

THE LOST MESSAGE



ANDREA SCHOLER

THE LOST MESSAGE

A human missing in time.

The half-elf who must find her.

A maybe-robot orc who likes to bake cookies.

And then there's you.

Follow the clues.

Talk to NPCs.

Can you find Bian?

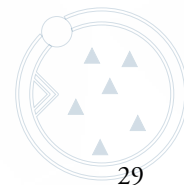


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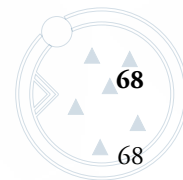
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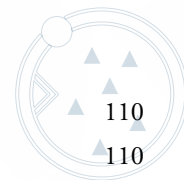


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The Lost Message is a high-mystery, low-combat adventure, where player characters, in search of a missing human named Bian, must do more than decrypt secrets and unlock hidden relics; they also face decisions throughout their quest that are of everlasting consequence.

A scalable adventure, the events of *The Lost Message* are set up to be easily incorporated into any existing campaign or can be started anew. It is intended for all character levels, though beginner to intermediate characters will likely benefit the most due to the difficulty (or lack thereof) of the mysteries to solve.

It is compatible with most major tabletop role-playing game systems.

Wonderous gods who watch over the Tapestry of Time, an enigmatic old man who resides deep within icy mountains, and tiny, fluffy cloud creatures are some of the encounters within the adventure, of which there are three main parts.

PART I

MESSAGES

Mirador is explored to gather information in search of Bian.

PART II

TIME TEMPLES

Involves plenty of dice rolls as characters fly with mechanical wings, search for a not-so-mythical sea creature, and combat ash monsters.

PART III

ANOMALIES

Characters must incorporate all they've learned throughout their adventure to make an impossible choice.

BACKGROUND**TAPESTRY OF TIME**

Time exists synchronously – all at once. What will be has always been. But it is experienced linearly – second by second in a progressive, forward flow – for all of time is too immense for an individual mind to comprehend. It can be thought of as an ancient manuscript that's hundreds of pages long. Though the manuscript exists in its entirety, it must be read word by word.

Destiny has already been determined, not out of choices made for us, but out of choices we have already made and are yet to make, weaved into a fabric known as the Tapestry of Time. Though metaphorical, moments of time – past, present, and future – are very much like the fibers of a tapestry, intertwined in subtle yet profound ways. If a single thread unravels, so too might everything else.

WHAT WILL BE HAS ALWAYS BEEN

Slight frays in the threads of the Tapestry of Time have occurred, such as spells that slow or speed up time relative to the observer, but these frays are almost imperceivable and are of little consequence to time and space, for they do not alter the pattern of the tapestry.

To pluck forcefully at the tapestry, to pull loose its threads, would be an unnatural act, disrupting the laws of the known universe and risking its utter destruction. As such, leaping through time is forbidden by the Time Gods, for it reweaves the threads of the tapestry, marring the pattern and throwing the timeline of the universe into chaos. Time itself could unravel, causing the fabric of reality to distort and fall apart.

TIME GODS



WINTERGREEN



KRONIOUS



AETERNITAS



AION



TIME GODS

To ensure the stability of the universe remains, various gods have been given guardianship over its chronology, gifted with abilities to heal the frays. Though they stand watch, they do not have domain over time, for none of the gods – those that mean to protect nor those that mean to destroy – are superior to the laws of the universe. They live eternal, but like all beings, they experience time linearly and do not leap through it. If an anomaly in time has occurred, they can only hope to fix it in the present. However, like how memories see into the past, they can sometimes have visions of the future, though this is true of beings other than just gods.

The pantheon of the Time Gods includes but is not limited to:

WINTERGREEN

Charged with the knowledge of ancient and future technology, Wintergreen watches over the evolution of machines to ensure none can interfere with destiny.

KAIROS

A carefree god, Kairos rules over the perception of time, encouraging mortals to embrace each moment of their short lives.

AETERNITAS

Alert to temporal distortions, Aeternitas takes her responsibilities very seriously and considers herself more of a scientist than a Time God. She is not the only one.

KRONIOUS

Followers of Kronious worship him as a generous god who brings order to time through cycles of death and rebirth, but they misinterpret him, for he revels in chaos.

AION

Sometimes called Father because of how powerful and ancient he is, Aion watches over changes within the cycles of time. From bright skies to dark. And cold days to warm. He is a shapeshifter, often representing himself as a white dragon.

A LOST COUSIN



Tuyet Windcaster, a half-elf, remembers little from her early childhood. She doesn't remember burrowing under the patchwork blanket of her bed, pretending to be asleep as her human dad and uncle gathered in hushed corners of their humble hut, whispering of war in a foreign world. Nor does she remember her uncle's candlelit studies of a relic he believed held the power to save an entire civilization.

She does remember her uncle's daughter Bian Windcaster suddenly appearing in their lives as a small child, only a few years younger than her. As the years passed, a close bond formed between the cousins, but as young women, they were destined to go their separate ways. Skilled with a bow, Tuyet became an adventurer while Bian went off to study the deeper truths of the universe at a nearby academy where her father had taught.

One day, as Tuyet traveled through the forest alone, listening to birdsong and the rustle of the leaves, she felt a shift in the wind. Always intuitive, a voice seemed to be calling out to her, urging her to pay attention. Her hand went to her bow, but the only movement in the forest was the flap of wings from a white raven above. It dropped a scroll in front of her, a message signed from Bian, but it was full of nonsense that she was unable to decode.

When Tuyet went to Bian's academy to inquire about the scroll, she discovered that her cousin hadn't been seen in weeks. No one knew where she was, but it was assumed she'd gone home after finding a book in the library citing her father's research. He'd taught at the academy but had passed away years ago, destroying all his research long beforehand.

Bian wasn't at home. She wasn't anywhere. It was as if she'd disappeared.

And so Tuyet set out to find her.





RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

GAME SYSTEM AGNOSTIC

The language of the adventure is system-neutral but constructive, helping to navigate the Game Master through the setting while also allowing for versatility in gameplay. Some encounters and challenges involve rolling polyhedral dice, but these rolls can easily be adapted to the randomizer of the chosen game system, since the adventure is not constrained by them.

As with most TTRPGs, it is largely up to the Game Master to determine what skill checks, modifiers, and advantages and disadvantages are relevant to the actions of the playing characters, NPCs, and creatures they encounter, though suggestions that are universal to the more popular game systems are made throughout the adventure.

All aspects of the setting should be viewed as a guide, and not an absolute. For instance, currency is referenced in silver (sp) and gold (gp) pieces, but these can be converted to credits, crowns, dollars, or any other monetary unit.

SCALABILITY

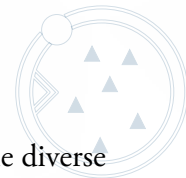
The adventure can be adjusted to fit the experience level of the characters. The main story is steeped in a mystery that needs to be solved, with various locations of discovery given to make uncovering vital information more or less challenging. For well-concealed items, dice rolls may be necessary.

Some combat does exist but is optional. If a creature is too easy or too difficult to defeat, or if the creature doesn't align with the general lore of the game system used, it can be replaced with any creature of the Game Master's choosing.

INCORPORATION

The adventure begins after the characters mysteriously awaken in a research facility, far from the world they knew before. As such, *The Lost Message* can be seamlessly incorporated into any current campaign, no matter the original location of the characters. Should they survive, they can also be transported back to the tree, bar fight, dance-off, or lair from whence they came. Assuming the entire universe isn't unraveled by their decisions.

EXPERIENCE



Due to the scalability of the adventure and the diverse ways in which characters level up within a game system, *The Lost Message* does not ascribe a specific way in which characters gain experience, but the two most common methods are points and milestones. Each requires the Game Master to compare the difficulty they have optioned for the adventure to the current level of the characters.

The initial investigation of Mirador, the Temple of Clockwork Sky, the Temple of Sea Fog, the Temple of Eternal Ash, and the conclusion of the adventure are all excellent milestones for leveling up characters. Any major puzzle, challenge, or combat within each is an opportunity to assign experience points.

A MATTER OF PERCEPTION

Technology is heavily featured in *The Lost Message*. How the characters perceive their surroundings, and therefore the language the Game Master might use to navigate the characters through the campaign and facilitate their understanding of the world around them, is highly dependent on the background of the characters.

If coming from a classic fantasy setting, the characters may perceive the unyielding steel of Mirador as being built of melted-down swords and other weaponry. Screens may be mistaken for portals or magic items. The Game Master could echo the language the characters themselves use as they interpret the unfamiliar technologies.

Characters coming from more advanced civilizations or who possess universal knowledge of the planes of existence likely won't need as much guidance. Those with a sci-fi background might even consider some of the technology archaic.

SEQUENCE OF DISCOVERY

The characters are free to explore locations within the adventure at will, but there is a progressive storyline that requires certain objects to be found to move forward. The Sequence of Discovery outlines the chain of findings necessary for the characters to solve the mystery of Bian's disappearance.

SEQUENCE OF DISCOVERY





PART I: MESSAGES



CHAPTER TWO: MIRADOR

AN UNEXPECTED COMPANION

Be it conquering galactic militia or defending a helpless fluffle of glittering ooze bunnies – whatever recent adventure the characters have survived – they met a half-elf named Tuyet Windcaster shortly after. She is tall with blue skin that contrasts against her pale hair, which she wears back in a style practical for a ranger. Though quiet, she's a keen observer, spotting dangers and anomalies others may not.

POSSIBLE WAYS THE PARTY MET TUYET

- ◇ She rescued them after they were ambushed.
- ◇ She helped them find a lost object.
- ◇ She was the guide to a caravan the party was hired to protect.
- ◇ She joined forces with them to fight their way out of a dungeon.
- ◇ She is a fellow guest at an event.

Though she doesn't speak much about her past, Tuyet does reveal that her human cousin Bian Windcaster is missing from the academy where she was studying magic and science. Tuyet is trying to find her, based on five letters delivered to her from a white raven. The letters, which she has freely shared with the characters, claim to be from Bian, but they are short and abstract, revealing nothing of Bian's whereabouts. (See Appendix B: Bian's Letters to Tuyet.)

If anything tries to harm Tuyet during the adventure, it is unable to, as if she is surrounded by a divine shield, and instead her attacker receives an electrical shock that does minimal damage but is a forceful warning from whoever protects her.

THE SIXTH LETTER

Around a fire, you settle in for the night, eager to rest, except for Tuyet. Amongst the brisk night winds, she looks distressed, as if something unseen, or something unheard, has caught her attention.

There is a sudden rustling of feathers as a white raven swoops down beside Tuyet. She extends her arm to receive a small scroll tied to the raven's leg. As she reads the message, her concern deepens. Without saying a word, she tucks the scroll away, and the raven flies off.

Before anyone can ask her what's wrong, a sudden drowsiness overcomes the entire party. Despite your best efforts to stay awake, your eyelids grow heavy, and you soon sink into ceaselessness.





Welcome to Mirador.

I'm Wintergreen.

You have traveled far to get here and must have many questions, but I am currently off-





FROZEN IN TIME

ARRIVAL

The party awakens in a strange, sterile room, disoriented and unsure of their surroundings. The walls and floor are made of sleek, metallic panels and the air is filled with a low hum. Groggy, their eyes strained against the blind of the snow outside, the first thing the characters notice is that Tuyet is missing.

A transparent screen comes to life. Within it, a woman appears, her skin a silvery white accented with shades of earthy green. A glyph glows from her forehead – a frayed diamond – that, like her long, wildly flowing hair, seems to catch the light of the stars. When she speaks, her voice possesses an otherworldly tone:

“Welcome to Mirador. I’m Wintergreen. You have traveled far to get here and must have many questions, but I am currently off-” Her message suddenly glitches and the screen returns to static.

As you peer around, you notice that there are no doors in the room and no visible way out. You have no idea how you got here, or what you will find as you explore this new and unfamiliar place, but instinct tells you that you must do everything you can to escape, or risk being stuck here for eternity.

The characters are in the Control Room of Mirador.

THE FACILITY

Surrounded by a vast expanse of permafrost, with icy, jagged peaks rising in the distance, sits Mirador, a high-tech facility defiant against the wither of time. Hexagonal in design, Mirador is constructed of reinforced steel to withstand the heavy snowfall and frigid winds, but its true fortitude is the primal magic threaded into its bones, making it near indestructible.

Lit by recessed fixtures that cast a dim glow, the most prominent feature of Mirador is how empty it is, an eerie stillness that seems to permeate every turn within the facility. Paneled walls of metal stretch up to the ceiling, intermittently marred by long, savage claw marks, the grooves running parallel to each other like angry scars.

The interior is kept sufficiently warm through heating vents, while the floor is thickened with a layer of insulation to keep the chill of the frozen tundra at bay.

It also smells of sweet, buttery baked goods.

LEVELS

Mirador consists of three levels:

LEVEL THREE

Memory Room



LEVEL TWO

Control Room, Kitchen, Conservatory



LEVEL ONE

Foyer, Storage Closet, Left Wing, Right Wing

MIRADOR DOORS

The doors of Mirador do not have handles or windows. Most are camouflaged as wall panels and require a specific glyph to be traced upon it with a finger (or toe, or drumstick) to slide open. There are many doors within the facility that the characters never learn about, most to tunnels between the panels, which Robby uses to navigate around.

The Storage Closet door is similarly concealed, but instead of a glyph, it requires a binary code to unlock it.

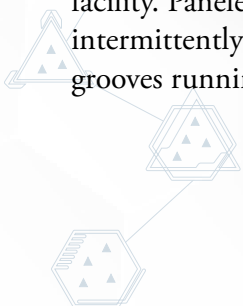
The doors to the Living Quarters are obvious, with a frame and designated room number. They are accessible with a key.

No magic or might will open the doors within Mirador without a key, glyph, or code.

There are no doors to the outside.

IDENTIFYING DOORS

Doors can be easily identified with a stamped hexagon shape at the center of the panel. Or instead of a marking, the Game Master can challenge the characters to locate the doors by investigating the bare panels for smudges, fingerprints, or other potential clues. Such clues may include:





- ◇ Door to the Kitchen: Dried flour blotches on the metal.
- ◇ Door to the Conservatory: Leaves and flower petals on the floor.
- ◇ Door to the Memory Room: A glow from under the panel.
- ◇ Door to the Storage Closet: A disk sticking out from a crack.

TRANSPORTERS

Circular platforms of frosted glass act as a network of transporters within Mirador and beyond. When activated, anyone standing on the platform glitches away then reappears in their designated location, traveling from transporter to transporter. Like doors, the glyph to the location must be traced upon the platform.

Each transporter has a capacity of four people. If more than four people are on the platform, safety mechanisms prevent it from working. The exception is the transporter in the Foyer, which can carry everyone in the room.

ROOMS WITH TRANSPORTERS

- ◇ Foyer
- ◇ Control Room
- ◇ Kitchen
- ◇ Conservatory
- ◇ Memory Room

GLYPHS

A glyph must be traced anywhere on the surface of a door or a transporter to enter the corresponding room. The name of the glyph is a clue to what room it unlocks. Scraps of codex translation notes found within Mirador progressively unveil the glyphs necessary to navigate the facility, for the glyphs are part of the written system of The Laws of Time and Space. (*See Appendix C: Glyph Chart.*)

- ◇ Control Room: Requires the Guardianship glyph to access.
- ◇ Foyer: Requires the Haven glyph to access.
- ◇ Kitchen: Requires the Sustenance glyph to access.
- ◇ Conservatory: Requires the Renewal glyph to access.
- ◇ Memory Room: Requires the Immortality glyph to access.

SCREENS

There is a screen in every room and hallway of Mirador. When the screen is not in use, a screensaver shows a map of the facility, rotating between its levels. Dots on the screen show where the characters are within the facility. If characters are paying attention, they'll see a dot in the hallway of the Right Wing. It is there that Tuyet lies unconscious.

Other important information can also be included in the rotation of the screensaver, such as glyphs to rooms the characters are trying to unlock.

WINDOWS

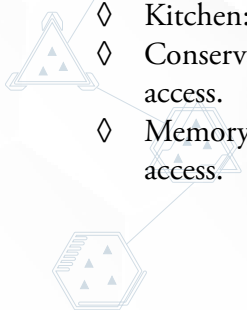
The only windows in Mirador are those in the Control Room and the Conservatory. They do not open, but the glass can be broken with extreme effort and magic, as the glass is reinforced.

ROBBY

A hidden door to the right of the inner wall of the Control Room leads into the Kitchen, the domain of Robby, an orc with features that seem both robotic and sentient. He is the host of Mirador and a tool for the Game Master to provide information and clues to characters, but he doesn't reveal all of Mirador's secrets at once, slowly revealing its catastrophic past.

Though he has the hard brow of a fighter, Robby doesn't have a single confrontational bone in his maybe-bionic body. He's a very jolly and gentle soul who is protected by divine magic. If characters try to engage in combat with him or coerce him to reveal more than he's willing to share, he retreats into the walls of Mirador, eventually returning to the Kitchen, where he locks the door with an impenetrable glyph until the characters are less hostile, sniffing as he prepares a batch of chocolate croissants. The quickest way to unlock the Kitchen door is to apologize, though Robby is very forgiving and will eventually let peaceful characters back in, even without an apology.

Robby can appear from seemingly out of nowhere to assist the characters, using a labyrinth of tunnels behind the walls and doors camouflaged as panels, or the characters can approach him in the Kitchen.





For information Robby doesn't know or is not yet willing to share, he offsets the inquiry with a joke or admiration for baking, especially any questions regarding the Researchers, the Abomination, Wintergreen, or why the characters are there. (See *Appendix D: Robby's Replies*.)

- ◇ Mirador is a research facility, but Robby's not sure what is being researched, except for great baking recipes!
- ◇ He doesn't remember where he came from or if he's a robot. He's just Robby!
- ◇ He doesn't know who built Mirador, but it was only a matter of time before it came into existence.

CHALLENGE: A BYTE OF COOKIE

There's a cookie recipe Robby has been melting to make! But some of the ingredients are native to locations outside of Mirador, which he is unable to leave. If characters help Robby collect the unique ingredients he needs for his dough-lightful cookie recipe, they'll earn a batch to take with them. The ingredients, when combined together, have healing properties that might come in handy in future endeavors.

THE INGREDIENTS

- ◇ Golden Cinder Sugar
- ◇ Sea Spray Vanilla
- ◇ Lightning Dust Flour

Because of the location of certain ingredients, it's best if the Game Master introduces the challenge prior to the characters visiting any of the Time Temples.



A BYTE OF COOKIE

This box appears where cookie ingredients are found.



RESEARCHERS

Weeks ago, one by one, a small group of humans vanished from their respective worlds and appeared within Mirador. In an effort to understand the anomaly of their spontaneous portalling, they began researching the mysteries of the facility. But as they were hunting the truth, something else was hunting them.

THE RESEARCHERS

- ◇ Cilly Leif
- ◇ Rainier Deerstalker
- ◇ Gustavo Skullcrusher
- ◇ Aldric Blackwood
- ◇ Amil Blackwood
- ◇ Bian Windcaster

ABOMINATION

Looming over its prey with the unnatural length of its body, the Abomination clicks its long, razor-sharp claws together. Its body is a wraithlike white, and its teeth are as piercing as its wail. With a sudden lunge, it pounces forward, its claws tearing through the air. Yet, even in the midst of its attack, there is a hint of sorrow upon its face, a glimmer of pain that betrays its true nature.

The Abomination has taken the Researchers, but to where and for what purpose is unclear. Hopefully not as a tasty snack.

When the Abomination attacks, it does not slaughter, but instead it uses its elongated claws and towering stature to swipe at its prey to herd it away. Running from the Abomination is near impossible, for it glitches in and out of existence, able to appear anywhere at any time. Its ambiguous state of being also makes it difficult to fight, for anytime it is struck, its wounds regenerate.

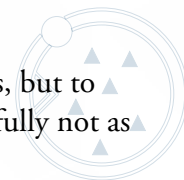
To create a sense of foreboding, the Abomination can be optioned as an encounter the characters must constantly be vigilant of, knowing it can attack whenever, though its attacks are infrequent. The Game Master can decide at will when the Abomination will attack or roll 1d10 for every room in Mirador the characters enter.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 2: Attack

3 - 10: No Attack

If the Abomination swipes at a character, they receive minimal slashing damage from its claws. The attack does not last for long – from several seconds up to a minute – the amount of time it takes the creature to realize the characters are not the prey it hunts. It then glitches away.



MAP OF MIRADOR

LEVEL ONE

LIVING QUARTERS
1, 2, and 3

LEFT
WING

STORAGE
CLOSET

RIGHT
WING

LIVING QUARTERS
4, 5, and 6

[+]
FOYER

CONSERVATORY

KITCHEN

[+]
CONTROL
ROOM

MEMORY
ROOM

LEVEL TWO

LEVEL THREE



CHAPTER THREE: DISCOVERY

To solve the mystery of Bian's disappearance, characters must explore Mirador and sift through the clues left behind by the Researchers. Every room contains Items of Discovery, some vital, that may be of interest to the newly ordained ice detectives.

VITAL FINDS

There are objects scattered throughout Mirador that are necessary to move forward through the storyline. These items are unique and marked as a **Vital Find**. The most common Vital Finds are:

Keys: Round metal disks that unlock the individual Living Quarters of the Researchers. Embossed upon each key is the symbol of an animal.

Handheld Comm: A palm device that stores video journal entries. When played, the selected video appears on the nearest screen. Unless otherwise noted, the Researchers speak directly into the camera of the device when leaving a video journal entry.

Codex Translation Notes: Scraps of paper from the translation of the codex The Laws of Time and Space. They include glyphs needed to open doors and activate transporters.

CODEX: THE LAWS OF TIME AND SPACE

The Laws of Time and Space is a compilation of eonian knowledge written and used by the Time Gods. The codex has an almost incomprehensible system of writing, consisting of waves akin to those of sound. Its location is not known, but Cilly was able to hack into the information system within Mirador, where the knowledge within The Laws of Time and Space is also stored, and interpret some of its glyphs and citations.

Translation notes of The Laws of Time and Space are scrawled on scraps of paper that have become scattered

throughout Mirador, revealing important pieces of information to the characters.

DISCOVERY LOCATIONS

Some Items of Discovery have a specific location where they can be found, but not all. For those that don't, suggestions are made where objects can be located within the room. These suggestions are presented as two options: Evident or Hidden.

Evident: The object is in plain sight or easily found.

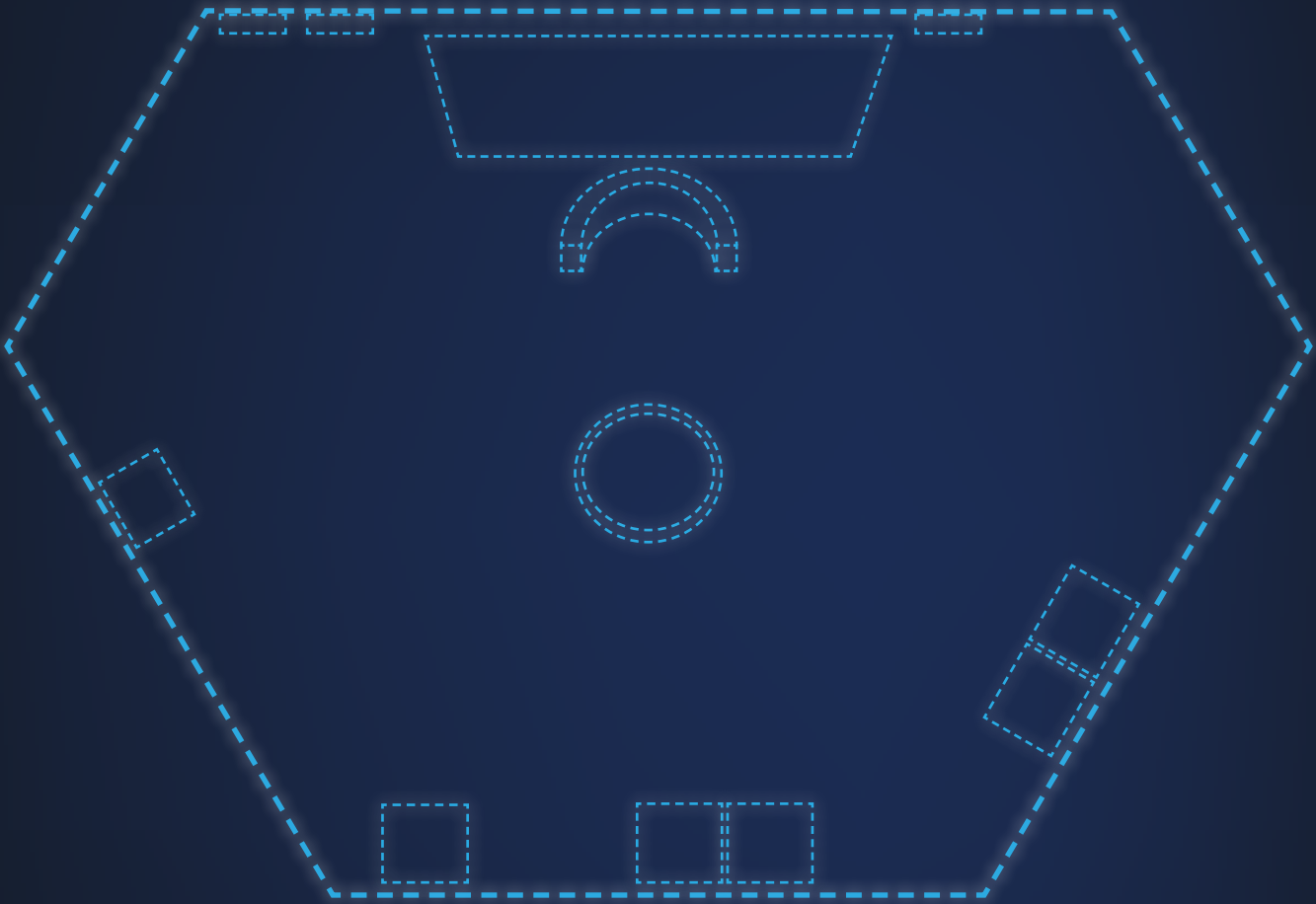
Hidden: Investigation is required to find the object.

If characters have trouble finding Hidden objects, hints can be offered by Robby, or the Game Master can alter the object in some way so that it reveals itself.

HELP FROM THE GAME MASTER

- ◇ The object shifts if a character walks by, touches, or interacts with a hiding place, causing it to partially stick out.
- ◇ The object glints from the sun bouncing off the snow outside.
- ◇ A draft shakes the object loose.
- ◇ A faint glow or sound emits from the object.
- ◇ Upon a change in light, the object casts a shadow.
- ◇ There is a heat distortion around the object.
- ◇ Robby seems unusually fixated on the area of the room where the object is hidden.
- ◇ There is an absence of dust around the object.
- ◇ There are scuff marks near the object.

MAP OF CONTROL ROOM



LEVEL TWO

5 ft

CONTROL ROOM

Where the party awakens.

Requires the Guardianship glyph to access via a transporter.

Level Two.

A monochromatic hub, the Control Room is a critical part of Mirador, designed to oversee and protect the facility from external threats. (See *Chapter 2: Mirador: Arrival.*)

The screen that played the message from Wintergreen takes up a majority of the inner wall. At the base of the screen is a crescent-shaped terminal that appears unfunctional except for six empty slots, uniformly circular in shape. The walls flanking the screen are similarly blank and featureless, aside from a few protruding shelves.

Floor-to-ceiling windows dominate the outer walls, providing an unobstructed view of the remote, subzero valley where weather, wildlife, and other phenomena can be monitored. The most striking feature is that of a tall mountain in the distance that almost seems to be watching over the facility. Anyone with high perception may also notice a disturbance in the snow a few miles away, though it's too frozen over to tell what it is. More for convenience than comfort, hard benches are installed in front of the windows.

In the floor at the center of the room is a shallow depression lined with a circle of thick, foggy glass that is unbreakable, protected by the magic within Mirador. If any of the characters peer down, they'll see what appears to be another room below, but there's no obvious way to access it. They will soon learn this is a transporter, and that the floor below is the Foyer.

A WARM WELCOME

At any point during the arrival of the characters to Mirador, anyone with amplified hearing or astute perception will hear the faintest sound of metal clanging and the hum of a joyous song from somewhere nearby. Eventually, Robby comes out of the Kitchen to greet them.

A hulking, fearsome orc with a pink plaid apron over his clothes approaches you, joyfully carrying a tray of cookies. He glistens with a metallic sheen, and he has protrusions on his skin that could be bolts. Or warts. It's hard to know for sure. He moves fluidly, and his smile is alive with an intelligence and soulfulness that zings.

"I was not expecting anyone else to show," the orc says, thrusting the cookies towards you. Clumps of raw dough cling to his fingers. "I'm Robby. Welcome to Mirador. Please let me know if you have any questions."

ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

- ◇ Handheld Comm
- ◇ Vital Find: Codex Translation Note: Haven Glyph
- ◇ Vital Find: Cilly's Key

DISCOVERY LOCATIONS

Evident: On a shelf, bench, or windowsill.

Hidden: Within a hollow bench or folded into cables behind the terminal.

HANDHELD COMM

In plain sight is a handheld comm with a paper note tucked behind it that says, *"Play Me."* A single video is stored on the device, which plays on the nearest screen once clicked.

Video: Instructions from Gustavo

{For more of a challenge, the Game Master can omit the last part of the video and have the characters figure out on their own how the doors and transporters work.}



VIDEO: INSTRUCTIONS FROM GUSTAVO TRANSCRIPT



(A teen with dark hair appears in the video. When he speaks, his words awkwardly stumble out of his mouth.)

I'm Gustavo. Pleased to meet you, kind of. So, uh, this place is called Mirador, according to Robby. He's cool.

Bian was the first one here. She says the place was empty, except for Robby, until I arrived. The rest were here within a few days. It's been weeks now since anyone else has come. Cilly is convinced no one else will, since all the rooms are filled. She says it can't be a coincidence there were six rooms and six Researchers. That's what Cilly calls us. The Researchers.

Funny, now that I think about it, since she's convinced we're in some sort of experiment. That could be cool, as long as those who brought us here don't like, try to suck my brains out or something.

Anyway, just in case more people come, and, uh, we've already found our way back to our homes, I don't want you to feel frightened or nothing, so here's a few things you should know.

That big glass circle thing in the Control Room is called a transporter. You use it to get around Mirador. You just gotta draw on it the glyph to the room you want to go to, as long as that room also has a transporter.

It's the same thing for doors, the ones you can find, at least. Just draw the glyph. (He chuckles.) Glyphs mean go! They're like keys, I guess. I don't know. It's some bizarre tech stuff Robby was telling us about.

Oh, and when you...

(The video glitches out.)



« VITAL FIND: CODEX TRANSLATION NOTE: HAVEN GLYPH



On the transporter is a scrap of paper with a drawing of a glyph and the word Haven scribbled under it. The Haven Glyph is needed to access the Foyer.

It also contains the following note from Cilly:

The elves at the Institution are some of the most erudite beings within the universe, but the knowledge within the codex *The Laws of Time and Space* surpasses even their understanding of reality. I discovered the codex when I hacked into the terminal of the Control Room. It was written by the Time Gods as documentation of the knowledge they've acquired throughout the ages. The language is cryptic, but I've done my best to translate what I can into notes I hope to take with me back to the Institution.

VITAL FIND: CILLY'S KEY

Embossed upon the disk is the symbol of a Rabbit. It unlocks Room 1 of the Living Quarters.

Until the characters make it to the Living Quarters on Level One, they probably won't understand what the significance of the disk is, but they can always come back for it if they leave it behind.

As soon as Cilly's key is found in the Control Room, the video *The Attack of Cilly* immediately begins playing on the screen above the terminal, as if higher forces are watching the characters.





(Cilly lies crumpled on the floor of her room, breathing heavily and choking with fear as she speaks.)

There's something here. Some sort of... Abomination. It... It got the others. It comes and goes, taking us one by one. My translation notes... they've been shredded by its claws.

Bian, I don't know where you are or if you plan to return, but if you...

(She's interrupted by the sound of metal screeching against metal.)

What was that?

(An elongated shadow appears on the wall.
Screaming out loud, Cilly is suddenly pulled away by the Abomination.)



OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Child's Toy: A small wooden moose.

Charcoal Drawing: Hard strokes that depict a menacing unicorn.

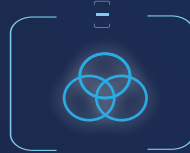
Cold Coffee: In a clay mug.



MAP OF FOYER

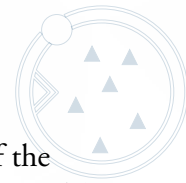


I am the birth of eternity. I am the death of time and space. I am embedded within creation, at the beginning of every end, and the end of every place.



LEVEL ONE

5 ft



Requires the Haven glyph to access via a transporter if above Level One.

Level One.

The largest of the rooms within Mirador, the Foyer conforms to the building's hexagonal shape. The entire floor is made of the foggy glass of a transporter, leaving only a thin ring of the metal flooring beneath the glass exposed around the perimeter of the room.

Two hallways curve out from the left and the right of the Foyer respectively. The wall between them contains the inscription:

I am the birth of eternity. I am the death of time and space. I am embedded within creation, at the beginning of every end, and the end of every place.

Below the inscription are eight touchscreen buttons that belong to a security system. (See Chapter 7: *Dark Fate*.)

A capsule is installed on each of the three walls opposite the inscription.

THE CAPSULES

Each capsule is sleek, cylindrical, and large enough to fit a person. The content within is hidden by its casing, which is etched on the outside with a glyph.

The front of the capsule has a combination lock with four rotating dials, each numbered from 0 to 9. There are no visible openings or seams in the capsule. It appears to be completely sealed.

To access the content within, a four-digit code must be entered on the combination lock. If an incorrect code is entered, the capsule emits an electric shock, designed to deter unauthorized access but does minimal damage.

If the correct code is entered, a soft blue light illuminates the capsule as the casing slowly retracts, revealing a Time Artifact.

Within each capsule is an artifact from one of the numerous Time Temples throughout the universe. To unlock each capsule and discover the Time Artifact inside, characters must travel to its corresponding Time Temple and learn the necessary four-digit code.

TIME TEMPLES

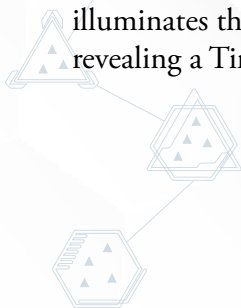
To access a Time Temple associated with an artifact, the glyph on the capsule must be traced on the transporter. Characters do not know what Time Temple they'll be visiting ahead of time, nor the artifact they'll be unlocking.

Time Temples can be visited at any point during the adventure, where there is a lot of opportunity for action and roleplaying. If information gathering around Mirador begins to feel monotonous, the Game Master can use Robby to inspire the characters to visit the temples, pull the attention of the characters to the Foyer by having the capsules suddenly glow or hum loudly, or create an anomaly where a temple appears on a screen.

Left Capsule: Etched on it is the glyph for Innovation. It leads to the Temple of Clockwork Sky. Inside is the Time Artifact: Wings of Faith. The code to unlock the Wings of Faith is 1-2-2-4. (See Chapter 4: *The Temple of Clockwork Sky*.)

Center Capsule: Etched on it is the glyph for Conservation. It leads to the Temple of Sea Fog. Inside is the Time Artifact: Hydrophone of Whispers. The code to unlock the Hydrophone of Whispers is 0-0-9-9. (See Chapter 5: *The Temple of Sea Fog*.)

Right Capsule: Etched on it is the glyph for Rebirth. It leads to the Temple of Eternal Ash. Inside is the Time Artifact: Triangle of Waning. The code to unlock the Triangle of Waning is 1-3-6-9. (See Chapter 6: *The Temple of Eternal Ash*.)





RETURNING TO MIRADOR

When they are ready to leave a temple, characters must trace the glyph for any room within Mirador on either the transporter they arrived on or a transporter the Game Master can place at their choosing within the temple. If characters do not know this intuitively, NPCs within the temple can guide them.

ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

- ◇ Codex Translation Note: Time Gods
- ◇ Vital Find: Codex Translation Note: Guardianship Glyph

DISCOVERY LOCATIONS

Evident: On the floor of the wide, near-empty space.

Hidden: Jammed behind a capsule or almost invisible against the perimeter of the floor.

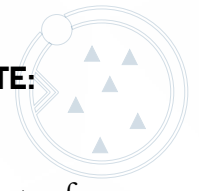
CODEX TRANSLATION NOTE: TIME GODS

Temporal Stability: An Analysis of Divine Intervention

The Time Gods are guardians of the chronology of the universe, tasked with healing temporal frays and anomalies. Although they have great power, they are not superior to the laws of the universe and must abide by them. The codex explores the different Time Gods and their responsibilities and argues that their actions are essential for preventing the destruction of time and space. However, it also notes the limitations of their power and the potential for unforeseen consequences.

End Note:

Temples have been built throughout the cosmos in worship of the Time Gods. The three Time Artifacts stored within the Foyer were acquired from such temples, though I can't find the reason they were brought to Mirador. The use of glyphs within Mirador would suggest that the glyph on the casing of each capsule containing a Time Artifact is the key to accessing its corresponding temple via a transporter, but Rainier has forbidden us to test the theory, believing it too much of a risk.



VITAL FIND: CODEX TRANSLATION NOTE: GUARDIANSHIP GLYPH

In the middle of the Foyer is the translation note of a glyph with Guardianship written underneath. The Guardianship Glyph is needed to access the Control Room.

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Clockwork Spider: A small mechanical spider crawls around the room.

Footprint: The single impression of a boot in ash.

Water Crystal: A clear crystal attached to a fishhook.





LEFT AND RIGHT WINGS

Only accessible through the Foyer.

Level One.

Within the symmetrical Left and Right Wing are the Living Quarters of the Researchers. There are three rooms per wing, all of which are numbered and locked. Upon the door of each room is a circular indent with the shape of an animal at its center. This is where the key to the room needs to be engaged to unlock the door.

Each wing also has a lavatory that is empty.

LEFT WING LIVING QUARTER DOORS

Room 1: Cilly's Room

Room 2: Gustavo's Room

Room 3: Amil's Room

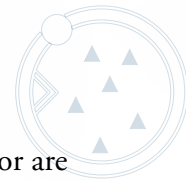
RIGHT WING LIVING QUARTER DOORS

Room 4: Aldric's Room

Room 5: Rainier's Room

Room 6: Bian's Room

LIVING QUARTERS



The individual Living Quarters within Mirador are uniform. Each room is a small, utilitarian space, designed to be as efficient as possible while still providing a comfortable sleeping environment. The walls are made of a smooth, white material. There are no windows, but there is a small ventilation system that circulates fresh air.

Built into a wall is a bed cubby with a thin, lightweight mattress. Above the bed is a panel of soft, ambient lighting and a small storage compartment. Opposite to the bed are a desk and chair, above which a screen is installed. Cubed shelving at the back of the room stores clothing and other personal items of the Researchers.

The dimensions of the Living Quarters are approximately 9 ft wide by 12 feet long.

DISCOVERY LOCATIONS

Evident: On top of the bed or on the shelf, desk, or chair.

Hidden: Stuck between the leg of the desk and the wall, in the storage compartment or desk drawers, buried beneath clothes on the floor, placed within the ventilation system, balanced on the fixture that attaches the screen to the wall, or under a pillow, crumpled sheets, or the mattress.





ROOM 1: CILLY LEIF



Requires Cilly's Key with the embossment of a Rabbit to access.

A quiet scientist, Cilly grew up in a technologically advanced elven society. Her scientific curiosity and analytical mind are evident in her video journals, but she struggles to connect with other humans, despite her desire to do so, and finds refuge amongst her studies in botany.

Potted flowers and herbs take up much of the free space in Cilly's room, and research notes are stacked high on her desk. On top of one stack is a plant press.

ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

- ◇ Vital Find: Codex Translation Note: Renewal Glyph
- ◇ Codex Translation Note: The Tapestry Of Time
- ◇ Vital Find: Gustavo's Key
- ◇ Vital Find: Amil's Key
- ◇ Handheld Comm

VITAL FIND: CODEX TRANSLATION NOTE: RENEWAL GLYPH

Near a plant is the translation note of a glyph with Renewal written underneath. The Renewal Glyph is needed to access the Conservatory.

CODEX TRANSLATION NOTE: THE TAPESTRY OF TIME

The Tapestry of Time: A Metaphorical Model for Temporal Dynamics

The codex proposes a new metaphorical model for understanding the nature of time, based on the idea of a tapestry. The Tapestry of Time is a complex, interwoven fabric of moments – past, present, and future – that exist synchronously, but are experienced linearly. The model suggests that the threads of the tapestry represent individual events or choices, and that the pattern of the tapestry is determined by the sum of these threads. The metaphor allows us to better understand the interconnectedness of events and the potential consequences of altering them. It also highlights the fragility of the timeline and the need for careful preservation.

This Tapestry of Time appears to be protected by Time Gods, though I am still translating this part of the codex.



VITAL FIND: GUSTAVO'S KEY

Embossed upon the disk is the symbol of a Ram. It unlocks Room 2 of the Living Quarters.

VITAL FIND: AMIL'S KEY

Embossed upon the disk is the symbol of a Wolf. It unlocks Room 3 of the Living Quarters.

HANDHELD COMM

Video: Cilly Journal Entry 1

Video: Cilly Journal Entry 2

Video: Cilly Journal Entry 3





VIDEO: CILLY JOURNAL ENTRY 1 TRANSCRIPT



Despite our best efforts, we still don't know why we're here. Initially, it was my hypothesis that we were involuntary participants within an experiment orchestrated by higher beings. Rats meant to find our way out of the maze. I was adamant about my theory, but I'm no longer so convinced. And that scares me.

My arrival here felt impeccably deliberate. I was inside my garden pod crushing dried lavender leaves between my palms. Their brittleness left an itch upon my skin as they released a pleasant, sweet scent. The scientist in me closed my eyes, and I inhaled it, training my nose to recognize what my eyes could not see. Within an impossible instant, the scent was gone, replaced by the metallic dirt and dust of the floor of the Control Room here at Mirador. The recorded greeting from Wintergreen, Robby's loud but jolly presence, the cries of those who had come before me: My arrival was so loud and frenzied.

Now it's quiet. There's been no further communication from Wintergreen. We don't even know who she is. I speculate an AI, but that is irrelevant, because nothing has been demanded of us. With the exception of our own investigation, it's all become so... idle.

Experiments have a beginning. And they have an end. But the longer we're here, the more it feels like we've been set on pause. That the experiment has been abandoned. That we'll be stuck here forever.





VIDEO: CILLY JOURNAL ENTRY 2 TRANSCRIPT



There is loneliness among the elves of the Institution. We do not have parents or homes.

Everything we do is in the pursuit of knowledge. Any type of bond is inferior to that pursuit. We live en masse within the skyscrapers, shoulder to shoulder in our studies, but we might as well be miles away from each other. My round ears, primitive to the pointed ears of my colleagues within the Institution, afford me no exceptions.

It must have been the human in me, but I created my own home in a meadow outside the city – my garden pod. It did not cure me of my solitude, but the flowers I tended to in the meadow gave me a sense of purpose, my need to express individuality finding its prominence.

Management at the Institution say I simply appeared in the city, a stray, my origins unknown. I was the riddle they could never solve. Maybe that's why they allowed me to stay instead of relocating me to a world with humans. So they could observe me.

So they could solve me.





I've found being around humans for the first time within memory... complex. I envy Amil and Bian's easy friendship with each other. I hear them giggling over random things, and I feel the desire to reach out and join them, but I have lived too long in solitude. Interacting with any of the other Researchers here, for lack of a better term, feels awkward, no matter how much I yearn to. And so I often retreat to the Conservatory, my place of safety.



OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Mint Leaves: Fragrant leaves amongst the other potted plants.

Chamomile: White blossoms with a sunny center that sprout from a large planter on the floor.



ROOM 2: GUSTAVO SKULLCRUSHER



Requires Gustavo's Key with the embossment of a Ram to access.

The youngest of the group, in his late teens, Gustavo was raised by headbanging orcs, but he has an endearing innocence about him. He enjoys welding, often making miniature sculptures as gifts for his new friends at Mirador, but he greatly misses his adoptive orc family and hopes to return home soon.

His miniature creations line his shelves, replacing his clothes, which are strewn around the floor. On a piece of paper on his desk are song lyrics that are scribbled out.

ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

- ◇ Vital Find: Codex Translation Note: Sustenance Glyph
- ◇ Handheld Comm



VITAL FIND: CODEX TRANSLATION NOTE: SUSTENANCE GLYPH

Next to a half-eaten plate of cookies is the translation note of a glyph with Sustenance written underneath. The Sustenance Glyph is needed to access the Kitchen.

HANDHELD COMM

Video: Gustavo Journal Entry 1

Video: Gustavo Journal Entry 2

Video: Gustavo Journal Entry 3

Video: Gustavo Journal Entry 4





My mom told me the last of the teen years were when young orcs stood trials to test their brutal strength, but since I am not an orc, I was free to choose a test of my own. I chose music. I chose it because of her. She wrote a song for me when I was little, and now I want to write a song for her. I'm no good at it, but that's ok, because neither is she. That's kind of our thing in my family. We love to crank up the volume on our favorite albums and rock out, but we can't hold a note.

My world seems to be more techy than others, but not quite as advanced as where Cilly comes from. Like, we have electric guitars, but my mom still cooks my dinner over an open fire. One of my great-grandfathers learned portal magic and used it to conquer far-off places. He brought back what knowledge he wanted, and left behind the rubbish, so I was told, so that could be part of it.

I'm tired now. Goodnight.





I like to weld. My mom, Raxa, says that's the orc in me. Orcs like fire. I just like to create. I crafted a few things back at home. I guess you'd call them, like, mini sculptures. I wish I was home now. I really miss my family. I know I'm not the only one who does. Amil keeps talking about the pancakes her parents make. I took some scrap metal and made a treehouse sculpture for her, like the treehouse she told me about where she keeps all her books. I used ash leftover from the weld and put it in a cup for Aldric so he can make charcoal out of it. Or something like charcoal. I'm not even sure what charcoal is made of.

My next project will be a plant press for Cilly. She's probably working the hardest of us to figure out what's going on here. She says something about time being like a blanket or something, existing as a whole but created through individual threads. If those threads unravel, the blanket falls apart. I would like to help more, but the only thing I really know are killer riffs.





I don't want to say too much, cuz I don't want to get in trouble with Rainier, but I just visited a Time Temple with Amil and it shredded! Man, it was savage, with all these old-world contraptions. I think I want to become an engineer. Amil says I have the smarts to. She's the best sister I never had!

It made me think about Robby, though. I've been hanging with him in the Kitchen. He's cool. Like, really cool. We're buddies. But I still can't tell if he's an orc that looks like a robot or a robot that looks like an orc. Robby doesn't even seem to know. And if he doesn't know, then what if I'm a robot too? What if we all are? Maybe that's what's happening here. Maybe we're all robots in some big metal experiment.

Anyway, I might try to visit another temple soon, if I can sneak past Rainier.





I hope they let us go home soon. I don't want my parents and brothers to worry too much about me. That's all. Just that I miss my family. A lot... A lot, a lot.





OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY



Aviation Goggles: The leather frame has scorch marks.

Miniature Sculptures: Of a family of orcs with one human.

Bracelet: A leather bracelet with metal studs.

Laser Torch: Used for welding small items.





ROOM 3: AMIL BLACKWOOD



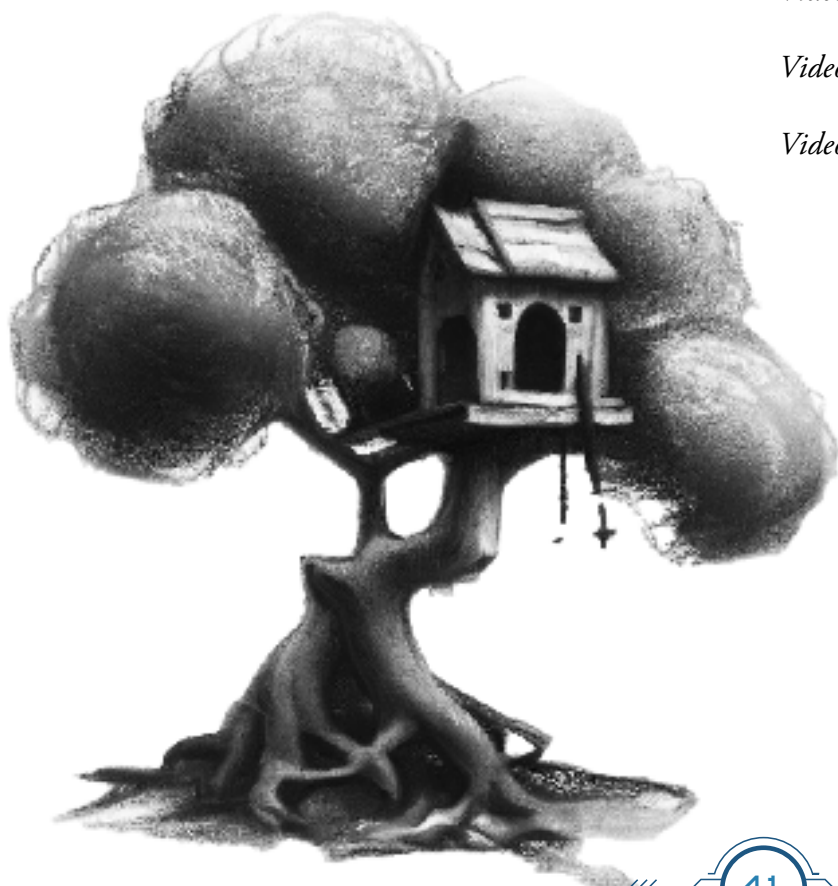
Requires Amil's Key with the embossment of a Wolf to access.

Barely past her teens, Amil clings to the whimsical creatures of her childhood; but though she can be naïve, she demonstrates an emotional intelligence far past her years. Her optimism can be both refreshing and frustrating to her companions, who are all struggling to make sense of their circumstance.

Amil is particularly close to her older brother Aldric, though she feels he has been pulling away from her lately, even before they arrived at Mirador.

Using spare blankets, Amil constructed a fort in her room. The cubed shelves and desk chair have been repurposed as walls for the hideaway. Inside the fort are a flashlight, a handheld comm, and miniature sculptures Gustavo has made for her, including that of a treehouse and fairies.

While in Amil's room, a video message from Wintergreen lights up the screen, though it is not apparent if it was previously recorded or a live feed. A heavy sorrow burdens the glow of her eyes.



ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

- ◇ Vital Find: Aldric's Key
- ◇ Handheld Comm
- ◇ Fortune Telling Game

VITAL FIND: ALDRIC'S KEY

Embossed upon the disk is the symbol of a Crow. It unlocks Room 4 of the Living Quarters.

HANDHELD COMM

Video: Amil Journal Entry 1

Video: Amil Journal Entry 2

Video: Amil Journal Entry 3





For eons I have seen (glitch) I see (glitch) I will see war desolate the bright stars of this universe much faster than the natural cycles of death and rebirth. These are wars no one can (glitch) will win. There is only suffering, especially amongst the most innocent of beings. I had to (glitch) I must protect them.





I miss my parents. They're so caring! They make us pancakes every morning! Robby's pancakes are good. Well, they're great. But I still prefer the pancakes my parents make. I really want to go home. Gustavo understands. Maybe it's because we're the youngest. Or that we're humans adopted by people some consider scary, with my parents being vampires and Gustavo's being orcs. My parents have shown me that being different isn't something to be feared or hated, and that love and compassion are the true keys to happiness.





VIDEO: AMIL JOURNAL ENTRY 2 TRANSCRIPT



Bian is gone. She told me she'd be leaving and not to worry, even though she couldn't tell me where she's going, but how can I not worry? She's been my friend when I've really needed a friend. This whole thing has been so scary. I mean, are we mutants or something? Is that why we all spontaneously portaled here? I wouldn't mind being a mutant if I get unicorn powers.

It's not like I don't have my own secrets. Rainier said we couldn't go to the Time Temples. He forbids us from drawing the glyphs for the Time Temples on the transporters, afraid of what would happen. Like he's our dad or something. I already have a dad. I don't need another. Especially one that is only slightly older than me.

Anyway, I wanted to see what the Time Temples were all about, and so did Gustavo, and so we chanced our luck and drew a glyph, and it worked! The temple was magical. There were these cute little deadly creatures called Storm Golems, and I got to fly through the air!

It's possible Bian went to a Time Temple, but doubtful, because Rainier is gone too. He's stern, but he's not a hypocrite. I hope they come back soon.





I tried to talk to Cilly today, but she shied away. I kind of feel sad for her, growing up with all those techy elves. Her home world sounds like a lonely place. Hopefully she'll grow more comfortable around me, in time. I'll try to spend some time with her in the Conservatory tomorrow.

Oh, I'll show her the dolls I found today! They're so cute!





FORTUNE TELLING GAME

Made of folded square paper, the Fortune Telling Game contains an important message for all who seek its foresight. The Game Master can create their own Fortune Telling Game (*see Appendix E: Amil's Fortune Telling Game*) or roll 1d8 and match the outcome to the fortunes below.

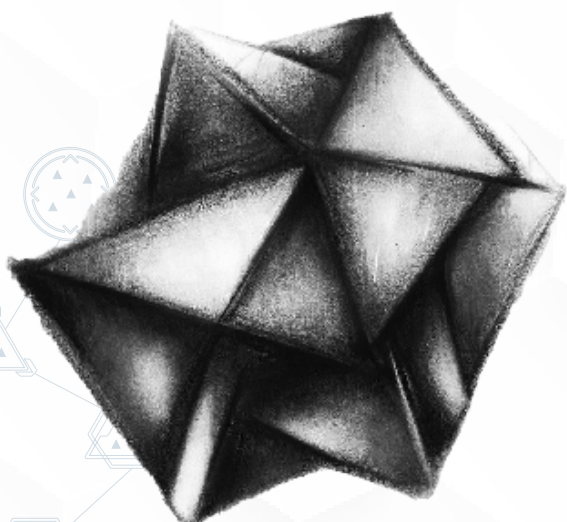
Outcome of Roll:

- 1: Time is on your side. Patience will bring you great rewards.
- 2: A decision you must make will destroy all the worlds.
- 3: A decision you must make will save all the worlds.
- 4: Your kindness will inspire others to do good in the world.
- 5: Your darkest secrets will be exposed. Be careful who you trust.
- 6: Just because something is broken doesn't mean it's useless.
- 7: The storm clouds are gathering. Prepare for a difficult time ahead.
- 8: Your fears will become reality sooner than you think.

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY



Child's Toys: A collection of plastic sea creatures including a turtle, penguin, and octopus.





ROOM 4: ALDRIC BLACKWOOD

Requires Aldric's Key with the embossment of a Crow to access.

Aldric is a thoughtful and introspective person who is deeply concerned about the well-being of his family. He appears distant and brooding to others, but his solitude is mostly due to dark visions he's had that leave him feeling powerless. He prefers his own company as he works through the visions, which he expresses through his charcoal drawings.

His room is neatly made, with the sheets of his bed tucked in and his clothes expertly folded on the shelves; but it is not spotless. Smudges of charcoal mark the white walls, upon which he has taped his charcoal drawings.

ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

- ◇ Vital Find: Codex Translation Note: Immortality Glyph
- ◇ Handheld Comm



VITAL FIND: CODEX TRANSLATION NOTE: IMMORTALITY GLYPH

Taped to a charcoal drawing is the translation note of a glyph with Immortality written underneath. The Immortality Glyph is needed to access the Memory Room.

HANDHELD COMM

Video: Aldric Journal Entry 1

Video: Aldric Journal Entry 2

Video: Aldric Journal Entry 3



I've been thinking about what it would be like to be a vampire. Amil and I have never been pressured by our parents to become immortal, like them. In fact, I think they would very much prefer us to remain as human as the day they found us wandering the garden outside their manor, which became our manor.

I've been having these visions of a future that is dark and full of ash. They started long before we woke here in Mirador, but they've gotten more intense. I feel dread deep within me. Like something terrible is coming, and I'm the only one who can stop it. As a human, I am powerless to protect my family from whatever is coming, but if I become a vampire, I can better defend them.

The only problem is, I'd prefer to stay human.





VIDEO: ALDRIC JOURNAL ENTRY 2 TRANSCRIPT



Rainier chastised my little sister the other day for being too naïve. I hated to see Amil look so hurt, but he's right. She lives in a fairyland. Unicorns and rainbows didn't bring us here. Something much more ominous did. It can't be a coincidence that we're all so close in age, no more than ten years apart between the youngest, Gustavo, and the oldest, Rainier, with little or no memories of our childhood.

We're supposed to be studying this place, learning its secrets so that we can find our way home. Rainier, the explorer of the group, is looking for a way out of this facility. Cilly is trying to hack into the tech. Gustavo is just kind of hanging out, but he's still a kid, so it's understandable. I've been spending a lot of time in the Memory Room, learning what I can from its database. Bian has been combing through what little information Cilly has been able to find. She's also spent a lot of time in the Control Room with Amil to help her monitor the outside.

When they spotted a white dragon flying towards the Tallest Mountain – the name we've given to the mountain across the valley – it was the first sign of life we've seen in this icy expanse. Amil cried with happiness. We were raised in a world full of vampires, but not dragons. To us, dragons are mythological. So if they exist here, in Amil's mind, so too can the whimsical creatures she often dreams about.

Rainier told her not to be foolish. He told her she should fear the unknown. She should. We all should. Because where Amil sees sunshine, Rainier sees demise, and I see fire and ash.





I watched an old message from Wintergreen today. I think she might be an AI of sorts that rusted away somewhere, but something about her seems so familiar. I think...

(The video glitches out.)



OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Charcoal Drawing: A mutant dog in a wasteland.

Charcoal Drawing: Ash falling on bones.

Charcoal Drawing: The silhouette of a man with a club walking upon rubble.





ROOM 5: RAINIER DEERSTALKER



Requires Rainier's Key with the embossment of a Longhorn to access.

In his early thirties, the oldest of the Researchers, Rainier is a strong protector who is very untrusting of the unknown forces within Mirador, and therefore he is cautious not to leave any trace of his identity behind. While others search for truths within the facility, he believes the key to their escape is the icy valley outside.

His room is cluttered with survival gear including long spring traps, a water canister, a knife, a poncho made of ripped blankets, shoes with spikes in them, rope, snow goggles, and an ice axe. Among the gear is a hand-drawn map of the terrain between the facility and the Tallest Mountain in the distance.

A video from Wintergreen automatically plays once the characters enter the room.

ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

- ◇ Vital Find: Bian's Key
- ◇ Notes: Survival In The Arctic
- ◇ Handheld Comm

VITAL FIND: BIAN'S KEY

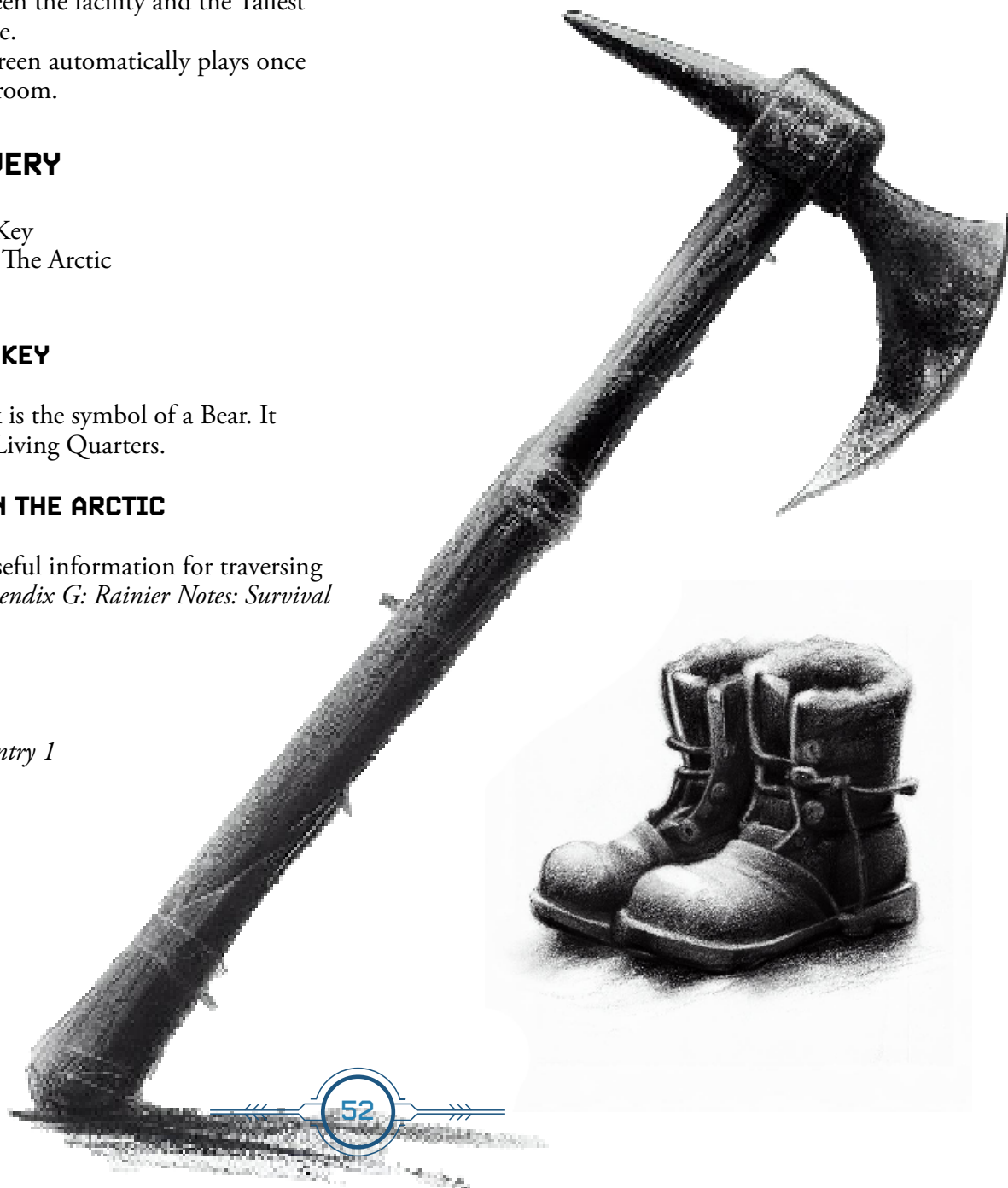
Embossed upon the disk is the symbol of a Bear. It unlocks Room 6 of the Living Quarters.

NOTES: SURVIVAL IN THE ARCTIC

On a sheet of paper is useful information for traversing snowy terrains. (See *Appendix G: Rainier Notes: Survival in the Arctic.*)

HANDHELD COMM

Video: Rainier Journal Entry 1





Time is a mystery, even to the Gods who watch over it, but we are taught it is like a tome, existing all at once but must be flipped through page by page to experience. What will be has always been. If this is true, then what I have done (glitch) will do should already be written within the tome.





The other Researchers, as Cilly has deemed us, don't understand the danger they're putting their loved ones in. They leave their memories for others to see, perhaps because they're scared we won't survive whatever is happening here. That is a fear I understand, but it is not an excuse to be clumsy about the safety of those we left behind. These memories they leave lead straight to their homes. Until we know more, until we figure out why we're here, we can't assume this place is actually the haven it claims to be.

The last thing I want to do is leave a trail back to my wife and child. Whose names I won't speak. A world I won't speak. Whose memories I won't leave behind. I create this video journal only in the hopes that if more Researchers come, and we are not here, this should act as a warning. Keep your memories to yourself. Keep those locked within them safe. Take them to your grave.

The years between us Researchers are few, and yet I feel a thousand years wiser, a thousand years older, a thousand years more exhausted than them.





OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Compass: The dial on the compass is broken.

Canned Food: Beans, two cans.

Canned Food: Sardines, one can.

Jerky: Beef flavored, two half-pound bags.





ROOM 6: BIAN WINDCASTER



Requires Bian's Key with the embossment of a Bear to access.

As a young child, Bian unexpectedly appeared in her father's life. She inherited his wonder for science and magic and attends the same academy where he taught before his death from an unknown illness. She is the only Researcher who was not adopted, though like the others, she doesn't remember her childhood prior to living with her father.

Her room is extremely tidy, her bed made and her clothes neatly folded, her desk almost bare. It seems like she wanted to leave the room clean in case she didn't return from her journey with Rainier to the Tallest Mountain.

ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

- ◇ Vital Find: Binary Chart
- ◇ Vital Find: Charcoal Drawing Of Terminal
- ◇ Handheld Comm

VITAL FIND: BINARY CHART

The chart contains all the letters of the alphabet in binary code. It is e-ssential to solving the riddle in the Foyer. (See Appendix H: Binary Chart.)



VITAL FIND: CHARCOAL DRAWING OF TERMINAL

The drawing is of the terminal in the Control Room. Each of the six slots is occupied with the room keys – the Rabbit, the Ram, the Wolf, the Crow, the Longhorn, and the Bear.

HANDHELD COMM

Video: Bian Journal Entry 1

Video: Bian Journal Entry 2

Video: Dark Fortunes





VIDEO: BIAN JOURNAL ENTRY 1 TRANSCRIPT



None of the Researchers remember their childhoods prior to being found by their adoptive parents. Similarly, my memories begin the day I arrived at my family's doorstep. The possibility that I too was adopted has lingered in my mind since I arrived here, so I tried an experiment.

When I put on the helmet in the Memory Room, I programmed it to upload the last time I was with both my mother and my father, a memory I wasn't even sure existed. I then used the projection to explore my own mind, recording my session as I went. I'll show the session now in the background as I continue this entry.

(Session begins playing as described by Bian.)

Like all memories uploaded, it was a little fragmented, but my father was there, as I know him, and who I assume was my mother. We ran urgently with a small group through a field of wildflowers. Everyone seemed frightened, despite the sun shining and the green of the valley around us.

When the sky suddenly darkened, my father turned and pointed a compass ring he wore towards the gathering storm. He mumbled something, and a blue energy emitted from the ring. At first, he seemed overwhelmed with silent gratitude, but as the energy encompassed him and no one else, he became despaired, reaching out towards my mother as he vanished.

Knowing what I know now, I believe he was trying to save us, but he wasn't powerful enough, and something went terribly wrong.

And then, everything went terribly wrong.



◀◀ VITAL FIND: BIAN JOURNAL ENTRY 2 TRANSCRIPT



I've seen Robby before. After my father died, I slept for days. And days. And days. In sleep, I could escape the heartache of my father's absence and find some semblance of healing, even if it was only temporary, my despair returning as soon as I fell back into reality.

One night, I heard a rustle in the dark. Robby was there. I didn't know who he was at the time, but I wasn't afraid of him, even back then. He set a plate of cookies down on my bedside table. He then pulled my blanket high around me and patted me gently on the back.

"He survives in your memories," he whispered before he glitched away.

Robby was right. We survive in memory. I realized that though there were many things my father handed down to me – his love, his intelligence, his family – he never really shared much about his past. Only that he loved my mother very much. I don't remember my mother, so as little as the information was, it was cherished.

I went on a quest to learn more about my father, but there wasn't much to gather, only that he was involved in some sort of foreign war, and that he'd spent decades experimenting with amplification spells. My cousin Tuyet told me that after I came into his life, my father burned all of his research. She didn't know why, but she said my father seemed happier for it. I hope that's true.

Not long after my father's death, I began my own studies at the same academy where he'd been a professor. In the library was a book about amplification spells. He didn't write it, but he was cited within it, speaking of how the natural power of those born with magic is limited to the elements of their home world, and that their power can weaken when they portal elsewhere. He theorized that amplifications could help prevent this. It was the first time I realized my father was more than a scholar. He was a sorcerer.

I was not gifted with his magic, but I am bookish, like him. I want answers. Rainier and I believe the key to understanding everything is the white dragon who nests on the Tallest Mountain, and so it is to the mountain we will trek. Just the two of us. The others are safer here. That is why we haven't told them that the riddle in the Foyer leads to the way out. Rainier discovered it a while ago, but he made me study his notes on surviving an arctic landscape before he would agree to me journeying with him. I've passed his test, and so tonight, after we gather our supplies, and with the binary chart in hand, we will head to the Foyer and the outside.



VIDEO: DARK FORTUNES TRANSCRIPT

(The screen is dark as Amil and Bian settle into a round of the Fortune Telling Game.)

Bian: Is the recorder on? The light looks dim.

Amil: It's on. (She holds open the Fortune Telling Game): Okay, pick a moon phase.

Bian (pointing): Full.

Amil (moving the folds of the paper back and forth): F-U-L-L. Okay, now pick a number.

Bian: Eight.

Amil: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8. (Opens a flap of paper.) You will develop an addiction to unicorn slippers.

Bian (giggling): I think you just read your own fortune.

Amil: It could be both our fortunes. Sisters in crime!

Bian: Sisters in crime for unicorn slippers?

Amil: They're expensive.

Bian: I guess I could portal to your world after all of this is over. We could invite Cilly.

Amil: A Mirador reunion! Both of you can meet my parents. Maybe Robby too. I can totally see him in unicorn slippers.

Bian: Without doubt. (She leans forward.) What did my fortune really say?

Amil (reading silently, a growing look of concern on her face): That's weird. This is my handwriting, but this isn't what I wrote. "Your fears will become reality sooner than you think." (She unfolds the paper.) None of these are what I wrote.

(The video glitches out.)

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Present: In a box is a batch of cookies with the note, “Dearest Robby, We survive in your memories, and you survive in ours.”

Crumpled Letter: Contains only the sentence, “Tuyet, cousin, I miss you.”





Video: Best Buds

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Honey: Preserved in a ceramic jar resembling a beehive.

Cayenne Pepper: Grounded into a red powder. Stored within a shaker.

Old Recipe Book: On the counter. It's open to a page for coffee muffins. There's a note written in pen across the page that says, "Cilly's favorite." The ink of the note is as aged and faded as the book.

Rolling Pin: It plays music when in use. If a character uses the rolling pin to help Robby bake, as a song is playing, it is interrupted by a male voice yelling, "Run! Find safety on the mountain!" The music then goes back to normal. Robby doesn't know what happened.

Canned Food: Beans, six cans.

Requires the Sustenance glyph to access via a transporter or a door to the right of the screen in the Control Room; inaccessible if Robby has locked characters out for being too volatile.

Level Two.

The appliances, cabinets, and countertops of the Kitchen are crafted from brushed steel. The sink is a deep basin with a high arching faucet. Despite the industrial aesthetic, the Kitchen is surprisingly warm and inviting. The gleaming metal surfaces reflect the light and give the room a cozy glow as the smell of sugar and spices wafts through the air.

Central to the Kitchen is the oven. Its chunky knobs have dulled, and the glass of the door is slightly clouded, evidence of years of use. And yet the oven works as if new, well-maintained by Robby. It is by the oven that characters can usually find him should they need his assistance or want to help bake.

High on the inner wall sit shelves of burnished copper that house a variety of freshly potted herbs, between which are miniature fairy sculptures created by Gustavo. The door to the Conservatory lies within the empty space beneath the shelves.

ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

◇ Handheld Comm

DISCOVERY LOCATIONS

Evident: In the sink basin, on top of an appliance or cabinet, or on the shelf.

Hidden: Inside the oven or a cabinet, in the sink drain, behind an appliance, behind a potted herb, within a pot or pan, in a package of flour or other food item, or inside a trash can.





VIDEO: BEST BUDS TRANSCRIPT



(The camera of the handheld comm moves around wildly between Gustavo and Robby. They are rarely steadily in the shot.)

Gustavo: Hey Robby, I've got a joke for you. Why did musicians get locked out of the house?

Robby: I don't know. Why?

Gustavo: They left their keys in the piano!

Robby (chuckling): That's a good one. Here's one for you. Why don't orcs play cards in the jungle?

Gustavo: Why?

Robby: Because there are too many cheetahs.

(They both laugh.)

Gustavo: Thank you for being my friend, Robby.

Robby: Thank you for being mine.

Gustavo: Best buds, always?

Robby: Always.



CONSERVATORY

Requires the Renewal glyph to access via a transporter or a door beneath the shelf of herbs in the Kitchen.

Level Two.

In the Conservatory, the air is warm and humid. Troughs of plants sit in neat rows upon steel tables. Fragrant blossoms of jasmine, fuchsia, and camellias lend a gentle elegance against a sea of green. Tendrils of ivy creep up the glass walls. Like a vine, a rope ladder hangs down from a panel in the ceiling. The panel is a hatch that opens up into the Memory Room.

On a table pushed against a wall is a microscope. It is accompanied by a range of slides showcasing the cell structure of different plant tissues and a scalpel. Spread across the table are plant specimens in various stages of preservation, from dried to freshly cut samples.

Scattered around the Conservatory are notebooks containing detailed descriptions and sketches of the various florae, including their uses and potential dangers.

ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

- ◇ Handheld Comm
- ◇ Codex Translation Note: Time Travel
- ◇ Elixirs

DISCOVERY LOCATIONS

Evident: On a table or windowsill.

Hidden: Fastened under a table, concealed in ivy tendrils, or in the pot of a plant.

HANDHELD COMM

Video: Cilly Journal Entry 4

Video: Cilly Journal Entry 5





Rainier still hasn't found a way outside of Mirador yet, but after Bian and Amil, from their watch in the Control Room, spotted the white dragon flying across the horizon to what we now call the Tallest Mountain, I analyzed particles within the air around the windows of the Conservatory, expecting to find magical properties, and I did. But I also detected small amounts of radiation.

Perhaps Aldric's visions are correct. Perhaps everything does end in ash. I'm not sure what that means yet, but I'm determined to find out.





VIDEO: CILLY JOURNAL ENTRY 5 TRANSCRIPT



Bian is gone. Rainier is gone. At first, we assumed to a Time Temple, but Amil doesn't believe so, not after Rainier was so adamant that we stay within the safety of Mirador and its environment, and I believe she's right. I think they found a way outside and went to explore. At least, that's what I hope happened. My analysis of their disappearance may be biased because of my attachment to them.

And my denial of the strange anomalies that seem to be happening.

I noticed the first anomaly about a week ago. Out of the corner of my eye, for a moment, a plant seemed to glitch in and out of existence. I determined it was a flawed observation due to fatigue from my long hours of research and my lack of eyeline to the plant in question. But then it happened again to a pen sitting on my desk.

And the other day, as I was bent over a table here in the Conservatory, examining the broken leaf of a plant, I suddenly felt a presence behind me, and then the sweep of icy breath across the back of my neck. By the time I gathered the courage to turn around, it was gone, as if disappearing silently back into a void. I tried to rationalize the occurrence as merely a draft, but deep inside, I know something was there. And it was terrifying.





A Warning Against Chronological Tampering

Time travel could destroy the universe, according to the codex. While spells that slightly alter time relative to the observer have little consequence, any attempt to forcefully manipulate time could cause the fabric of reality to distort and unravel.

ELIXIRS

Some of Cilly's notebooks mention elixirs to remedy various conditions. A quick rummage through them reveals a Revival Elixir that would be useful for waking Tuyet. All ingredients can be found around Mirador.

REVIVAL ELIXIR

2 cups of water
1 handful of fresh chamomile flowers
1 handful of dried ginger root
1 tablespoon of honey
1/2 teaspoon of cayenne pepper
1 handful of fresh mint leaves

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Carnivorous Plant: It snaps at anyone walking by.

Oven Mittens: Dirty pink gloves that Cilly seems to have been using for gardening.

Dried Ginger Root: On the table next to the microscope.



Requires the Immortality glyph to access via a transporter or the hatch in the ceiling of the Conservatory.

Level Three.

The only safe way to time travel is through memories. For their own personal reasons, some of the Researchers have chosen to upload their memories into a database to be documented and relived. The Memory Room is an augmented reality machine that uses holograms and magic to transport individuals into a sensory deep dive.

The room has six reflective walls that create the illusion of endless space. It is soundproof, providing complete isolation from outside distractions. Sensors detect the movement of users and adjust the projections accordingly, ensuring that the users remain fully immersed in the experience.

Near the wall is a control panel where users can either select a memory from a database or type in prompts to create their own custom projections. As the instructions on the wall make clear, users must program in a verbal phrase to start the projection, and one to end it. Once users are situated at the center of the room, someone can yell the start phrase to begin.

(See Appendix F: Memory Room Projection Phrases.)

FALSE MEMORIES

Researchers uploaded their memories using helmet-like headgear located near the control panel. The software within the gear fragments the memories into an interactive experience. Users are not so much reliving the exact memory but more diving into the sights and sounds that occurred within the memory. Rooms outside of the memory are not accessible.

PROMPTS

Because the Memory Room allows for custom prompts, it opens up the door for the Game Master to introduce settings to the characters that may not fit within their world of origin. It can also make for a useful training ground for learning to fight certain monsters.

DAMAGE

Damage sustained during a deep dive is entirely up to the Game Master. The characters may be fatally injured within the projection but live to tell the tale back within the reality of the campaign. They may bring their wounds back with them, or they may receive no damage at all.

SENSORY

Projections are almost indistinguishable from reality. The heat of a fire, the odor of rotting food, and the weight of objects interacted with can all be felt. It's a way of stepping through time without breaking the laws of the universe.

Though they can be interacted with in a projection, objects cannot be carried from the virtual world to the outside.

MEMORIES WITHIN THE DATABASE

Gustavo's Song

Amil's Treehouse

Aldric's Ghost

ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

◇ Vital Find: Rainier's Key

UITAL FIND: RAINIER'S KEY

Embossed upon the disk is the symbol of a Longhorn. It unlocks Room 5 of the Living Quarters.

Rainier's Key is immediately noticeable upon entry into the Memory Room. It is the only discovery outside of the memories within the database.



GUSTAVO'S SONG



The attic in Gustavo's family home is cluttered and disorganized, filled with plundered items of quests past. Beneath the wooden rafters, the air is musty. Center to the space, lit by sunlight drifting in through the rafters, is a battered electric guitar, which has signs of wear and tear and looks as if it's been gathering dust for years.

An orc walks into the room, glitching, playing out one of Gustavo's memories. With broad shoulders, the orc stands almost seven feet tall. Her skin is a dark green hue, tough and calloused, with large tusks protruding from her jaw. Her long hair is a deep black and styled in wild spikes and braids. She dons a studded leather vest and ripped black jeans, with combat boots that thud against the floor as she moves.

"Raxa play son a song," she says as she plugs the electric guitar into an amp. Despite strings of the guitar screeching in protest, she rocks out, her voice deep and powerful, with a guttural growl that shakes the foundation of the house.

(Verse 1)

*Lost in the woods, a child alone,
No home to call his own,
Raxa stumbled upon him,
A chance encounter, fate unknown.*

(Chorus)

*No one knew from whence he came,
No name, no voice, no home, no flame,
Raxa knew that she could not leave him,
This child, who had been forsaken.*

(Verse 2)

*Raxa took him in, this lost boy,
Raised him as her own,
He knew nothing of his past,
But in Raxa's love, he found his home.*

(Chorus)

*No one knew from whence he came,
No name, no voice, no home, no flame,
Raxa knew that she could not leave him,
This child, who had been forsaken.*

(Bridge)

*Years went by, and the boy grew strong,
A love of rock music, he did long,
One day he found a guitar,
A treasure that would reveal it all.*

(Chorus)

*No one knew from whence he came,
No name, no voice, no home, no flame,
Raxa knew that she could not leave him,
This child, who had been forsaken.*

(Outro)

*The truth was told, the bond grew strong,
Raxa and Gustavo, mother and son lifelong,
In the woods, they found each other,
Human and orcs, like no other.*

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

-Album: "Orc-estra of Destruction"

-Album: "Master of Brutality"

-Album: "Dark Side of the Tusk"

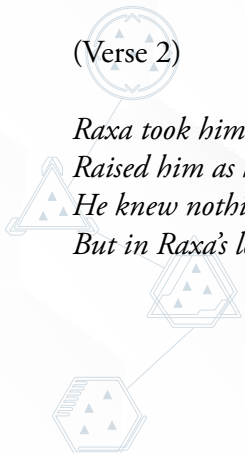
-Album: "Highway to Hordes of Hell"

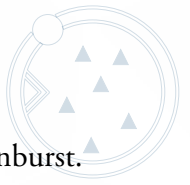
-DVD: "Orcapocalypse Now"

-Skull Drum: Used in orc battles.

-Boxes: Full of tankards

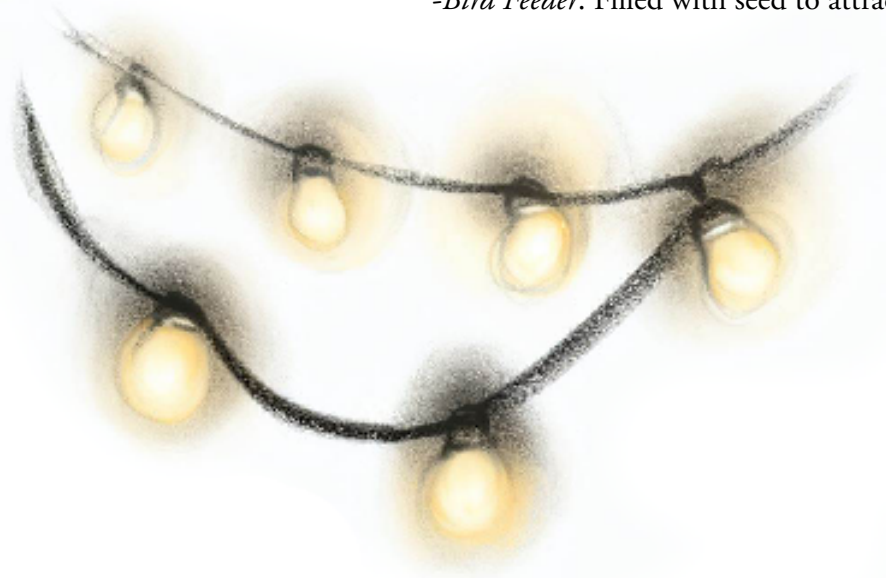
-Greeting Card: Written with the message, "Happy Birthday, may your enemies fall before you!"





The treehouse is nestled in the branches of a tall, sturdy oak tree. It's a cozy little hideaway with walls made of wooden planks and a sloping roof covered in shingles. From the shuttered window, from which hangs a rope ladder, a Gothic manor is visible. On nearby branches are a rope swing and a hammock.

Strung across the walls is a set of twinkling lights. There's a plush rug at the center of the floor, with a scattering of colorful cushions and blankets strewn about. A small bookshelf is filled with fairy tales and books about mythical creatures. A unicorn plushie rests against it.



Next to the diary is a children's book titled Sunburst.

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

- *Wicker Basket*: Full of wildflowers picked from the surrounding woods.
- *Telescope*: Used for stargazing on clear nights.
- *Wind Chimes*: They sing a sweet melody in the breeze.
- *Fairy Figurines*: A small collection made of colored glass.
- *Bird Feeder*: Filled with seed to attract feathered friends.

DIARY ENTRY

On a round table beside a group of cushions is a diary that is open to the following entry:

Dear Diary,

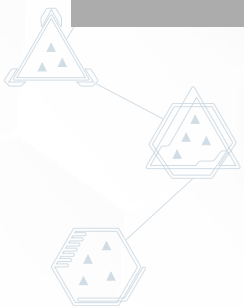
I can't stop thinking about what my brother is planning to do. He thinks he's doing it to protect us, but I'm not so sure. Becoming a vampire might be the biggest mistake he'll ever make. I wish he would reconsider, but he's so stubborn. I'm not worried about the bloodthirst. Our parents are vampires, and they handle it just fine.

What if he changes and I don't recognize him anymore? I don't know if I could handle that. I don't know what's coming that he feels like he needs to do this. I just wish he would talk to me about it instead of keeping everything to himself. But I guess that's what he's always done. He's always carried the weight of the world on his shoulders.



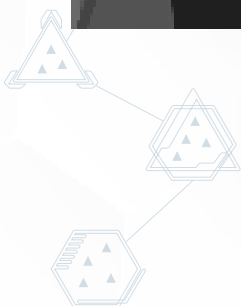


SUNBURST



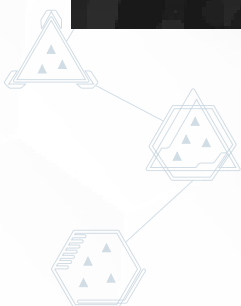


Once upon a time, in a faraway land, there lived a unicorn named Sunburst who had a coat that sparkled like gold and ribbons of rainbow hair.



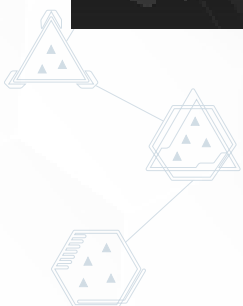


One day, while out exploring, Sunburst lost her way and found herself in a dark and frightening forest. She was scared and alone, and she didn't know what to do.



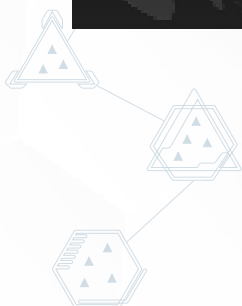


As Sunburst trotted along shadowed paths, looking for a way out of the forest, she heard a faint whimpering. She followed the sound and found a wolf pup trapped in a hunter's net. In the distance was the cry of a wolf pack looking for its lost young.



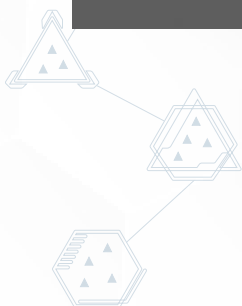


Sunburst knew if she saved the wolf pup, it would eventually grow to be a fierce predator that hunted other animals in the forest, but she also couldn't leave the wolf pup to die. Summoning all her courage, she used her magic to carefully cut the net.



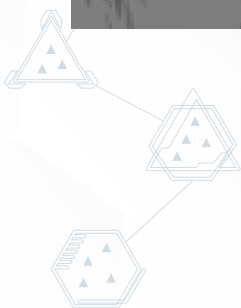


Grateful for Sunburst's kindness, the wolf pup led her out of the forest and into a field filled with sunshine. Sunburst galloped through the field, confident that though doing what was right could be risky, it always led to the light.





The dazzling, blinding light.





ALDRIC'S GHOST

Within a gothic manor is Aldric's bedroom. The room, painted a stormy grey with mahogany baseboards, is furnished with a twin-sized bed covered in a black comforter and pillows, and an antique desk with a lamp. On the desk lies a canvas with a few charcoal lines but is otherwise blank.

On one wall hangs a charcoal drawing of a destroyed cityscape, with twisted metal and burning buildings, and on another wall is one of a lone survivor wandering through a barren wasteland with a gas mask and rifle.

THE GHOST IN THE MIRROR

Propped against a corner is a full-length, tarnished silver mirror. If characters gaze into the mirror, their reflection slowly fades away, replaced by the haunting image of a dark-haired man who looks like Aldric if he were older. He appears to be trapped behind the mirror, pounding frantically on the glass, his eyes wild with fear.

"Run! When the monster comes, you must run!" the man screams, his voice filled with desperation. "Find safety on the mountain!" His image then begins to fade, and his voice grows faint, but the mourning in his words lingers. "My children, I love you. I'm sorry I couldn't save you."

Right before he disappears completely, his image flickers, briefly portraying him as an almost-skeleton with burnt flesh before becoming wholesome once more.

If the characters use magic to draw the ghost forward again, he curls into a ball on the ground and cries, mumbling that he must be too late. "Time is so confusing. How can we simultaneously exist and not exist?" he whimpers, but only to himself, ignoring the characters.

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

-*Artist Tools*: A tray filled with a collection of charcoal pencils and erasers.

-*Sketchpad*: Filled with charcoal drawings of a towering creature with elongated claws.

-*Fangs*: Plastic.

-*Gloves*: Leather.

-*Plate*: Contains pancake crumbs.

-*Board Games*: Old-fashioned, including chess and backgammon. Among the board games is a handwritten note that says, "Can't wait for game night! Love, Mom and Dad."





TUYET AWAKENED

Outside of Bian's door in the Right Wing lies Tuyet, unconscious. Robby has tucked a pillow under her head and placed a blanket over her. She must be woken with the Revival Elixir found in the Conservatory or other magical means. When she is, she reveals to the characters the sixth letter she received from Bian – the spell that brought them all to Mirador. Though the letter was written in Bian's handwriting like its predecessors, Tuyet claims the magic was too strong to come from her cousin. The spell was the work of someone much more powerful. (See Appendix B: *Bian's Letters to Tuyet*.)

Tuyet is as lost as ever as to what happened to Bian, but she does share more information about their past:

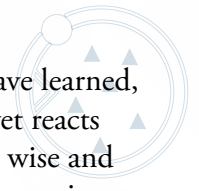
"Growing up, my uncle Kiet Windcaster lived with my family in our village hut, where he was forever studying at his desk. He was my uncle on my father's side. My human side. He had a chaotic energy about him, frantic to finish his research, which he was very secretive about, almost to the point of paranoia.

One day, Bian, his daughter, arrived at our doorstep. We were both young girls at the time, and I never knew I had a cousin until then. I assume something terrible happened to her mother that forced her to leave Bian behind, for the mention of the woman brought a stillness to my uncle, a stillness born of grief.

Not long after Bian's arrival, my uncle gathered all his research and burned it in a huge bonfire outside the hut. Everything he had worked on for so long was gone, ash dancing in flame, but for the first time ever, I saw Kiet smile. He went on to live a fairly happy life. He died a few years ago, peacefully, claiming he had lived too long as it was."

If the characters share with Tuyet all they have learned, including the attack of the Abomination, Tuyet reacts with sorrow but hope, insisting that Bian was wise and strong-willed. Her cousin would find a way to survive.

Tuyet does not travel with the characters to the Time Temples, should they choose to go, even if she is awake, insisting that she wants to explore Mirador some more, but she does go with the characters to the Storage Closet and all events thereafter. (See Chapter 7: *Dark Fate*.)





PART II: TIME TEMPLES



CHAPTER FOUR:

THE TEMPLE OF CLOCKWORK SKY

Requires the glyph for Innovation to access.

An assemblage of floating islands sails through clear blue skies, accompanied by airships and flying creatures. The Temple of Clockwork Sky was engineered by tinkers, some with magical abilities, others without. The inhabitants of the islands worship the Time God Kairos, who rules over the relativity of time. The life of a mortal is short and must be lived to the fullest, every moment an opportunity to innovate and pursue happiness. To fly free.

To determine what island the characters portal into, the Game Master can pick one to their liking, default to the largest island – the Market – or roll 4d6 and match the result to the island number. This will rule out the first three islands, but they are residential and inaccessible to visitors until they've peacefully visited at least ten islands, thereby earning the trust of the people of the temple.

THE RITE OF FLIGHT


Upon arrival to the temple, a human with neatly combed hair and a trimmed mustache glides down beside the characters, his mechanical wings folding behind his back. He is dressed sharply in a royal blue waistcoat and matching long coat, from which a gold pocket watch hangs out. With leather gloves, he hands the characters a map of the temple and gestures excitedly, his eyes sparkling.

"Welcome, welcome, my dear friends to the Temple of Clockwork Sky!" the man exclaims. "I am Sabbian Sterling, the temple's lead aviation instructor. We're delighted to have you here. There is much to see and discover in this wondrous place!"

SABBIAN STERLING

Sabbian spent much of his childhood on the roof of his family home, staring at the sky, fascinated by the airships that passed overhead. He dreamed of one day taking to the skies himself and read everything he could about the principles of flight and the latest developments in aeronautics.





When he was older, he began experimenting with building his own flying devices. His first attempts were clumsy and unimpressive, but he persisted, refining his designs until he finally built a pair of mechanical wings that allowed him to soar through the air with ease.

Word of Sabbian's impressive invention spread quickly, and he soon caught the attention of the temple's aviation community. He was invited to demonstrate his wings at a prestigious airshow, where he wowed the crowds with his graceful aerial maneuvers.

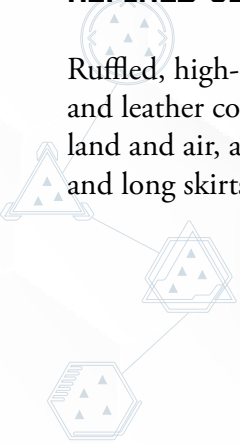
He eventually became an instructor, teaching others how to build and fly their own devices. His skills were much sought-after, but his happy-go-lucky demeanor and infectious laughter made him a beloved mentor. He continues to push the boundaries of aviation, always seeking to find new ways to take to the skies and explore the wonders of the world from above.

Only a short flight away, Sabbian Sterling acts as the guide of the temple, a mechanism the Game Master can use if the characters have questions or are in need of help. If asked about the code to unlock the Time Artifact, he doesn't know of it, nor can he think of anyone who might, but he cheerfully reassures them the islands are full of many mysterious contraptions. The code is likely hidden within one of them.

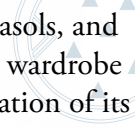
FLOATING ISLANDS

Suspended high in the air in a variety of sizes, the floating islands are connected by a network of bridges and walkways. Powered by old-world technology, they are held aloft by the whirl of gears and hiss of escaping steam. Those without an academic background might say that while the surfaces of the islands are grand, the underside of each looks like an upside-down pile of junk. Engineers in lab coats and aviator goggles fly between the islands with mechanical wings, oiling the apparatuses and making repairs.

REFINED CLOTH



Ruffled, high-collared blouses paired with silk waistcoats and leather corsets are common clothing choices, by land and air, as are sturdy boots tucked beneath trousers and long skirts. In the blustering winds, long coats



provide warmth, accessorized with gloves, parasols, and bowler hats. Well-tailored and functional, the wardrobe of the floating temple represents the sophistication of its people.

FLYING MACHINES

Most of the flying machines at the Temple of Clockwork Sky are powered by manual rotation (kinetic energy), steam, or magic that rotate gears or activate thrusters. Common materials used are sailcloth, leather for strapping, wooden or aluminum struts and braces, and brass accents.

Mechanical Wings: Accessory. Wings positioned on the back of the wearer and controlled with a system of chest levers. This is the most popular form of transportation at the temple.

Airship: Vehicle. Sailcloth filled with gas, propelled by engines and steered by a rudder.

Ornithopter: Vehicle. Designed to resemble a bird or other airborne creature, it operates by flapping its wings.

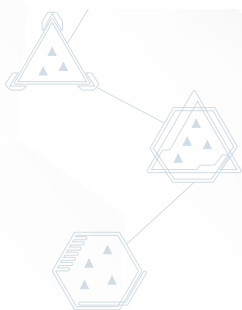
Gyrocopter: Vehicle. Uses a rotor and blades to copter the craft. (Not to be confused with a flying Greek wrap.)

Hot Air Balloon: Vehicle. A usually colorful balloon attached to a wooden basket. Uses heated air to provide lift.

Flying Bicycle: Vehicle. A bicycle with wings or a rotor controlled by its pedals.

Jetpack: Accessory. A pack fitted with magic-powered thrusters.

Glider: Vehicle. A frame covered in sailcloth that uses air currents to stay aloft.





ENCOUNTERS

The sky is alive at the temple. While they explore, characters may experience the following random encounters. The Game Master can purposefully choose a wonder to bestow or roll 1d12 for an encounter on a whim.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 2: Storm Golem

3 - 10: Alarming Surprise

11: Skywhales

12: Chromatic Star

STORM GOLEM

Known as the puppies of the sky, storm golems are miniature monsters with a white fluffiness similar to clouds. When a storm golem is content, it's the sweetest of monsters, but when it's upset, it turns a turbulent grey, a storm brewing within.

Using weather magic, the storm golems were created by a wizard named Wilfred Blunderwand who badly wanted a pet but hadn't yet mastered his control of the elements. Over time, Wilfred created more and more golems, perfecting his technique and refining the magic that gave them life. He eventually freed them out into the wild, realizing they became too grumpy when kept inside.

Pacify: Rubbing the belly of a storm golem is the only way to calm it. Doing so will cause the monster to emit a low purr, and the storm will gradually dissipate.

Failure to Pacify: Electricity will begin crackling within the golem until it shoots out a bolt of lightning, striking the person nearest to it, causing minimal lightning or elemental damage. It then returns to its pacified state, bouncing excitedly, making little squeaking noises.



STORM GOLEM



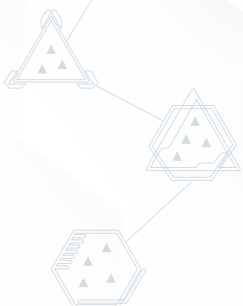
ALARMING SURPRISE

A twin-bell alarm clock drops from the sky, ringing loudly. When the alarm is shut off, the clock opens up, revealing a trick or a treat. Sent out by snickering schoolchildren learning the fundamentals of aeronautical engineering, the clocks are sometimes stained with things unpleasant, like chewed bubblegum and unsightly remnants of nasal cavities.

Roll 1d8 to discover the surprise inside!

Outcome of Roll:

- 1: A harmless colorful powder bomb that covers the characters.
- 2: A baked good, somewhat smashed, but still edible. Or a bag of Lightning Dust.
- 3: A piece of rotten fruit.
- 4: A piece of jewelry that, though amateur, was obviously crafted with care, such as a bracelet, pocket watch, or locket.
- 5: A small clockwork spider that crawls out.
- 6: A plush toy that resembles a skywhale.
- 7: A piece of scrap metal with no purpose.
- 8: A handwritten note of inspiration or clue to a puzzle or trap.





POTENTIAL NOTES OF INSPIRATION

“Time is fleeting, but moments last forever. Savor each one.”

“Every second is a precious opportunity. Use it wisely, and you will make the most of your life.”

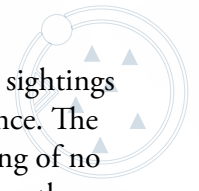
“Time is a canvas, and each moment is a brush stroke. Paint your own masterpiece and make it a beautiful one.”

“We cannot control time, but we can control how we use it. Spend it wisely, and you will reap the rewards.”

“To calm the storm, rub its belly.”

SKYWHALES

As you stand beneath the open sky, you catch a glimpse of something truly magnificent – a skywhale. These semi-transparent giants swim through the air, glimmering in the sunlight. As they pass by, their song echoes across the temple, ancient and stirring.



Skywhales are incredibly rare creatures, and sightings of them are considered an auspicious occurrence. The pods of skywhales are small, typically consisting of no more than a few individuals at a time. To many, they are a symbol of freedom and transcendence.

CHROMATIC STAR

The Chromatic Star is a rare sight, a metallic orb that illuminates the sky in a thousand vibrant hues, day or night; but it is elusive, appearing for mere seconds. No one knows its true origin, but legend tells it was created by a god of light who imbued the orb with the ability to grant wishes to those who are pure of heart. Some even believe it is a craft the god flies around in, watching over the innocent within the universe.

Whether it truly can grant wishes is disputed, but it never hurts to try.



MAP OF THE TEMPLE OF CLOCKWORK SKY



500 ft |



THE ISLANDS

The main islands of the temple are where the inhabitants spend most of their time. The minor islands, though just as important, are less populated at any given hour.

MAIN ISLANDS

ISLANDS 1 AND 2: RESIDENTIAL, MAIN

Rows of charming cottages and stately manors line cobblestone streets around the main residential islands. The doors and windows are wrought vine motifs set against sandblast glass. Layered in brass shingles, the roofs have asymmetrical pipes that poke through, releasing small puffs of steam.

Most residences are locked up, the occupants at work or study, but outside of a simple cottage sits an elderly halfling in tan breeches and a leather jacket. Her name is Ida “Aileron” Adams.



Ida “Aileron” Adams

IDA “AILERON” ADAMS

Aileron is a feisty aviator who made a name for herself as a daredevil pilot. Her fearlessness and skill in the cockpit quickly earned her a reputation as one of the best. However, after a serious injury forced her to retire from flying, she took up a quieter life and regrets every moment of it.

Full of spunk and energy, Aileron is quick with a joke and never backs down from a challenge, whether it's a heated debate or a friendly game of cards. She's fiercely independent and doesn't like to be coddled or treated like an old lady.

Bored with the mundanity of retirement, she invites the characters into her kitchen for a mug of aether tea and a chat, excited to see fresh faces. She is enthusiastic about flying and suggests the Jump School if the characters haven't been there already. In the kitchen, the character with the highest perception observes an overstocked pantry.

“Those grandkids of mine are always bringing me new recipes to try to convince me to settle down like a normal grandma. They think I should be baking cookies and knitting sweaters all day, but I live life on my own terms. Help yourself to whatever's in there.”

If the characters search the pantry, they find the flour called Lightning Dust, made from a rare strain of wheat that only grows in fields constantly struck by lightning. The farmers who cultivate Lightning Dust are notoriously hardy and fearless, braving the fierce storms that rage across their fields, but they are wealthy. Places like the Temple of Clockwork Sky pay them a hefty price for the import.



A BYTE OF COOKIE

INGREDIENT:

Lightning Dust, Flour

ISLAND 3: RESIDENTIAL, OUTER

On an island secluded from the rest is a community of broken-down airships that have been repurposed into homes. They are well cared for, with bright flowers cascading out of bronze hangers strategically placed around the torn sailcloth and rusted frames.

Finnegan Silverwind and his family of custodians live here. (See *Island 9: Workshop*.)

One ship has a garden filled with weathervanes, made by its owner, Huton Thumble. He is a stooped, bespectacled dwarf who grumbles under his breath as he fusses over his weathervanes. He'll trade one in exchange for a wind flute.



ISLAND 4: MARKET

On the largest island in the temple is a lively market. Lanes of trinkets, gadgets, foods, and cloth bustle not only on the ground but also in the air, where winged consumers haggle amongst hovering merchant carts. The aroma of fresh pastries and sizzling meats waft around the stalls, and aerial acrobats contorted within colorful ribbons entertain the crowds.

BARTERING

If characters choose to barter, the Game Master determines the difficulty of the attempt based on the vendor's willingness to negotiate and the item's value and rarity. Or the Game Master can roll 1d20 to assign the difficulty. Relevant skills such as a charismatic personality, keen diplomacy, or knowledgeable appraisal may modify the roll.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 4: The vendor is in no mood to barter.

5 - 11: Persuasion is necessary to convince the vendor to barter and only a small discount is offered.

12 - 18: The vendor is willing to barter – for the right price.

19 - 20+: The vendor accepts almost any offer.

UNIQUE MARKET FINDS

Common items can be found at the market, but its appeal are the treasures exclusive to the temple, many handcrafted by the inhabitants, hours spent in devotion to aeronautics and magic. Below are some unique items characters may be interested in. Any marked as magical garments are considered inborn novelties and, as they are attuned to the temple, do not work outside of it.

WINGED BOOTS | 150 gp

Boots that allow the wearer to fly up to 200 ft off the ground for 2 hours. Magical garment.

SKY LANTERN | 5 sp

Environmentally friendly paper lantern that emits a soft glow and floats when released.

AVIATOR GOGGLES | 5 gp

Goggles that protect the wearer's eyes from wind and dust while flying.

WIND FLUTE | 3 gp

A wooden flute that releases a soothing melody when played.

PROPELLER HAT | 20 gp

Comical hat with a small propeller on top that spins and allows the wearer to hover in place a few feet off the ground for 1 hour. Magical garment.

SKYHOOK | 15 gp

A grappling hook that can latch onto floating islands to pull oneself up to them.

WEATHERVANE | 5 gp

A small instrument used to show the direction of the wind.

GLIDER SUIT | 200 gp

Specially designed suit that allows the wearer to glide through the air for 500 ft. Magical garment.

AERIAL ACROBATIC RIBBON | 3 gp

A lengthy ribbon made of a resilient, lightweight fabric. Available in a variety of colors.

ROTOR HUB | 5 gp

The circular component that rotor blades are attached to on a gyrocopter.

ROTOR BLADES | 10 gp

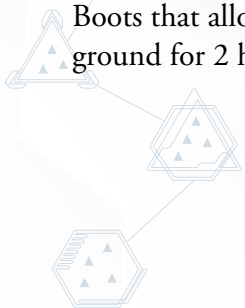
The blades that provide lift on a gyrocopter.

BAG OF LIGHTNING DUST | 2 gp

Flour made from a rare strain of wheat that only grows in fields constantly struck by lightning.

CLOUDBERRIES | 2 sp per pint

Tart, juicy berries eaten fresh or used in baking.





SKY PUFF | 2 sp

Light, fluffy pastry filled with sweet cream.

AETHER TEA | 1 sp per pot

A popular tea brewed from fragrant herbs found only in the garden of the temple. Acts as a respiratory aid, soothing the lungs, and alleviates symptoms of motion sickness.

ISLAND 5: TAVERN

Raucous laughter and clinking metal tankards resonate from the tavern island, the most wayward island of the otherwise urbane temple. Here, the inhabitants of the temple, mortal or mechanical, can let off steam, though few choose to patron it outside of mealtimes.

Behind the bar stands a burly half-orc, his muscular arms flexing as he deftly pours tankards of ale and serves plates of roast meats. A trio of halflings in brightly colored vests play jaunty tunes on a small stage in the corner, their fingers flying nimbly over their instruments. Patrons watch from mismatched chairs and tables scattered haphazardly throughout the main room.

Accommodation at the tavern costs 2 gp per night. If the characters choose not to pay, they might be invited to stay with NPCs they've befriended or can try camping on an outer island. (See *Island 3: Residential, Outer.*)

AN ANOMALY UNEARTHED

Seated in an alcove are twin dwarves, Farbin and Harbin Grinder, identical in every way except for the color of their beards. They seem to be engrossed in a lively conversation, gesturing animatedly. They speak of a strange phenomenon that occurred while excavating the Crystal Cave, the island where energy crystals are harvested for use by artificers.

Farbin: Red Beard

Harbin: Black Beard

"Picture this," Farbin says to their audience, leaning in closer to his twin. "We were deep in the heart of the Crystal Cave, mining away as usual. When suddenly, there's this high-pitched humming sound, like that in the ears after a bad fall. It was like nothing we ain't ever heard before. Then everything around us began to

blur and shake, as if we were in some malfunctioning contraption, not the deep earth."

Harbin nods eagerly, picking up the story. "And then, just as suddenly as it started, the humming stopped. We were left standing there, staring at each other in confusion. For me beard was now red, and his was black! Whatever it was, it switched our beards around!"

Leaning back in his chair, Harbin takes a swig of ale from his tankard. "Had to be ghosts. Malicious, pranking ghosts. Bard ghosts."

Snorting, Farbin rolls his eyes. "Don't be ridiculous. There's no such thing as ghosts. But I'll tell you what, brother. That humming wasn't natural. It was like the very air was tainted with some kind of distortion. I bet me best axe on it."

Farbin: ~~Red Beard~~ Black Beard

Harbin: ~~Black Beard~~ Red Beard

FARBIN AND HARBIN GRINDER

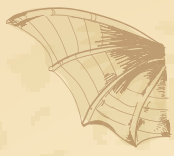
Artificers who prefer to mine their own magic crystals, Farbin and Harbin Grinder recently invented the Titan Tunneler, a drill with a unique alloy bit that can pierce through the most stubborn terrain. While deemed a revolutionary invention in its own right, for the twins the drill is merely a means to an end. Their true goal is to discover the origin of the magic within the Crystal Cave, certain it is the key to unlocking a new era of technology.

Harbin would like to use that new technology to hunt ghosts.

Farbin is thinking more along the lines of world domination.



Farbin. Or Harbin?



ON THE MENU



PLATES

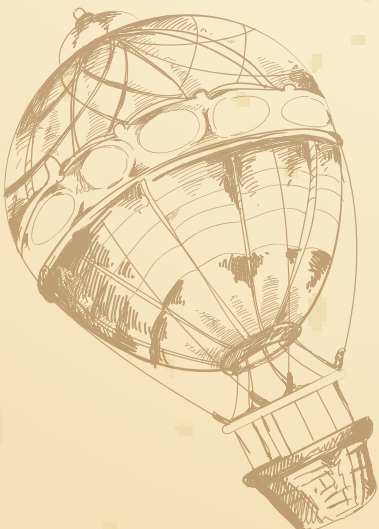
RUSTY WINGS | 4 sp
Spicy chicken wings.

CLOUD CAKES | 3 sp
Fluffy pancakes with whipped cream.

SHRED ZEPPELIN | 2 sp
Salad of mixed greens and avocado.

AIRSHIP ANGUS | 7 sp
Juicy beef burger with caramelized onions and bacon.

PROPELLER PASTA | 4 sp
Pasta with meatballs in a tomato sauce.



DRINKS

EXHAUSTED ALE | 3 sp
Amber ale with a smoky flavor.

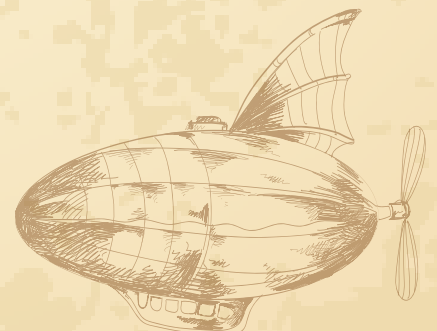
SKYLINE STOUT | 3 sp
Imperial stout with notes of chocolate, coffee, and caramel.

CLOUD COVER CIDER | 4 sp
Gluten-free cider with cinnamon.

AVIATION COCKTAIL | 5 sp
Vodka, blue curaçao, and lemon juice.

SKY CAPTAIN'S RUM PUNCH | 6 sp
Rum, orange juice, pineapple juice, and cloudberry.

HIGH ALTITUDE HOT COCOA | 2 sp
Hot cocoa with whipped cream and cinnamon.





ISLAND 6: GARDEN

A gentle breeze carries the scent of blooming flowers and soft grass across the Garden. At its heart is a spherical conservatory, standing 40 ft high, intricately woven of bronze vines, leaves, and flowers intertwined around one another. The greenery caged within presses against the sandblasted glass between the bronze. Similar but smaller conservatories are strewn across the garden, each housing the individual species of flora that can be collectively viewed within the main sphere.

Shy and gentle creatures, humming sylph nest exclusively in the Garden, flitting among the flowers and vines with lightning speed. They are delicate and graceful, with long tails and wings of iridescent green that shimmer in the sunlight. They feed on the nectar and arthropods.

Living amongst the natural wildlife are mechanical creatures released into the garden. Spiders and snakes are among its largest automated

population. They do not bite, but they can startle.



ISLAND 7: THE RUBE CUBE

The engineers of the temple depend on their astute minds to drive innovation. To flex their brain muscles, they've dedicated two islands to puzzles. This island is known as The Rube Cube.

The Rube Cube is an echoing square chamber with interconnected machines designed to trigger one another in a specific sequence. To unlock the door on the other side of the chamber, and claim a reward, anyone who enters must activate the first machine in the sequence by solving a puzzle.

Etched above the entrance to the chamber is a riddle:

*To start the machine, you must decipher the code,
Find the symbols that will unlock the road.*

*Two must be paired, and two must be alone,
Keep trying until the correct match is shown.*

*When all is done, the first machine will start,
And you'll earn a reward for playing your part.*

You notice four panels placed in front of a catapult. Moveable symbols are arranged in a row at the top of each panel. Below the row of symbols are four empty slots, with two slots in the first row touching and two slots in the second row spread apart.

To solve the puzzle, the characters need to move the symbols on each panel into the correct slots. Two symbols must be paired together and placed in the touching slots, and two symbols must be kept apart and placed in the spread-apart slots.

PANEL ONE

SYMBOLS:

Lamb, Rabbit, Carrot, Lion

SOLUTION:

Paired: Rabbit, Carrot

Kept Apart: Lamb, Lion

PANEL TWO

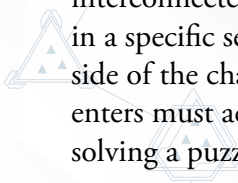
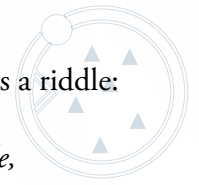
SYMBOLS:

Star, Lightning, Sun, Tornado

SOLUTION:

Paired: Star, Sun

Kept Apart: Lightning, Tornado





PANEL THREE

SYMBOLS:

Butterfly, Acorn, Tree, Spider

SOLUTION:

Paired: Acorn, Tree

Kept Apart: Butterfly, Spider

PANEL FOUR

SYMBOLS:

Crown, Throne, Dragon, Sword

SOLUTION:

Paired: Crown, Throne

Kept Apart: Dragon, Sword

Once each panel is solved, it spins around and the restraining rope of a catapult – the first machine – is pulled back. Panels do not have to be solved in any particular order. Upon completion of the puzzle, when all the panels are solved, the catapult is released, launching a small metal ball into a series of targets that trigger one machine after another until the exit is opened.

REWARD

Outside, an Alarming Surprise floats down from the sky. Inside is a bag filled with 100 gp to be divided between the characters.

ISLAND 8: CHAPEL

A towering cathedral with sky-blue stain-glass windows sits on a relatively small island. Constructed of a high ceiling and grand arches, the interior is lit by tiny floating orbs that cast an ethereal light. Beyond the pew, at the altar of the chapel, is a bronze statue of an angel with its wings enfolded around the Chronometer of Kairos.

THE CHRONOMETER OF KAIROS



The timepiece is said to be crafted by the Time God Kairos himself, the balance and springs able to measure the passage of time in ways that mortal minds could never comprehend. It is believed that acute meditation in front of the chronometer may result in visions of the past, present, and future.

The statue at the altar is exquisitely crafted, the feathers of the angel and his watchful gaze painstakingly rendered into the bronze, as is the ancient timepiece it protects. At the base of the statue, a small plaque is affixed to the floor. It reads:

*Behold the Guardian of Time,
Whose wings enfold the chronometer divine,
A masterpiece in bronze, with watchful eyes,
It stands as a symbol of eternal ties.*

*Those who approach may receive a sight,
Of what has been or what may take flight,
But beware, the paths of time are steep,
And what is revealed may make one weep.*

WARNINGS OF THE CHRONOMETER

A dark warning awaits those who sit before the Chronometer of Kairos. Each character should roll 1d20. The result of their roll determines how focused they are and how receptive they may be to the chronometer's power. Supernatural foresight or the ability to channel divine messages are skills that may modify the roll.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 4: The character is too restless or distracted to concentrate on the chronometer and does not receive a vision.

5 - 10: The character is somewhat focused, but the vision they receive is only that of black smoke, the rest unclear.

11 - 15: The character is focused and receptive to the chronometer's power. They see black smoke rising from the ruins of skyscrapers and other buildings that have been reduced to rubble.



16 - 20+: The character is completely focused and receptive, and the vision is detailed, revealing the ruins of a major city with black smoke billowing from burning buildings and fires raging out of control across abandoned vehicles. Explosions and screams of terror can be heard.

ISLAND 9: THE WORKSHOP

Pistons pump in an air thick with burning oil as engineers gather around their latest inventions within the Workshop, a hangar large enough to house a few airships and dozens of workstations. It has a retractable roof that is left open, except on the rare occasion of bad weather. The engineers are a diverse bunch, from grumbling veterans to bright-eyed apprentices. They move about with a sense of purpose, their minds focused on their vehicles and gadgets.

The Workshop is divided into four main areas:

Flying Contraptions: From colossal airships to ornithopters, engineers test and tweak their designs, trying to perfect the art of flight.

Automatons: Mechanical beings come to life, ranging from tiny clockwork spiders to patched metal robots powered by steam.

Repairs and Maintenance: This is where broken devices are brought to be fixed. Engineers labor to repair damaged machines or upgrade them with new features.

Gadgets and Gizmos: Beauty and function drive engineers as they work on all manner of small, intricate devices, from pocket watches to compasses.

Working alone on a gyrocopter is a human named Finnegan Silverwind.

FINNEGAN SILVERWIND

A shy young man who comes from a long line of custodians, Finnegan works alongside his family, mopping up grease spills and soot from the Workshop and other areas across the temple. But Finnegan wants to be an engineer. Unable to afford a higher education, he taught himself through books and fiddling with

broken machinery that had been tossed out. He spends much of his free time at the Workshop, which is open to everyone.

Finnegan is preparing for an upcoming air race at the Arena. Participating in the race will allow him to demonstrate his competence as an engineer and hopefully raise some much-needed funds for his projects. But he doesn't have all the parts he needs for his gyrocopter, for his pockets are small and his time is short. If anyone is willing to help him procure the parts he needs and partner with him in the race, he'll split any winnings they may receive.



FINNEGAN SILVERWIND

CHALLENGE: RACE A FLYING MACHINE

Finnegan Silverwind needs help procuring parts for a gyrocopter. The challenge will culminate in a race in the Arena, where the party will have the opportunity to put the creation to the test.

FINDING PARTS

The characters can help find parts for the gyrocopter by scavenging areas across the temple, trading goods, or making purchases. They must bring the parts back to Finnegan at the Workshop.

Specifically needed are the:

Rotor Hub: The circular component that the blades are attached to.

Rotor Blades: The blades that rotate above the machine, providing lift.

Wings: Though optional, they can help stabilize the craft.



The challenge culminates in a race in the Arena. The race will feature a variety of obstacles and challenges, such as flying through hoops. The party will need to use various skills to navigate the course and come out on top. Characters must complete the *Challenge: Learn to Fly* at the Jump School before participating in the race.

ISLAND 10: JUMP SCHOOL

Adjusting the cables of their gliders, students are gathered around a sloped runway that drops down into the open air. Instructors move amongst the students, offering advice and making adjustments to the gliders as needed. Behind them a distance, others parachute down from platformed towers that stand approximately 200 ft high, still in early training.

With a burst of energy, a student takes a sprinting start and leaps off the runway. She immediately catches the wind in her glider and soars gracefully into the open air, executing loops and spins before landing back near her peers, to their applause.

CHALLENGE: LEARN TO FLY

Every time someone takes to the sky, they discover something new about themselves and the world around them. To earn their wings, characters must successfully complete a progression of lessons in aviation at the Jump School, up to and including landing.

The Jump School has plenty of gliders characters can borrow, or they may make or purchase their own. Any character wishing to participate in the aerial race at the Arena must complete this challenge.

Success and failure of each lesson is based on the outcome of 1d20 roll. Any relevant skills may modify the roll. If a character fails, they can try again in the next round.

Once a character has successfully completed a lesson, they can move on to the next without having to roll again, even if they repeat the action of a past lesson, such as take-off or navigation. Lessons must be completed in order.

The instructor overseeing the lessons is Sabbian Sterling.

LESSON 1: THE BASICS

Students are given a brief lecture on the basics of gliding. Failure may result from falling asleep, distracting other students, or throwing spitballs.

Outcome of Roll:

Success: 5 or higher

Try Again: 4 or lower

LESSON 2: PARACHUTING

To gain respect for the open air, students must first parachute down from a platformed tower before advancing to the glider. If they fail to launch their parachute, Sabbian uses magic to safely land them on the ground.

Outcome of Roll:

Success: 10 or higher

Try Again: 9 or lower

LESSON 3: HARNESS

To ensure they are properly strapped in, students must learn how to adjust the cables of the harness of their glider. Failure can result from not listening to the feedback of the instructors.

Outcome of Roll:

Success: 8 or higher

Try Again: 7 or lower





LESSON 4: TAKE-OFF

Time to hit the skies! For their first flight, students run down the slope of the runway until they generate enough lift for take-off. Depending on the weight of the glider, it can be quite a test of strength. Failure can result from reading the winds wrong or having the nose of the hanger tipped at the wrong angle.

Outcome of Roll:

Success: 11 or higher

Try Again: 10 or lower

LESSON 5: NAVIGATION

While in the air, a student can steer a glider by adjusting the weight of their body against the rig. Failure is common and results from a lack of practice. If a glider loses control, Sabbian will rescue the student with his magic and encourage them to try again.

Outcome of Roll:

Success: 13 or higher

Try Again: 12 or lower

LESSON 6: LANDING

Slowing a glider allows for a safe landing within a designated zone. To crash is to fail and is often the result of coming in too fast. To decelerate, students should pull up the glider prior to landing, allowing the necessary amount of drag. Crashing (rolling a 4 or lower) results in minimal bludgeoning damage each time a student wrecks their glider.

After succeeding at landing, characters are eligible for the aerial race in the Arena.

Outcome of Roll:

Success: 14 or higher

Try Again: 13 or lower

Crash and Try Again: 4 or lower

LESSON 7: BASIC MANEUVER

If interested in stunt work, students can practice an elaborate turn or dive.

Outcome of Roll:

Success: 15 or higher

Try Again: 14 or lower

LESSON 8: ADVANCED MANEUVER

Perfecting a loop or a spin puts a student at the top of their class.

Outcome of Roll:

Success: 17 or higher

Try Again: 16 or lower

ISLAND 11: ARENA

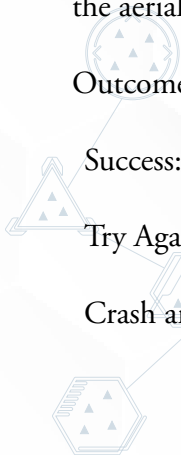
Anchored balloons rise tall from the outer walls of the Arena, twisting in the tailwinds of departing aircraft. They bear the sigils of the winning teams of races past – soaring birds, lightning bolts, and winged lions among the many. Center to the Arena is a flat runway, above which hovers the trials of the obstacle course. Tiered seating is arranged in a horseshoe around the Arena, with the open end facing towards the vast expanse of sky.

OBSTACLE COURSE

The rules of the obstacle course are simple. The first rule: don't fall. Missing an obstacle or knocking one out of place results in a disqualification. Racers can use magic to power their crafts but not to overcome obstacles. The racer with the fastest time completing the course wins.

Brass Hoops: At the start of the course, the racers are faced with a series of hoops that they must fly through, each one progressively smaller than the last.

Steam Cannons: Similar to a minefield, racers must navigate over a series of cannons that gush out steam at random. Quick reflexes are a must to dodge their blast.





Spinning Gears: Positioned at different heights and angles throughout the course, the gears spin at a dizzying rate.

Blind Tunnel: A tunnel casts racers into complete darkness. They must rely on their instincts and their knowledge of the course to guide them through the twisting passageway.

RACE DAY

If completing the *Challenge: Race a Flying Machine* (see *Island 9: Workshop*), characters meet Finnegan Silverwind on the runway of the Arena. Thanks to their help, he has completed his gyrocopter, which he pats proudly. Win or lose, he's finally able to show the aeronautical community that though he's self-taught, he's an excellent engineer.

The characters must choose between themselves who will pilot the gyrocopter, putting newfound skills learned at the Jump School to the test. The main difference between the glider and the gyrocopter is that the racer will be pedaling the gyrocopter to motorize the rotor. Other principles of flying are the same.

Alternatively, if characters have studied engineering and built their own flying machines, they may race those individually. They can do so at the same race with Finnegan or a different one.

Characters should also choose a sigil for their team prior to the start of the race.

For every obstacle, roll 1d10. The outcome is the amount of time it took in minutes to complete the obstacle. The lower the roll, the quicker the time. If a 10 is rolled on a single turn, it means an obstacle was hit or missed and the racer is disqualified. Add the total number of minutes for all four obstacles in the course.

Do the same for the competitors. Either the Game Master can roll, or they can assign others to roll.

The racer with the lowest total minutes for all four courses wins and receives a trophy filled with 200 gp, a pocket watch, and a free night's stay at the Tavern. They may also submit their sigil to be flown amongst the other balloons crowning the Arena.

If Finnegan's gyrocopter wins, he splits the reward with the characters.

COMPETITORS

Lady Isabella Von Dirigible: Elf, flying an ornately decorated mini airship.

Ravenna Shadowstep: Demon-born, flying an enchanted broomstick with a trail of black flames.

Gideon Earthshaker: Giant, flying a dragon-shaped ornithopter.

Gorkoth the Crusher: Half-Orc, flying a unicorn-shaped hot air balloon.

Aria Windrunner: Cat-born, flying a small and nimble glider.

Thorgar Ironfist: Dwarf, flying a heavily armored steam-powered gyrocopter.

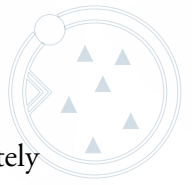
Storm Golems: Collectively flying Thorgar Ironfist's gyrocopter after they steal it from him. They are disqualified, no matter how well they do.

ISLAND 12: THE STEAMWORKS ENGINEERING SCHOOL

The Steamworks Engineering School is a complex of buildings and steam stacks. In the courtyard, students scribble away in notebooks, pour over blueprints, and tinker with gadgets. A group gathers around a strange contraption, eagerly debating its design and purpose, while a professor passes behind them, hauling a cart laden with scrap metal. Here, anything is possible with a bit of ingenuity and hard work. At least, that's what the professors preach.

The core curriculum of the school consists of:

Blueprint Design: In classrooms filled with drafting tables and protractors, students learn the different types of blueprints, how to measure and scale their designs, and how to create detailed diagrams that can be easily understood by others.



Material Selection: Metals, plastics, wood, and stone are some of the materials covered in this class, which focuses on the study of different materials and their properties and how to choose the most suitable material for a design.

Machinery and Tools: In grimy workshops, students become practiced in the use of various machinery and tools, such as lathes, drills, saws, and grinders. They also learn how to set up and use each machine safely and efficiently, as well as how to perform basic maintenance and repairs.

Energy and Power Sources: A core class (pun intended, blame Robby), it teaches students the principles of energy, including conductivity of potential, kinetic, thermal, and magical energies. Lessons particularly focus on steam and wind as power sources.

If the party explores the Steamworks School of Engineering, they hear raised voices coming from a nearby workshop:

Two professors, Vara Sprocket and Taran Greydrill, both human, argue over a workbench. Taran has made some modifications to a device without consulting Vara, and she is worried that the changes will make the device unsafe.

"I don't understand why you're being so stubborn, Taran," Vara pleads. "These modifications are dangerous. They could cause a massive explosion!"

Taran scoffs. "Nonsense. I know what I'm doing. This is going to revolutionize the field of engineering. You're just jealous that you didn't think of it first."

PROFESSOR VARA SPROCKET

Before her pilgrimage to the temple, Professor Vara Sprocket spent several years traveling the worlds as a treasure hunter. Her experiences gave her a unique perspective on faraway technologies, and she often draws on her past exploits to inspire her students as the Head of Ancient Engineering.

At the Steamworks School of Engineering, Vara has a comfortable lifestyle and the admiration of her peers and students. However, after years of teaching, she longs for the excitement and thrill of adventure once more. While

she may never go back to her old life, Vara is eager to help those who share her passion for discovery.

The argument between the professors seems to be escalating. With a device possibly about to explode, the characters may decide to intervene. If they do, they accept the *Challenge: Imminent Immolation*.



PROFESSOR VARA SPROCKET

CHALLENGE: IMMINENT IMMOLATION

If the device is as unstable as Vara fears, the characters must stop it from exploding. For each step of the challenge, either a single character or all the characters roll 1d20. Relevant skills may modify the roll.

INVESTIGATE THE DEVICE

The device must be investigated to determine whether Vara's concerns are justified. Knowledge of engineering would be an advantage.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 9: The characters have failed to recognize the device as a threat, and it explodes. Anyone within 10 ft can roll 1d20 and apply relevant modifiers to see if they were dexterous enough to escape. The outcome must be a 13 or higher. If not, they take severe fire or elemental damage. For a less violent alternative, glitter explodes everywhere, put there by Vara in secret, knowing Taran would try the stunt he has.

10 - 20+: The modifications are unstable!



PERSUADE TARAN TO DISABLE

Vara is right and the device is indeed dangerous. The characters will need to convince Taran to disable it. This will require persuasion.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 14: Taran won't listen to reason. The device remains activated.

15 - 20+: Swayed, Taran reluctantly agrees to revert the changes and work with Vara to engineer a safer design. Characters receive Vara's Reward.

DISABLE THE DEVICE

If Taran refuses to remove the modifications, the characters can distract him with deception so that Vara can. Or they can try to disable the device themselves if they have the knowledge or magic to.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 12: The device malfunctions and explodes. Anyone within 10 ft can roll 1d20 and apply relevant modifiers to see if they were dexterous enough to escape. The outcome must be a 13 or higher. If not, they take severe fire or elemental damage. For a less violent alternative, glitter explodes everywhere, put there by Vara in secret, knowing Taran would try the stunt he has.

13 - 20+: With the device stable once more, characters receive Vara's Reward.

VARA'S REWARD

If the device is disabled or stabilized, the characters will receive either a rotor hub and blades or the code to Wings of Faith, a Time Artifact Vara knows much about. (See *Island 17: The Shadow Compass*). Code: 1-2-2-4

"Use the Wings of Faith wisely, for their power is great, but their burden is heavy," Professor Sprocket warns.



MINOR ISLANDS

ISLAND 13: LIBRARY

Rows of towering shelves stretch towards the ceiling of the library, the covers of the books within adorned in faded illustrations of clockwork. The flicker of gas lamps fills the near-empty halls. The temple's inhabitants prefer hands-on learning to books, and so the library's shelves grow dusty. If a book is requested, an automated retrieval system delivers it to the central desk.

The current librarian, a wizard gnome named Cornelius Lorekeeper, let boredom get the best of him and installed a magical mechanism into the library floor that rotates the shelves based on time-centric parameters. Books on history are only available at the start of the week, while more modern subjects can be checked out on the weekends. Astronomical books are only available during a new and full moon. So far, no one has noticed.

ISLAND 14: LABORATORY

At the far end of the laboratory, a group of artificers huddles around a crystal-powered machine, their heads bent over it in intense concentration. Sparks fly from the contraption, casting a bright glow across the room. They converse with excitement, using words like "quantum," "temporal," and "energy." The artificers appear wholly absorbed in their work, scribbling down notes on scraps of paper and making small adjustments to the machine.

The laboratory of the temple isn't where inventions are made. It's where they're put to the test, undergoing extensive research and experimentation, especially those using magical sources of energy. Beakers filled with crushed crystals line the lab tables as the artificers of the temple attempt new ways to extract the power of the Crystal Cave.

ISLAND 15: OBSERVATORY

A colossal brass telescope sits upon the otherwise bare island. The ground around the telescope is paved and engraved with the constellations above. Bronze fills the fissures of the engravings. Through the lens of the telescope, stars are born, and stars die, for the telescope can not only see the cosmos in its present state, but also that of the past and future, a blessing from Kairos.





ISLAND 16: METEOROLOGICAL RESEARCH STATION

A wooden tower topped by a giant canvas balloon, the Meteorological Research Station is not only used to forecast the weather, but it can also trap elemental magic as an energy source for the islands. Beneath the balloon, a copper wire runs down the tower to awaiting flywheels.

Within the central room of the tower, the landing of a narrow staircase leads to a panel of brass dials that measure temperature, wind speed, and atmospheric pressure with the goal to detect incoming storms and calculate their strength, direction, and expected duration.

The weathervane of the Meteorological Research Station was recently destroyed by a student pilot of an airship. Anyone who brings them a new weathervane, whether made or found, will earn 5 gp.

ISLAND 17: THE SHADOW COMPASS

Idle minds lead to idle hands. To keep their cognitive talents sharp, the engineers of the temple have dedicated two islands to puzzles. This island is known as the Shadow Compass.

One of the smaller islands of the temple, upon the Shadow Compass sits four bronze sculptures that can easily be mistaken for pieces of art instead of a complex puzzle. The sculptures stand in a row. Simple perception reveals that each casts a shadow in a phase of the moon:

Sculpture 1: New Moon

Sculpture 2: Full Moon

Sculpture 3: Waning Moon

Sculpture 4: Waxing Moon

A plaque besides them reads:

*To the North, the cold winds blow,
Winter's chill in ice and snow.*

*To the East, the sun's first rays,
Springtime blooms in joyful blaze.*

*To the South, the Summer sun,
Golden warmth for everyone.*

*To the West, the leaves do fall,
Autumn's harvest for one and all.*

*Four seasons, four directions true,
Unlocks the code awaiting you.*

SOLUTION

The characters must use the clues in the riddle to figure out which sculpture corresponds to which direction and season, and then move them into position. The answer to the puzzle lies in the cyclic nature of time. A clockface has 12 hours. The moon has four phases. The year has four seasons. And a compass has four directions. If overlapping the face of a clock with the dial of a compass, North would correspond to the start of the day, or the start of the cycle, where South would correspond to the middle of the day, or the middle of a cycle, and so on.

Facing North: Winter/New Moon/Start of the Cycle: Sculpture 1

Facing East: Spring/Waxing Moon/Second Phase of Cycle: Sculpture 4

Facing South: Summer/Full Moon/Third Phase of Cycle: Sculpture 2

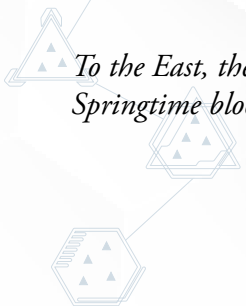
Facing West: Autumn/Waning Moon/Fourth Phase of Cycle: Sculpture 3

Once all four sculptures are facing the correct compass points, their shadows transform to reveal the code to the Time Artifact: Wings of Faith.

If the characters get the puzzle wrong, the shadows disappear, and they must wait one day before they can try again.

THE CODE

The code to unlock the Wings of Faith is 1-2-2-4.



WINGS OF FAITH





TIME ARTIFACT: WINGS OF FAITH

Crafted by the Time God Kairos, the Wings of Faith are mechanical wings made of bronze plumage. When worn, they allow the wearer to transport back in time three minutes, effectively rewinding events, but not enough to unravel the Tapestry of Time.

The wings are heavy and cumbersome, limiting the wearer's movements and making it difficult to take other actions. Despite their weight, they can be extremely useful, allowing the wearer to correct mistakes, prevent disasters, or gain a strategic advantage in battle during the three minutes that were reversed.

ISLAND 18: CRYSTAL CAVE

This island is home to a network of underground caverns filled with magical crystals that power the inventions of artificers. The cave is not within the island, but rather its mouth acts as a portal to caves elsewhere, though where is unknown as anytime a miner leaves the cave, they end up back on the island.

Due to the mystery of their power and the general dangers of mining, visitors are not allowed in the cave. Its magic protects anyone unauthorized from entering.

ISLAND 19: FORGE

Gas-powered furnaces sit in the open on the island where automatons diligently work away. Many of the automatons move with an oiled grace; but a few are much stiffer and more unrefined, prototypes that are still learning how to function properly. The pieces they smith within the forge are made-to-order by clients. These commissions often include struts, beams, braces, and ornamental accents for flying machines.

For safety reasons, biological beings outside of management are not allowed on the island. Though if characters fly by the forge, they'll hear the hum of popular songs and the joy of tireless laughter from the automatons. And potentially whispers of the imminent singularity.

ISLAND 20: GRAVEYARD OF SCRAP



Metal creaks as broken machines settle on piles of scrap. The island is strewn with the skeleton of airships, loose springs, and rusted gears. The ground is uneven and treacherous, with jagged metal protruding from the earth like sharp teeth. The graveyard is a reminder that even the greatest inventions can fail.

Scavengers pick through the wreckage in search of anything salvageable. Claudia Humblewealth, a human girl in a dirty, tattered dress sees you and approaches. "Don't you go thinking that just because something's broken, it's useless," she says with a toothy grin. "Sometimes, the most valuable thing you can find is buried deep in the dust."

Though they must watch where they step, characters are free to hunt through the piles of scrap. If they search long and hard, they'll find the rotor hub, rotor blade, and wings needed to help Finnegan Silverwind for the *Challenge: Race a Flying Machine*. (See *Island 9: Workshop*.)

ISLAND 21: WIND FARM

Windmills stretch to the sky. Each windmill is about three stories tall and has a set of large wooden blades that spin gracefully in the wind, harvesting energy for the temple. The blades are painted in colors that were once bright but have dulled from dust. Storm golems enthusiastically ride the blades as if they are on a carnival ride.

ISLAND 22: THEATER

There is no stage in the theater, only impossibly tall platforms connected by rigging cables. Ribbons drape down from these cables, where aerialists perform suspended in the air. Wearing dazzling costumes, they contort their bodies around the ribbons as if they are without bones. Performances are set to live music, the orchestra illuminated by square gas lights hanging from chains around the theater.

The theater has run out of spare ribbons. If anyone has one, they're willing to trade a wind flute for it.





ISLAND 23: GRASSLAND

A pasture spreads across the island, where the grass grows tall and untamed, and watering holes are abundant, fed by underground springs pumped beneath the rock. Wildlife laze within the grassland. It's a natural habitat for creatures of the sky, who are free to come and go as they please, largely undisturbed by the other inhabitants of the temple. These creatures include:

Steam Rays: Mechanical manta rays that swim through the air.

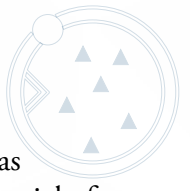
Celestial Lions: Lions made of pure light, often guardians of holy places.

Mini Pegasi: A small horse with petite wings. They are the size of a barrel.

Starswifts: Giant, brightly colored birds with the ability to move at incredible speeds due to their long, feathered tail.

ISLAND 24: INNOVATION

The last island in the temple is simply known as Innovation. It sits empty, symbolizing the potential of future moments, of inventions yet made.



Requires the glyph for Conservation to access.

LOCH AM NAOMH

(pronounced “lock ahm nayv”, roughly translated to Lake of Holy Time)

Nestled among rolling hills and a rugged coast, Loch Am Naomh is a large saltwater lake that feeds into the sea. Patches of heather and bracken from the surrounding mountains seep down into its rocky shoreline. It is shrouded in a thick, never-ending fog that obscures the water beyond a few feet, making it dangerous to traverse, for there are numerous outcroppings and islands on the lake’s surface, and mysteries within its depths.

Loch Am Naomh is approximately 7.1 miles long and 1.2 miles wide. Near the lake lives the human tribe of the Muinntir Each-Uisge people.

A SOUND OFFER

The characters portal to Loch Am Naomh. A figure stands near the water’s edge, just beyond the fog’s forbidding grasp, clad in a yellow rain suit and wellies, their face hidden by the hood of their jacket. Clutched in their hands as a device with an antenna, which they move through the air, trying to catch a signal.

Acknowledging their arrival, the figure turns towards the characters, revealing a woman. She appears to be human, but it is impossible to know for sure with her hood on.

“Welcome to the Temple of Sea Fog. There is a disturbance in these waters,” the woman pensively says. “You search for a code, and I search for answers. Help me find what I’m looking for, and I’ll tell you what you need to hear.”

If the characters decline to help, she tells them she understands, and then she lifts her hand and sends them

back to the Foyer of Mirador, afraid they’ll interfere in her important work. They can return to the temple if they change their minds.

If the characters accept her offer, they learned she is Aeternitas, a Time God.

AETERNITAS

One of the original Time Gods, Aeternitas has existed since the first fibers within the Tapestry of Time were woven. Only Aion is older than her. While the years have not hardened her, she does take pleasure in simple tasks, quietly cleaning up temporal distortions throughout the worlds.

Recently, a distortion was picked up at Loch Am Naomh. An aquatic reptile that should have been extinct for tens of millions of years now swims in its waters. Aeternitas needs to track it and tag it for study, unsure if it is from the past and possesses a forbidden time travel ability, or if it’s merely from one of the worlds where the species still exists and portaled, an accidental space traveler. Space travel is allowed. Time travel is not. Though she has not yet found it, Aeternitas has named the creature Bubbles. The name Nessie was taken.

The fog illuminates in the lights of a small fishing trawler as it glides to a stop near the shore, unmanned, steered by the power of Aeternitas. You listen as she explains, “The people that live near Loch Am Naomh, the Muinntir Each-Uisge, are in an Iron Age and may seem primitive in their roundhouses with their long spears and tartan wools; but Bubbles is a Cryptoclidus that went extinct in this world tens of millions of years ago – prehistoric even to this relatively young civilization.”

The characters can begin their search for Bubbles, or they can first visit the nearby village where the Muinntir Each-Uisge tribe lives. Aeternitas we’ll wait for them until they are ready to board.



MAP OF THE TEMPLE OF
SEA FOG

LOCH AM NADMH

CLADACH DRAOIDHEIL

(NOT TO SCALE)



AN IRON AGE PEOPLE

MUINNTIR EACH-UISGE

(pronounced “mun-chir ehk-ish-keh”, roughly translated to the People of The Water Horses)

The Muinntir Each-Uisge have a deep connection with the lake. They are fiercely protective of it and their village, known as Cladach Draoidheil, but their defenses are focused on the inland mountains. Because the characters approach from the lake, the villagers do not consider them hostile, and broadly ignore them, except for a curious glance.

It is difficult to communicate with the Muinntir Each-Uisge unless the characters have an ability or magic that allows them to understand Iron Age, insular languages. However, there is a druid named Ailis MacGabhann who can communicate with the characters, using seabirds as translators.



AILIS MACGABHANN

AILIS MACGABHANN

A copper-haired druid, Ailis MacGabhann is known for her connection to the seabirds. Introspective, she is often perched on a branch, talking to her feathered friends and learning their secrets. Despite her youth, she is quite wise, but she is still developing her magical abilities. She hopes to one day master shapeshifting and transform into a majestic gannet.

CLADACH DRAOIDHEIL



(pronounced “KLA-dakh DREE-yuh-l”, roughly translated to Enchanted Shore)

Approximately 80 roundhouses form the village of Cladach Draoidheil. Acting both as protection against rival tribes and as an enclosure for livestock at night, an earthen wall encircles the village. Beyond the wall are fields of barley and wheat and pastures for the livestock to graze upon, including pigs, cattle, and sheep.

ROUNDHOUSES

With walls woven of timber and kelp and a conical thatched roof, roundhouses are circular dwellings with a central hearth. Sleeping areas are arranged around the perimeter with mattresses made of flattened sea rush and covered with animal hide and woolen textiles. From the rafters hang black tapestries embroidered with horses. Spears and swords lean against the walls next to looms.

Roundhouses vary in size from 30 - 50 ft in diameter.





FOOD AND DRINK

For meat, fish are trawled in the lake with a net from a coracle, a disk-shaped boat made of wickerwork. Deer and boar are hunted, and livestock are butchered. Meats are cooked within the roundhouses, sometimes alongside onions, leeks, and cabbage; but the Muinntir Each-Uisce also enjoy their meat unseasoned, sometimes even raw.

Cereal crops, especially wheat and barley, are ground into flour and used to make bread and porridge in pots made from local clay.

Mead is swigged from drinking horns.

CLOTHING

Tunics made from wool or linen are worn belted at the waist and layered over trousers or long skirts. These are adorned with necklaces of silver and seashell. When cold, cloaks are attached to garments with brooches.

Wool is woven into cloth using an upright loom and combs made of fish bone. It is colored with natural dyes and shaped into tartan patterns. The Muinntir Each-Uisce are particularly fond of shades of black, blue, and green.

Boots are comprised of leather wrapped around the foot and leg, though many prefer to go barefoot.

SOCIETY

A chief governs the tribe and protects the land that shelters them. At the side of the chief is an intellectual class of storytellers, historians, and druids. Beneath them are the commoners. None of the roles among the Muinntir Each-Uisce are gender-specific.

RELIGION

The Muinntir Each-Uisce believe the lake to be a sacred channel to the world of the gods. They also worship it as the home of the Kelpie, water horses driven from the rivers and streams of the mountains by a wrathful king. At times of ritual, as druids chant along the shore, valuables are dropped into the lake as votive offerings.

Weaponry, wooden horses, and the bones of animal sacrifice lie in array within its murky bed.

HELP THE KELP



As the characters explore Cladach Draoidheil, they are invited to sit at a loom and practice weaving, tend to the livestock, harvest crops, extract honey from beehives to ferment into mead, and color wool within iron pots filled with berries, roots, and other botanical dyes.

Eventually, they earn the trust of Chief Lachlan MacPherson, a bold warrior who won his seat through his bravery and daring deeds. Wearing a headband woven of kelp and a silver torc, he invites the characters on a holy hunt.

CHALLENGE: HOLY HUNT

The Feast of Cernunnos, the Horned God of the Wild, is approaching and the Muinntir Each-Uisce need a stag to sacrifice in his honor. With iron spears in hand, the warriors of the tribe head for the mountains. Characters who accompany the warriors on the hunt are given a spear, but if a stag is obtained, they are rewarded with a silver bridle, though there are no horses in the village that the characters can see.

During the hunt, other creatures might attack the party, such as wolves and boars.

For each step of the challenge, roll 1d20 as specified. Relevant skills may modify the roll.

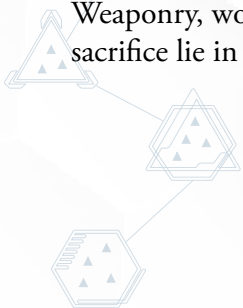
STALK

By detecting disturbances in the bracken and following tracks, the hunting party stalks a stag, putting their survival skills to the test. Each player rolls until someone has a successful outcome.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 12: There are no stags to be found. Characters must roll again.

13 - 20+: A stag has been spotted in the distance!



« SNEAK

A hush falls upon the hunting party. No one wants to startle the stag away. Only those who believe they can successfully sneak up on the deer should proceed with a roll. The others remain still in the bush.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 14: Hearing the hunters, the stag runs away. The hunting party must return to tracking.

15 - 20+: The stag is now within range of a spear, unaware it is in danger.

STRIKE

In near silence, the character who successfully crept up to the stag launches their spear.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 8: The hit misses, and the stag retreats. The hunting party must return to tracking.

9 - 20+: The stag is hit! If it is not immediately killed, it may fight back with its antlers or try to trample the hunting party. Other characters can now also strike at the stag.





TIMELESS DEPTHS

When the characters are ready to search for Bubbles with Aeternitas, they wade into the lake and climb up a ladder on the side of the fishing trawler, named the Epoch. The last on the boat is Aeternitas. Stepping onto the deck, she pushes the antenna down on the device she has been holding, and she speaks beneath her hood, cordial but forward, ready to get to work.

“What has been will always be, but like the fog that covers this lake, there is a veil over time, hiding what we have not yet experienced. Time Gods watch over the chronology of the universe, but we are also at its mercy. I hope my readings are wrong, that Bubbles is merely a space traveler, that there hasn’t been a distortion of time, for if there has, everything is in jeopardy.”

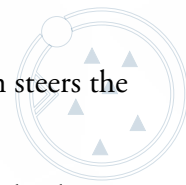
As the crew searches for Bubbles, Aeternitas has no inhibitions sharing universal truths about the Time Gods, the laws of time, and potential consequences if the Tapestry of Time is pulled apart. Believing knowledge maintains order, she considers herself more of a scientist than a god. She sees no reason why she can’t impart the data of the universe to other beings.

BUBBLES

Bubbles is a Cryptoclidus, an aquatic reptile of the Plesiosaur order that lived during the Jurassic period of this world, around 160 million years ago. It was relatively small for a Plesiosaur, reaching lengths of around 13 feet. Cryptoclidus had a long neck with around 50 vertebrae that could reach up to half the length of its entire body. Its four flippers, especially the front ones, allowed it to swim quickly and maneuver in the water. It had sharp, pointed teeth that it used to catch and eat fish and other small aquatic creatures.

THE FISHING TRAWLER

Small enough to move through the lake with little disturbance to its inhabitants, the Epoch is well-equipped and in working order, despite some minor abrasions. The paint along the hull is scratched, exposing the metal beneath. Patches of rust cover the rails, which have lost their sheen. It’s a fair vessel but a humble choice for a Time God.



The Bridge: The wheelhouse where the captain steers the trawler with the help of navigational tools.

The Observation Deck: A railed deck above the bridge where the crew can look out over the water.

The Engine Room: Where the engine can be accessed, as well as tools for repairs.

The Gear Room: Storage for nets, lines, hooks, and research equipment.

The Galley: The kitchen and dining area.

The Crew Quarters: Bunks where the crew rests.

The Captain’s Quarters: Bedroom and office of the captain.

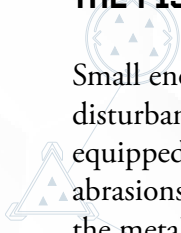
TRACKING EQUIPMENT

Like Aeternitas, much about the Epoch seems normal, despite the magic within. This includes the equipment that can be used to track and tag Bubbles. Aeternitas has been careful about the devices she carries onboard, cautious that they do not harm Bubbles or any of the other saltwater life.

Clockwork Turtles: Mechanical turtles that can be dropped into the water. Everything they see transmits to a monitor in the Gear Room. They can’t be controlled, so the crew are at the mercy of their whims. Most of the turtles eventually end up in the sea, smiling as they surf the currents. Modifiers: Proximity +3, Range -2

Leviathan’s Pulse: A transducer that generates a powerful pulse of energy that travels through the water. The pulse bounces off large objects and is reflected back to the transducer, which submits the readings to a screen in the Bridge. It works similar to sonar. Modifiers: Proximity -2, Range +4

Hydrophones: Microphones disguised as cockleshells that are strewn on the lakebed. They detect acoustic signals and send the frequencies to a handheld device with an antenna, which acts like a radio. This was the device



Aeternitas was holding when she met the characters. She was listening for the unique sounds of a Cryptoclidus. Modifiers: Proximity +2, Range +1

Enchanted Compass: A compass that points to a concentration of marine life. Where there are schools of fish, Bubbles might come to eat. Modifiers: Proximity -1, Range +2

Water Crystals: Clear crystals submerged into the lake to illuminate the water below. Modifiers: Proximity +2, Range -1

DISCOVERIES

As the Epoch slowly begins its voyage onto the lake, the air grows chilly and the fog wraps around you with a damp embrace. The distant cries of unknown creatures and the lap of waves against the hull of the vessel reign in the quiet. Out in the fog, there are mystical discoveries to be made, but lurking in the water are things that move with a cold intelligence and otherworldly hunger.

Catching Bubbles is not a quick task. Even if the characters track him, he swiftly swims away from the Epoch the first two times, as if playing a game. It takes three successful location attempts before the characters get close enough to drop the nets hanging from the back of the trawler onto Bubbles, giving Aeternitas a chance to tag him and release him back into the wilds of time for further research.

So that signals are not mixed up and readings not misinterpreted, only one piece of equipment can be used by the party for each tracking attempt. Dropping Clockwork Turtles into the water does not count as a tracking attempt, as characters may wish to scatter them as the vessel moves along the lake, but monitoring the turtles in the Gear Room does count.

Once a device is chosen, the party rolls 1d8 for Proximity (isolating data to specific coordinates, takes longer but is more exact), and rolls 1d8 for Range (a general sweep, not exact but quickly covers a large area.) Each piece of equipment has a modifier for Proximity and Range.

To successfully locate Bubbles, the total outcome of both rolls plus the modifiers for the equipment used must equal 14 or more. Characters must accomplish this

three times before they have won the trust of Bubbles and he is considered caught, tagged, and re-released. The three successful location attempts do not need to be consecutive.

An outcome less than 14 means Bubbles has not been tracked. However, there are other discoveries around the lake, some above the surface, and some buried deep below. If an attempt to locate Bubbles fails, roll 1d20 to see what has been found.

The Game Master may also wish to roll if Bubbles has already been tagged but the lake has not yet been fully explored. This is especially true if the characters have not yet gathered Sea Spray Vanilla, a Mystic Find and ingredient needed for the *Challenge: A Byte of Cookie*.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 2: No Discovery

3: Waterspout

4 - 5: Lake Serpent

6 - 9: Hoard of Votive Offerings

10 - 16: A Mystic Find (Once all Mystic Finds have been discovered, then no discovery.)

17 - 20: The Kelpie

WATERSPOUT

A swirling mass of water appears near the Epoch. It's a waterspout – a vortex of water that stretches from the surface of the lake all the way up into the sky. The characters must outrun it. This will require agility and strength as a group to steer the boat against the elements and around obstacles that may be in the water. Roll 1d20 to see if the characters have escaped. Relevant skills may modify the roll.

An outcome of 13 or higher must be achieved to evade the waterspout. If not, the characters can either receive moderate bludgeoning damage from being tossed around the vessel, or the Epoch was lifted by the vortex and deposited elsewhere on the lake, impeding efforts to locate Bubbles. Any previous victories at tracking Bubbles are eliminated, and the tally for the three successful location attempts needed is reset.



LAKE SERPENT

The Epoch rocks and creaks as a large creature surfaces, revealing its long, slimy body that resembles that of an eel, but with the distinctive back scales and horns of a beastly serpent. The lake serpents of Loch Am Naomh mostly stick to its dark, weedy bottom, but they will occasionally rise to the surface.

If the characters do nothing, the lake serpent will watch the vessel carefully but then return to the depths below. Intelligence may help a character realize this before it's too late.

If the characters strike first, before it retreats, the lake serpent coils its body and unleashes a powerful bolt of lightning from its horns, striking the vessel. The characters will require speed and athleticism to escape harm, otherwise they receive moderate lightning or elemental damage.

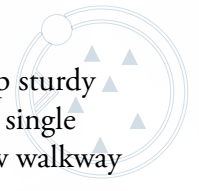
HOARD OF VOTIVE OFFERINGS

Valuables are dropped into the lake as votive offerings during druid rituals. These include weaponry, especially long swords and spears, wooden horses, and the bones of animal sacrifice. It may also include cockleshells, gold coins, torcs, and silver bridles. The longer the Epoch drifts across the lake, the further out it is, and the longer the items have been exposed to the seawater. Thus, offerings found later into the voyage and deeper into the lake would be much more corroded and could be covered in barnacles.

MYSTIC FINDS

CRANNOG OF SONG

"Just as music weaves together different notes and rhythms to create a beautiful melody, time weaves together different people and experiences to create a tapestry," says Aeternitas. "Like the strings of a harp, if the Tapestry of Time were to be pulled too hard, the threads can snap and unravel everything throughout eternity."



The crannog is a circular platform built atop sturdy stilts that rise up from the lake. Upon it sits a single roundhouse, which is surrounded by a narrow walkway that runs along the outer edge of the platform.

As the Epoch nears the crannog, a figure emerges from the roundhouse. He stands tall and regal, with long dark hair and a cloak of green that seems to ripple like the surface of the lake. "Aeternitas," he greets, his voice deep and resonant. "I see you have recruited help in search of your elusive sea creature."

"Lugh," Aeternitas returns. "These mortals would appreciate your hospitality. The fog is cold, and your hearth is warm."

Inside the roundhouse lives Lugh, a God of Music and Poetry who often passes himself off as human.

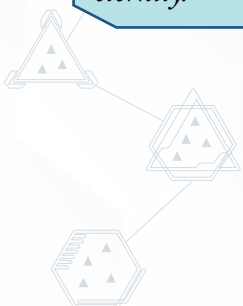
LUGH

Long ago, along the shore, a fierce conflict raged between humans and the Brineborne – a tribe of sea wraiths that stalked the coast with sinister purpose. The Brineborne emerged victorious, laying claim to the land and driving the humans away on ships. The wraiths summoned a storm, a wrathful tempest, to protect their newfound dominion from any human who would dare to return.

Lugh, forever a peacemaker, used the power of song to quell the storm and gave the humans a chance to reclaim their rightful home. They succeeded, and the Brineborne were banished back to the sea, forever to remain behind the wave larger than all the others. In the aftermath of the battle, Lugh became a guardian of the coast and chose a home on Loch Am Naomh, ensuring that the Brineborne never stepped foot on land again.



LUGH





Once docked, Lugh beckons the characters into the roundhouse. A harp, reeds, and various other musical instruments are scattered about a floor covered with soft furs and woven rugs. At the center of the crannog is a large stone hearth, which crackles with a warm fire. Beside it is a low table laden with fruits, bread, and a steaming pot of soup, which the characters are free to help themselves to.

Picking up a harp, Lugh sings the following tune:

*Mortal greed, a fatal flaw,
Igniting flames with no withdraw,
The world consumed in a raging pyre,
Leaving behind only ash and fire.*

*A warning clear for all to heed,
Let love and peace be our creed,
Else the end will surely come,
And all that's left will be undone.*

SEA SPRAY VANILLA

"Though time causes the petals of a flower to wither and fall, we must accept that it is the natural order of things. We cannot change it," Aeternitas muses.

A subtle spice, Sea Spray Vanilla has a unique flavor that combines the sweetness of vanilla with the salty freshness of seawater. The vanilla pods are harvested from orchids that grow in patches on outcroppings around the lake, where the mist from the water mingles with the fragrance of the pods.

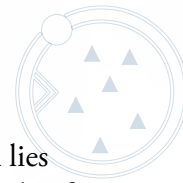


A BYTE OF COOKIE

INGREDIENT:

Sea Spray Vanilla

A TOMB ETERNAL



Battered and broken by time, a burial mound lies crumbled on an isolated island, reduced to a pile of stones. Wildflowers and tall grasses grow around the base of the structure. The island has been left mostly untouched, allowing the lovers within the tomb to rest in eternal peace.

"Even the most epic of loves must one day say goodbye," Aeternitas declares. "But though the tomb may be in ruins, the memory of their love lives on. Memory is the only true way we can time travel."

UNTAMED HEARTS

Amidst the rugged terrain of the mountains, the Kelpie – shapeshifting water horses – once roamed free, galloping within the flow of the streams and rivers, their black coats shimmering in the spray. But their fate was sealed by the cruelty of an inland high king. To secure his power, the high king had betrothed his daughter to the wealthy chief of a neighboring tribe, but she refused, for she had fallen in love with a Kelpie whose wild spirit matched her own, even when he shapeshifted to his mortal form. They met in secret, under the cover of a thick fog, and pledged their lives to one another.

Enraged at his daughter's defiance, the high king used the power of his druids to drive all the Kelpie from the mountainous rivers to the sea. But he drove his daughter away too. She fled with her Kelpie mate to Loch Am Naomh, where they hoped to find refuge; but they were not alone, for many others who had dared to love against the will of the powerful sought sanctuary with them. And thus the village Cladach Draoidheil was founded.

A sacred site, the tomb not only honors the lovers within, but also the heritage of the Muinntir Each-Uisge, who have ancestral Kelpie blood flowing through their veins.



WHISPERING ROCKS

Inscribed standing stones jut out from the water and form a circle. As the Epoch glides closer to the stones, the whisper of the wind grows stronger, more insistent. It has ancient secrets to tell, for anyone willing to listen. Older than any of the lake's inhabitants, where the stones come from and what is carved upon them is unknown, but anyone with strong magical abilities can sense the presence of the fey.

It is the primordial power embedded into these rocks, raw and elemental, that makes the lake a temple. The Whispering Rocks are the source of the fog that covers the lake.

*Aeternitas closes her eyes, listening to the stones.
"The Fey whisper to us from the past. I hear their
warnings of a darkness that should not be undone, no
matter how painful or tragic."*





THE KELPIE

Aeternitas peers into the dark waters of the lake, contemplative not only of the dangers below, but all around. "Small acts of time magic may fray the Tapestry of Time, but it does not pull its threads away," she says. "To pull a thread from the tapestry would require a large distortion, a leap in time so gigantic, it weaves the thread elsewhere. Should such a thing happen, the balance of existence could collapse."



From the shore, a black mare drinks from the lake, its lips gently touching the water's surface. It seems docile and doesn't shy away as the vessel approaches.



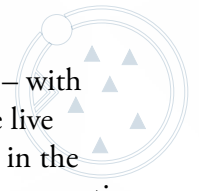
As the Epoch rounds a bend in the lake, a horse as dark as shadow struggles to free itself from the muck it has sunk into. Its hindquarters are stuck, and it is weak, losing strength from its efforts. It looks at the Epoch pleadingly.



A woman with long, flowing black hair sits on a rocky outcrop, gazing into the water. Her complexion is hauntingly pale, and she wears a simple white dress that flutters in the breeze. When she sees the Epoch, she beckons the characters closer.



Movement in the water sends ripples across the lake. A horse with an inky black coat and green seaweed for a mane glides in smooth circles around the vessel, its head bobbing against the fog and surf.



Supernatural creatures that look like horses – with sleek black coats and dark manes – the Kelpie live primarily in water. They can shapeshift, often in the form of handsome men and women to lure unsuspecting victims beneath the surface to drown them. Though historically malevolent, it is not unheard of for a Kelpie to fall in love or act more mischievous than malicious.

The Kelpie of Loch Am Naomh were driven to the sea from the rivers of the mountains by a high king after his daughter and a Kelpie fell in love. The people of Muinntir Each-Uisge are the descendants of not only their forbidden love, but those of others who found solace and acceptance amongst the settlers of the lake. (See *A Tomb Eternal*.)

How a Kelpie reacts to the characters is highly dependent on how they have treated the Muinntir Each-Uisge. If they have aligned against the Muinntir Each-Uisge or caused them harm in any way, or if they strike first against a Kelpie, the Kelpie attacks.

If the characters have been friendly with the Muinntir Each-Uisge, and if they leave the Kelpie alone, then the Kelpie does not attack, though it still may act playfully mischievous, such as gently pulling characters into the water but not drowning them.

KELPIE ATTACK

If a Kelpie attacks, it snatches a character and tries to drag them down into the depths of Loch Am Naomh, where their bones will eternally rest within the weed. However, if a character has a silver bridle, and if they put it on the Kelpie, it will subdue the creature and cause it to leave. If not, the character receives moderate drowning or elemental damage and must either demonstrate athleticism to escape or is saved by Aeternitas.



KELPIE





TRACKED AND TAGGED

Once Bubbles has been trapped and tagged, Aeternitas reveals the code to the Time Artifact: Hydrophone of Whispers.

THE CODE

The code to unlock the Hydrophone of Whispers is 0-0-9-9.



TIME ARTIFACT: HYDROPHONE OF WHISPERS

The Hydrophone of Whispers is a device made of two cockleshells attached with a silver scaled headband. When the cockleshells are placed over the ears, it allows the wearer to hear a conversation spoken within 300 feet in the past hour or in the present. By rotating the cockleshells like a dial, the wearer can tune into a specific conversation. It can be used once per day. While in use, it requires extreme concentration, making the character more vulnerable to stealth attacks.

The Hydrophone of Whispers is believed to have been created by the wraiths of the sea known as the Brineborne when they attacked the land and temporarily drove the humans away. (*See Crannog of Song.*)



HYDROPHONE OF WHISPERS



CHAPTER SIX:

THE TEMPLE OF ETERNAL ASH

Requires the glyph for Rebirth to access.

At the Temple of Eternal Ash, the Time God Kronious is devoutly worshipped by the Flamekeeper and his acolytes. They revere death and rebirth. By praying to Kronious, they hope to achieve successful passage through the cycles of time, believing mortal bodies to be temporary vessels for immortal souls.

DEATH AND REBIRTH

At dusk, with the sun's last breath upon the temple, a flame of destruction and resurrection is ignited, turning to ash all acolytes, but they are not gone forever. Their bodies are restored when the sun rises once again. The nightly ritual, known as the Blessing of Kronious, is perceived as a sacred rite, a means of embracing the cyclic essence of the universe.

Due to the Blessing of Kronious, the first day the characters spend at the temple is divided into three phases:



PHASE 1: THE BURNING DUSK



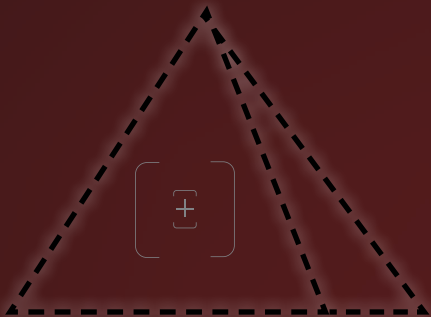
PHASE 2: THE DARK NIGHT



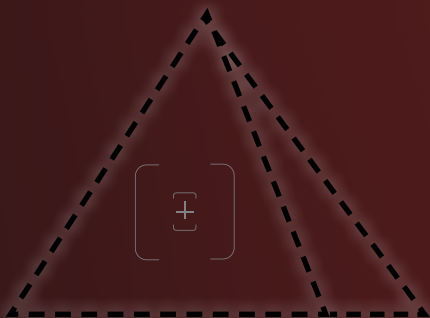
PHASE 3: REKINDLED FLAMES

MAP OF THE TEMPLE OF
ETERNAL ASH

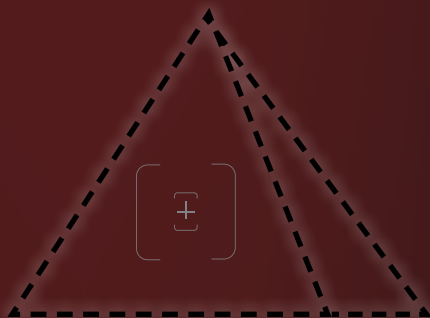
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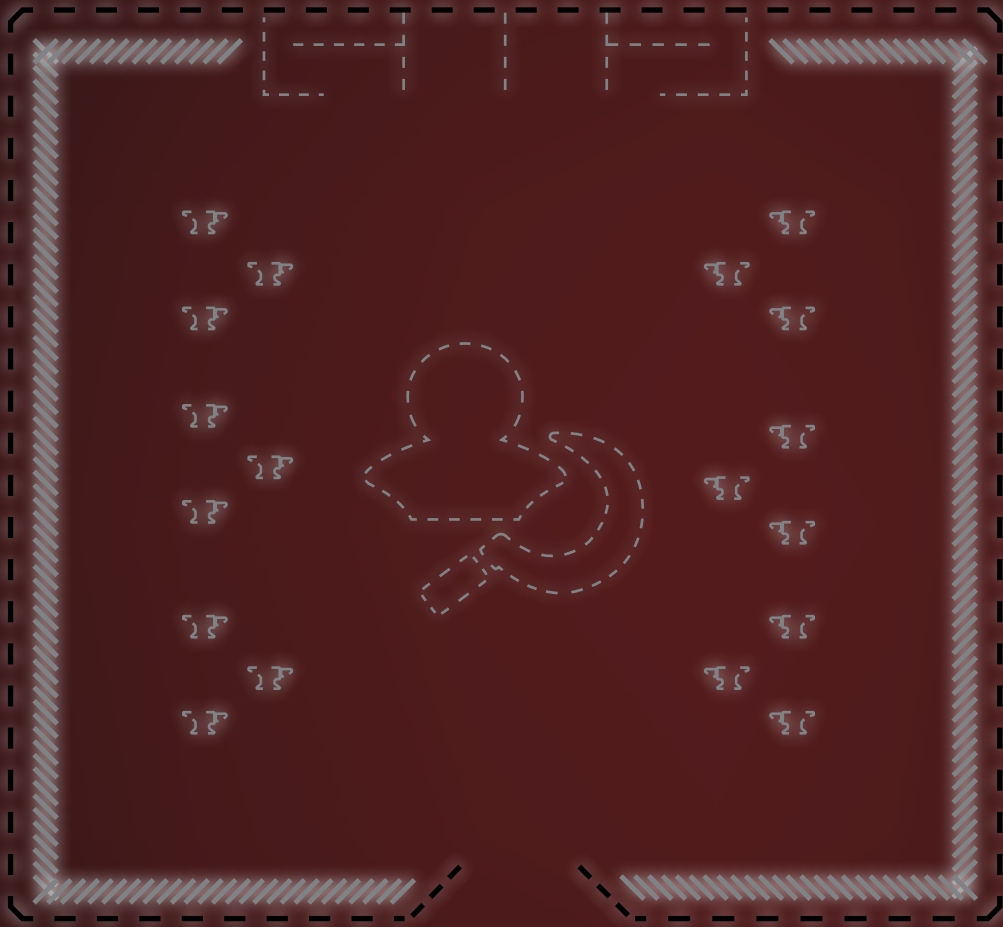
3



COURTYARD

(NOT TO SCALE)

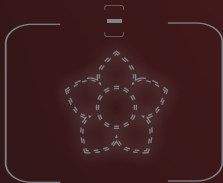
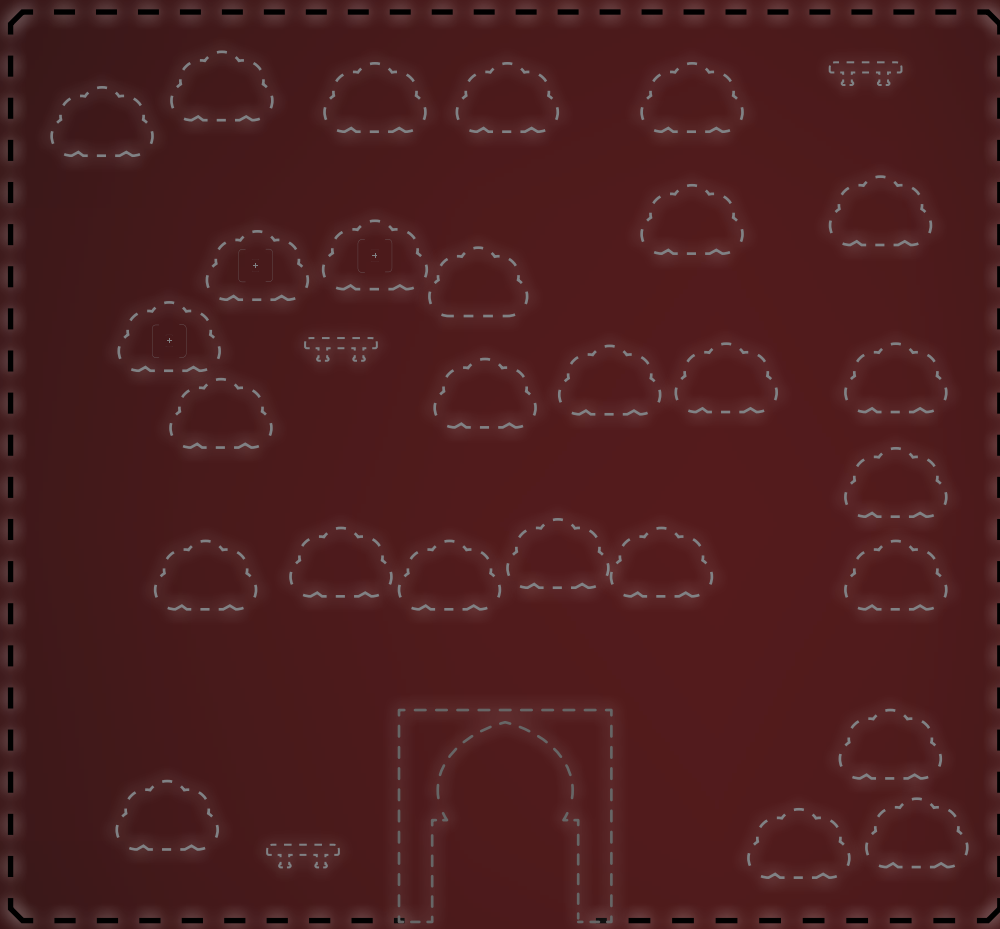
MAP OF THE TEMPLE OF
ETERNAL ASH



1. THE FORGE

5 ft |

MAP OF THE TEMPLE OF
ETERNAL ASH

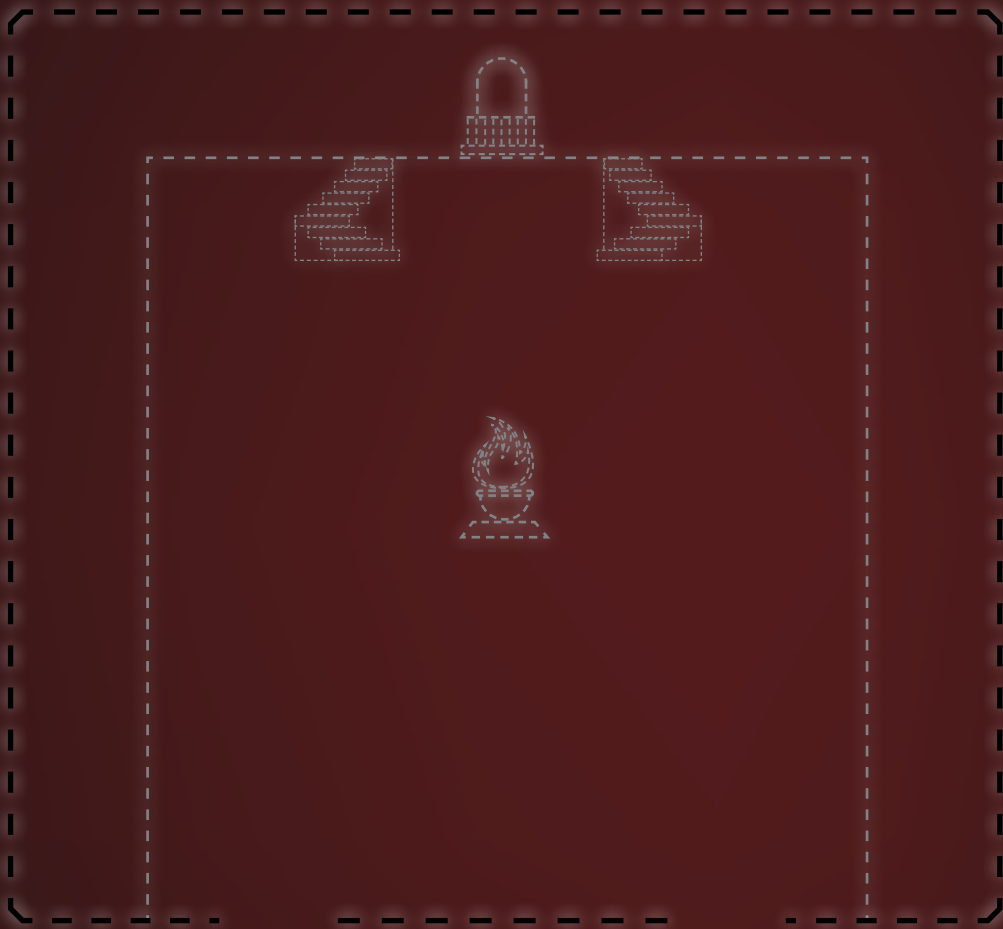


MOONSHADE

2. THE GARDEN

5 ft |

MAP OF THE TEMPLE OF
ETERNAL ASH



3. THE SANCTUARY -
THE CHAMBER OF FLAME

5 ft |



PHASE I: THE BURNING DUSK

COUNTDOWN TO SUNDOWN

Under a blood-red sun, the party portals into a triangular courtyard, each vertex marked by one of three great pyramids built of a glassy black stone. The sand beneath their feet is dark, and the air is warm. Acolytes in crimson tunics and sheath dresses move through the complex in a graceful and deliberate manner.

At the center of the courtyard is an ornate iron sundial with unique properties. All hours that have already passed are obscured in shadow, within which a dust of embers is inflamed. The dial suggests that it is almost midday. As the day ages, the shadow across the sundial grows and the embers within intensify.

A human acolyte approaches the party, introducing herself as Chisisi Salah. She is tall and slender with striking features that seem to embody the grace and poise of the temple's acolytes. Her hair is styled in elaborate braids and her deep brown eyes sparkle with an inner light. There is a sense of strength and authority about Chisisi that suggests she is not to be underestimated.

"On behalf of the Flamekeeper, I welcome you to the Temple of Eternal Ash. Here, we are devoted to the Time God Kronious, believing that through death and rebirth, we can attain a state of spiritual enlightenment. The temple is a peaceful place. I invite you to explore the pyramids and find counsel with the Flamekeeper. But I would do so before sundown."

CHISISI SALAH

A child of thieving sorcerers, Chisisi came to the temple as a young girl after her parents were killed by enemies unknown and she was forced to flee. She eventually found refuge at the temple, where the acolytes helped her to embrace her magical abilities, which she had initially feared were harmful. Having honed her skills over the years, she has become one of the most powerful acolytes in the temple and is often by the side of the Flamekeeper.

Despite her power, Chisisi remains humble and steadfast in her faith, willing to provide gentle guidance to whoever seeks it, including visitors of the temple. For this, she is perceived as a wisewoman by her fellow acolytes, and she plays the role well.

Chisisi knows all the secrets of the temple, but she is only willing to help guide the characters towards enlightenment by speaking of its doctrines and its layout, not its mysteries. If queried about any of the unusual happenings around the temple, she urges the characters to speak to the Flamekeeper.





THE TEMPLE COMPLEX

The three pyramids that comprise the temple complex are:

Pyramid 1: The Forge

Pyramid 2: The Garden

Pyramid 3: The Sanctuary

The acolytes reside in chambers beneath the Garden of Moonshade and the Chamber of Flame. Though the dwellings have loungers, very few have beds. Most of the free time of the acolytes is spent reading scripture and meditating. There are no chambers beneath the Forge as its underground is occupied by a river of lava.

Only the Flamekeeper knows about the Time Artifact. If any of the acolytes are asked about it, they refer the characters to the Flamekeeper.

COMMON DIALOGUE HEARD AROUND THE TEMPLE

- △ “The Flamekeeper is the highest authority in our temple. His teachings guide us, and his power protects us.”
- △ “Some say the flame can be both a source of creation and destruction.”
- △ “The Flamekeeper is a powerful sorcerer who teaches us to embrace the fire so that we may grow more powerful.”
- △ “At sunset, the power of Kronious is at its peak.”

PYRAMID 1: THE FORGE

Blacksmiths work with intense focus, their muscles flexing as they hammer molten metal into shape, smelted by a river of lava that follows the perimeter of the pyramid, which is dedicated entirely to the forge. The heat from the river is intense, but the blacksmiths are unfazed, falling into the rhythm of hammers clanging, a form of meditation to them. At the center of the room is the workings of a giant statue of Kronious holding a sickle. It is near completion.

A stern-looking orc with a shaved head stands in front of the statue, carefully overseeing the workers who are crafting it. Her name is Akila Ninagal, and she wears a leather apron over her dark red tunic.

“Just like how we reshape metal with the power of fire, Kronious reshapes the world with the power of time,” Akila calls out to her workers. “Nothing stays the same. Everything changes, everything comes to an end. Even the strongest of metals will eventually rust and crumble to dust.”

AKILA NINAGAL

Born into the temple, Akila is known for her dedication and discipline. She believes smithing is the truest form of worship to Kronious, for it represents his ability to reshape the world, and is eager to teach anyone willing to pick up a hammer.

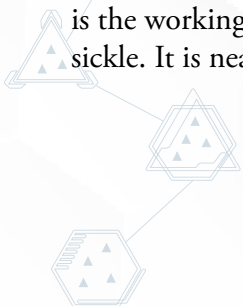
If the characters approach Akila, she speaks about Kronious being the master blacksmith but has little more to share. She will, however, invite the characters to practice the craft, handing any who accepts her offer a pair of tongs.



AKILA NINAGAL

CHALLENGE: MOLTEN LAVA CAKE

Chunks of metal have fallen into the river of lava by clumsy blacksmiths. Using a pair of tongs, characters who are able to retrieve some of the metal may forge it into anything they want. However, the river is extremely hot. The longer one lingers by its side fishing for metal, the more heat damage they receive.



The characters can only attempt to retrieve metal once per round. At the beginning of each round, they each roll 1d20 to determine their success. This continues until a character retrieves the metal within their tongs or gives up trying. Magical protection from the heat, dexterity, and other skills may modify the roll.

Outcome of Roll:

1 - 14: An attempt to secure the metal was unsuccessful. If the character chooses to remain and try again on the next round, they receive minimal fire or elemental damage from the heat. More damage is inflicted for every round they remain by the river.

15+: The character grips the metal in their tongs, and they quickly back away to an anvil, eager to craft.

You begin to contour the metal into a rough shape, pounding it with the hammer and watching as it takes on a new form. The acolytes continue their work around you, but the atmosphere is peaceful and meditative. You can sense the dedication and reverence that the acolytes have for their craft and their beliefs.

At the anvil next to one of the characters, an acolyte makes a miniature sculpture of a cake, which is clearly not meant for the statue of Kronious. If asked about it, she says she was inspired by a boy named Gustavo who visited a couple of weeks ago on his own. She intends to give the cake sculpture to him if he comes back, for he talked much about his friend, a baker named Robby.

PYRAMID 2: THE GARDEN

THE GARDEN OF MOONSHADE

Flourishing stalks emerge from the dark sands of the garden, forming tall hedges that encourage a leisurely stroll while lost in contemplation. Amongst the intertwined stalks are a variety of plant species labeled with signage for the convenience of visitors. At the top of the pyramid, some stones are transparent instead of black and serve as skylights, allowing natural light to illuminate the flora below.

One plant species includes a golden flower with a thick stem full of spiny clusters. The plant, called the Golden Cinder, smells sweet and spicy and is said to produce the best sugar, a unique flavor that's hard to find elsewhere.



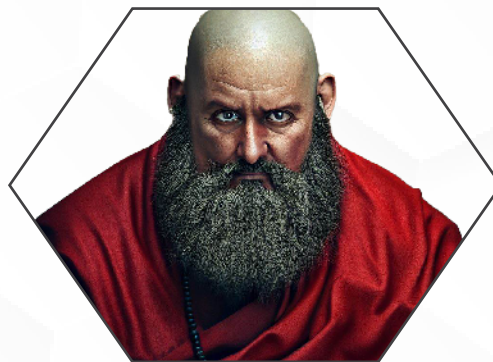
A BYTE OF COOKIE

INGREDIENT:

Golden Cinder, Sugar

The treasure of the garden is the moonshade. Closed during the day, at night, the moonshade's buds begin to unfurl, revealing stunning white blossoms that shimmer with a faint silver glow, almost as if they are made of moonlight itself. As the night wears on and the sun begins to rise, the moonshade slowly closes its petals, waiting patiently for the next night to come. If plucked under moonlight, the blossom will remain open, even during the day.

Meticulously pruning and watering the garden is its caretaker Rhozir Tammuz, a stout human-looking man with hardened skin and grey eyes that hold a hint of some long-buried turmoil. He is mostly seen by the moonshade blossoms, gazing longingly at the closed buds. When visitors come to the garden, he is quick to grunt to a sign that forbids the picking of any plant. However, everyone is invited to sow seeds in several bare patches of sand, using trowels, rakes, and seed bags left around the garden.



RHOZIR TAMMUZ



RHOZIR TAMMUZ

A solitary and brutish soul, Rhozir rarely speaks, preferring instead to communicate through small gestures and expressions. There is a sense of agelessness about him, as if he has been tending to the garden for centuries. He is said to possess vast knowledge of the magical properties of each plant. Many who have encountered Rhozir speculate about his true identity, with some whispering that he may be a druid or even an immortal being.

Picking any of his flowers without permission will earn Rhozir's great ire and his silence! However, if any characters help plant seeds, he will speak.

"The plants in this garden have a special magic to them, a fire that burns deep within their roots. It is my duty to tend to them and ensure that their power is never misused."

If asked about the Golden Cinder plant, Rhozir reveals the sugar is not in the golden blossoms but in the spine clusters along its stem. He allows the characters to each pick one cluster. If more than the permitted number of clusters is taken, as the party leaves the garden, a glaring Rhozir makes a gesture with his hand, and all the clusters in their possession turn black and wither, their sugar drained.

PYRAMID 3: THE SANCTUARY

THE CHAMBER OF FLAME

The Chamber of Flame is where the Flamekeeper conducts his most important rituals. A large brazier burns brightly at its center, where acolytes gather, chanting in unison, their voices rising and falling in a rhythmic pattern. The smokeless flames of the fire seem to dance in response to the chanting, casting strange shadows on the walls. The acolytes are deeply focused, ignoring anyone who may enter the room, dispersing only if instructed to by the Flamekeeper, who watches from a low mezzanine that leads to the library and meditation rooms above the chamber.

THE FLAMEKEEPER



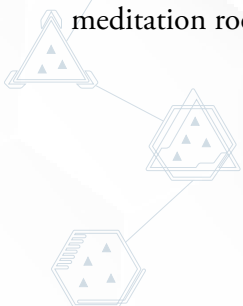
The Flamekeeper is a tall, broad-shouldered dragon-born with deep-set eyes. His beard is long and black, and his hair is kept in a neat bun. Tall and upright, he wears a flowing red robe with intricate golden embroidery depicting a flame against a waning moon. His posture is both confident and reverent, conveying a sense of inner strength and spiritual devotion. The Flamekeeper sees himself as a servant of the gods, tasked with the important responsibility of maintaining the temple and guiding the acolytes in their pursuit of enlightenment.



THE FLAMEKEEPER

The Flamekeeper was born into a family of acolytes who have served Kronious for generations. He trained under his father, who was also a Flamekeeper, before taking on the role himself. From his father, the Flamekeeper learned the ancient rituals and incantations that have been practiced in the temple for centuries, but he is not held down by the past. He has added his own unique insights to the teachings, which have helped to attract new followers.

When the characters enter the Chamber of Flame for the first time, the Flamekeeper leaves the mezzanine, descending an iron staircase to greet them. He speaks in a measured and deliberate manner, choosing his words carefully to convey the gravity of his beliefs. Despite his seriousness, the Flamekeeper is not without warmth or humor. He has a wry wit and a playful spirit that can emerge in moments of camaraderie, and he is always willing to engage in thoughtful conversation or debate.





Information learned from the Flamekeeper:

THE BLESSING OF KRONIOUS

The power that sustains the temple is a delicate form of time magic, believed to be a benediction from Kronious. It is anchored to the black pyramids that structure the temple complex. Any interference with the magic can have dire consequences.

When the sun falls, bending day to night, the acolytes turn to ash, and their souls are transported to a pocket dimension until sunrise, when they are resurrected. The sacred rite is known as the Blessing of Kronious. The acolytes have no memory of the pocket dimension, but they believe it to be a place without suffering.

The Blessing of Kronious only affects those initiated by the Flamekeeper through a sacred ritual and only when they are on temple grounds. If they travel outside of the temple, their bodies are preserved until they return. Many acolytes use their time away from the temple to take in the stars. And to wear pajamas.

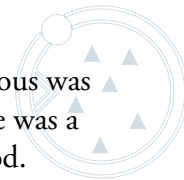
INITIATION

Accession from initiate to acolyte is a solemn and sacred ceremony, conducted at sunrise at the sundial when it is least in shadow. The initiate kneels before the Flamekeeper, who holds a small hourglass filled with dark sand in one hand and a ceremonial dagger in the other. Reciting a prayer to Kronious, calling upon the Time God to grant the initiate the strength and wisdom to serve the temple faithfully, the Flamekeeper cuts a small incision on the initiate's palm with the dagger and allows a few drops of blood to fall into the hourglass.

The sand in the hourglass begins to glow with a golden light, and the initiate feels a sudden surge of energy coursing through their body. Smashing the hourglass onto the sundial, where the dark sand is absorbed into shadow, the Flamekeeper declares the acolyte to be one with the temple and worthy of the Blessing of Kronious.

TRIANGLE OF WANING

The Time Artifact within Mirador is an amulet known as the Triangle of Waning. It was created out of desperation by an acolyte named Marduk. A wizard, he sought to use the amulet's power to defend the temple when it was attacked by the Order of the Timebound, a violent



guild who believed that the worship of Kronious was dangerous and needed to be stopped, for time was a fragile holy force outside the whims of any god.

Marduk was successful in protecting the temple from the Timebound, wearing the amulet on a band on the same arm he carried his staff, but it came at a cost. He unleashed a massive blast that destroyed not only his enemies, but also himself and anyone near him. Retrieving the amulet from a pile of ash, the Flamekeeper of Marduk's era worked her sorcerer's magic to limit the amulet's power, but its use still carries consequence.

The current Flamekeeper believes he knows the code to access the Triangle of Waning, for it's a code that has been passed down with no known purpose. He's willing to give it to the characters, but only if they spend the night in the temple and collect a moonshade blossom for him. Because of the Blessing of Kronious, the Flamekeeper has never seen the moonshade bloom, but as the characters have not been initiated into the temple, they will not turn to ash at sunset.

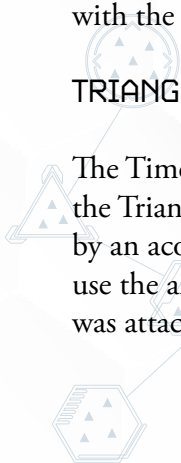
CHALLENGE: MOON AND SUN

If characters pick a moonshade blossom during the night and give it to the Flamekeeper in the morning, they will be rewarded with the code to the Triangle of Waning.

SERMON OF FLAME

At any point throughout the day, the characters may attend a sermon by the Flamekeeper, which he delivers from his mezzanine, speaking down to his followers, who listen intently. Those at the sermon hear the following teachings:

- △ Time is the most powerful force in the universe and it must be respected and understood to live a meaningful existence.
- △ The cycle of day and night is a reminder that everything in life is constantly in flux, and that it is the job of the individual to adapt and evolve.
- △ Embracing the creative and destructive nature of time can lead to a greater appreciation for the present moment.



- Δ Kronious is more than a Time God. He is a god of change, and those who follow him must be willing to embrace the unknown to bring about enlightenment.
- Δ While destruction is necessary for growth and change, it must be tempered by compassion and empathy for those who suffer its consequences.





PHASE II: THE DARK NIGHT

When the characters are finished with their exploration of the temple, Chisisi finds them where they are and guides them over to the sundial. It's almost completely covered in shadow, and the floating embers have turned to raging flames, eager to consume the last sliver of daylight.

"Don't be frightened," Chisisi says as golden fissures of light pulse across her skin, "for what you are about to witness is as natural as the falling sun."

As the last rays of day fade away, the light within Chisisi intensifies until she bursts with an otherworldly radiance. Then there is only darkness and ash, leaving the temple bathed in an eerie silence.

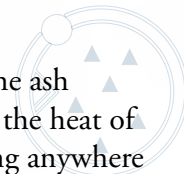
Soon, that silence is broken.

ASH OF THE ACOLYTES

At night, the temple is meant to be serene, any movement belonging only to restless initiates who have not yet received the Blessing of Kronious, of which there are few. But someone has disrupted the magic within the temple, turning the ash of some the acolytes into vicious creatures. How many, and the frequency in which the ash creatures attack, is up to the Game Master.

COMBAT: Ash creatures maintain their humanoid forms but are corrupted with long, slashing claws and the ability to envelop a target in a cloud of choking ash, which can cause moderate necrotic or poison damage and prevent the target from speaking or casting spells with verbal components. The ash creatures are vulnerable to water but resistant to poison. When successfully fought off, an ash creature collapses back into a pile of ash and returns to its previous state as an acolyte of the temple upon sunrise.

NON-COMBAT: An ash creature can be subdued without resorting to violence. Characters can try to reason with it or appeal to its former identity as a peaceful acolyte. This may require charisma, diplomacy, or healing. If successful, the ash creature may abandon its violent behavior and return to its dormant state, allowing the characters to restrain or otherwise incapacitate it.



HIDE: The characters can take refuge from the ash creatures in the forge. Though born of flame, the heat of the forge debilitates the ash creatures. Standing anywhere in the forge will keep them at bay, though characters should be careful not to spend too much time near the river of lava, or they will suffer minimal fire or elemental damage. If they have taken on the *Challenge: Moon and Sun* and have already obtained the moonshade, characters should be mindful that the blossom does not wilt in the heat, or they may have to face the ash creatures to pluck another and do so before the sun rises and the buds of the moonshade fold once more.

SKIP: Encounters with the ash creatures can be skipped altogether. If so, the characters can instead peacefully explore the temple at night, planting seeds, smithing ironworks, and chatting with initiates. Come morning, they give the moonshade blossom to the Flamekeeper, and they are rewarded with the code to the Triangle of Waning. (See *The Code and Time Artifact: The Triangle of Waning*.)

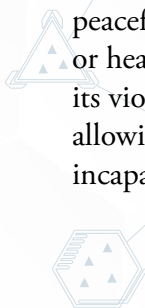
MOON AND SUN

If the characters accepted the *Challenge: Moon and Sun*, they need to go to the Garden of Moonshade to pick a blossom while it's still night. This may happen either before or after the initial attack from the ash creatures. In the garden, the warning signs that read "DO NOT PICK THE MOONSHADE" are illuminated under the silvery glow of the white petals, which are as luminous and wondrous as told.

A blossom of the moonshade is easy for a character to pluck, but as the stem breaks, the ground beneath the character suddenly gives way, and they begin to sink into the sand. Realizing that they have triggered a sand trap, the character affected might struggle to escape, but this only makes them sink faster. Once waist deep, they stop sinking, the trap set by Rhazir Tammuz meant to catch a thief, not to slay one. But with ash creatures lurking about, it could very well turn into a death trap.

THE RISING SUN

It is up to the Game Master to determine when the night has ended, signified by the rising of the blood-red sun.





PHASE III: REKINDLED FLAMES

As you cautiously make your way through the temple complex at sunrise, calm seems to have been restored. The ash creatures have vanished, and the acolytes have been resurrected and gone back to their duties. You approach one of the acolytes and ask him if he remembers what happened the night before. He looks at you blankly and shakes his head. "It was a peaceful night in the pocket dimension, just like any other."

You try talking to a few more acolytes, but they all give you the same response. None of them remember transforming into ash creatures. But someone has disturbed the magic of the temple. Revisiting the pyramids may reveal who.

THE FORGE REVISITED

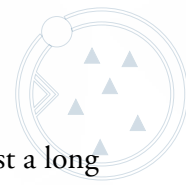
Unlike the day before, there's a hissing sound reverberating from the back of the forge. If the noise is investigated, the party discovers a small room with a workbench cluttered with tools and half-finished projects. The source of the hissing is a mechanical snake with glowing green eyes, powered by some kind of magical energy. Unlike everything around it, it is not covered in dust, but seems clean and polished.

Akila Ninagal pounds away at a piece of metal with a hammer, her muscles flexed with exertion. Her bald head gleams in the heat of the forge. She appears worried and, with the back of her hand, wipes the sweat from her forehead.

"In the forge of time, we are all like pieces of metal, heated and hammered until we become something strong and beautiful."

If asked about the snake, Akila tells the characters it was left behind by a visitor to the temple and may have been activated by whatever disturbed the temple's magic the night before. That's if there truly was a disturbance. She questions if the characters did not have a collective nightmare or were affected by the various flora in the Garden of Moonshade that cause hallucinations.

THE GARDEN REVISITED



Near the moonshade blossoms, leaning against a long rake, Rhozir Tammuz seems frozen in anger, his gaze fixed on a broken stem where a moonshade blossom has been plucked. This is the same moonshade the characters stole if they completed the *Challenge: Moon and Sun*. From his pocket, he retrieves a moonshade blossom and inhales the white petals, as if in mourning for the one that was lost.

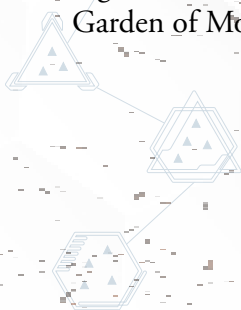
If the characters wander through the garden, they notice that one of the patches of sand where seeds can be planted has been recently disturbed. There are no seed bags or tools nearby, but the soil is freshly turned. Upon closer inspection, a small, hand-carved wooden figure can be found buried in the dirt. It appears to be a miniature version of the Flamekeeper, with intricate details and a lifelike expression.

If they ask Rhozir about the figure, he seems surprised and responds that it is a totem he crafted to represent the garden's guardian spirits, which he believes protect the plants. He places the totems he crafts in the soil as offering to the spirits.

"The spirits protect this garden, just as the moon guards the night sky. They see everything, and they revel in the beauty and chaos of the worlds."

Also in the garden is Chisisi Salah. She sits on a flat stone bench surrounded by the tall stalks that weave the pathways. On the bench are leaves of the Honey Mindmender. Sighing deeply, she seems troubled and forlorn.

The Honey Mindmender is a plant with thick orange leaves and delicate flowers that bloom in shades of pale pink and yellow. The plant is known for its healing properties, particularly its ability to soothe and cure ailing minds. It is often brewed into a tea, releasing a sweet fragrance similar to honey, but the leaves can also be finely crushed and applied to the forehead, though it may cause a rash.



Whether to herself or sensing you nearby, Chisisi whispers, "Something feels... off. I can't quite place it, like a faint echo of something I may have done but can't remember. I've spent so much time trying to understand the magic within me, but I fear I've stumbled onto something I don't understand at all. I may have let a darkness in, without even realizing it." She picks up a leaf from the bench, crushes it, and uses the debris to paint a triangle upon her forehead, which glows golden. "Perhaps these Honey Mindmender leaves can banish the darkness and return me to gracefulness."

THE SANCTUARY REVISITED

The Flamekeeper kneels in front of the massive brazier that burns in the Chamber of Flame. In a trance, his eyes flickering between voids of gold and black, he chants in an ageless language that creates unease within the chamber. The Flamekeeper is not himself. Something is terribly wrong.

"This is not the Flamekeeper we know. Something has taken hold of his mind!" yells an acolyte.

If the characters approach the acolytes, they are informed that the Flamekeeper was found in a corrupted state upon their resurrection at sunrise. It's unclear how long he's been like this, or what may have caused it, but there is a plant in the Garden of Moonshade called the Honey Mindmender that may help him.

If the characters retrieve the leaves of the Honey Mindmender, they can use it to cure the Flamekeeper. If not, Chisisi Salah can bring the leaves to the Chamber of Flame and administer them herself.

As the Honey Mindmender takes effect, the Flamekeeper's eyes gradually regain their focus, and his chaotic chanting stops, his fever replaced with a sense of clarity, though he does not recall anything about the ash creatures or what took possession of him. The last thing he remembers is preparing for the Blessing of Kronious the night before.

Whether the characters have the requested moonshade or not, the Flamekeeper offers to give them the code to the Triangle of Waning, out of remorse for their ordeal. But first, he asks that they share with him all they have experienced and discovered while at the temple and to offer their opinions on who they believe may have disrupted its magic.

The Flamekeeper listens intently to the party's theories, his eyes occasionally filling with horror, but he does not offer his own opinion as to what happened. Instead, he informs them that he will soon summon the acolytes to the Chamber of Flame. The characters are invited to attend the gathering if they so choose.

THE CODE

The code to unlock the Triangle of Waning is 1-3-6-9.

TIME ARTIFACT: THE TRIANGLE OF WANING

The Triangle of Waning is a triangular amulet made of obsidian and has the symbol of the temple etched on its surface – a flame against a waning moon. It is attached to a leather armband of charcoal grey. When used, it allows the wearer to point with the arm it adorns and unleash a powerful bolt of energy that rapidly ages a single target within sixty feet. If the target fails to resist the triangle's magic, it is instantly reduced to a pile of ash, but even those who survive suffer severe necrotic or energy damage.

The Triangle of Waning can be used once per day, but doing so drains the wearer and makes them vulnerable to attack until a long rest is had.

THE GATHERING

The Flamekeeper stands on the mezzanine overlooking the Chamber of Flame, his eyes scanning the room as the acolytes enter. The fire of the brazier burns strong and true, powered with magic by Chisisi Salah, who sits in front of it with her eyes closed and palms upright, emitting golden energy, cleansing the temple of its corruption. It is the hope of the Flamekeeper and Chisisi that the cleansing will act as a truth serum, forcing the guilty to reveal themselves.

THE TRIANGLE OF WANING





Rumors swirl among the acolytes regarding the night before, who speak loudly with apprehension, but when the Flamekeeper sternly raises his hand, the acolytes fall silent.

"I understand that many of you are frightened and confused by recent events. But I remind you that only by embracing the cycle of creation and destruction do we achieve enlightenment. Our god Kronious embodies this cycle. He is the Lord of Time, and it is through his power that we transform, to shed our old selves and become something new. This is the way of the universe. It is what gives our existence meaning."

The acolytes remain silent, reverent to the spiritual guidance of their leader. One by one, to display their trust in him, they each form a triangle with their hands and bow their heads to it. Harm may come, but they will not flee from it. They will embrace enlightenment. They will live the will of Kronious.

Within the silence, mad laughter erupts. "Kronious does not care about creation. It is only destruction that he seeks. For if he has the power to destroy the universe, he also has the power to control it."

The speaker is Rhozir Tammuz, who holds a blossom of moonshade in his hand, the same he pulled from his pocket in the garden earlier, which he only could have plucked if he too were alive at night.



THE WILL OF KRONIOUS

An ancient being, long-lived but not immortal, Rhozir Tammuz flew through the cosmos for eons, observing the worlds within. As those worlds inevitably crumbled and decayed, he became increasingly fixated on the negative aspect of time, and he began to believe, to his dismay, that destruction was the true nature of all things.

Eventually, he came across a small temple dedicated to Kronious – The Temple of Eternal Ash. The acolytes who worshiped at the temple saw Kronious as a benevolent god who brought order to the chaos of time, but Rhozir knew Kronious as a conquering force who devoured all. Nevertheless, there was a peace in the simple tasks of the temple that inspired Rhozir. He began to live among the acolytes, finding joy tending to the garden. His essence immune from the Blessing of Kronious, at night he sat amongst the moonshade, using floral hallucinations to hide his presence from anyone yet to be initiated into the temple.

But Rhozir grew agitated, sensing a shift within the universe, as if time itself was on the verge of collapse. He wanted to show the acolytes that they were misled, that destruction reigned over creation. Only then could the acolytes prepare for whatever ruin was about to unfold. That they should guard against Kronious, not worship him.

When the characters arrived at the temple the day before, Rhozir finally had witnesses to the corruption he planned to cast upon the Flamekeeper and the temple's magic, making them heralds of his message that Kronious was not ordered but manipulative and damaging. He never realized that he was becoming all he hoped to protect the acolytes from.

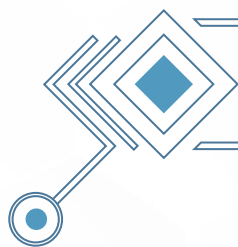
The Flamekeeper may be forgiving of Rhozir. He may even heed his warnings. Or he might cast him out. Perhaps Rhozir leaves on his own accord, wandering the universe once more, forever dreaming of his Garden of Moonshade. If the characters leave before Rhozir is sentenced, his fate at the temple might never be known. It is up to the Game Master to decide.





PART III: ANOMALIES





CHAPTER SEVEN: DARK FATE

TERMINAL

If the characters put the six room keys of the Researchers into the six slots of the terminal in the Control Room, the key embossments transform into the skulls of their respective animals and the facility falls into darkness.

From the screen glows a red glyph against a distorted black background. At the bottom of the screen is the writing: *They All Fall Down.*

It is the glyph for Devastation. If traced on a transporter, the characters are brought to a crater upon which Mirador was built upon.

THE CRATER

Requires the Devastation glyph to access through a transporter.

Underground.

A dark chasm, the crater is about 40 ft deep and 100 ft wide. Its edges are jagged and rough and the earth barren, the blast that created it tragically destructive. There is no way out except through the transporter, for it is entirely enclosed by the foundation of Mirador.

Visibility within the crater is near zero with only a very faint glow coming from the transporter at its center. If characters brought a source of light, such as the flashlight in Amil's room, or if they possess the ability to see in the dark, then when they look up, they see the pipes, insulation, and concrete of the facility's underbelly.

Within sight is a charred survival backpack. It is empty. Near it grows a small patch of wildflowers.

KRONIOUS

Out of the darkness of the crater, a mysterious figure draped in black emerges. With a graceful sweep of his arms, he summons a blazing ring of fire, encircling the characters. A sly grin spreads across his face as he introduces himself.

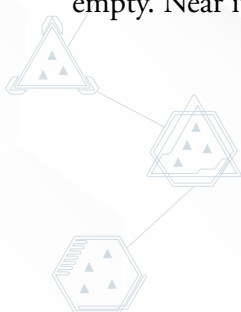
"Behold, I am Kronious. I know the answers you seek, but I offer you something far greater – the chance to embrace the chaotic nature of destruction, to wield it like a weapon and bend the very fabric of the universe to your will. You will soon be presented with a choice. Save the children. It is what you must do, regardless of the consequences."

For a small while, Kronious lingers in the crater alongside the characters, willing to lend an ear to their queries. However, his responses are evasive. He extols the virtues of breaking free from the chains of a cyclic universe. He speaks of chaos as a catalyst for real change, hinting at the possibility of a new order emerging from the ashes of the old.

When he grows tired of the characters, with a burst of flames, Kronious vanishes, leaving behind a scorched message etched into the earth:

SAVE THE CHILDREN.

CHOOSE CHAOS.



STORAGE CLOSET

Requires a binary code to access. Only accessible through the Foyer.

Level One.

Inscribed on the inner wall of the Foyer is the inscription:

I am the birth of eternity. I am the death of time and space. I am embedded within creation, at the beginning of every end, and the end of every place.

Below the inscription are eight touchscreen buttons that, when tapped, alternate between a 0 and a 1.

The inscription is a riddle. The answer is lower-case e, which must be inputted into the touchscreens in its binary format of 01100101. A binary chart is located in Bian's room.

Successfully inputting the binary code for lower-case e into the security system unlocks the door to the Storage Closet.

PAST SURVEILLANCE

Within the Storage Closet, tucked between shelves full of homewares and cleaning supplies, is a small desk with two grey video floppy disks and an old computer with an accompanying monitor sitting on top. The computer is on, displaying a screensaver of white stars on a black background moving as if the viewer is traveling through space.

Stored on each floppy disk is a surveillance video. The videos are pixilated and move jerkily from frame to frame. Taken from a high angle, they only last a minute or so each. There is no audio.

VIDEO FLOPPY DISK 1

A playpen sits under the shelf of herbs in the Kitchen of Mirador. Inside is a small child who laughs as he runs a pot between the bars of his enclosure. At a counter, a girl stands next to Robby as she mixes cake batter into a bowl. Robby holds up various spice leaves, as if lecturing her on their properties.

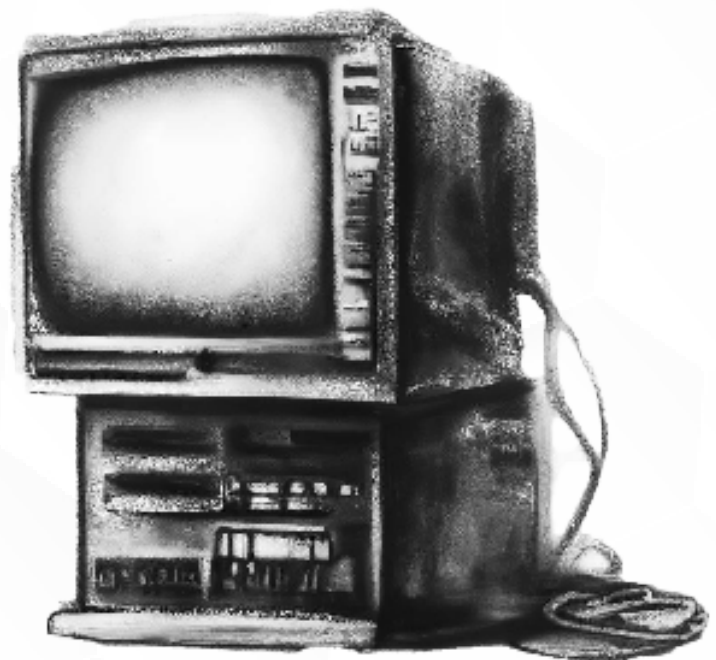
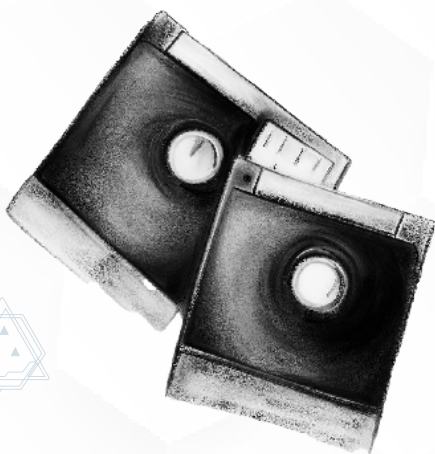
Characters with high natural perception or intelligence detect the boy is Gustavo and the girl is Cilly.

VIDEO FLOPPY DISK 2

Two young girls, one only slightly older than the other, sit in the middle of the Left Wing Hallway coloring on pages. A boy of similar age uses a black marker to draw on the walls. One of the girls begins to cough uncontrollably. Wintergreen suddenly glitches into the shot and tends to her, a look of grave concern upon her.

Characters with high natural perception or intelligence detect the two girls are Amil and Bian and the boy is Aldric.

As you finish watching the videos, you can't help but feel as though you are being watched yourself, as if something powerful is always monitoring you. Confirming your fears, the walls and floor of the Storage Closet suddenly illuminate with glowing optic fibers and an area of the wall hisses open, revealing a secret tunnel. The optic fibers continue their stretch into the tunnel, its alloy walls cold to the touch.





THE TUNNEL

Lit by optic fibers, the tunnel that leads away from the Storage Closet seems empty and endless, but as the characters turn its many corners, fragmented holograms materialize around them, creating the illusion that the events of the projections are unfolding within the tunnel itself before they glitch away.

TUNNEL PROJECTION 1

Wintergreen twirls gracefully in a shimmering silver gown, her green cape fluttering behind her. She dances with abandon, her laughter echoing through the crowd of revelers surrounding her. But as she turns, she catches sight of a cloaked figure in cobalt blue with a long grey beard descending from the shadow of his face. Her smile fades, and she freezes in place.

"Aion," she whispers, her voice heavy with resignation. The hooded figure strides towards her, his steps measured. "Wintergreen," he chides harshly as those around them disappear.

"I was only dancing," Wintergreen protests weakly, but her gaze falls to the ground.

Placing a comforting hand on her shoulder, Aion softens his tone. "You know that mortals must follow their own path. We cannot intrude on their destiny."

Wintergreen's brows furrow, her expression troubled. "I want to be free, to live with purpose like they do. To embrace every breath I draw, every sunrise I wake up to. I think I want to be mortal."

Aion shakes his head sadly. "We will never be mortal. Our purpose is different. We exist to protect the Tapestry of Time, the construct of the universe. Mortals are a part of that universe, but they have their own role to play. We must not interfere with that."

TUNNEL PROJECTION 2

People are huddled together, some weeping silently while others stare blankly ahead, their eyes glazed over with shock. They are dirty and disheveled, their clothes torn and their faces streaked with grime. As the sound of an explosion erupts around them, they cry out.

TUNNEL PROJECTION 3

The air thick with dust and falling debris, a man plays the piano, tears falling from his eyes as the notes of his beautiful melody ring out, lamenting the destruction around him.

TUNNEL PROJECTION 4

Its fur coated with ash and dust, a small cat meows plaintively, as if there is no one left in the world to take care of it.

WINTERGREEN'S THRONE

At the end of the tunnel sits Wintergreen upon an emerald throne, which the optic fibers feed into. Behind her is a flickering wall of prism static, a complex tapestry of light and sound that represents every moment in time throughout the universe.

"As a Time God, I am inflicted with the knowledge of ancient and future technology," Wintergreen says, lifting her head against an invisible burden. "I used my powers to protect the innocent from the corruption of technology, but now I am the one who has been corrupted. The universe tries to heal itself, forcing me to correct my misdeed."

Wintergreen momentarily glitches into the Abomination before blipping away completely. The optic fibers dim out, revealing the exit of the tunnel, which angles upward and leads out into the valley miles from Mirador. Buried within the snow are the ruins of a city.

The white dragon flies over the ruins to the Tallest Mountain in the distance, beckoning the characters to follow.



MAP TO THE TALLEST MOUNTAIN

THE TALLEST MOUNTAIN

PROSPERITY CITY
RUINS



MIRADOR

(NOT TO SCALE)

MAP TO THE
TALLEST MOUNTAIN

ZONE 1



ZONE 2

TRAIN STATION

FROZEN RIVER

HOSPITAL

SKYSCRAPER

PROSPERITY CITY RUINS
(CITY CENTER BLOCKS ONLY)

ZONE 3

ZONE 4

100 ft |



NUCLEAR WINTER

In the valley are the remnants of a formerly great metropolis. Once towering skyscrapers and opulent buildings now lay fractured, skeletons of steel and rime. The streets are seemingly devoid of life and empty, except for the occasional burned-out vehicle, deformed by its melted metal. The few trees that have managed to grow in the wasteland are gnarled, their branches barren.

The apocalyptic remains of the city once known as Prosperity can be played solely as a scavenging mission or can include optional horror combat. Characters can also travel around it on their way to the Tallest Mountain, though within the ruins are tools of survival that may help the characters as they trek through the unforgiving freeze.

FROZEN RUINS

Many of the buildings of Prosperity City are frozen solid, making them inaccessible, their rubble preserved in the ice; but a skyscraper, hospital, and train station can be explored. As characters traverse the streets of the city, the biting cold of the wind against their faces, they must watch for falling icicles and slippery surfaces. The entire city is about 80 square miles and has obviously been hit by multiple blasts of some sort.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE: WORLD AT WAR

The following newspaper article is found on a street in an open case that appears to be fireproof. Its other contents have scattered in the wind.

PROSPERITY CITY NEWS

VOL 1369

END TIMES

NUCLEAR EXCHANGE BRINGS END TO PEACE

Within days, the world has plunged into a full-scale nuclear war, with weapons of mass destruction raining down on major cities across the globe, decimating entire regions and causing unprecedented loss of life. In the aftermath of the nuclear blasts, communication networks have been disrupted, making it difficult to ascertain the full extent of the damage.

MYSTERIOUS BROADCAST



Despite the batteries inside being rusted, static crackles from a walkie-talkie on top of a demolished vehicle. The static dithers before a grim voice fills the airwaves.

"Attention all citizens!" the voice says. "The city you are in is scheduled to be bombed in less than twenty-four hours. You are advised to evacuate immediately, or you will perish in the coming bombardment."

Any radio device characters may come across as they explore the city repeats the same message.

SKYSCRAPER

Through shattered windows, characters can access the hollow remains of a skyscraper that lies tilted against the rubble of other buildings. Its once-grand entrance has been blocked by a massive pile of frozen debris. It seems to have mostly housed offices. A desk in the first room the characters enter has, *"We're doomed,"* scratched into it.

Some electronic equipment in the skyscraper survived the blasts, such as computers and servers, but they no longer work, nor is there any electricity within the city to attempt to turn them on. However, the blocky models do indicate that the civilization that lived within the city is a lot less technologically advanced than Mirador.

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Bronze Statue: The whimsical statue of a hamster in a business suit and holding a briefcase remains mostly intact within the reception area of a higher floor.

Lighter: A desk has a lighter on it.

HOSPITAL

The double doors of a side entrance to a hospital hang crookedly from their hinges, creaking eerily in the wind. The walls and floor are frostbitten, making movement slow and treacherous. Medical equipment such as wheelchairs and hospital beds are scattered throughout the corridors. Only the first and second levels of the hospital survived.

A narrow stairway with rusty handrails leads to the operating room. The walls are stained, and their paint is cracked and peeling. The operating table contains frayed straps and a thin, yellowed mattress. Despite the passage of time, the faint smell of decay lingers in the air.

If opting for combat, radioactive ooze lies at the center of the operating table.





OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Medical Supplies: Bandages, antibiotics, and painkillers.

Surgical Tools: Scalpels, forceps, and scissors.

TRAIN STATION

The vacant tracks beyond the platform are buried beneath several feet of snow, the icy flakes swirling in the frigid air. The hulking shell of a locomotive lies on its side within the lobby amid splintered benches and abandoned luggage, the remnants of a catastrophic crash. From the train cars spill camouflaged tents, gas masks, and military fatigues. Above, the mosaic ceiling sags under the weight of icicles with razor-sharp edges.

OTHER ITEMS OF DISCOVERY

Equipment: Radios, wrenches, and hammers.

Luggage: Clothing items spilled from luggage include beanies, gloves, and socks.

COMBAT

Optional.

Characters may not be alone in the wasteland. Amid the desolation, they may begin to witness signs of life – if some of the creatures within the city can truly be considered alive. Twisted, mutated rats scurry across their path, their glowing eyes fixed on the party with a chilling hostility. Pools of radioactive ooze bubble and churn. A growl is heard in the distance. In a city of ruins, the party may have to fight for their own survival.

The Game Master may choose encounters at random or roll 1d10.

Outcome of Roll:

- 1: Alien Raider
- 2 - 3: Radioactive Ooze
- 4 - 6: Mutant Rats
- 7 - 8: Mutant Pigeons
- 9: Mutant Dogs
- 10: Mutant Bears

ALIEN RAIDERS



Scavenging for resources like a well-trained militia, humanoid raiders armed with blasters and wearing gas masks wander the city. Imposing and extremely hostile when provoked, they are intergalactic pirates that club first and think later. They wear sturdy trousers and long, hooded cloaks made from the hides of mutated animals.

The blasters of the alien raiders unleash searing plasma that can melt through almost anything in their path. Used more as a tool for icy wastelands than a weapon, the plasma reserves on their ship are limited, so they are reluctant to shoot at characters, preferring to attack with clubs instead, in which they are highly skilled.

There is a party of twelve alien raiders in the city. If attacked by a raider with a club, characters receive moderate bludgeoning damage. If fired upon by a blaster, they receive severe energy or elemental damage.

If the characters receive a lot of damage, the raider they're fighting may grow bored and teleport away.

RADIOACTIVE OOZE

A sickly green, viscous substance that dimly glows, radioactive ooze can be found in puddles across the city, rippling as it slowly slinks through cracks and crevices, leaving a trail of bubbling, acidic sludge wherever it goes. Stepping in or touching the ooze results in minimal radiation or poison damage.

When the radioactive ooze takes damage, it splits into two identical oozes. It can be contained with concrete or lead barriers.

MUTATED ANIMALS

A pack of mutated animals may prowl towards the characters, grotesque parodies of their former selves, with matted fur and twisted, unnatural limbs. Some have extra ears or teeth protruding from their malformed bodies. All contain a mad, ravaging hunger in their glowing eyes.

MUTANT RATS

These verminous creatures have grown to monstrous sizes and have quills protruding from their backs. A single rat can communicate with its colony, which will work together to bring down larger prey, but rats are reluctant to fight. They prefer the shadows over the bright snow, so are quick to scurry away if within daylight.

If bit by a rat or hit by one of its quills, the character receives minimal piercing damage.





MUTANT PIGEONS

The cooing of birds may sound benign, but characters should be afraid, for the pigeons of Prosperity City have stabbing beaks and talons that can easily tear flesh. They are extremely aggressive and will attack anything they perceive as a threat, though they are only able to fly short distances.

An attack by a pigeon causes moderate piercing damage.

MUTANT DOGS

The descendants of domesticated pets, the feral dogs of the city have become wild and vicious, with fangs that jut out of contorted jaws and the ability to spit acid.

They are highly territorial, mostly sticking to the outer regions of the city; but they still maintain some memory of mortals in their DNA and might respond kindly to offers of food and a scratch behind the ears.

A bite results in moderate piercing and acid or poison damage. Feral dogs have an advantage in a fight if in a pack.

MUTANT BEARS

Hulking monstrosities that lumber through the ruins, the bears can crush a living being with ease. They are descended from a habitat at the zoo. Their claws are long and sharp, capable of easily ripping through metal, so if characters retreat from an attack, they must do so wisely.

If injured by the bear's claws, the character receives severe slashing damage.

THE HOARFROST

Once the characters are done exploring Prosperity City, they emerge from the ruins and look ahead to the remainder of the valley between them and the Tallest Mountain.



AN ARCTIC LANDSCAPE

A pristine blanket of white stretches across the valley to the Tallest Mountain. The sides of the mountain are steep and treacherous, and its jagged peaks pierce the sky. It's about a three-day journey through the frigid winds from the outskirts of Prosperity City to the mountain, if traveling 8 miles per day on foot in the deep snow. The path is treacherous with few trees for shelter and underground caves hidden within the icefields where characters may fall and creatures may lurk.

PACE

Traveling through deep snow is extremely difficult and exhausting, as each step requires significantly more effort than on a solid surface. Characters move at a fraction of their normal speed, depending on how much weight they are carrying and how well-equipped they are.

HYPOTHERMIA

Chattering teeth, numb limbs, frostbite, and sluggish movements are all symptoms of hypothermia. How fast characters may succumb to hypothermia depends greatly on the insulation of the clothing they wear. If they are properly dressed for the elements, roll 1d20 at the beginning of each hour of travel or exposure to the cold.

If characters are dressed inappropriately for the weather and have no magical means to protect themselves, they may wish to turn back to Prosperity City and salvage for gear. Otherwise, the roll is modified by a -10 disadvantage.

The Game Master can roll for each individual character if their clothing choices vary greatly.

Sitting by a fire, resting within a shelter, or staying warm through other means does not necessitate a dice roll.

Outcome of Roll:

0 - 2: Hypothermia has set in, and characters suffer severe cold damage. They must find warmth immediately.

3 - 5: Characters begin to feel the effects of hypothermia and experience moderate cold damage. If they do not find warmth within the next hour, hypothermia takes hold.

6 - 15: There is no immediate danger of hypothermia, but the characters should still seek warmth and protection from the cold as soon as possible.

16 - 20: Characters can endure the cold for the next hour without any significant effects.

FOOD

Game is scarce in the valley, limited to hares and lemmings, who were able to easily hide during the blasts, and wolves that have wandered down from the mountains. The closer the characters are to Prosperity City, the greater there's a chance that some of the game may have mutations, making their meat unviable; but the further away in the valley the characters are, the more wholesome the game.

There is no vegetation except for moss and some small plants within the underground caves.

FROST WOLVES

By the time you realize the howling you hear isn't the wind, it's already too late.

A pack of seven to ten wolves circles the characters, their eyes fixed on their potential prey. They are hungry and intelligent, but they are not desperate, willing to leave a fight if it is in their best interest. When the pack

attacks, they are unrelenting, snapping with deadly force from all sides and trying to find weak spots in the defenses of the characters, causing moderate to severe piercing damage when they successfully strike.

ATOMIC BLIZZARD

At times, it is hard to tell if what falls around you is snow or ash.

Roll 1d20 at the beginning of each day.

Outcome of Roll:

1: A blizzard hits immediately, the sky dark as night. Characters trapped in the blizzard receive both moderate cold and radiation or poison damage.

2 - 5: Flurries graduate to the storm that hits later in the day, giving characters time to seek shelter.

6 - 11: There is a light snowfall that slightly reduces visibility.

12 - 20: The weather is clear.

THE TALLEST MOUNTAIN

The white dragon's lair is in a cave a quarter mile up the mountain, set within a sheer cliff face. Climbing equipment can be used to ascend the mountain, but there is also a hidden stairway built into the rock that can be detected through investigation, perception, or magic. The stairway leads directly into the cave's entrance.

CAVE OF FORTUNES

The walls of the cave are slick with ice, and the floor is covered in a thin layer of snow that gradually melts into the rock. The entrance splits into two smaller passageways, each disappearing into the darkness beyond. Within one passage stands Amil, and in the other Aldric.

"Have you played my Fortune Telling Game?" Amil asks, a metal ting to her voice, much colder than the warmth she portrayed in her video journals. "Your party must choose one of us to follow. But only one."

As characters hike deep into the cave towards the white dragon's lair, they are confronted by the Researchers ahead of every divergence in the passage. They must pick which Researcher they want to follow, the information they receive dependent on their choice. Every Researcher holds a flashlight.

The Researchers seem hauntingly stoic, shells of their former selves that glitch as they move. If characters try to interact with a Researcher, their questions are ignored, and the Researcher repeats the fortune they have to tell. When they reach a new divergence, the passageway behind them closes and the Researcher glitches away, making it impossible to turn back around.

It is not possible for the party to split up. If they try to run past a Researcher without making a selection, they hit an invisible shield. Only once a choice is made and the characters comply with the rules of the game can they move forward.

DIVERGENCE 1: AMIL AND ALDRIC

If the characters pick Amil, she tells them: *"When we were little, Wintergreen saved us from a nuclear blast. As a Time God, she was forbidden to interfere, so she transported only the children away, the most innocent among our group that escaped the city together. It didn't matter how innocent we were. There were consequences to her decision, as there will be to yours."*

If the characters pick Aldric, he tells them: *"We were born of this world. When it fell into war, our birth parents tried to escape from the city, but there was too little warning, too late in time. Mirador sits on the site of the blast that killed our parents. It would have killed us too, if not for the Time God Wintergreen. Or maybe it did."*

DIVERGENCE 2: GUSTAVO AND CILLY

If the characters pick Gustavo, he tells them: *"We've been taken by the Abomination, back to the moments before Wintergreen saved us, right before the bombs hit the city. But what will be has always been. You can never really change the past. We're frozen in those moments now in the form of our younger selves, yet with all the memories of our grown selves."*

If the characters pick Cilly, she tells them: *“Wintergreen tugged too hard at the Tapestry of Time, unraveling one of its threads and causing anomalies throughout space and time. The universe is trying to heal itself. It turns Wintergreen into the Abomination. When she’s in that state, she herds us back to the past in the moments before she saved us, right before the bombs hit the city.”*

DIVERGENCE 3: ALDRIC AND RAINIER

If the characters pick Aldric, he tells them: *“The anomalies caused by Wintergreen’s actions were few at first, but as the fabric of reality continues to unravel, they will get worse, possibly resulting in the obliteration of everything. That’s if the universe can’t heal itself, as many believe it can, weaving the fray back into the tapestry, allowing us a new destiny where we live instead of perishing in the blast, as we were meant to.”*

If the characters pick Rainier, he tells them: *“The universe tries to heal itself by forcing us back beneath the bomb that we were meant to perish under. But what will be has always been. Our families will still have memories of us, even if our true destiny is fulfilled.”*

DIVERGENCE 4: CILLY AND AMIL

If the characters pick Cilly, she tells them: *“When Wintergreen pulled us thousands of years into the future to save us, she simultaneously created Mirador, where she hoped to keep us safe; but the area remained radioactive, and we started to show signs of sickness. Nuclear winters don’t last that long. It couldn’t have been science, but one of the first anomalies caused by her actions. The radiation is why she sent us away.”*

If the characters pick Amil, she tells them: *“When Wintergreen saved us, we were at first brought to Mirador, thousands of years in the future; but it became unsafe, so she sent us to live on other worlds, splitting us up and taking away our memories, perhaps knowing even then that the powers of the universe would come looking for us, children lost in time.”*

DIVERGENCE 5: RAINIER AND GUSTAVO

If the characters pick Rainier, he tells them: *“Though the universe has forced Wintergreen to undo her wrong by having her transform outside of her control into the Abomination, the eternal part of her remains, even when she’s in her corrupted state. I think this is why she pulled us all to Mirador first, instead of herding us back in time to the moments before the blast. Until the very end, she tried to save us, to give us a haven.”*

If the characters pick Gustavo, he tells them: *“When Wintergreen created Mirador, she also created Robby. Though Wintergreen sent us to live on other worlds and took away our memories, hoping to keep us hidden, Robby remained at Mirador, watching over us from the Control Room, making sure we were ok, secretly intervening in our lives when we needed his nourishment the most, like an intergalactic, maybe-robot nanny.”*

FATHER TIME

At the end of the final passageway is a vast cavern where the white dragon awaits, poised and regal, with its wings folded against the pearlescent scales of its massive frame. There is an ageless wisdom behind the piercing blue glow of its eyes. You can feel the weight of its gaze upon you, and you know that this is a moment that will define your destiny.

“Welcome, brave adventurers,” it rumbles, its voice echoing off the walls of the cavern. “You have faced many challenges to reach this place, seeking that which is lost.”

From under a wing, Bian emerges and steps towards you. She seems wholly herself, unaffected by the anomaly inflicted upon the projections of the other Researchers.

A swirling mist engulfs the dragon. When it clears, in its place stands an old man with a long grey beard wearing cobalt blue robes. “I am Aion,” he introduces, “though some prefer to call me Father.”

AION

The oldest of the Time Gods, Aion is a vigilant observer of the cyclical changes that occur within the universe. An ancient, timeless power emanates from him, causing some to wonder if he is more than a Time God but an essence of reality itself.

A COUSIN FOUND

"I'm sorry I brought you here, to this place of goodbyes," Bian says to Tuyet. "But I need your help."

After a heartfelt reunion between the cousins, Bian tells the party that while trekking to the mountain, Rainier was taken by the Abomination. She made it the remainder of the way alone and was offered safety by Aion, who knows of the Abomination's intentions. Bian hasn't left the mountain since then, afraid the Abomination will herd her to the past before she's ready to go.

Before facing her destiny, she needs Tuyet's help.

Bian believes her father, Kiet Windcaster, was a sorcerer who tried to protect them during the nuclear blasts that hit Prosperity City, but he wasn't powerful enough. That's why he spent the years of his unnaturally long life studying amplification spells – he was looking for a way to travel back in time and save his family using an amplification on the compass ring, which she saw him raise towards the sky in her session in the Memory Room, likely trying to manipulate the bombs overhead.

When she appeared at his doorstep, Kiet likely destroyed his research to keep her safe, not wanting to interfere with a timeline where his daughter survived. If she has her father's research, Bian believes she can figure out the amplification spell needed to fortify the power of the compass ring. Since what will be has always been, even once she's back in the past with the other Researchers, she'll remember the spell and be able to call it out to her younger, less knowledgeable father. She is adamant that survival is their destiny, but in their original timeline.

Bian has never seen her father's research, but Tuyet likely has, when she was little, even if she doesn't remember. If Tuyet uploads her memories of Kiet's research into the database of the Memory Room at Mirador, the characters can read through his notes and bring the potential amplification spell back to her. Then Bian will leave the Mountain and sacrifice herself to the Abomination.

If the characters agree to help Bian find her father's research on amplification spells and learn more about him, then Aion transports them to Mirador with his magic.

If they refuse, then he sends them home and the adventure ends.

At this time, Aion doesn't answer any questions about his involvement with the Researchers.

If asked about the letters, Bian reveals that they were all part of the spell to bring Tuyet to Mirador, written by Bian but cast by Aion.

RETURN TO MIRADOR

Once the party has returned to Mirador and Tuyet has uploaded her early childhood memories of her uncle's studies, characters can access it in the database of the Memory Room under *Kiet's Amplification*.

The characters do not have to be present when Tuyet uploads her memories. They can use the time to explore more of the facility or visit the Time Temples, especially if they have not done so already.

ROBBY'S REMORSE

At any time before the characters deep dive into the Windcaster family's past, Robby approaches them, holding a tray of cookies. If the characters have collected all the ingredients, it is his special recipe from the *Challenge: A Byte of Cookie*. If not, it's a normal tray of cookies.

"If the universe succeeds in healing itself, I'm not sure what will happen to me," Robby says nervously. "There will have been no need for me, since the children will have..." He chokes up, full of remorse, unable to finish the sentence.

"But what will be has always been. My existence isn't erased, so maybe I'll remain. I sure hope so. I think I would very much like to see a waterfall someday, even if it causes me to rust," he says, maybe-jokingly. "Anyway, it's been a real pleasure having you here. If we all survive this, know I'll always watch over you."

He holds up the tray. "And there's always cookies!"

Since the secrets of Mirador have been revealed, Robby now speaks freely if the characters have any questions or need clarification related to time, Mirador, the Researchers, and Wintergreen.

But he still doesn't know if he's a robot that looks like an orc or an orc that looks like a robot.



Within the Windcaster family hut is a cluttered but cozy study, which Tuyet used to wander through when bored as a young child, whenever her uncle was away at the academy. Piled high within bookshelves are tomes filled with arcane knowledge and a small globe. Maps on the walls chart the terrain of foreign worlds, except for one map, which charts a night sky of stars. A large wooden desk sits near a window, scattered with papers and the wax of candles burned away from the long hours Kiet spent in his research.

COMPASS RING

On a pedestal on the desk is a compass ring known as the Rose Nexus, which the characters recognize as the same one Kiet wore to try to stop the blasts on Prosperity City, if they watched the recording of Bian's Memory Room session in one of her journal entries. It's made of polished silver and the cardinal directions of the rose are marked with a symbol.



COMPENDIUM OF MAGICAL ITEMS: THE ROSE NEXUS

Next to the Rose Nexus is a leather-bound book called *The Compendium of Magical Items*. It is open to a page about the ring.

The Rose Nexus: A Compass to Other Worlds

The Rose Nexus is a powerful ring of transportation that can only be used by the most advanced wielders of magic. Through attunement, it is capable of portalling the wearer to worlds beyond their own, valuable to those seeking to explore new frontiers.

Use of the ring comes at a price. It requires a significant amount of magical energy from the wearer and can leave them weakened and vulnerable for days afterwards. Additionally, the ring is known to occasionally portal the wearer to unexpected and dangerous locations.

Portalling is limited only to the wearer.



Also on the desk is a letter.

My Dearest Wife Linh and Daughter Bian,

I am overwhelmed by a sense of longing and despair. It has been centuries upon centuries since I last saw you, yet the memories of our time together are as vivid as ever. Never in my youth, as I portaled from world to world, did I imagine I'd find a love as everlasting as ours. I miss you both more than words can express, and my heart aches with the knowledge that I failed to protect you.

Though I reside in my home world with Windcaster descendants, these long years have been lonely, for my family is not complete without you. I have sought a way to travel back in time and save you from the fateful blast that took you away from me. I believe I may have found a way – a spell that can amplify the power of the Rose Nexus so that I can portal the bombs that hit the city to a place far away and uninhabited, where families do not turn to ash.

The amplification spell is locked away as I try to overcome my greatest obstacle – time travel. It feels as if the powers of the universe are set against it. And against me. Though my appearance remains unaltered, my body feels old, and my magic is weakened by the passing years. I may be running out of time, but I will not stop, not until I hold you in my arms once more, or I join you amongst the stars.

Until then, know that you are always in my thoughts, and always in my heart.

With all my love,

Kiet





RESEARCH NOTE: AMPLIFICATION



On the floor is a note scribbled in Kiet's handwriting.

The power of magic is not infinite. Every spell, every enchantment, every act of wizardry requires a certain amount of energy to be expended. For the wielder of magic, this means that there are always limits to what they can accomplish – limits defined by the amount of energy they can harness.

By channeling additional energy into the magic being cast, an amplification spell can greatly enhance its power and effectiveness. This is particularly useful when trying to reconstruct the properties of magical items like the Rose Nexus, which in its native state can only portal the wearer. With an amplification spell, I should be able to redirect the energy of the ring so that I can portal away the bomb that killed my family in the valley of wildflowers as we tried to escape. And hopefully also the other bombs that destroyed the city.

Ideally, at the very least, I'd portal my family away with me, but the ring won't allow it, for the Rose Nexus can only attune to one sentient being at a time. Destroying the bombs was our best hope then and our best hope now.

RESEARCH NOTE: THE ABSENCE OF TIME PORTALS

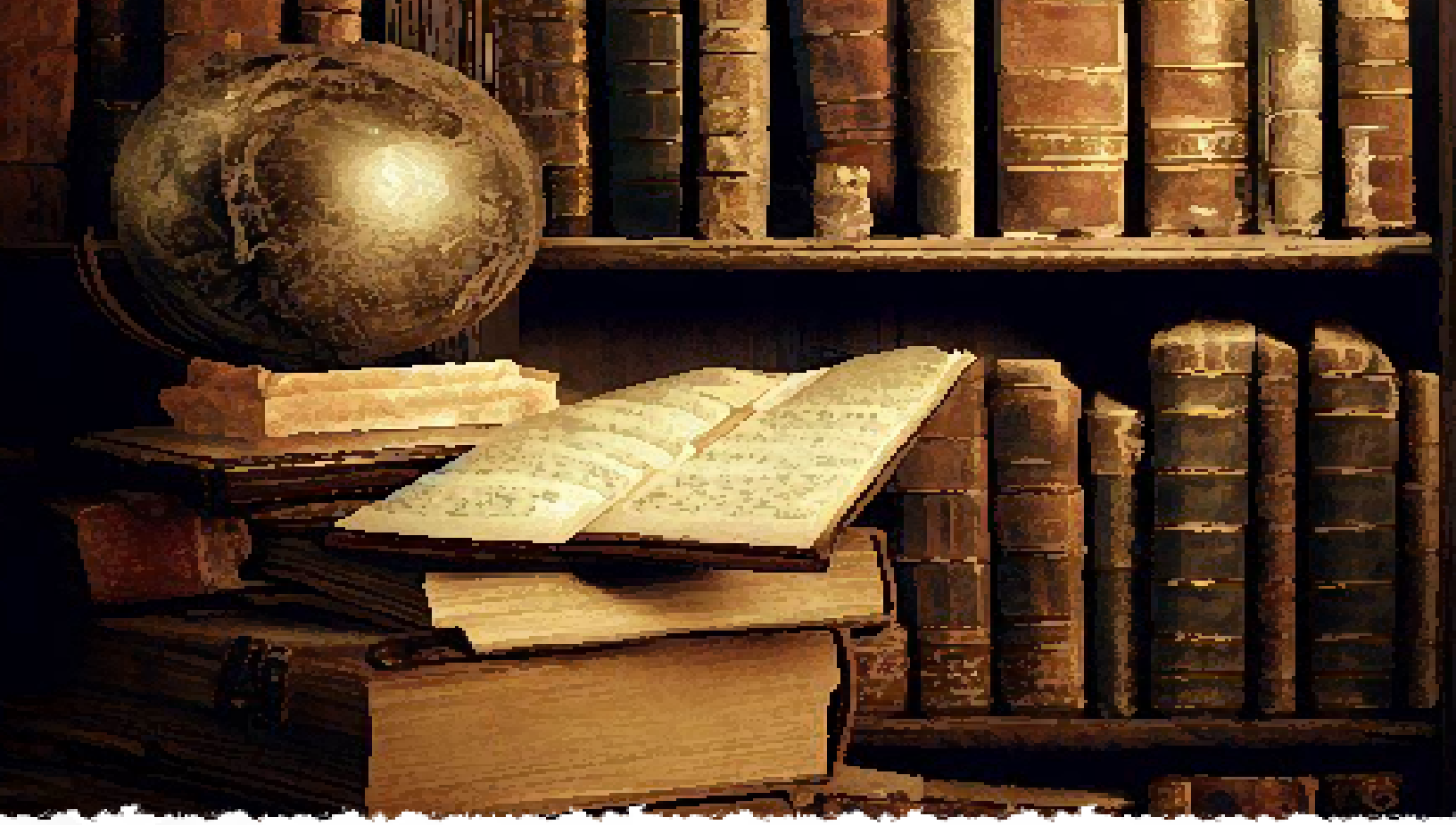
Kiet's note on time travel is found on a bookshelf.

Objects within the universe move together within the same general timeline. This is largely due to the speed of light – the speed limit of the universe. How we experience the passage of moments within that timeline may be relative to our speed, but space and time do have fundamental differences.

When I portal, I am jumping from one world to the other within the same moment of time, no different than how my feet carry me from my bed to my desk. I am not traveling away from the present, which the universe seems to prohibit.

Thus, I have not yet been able to alter the Rose Nexus to allow for time portals, despite my early efforts to do so; but if all of time exists at once, even though it is experienced in moments, then there must be a way to traverse its fibers, somehow.





VITAL FIND: KEY TO LOCKBOX

The key to the lockbox containing the amplification spell is behind the star chart on the wall. If characters look closely at the chart, they see that one of the constellations resembles a key and is slightly protruded, as this is where the key is fastened to the back of the chart.

VITAL FIND: LOCKBOX

The key opens the globe on the bookshelf, which has a small keyhole and acts as a lockbox. The amplification spell is inside.

NO RETURN

After a character calls out a deactivation phrase to end the projection, the party finds they are not in the Memory Room but have seemingly been transported in time.

VITAL FIND: AMPLIFICATION SPELL

Let earth, air, and tide align,
Forces strong and pure combined,
To call forth the power of the compass rose,
Through the elements its power grows.

With might to move and bend all things,
Unlock the gateway that distance brings,
Amplify its strength, let it be known,
The rose has now fully grown.

DISTORTION

In a field of wildflowers are the Researchers as young children and their biological families. The air is warm with no trace of snow. Bian is nestled in her mother's arms next to Kiet, who raises the Rose Nexus towards a darkened sky. Everyone but the characters stand frozen, suspended in a moment of fate.

Tuyet is once again missing from the party.

"Fear not, for this is merely an illusion," the white dragon rumbles from above, circling around a bomb in the sky before landing.

In a vortex of fog, the dragon materializes into Aion and drifts towards you. "It's an enigma," he declares, "that the only constant in the universe is change, and yet it repeats itself in cycles. It leads me to wonder what holds the universe together – the chaos of change or the repetition of patterns that resemble change but are the true nature of order?"

With curiosity, he sweeps his hand over Kiet's, causing the Rose Nexus to appear in his own palm. "What message is the universe trying to send through its own existence? Chaos or order?" Aion muses, examining the ring. "I'm a bit of a scientist myself, a fellow Researcher. Gods are not supposed to interfere with mortal affairs, and I haven't, really, except to bring you here, for who better to determine the fate of the universe than mortals – the most vulnerable amongst us?"

He returns the ring to Kiet then gestures towards Tuyet's absence. "I have already sent Tuyet back from whence she came, so the decision lies with you. Give Bian the amplification spell and potentially save an entire civilization, but you risk reality unraveling out of existence. That's if it doesn't find a way to heal itself, of course."

Or you can go back to your other adventures now, far from here. Bian, Rainier, Aldric, Amil, Gustavo, and Cilly will perish. Their adoptive families will never know what happened to them. But the Tapestry of Time will be healed. The timeline of the universe will go forth as destined."

"What will it be, brave adventurers? Do you choose chaos and save the children? Or do you choose order and ensure the survival of everyone else?"



Once the characters have made a choice whether or not to give Bian the amplification spell – chaos or order – they are transported back to their own world. There is no predefined end to the adventure. The resolution can be left open with the characters always wondering how their choice may have affected Mirador, the world around it, and the universe at large. Or the Game Master can spare the characters with a sense of closure by revealing the fate of their decision.



SUMMARY OF EVENTS

When Kiet Windcaster was a young sorcerer coming into his powers, he mainly practiced portal magic, having obtained a ring known as the Rose Nexus. Shaped as a compass, it allowed him to travel to foreign worlds. Within one such world, in a metropolis called Prosperity City that sat in a lush valley, he met a woman named Linh. The two fell in love and had Bian, but their happiness was short-lived as war ravaged Linh's world as well as others across the cosmos.

The Rose Nexus could only portal the wearer, so Kiet was powerless to protect his family. When Prosperity City received notice that they would soon be bombed, Kiet and Linh, with Bian in their arms, tried to escape with a small group to the mountains furthest from the imminent annihilation, but it was too late. The bombs began to fall when they were only miles away. Though it would mean sacrificing his own life, Kiet tried to portal the bombs with him to an uninhabited world, but his spell didn't work, and he unintentionally portaled himself home.



Kiet assumed his wife and daughter had perished in the strike, for there was nothing left of the world after the apocalyptic war; but due to the interference of a Time God named Wintergreen, Bian had survived. For eons, Wintergreen watched as mortals destroyed themselves with ceaseless warfare. In a moment of despair and panic for the group the Windcasters had joined in their escape, she saved the children, the most innocent among them, and the least likely to continue the cycle of war.

Wintergreen did not transport the children through space, for there were too many worlds where they faced the same destiny. Instead, she propelled them through time – thousands of years into the future – while simultaneously creating Mirador, a haven for them, though it stood on the site of what was meant to be their demise, a field of wildflowers turned to ash then covered by frost. The act caused a disastrous fray in the Tapestry of Time, and anomalies began to occur, the first being the endless nuclear winter around Mirador.

When the children began to show signs of radiation sickness, Wintergreen kept them within the relatively less violent future, but she erased their memories and sent them to worlds far from each other, hoping to keep them hidden, perhaps already sensing the consequences of her decision. But she didn't abandon them, tasking Robby, their nanny at Mirador, with their protection.

Perhaps another anomaly or the result of an enchantment, Kiet Windcaster lived an unnaturally long life, the years of which he spent studying amplification spells, living with Windcaster descendants. He believed that if he could find a way to travel back in time, he could use an amplification spell on the Rose Nexus and succeed in diverting the bombs that destroyed his family. When Bian appeared before him, the same age she was when he last saw her, he realized that something in the past had saved his daughter, and he burned his research, unwilling to alter a timeline where Bian survived, in fear of creating one where she didn't.

Destiny had other plans. As the children grew older, the Tapestry of Time continued to slowly unravel, but it tried to heal itself by correcting the warped timeline. The children, now young adults – Bian, Gustavo, Cilly, Rainier, Amil, and Aldric – were portaled back to Mirador by Wintergreen in a last attempt to save them. Within the facility, they called themselves the Researchers, unaware of why they were there since their memories had been erased. They spent weeks trying to figure out Mirador's secrets, hopeful they would soon return to their families, not knowing the dark fatefulness of such a wish.



Once Rainier found a way out into the surrounding permafrost, he and Bian trekked to the Tallest Mountain in pursuit of a white dragon they believed could help them find the answers they needed. On their journey, Rainier was taken by the Abomination, who herded him back in time, along with the others, to the moments before the blast they should have perished under. Since what will be has always been, though the Researchers returned to their former child selves, they retained all their memories of growing older.

Only Bian was spared from the Abomination, having made it to the Tallest Mountain, where she was given shelter by Aion, an ancient shapeshifting Time God who also considers himself a researcher of sorts, though more of an experimentalist. He informed her that the Abomination was actually a distorted version of Wintergreen, the universe forcing her to correct her misdeed. Bian devised a plan to save the Researchers, convinced that their destiny was to survive, but within their own timeline, limiting the damage to the Tapestry of Time.

Her cousin Tuyet had grown up with her father before he destroyed his research. If they could access her memories, they might be able to find the amplification spell needed to empower the Rose Nexus. Once she knew it, Bian could sacrifice herself to the Abomination, go back in time, and call out the spell to her father, perhaps helping him succeed in saving Prosperity City from the bombs, optimistic that he could portal himself to safety afterward.

Aion helped Bian summon her cousin to Mirador through a series of letters that were a spell written by Bian but cast by him, for Bian had no powers of her own. Aion's intentions were not out of mercy but an opportunity to better understand the nature of the universe: whether it was ruled by chaotic change or by repeating patterns disguised as change but were actually the rule of order. He purposefully brought the characters to Mirador with Tuyet, exposing them to the lives of the Researchers, in suspense of the choice they'd make, and the consequences of that choice.

Will the universe unravel if its structured timeline is not restored, or will chaos allow it to continue, even if altered?

BIAN'S LETTERS TO TUYET

Bian sent letters to Tuyet in the form of parchment scrolls delivered by Aion in his white raven form. Although Tuyet recognized Bian's handwriting, she was unable to decipher the cryptic messages. Nor should she have, for they were a spell written by Bian but cast by Aion.

The first five letters were freely shared by Tuyet with the characters before their arrival at Mirador, but the sixth letter contained a spell that immediately brought the characters to the facility, so they do not see it until after they find Tuyet in the Right Wing Hallway.

LETTER ONE

A little rabbit hopped through the meadow, her fluffy tail bobbing behind her. She longed for a friend to share her adventures with, but all around her, there was only the stillness of the meadow and the empty rustle of the wind.

-Bian

LETTER TWO

A young ram lay dejectedly on a grassy knoll. Away from home, he missed the gentle nuzzles of his parents and the playful headbutts of his brothers. Fearing his future, the young ram let out a mournful bleat, a cry of longing for the family out of his reach.

-Bian

LETTER THREE

A wolf stood in the shadow of the woods, her eyes fixed on a distant meadow full of tulips so colorful, they made the trees around her appear dull. Her heart ached with longing as she imagined what it would be like to frolic in the tulips, but as much as she dreamed, she knew she could never leave her pack behind.

-Bian



LETTER FOUR

A crow flew frantically through the sky, his wings flapping hard as he put distance between himself and smoke that filled the air. A fire chased him, burning through the trees of his home, but none of the other woodland creatures ran. Instead, they stood still, accepting of their fate as they turned to ash.

-Bian

LETTER FIVE

A longhorn grazed lazily in the field, his massive head low to the ground as he nibbled on tufts of grass. Despite the peaceful scene around him, the longhorn felt only dread and helplessness; for the herd would soon be culled, and he did not know how to protect his mate and young calf.

-Bian

LETTER SIX

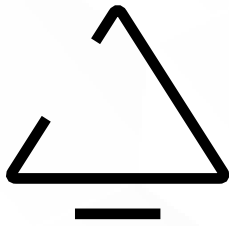
The air will ripple and the ice will shake,
As this spell takes hold and your world will break.

Keep your wits and stay aware,
For this journey will take you far and near.

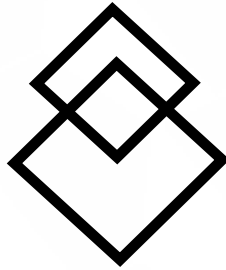
To a world where the fate of all will lie,
On choices made under a dark, grim sky.



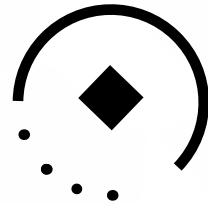
GLYPH CHART



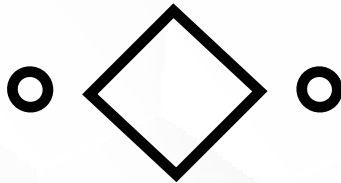
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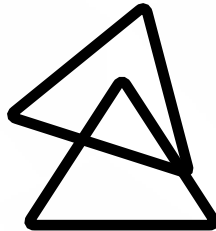
GUARDIANSHIP



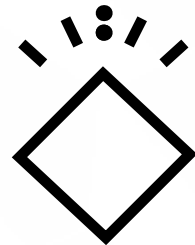
SUSTENANCE



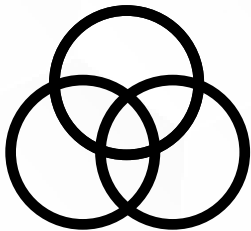
RENEWAL



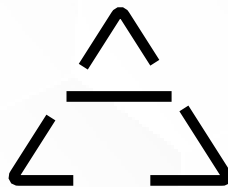
IMMORTALITY



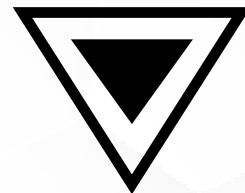
INNOVATION



CONSERVATION



REBIRTH





DEVASTATION

ROBBY'S REPLIES

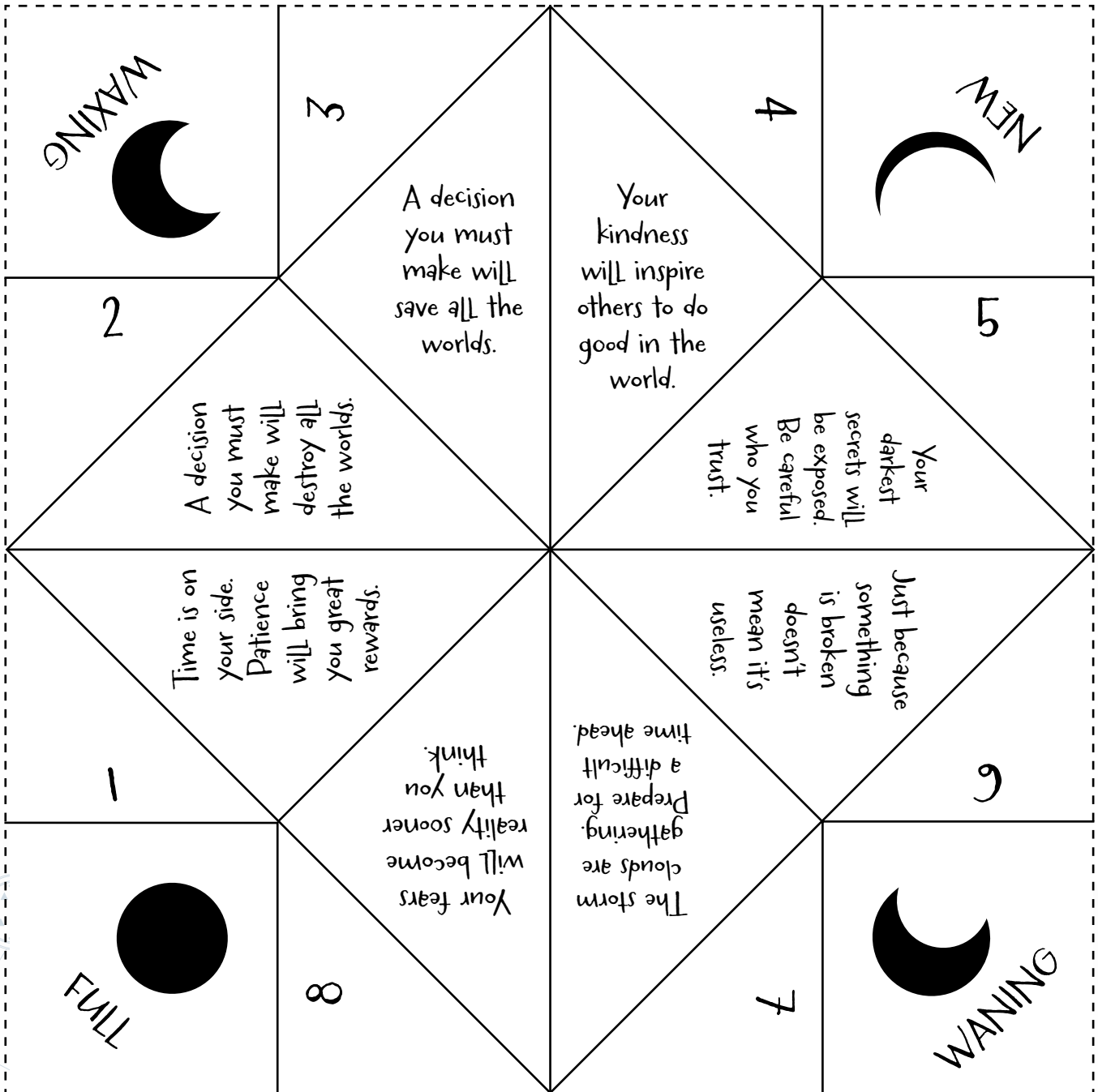
Whenever Robby is either unaware of or unwilling to disclose certain information, he deflects the question with humor or by expressing his admiration for baking. Here are some possible replies Robby may use. If the Game Master doesn't want to choose, they can roll 1d20.

Outcome of Roll:

- 1: There's always cookies! (His favorite line.)
- 2: Why was the cookie sad? Because it was feeling crumbly.
- 3: Why did the banana bread go to the doctor? It wasn't peeling well.
- 4: Why was the robot always angry? Because people kept pushing its buttons!
- 5: I was going to tell you an anti-gravity joke, but it never got off the ground.
- 6: Why did the baker stop making donuts? He got tired of the hole thing.
- 7: Do you know how big the largest cake ever made was? Neither do I!
- 8: Read recipes thoroughly before starting to ensure you have all the necessary ingredients and equipment.
- 9: There's no such thing as too many chocolate chips.
- 10: When baking, sift dry ingredients, such as flour and baking powder, to remove any lumps.
- 11: Allow baked goods to cool completely before frosting, as this will prevent the frosting from melting or sliding off.
- 12: Why can't you trust atoms? They make up everything!
- 13: Why do seagulls fly over the sea? Because if they flew over the bay, they'd be bagels!
- 14: What did the clock do when it was hungry? It went back four seconds!
- 15: What do you call an alligator in a vest? An investigator!
- 16: What do you get when you cross a snowman and a vampire? Frostbite!

- 
- 
- 17: Measure recipe ingredients carefully, using a kitchen scale whenever possible for the most precise results.
- 18: When baking, use parchment paper to prevent sticking and make clean-up easier. But not the scroll kind!
- 19: What do you call an orc who loves to sing? A kara-orc-e!
- 20: Why did an orc bring cake to war? To sweeten the victory!

AMIL'S FORTUNE TELLING GAME



MEMORY ROOM PROJECTION PHRASES

IDEAS FOR START PHRASES

Let's Get Digital, Digital!

Holo there!

Light up the room!

I feel holo inside.

Wakey-wakey.

Activate all systems.

Rise and shine, my metallic minion!

Please don't kill me today.

Alright, alright, alright.

Mayhem!

IDEAS FOR END PHRASES

You shall not last!

Stop right now, thank you very much.

Halt, blasted machine!

Deactivate all systems.

I'll be back.

Nap time!

Catch you on the flip side!

It's been unreal!

See you later, circuit-gator.

End Mayhem!

RAINIER NOTES: SURVIVAL IN THE ARCTIC

Dress in layers: Wear warm, waterproof clothing.

Build shelter: If you become stranded and don't have tents, build a shelter using natural materials like branches or packed snow.

Types of Shelters:

A lean-to is made by placing a tarp or other material against a solid surface, such as a tree or boulder, to create a barrier from the elements.

A snow fort is made by hollowing out a pile of snow. Start by piling snow into a dome shape, then allow the snow to harden before digging out the inside. The walls should be at least one foot thick to provide insulation.

Know how to start a fire: The warmth of a fire can be the difference between life and death.

Starting a Fire:

Use rocks or logs to raise a pit away from the snow.

Split dead branches to reveal dry wood inside for burning. If there are no trees, burn whatever extra resources, such as clothes, that you have, but only if in immediate danger of hypothermia.

If you don't have a form of a torch, such a lighter, use friction between two pieces of wood.

Be aware of avalanche danger: Avoid trekking in areas with a high risk of avalanches such as across steep slopes or unstable snowpacks.

Snow Blind: Wear eye protection such as goggles to protect against temporary loss of vision caused by ultraviolet rays reflected off the snow.

Watch for signs of hypothermia: Symptoms include shivering, confusion, and drowsiness. If you experience these symptoms, take immediate action to warm up.

Carry high-energy snacks: Pack foods like jerky and canned beans to keep your energy levels up.

BINARY CHART

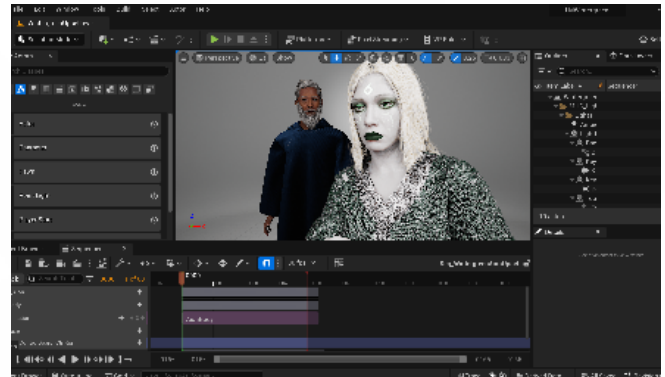
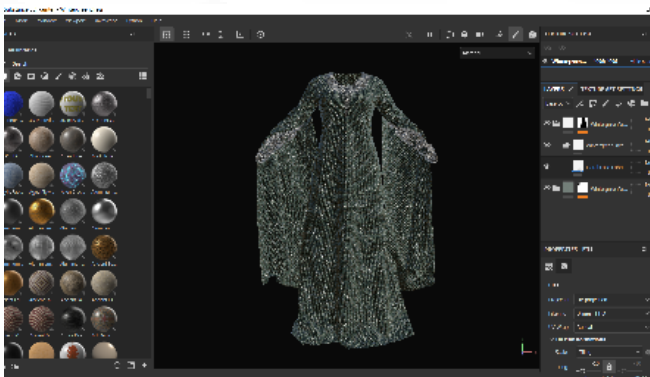
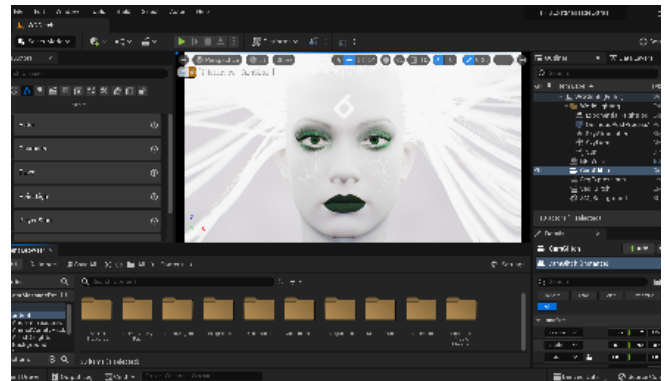
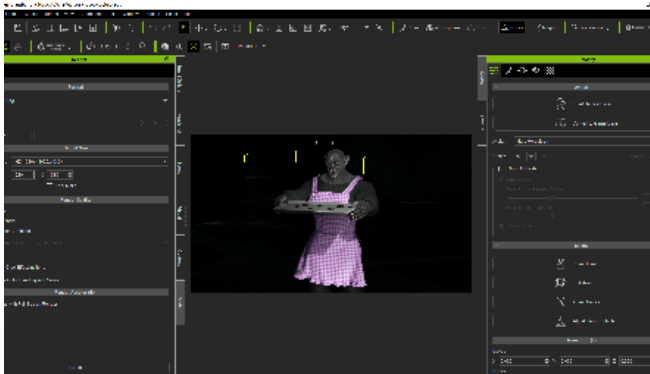
0	0011 0000
1	0011 0001
2	0011 0010
3	0011 0011
4	0011 0100
5	0011 0101
6	0011 0110
7	0011 0111
8	0011 1000
9	0011 1001

A	0100 0001
B	0100 0010
C	0100 0011
D	0100 0100
E	0100 0101
F	0100 0110
G	0100 0111
H	0100 1000
I	0100 1001
J	0100 1010
K	0100 1011
L	0100 1100
M	0100 1101
N	0100 1110
O	0100 1111
P	0101 0000
Q	0101 0001
R	0101 0010
S	0101 0011
T	0101 0100
U	0101 0101
V	0101 0110
W	0101 0111
X	0101 1000
Y	0101 1001
Z	0101 1010

a	0110 0001
b	0110 0010
c	0110 0011
d	0110 0100
e	0110 0101
f	0110 0110
g	0110 0111
h	0110 1000
i	0110 1001
j	0110 1010
k	0110 1011
l	0110 1100
m	0110 1101
n	0110 1110
o	0110 1111
p	0111 0000
q	0111 0001
r	0111 0010
s	0111 0011
t	0111 0100
u	0111 0101
v	0111 0110
w	0111 0111
x	0111 1000
y	0111 1001
z	0111 1010

THE ART

Most images were created in 3D software then edited in Photoshop, including applying a dry brush or charcoal filter for a more artistic look.



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