch and tinged grey. Further examination showed a great deal of metal was collecting in the local tissues, depleting the iron in her blood and other metals from throughout her body.

I suspected, but could not prove, a relation to the unfortunate victim of the Iron Wind. By the end of that day three others had come to the clave with similar complaints; by the end of the following day the number had risen to nearly two dozen. Since then despite the efforts of my fellow Priests the rate of infection has risen nearly exponentially. I fear that by the time you get this missive, we will be facing near total infection throughout the population.

The symptoms may appear at any point on the body of the infected, and we believe that this is a result of the infection vector of that host. In nearly all cases the flesh takes on a grey pallor and chill touch, as well as stiffness in related joints and a reduction in the suppleness of the skin and flesh. All of those infected take on symptoms of malnutrition within a matter of hours based on our observations, and my colleague Priest Koallu believes that the infection is drawing minerals and nutrients from throughout the body to effect whatever changes it seeks.

Thus far the rate of death has proven remarkably low, but I believe that this merely proves the insidious nature of the contagion. Some of the victims have taken to walking in their sleep, or appear in a daze not unlike sleep. The victims are consuming nearly any material they can lay hands upon, especially those of high mineral content or metallic nature. I fear for what these changes may yield if the disease is allowed to run its course.

Alzu, my dearest and longest friend, I am hoping that your great knowledge of the healing arts and access to the storehouses of numenera in Qi itself will yield some poultice or boon that can halt or eradicate this sickness. However I am also more than aware of the danger this poses for I myself have contracted this malady not more than two days ago. I write this from my bed, not by my own hand, which you would no doubt recognize, but by dictation to my apprentice. Would that I could still hold a quill without pain I would commit these words to parchment myself.

Please, if you are able to lend aid or succor I beg of you to do so, not for my own pains, but for the thousand and more souls that suffer here and lose hope with every passing hour. If there is no hope to be had you must ensure that we remain quarantined here in Ismonnig lest this affliction spread. I have no doubt that the application of the proper weapons and implements of destruction could lay waste to this town and ensure the eradication of this plague where I and my fellow Aeon Priests have failed.

With kindest regards, and dearest wishes,
Aeon Father Kewil Ona



broken fractals

a thrilling adventure in the strange
by michael parker

introduction:

In this adventure characters take on the role of Estate agents working, ultimately, to preserve our world from numerous outside threats working against it.

This adventure is designed for 3 to 5 characters of either first or second tier, and is intended to play in one or two session. The characters start on Earth, travel to the recursion of Crows Hollow to investigate, then use the clues they've assembled to return to Earth and attend a nefarious art auction New York.

While the adventure assumes that the characters work for the Estate, the adventure would require little adaptation to be played from the perspective of the Quiet Cabal, and with a little more effort could be adapted to other organizations. Broken Fractal is inspired by fast paced action thriller films such as The Bourne Identity and Minority Report.

adventure synopsis:

A recursion miner named Alan Rule found a strange artifact in The Strange: a devastating weapon he suspects to work under any recursion law. Rule smuggled the item through Crows Hollow back to Earth, and plans on auctioning the artifact off for an exorbitant amount.

The Estate has intelligence about the artifact, but not where Rule is now, nor where the auction will take place. However, they know that Rule had to have help smuggling the artifact through Crows Hollow, and suspect his help came from a smuggler known as "The Magpie". The real identity of the Magpie is unknown, but he is a prominent figure in certain disreputable circles of Crows Hollow. The PCs are sent to Crows Hollow to track down The Magpie and uncover information about the artifact and either Rule's current whereabouts or the location of the auction. Through investigation the PCs are led to one of the Magpie's front establishments.

Upon arrival, they discover that the place is being vandalized, ransacked, and tossed by members of the Beak Mafia, the self-appointed protectors and racketeers of the Crows Hollow Glittering Markets. The Magpie, also known as Feanore Strut, is being brought before Wyclef Drood, the current Don of the Beak Mafia, for the not giving the Don his proper cut of smuggling action. By various means, the PCs find out that Rule is moving with his impossible prize while waiting for his arranged auction, an auction that will take place under the guise of an art auction at a prominent auction house in New York.

The adventure is concluded by confronting Rule at his auction in an attempt to gain control of the

artifact, but the PCs must also contend with Karum and Zal agents from Ruk as well as other individuals from across The Strange attempting to obtain the artifact for themselves.

adventure background:

Alan Rule hasn't had a good life. He grew up in a poor family in the outskirts of Detroit. His mother had a recurring drug problem and his father was an alcoholic drifting from job to job, when he was sober enough to work. Rule fell into petty larceny during his teens as a way to survive, needing to steal enough money or food to keep himself alive.

Things changed when he learned he was quickened. When running from the police after a B&E gone wrong, he ducked into an abandoned building and something in the buildings debris stirred his latent quickened ability. He wanted out of his situation so much that he made it so through force of will, translating to Catalyst. Since then he has been exploring The Strange for his own gain.

Years later, Rule is an infamous recursion miner, one whom the Estate and the Quiet Cabal would like to capture or eliminate.

Rule's latest find will be the crowning jewel in his career, providing him enough money and influence to buy a reality seed, allowing him to live in a world of his own design. The unusual artifact was found along the shore of The Luminous Circuit along a small stable area which Rule calls the Emerald Foundry. The artifact is roughly the size of a large desktop computer tower. At first the artifact was inert, but after some dissecting Rule removed a small white ellipsoid. Then the unusual artifact came to life. When activated it alters all of the surrounding firmament, removing an element of the chaos and transforming it into uniform light blue semi-solid goo.

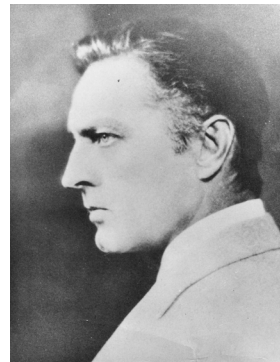
After some experimenting, Rule took the artifact into a small recursion (inspired by many beloved children's cartoon characters) and activated the artifact. The effect was frightening; the entire recursion was transformed, leaving Rule floating amidst a mansion sized blob of blue gelatin.

Armed with perhaps one of the most dangerous objects in The Strange, Rule set out to make his fortune. He made a deal with a regular contact of his, a Kro smuggler from Crows Hollow known as

The Magpie, to transport the artifact through an inapposite gate to Earth, where the artifact will theoretically be inoperable.

Rule is currently criss-crossing the eastern seaboard, using his contacts to invite buyers to his auction which will be taking place under the guise of an elite art auction in New York in four days time.

alan rule:



level 5 (15) - level 6 for Fractal Surfing, Cyphers, and Strange Artifacts. He has a defensive cypher, when damaged, the cypher deals damage to the attacker and everyone else (other than Rule) in intimate range with 5 electrical damage. Rule carries one other cypher (as needed). He often carries a concealed pistol (2 damage). 15 Health, Armor 2.

mission briefing:

The agents are given a priority alert, notifying them to attend an urgent mission briefing at The Estate's primary facility outside Seattle. Assume that all of the characters are on hand when this alert is given. If the PCs are not an established team, have each character describe why they are currently at the facility. If they are part of an already established team they are likely brought into this urgent mission while awaiting debriefing from a previous mission.

The briefing takes place in a conference room in one of the above ground buildings on The Estate's large complex. This conference room looks as if it could belong to any Seattle high profile tech company.

In attendance at this emergency briefing are Special Agent Katherine Manners (Senior Operative) and Director Edward Kincaid. Manners and Kincaid have worked together extensively, and are used to running operations as a team. Director Kincaid takes a passive role for most of this briefing.

When all of the PC's are in attendance the briefing begins.

read or paraphrase the following:

"Thank you all for your swift response. For those who don't know who I am, I am Special Agent Katherine Manners, I will be taking the role of lead agent on this task force. Also with us is the Direction of Operations, Edward Kincaid."

"We have a high priority situation that could easily escalate to an Alpha level event. This morning we received intelligence to suggest that a known and wanted recursion miner came into possession of a highly dangerous artifact."

Manning pulls out a presentation wand, a soft click is heard. On a large monitor in the room shows a security camera still of a man of indeterminate or mixed ethnicity, roughly six feet in height, with a medium build.

"This is Alan Rule, in his Earth incarnation, this photo was taken 3 years ago, shortly before Mr. Rule was upgraded from our watch list to our threat list. The Estate and our allies in the Quiet Cabal have been after Rule for illicit dealings in black market cyphers and strange artifacts. This morning, we intercepted message traffic that we believe to be Rule. From these we have gathered that he has recovered and transported a highly dangerous artifact from either The Strange or some distant recursion. In his own words, 'This has the potential to fundamentally alter or even destroy a recursion.' These messages indicate that he is trying to set up a sale for this artifact"

"Now that you have a broad scope of the situation. Let me explain your mission. You will be one of three field teams attempting to run Rule down, find the artifact, prevent its sale to a third party, and either recover or destroy the artifact. Apprehending Rule, his buyers, accomplices and compatriots is secondary to your primary objective. Your focus will be on the recursion of Crows Hollow, which we suspect to be the point of inapposite transport for Rule his artifact. Given the nature of Crows Hollow, it is very likely that he had a local accomplice. You will start with two of Rule's known associates; a fence by the name of Marta Chaks, and an unidentified smuggler known as The Magpie. From there do your best to follow Rule's trail and, if possible, identify his location. Failing that, identify the location, date, and time of his auction."

"Questions?"

Manners is being completely straight with the PCs. Any other information she left out of the initial rundown was for brevity. If asked, she will provide any additional information she has.

After two or three questions, Director Kincaid interrupts. Having less patience for inquisitive minds. He makes it clear that they everyone is working against the clock.

some possible questions that might be asked:

What are the other teams doing?

The PCs are part of Team 3, tasked with running down Rule from his supposed most recent translation to Earth, Crows Hollow. Team 1 is tasked with taking other leads and attempting to find Rule based on his recent activities on Earth. Team 2 is surveilling Rule's most likely known associates on Earth, hope to catch him making contact in preparation for his auction. In addition to the field teams, several specialists are attempting to verify if The Playroom has indeed been destroyed. This team's composition and assignment were based on one primary factor, all of the agents present are quickened. The Estate does not control a permanent translation gate to Crows Hollow, and using a team of quickened agents is the quickest and subtlest way to reach the recursion.

How is this even possible?

Manners isn't sure that what Rule claims is true, but also knows that nothing is truly impossible when dealing with The Strange. The Estate must treat this as though it was an authenticated threat, until proven otherwise.

Tell me about Crows Hollow?

Manners tells the PCs all of the basic information about Crows Hollow (pg 242 of The Strange Core-book).

The PCs have two hours to prepare, give each recursor the chance to do some their own preparation or take a single action. The PCs are then provided with a recursion Key for Crows Hollow. Translation can be performed in a private room in the south wing of the Translation Lab.

crow hollow:

The recursion key translates the PCs to an entrance on the southwest side of a massive tree

that encapsulates The Glittering Market and all of Crows Hollow. The Glittering Market is one of Crows Hollow's main attractions to recursion miners and other travellers of The Strange, given its open bazaars and the ready availability of cyphers, and even the occasional artifact, from all over The Strange.

on the trail

There is no question that the PCs will find The Magpie (Feanore Strut), the question is how. Here are some ways that the recursors may try and find information.

Marta Chaks (level 3) is actually fairly easy to find. She is a low level fence and relatively unimportant in the Crows Hollow underworld. Merely asking around in the Glittering Market will provide information on how to find her. However, she hasn't had any contact with Rule in over a year (and he still owes her 10 Crow Coin). However, she does have information about The Magpie, for the low cost of a single cypher.

She tells the PCs that The Magpie is currently wanted by The Beak Mafia, so they better finish whatever business they have with the Magpie be-

fore Drood's enforcers find them.

Those looking for the Magpie directly by asking around will not find her. There are a few different ways that the PCs can find The Magpie. This is not an exhaustive list, but a list of possible avenues of investigation.

The Beak Mafia - If the PCs find out that the Beak Mafia is looking for The Magpie, they can use that knowledge to find the Magpie by identifying Beak Mafia enforcers and shadowing them to their destination, but then they need to deal with the Beak Mafia enforcers when they arrive. This is a test against a level 3 task, Carlo only arrives on the scene once The Magpie has been positively identified. If the PCs take this route, they can more easily deal with the Magpie himself, and not need to deal with Drood to get the direct information. Carlo Hest, Beak Lieutenant, talks like a 20's mobster | level 4, level 5 for melee attacks and intimidation, has one random cypher. Beak Mafia goons, strong and silent | level 3, level 4 for melee attacks and streetwise.

If the PCs attempt to find her through the underworld, (especially if they pose as a potential client)



GM Intrusions - Adding Some Chaos

Crows Hollow in general and The Glittering Market in particular are rife with activity, use some of the following ideas (or create your own) to inject some chaos into your PCs investigation as GM Intrusions.

A young pickpocket attempts to steal a cypher or crow coin from a random recursor. If the target succeeds at their roll, they catch the thief red handed; if they fail, they notice just as the miscreant is rushing off into an ally. If caught, the pickpocket has some information about where Marta or the Magpie might be found.

Erenon Snipe, Kro Pickpocket, can't speak without stuttering | level 3, level 4 for stealth, pickpocketing, and speed defense.

As they are passing a stall in the market, a fight breaks out between three arguing locals. A random recursor is swept into the brawl by bad luck. All locals are level 2, but extricating oneself from the brawl is a level 3 task. If the locals realize what has happened, they offer the recursor a Crow Coin to forget this ever happened.

A hooded crow, carrying a wrapped bundle runs into a random recursor - both of which don't see the other one coming. The bundle is actually an enchanted mirror trapping a Mirror Gaunt. When the two collide the bundle is dropped, the mirror shatters, releasing the Mirror Gaunt (The Strange Bestiary, pg 85). The Mirror Gaunt is starving and attempts to attack anyone around it. If it takes 5 or more damage, it flees, looking for a mirror to hide into. In the remnants of the shattered mirror is a cypher that was lost inside the mirror cage.

they run across Kinsa Welt (level 3), an underworld fixer and associate of The Magpie who often refers potential clients to specialists... for a fee. With a good story or lie, Kinsa will direct the PCs to The Magpie's front warehouse for the low, low price of one cypher or three Crow Coins. Kinsa explains that this warehouse is used as a front for The Magpie, and by inquiring with the desk clerk they

will eventually get The Magpie to contact potential clients. If they slip her extra money, or the PCs get a major or minor effect on any interaction rolls, Kinsa will also inform the PCs that the Beak Mafia is also after The Magpie.

The PCs might intuit that the artifact left Crows Hollow through an inapposite gate, thus they may try and find The Magpie by identifying where inapposite gates are located in Crows Hollow. Doing so requires an explanation as to how they are attempting to find the gate activity. Some possibilities include a character who can detect The Strange, an unusual cypher, or a creative interpretation of a character ability. Attempting to identify inapposite gates in Crows Hollow is a level 5 challenge, and likely requires several hours (2d6). If the PCs succeed they identify three Inapposite gates.

The First is easily identified as a Beak Mafia stronghold. Those who ask or have a relevant skill know that this is the primary residence of Don Drood.



The second is the Magpie's front warehouse. See description below.

The last is a little shop in the Glittering Market, it's sign reads "Cira's Curio". This shop is currently locked up tight with magical wards and mundane security (level 6 task to gain entry). If the PCs get in, they find a mostly empty curio shop, they find 2 random cyphers in a strong box under a counter. The inapposite gate is located through a mirror and leads to Wonderland. No sign of the Magpie or Rule.

the magpie's nest

Located near the edge of the 3rd level of the Glittering Market, the Magpie's warehouse is indistinguishable to it's neighbors. This area of the Glittering Market contains workshops and small warehouses used by nearly all of the merchants in the Glittering Market. Strut operates the warehouse as a legitimate business, although very little of his actual time is dealing with merchant storage or other related activities. Before the events of this adventure, none know that she is actually the Magpie. He has arranged it so that very few people even know how to get in contact with the Magpie, only a limited number of fences know the procedure, these accomplices of hers are paid a handsome sum every month to keep an eye out for prospective clients. A prospective client is too go to the warehouse, and give the employee a package, indicated that they "need this stored for a week, no need for a return receipt." The package is supposed to contain 10 Crow Coins and a message detailing the nature of the business desired, and a message drop location. This allows her to size up potential clients, allowing Strut to try and sniff out anyone who has the smell of the Mafia or trouble.

Feanore Strut (a.k.a. The Magpie)'s warehouse has four rooms.

1. The first room serves as the storefront, containing a small wooden counter in front of a wooden message organizer. Under the counter is a locked strongbox (level 5) with two dozen fine jewels and 22 Crow Coins (this is Strut's 'petty cash'). The only exits from the front room are the entrance, and a closed door leading to the main warehouse.

2. The bulk of the space of the warehouse is a reasonably large open warehouse. The facility is a little over 50% full, primarily with wooden crates and chests of various sizes. There is not much of value in the main warehouse, as most of the contents are actually junk, meant to fool anyone snooping around the facility. One crate in the north west corner of the warehouse is affixed to the floor, noticing that this crate is different is automatic for anyone searching the warehouse. A hidden compartment within the crate reveals two dials used as a combination lock, (level 5). When these locks are activated they open a hidden trap door, leading to the basement. A stairway on the eastern side of the warehouse leads up to a loft.

3. The loft seems to be used as part living quarters, part curios shop. While not his primary residence, she stays at his warehouse often enough while smuggling through his gate that he has a cot, a clothes chest, a side table and a chair. This is where Strut keeps oddities that are of interest to him, but not inherently valuable. This includes a number of objects scattered around the room from other recursions. You can include any num-

GM Intrusion: If things have been going too well, or you want to inject an action beat into these any of these scenes, the PCs have to contend with agents of The September Project (The Strange Corebook, pg 155). These agents are also on the trail of Rule, having obtained similar intel. They are trying to track down the artifact and bring it back to their masters on Ruk. Ultimately they are on the same side as Alex Terra (See the Auction for more details about Terra's involvement).

Isabell Santoni, lead operative and three of her subordinates.

[Use the statistics for one Agent and three Guards to represent the operatives in these scenes (pg 302 & 303 from The Strange Corebook)]

For an extra touch of weird, these agents could arrived in Crows Hollow via the inapposite gate from Cira's Curio, thus they are easily noticeable as being the only human beings walking around Crows Hollow (at the moment).

ber of objects that work for your story, some ideas include: a small bronze statue from Aryden, a hard organic pod from Ruk, a wood carving from the Thunder Plains, a robotic cervo from The Machine God, and a twisted piece of metal from an unidentifiable recursion.

4. The basement is about half the size of the main warehouse room. Inside are valuables including a couple of artifacts from other recursions that have ceased to function. The largest feature is the inapposite gate, attached to the far wall. It seems to be utilizing both Magic and Mad Science, and could be taken directly from a steampunk convention. The Gate has a number of dials and switches, which are used in combination to 'tune into' a recursion for gate access. It is currently set for Earth, as that was the last destination programmed into it. There is a work table along one wall, on it there is a leather bound journal underneath spare parts and components that appear to be for the gate. In addition there are three level 4 cyphers here: Mapper, Contextualizer, Cell Destablizing Grenade.

If the PCs manage to get to the warehouse before the Beak Mafia, Strut can be found here, sleeping in the loft.

If the Beak Mafia gets here first, when the PCs arrive, the warehouse has started to have been ransacked by Carlo and his goons.

If the PCs activate the inapposite gate from it's last coordinates (level 4 task) it takes them to an abandoned warehouse along the New Jersey shore. There is no physical evidence on the Jersey side of the gate to point to Rule's location. Also, remind the PCs that they can't stay very long on Earth in their Kro incarnations.

feanore strut, the magpie:



Greedy Coward
level 4 (12), level 5 when
dealing with smuggling,
cyphers, and artifacts. she
carries two Cyphers nor-
mally, one offensive and
one defensive.

the crow speaks

Obtaining the information about Rule's location depends greatly on how the PCs investigate. They can find Strut before the Mafia, they can intercept Strut on her way to Drood, they can negotiate with Drood to be allowed to get the information from her, or they can also find most (but not all) of the information simply by investigating the warehouse and its secret basement recursion lab.

Here are the relevant facts are to be obtained by Strut:

1. Rule was here two days ago and had her transport himself (in a human guise) to a warehouse in New Jersey on Earth.
2. Rule is traveling around the north eastern seaboard, by car, train and bus, until his auction.
3. Rule's auction is taking place tomorrow evening. He is holding his auction alongside an elite art auction in New York.
4. The real auction is being held by S&L, a prestigious and old auction house.
5. Strut doesn't have the faintest clue who is going to be at the auction to purchase the artifact.
6. There is a white egg shaped object that Rule removed from the artifact, Strut has possession of the object and has left it under his work table.

If the PCs find a way to talk to Strut directly, the information is provided right from the crow's beak. If the only place of investigation is Struts warehouse, this information is kept in a journal in his secrete basement. The only two major clues missing from the journal are #4 - the name of the auction house - and #6 - the connection of the white egg to the artifact.

to the auction:

S&L (Sutherland and Lemur) is a prestigious auction house that is over 200 years old. With auction houses all over the world, S&L caters to the world's most elite collectors and art aficionados. One the night Rule is attempting to sell the artifact S&L is hosting a large charity auction.

Rule has worked with the house manager of the New York S&L division before, providing exceptionally unusual artifacts from The Strange and recursions. This is the first time that the manager, Emily Witt (level 3) has arranged this type of special for Rule, allowing a secrete auction alongside the main auction. However this is the largest event that she has done this alongside. The auction going on this evening is a large and prestigious charity art auction. The public event actually has several auctions going on simultaneously, including postmodern, lesser renaissance paintings, pan asian paintings, and contemporary european sculpture. Additionally there is a neighboring 5 star restaurant providing a black tie dinner for the auction attendees.

A Touch of Globetrotting

If you want a more exotic globe trotting feel for this adventure, set the auction somewhere other than New York. Good options include London, Hong Kong, and Dubai. Change the location of the inapposite gate's counterpart on earth, or adjust the time scale to allow enough time for Rule and the PCs to arrive at the intended destination.

A rough outline of the timeline for the event is below.

5 PM - Black Tie Dinner

7 PM - Cocktail hour

8 PM - The first auction starts, each auction track is slated to start about 15 minutes after the one before it.

~9:30 - Auction item C161 is supposed to be auctioned off.

The recursors can get into the auction in any number of ways. They can pose as additional private security for the event, event staff, or other employees of the auction house. If any of the characters have any celebrity notoriety, they can go as themselves with a small entourage. Spinners with the appropriate twists can also pose as high profile guests for the same effect. Getting past the door guards and event staff is a level 2 test, which will likely be automatic for most recursion teams.

Rule has arranged for one of the auction items to have a particular pass phrase to be included in the auction listing description, "...obtained from parts unknown...". Item C161 has been the piece selected to be a cover item, an oil painting from an obscure artist from the 1960's from southeast asia, it depicts a sunset over a rustic harbor. This is the item which Rule's clients will bid on to obtain his artifact.

Rule has made arrangements to store the artifact in a secured room in the admin wing of the auction house, which is on the 3rd floor, this is around the corner from the branch managers office. Rule keeps himself out of sight until shortly before his auction starts, around 9:10. Rule doesn't want to leave the artifact out of his site, and thus will be taking it with him to watch the auction for C161. He has the artifact on a transport cart, and wheels it to a secure elevator bank, which takes him down to the second floor, the balcony level for the auction auditoriums. All of the balcony boxes for Auditorium C - The Pan Asian auctions - are purposefully unoccupied.

the buyers

The following is a list of buyers that you can use to populate the auction. If the PCs want to try and identify Rule's potential buyers they will unlikely be able to identify them based on the list of guests, which has several hundred people on it and doesn't include most of the entourage of the higher profile guests. Those with a sense of The Strange will likely be able to identify the handful of guests who are not Earth natives. Otherwise they will be able to identify them prior to the auction (with some sloughing) or will reveal themselves during the auction (by being the ones who are bidding).

nanda gade

Nanda is a tall Hindi Man in his late 40's, he stands in a well tailored navy blue suite. He has close cropped black hair and a pencil mustache. He claims to be from an old Indian family, dating back to the old maharajas; he himself is a successful independent financier for several successful technology companies started during the recent boom in India.

Agenda: Nanda is actually James Moriarty in disguise (using an appearance altering cypher). See page 309 in The Strange Corebook for a full write-up on Moriarty.

Moriarty is in attendance not because he wants the artifact, but because he wants to inspect Rule's operation to possibly recruit him. If he happens to be presented with the opportunity to obtain the artifact easily, he will take it, but Moriarty thinks that the object itself is likely trivial to his overall scheme.

alex terra

An internet billionaire, easily recognizable to any earth native. On the short side, Terra has a mop of brown hair, glasses, and makes no attempt at wearing fashionable clothes. He bids on quite a number of art objects, mostly post modern works.

Agenda: Terra is actually a high ranking Karum agent, despite the fact that he is a native of Earth instead of Ruk. The Terra identity has been carefully sculpted to take opportunities like this. He is determined to get the artifact for the Karum, by any means necessary.

Alex Terra, Internet Billionaire and Karum fanatic | level 5 (15), level 7 for computer (on Earth) or All Song use (on Ruk). 18 Health, no armor

Terra has an armor cypher, and two pocket orbs. The first orb contains a Fungalar from Ruk (Page 57 of The Strange Bestiary). The second has not been activated yet, and is how Terra intends to transport the artifact back to Ruk. If threatened, Terra will smash the orb containing the Fungalar

Pocket Orb:

A pocket orb contains a micro recursion (no larger than a single room). A quickened entity that concentrates for 10 minutes and makes a level 3 intellect roll can manipulate objects inside the orb, this allows them to place objects or creatures around them into the orb - creatures attempting to resist the effects of the orb must make a Might roll against the cyphers level, or bring objects and creatures from the orb to the outside. Pocket Orbs are cyphers, although they are not instantaneously expended. When first activated, they will last for a number of hours equal to the cyphers level (1d6+2) multiplied by 6. Once the cypher expires discharging all contents contained within back to the immediate surroundings. Pocket Orbs are fragile, and can be broken by high levels of force. A broken orb does 2 ambient damage to all creatures in immediate range of it and discharges all contents into the immediate vicinity. Pocket Orbs translate with an individual, and the contents inside remain intact. Contents that are removed (either by choice or force) appear as if translated through an inapposite gate.

to use as a distraction, cover his escape, or attack the other buyers or PCs. If he escapes the auction, he has a limousine waiting for him nearby, from there he goes to a translation gate controlled by the Karum in Manhattan, translating to a Karum stronghold on Ruk.

edna reddish [hānā-bāciā]

Edna appears as a stone faced african american woman in her mid-thirties, dressed in a sharp pants suite. On earth, she is a security director for Zoophyte Acquisitions Limited, which is nothing but a front for the Zal faction of Ruk and their dealings on Earth.

On Ruk Edna is known as Hana-bacia, and their role within Zal is as a Recursion Security Liaison. Hana has a foul temper whenever they need to translate to a recursion outside of the Laws of Mad Science and Superscience, as they often require a downgrade in body type and an artificially imposed gender identity.

Agenda: Hana's mission, above all else, is to stop Terra from returning the artifact to Ruk for the Karum; Terra has been identified as a major threat to Zal interests. Their secondary mission is to bring the artifact back for Zal scientists, who will analyze it and might be able to reverse engineer useful materials and products from it.

Hana has four other Ruk natives who translated as them, all with covers as employees of Z.A.L.

Edna Reddish, Zal agent from Ruk, no nonsense & mission oriented | level 4 (12), Level 5 for speed defense and all security related tasks, level 6 for perception, speed and might based attacks. Hand to Hand (light or medium weapon), heavy automatic pistol (medium weapon), one cypher (as needed). 12 Health, Armor 2

Zal Grunts | level 3 (9), 5 Health, Armor 1

kuri gensai

Kuri is a small Japanese woman in her late 20's, pixie cut black hair, dressed in free flowing black blouse and skirt.

Kuri Gensai is a native of Earth who travels back and forth between Tokyo, San Francisco and New York for her "work". She has a affiliation the Yakuza. Kuri actually has no knowledge of The Strange

or recursions, although several of her employers do. She often uses a well established cover identity, that of the self-absorbed debutante daughter of a powerful Japanese CEO.

Agenda: She is acting as her role as an underworld fixer, representing another party (A quickened member of the Yakuza) here at the auction for item C161. During the auction she will be in direct text communication with her employer via a secured cell phone, relaying bids to the auctioneer. If conflict arises during the auction, she hides and attempts to escape into the crowd.

Kuri Gensai, Underworld fixer and thief, professional but flirtatious | level 3 (9), level 4 for speed defense and stealth. Small knife (light weapon), and secured cell phone. 7 Health, no armor.

the rundown:

The auction likely plays out over four scenes, depending on the approach of taken by the PCs.

1. The Prep Work - This encompasses all research and preparatory action taken by the PCs before they go to the auction.
2. Pre Auction Socializing / Investigation - This scene will be when the PCs go to the auction, they will likely either focus on trying to find Rule or focus on identifying people at the auction who will be interested in item C161.
3. The Auction - This is a short scene where the auction takes place. If the PCs focus all of their efforts on finding Rule and get a little lucky, this scene might not be necessary as they will have already apprehended him. Although the buyers don't know that and might still be able to be identified for secondary mission objectives.
4. The Fallout - This is the action scene that occurs if the PCs fail to apprehend Strut before the auction starts. If they confront him during the auction a lot of chaos occurs, as several of the parties will resort to violence to pursue their agendas, Hana and Terra in particular.

Things that will likely occur in this scene:

Terra releasing the Fungalar into the room as a distraction (or unleashing it on Rule, to get access to the artifact).

Hana using her goons to stop Terra and bring him to Ruk (dead or alive).

Nanda (Moriarty) performs some mischief and, if he doesn't have an easy shot at the artifact, he flees. With or without the artifact, he uses a level 9 gate cypher, which creates a translation gate to Goodville, which closes 6 seconds after Moriarty passes through it.

conclusion:

Assuming the PCs recover the artifact from Rule, they are lauded as heroes of the Estate and provided recommendations and possibly promotions after the mission debriefing.

If one of the other buyers recovered the artifact, future adventures could focus on tracking them down before they have time to study and utilize the artifact.

If Terra gets the artifact, he keeps it at the Karum based secret stronghold (pg 200 of The Strange Corebook). The Estate must track down Terra and recover the artifact from Ruk.

If the Zal faction recover the artifact, they make an open offer to the Estate to sell it back to them after they have studied it for commercial purposes.

If Moriarty manages to recover the device, there will be a mysterious set of breadcrumbs to follow set by Moriarty to test the PCs starting in the recursion 221b Baker Street.

What does the Fractal Disruptor do?

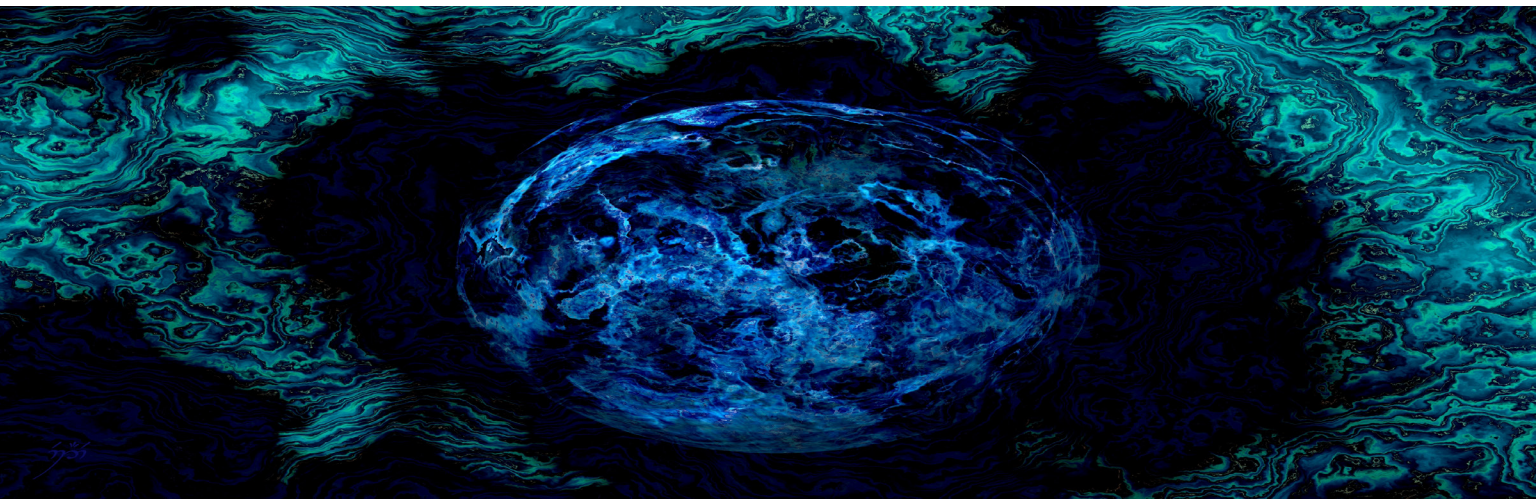
The artifact should be made into a macguffin that fits into your game. If you need the artifact to fit into a larger ongoing story, it should fit in as needed. If you want some inspiration here are some ideas.

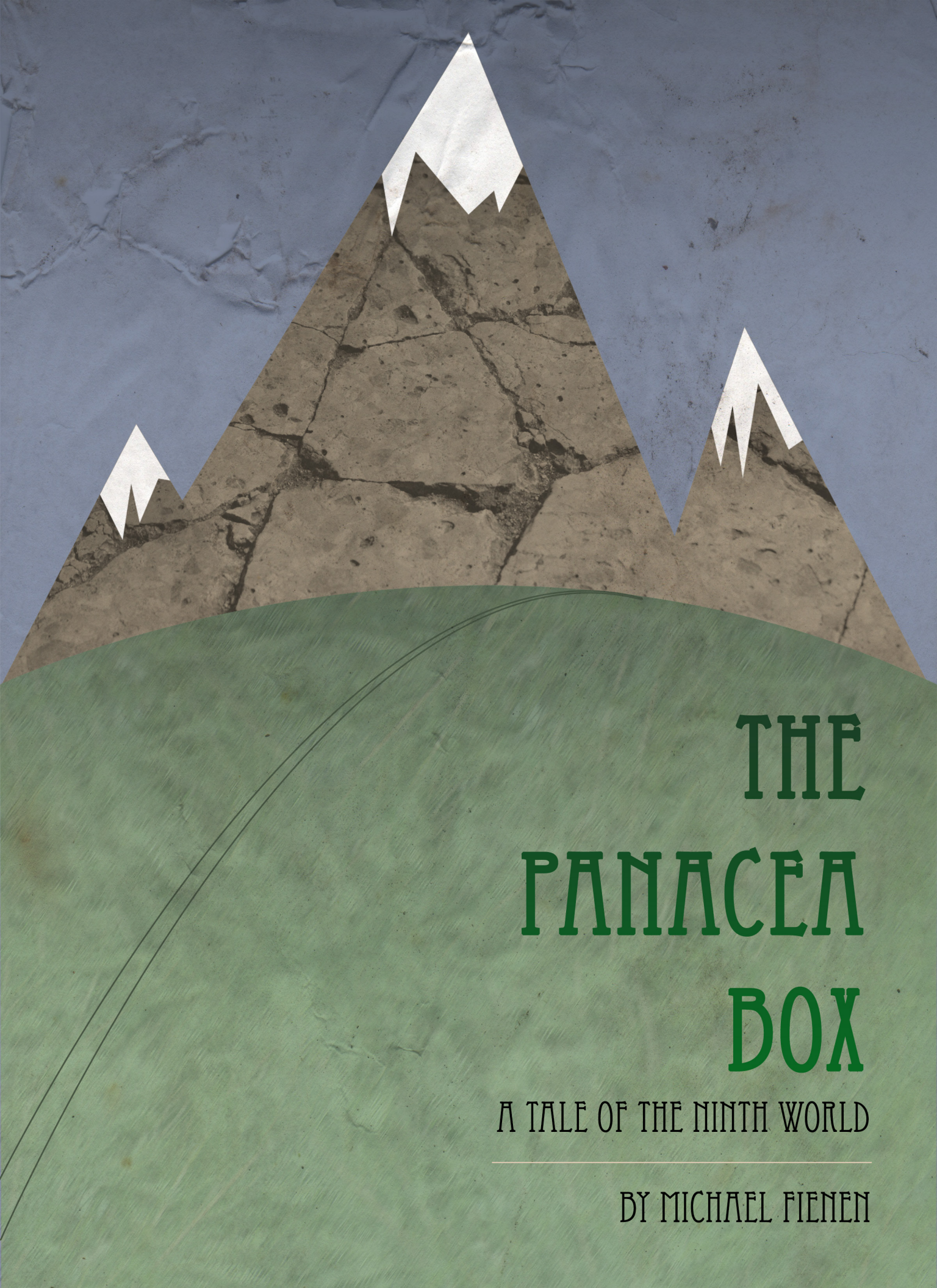
Data Management Tool: The artifact called the Fractal Disruptor is actually a fragment of a larger system used by the race who created The Strange to manage the data contained within. When it was whole and working properly, the system would copy, edit, and format the dark matter of The Strange similarly to administrative tools on modern day computer system (although it should feel more alien and complex).

Backup Utility - Perhaps the recursions "destroyed" are not actually gone, perhaps the white egg removed from the artifact is actually a data storage artifact. This egg functions similarly to a world seed, except that the recursion that grows will be very similar to the recursion which created the storage artifact.

Format Tool - The artifact does destroy recursions, but it does so by resetting the firmament to a "default state". Areas of The Strange that have been formatted in this way are especially receptive to new World Seeds.

The artifact is a part of a machine based, post-human planetovore. The recursions "destroyed" by the Fractal Nullifier are actually being absorbed by a distant planetovore, who uses these samples to zero in on prime worlds...





THE PANACEA BOX

A TALE OF THE NINTH WORLD

BY MICHAEL FIENEN

*For my grandmother,
who would make fun of me for still playing games, but would
be proud of me for this story anyway.*

CHAPTER 1

No sooner was the sun starting to break light on the horizon, than it was beaming through Brisbane's window and squarely onto her eyes. The light was the deep yellow of early morning, which belied the afternoon brightness that would no doubt follow later that afternoon. To the casual observer this light looked quiet warm, but there was no heat to be gleaned from it these recent days. She rolled to her side, shying away, and found herself clutching at the blankets as if to hunt down and kill any unwanted access the cold had to the body that was underneath.

Only moments passed before she reluctantly gave in, pushing herself up and feeling cool morning air creeping around the bed, enveloping her. She looked at the window, a solid pane of inch-thick, transparent synth that retracted up into the wall. Her mother had been here. She knew it because it was the only reason the window would be open. It was dangerous to leave windows open overnight - Iron Wind had been travelling through the region over the past several months, and it wasn't safe to leave yourself exposed. Her mother didn't know better any longer, though.

Brisbane slid over to the side of her bed, working her way out as one hand guided her way to a wheeled chair next to the side. It was one of her few precious artifacts, and it was the one reason she was able to remain truly independent. The chair was worn, used beyond ages that she could contemplate. Her fingers traced the small control panel at the end of the armrest, a smooth glass panel that faded into life at her touch. A series of power tubes were mounted to one side, connected by thick, cloth-wrapped cables. A large motor sat in between the wheels and added considerable weight and balance to the chair.

As she settled in to the leathery padded seat of the chair, her nightshirt pulled back to reveal her legs. Not really legs at all, at least not by any normal sense of the word. Where a normal person would have two long, strong legs, Brisbane had three. They were triple jointed, but horribly under-

developed and covered in hard, scaly growths that occasionally pulsed and shifted around the surface of her flesh. They were prehensile to a small degree, but were functionally useless for locomotion. One was twitching.

Finally settled, Brisbane touched one of the glowing sigils on the control panel of her chair, and it quietly rolled forward. As she made her way to the window, she noticed that the air this morning, though cool, had a pleasantly fresh and crisp smell about it. A building very distant in the mountains had been putting out smoke these recent months that would blanket the entire area, leaving the air heavy and oily smelling. But not today.

Today was a good day.

She quickly touched a panel next to the window, and it slid shut with a penetrating thud. She turned the chair, and rolled out her door into a short hallway. Their home was simple, with wide halls and little furniture to accommodate Brisbane's chair. Small, holographic pictures lined the wall of the hallway with the faces of past family members that were ever so subtly breaking into the plane of the hall. They'd stared at nothing. The ceiling was the proud point of the home. The roof, though visibly opaque from the outside, was entirely transparent from the inside. The morning sunlight illuminated the home with a rich orange that reflected through the holograms and almost seemed there enough to grab. Brisbane loved to just sit in the living room during a good rain and watch the water falling towards them, but stopping mid-air as it hit their roof. She liked to pretend she had the power to stop the rain in the air and send it away at her will. In the mornings, dew would collect and bead up on the surface, casting rays and reflections and shadows in every direction. It was beautiful and mesmerizing.

A new smell broke the air as she made it to the end of the hallway though. No longer the surprising smell of a cool morning, now it was a heavier smell, meaty, of something cooking. The smell was quickly followed by the sight of her mother's back to her as she came around the corner. Rather than the happy feeling she should feel to see her mother preparing breakfast for her, she felt sad. Whatever her mother was cooking, she didn't know what it could be, because they hadn't had anything that would genuinely qualify as meat in

the home for the better part of a week. On top of that, she counted at least thirteen glasses of water - some on the table, but others on the windowsill, in chairs, on the floor, and anywhere else there was a spot.

Looking ahead to the living room, their furniture had been laid on its back, and a blanket had been laid out in the center of the room with all manner and form of strange oddities gathered and spread out on it. From the looks of it, her mother had been up all night "rearranging." How she'd managed to move the water purifier - a device so heavy it took two strong men to bring it in - Brisbane was clueless. And this whole time while she surveyed the situation, her mother was humming.

Today was a bad day.

"Mom?"

Brisbane's mother turned to her. She didn't know what to expect, but she was met with a warm smile that only a mother can give to their child. She had a spoon in one hand, and a some unseemly brown mass in the other.

"Mom, what's that song you're singing?" she asked. A harmless question. The answer wasn't important in and of itself, but how her mother answered would say a lot.

"Yes, you're so right. But then the fannity man comes by and we know it's morning, but it's not... well it's not... what's the word? I had it right there and I just can't make it be. You're so lucky though, you know? So lucky. And that man, he watches, and I think he's onto something - into something. But our love is stronger than all that."

"I know mom, I love you too. Don't worry about that man, I'll have a talk with him."

Her mother gave her a knowing nod, and turned back to the cooktop. Her humming recommenced, a tune that walked the line of unpleasant discordance. Brisbane wanted to pull her mother away and see what she was cooking, but there wasn't enough room for both of them back there with her chair, so she'd just have to be patient. Her mother had been getting steadily worse over the past six months, and so far there hadn't been anything that seemed to help. Something had man-

aged to get into her mind, and it was just breaking it down. Brisbane had been hoping desperately it didn't have anything to do with the smokey air they'd been dealing with lately. Unable to do anything about the cooking, she began moving about the room, collecting glasses and setting them aside on the counter.

Brisbane rolled into the living room space, but quickly discovered that she wasn't entirely sure how to right all the furniture by herself. She'd have to find a way to get her mother to help, and that would likely prove difficult. For now, she'd pick up the pile of trinkets and baubles from the floor and get them out of the way. Her mother and father used to go looking for these little shinies as a bit of a hobby in their youth. There weren't many, but what they had was interesting. Some days they would take them down and go over them - where they were found, what they could make them do. It was her second favorite rainy day activity.

As she maneuvered the collection of oddities out of the way, one in particular caught her eye. She'd see these things a hundred times before. Played with them. Handled them. But this one wasn't familiar. It was a small brass box. The outside was carved and embossed with all manner and form of swirls and shapes, with an etched strip along the bottom front edge. No more than a couple inches deep a twice that long, it's weight belied its size. She set all the other items aside and reserved this one into the folds of her shirt before wheeling back towards the kitchen.

There was a distinct vibration to the item. It had settled in her shirt, resting against the skin of one tiny thigh. She could feel it humming, and feel a disconcerting cold from it. It was a cold that seemed to ignore the fabric currently surrounding it, and it was a cold less like that of metal, but rather the sort of cold that presents itself simply in the absence of heat. She imagined this must be what cold in outer space feels like. She caught herself staring at it as she bumped into the island in the kitchen. Looking up, she was surprised to see her mother turned and looking at her.

"Mom, where did this come from?" Brisbane asked slowly, somewhat startled. She presented the box and set it on the counter, tapping it with her finger for emphasis. "This. I don't remember it. Did you find it somewhere?"

Her mother's brow furrowed. She was concentrating. There was a focus in her eyes like Brisbane hadn't seen of late, and she could tell that her mother was trying very hard to process the question and present an answer that would satisfy her daughter. Finally, after several seconds, she answered.

"It was... a special thing. A fixer thing. Fixeded. Fixededed. I thought you should play with it, so I washed it with the marble sauces up high."

Brisbane tried for a moment to decipher what her mother was trying to tell her. Before she knew what was happening, her mother had taken the box into one hand and held it over one of the glasses of water. She slid one delicate finger across the stripe on the bottom, and a fine mist of liquid sprayed out into the water. She sat the box down and picked up the glass.

"Mom! No!" Brisbane yelled, but helpless otherwise to stop her mother from the chair. She had no choice but to watch as her mother drank the water which had turned a dark, swirling grey. Her anxiety was fanned as the box began to let out a soft chime over and over. It wasn't loud or sharp, just regular. Matching the chime, a small light started to pulse on the top of the box. Her mother sat the glass down and turned back to the stove.

"Brisbane honey, could you grab the tarjik powder from the pantry?" her mother asked, back still turned.

Brisbane sat there, lips slightly parted, a hint of white teeth visible. She tried twice to speak, but before she could move her lips, the words vanished from her tongue. She just sat, and watched. Her mother tasted the horrible looking mass that was cooking in the pan and shuttered, picking up the pan and turning it over into the refuse.

"Oh my, that's gone horribly spoiled. I'm sorry I didn't notice before. We should travel into town later and get something nice and fresh. Maybe we can do some nice, steamed fish for your birthday tomorrow. That would be nice, wouldn't it?"

Brisbane just sat. She felt all thought pause in her brain and time shutter for a moment as she realized tomorrow was her birthday, but it had been the farthest thing from her mind lately, and surely

her mother didn't - couldn't - recall that fact. She just watched as her mother cleaned out the pan and started picking up the kitchen as if it was the most natural thing in the world for her to do.

"Well hon, are you just going to sit there and stare or go get dressed? Go, I'll make a nice fresh breakfast instead," her mother directed, hands on hips. There was something undeniable to her mother's eyes. A presence. For the first time in a long while, those eyes weren't just a mother's eyes, they were her mother's eyes.

Before any other thoughts were able to process, Brisbane took up the small, chiming box from the countertop and turned to wheel her way back to her room. The whole way down the hallway, she couldn't escape the terrifying notion that maybe she was succumbing to the same malady that had been taking over her mother. Or worse, maybe she was the one that had been sick this whole time, and was simply having a moment of clarity. If this is how it felt to lose one's mind, then maybe it wasn't such a bad thing after all. That had to be it, almost certainly. All the while, the box chimed, and the color shifted to a pale red color.

CHAPTER 2

A short while later, Brisbane emerged from the hallway back into the kitchen dressed, but no less dumbfounded. Part of her was still trying to convince herself that maybe, just maybe, she was imagining it all. She was mostly ready to accept that, until she came back into the room. What she saw only further deepened the strangeness created by the unexpected normalcy. The kitchen was cleaned up. Gone were the glasses that she had set aside. Fresh fruit had been cut and set out. And her mother, who for weeks on end couldn't string together one entire, normal sentence, was there in the living room. A living room that was previously wrecked, was now precisely in sorts. Her mother was wiping down a cabinet with a rag. Even the water purifier, that bedamned heavy machine, had been moved back into place.

"Sweety, next time you want to rearrange, please just ask. I'll be happy to help, you know that. I just worry about you trying to do too much from that chair. There's no need to put yourself to that extra

risk," her mother said with calming inflection. Brisbane blinked.

"Mom, you're okay? I mean, are you feeling fine? How are you feeling?" The words fell out of Brisbane's mouth. They hit her lap and tumbled to the floor. Her thoughts were broken and staggered as she tried to reconcile the events of the morning and talk at the same time.

"Well of course honey. I'm sorry I've been so out of sorts lately, the weather must be getting to me."

Of all the things that Brisbane expected today, this was not it. Even after the past hour, something about this exchange just wasn't clicking. She wanted to be happy. She wanted to be thrilled, in fact. Whatever was in that water must have helped. What had her mother said about it? A "fixer thing." Maybe she remembered something about it, like perhaps it must have been some kind of medicine. As if trying to provide a nerve-racking answer, the box continued its soft chiming in her lap. The light on it had changed from the soft red, to a soft blue now, but otherwise she wasn't able to discern what it meant.

Her mother moved on from the living room and continued into other parts of the house, cleaning and doing other things that you would have seen as perfectly normal given the situation. She never once gave an inclination that she'd be sick lately, nor did she seem to have any recollection of her odd behavior prior to this. Brisbane noticed that she had even set out a number of books for her on the living room table, something she used to do quite regularly... before. Not just any books, but books they'd specifically talked about Brisbane wanting to read soon.

But she'd never gotten the chance.

Not wanting to upset or disrupt this new found good fortune, Brisbane continued to stay out of the way as best she could. She let her mother work, but watched closely. She minded her behavior and tried to find faults. More than anything, she hoped that perhaps the strange fluid had restored her mother, and this might mean a return to better times. The uneasy sense of uncertainty and confusedness slowly began to give way to that happiness she wanted so badly. The longer she watched, the harder it was to contain the tears

that wanted to well up in her eyes over and over. There was so much that Brisbane simply couldn't do for them when she was taking care of everything - simple things like dusting high shelves - and watching her mother take care of these issues as if it was never as issue pulled at Brisbane's heart.

The day continued on in that fashion. Calm and serene. Her mother behaving exactly as her mother, and she watched on hopefully. Eventually, she set the box aside on the counter, tired of carrying its heavy, cold weight. Despite its continued chimes, her mother seemed to ignore it. From time to time, Brisbane would check it out of an irrational fear that it would suddenly have vanished. It never did. Morning gave way to afternoon, and soon that to the evening. The entire day was like a much needed vacation from life itself.

The two of them sat in the living room that night. Her mother put on some soft music that played from several glass plates mounted to the walls. They produced a low glow of color that changed and danced with the melody of the songs. They were never quite sure where the music itself came from, nor could they change it, but it was always there when they turned on the panels and it was always pleasant music that came from them. They sat there together, Brisbane in her chair and her mother in hers, staring up through the ceiling at the stars above. A comet had been low in the sky the past few evenings, and it was large and bright tonight as it traveled over their roof.

Eventually, her mother hurried her off to bed and helped her out of the chair. There was a familiarity to this process, so warm and missed these past months. As her mother put out the light in the room, Brisbane leaned forward and hugged her mother with every ounce of strength she had. She patted Brisbane's head and held her close to her breast until Brisbane finally let go. As she drifted off to sleep, it was with only a single thought.

It was a good night.

CHAPTER 3

The next morning, Brisbane was startled awake by the rush of a strangely hot, billowing wind. She shot up in bed to see the window again wide open, and was immediately hit in the face by a gust of the dusty wind blowing in. Sharp, fine grit pricked at her cheeks.

"Mom!" she shouted, trying to be heard of the thundering bass of the wind as it whipped around the house. "Mom, the window! The window's open! Something's blowing in!"

But her mother did not answer. She wasn't even sure if anyone would be able to hear her over the sound the wind was making. She struggled to slide herself out of bed into the chair as a loud clattering sound came from the outside. Something hit the wall of the house, shaking it, and she very nearly tumbled out of the bed as she caught the arm of the chair and pulled herself in. As quickly as she could muster, she wheeled over to the window and shut it, partly blocking out the sound of the wind.

Around the room, items had been knocked off shelves. Clothes were strewn about. A layer of grey-brown dust covered everything, gritty like beach sand. It was in her hair and she could feel the particulate between her teeth and around her eyes. Her chair's wheels crunched steadily as she started to exit the room. This wasn't the Iron Wind, that much she knew, otherwise she'd almost certainly be dead already. This was something else, and it had her adrenaline pumping as hard as she could imagine. Her temples were thumping and her fingers trembled as she made her way down the hallway and into the kitchen area.

The lights were out as she came into the room, the only light coming from the occasional purple lightning bolt in the wind blown sand above the house that reflected through the ceiling, and a small blue light flashing on and off. She could see it as the box from yesterday. Her mother was sitting on the floor, naked save but for a pair of shoes, and the box was in her hands. She turned it over and over as it chimed all the while. Outside, Brisbane could still hear the wind and sand blowing around the house, and the whole scene made her feel extremely uneasy.

"Good afternoon to the canisters up there," her mother said. "They are well tamed and with a flavor do dance. Drink!"

All at once, a cacophony of emotions began to pour through Brisbane's heart. There were so many, and they were so strong, it was all she could do to keep from breaking down into tears on the spot. Whatever had freed her mother yesterday was gone today. She could tell it from just those few seconds. She didn't know what to do, and froze in a moment of panic. The wind was making a high pitched screeching noise outside, with the sand grinding against the edges of the house. She was startled into action as a large metallic superstructure fell onto the roof of the house with a deafening noise. Brisbane screamed and punched the chair into motion towards her mother. Above, giant metal girders and pilings could be seen laying across the house through the roof. Luckily, the house was strong, and held through the force of the impact.

As Brisbane made it to her mother's side, she flung herself from her chair and grabbed at her mother, pulling her close. Her mother shifted uneasily at the contact and tried to pull away, and Brisbane could tell she was cold and wet. She reached out with one of her legs, wincing at the pain of stretching it out, and was able to latch on to a corner of a rug with two not-toes and pull it close. She grabbed it with her hands and pulled it around her mother and herself, covering them entirely, leaving the wind little more than a muffled whistle.

They remained there, huddled under the rug, for hours. At some point, her mother fell asleep. But Brisbane couldn't. She was sad and scared all at the same time while adrenaline made her tremble and tense. She waited out the storm with her mother in her arms until the wind was finally silenced, and then she waited just a bit longer. It wasn't that she was afraid of what awaited her outside the rug, she was just afraid that she wouldn't know what to do next regardless.

The rug slid off from around their heads and shoulders, revealing a partially sunlit room. It was afternoon now, and the sun in the west was throwing shadows all over the house from the metal above. She looked up and around. It looked like some kind of antenna array had landed on the

house, crumpled over the top. There were several boxes and nodules affixed to different parts that still glowed and flashed, apparently unaware of their current situation. Inside the house, a fine layer of dirt and sand covered every surface. In the afternoon light, it gave everything a warm hue.

Brisbane used the entirety of her strength to pull herself over and into her chair. It was uncomfortable, and the dirt was abrasive against her skin where it was exposed. She looked down at her mother, who was still asleep on the floor, naked but for the bit of rug still covering her, sucking her thumb. She closed her eyes, squeezing as tightly as she could. More than anything, she just wanted to scream loud enough to shake the walls of the house down.

As the moment passed, Brisbane steadied her thoughts and opened her eyes. She needed to take care of her mother. That's the first thing. She navigated her chair around the room and across the hall to her mother's room. Normally kept and tidy, it was as much a mess as everything else. But her robe hung neatly next to the bed. It was just low enough that she could flip it off the hook into her lap. With it collected, she turned and went back to the front room.

Almost immediately she saw that her mother was no longer on the floor though. Her eyes raced quickly from left to right, landing on a silhouetted figure in the kitchen. Tears came back to her eyes again at the frailness the shadows exposed in her mother's form. As she directed the chair towards her, two more details caught her eye: the chiming box was back on the counter, and her mother had in her hands another glass of that grey liquid. Before she could even think of a question to ask, her mother was drinking it in large, gulping swallows, until the glass was empty. She sat it down and stood there, back to her daughter. Brisbane came behind her and gave the robe a slight toss up so that it would land on her shoulders. After several minutes standing in silence, her mother reached around and pulled the robe tight and turned to face Brisbane. Her face was serene and relaxed.

"Brisbane, dear, I'm so sorry. You must have been so scared during the storm. Here, let's clean some of this up."

For the second time in two days, Brisbane was

left stunned beyond reaction. She watched as her mother went to work cleaning the countertop as if it was the most natural thing in the world. She stared at the empty glass, then at the small box. She reached out and picked it up.

"Mom, what's this? Where did it come from?"

"That?" her mother turned and ask, squinting at the box and its blinking light. "You know, I'm not sure your father or I ever figured it out. We found it years ago, long before you were born. North of here I think... yes. I hadn't thought of it in ages. Where did you find it at?"

Brisbane wasn't entirely sure what to make of this last part. Surely she must remember using it to make the drink. Something obviously compelled her to do that. And it seemed to make her so much better - yet still not entirely right.

"I... well, it was just behind some stuff when I was cleaning the other day. I was just curious. I can't seem to get it to stop chiming."

A lie. But one her mother didn't seem to question. At least not outwardly. And the last part was true, that she had no idea how to make it stop the chiming. Luckily, it wasn't loud or otherwise distracting. And her mother seemed to ignore it all together. She wanted nothing more than to just stop the world for a little while so she could sort all this out and make sense of it all. One thing seemed immediately clear though, that the box did something that was helpful. Brisbane tucked it away into a safe spot in her chair.

"Mom, I'll go start cleaning up in my room."

"Okay sweetheart. Just yell if you need anything."

If only it were that simple.

[CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE]

INTO THE GALVANIC LABS

EXPERIMENTS IN DARK ENERGIES



A HOLSTENWALL ADVENTURE

BY SCOTT ROBINSON

Holstenwall holds the potential for many types of gothic horror adventures. The previous article (CypherCaster Issue #1) provided a variety of story seeds embedded in a brief overview of the recursion. This article provides a brief adventure to further illustrate the potential of the recursion. The players explore a warehouse recently (mostly) abandoned by researchers from Auroleaus University conducting dangerous experiments with galvanic energies. As players explore the laboratories, the extent of the experiments (and their motivation) unfold along with various threat left behind.

After a brief introduction to the central story of the adventure, there are several story hooks to bring your player characters to the galvanic labs. The description of several, loosely-connected encounter locations follow. The adventure is kept flexible for you to re-shape to your purposes. The article concludes with a bestiary with several new monsters introduced in the adventure -- but easily portable to your own games.

The art for this adventure was developed to help support your home games. You can use the art in this article and the others in this series as "show-em" illustrations for your players. The description will provide strategies for using the art in the article in your games.

ADVENTURE INTRODUCTION

The recursion of Holstenwall is intended to serve several possible campaign functions. You can use Holstenwall material to support either a small recursion (including just the locations described in the adventure), a large recursion (including the various locations described in the previous article on Holstenwall), or even as a small piece of Holstenwall that has overlapped with Strange Earth. Different story seeds support these different uses of the recursion.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Long ago residents of Holstenwall learned that they could use advances in science to combat the forces of darkness. The intellectual leaders of Holstenwall's respected university -- Auroleaus University -- quietly shaped their research agendas

to supply humans with protection (and weapons) needed to combat the threat of the Dracul families, their Ghul servants, and others.

Over time, the research agenda of the inner circle of scientists -- the Provost's Council -- began to shift. After generations of developing protective technology, including animated statues called Gholas, the scientists of the Provost's Council turned to more self-serving pursuits. Specifically they began to investigate technology to extend their own lifespans. With luck, the Council could live forever to continue their scientific research. The galvanic research team has established a series of sites to conduct their research. They hope to be able to escape the notice, and potential sabotage, of research conducted on the Auroleaus campus itself. Being off-site also allows the research team to avoid scrutiny for their more controversial research protocols. One of these facilities is in a warehouse in a lightly trafficked area. Research into the use of galvanic energies to augment humans or reanimate human corpses had produced promising early results... until something went wrong, forcing the abandonment of the facilities.

An optional story frame:

The research program has recently entered a new phase. At least two teams of researchers from the university have begun to explore the interaction between their favored technological approaches (alchemy and galvanic electricity) and the rules of their own recursion. A few of the awakened members of the research team wondered whether their technologies might work better in other recursions. This has created a new series of fronts in the competition between the research teams -- the creation of research facilities in other recursions.

HOLSTENWALL-BASED STORY SEED

There are several options for how to hook your players into the adventure that follows. The adventure can be set directly in Holstenwall. The Auroleus University Galvanic Labs can be placed either in a neglected and rundown area of the city or on the outskirts of the university district itself. The area should be sparsely trafficked -- but this describes most of Holstenwall at night.

Alternatively, the Galvanic Labs themselves can be a micro-recursion consisting of only this particular location if you do not want to link the location together into the larger Holstenwall recursion.

You can include rumors that indicate that several researchers from Auroleaus University had proposed to conduct research into the re-animation of human subjects rather than the imbueing of life-like properties into statues (like the gargoyles). This proposal was declined by the directors of the university but the researchers simply moved their work off the university proper where they could continue research without oversight. These rumors can come from any source -- including the organized resistance to various monstrous forces: the Coming Dawn. In this version, the activation of the batteries led to a constant electrical storm above the warehouse. The storm led to the abandonment of the facility by (most of) the researchers and brought the facility to the attention of the player characters or their sponsors.

EARTH-BASED STORY SEED

It is also possible to tell Earth-based stories with Holstenwall. This recursion is fueled by the pre-eminent place of gothic horror in contemporary fiction. With this torrent of fictional leakage, the connections between Holstenwall and Earth are quite strong. The connections are strong enough (with a little push) that people, creatures, and items passing over from Holstenwall can be stabilized on Earth.

The Directors of Auroleaus University are fully aware and encourage galvanic research into animation in the hopes that this research will reveal the secrets of immortality. They hope that taking advantage of the thin walls between Earth and Holstenwall will allow them to experiment with alternative physics as a basis for this research. Accordingly, they sent a team to Earth to occupy a large structure (say, an abandoned warehouse), stabilize the structure against the decaying influence of Earth on their work, and continue research into galvanic regeneration. The research continued for several weeks (using some combination of corpses stolen from local morgues or kidnapping of homeless people who wandered the warehouse district at the wrong time) before their most aggressive efforts to re-animate the Gholas resulted in an electrical storm that shut down the local

electrical grid. This brought the research team unwanted attention and they fled back to Holstenwall to regroup. Either the missing corpses, missing people, or unnatural electrical storms could bring the location to the attention of The Estate, the OSR, or even unaffiliated characters.

If you would like to use the "stabilized zone" story seed, you can include etched circuit plates placed strategically around the exterior of the building. Most of the plates were likely removed as the bulk of the scientists returned to Holstenwall (leaving the warehouse to slowly revert to Earth-native physics). One plate, possibly broken, was left behind. The characters can find the plates, note their linkage to the fundamental forces of The Strange. This discovery may serve as a hook to further investigation into Holstenwall.

ADVENTURE PREVIEW

As the player characters progress through the warehouse, they will slowly unravel the purpose of the warehouse and what went wrong. The players first have to make it inside the warehouse facility itself, bypassing the Gargoyle Gholas guardians on the roof. On the first floor, the players encounter the source of the warehouse's problems. The galvanic batteries situated on the first floor malfunctioned creating sentient energy sparks. Further investigation reveals that the research facility was largely abandoned leaving behind two research projects. Next, the party comes across a research lab intending to imbue living humans with galvanic energy. The result was a psychologically unstable living weapon. Further investigation reveals one researcher who stayed behind to finish his work -- on the reanimation of a human corpse. The players arrive at the laboratory rooms on the top floor of the building just as the scientist completes his final experiment.

Lighting:

The building interior is lit with a series of alchemical lamps in wall sconces. The lamps including a caustic fluid that provides a dim glow sufficient for most activities including reading but providing a potential asset for hiding in shadows. Feel free to use the caustic nature of the lamps in GM intrusions.

A HOLSTENWALL LOCATION

AUROLEUS UNIVERSITY GALVANIC LABS

On the fringe of the Auroleus University campus is a large, nondescript building that contains some of the more dangerous labs. The Galvanic Labs contain the research laboratories of those natural philosophers who are investigating galvanic technology (the use of alchemical mixtures to generate electricity for various purposes). The buildings is set off to the edge of the central university campus, in part to ensure that any problems that develop in the building will not endanger the main campus. As a result the Galvanic Labs have relatively little traffic from main campus with only the researchers, some laboratory assistants, and staff for the warehousing operations actually visiting the building.

You can arrange the following encounter areas however you like. I recommend placing the Generator Room on the ground floor, a series of offices on the second floor, the Arcer Laboratory on the third floor (possibly with the sole occupied office), and the Ghola Laboratory on the fourth floor (with a skylight opening to the roof). This arrangement will allow you to use the cover image as a reference for your players.

BUILDING EXTERIOR

(INVESTIGATION/STEALTH ENCOUNTER)

The Galvanic Labs do not stand out amongst the various warehouse building in the surrounding district. This is very much by design. The University Council recognizes that the building contains both controversial research and valuable materials. The building was designed to blend in with the others in the area and avoid drawing attention.

Specifically, the warehouse is a four-story building surrounded in a pale red brick. The first two levels are ringed with windows letting in natural light during the day. The third story has no actual windows but various decorations that provide the illusion of windows to casual observation (noticing that the third floor has no windows is only a level 3 intellect task). The fourth floor has a limited set of wide windows that allow in natural light -- but largely focus that light downward, making it almost impossible to see anything from ground level outside. The fourth floor windows resemble

greenhouse roofs (oriented toward the sky). A representation of the building is on page 37.

The roof of the building is ringed by surprisingly elaborate sculptures. At various, irregular intervals one can see gargoyles carved into the buildings. The gargoyles are larger and more elaborate than many of those on surrounding buildings. In this way, the building more closely resembles the detailed architecture of the main campus of Auroleus University than the utilitarian design of the area's warehouse district. Some people who travel (often quickly) past the building report that the gargoyles seem to be in different positions around the building. Some even suggest that they have seen the gargoyles move -- though these reports are easily dismissed as the sensationalist ramblings of inebriated warehouse workers or vagrant pod smokers.

The gargoyles on the exterior of the building are actually the result of early experiments in animation by past generations' natural philosophers in Holstenwall. The gargoyles serve as a surveillance system as well as preventing unwanted visitors. Any person who observes the building too closely or tries to scale the building (or otherwise reach the roof) are likely to garner the attention of the gargoyles -- statistics in the bestiary section below. While the process (what the researchers call their "techne") for creating gargoyles is still available to various faculty of the university, it is not the active subject of research and refinement as attention has turned to other forms of animation. There should be as many gargoyles as there are party members.

NOTE:

This section will describe several rooms in the Galvanic Labs. This is not an exhaustive list of the rooms. Instead, these are simply rooms you can place in the warehouse where you like. They can be connected by narrated exploration of the warehouse (e.g. "As you explore this level of the building, you find a series of similar offices.

These are likely the faculty offices. However, you note a larger room at the end of the hall that seems to contain research facilities.") or fill in other rooms to serve your story. Examples of other potential rooms include: a desk for the security guard, various faculty offices -- some of which could include clues to your story, restrooms (everyone always forgets restrooms), janitorial or service closets, other laboratories, research supply closets, or seminar rooms.



GALVANIC GENERATORS

(COMBAT ENCOUNTER WITH PUZZLE ELEMENTS)

The generator room makes up a large portion of the first floor of the warehouse building. Half of the room has a series of six large vats of chemicals -- arranged in pairs. Electricity arcs across the wires connecting each pair. The vats are transparent with one of each pair filled with liquid with a blue tint while the other is filled with a shimmering silver liquid. Suspended in each vat is a large metal plate (one silver and one copper). Each silver plate includes several runes carved onto their surface. A level 5 intellect task reveals that the runes are classic alchemical representations (from Earth history) of various metals and reagents.

If a player wearing any amount of metal approaches the generator section of the room, electricity will arc from several local vats to create a ball of lightning floating 3 feet off the floor (a Galvanic Wisp -- see the bestiary at the end of the article). The wisp will discharge electricity at a character within long range (including the entirety of the room). While connected to the vats by these arcs of electricity, the wisp will regenerate 4

hit points a round.

The wisp will move towards any player who either wears a large amount of metal (like metal heavy armor or carries a large metal item -- a small metal weapon is not likely enough) or who takes one of the metal plates from a vat. The wisp can be drawn away from the vats towards the empty part of the room by this player. Once a short distance away, it becomes disconnected from the arcs and loses its regeneration.

Any player hit by the Galvanic Wisp may retain some element of the charge. Occasionally, these characters will experience a sharp shock like a strong static electricity shocks. Even the removal of metal gear will not fully remove the effect -- though it will reduce the frequency of these shocks. These shocks do no damage and -- for now -- serve only as a reminder of the ordeal with the wisp.

The far side of the room includes stairwell access to the other floors. For now, the stairwell represents the only way to travel between floors -- and it provides access to all three levels (the "fourth" level is simply the excessive height allowed for the third floor discussed below). It is possible for the characters to bypass the second floor by continuing to the top of the stairs.

Optional ending:

If the arcer has joined the party to the Gholia laboratory, you can use an optional ending. If the party is having trouble with the Gholia (or, if you happen to increase its level to make sure this is the case), the arcer can regain consciousness when the party seems to be in danger. The arcer will rush to the Gholia. She places her hands on the gholia and draws the electrical charge out of the Gholia. The Gholia collapses; again deactivated. The arcer stumbles, struggling to maintain the total charge until she is eventually consumed and burned out having sacrificed herself for the party.

THE GALVANIC ARCKER ROOM

(COMBAT ENCOUNTER WITH SOCIAL ELEMENTS)

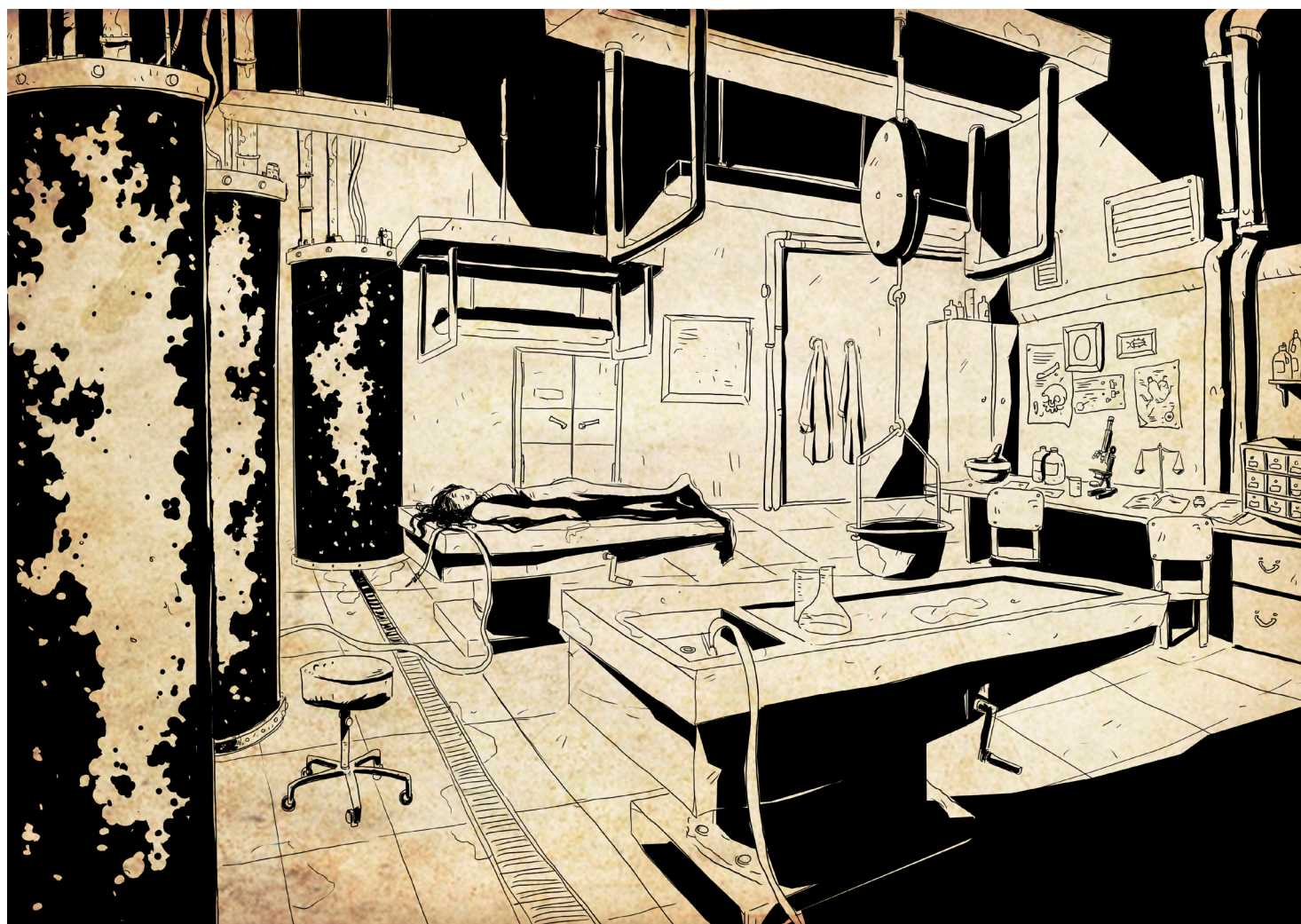
This room is a large laboratory with three huge glass cylinders in addition to a series of work stations, chairs, and examination tables. On the

far end of the room, a person seems to be passed out on one examination table. Each glass cylinder is on 12 inch tall metal pedestals and have a circumference of about 6 feet. The cylinders are filled with smoke obscuring the view of what is inside. Any careful observation from a distance of more than 10 feet will notice movement within the orbs (difficulty 3 intellect task). Any observation from closer than 10 feet will note that the movement is of some humanoid shape moving in a jerky fashion inside (difficulty 2 intellect task). Any movement within 10 feet of the orb will get the attention of the Galvanic Arcer inside (difficulty 3 speed task to avoid notice). If noticed, the Galvanic Arcer will begin to scream and bang his fists on the glass. The first time he does this, a noticeable crack appears. The players have a chance to make any preparatory action as the arcer breaks through the glass (roughly equivalent to a round of actions).

Once the arcer has broken through the glass, the entire orb crashes to the ground. Once this happens, the second arcer will break through her orb in the next round (unless players initiated the

activity of the arcers at the same time by simultaneously approaching the orbs). This allows the gas to escape and reveals the arcer. The arcer is in short pants (the second arcer is in a short tunic) with several diode-like structures penetrating into and out of his skin. Each arcer is chained to the base on which the orb sat. Electricity arcs from diode to diode across their skin and occasionally passes through their chain in the floor. Each arc of electricity is clearly painful to the arcer.

The arcers are not aggressive at first -- though they are clearly finding it difficult to communicate through their constant pain. Players can try to calm the arcers down and offer to help them (a level 5 intellect task due to the pain and confusion of the arcers). Players can try to deactivate the bases or otherwise free the arcers (a level 4 intellect task -- making it impossible to perform speed defense against the arcers). Doing so does not completely remove the arcs of electricity passing through the arcers, but it reduces their frequency and provides some relief. If freed, the arcers will pass out from the pain once free. If the players break the orbs but do not free the arcers, they will



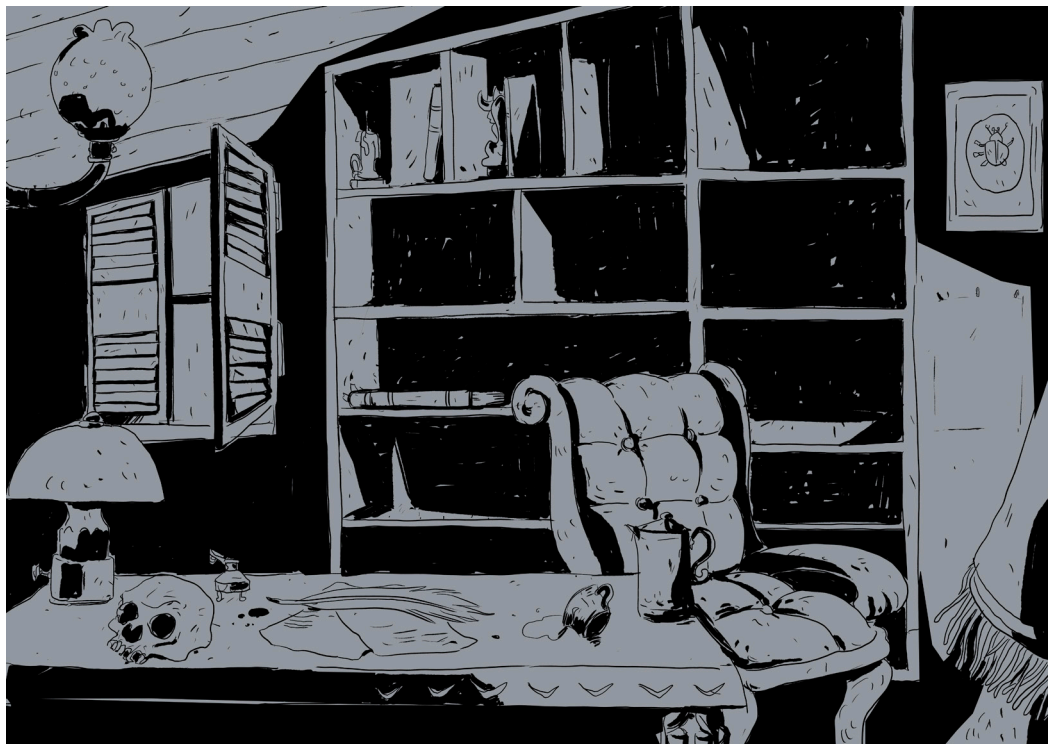


lash out at the players by arcing electricity towards them as they reach towards the players (this can be seen as an attempt to simply reach out towards the players -- it can look like an aggressive action or a plea for help depending on what you think fits the tone of your game best).

After freed, the arcer can be treated and returned to consciousness. The arcers remain dazed and unable to assist the party in any meaningful way. However, the arcers can follow the party and largely stay out of the way. The arcers should not present a hindrance as the party explores the

remainder of the building -- unless you want to manage that part more closely for your group. With parties of six or larger, you can add a third arcer with a GMI. Otherwise, the other orbs are empty.

The person passed out on the examination table is in a coma -- having been subject to only limited modifications. He is only in the early stages in the process of becoming an arcer. This person can not be awakened but could be treated and will recover eventually if taken to a large medical facility (like a hospital).



artificial life and the pursuit of immortality. There is also a medallion that looks like a classical seal for Aureoleus University. A level 5 intellect task reveals that there is no such university on Earth.

With an intellect task of difficulty 4, players may find relevant material in the various notebooks left on the shelves. The notes stand out because of their informal tone and haphazard formatting -- distinguishing them from the piles and piles of formal lab notes. This is something like a diary for one

of the researchers -- rather than lab notes. These notes include references to: the creation of ghola, the generation of large scale electricity through alchemical mixtures, Aureoleus University, the "spiral gnosis", the University Council, Dean Allesandro, an order to vacate following some disturbance related to the activation of the most recent set of generators, and concerns about something called the Dracul.

1d4 cyphers with galvanic themes (check back next issue for support for Holstenwall cyphers....)

OFFICES

(EXPLORATION/INVESTIGATION ENCOUNTER)

A series of offices are spread across the first two floors of the warehouse. You do not need to narrate the exploration of each of these offices. Instead, the exploration of these various rooms can be taken as a single encounter - just provide a montage style review of the investigation. Among the items that the characters may find discover (each will be revealed with a single intellect level 2 tasks for searching/investigating): Each office has a bookshelf and desk. On each desk is an inkwell and some blank vellum. Some desks still include broken or low quality quills.

None of the offices include computer terminals (an anomaly if this warehouse is located on Earth).

The offices have all been abandoned with only scattered notes remaining in the least cleared-out office, the characters find remaining notes (these notes do not require a roll to find) including several alchemical formulas -- including references to the creation of



THE GHOLA LAB

(COMBAT ENCOUNTER)

What seems from the outside to be the top two floors of the warehouse are actually a single floor consisting of a series of tall examination and experimentation rooms that open to glass ceilings on the roof. There are four main examination rooms -- each surrounded by an observation room (rows of benches so that students or guests can see operations or experiments occurring within the laboratory itself). Each examination room has an operating table at its center and otherwise has elaborate -- though archaic looking -- equipment. All but one of these rooms has been entirely abandoned though each has indications of prior use. While there is little evidence of use of the spectator areas (though evidence of some, limited use -- paper scraps left behind, scuff on the seats and floor, etc.), there is extensive evidence of usage of the examination rooms in terms of stains of the floor, wear on the metal components that allow the wooden tables to rotate and move for ease of access. The rooms look like the sites of previous surgery -- or autopsies.

The final room was not entirely abandoned as the others were. This last room has an active trellis system that connects the examination table to the open window above the room. The metal of the trellis creaks as it is slowly pushed by winds from outside the room. The table itself is occupied by a large, humanoid body. The humanoid is clearly stitched together from various separate corpses of different sizes and skin colors. The parts seem to have been selected for their health with each component representing a vigorous example of the component of organ. The humanoid (a Flesh Ghola) remains dormant on the examination table unless activated. Across the examination table from the Flesh Ghola is a galvanic scientist (level 2 NPC -- level 4 for purposes of galvanic engineering).

There are several ways that the Flesh Ghola could become activated.

If the character who is affected by a remnant charge of the Galvanic Wisp enters the room, this spark leaps from them to the treillis and to the Flesh Ghola. This seems to surprise the engineer who is immediately seized by the Flesh Ghola. The Ghola quickly breaks the engineer neck before

turning to the party.

If an Arcer accompanies the party into the room, they too will generate a spark to activate the Flesh Ghola. Doing so renders the Arcer unconscious and neutralizes their electrical charge for 24 hours. In this case, the Flesh Ghola kills the engineer as described in 1.

The Flesh Ghola may have been left behind as a final trap for any unprepared people who have made their way through the warehouse. In this case, a trap mechanism (pressure plate or trip wire) is at the entryway to the room. The trap mechanism requires a level 5 intellect task to observe and a separate level 5 intellect task to disarm. In this case, there is no engineer in the room. The engineer could activate a mechanism on the trellis to draw galvanic energies from the sky (like a localized lightning strike). He cackles (in classic villain form), "I just could not abandon my experiment when it was so close to completion. You will see the power of my ghola then I can return triumphant to Aureoleus and they will understand my genius." The scientist retreats to behind the mechanism while the Ghola sees the party and prepares to attack them. This will leave the scientist for questioning (possibly). With sufficient persuasion (a level 3 task given his reluctance for sharing information), he will reveal that he is a researcher from "the other side" who works for research team there. They are investigating the use of galvanic energies for the purposes of extending or creating life. If the warehouse is on Earth, he explains that they had hoped that this reality would provide a more hospitable set of physical laws for their research. When they fully activated the batteries intended to power their experiments, energies were drawn in from surrounding buildings drawing more attention than they had anticipated. The university ordered them to withdraw back to their home reality with all of these notes. He just could not leave his experiment behind. The other scientists left (taking the runes used to stabilize the warehouse) and the scientist was on the clock to complete the experiment while he was still able to easily translate back.

With a good old-fashioned GM Intrusion -- just have the trellis stuck by ill-timed (for the players) lightning strike.



XP

The short adventure will reward player for several discoveries. Simply making it through the warehouse and reporting back will generate 2 XP. The players may also receive 1 XP for each of the following discoveries: the recursion stabilizing plates (if you are using that story seed, see below), freeing the Galvanic Arcers from the lab, taking the comatose research subject to a hospital, and/or discovering the detailed lab notes that reveal the nature of the laboratory.

HOSTENWALL BESTIARY

FLESH GHOLA - LEVEL 5 (15)

Research into the galvanic basis of life has motivated research into tissue regeneration. The most dramatic result of these experiment are the fearsome Flesh Ghola. Galvanic researchers typically assemble the most physically dominant components to create a fearsome Flesh Ghola: the strongest limbs, the tallest torsos, etc. The impressive strength of the combined subjects is amplified by the raw galvanic energies coursing through the ghola. Freshly re-animated specimens will often be dripping with the galvanic fluids of the baths in which they were reanimated. This discolors whatever clothes the ghola was dressed in before re-animation (e.g. breeches and a simple shirt) leaving them with a metallic, green, or purple tint. The muscles of the ghola can be seen rippling and growing under their skin as the galvanic energies continually create and re-create the Flesh Ghola.

***Motive*:** Immediately following animation, Flesh Ghola have a reputation for unreasoning rage. However, these ghola are trainable and educable. With simple training, one can be tasked with guarding an area, for example. Rumors exist of some Flesh Ghola becoming quite intelligent -- even through extended periods of self-education. The motives of a well-educated Flesh Ghola are as diverse as that of any human.

***Environment(Sub-standard Physics, Magic)*:** Flesh Ghola can be found in a wide variety of environments. Recently reanimated -- and raging -- Flesh Ghola are likely to be found within galvanic laboratories where experiments are ongoing. Trained Flesh Ghola can be found throughout Holstenwall

as guardians, laborers, etc. (though they are still rare and typically only employed where their presence is likely to remain secret). Educated Flesh Ghola rarely accept servitude and -- the few that are rumored to exist -- are more likely to reside in places where they can hide from the people who would fear them.

***Health*:** 15

***Damage Inflicted*:** 5

***Movement*:** Short

***Combat*:** Flesh Ghola attack through brute physical force. However, an educated ghola could potentially use a weapon.

The reanimated flesh of ghola provide 1 point of armor (except to fire) and 1 point of regeneration per round.

Ghola are quite destructive of the world around them. They can they use elements of their wreckage around them (like broken pieces of furniture, walls, etc.) as ranged weapons (these attacks would be as a level 5 creature at long range).

***Interaction*:** The level of interaction depends on the age and training of the ghola. A recently re-animated Flesh Ghola is likely to be difficult to interact with due to their rage (difficulty 6 to reason with a raging Flesh Ghola). A trained Flesh Ghola can be much easier to interact with (difficulty 3 to avoid their notice or any social task that does not directly contradict their training). A fully educated Flesh Ghola can be interacted with as an intelligent human -- with difficulty related to the specific challenge of what is requested.

***Use*:** Flesh Ghola are quickly becoming a favored workforce for the galvanic engineers. They can be found within their laboratories (sometimes still raging) or performing menial tasks in galvanic facilities (loading and unloading, moving material, janitorial work, etc.). The Flesh Ghola, while still rare, are preferred for this sort of work since their cooperation is more-or-less guaranteed. Of course, a fully educated Flesh Ghola is a different matter entirely. Fully educated Flesh Ghola are more likely to be found having fled galvanic facilities. Such a ghola may be a hermit with special knowledge of their new home or even as an ally in

any fight against the galvanic engineers.

***Loot*:** Flesh Gholas are often in locations where cyphers may be found (like laboratories -- 1d3 cyphers). Their very flesh and implanted materials could be used as a cypher (1d2) at the GM's discretion.

***GM Intrusion*:** In the Flesh Gholas' fury, he tears a long chain off a nearby wall. The galvanic energies that animate the ghola, surge through the chain making it crackle with energy. The ghola then throws the chain (at long range). Any creature hit by the chain takes the typical damage for a Flesh Gholas attack (5) and becomes bound in the chain. It is a level 4 might task to escape the chain and does 2 points of damage at the beginning of any character's round if he can not escape the chain.

GALVANIC ARCER - LEVEL 4 (12)

A Galvanic Arcer is a human modified by galvanic engineering to store electricity. Galvanic scientists created arcers in their investigation into the use of electrical energy as a way to energize living flesh -- hopefully to render the human immortal with sufficient electricity. The result, so far, has instead been a human in constant pain who can barely contain the energies infused within them. Each arcer is typically covered in a simple, long tunic. The exposed flesh of the arms and lower legs reveals a complex set of wiring embedded into the major muscle groups. The wires dig cruelly into the flesh of the Galvanic Arcer leaving raw scars at their points of entry. Electricity flows through the wires burning flesh as it passes in and out of the skin -- with a glow that hints as it passes through the body. This process leaves the Galvanic Arcer in near constant pain.

***Motive*:** Galvanic Arcers are driven to rage by their constant pain.

***Environment(Sub-standard Physics, Magic)*:** Galvanic Arcers are test-subjects in galvanic research labs in Holstenwall or the various outputs of galvanic research.

***Health*:** 12

***Damage Inflicted*:** 4

***Movement*:** Short. Due to their constant pain, the Galvanic Arcer is unlikely to move in any way that requires dexterity. They will instead move jerkily towards their focus.

***Combat*:** Galvanic arcers have two methods of attack.

- 1- From diodes in their hands, they can emit an arc of electricity (for which they are named) at a long range. This arc is only difficulty three to avoid given the imprecision with which the arcer makes its attack. This attack ignores metal armor.
- 2- In short range, a Galvanic Arcer can attempt a grab attack. This attack is level 4 speed defense to avoid given that the arcer does not need a tight grip for the damaging electricity to jump from the arcer to his victim.

***Interaction*:** They can be reasoned with -- but at a level 5 difficulty. If the attempt to reason with the Galvanic Arcer involves a credible chance to reduce their pain, the difficulty is instead level 3.

***Use*:** Galvanic Arcers will likely be found within galvanic research labs in Holstenwall and beyond. As the capabilities of the arcers are well-known within the galvanic research community, they could be deployed offensively at another location (though they are difficult to control).

***Loot*:** Careful removal of the various components grafted into the arcers could result in a cypher.

***GM Intrusion*:** A surge of galvanic energies build up within the Galvanic Arcer and explode attacking everyone within short range.

GALVANIC WISP - LEVEL 4 (12)

A Galvanic Wisp is a by-product of the energies utilized in advanced galvanic research. The concentration of these forces within a recursion can result in a semi-autonomous entity emerging from the tensions in the fundamental forces. The wisp looks like a floating ball of energy approximately 30 cms in diameter. Small bolts of electricity will briefly appear connecting the wisp to any nearby metallic surface.

***Motive*:** A Galvanic Wisp is only dimly conscious. It primarily wants to resolve the tensions that have

created it -- possibly by destroying the source of galvanic energy or any other nearby power source. It has only a limited capacity for understanding how to accomplish this -- so its efforts are likely unfocused.

***Environment(Sub-standard Physics, Magic)*:** Any location with a high level of galvanic energy -- possibly even during electrical storms.

***Health*:** 12

***Damage Inflicted*:** 4



***Movement*:** Short, long if it can travel along an electrical wire or a continuous array of metallic objects

***Combat*:** The Galvanic Wisps attacks by sending shocking bolts from its core sphere outward at up to a long distance. These attacks ignore metallic armor.

***Interaction*:** Galvanic Wisps are not sufficiently sapient to permit complicated negotiation or even

language. However, wisps can be interacted with in the sense that their behavior can be predicted and manipulated. Their desire to attack the largest local source of energy or large metallic objects can be used to manipulate their movement.

***Use*:** Galvanic Wisps, as by-products of galvanic energies, are useful to illustrate the danger of galvanic research and the manipulation of fundamental energies.

***Loot*:** One can not loot a Galvanic Wisp -- though they often appear near galvanic generators that themselves could be looted for 1d2 cyphers.

***GM Intrusion*:** A Galvanic Wisp can trigger an acceleration of galvanic energies in a nearby generator (or if a PC uses an electronic device). The result is the creation of a second Galvanic Wisp in the area.

[[Estate Pro-tip: Do not attempt to take a cell-phone picture of a Galvanic Wisp.]]

GARGOYLE GHOLA - LEVEL 3 (9)

Early efforts at animation focused on simple building materials: clay, straw, etc. The most useful has proven to be the animation of stone statues as gargoyles. The style of the gargoyle can vary from town to town -- to fit in with local customs for the decoration of buildings -- but often takes on a fearsome form. Gargoyles are useful as spies and guardians given their ability to move easily across rooftops and blend into their environment.

***Motive*:** Gargoyles are beholden to the command of their creators. Written instructions are often forged into the gargoyle itself to do such things as defend a location from anyone who fails to give a specific hand sign or obey the command of their creator.

***Environment(Sub-standard Physics, Magic)*:** Gargoyles are most commonly found in urban environments where they can hide among the local architecture.

***Health*:** 9

***Damage Inflicted*:** 3

***Movement*:** Short distance crawling across vertical or horizontal surfaces -- long distance flying (though they avoid this due to their inability to conceal their presence when flying)

***Combat*:** Gargoyles rely on raking enemies with their stone claws.

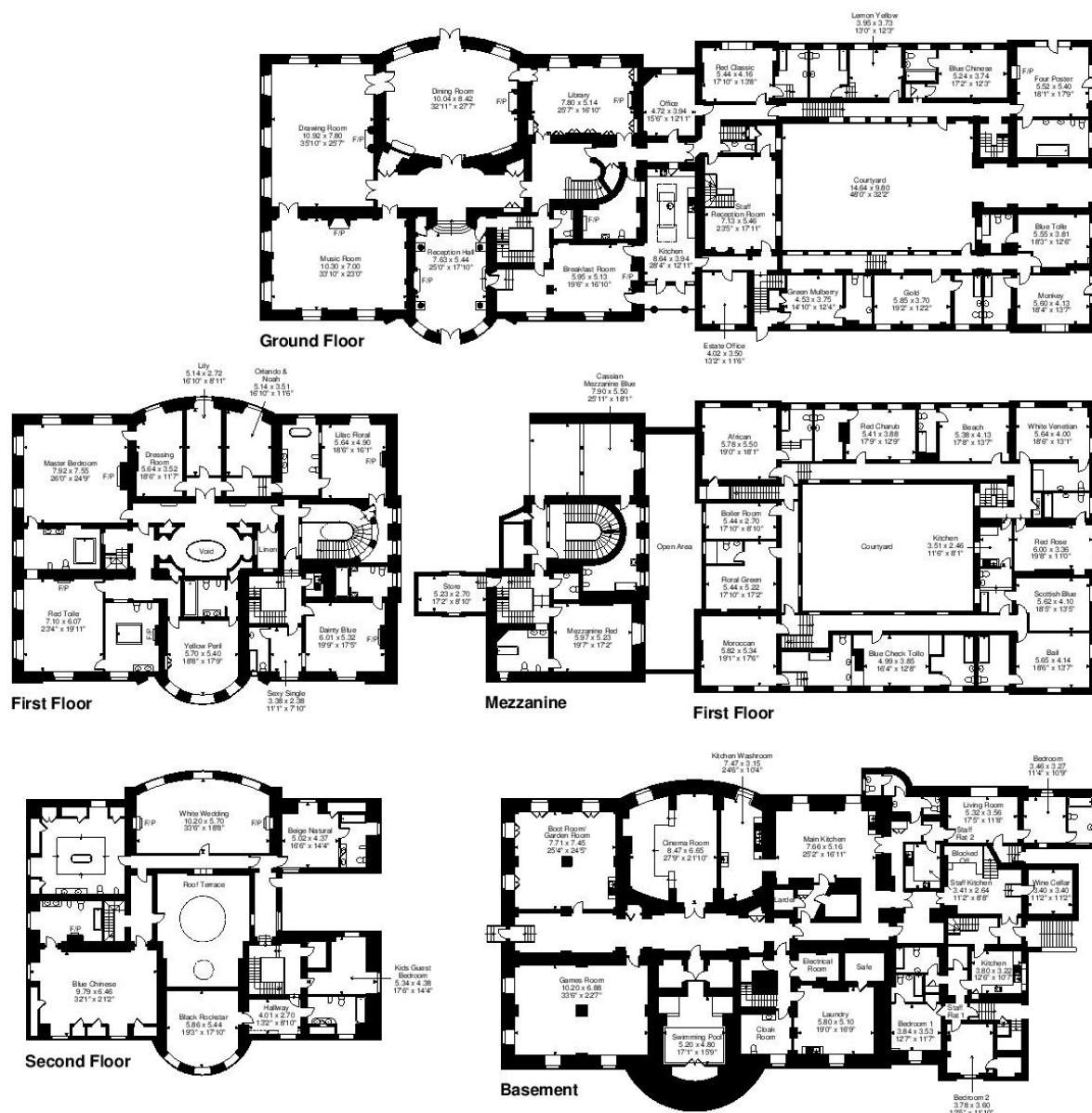
If a gargoyle succeeds in hitting a player, the player must succeed at a level 2 might task (on her next turn) to avoid being captured in its stone grasp. If a player fails to escape, the gargoyle will be able to bite the creature on its next round for 4 points of damage with no speed defense roll to avoid it.

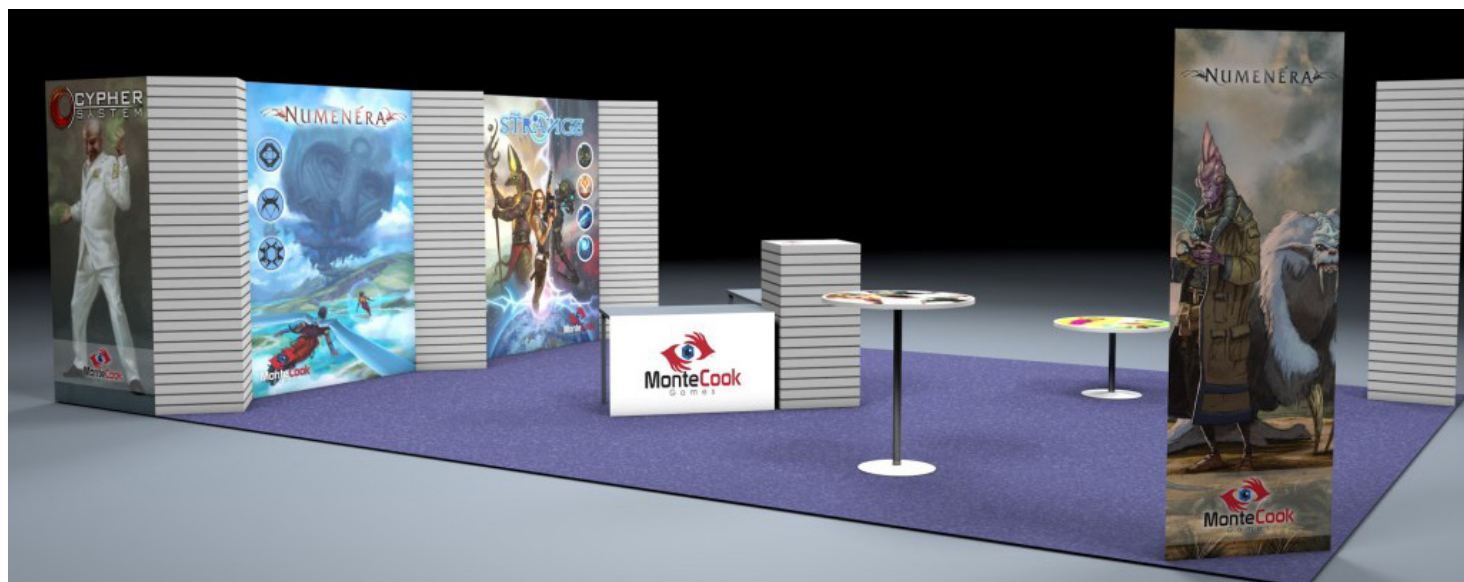
***Interaction*:** Gargoyles possess only rudimentary intelligence. They are difficult to reason with (level 5 task) and can only comprehend simple commands or inquiries.

***Use*:** Gargoyles are basic sentries and guardians for galvanic engineers. They are quickly falling out of favor given the improved trainability of Flesh Ghola - though gargoyles are easier to animate.

***Loot*:** Destroying a gargoyle may result in discovering the alchemical heart at its center. With some modification, this may serve as a cypher.

***GM Intrusion*:** The gargoyle becomes desperate to prevent someone from entering the building they are guarding. As a result, the gargoyle swoops down, grabs a PC, and flies a short distance straight up into the air. Now the PC can attempt to escape -- but what do they do about the drop?





Convention season is here! MCG will have a massive presence at Gen Con in Indianapolis this year. Above is a mock-up of the MCG booth (#1737). There were 70 official games (using the adventures shown below) as well as demos in the booth. Those demos included the first public demos of *No Thank You, Evil!* At the MCG seminar, it was announced that there will be a new Kickstarter for *Numenera* "Into the Ninth World" series of sourcebooks launching August 5th!

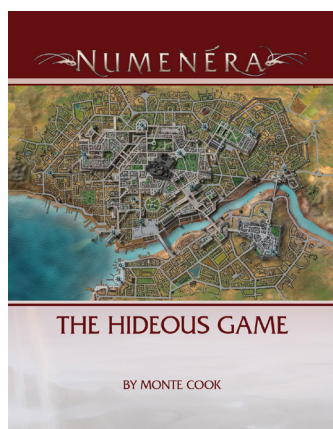
The Strange won many ENnie awards and "Translating The Strange" was nominated for Best Podcast, making it the third year in a row that a *CypherCast* Network podcast had been nominated!

Soon after Gen Con, MCG will have a presence at several other shows, including these:

Kansas City Comic Con (KCCC), Kansas City, MO, August 7-9

PAX Prime, Seattle, WA, August 28-31

Dragon*Con, Atlanta, GA, September 4-7



In the vast city of Qi, where technological wonders are the rule rather than the exception, a game begins. The slidikin have slipped once more from the shadows to play their elaborate game of blood, teeth, and knives. Can you discover the secrets of the past in time to save lives in the present?



You are part of the elite superhero team known as the "New York Sentinels." You receive word of an attack by the Dread Corps on the Museum of Art to get the supposedly magical crown of Pharaoh Nartarh—apparently Doctor Dread knows something you don't. Or does she have something even more sinister in mind?



You were recruited into a secret military unit, code-named Mastodon, and trained to use paranormal abilities. Funding for the unit eventually fell apart, and you returned to civilian life. You'd almost forgotten about your time in the service, until your old military buddies started turning up dead, one by one. You know what you must do.



NEXT ISSUE:

The wrapup of our Holstenwall series!

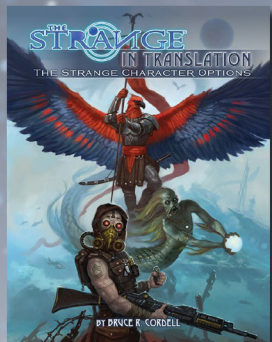
New *Cypher System* articles!

Coming September 2015!

THE STRANGE™

HEADING INTO EARTH'S SHOALS?

DON'T GO UNPREPARED!



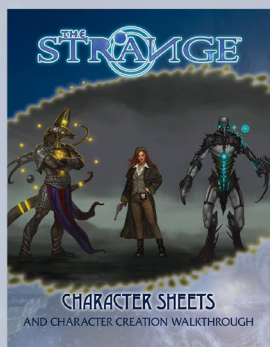
IN TRANSLATION: THE STRANGE CHARACTER OPTIONS

Character options for The Strange! Explore dozens of new foci for recursions of all laws, such as Pilots Starcraft, Grows to Towering Heights, Calculates the Incalculable, and Is Idolized by Millions. Plus dozens of new descriptors, moves, revisions, and twists!



THE STRANGE CYPHER CHEST

Think only books make great RPG products? Think again! These decks seriously speed up game prep and streamline play, leaving your time and imagination free to run great campaigns! Includes the 120-card Cypher Deck, the 100-card Creature Deck, and the 40-card XP Deck.



THE STRANGE CHARACTER SHEETS

Still keeping your character on a tatty old laser-printed sheet? You'll never look at that the same way again once you try these beautiful, full-color sheets printed on matte paper that's pencil and eraser friendly! And you get dozens of recursion sheets, so translate away!

AVAILABLE NOW FROM THE MCG WEB STORE:
WWW.MONTECOOKGAMES.COM



fb.com/TheStrangeRPG



[@TheStrangeRPG](https://twitter.com/TheStrangeRPG)



CYPHERCAST

NETWORK



CypherCast Hub

The new iteration of the original Numenera fan community site,
The Ninth World Hub- Now including The Strange, Cypher System & more!

hub.cyphercast.net



The Ninth World

A site collecting fan content for Numenera including new descriptors
& foci, new creatures, adventures and more!

theninthworld.com



Transmissions from the Ninth World

A podcast dedicated to Monte Cook's Numenera which covers new
game releases, including interviews with the creators

tf9w.com



Translating the Strange

A podcast dedicated to Bruce Cordell & Monte Cook's The Strange RPG
which covers new game releases, including interviews with the creators

translatingthestrane.com



CypherCast Chronicles

A live-play podcast of Cypher System games. Video recordings on YouTube
channel, edited audio podcast on iTunes.

cyphercastchronicles.wordpress.com