

DARK STATES

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Session 1: High Hopes

The characters arrive for a school reunion and everyone has grown up, but has their past left them...

It was a pleasant late afternoon in early May of the year 2032 when the characters arrive at their old school in the heart of New Hampshire, where they have all been invited to attend a reunion some 14 years after they had left to move on to other things in life. One by one they arrive and converse with the greeter, a young gangly looking man who is stood by the side of the road carrying a clipboard to tick off their names and direct them to the place to park their vehicles. Once parked they head on down to the Reception Building where they pick up their name badges, declare their firearms and receive a complimentary tote bag (which they all immediately discard).

Once done with the admin, Harvey, Heather, Keith and Nathan all head to the dorms they have been assigned to drop off their weekend bags (and some concealed firearms), whilst Felix goes in search of another greeter by the name of Sophie who is offering the free use of golf carts to help transport them around the campus. His joy at being given a free golf cart is short lived however when he finds that they are self-driving carts that have only specific destinations and routes pre-programmed in. His plan to rent out the golf carts to other unsuspecting Alumni is in tatters.

A notification on their eLense alerted them to the fact that tour of the campus will begin shortly, so they all rush to the gymnasium to grab a free drink before heading back to the Reception Building for the tour. Whilst grabbing drinks, Heather is reunited with an old friend, Tori Channing, and they catch up on old times (Tori is now a single artist based in Boston). Keith meanwhile is reunited with a suitably inebriated former classmate, Brad "The Brain" Emmerson, an ironic nickname for the meathead of the year, a football scholarship student who has since suffered an injury and is now running a security company, Emmerson Securities, out of Detroit.

The tour is brief but wide ranging, giving them a reminder of some of the main buildings on the campus and highlighting some of the common myths and legends about the place. Once complete they all retire to the gymnasium for dinner and drinks as rain settles in, where they are all seated at the same table whilst a jazz band plays softly in one corner of the gymnasium. Jokes are had over dinner (although Tori excuses herself to get away from the more macho elements at the table, especially concerning jokes about rhyming variations on the surname Hunt), and Harvey tries to astound everyone with his skills (**benny for playing on his delusional hindrance and attempting some actual magic**). They are also joined by Trish Regan, a freelance reporter from the Boston Globe, who comes across as a very reserved and aloof character. Brad continues to get drunker and louder, until Felix gives him some words of advice (**roll of 12 vs 3 on persuasion, actually the first die roll of the session**) for him to slow down somewhat. Keith in particular wants to find out more about the other people at his table, and uses his eLense to perform a basic search on all of their backgrounds. This alerts him to Trish's profession, Nathan's brother's demise, and a large hole in Felix's social profile. Heather meanwhile decides to move from table to table, chatting to other former alumni, although she quickly becomes disenchanted when most of those she talked to are in banking, accounting, corporate management and other professions which are distasteful to her.

As dinner comes to a close the rain becomes more persistent and thunder begins to rumble in the distance. The Principal takes to the stage to welcome back the alumni, but halfway through her speech (and after a few, louder, bangs of thunder) one particularly loud crash results in the lights (and all other main electricity devices) going dark. The eLense NightVision+ feature immediately kicks in, and generally people laugh and giggle about what is happening, whilst the Principal berates the event organisers. Within moments though eLenses across the room all transmit an alert indicating that Wi-Fi connectivity and phone reception has also been lost, warranting some confusion and murmuring from the group. Keith approaches the Principal and offers his services to investigate why the back-up generator has not kicked in, although this involves going around to

another building at the back of the gymnasium where the generator is located. Harvey meanwhile came to the conclusion he's had enough of this and decided to head back to the dorm to check on his belongings (given that the power loss has also resulted in all of the dorm room doors unlocking).

As Harvey crosses the road to the dorms, Keith and a small group of helpers (including the Principal) emerge from the gymnasium and head down an access ramp, only for them to spot someone walking slowly down the road towards them in the pouring rain, a soaking wet girl in a pink blouse and jeans. Despite calling out to her Keith cannot get her attention, she is walking slowly and in a confused state, so Keith moves slowly towards her despite his better instincts. Closer investigation (**a raise on a Notice roll**) informs Keith that the blouse isn't in fact pink but white and stained with blood and washed through with the rain, so he rushes over to help her. As he does so he begins to hear a hum behind the girl as an electric car without its headlights on comes careening around the corner, aimed straight at the girl. Without thinking (**and because of his Heroic hindrance, earning him a benny**) Keith dives at the girl (**successful Agility check**), tackling her just as the car rushes past.

Harvey meanwhile has heard the commotion behind him and come back in time to see the car almost run both people over, and elects to try and stop the vehicle. Throwing a beer bottle he had taken with him (**unskilled throwing check and 2 Bennies spent resulting in a triple dice explosion on the wild die**) results in the front windscreen exploding on impact and the car hitting the kerb, fish-tailing and then flipping, before coming to a stop on its roof some way down the road.

Keith passes the girl to the Principal and others to take inside whilst he goes to investigate the car. Harvey however, being closer, reaches the car first to find a man crawling out of the broken windscreen. However his attempts to restrain him (**critical failure on the grapple roll**) result in him slipping on a mix of oil leaking from the car, along with rain water, leaving him prone and shaken. But the man is not interested in hanging around and runs, with both Keith and Harvey now giving chase.

Back inside the gymnasium, Heather, Nathan and Felix hear the commotion outside, to then see the girl being brought in by the Principal and her helpers. Although in shock, there seems to be no major wounds on the girl, whose name was Tanya, and the Principal is demanding to know what has happened and why she is here and not where she is supposed to be. Felix decides at this point that he had also had enough, and exits the gymnasium to find his car and get off of the campus. After his departure (without telling anyone and using his blazer to cover his head from the rain), Tanya began to recover her wits (**despite repeated healing failure attempts and a benny spent from Heather**) and tells the gathering crowd that she had been at the Family Centre looking after the children of various families attending the reunion when it was attacked by a group of men and women dressed like the rest of the Alumni. They killed the other two baby-sitters and took the children with them, she only managed to escape by running out the back of the centre and across the playground. Voices at this point erupted from the numerous parents gathered in the Gymnasium, and Heather and the Principal have to do all they can to prevent the collective group all heading off in this direction. Nathan decides that now would be a good time to retrieve his weapons from the dorm.

Outside, Harvey and Keith are gaining on the man they were chasing, who is beginning to hobble quite badly from the crash, and are approaching the end of the road, when two figures emerge from the rain and darkness, brandishing guns. And they do not look happy.

-End of Session 1-

Session 2: A Saucerful of Secrets

Strange and secret things are about to be revealed...

Session note: Felix's player unable to attend session. Keith's player unable to attend session; is played as wild card NPC by other players for duration.

Despite the appearance of the figures ahead of them Keith and Harvey decide to try and catch the man in front of them. One last round of chasing closes the gap before one of the figures, who is using an assault rifle, shouts 'Halt!' and opens fire. He uses suppressive fire against them (**GM Wild Card Benny**), forcing Harvey to take cover (**failed spirit roll**) and, although Keith is unaffected (**successful spirit roll**), decides that chasing on his own is a bad idea. However, they are now close enough to the figures to realise that the one shooting at them is actually the young man who met them at the entrance several hours previous; the other appears to be one of the former alumni. The 'greeter' lets them go although he calls out their names almost tauntingly as they slide away through the darkness, heading for the dorms where some of their gear is stashed.

Back at the gym, the Principal is trying to organise a search party to head out to the family centre when the sound of gunfire is heard from outside, causing more panic. Nathan, Heather and Trish decide that they can't wait any longer and also head out, grabbing a spare golf cart to take them first to the dorms, also to retrieve gear, before heading on to the family centre. Here they meet up with Keith and Harvey and exchange information, at which point some of them spot a light coming from the main school building located across the quadrant. Trish (**now an allied extra with multiple raises on a Notice check**) is immediately aware that it is coming from a fire somewhere inside the building, and she also spots half a dozen or so shadowy figures running westwards away from the building. However their focus is still on the family centre and also their vehicles which are parked outside and contain more weapons and other equipment the characters want.

As they approach the car park next to the family centre they find that someone has ruined all of the vehicles, slashing tyres, pulling out engine parts, smashing windows and denting bodywork. Keith is visibly concerned and checks his vehicle whilst the rest retrieve contents from theirs. Keith is relieved to find his hidden stash of weapons has not been found, but as they retrieve items they are all alerted to the sound of people behind them. Keith unfortunately is somewhat spooked by events (**critical failure on notice roll**) and immediately opens fire on whoever it is. Luckily he misses the search group (consisting of the Principal, Brad and two other teachers) from the gym who are just rounding the corner, Brad in particular is not happy about being shot at but as Keith is a friend he lets it slide.

Subsequent investigation by Heather and Nathan (**Investigation rolls of 5 and 7**) of the Family Centre reveals that the other two child minders have been murdered, one with a blow to the back of the head whilst the other has been eviscerated and hung from a coat peg in the kindergarten cloakroom. In the main classroom they find blood and destruction aplenty and, using said fluid, written on the smartboard are the words 'This is for what you did'. This is when Harvey explains to the Principal about who shot at them earlier, whilst Heather asks what the message might mean. The Principal states that as she doesn't know who wrote the message she can't possibly think of what they might mean, and also reveals that the 'greeter' was hired in by an events contractor and that there are more of these contractors back at the gym with the rest of the alumni. The decision is made for the search party to head back to the gym and separate those people from the rest whilst Harvey, Keith and the others head to the Data Centre, which is next door, to see if they can get some form of message out to the authorities.

After a brief review Keith thinks he can repair the power supply to the facility (**successful repair roll**), which has been cut, and Harvey can then get some of the servers back up and running (**successful Knowledge: Computers roll**). Whilst they do this Nathan, Heather and Trish would head back to the gym to let the others know. However, as they emerge from the data centre they

hear gunshots ringing out that direction. Everyone tools up and heads in that direction, to find that the Principal's party was ambushed. The two teachers are dead and Brad is injured, whilst the Principal is missing. Heather patches Brad up (**simple healing success**) and Brad tells them they were ambushed by around 9 people who took the Principal with them back west across campus. Nathan decides to try and track them whilst the rest take Brad across campus North West to the doctor's office where they manage to patch him up some more with pain patches.

The tracks Nathan is following (**tracking roll with a raise after -4 for conditions**) leads him to the entrance to a path that leads up to the School Theatre, where he spots someone patrolling outside. His attempt at sneaking up on them is almost successful, but is caught just as he reaches the target (**a second opposed stealth roll to get the drop including bennies spent to try and succeed**), yet another alumni acting strange. A struggle ensues, which Nathan appears to be losing (**successful grappling roll by alumni**) ending up with the man astride him on the floor, when Nathan spots that there is what appears to be a slug attached to the neck of the man. Without thinking he bites into slug, causing the man on top of him to go limp (**for a Benny earned**).

The rest of the group spot Nathan as they head south and all convene outside the theatre where they can also now hear some form of song being sung from within, partly as the rain has finally started to ease off. However their discussion takes some time about what to do next, and the 'greeter' spots them as he comes down some stairs from inside the Theatre. Luckily for the group he is slow to react (**2 of clubs on initiative**) but Harvey and Keith opt to wait (**go on hold**) whilst Nathan ignores this and opens fire, unfortunately missing. The greeter goes to return fire but Keith retaliates first (**managing to interrupt the action**) and opens fire himself with an Assault Rifle scoring a hit (**with a raise for 17 points of damage**) to the body where he goes down.

The group realises the noise of the gunfire has probably attracted attention and Harvey (**exploding a common knowledge roll**), from his time performing at the school, reminds them that there is a stage door at the rear of the theatre so they head for that. Once inside they creep through the backstage area, Heather can now hear that there is chanting in a mix of German and Latin (**using her linguist edge**) but whilst she is listening to this her eLense sputters and dies. Eventually they make it into the wings of the stage, from where they can see what's on stage.

There are candles in a ring around the centre of the stage outside of which sits the missing children. Inside the circle are drawn arcane symbols and standing amongst this, chanting, is Tori, who they now realise that they haven't seen since things went bad. Directly in front of her, hovering off of the ground, is a football sized mass of indescribable shape, pulsating and semi-translucent, dripping what appears to be molten metal from its edges onto the theatre stage. And the crescendo of the chanting seems to be increasing, as if the ritual is nearing completion.

-End of Session 2-

Session 3: Pigs on the Wing

All hell breaks loose and the characters find some safety.

Session Note: Felix's player unable to attend session.

As the PCs stand in the wings trying to plan their next move they study Tori in greater detail. She is now wearing a serrated blade at her waist tied in with what looks like a snake. Her left forearm is bandaged, and from the angle they are at they can see one side of her face is dirty, looking like her makeup has been messed up.

Nathan is first to act, and tries to peer out into the auditorium to see if anyone else is around. Unfortunately (**critical failure**) Nathan catches his feet on the curtains in the wings and he stumbles onto the stage by accident. Shots ring out from somewhere, narrowly missing him before he scuttles back into the wings. A familiar voice from the darkness calls out 'I wouldn't do anything stupid if I were you'. It is the greeter. Harvey now tries looking out and this time (**scoring a triple explosion**), spots the greeter, along with another figure, perched on the balcony and aiming weapons at the stage. He also spots the Principal, bound and gagged but alive, at the front of the stage, before he ducks back.

Heather believes that maybe they could interrupt the ritual by singing some other music in Latin over that which Tori is singing, but whilst they are trying this the eLenses of all the other characters stutter and fail. She persuades Harvey to try singing but it seems to have little effect. They decide that they should shoot, but try not to kill, Tori so Nathan **aims** and takes a **called shot** to the leg, scoring a hit (**12 points of damage and 2 wounds**). Tori screams and falls to the ground, but despite the cessation of the chanting the strange object persists. In the auditorium there is a slow clapping from the darkness.

The PCs have now had enough and begin to open fire on the greeter. Unfortunately he is behind cover and is in the dark so all shots from Keith, Harvey and Nathan chew up the woodwork around the greeter but do not hit him. In response Keith and Nathan are both shot as they are well lit by the candles on stage and behind only light cover, although they are not significantly wounded with Keith taking a nick to the leg as a bullet passes through the curtain (**shaken and makes his spirit roll**) whilst Nathan is hit in the chest but his Kevlar vest protects him from injury and just knocks him back (**spirit roll failed so shaken**). Brad takes this opportunity to run on stage, grab Tori and pull her into the opposite wing. Trish and Heather follow his lead and grab the Principal whilst the children remain, many now crying and holding each other, some of whom have wet themselves. They have also spotted a number of figures entering from doors at the back of the auditorium on the ground floor and are making their way to the front of the stage. And now the object is starting to pulsate, to expand and contract, at an alarming rate and with growing frequency.

Keith decides to try a different tack and tosses a smoke grenade from the stage to prevent anyone from being able to see. Harvey meanwhile tries persuading the greeter to surrender (**exploding for a total of 23 whilst the greeter rolls 5 in the opposed roll**). The greeter, whilst still not on the side of the PCs, agrees to allow them and others on stage to flee, taking the children with them as '...they don't matter anymore.' After a couple of gun shots at the floating object, which pass straight through, most of the PCs leave with the children and a now subdued Tori. Keith remains behind to cover their escape, first tossing a flashbang from the stage, then trying to puncture the object with his knife, which again goes straight into it with no effect other than some of the molten liquid dribbling onto his knife, which he manages to catch and keep. Lastly as he leaves he tosses a high explosive grenade in the direction of the object, but unfortunately (**Critical Failure**) it goes far beyond its intended target into the opposite wing and explodes, catching the stage curtain on fire. Keith finally retreats outside.

Once outside, Nathan strikes through undergrowth surrounding the rear of the theatre onto a road that runs through the campus, and motions for the others to follow him. As they begin to herd the children away from the now burning theatre, what feels like a pressure wave flows over them, originating from the burning structure behind them, causing everyone's ears to pop. Keith unfortunately suffers a little more (**failed Vigor roll**) and comes over rather nauseous (**suffering a level of fatigue**). As Nathan waits he spies some flashing lights coming down the road, a police cruiser, which he gleefully beckons over. Out of the car steps the Sheriff for Exeter, a well-built man if with a slight paunch now, in his mid-forties with receding hair and a concerned look on his face. The PCs are immediately wary of him, given what has gone on before, but various rolls (**Common Knowledge and Smarts**) and interaction with the Sheriff prove that he is genuine. He

helps to guide everyone back to the Gymnasium where thankfully no more harm has befallen everyone, and the children are happily reunited with their parents.

(At this point the benny pool was refreshed and each character was given 5 xp which equates to an advance. They take the following:

- **Heather: +1 Healing, +1 Knowledge: Eco science (below controlling die type)**
- **Keith: +1 Shooting (above controlling die type)**
- **Nathan: Rapid Fire Edge**
- **Harvey: d4 Notice (amazingly he didn't have the skill previously despite the number of exploding rolls!))**

Having made it back to the gymnasium the PCs have the chance to relax and grab some quick refreshments as they watch the fire service and ambulances begin to arrive and deal with the situation. Sheriff O'Neill takes Keith to one side to find out if he knows anything about the chatter coming in over secured bands. He tells Keith that, although he doesn't understand much about the chatter, it seems that a variety of other services, including the CDC, FBI and National Guard are on their way to the location, although Keith refutes any knowledge of this. Because of a lack of operational law enforcement units present at the time, the Sheriff deputises Keith for the duration and asks him to keep the area secure.

Heather examines Tori, finding a cut on her arm that matches that of the serrated knife. Tori is starting to vacillate between anger and sadness, so she decides to sedate her before the Sheriff places restraints on her. Before she passes out however, Tori pulls Heather over and tells her to run, then mutters 'Baphomet is coming' before the sedative takes over. Meanwhile Harvey and Nathan decide to return to the data centre to restore internet connection whilst Keith makes it to the emergency generator and gets this working. As the lights come back on in the gymnasium, a helicopter lands in the main quadrant and two men in suits disembark. They introduce themselves as Agents Flynn and Jerome and immediately take the Sheriff to one side. When Heather and Keith try to get involved in the conversation they are brusquely told to back off. In order to distract the men Heather persuades Trish to go and ask some questions of them as a member of the press, which Trish gladly obliges in doing. Whilst they are distracted Heather confronts the Principal about the message in the family centre (**14 on Persuasion against the Principals roll of 5**), and although the Principal won't admit to knowing anything, it is quite obvious that she is holding back. Just before the agents have Trish arrested for obstruction, Keith pulls her off, pretending to be in the agents side. Heather decides that she needs to investigate the slug remains and serrated knife further and heads out of the gym and up to the science center.

Nathan and Harvey meanwhile reach the Data Centre and begin restoring power and rebooting servers (**no roll required as they had already determined what needed doing in Session 2**). As soon as the first signal is received from a local wi-fi router Harvey immediately receives a high priority email on the local terminal from an unknown source, despite Harvey's tech savvy filters on his social media accounts. The subject of the message simply says 'Get out of there' and the body of the message simply contains the letter Z. At this point a clattering is heard at the far end of the data centre, and although Harvey wants to leave, Nathan insists on investigating. As he proceeds down the aisle, he spots a huge snake emerging from behind the servers, some 40' long and slowly snaking towards him, who empties an entire magazine into it (**rapid fire**), killing it. However, before he can investigate the remains the body dissolves into dust. The pair decided things are getting weird and decided to head back to the gymnasium.

As they emerge from the data centre and the others watched from gymnasium a rumbling noise is transformed into a column of heavy duty military vehicles arriving at the campus. The army has arrived.

-End of Session 3-

Session 4: The Dogs of War

The army has arrived, but what are their intentions?

Session Note: Felix's player unable to attend session.

The convoy of vehicles heads towards the gymnasium including military trucks, Humvees, an Armoured Personnel Carrier and a large unmarked black 18 wheel truck. Nathan and Harvey watch as they drive towards the gymnasium before continuing to head in a similar direction. As they pass the Reception Building they hear a groaning sound coming from the building and, as they watch, the wooden slats of the building seem to expand and contract slightly, as if it is breathing. At the end of the 'exhalation' a bloodied hand slams against one window of the building before sliding down, leaving a trail of red in its wake.

Nathan decides to investigate and approaches the front door but finds it refusing to open, so he decides to break a pane of glass on the door so he can reach the door handle from the inside. As he reaches in something grabs his hand, a cold steely grip that then tries to pull him in (**opposed strength roll which Nathan wins**) and with Harvey's help (**cooperative strength roll**) he manages to break free of its grasp. A disembodied face of an old woman who's face has partially melted appears in the doorway, screaming at them in a terrifying voice, although neither are affected by this (**both make fear check despite a -2**), before flying away into the darkness. Emboldened by this Nathan pulls his handgun and shoots the lock on the door and the two of them enter the building. They find the reception room where they registered (the tote bags are still on the counter) which contains the window where the bloody hand was seen. On the other side of the counter is sprawled the body of the receptionist, beaten bloody, alongside a collection of random objects. Whilst they search the scene the door slams behind them, and shortly after the disembodied head comes through the door, followed by two disembodied claw-hands which stretch to either side of the room. Both Nathan and Harvey shoot at the head (**Nathan hits**) but the bullets simply pass straight through. The head starts shouting obscenities at them and blood starts to ooze from its eyes (**intimidation of 4 vs spirit check of 7 and 8, Benny spent by Harvey**) as objects start to fly around the room, hitting Nathan but doing no damage. Nathan decides to get out by shooting out the glass in the window and diving out, Harvey right behind him. As they land on the grass outside lights are shone in their direction and voices start shouting for them to stay down and put their hands on their heads. Harvey manages to talk the voice (**exploded persuasion 19 vs smarts roll of 4**) into letting him get to his feet, as one of the soldiers recognises him from his DJ YouTube videos, but Nathan is disarmed and they are both escorted back to the gym.

At the gym, Keith watches as the armed column rolls up and National Guard soldiers disembark from the trucks. A Captain climbs out of the lead vehicle and the two agents immediately head over to talk to him, giving him orders. He then orders the padlock on the worksite next to the gym and the mobile HQ is parked inside. A number of very bad looking men emerge from one of the Humvees, which Keith (**Knowledge: Military roll**) recognises as some form of special forces, whilst from the large black truck two figures dressed in hazmat suits emerge carrying chrome briefcases. These figures set the briefcases on the ground and extract some strange looking handheld devices which they begin calibrating. The agents take the Principal inside whilst the Captain starts directing squads to disperse across the campus with some of the trucks. At this point shots are heard from the direction of the data centre and a squad is dispatched to investigate, although Keith gives them a heads up that there are friendlies on the campus. As he is giving this advice the agents re-emerge and ask to speak to Keith, whom they take to a small office in the gym. They ask him to outline what has happened and Keith gives a broad account, including a description of the strange floating object that was seen during the ritual. He then retrieves the knife with the metallic substance still attached and shows it to the agents, who recoil in horror and demand he put down the knife and step away. They radio out and within a minute

one of the hazmat figures enters the room, placing the knife inside a metal box which is then sealed shut. The agents ask Keith to wait in the room whilst the three of them withdraw.

Heather makes it to the Science Centre, a big blue glass building on the North-Western fringe of the campus, but before she enters through the front door (**successful Notice roll**) she notices some slime on the door handle, which she scrapes off and places in another plastic bag. Inside she decides that the main staircase which rises up around the hanging skeleton of a Narwhal is too open and instead opts for one of the side stairwells to get to the second floor where the labs are located, but when she reaches the landing she finds a mould has taken over the ceiling of the dark corridor she needs to go down. She heads back downstairs and settles for one of the junior labs where some more basic equipment is available. First she takes out the half of slug that she bagged earlier, but it seems to be a fully formed slug once more and now, exposed to a small amount of light, it is wriggling around. Heather decides to let it go free in the hallway outside, before closing the door and watching through a small window to see what happens. The slug begins to crawl away and gets to the middle of the corridor before stopping and dissolving, slowly spreading across the floor to form a familiar looking mould. Luckily there are two exits to the room so Heather exits by the other door and leaves the building.

Nathan and Harvey follow the soldiers back to the gym, one of the soldiers asking Harvey for an autograph. The others are talking about what's going on, they seem somewhat perplexed, some of them having been on a training exercise whilst others were called out from Concord. Once they get back to the gym the agents immediately apprehend them and take them to the toilets where they are interviewed separately, Nathan first. Nathan declines to mention the slug incident or the snake or the ghost, but when Harvey is interviewed he spills the beans on everything (**benny earned**). This results in the agents hauling Nathan out to the CDC truck where doctors are waiting inside.

Keith waits in the room.

As Heather passes the main quadrant she can see the fire crews have almost put out the fire of the main school building, but they have now stopped and are staring at the ground around them, which Heather can see is shifting, like the grass is alive. As she gets closer she realises that what she, and the firemen, can see, is hundreds of worms coming up from below the ground to the surface, as if they are trying to escape something. This is when Heather also realises (**successful Knowledge: Eco-science**) that the night is extremely quiet and still, as if all of the night time animals you might see have disappeared. Unnerved she begins to walk quickly back to the gym. Inside the CDC truck Nathan is stubbornly refusing to allow the doctors to examine him, to the point where they call in two of the guards to assist. Nathan tries to grab a chair to defend himself, having been disarmed earlier, but finds the chairs are bolted to the floor, so grabs a aluminium tray and starts waving this around (**Benny earned for playing his stubbornness hindrance**). Whilst he is doing so he manages to get a good look at the inside of the truck, and can see (**no roll required**) a number of canisters stacked securely at one end of the truck with biohazard warning symbols etched on. His questions about why they have these are, however, ignored and the soldiers close in. Harvey, meanwhile, checks the corridor to see if he can see the agents, but they are nowhere to be seen.

Keith waits in the room (**benny earned now for following orders**).

There is a bang as several things hit the roof of the gymnasium, then another as something hits the floor in front of Heather, and another as something hits the roof of the CDC truck.

Harvey sneaks to the front of the gymnasium and sees something hit the pavement outside. When both Harvey and Heather examine their respective objects they find that they are bats, and Heather (**successful Knowledge: Eco-science roll**) quickly determines that it looks like the bats would do this if they had lost their echo-location ability. Harvey then hears something over by the

mobile HQ, which is surrounded by a chain link fence. His attempt to climb doesn't work (**unsuccessful unskilled climbing roll**) but he can see something moving at the rear of the HQ, and when he shines a torch in that direction he can see that the back of the mobile HQ is swarming with ants who are slowly climbing up and over the unit. He shouts a warning to the guards who are at the front of the vehicle then steps back.

In the CDC truck the doctor sends one of the others outside to see what is going on, who quickly reports back that they might 'have a problem'. The doctor loses interest in Nathan and instructs the soldiers to escort him outside, where he sees Harvey and Heather. The three of them group together and share information, at which point the newly repaired lights in the gymnasium once again go dark.

Keith turns on his flashlight and waits in the room (**tempted to either give him another benny or take one away for his stubbornness**).

The three outside notice that the soldiers are confused as to what is going on, they seem to be struggling to communicate with one another, and the Captain is now outside of the mobile HQ shouting orders at people who are running around. The Special Forces squad starts gearing up with advanced military assault rifles and flamethrowers. Gun fire can now be heard north of their position although the exact location cannot be determined. At this point the agents re-emerge from the gym and pull the sedated Tori from the back of the police vehicle, calling on two soldiers to assist them. Nathan goes over to express his annoyance at still not having been given his firearms back, citing that he's had a 'bad day' and blocking their way. One of the agents puts his hand on his pistol and asks if he would like that day to get worse, which Nathan declines to answer, the agent points him in the direction of a soldier who is carrying his weapons and instructs to give them back. Whilst he is doing this the agents, soldiers and Tori head north back towards the chopper.

Keith starts to wonder where the agents have gotten to.

Harvey, Heather and Nathan decide to track down Keith and find him pointing a flashlight and a gun at them from a darkened room. After being chastised by Heather for sitting around they try to enter the gym which is still hosting the various alumni and their children, but this is being blocked by two soldiers who are refusing to let them out. Rather than intervene they head back outside, where the sounds of gunshots are getting closer and some of the military trucks are beginning to pull back from their positions. They spot the chopper taking off and Keith (**Knowledge: Military**) observes that it is a very old helicopter, a Bell Huey 209, but then it banks eastwards and flies from view.

At that moment one of the military trucks comes around the corner, but is travelling too fast and can't turn in time, instead careening straight into the wall at one corner of the gymnasium. All of the players, who are finally all back together (**GM phew!**) head over to investigate, but as they approach a creature climbs out of the back of the truck and onto the roof. It is around 8' in length, moving on all fours with a gait similar to a big cat, but is covered in scales and various lumps, with an elongated snout and lower jaw protruding revealing rows of blood-stained teeth. Keith is first to act and shoots (**hit with 2 raises, exploding damage for 24 points**), blowing one of its front legs clean off and sending the creature falling onto the far side of the truck. Keith and Nathan edge round the vehicle to see it trying to regain its footing so Nathan shoots this time (**another hit with 3 raises, exploding for 21 points of damage**) blowing one of its hind legs off this time and sending it slumping to the ground. Not satisfied Harvey steps up and unloads into its head until it stops moving.

Heather examines the creature and can clearly see that it was once human, with remnants of human features present in its physical appearance. At this point two of the special forces soldiers turn up, one with a flamethrower, and insist on burning the corpse, despite the potential of setting

the truck on fire. They then inform everyone that the area has been compromised and they have orders to withdraw and that the characters are free to go wherever they want. Heather checks on the driver of the vehicle, who is alive but unconscious, and brings him round (**healing roll success**). The man is briefly confused but quickly overcome by panic as he tells them there are hundreds of those things coming. Everyone then gets into a discussion about where to go, whether to protect the people in the gym, try and repair the truck and leave or go on the offensive.

Whilst they are having this discussion there is screaming from behind them and, as they look, several more of these creatures leap out of the darkness into the remaining soldiers outside the gym, tearing and rending them into pieces. Heather opts to go under the truck and in through a hole into the gym (**Benny earned for idea**) whilst Harvey, Keith and Nathan decide to open fire. At the range they are at though they don't seem to be able to hurt any of the creatures (**several hits at medium range but low damage rolls**) who continue their rampage amongst the soldiers who are now shooting indiscriminately in self-defense. They watch as several soldiers lose limbs and life, and they are now starting to run out of ammo themselves.

Inside Heather makes it to the main gym where the soldiers have gone and everyone else is cowering in fear. She shuts the main door to the gym and barricades it, hoping it will be enough to prevent the creatures from getting in.

-End of Session 4-

Session 5: Welcome to the Machine

The characters fight for their lives, but is it all worth it?

Session Note: Heather and Keith's player unable to attend session; are played as wild card extras by other players.

Earlier that evening...

Felix heads north to his car, only to find that it (and all of the others) have been damaged and are immobilised. He decides that he can walk to the hotel (having retrieved his umbrella from the car), but as he begins to head west in the direction of the hotel gunfire erupts in the distance. Not wanting to get involved he strikes north off of the campus where he comes across a small pub attached to a bed and breakfast, from within which he can see the flickering light of candles. He knocks on the door and is let in by the proprietor of the establishment, a large elderly man named Gauge Patterson, who seeing he is wet and dishevelled takes him directly to the bar and pours him a scotch. Felix explains there is some trouble on the campus and Gauge insists he stay here until it has cleared up, although Gauge also retrieves a shotgun from behind the bar and lays it on the counter.

Several scotches later the rain has finally ceased and they begin to notice that there are the flashing lights of emergency services now on the scene. Gauge offers to drive Felix back to his hotel, but Felix decides to have one more scotch before they leave. Eventually they leave, Gauge reversing an old Chevy pickup truck from the garage, and the two of them set off with Felix driving whilst Gauge rides shotgun. As they approach the campus they come across signs of recent disturbance, and a military truck barrels past them at speed, at which point gunshots begin to ring out once more, this time from the direction of the gymnasium. Felix immediately takes a right turn and passes through the central quadrant where they spot a number of abandoned fire trucks and the burnt remains of the main faculty building. They can also see that entire ground around the

quadrant has bulged up in the centre, with cracks across the asphalt of the road. Felix decides to put his foot down.

At the far side of the campus they find two military trucks blocking the exit so Felix puts the Chevy in park and goes to move the trucks whilst Gauge keeps an eye out. One of the trucks works and Felix moves it, but the second is immobile, and at this point Felix's eLense stutters and dies. Deciding that there is enough room, Felix drives the Chevy through the gap and the two of them escape, down to the hotel where Felix goes to his room and tries to forget everything that happened.

Back at the gymnasium, Nathan decides to run for the CDC truck to try and set off the canisters he saw earlier, whilst the rest provide covering fire. Keith (**who draws a joker**) manages to shoot the nearest creature in the head (**3RB called shot -4 offset by +2 from joker and +2 for 3RB, 2d8[10]+1+4+2 =17 points of damage**), dropping it, but the other four creatures finish off the last of the soldiers. Before they can pounce on Nathan however he runs past and up the steps to the truck, to find it locked, and immediately (**quick draw**) pulls his pistol and fires at the lock (**double tap using rapid fire**), disabling it. He dives inside only to find the men in hazmat suits shouting at him to shut the door, so he leans against the door to keep it closed.

Outside three of the creatures stalk towards the gymnasium whilst one bounds towards Keith, Harvey and the two Special Forces soldiers (**now allied extras**). Two more figures also emerge from the darkness behind the CDC truck, carrying automatic weapons. One of the Special Forces shoots the creature (**standard hit, 13 damage**) just as it reaches Harvey and it collapses in front of him, so Harvey elects to shoot at one of the two figures and hits the figure in the groin (**raise on hit, exploding damage, 28 points of damage**), killing it. The creature in front of him however is not as dead as he believes and lurches forward, biting Harvey in the crotch, causing immense pain and shock (**hit for 8 points of damage, shaken but luckily not wounded**). The figures in the distance also open fire, one shooting at the CDC truck whilst the other scores a hit on the Special Forces soldiers, although it hits his body armour to no effect.

Inside the CDC truck a bullet hole appears in the side as the greeter, who can now be heard screaming gleefully "I'm gonna kill you all!", unloads on the vehicle. One of the hazmat-suited doctor's shouts at Nathan to plug the hole, using a modified soldering iron that is nearby, which Nathan reluctantly agrees to do. However, when he realises who is outside his vengeful hindrance takes over and he exits the vehicle once more to engage with the greeter. He drops under the vehicle and shoots the greeter in the calf (**called shot, hit for 2 wounds but the greeter uses a benny to soak one of the wounds and then makes his spirit roll**). The greeter in return drops and returns fire with his assault rifle but due to the pain in his leg misses and instead shoots out a number of tyres on the truck.

The creature attached to Harvey decides to try and get a better grip, but as it does so it releases its grip (**a miss on the fighting roll**), at which point Harvey falls backwards clutching his groin. The two Special Forces soldiers unload on the creature, killing it. Keith meanwhile, who has been aiming at the greeter, unloads a three round burst at the head (**called shot, hit, exploding damage for 17 points**), killing him outright, but at the same time he also notices that one of the creatures that had been lying prone in the middle of the road was now getting to its feet directly behind Nathan and cries out a warning. Nathan spins and fires, killing it outright with a shot to the head (**2 bennies spent and 15 points of damage from double tap**). Whilst Harvey checks himself for damage, the rest run to the gymnasium where the other three creatures went, which they find attempting to tear down the door to the main hall, whilst Heather, Brad and a number of others bolster the door from the inside. All of them open fire on the creatures, killing two but not the third, which jumps and lands on the soldier, trying to tear at his neck but getting caught on the armour he is wearing (**hit but only 8 points of damage against Kevlar so no effect**). The others unload on it, blowing holes in it and knocking it off of the soldier before killing it, who thanks them as he is raised to his feet.

Now that the last of the creatures are gone, the Special Forces Team advise everyone that the area is compromised and that they have been instructed to retreat to a fall-back position just outside Manchester. Whilst Keith, Harvey and others load people into trucks gathered from across the campus, Heather points out that she hasn't been able to locate the Principal and, with Nathan, they search the gym. Eventually they find her in one of the cubicles of the ladies toilets, but she has slit her wrists and lies dead on the toilet, closer examination does not reveal anything (**failed healing roll from Heather**). The Special Forces Team tell them that they can no longer wait and they all depart in a convoy from the scene. As they drive off of the campus a solitary SUV drives the other way with three shaven-headed thugs in the back, all of whom stare with dead eyes at Harvey as they pass, before disappearing in to the night. Felix meanwhile watches from the window of the hotel as the convoy passes by his hotel, before going back to watching the news, on which reports are beginning to emerge of an incident at the school.

Once at the rendezvous, a former truck stop now turned into a small tent city by the army, everyone is put through a decontamination procedure before being given scrubs and a makeshift bed for the night (**all fatigue recovered, bennies refreshed and 2xp awarded to all active players**). Nathan complains about giving up his gear, but eventually relents when they tell him they are going to make him better.

The morning dawns bright and sunny and they all find themselves being brought into a prefab structure seemingly built overnight whilst they slept, where they are met by three gentlemen in uniform. The lead, an elderly man with Mediterranean features and receding hairline, introduces himself as Major Nola and explains that he is from the US Army, in a division attached to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). He understands that they have all been through a lot last night and that it must have been quite traumatic for them, but he asks them not to discuss what they saw, heard or did with anyone else. Keith agrees but several of the people in the room, notably Nathan and Trish, decry this as a cover up, refusing to agree to this. Major Nola goes on to tell them that life can be made very difficult for them if they do not cooperate, at which point Harvey claims they can't do anything to him as he is a celebrity. Major Nola retorts that celebrity status is a fleeting thing and can disappear at a moment's notice. However, he is prepared to offer a conciliatory tone, and says that in return for their silence, he will be able to help them out with any troubles they might have. Nathan immediately enquires about helping to catch his brother's killer, which Major Nola agrees to help with, stating that this request can be passed on to the relevant agencies with the highest urgency. Harvey is quick to follow, asking for help in pursuing his celebrity status, along with a magic wand. Again Major Nola agrees to this, and then Harvey insists that he needs his own club in NYC. Major Nola intimates that running a club is a very time consuming position, and it would be easier if someone ran the club for him, and Harvey quickly agrees. Brad then asks for two hookers. Major Nola agrees to this request despite some of the others calling him out for thinking too small.

Heather is more reluctant to agree as she is distrustful of the government, but when she mentions the conspiracy about the government putting something harmful into lab grown meat, Major Nola insists that he will get this looked into for her and will provide her with all the information she might need on this subject. Eventually Heather agrees to the terms. That just leaves Trish who is standing her ground over freedom of press rights, but with a little persuasion, including exclusivity rights to cover a number of upcoming high profile events, as well as a few veiled threats, she is eventually forced to concede. Major Nola also presents them with new eLenses and tells them that any property that was lost or damaged would be replaced. He also needs them to sign some forms confirming the agreement they have all just made, after which he says they are free to go.

Back in his hotel room Felix watches the morning news whilst eating breakfast, which now has national coverage of a terrorist attack at the school, although the assailants are unknown at this time, citing a number of explosions on the scene, as well as the deaths of three terrorists and a number of civilians. As Felix begins putting together the calls he needs to make to insurance, legal

and other companies regarding what has happened he sighs to himself. This is going to be a long day.

-End of Session 5-

Session 6: Your Possible Pasts

The characters go deeper into the rabbit hole, and the story of what happened comes out

Session note: Harvey's player unable to attend, Harvey played as wild card extra.

There is a knock at the door. Felix looks up from the conversation he is having with his lawyer and asks who it is. A voice from the other side tells him they are DHS agents and that he should open the door. Keeping the lawyer on the line he answers the door and is met with two men, one tall and Gaelic looking, and the other smaller and with Asian features. They introduce themselves as agents Follow and Mei and want to talk to him about what happened last night. Felix, in consultation with his lawyer, gives them a brief overview of what transpired and they seem extremely curious about some of things he saw. They want him to come with them to allow for a short decontamination procedure and fuller debrief. Once his lawyer has been given the address and agrees to send a local representative Felix follows them. Outside he sees that the road leading back to the school is now blocked and manned by more soldiers, before he gets into the car and they are off.

Back at the former truck stop the rest of the group emerge from the debrief tent, after Keith has a conversation with Major Nola and offers his services, although Major Nola declines, saying they have the situation under control now. After arranging for transport into Manchester where they can pick up hire cars and find a hotel, they head to Stubby's Diner, a ramshackle building but one which holds the coffee and food which they are all craving. Inside the place is busy with some former alumni huddled together along with a number of off duty soldiers grabbing some chow. They are served by Stubby himself, who hobbles over and takes their order before leaving them in peace. Keith checks out his new eLense but **(failed Knowledge: Robotics roll even after 2 bennies spent)** can't see anything unusual about the hardware. Over coffee and lunch of pancakes and a Hamhock Special, conversation turns to what to do next.

Meanwhile Felix has arrived at the truck stop with the agents and is lead through a short decontamination procedure before meeting with Major Nola and being given the same offer and treatment as the others, sign and get some benefits, or don't sign and get into trouble. He refuses to sign anything until his lawyer arrives but does accept the offer of removing his criminal background and replacement of his vehicle and effects. When his lawyer does arrive, a small dishevelled looking man with a bad dress sense and stubble by the name of Lake Burrows, Felix insists on knowing the truth about what happened, but from Keith. Keith is duly brought back in but sticks to the story of it being a terrorist attack in which people died and won't say any more. Whilst this is happening Lake comes to the conclusion that the document needs to be read in finer details which will take a couple of days and that he would need to take it with him, at which point Felix decides that they are going back to the hotel, and Lake offers him a ride. Once they are in the vehicle however Lake tells Felix that he is extremely confused by the situation as the document, although genuine in intent, contains a number of references to offices and departments within government that he has not heard of before, and the whole thing looks suspicious. Felix tells him not to say another word as the car might be bugged and to simply drive.

Whilst the others boot up and configure their new eLenses Nathan decides to investigate the Principal's background. He does not get far however as the web is full of references to her in news

coverage of the attack last night. However, what they are surprised to hear is that the events that took place are being described as a terrorist attack led by the Silent Spring movement and that the Principal herself was the ringleader. The attack is described as biochemical in nature and led to the deaths of 3 terrorists but not before they caused extensive damage to the school, setting off several explosives and killing 17 civilians. They also notice that there is no mention of Tori as one of the terrorists and that no military casualties are mentioned. At this point Heather tries to locate some more info about Tori but can only find a basic social network profile, and then tells the rest of them not to use their eLenses as she doesn't trust them. Before she turns hers off she makes one last call, to a Lyft rep to come pick them up from the truck stop as their ride still hasn't appeared.

Felix and Lake start to head back to the hotel but as they get on the highway Felix keeps an eye out behind him to make sure that they are not being followed and (**exploded notice roll of 19**) spies a small drone tailing them at a distance. Felix instructs a now heavily sweating Lake to come off of the highway and head down some local roads before pulling in at a house with two vehicles parked on the driveway. Felix gets out and knocks at the door, which is answered by a large middle aged lady in a flowery smock, and Felix, having briefed his lawyer, indicates that they are in trouble and need help. The lady takes pity on them and leads them inside, offering to call the emergency services for them, but Felix declines, asking instead if he can buy one of the vehicles out front (**Persuasion roll of 6 + 4 for attractive and charismatic**). The lady, after some dithering, agrees to sell them the station wagon for \$4,000 and Felix says that she may hold on to the lawyer's car until they return, to which the exasperated lawyer complains that it's on credit. The lady asks if they would like a drink, some milk perhaps, and the lawyer asks for a beer, to which Felix rolls his eyes. Having got the car Felix then asks if she can spare a change of clothes and despite the larger size of her husband, who is not around, is shortly wearing an oversized pair of slacks and a massive shirt, all held together by a belt, along with a flat cap. The lawyer gets a deer stalker and a sports jacket, which only sours his mood further. Finally Felix persuades the lady to take the lawyer's car for a drive, just to test it out (**another successful Persuasion roll**), and as she leaves the two of them watch from the house as the drone flies off after it. Once gone they both jump in the car and head in the opposite direction, towards Manchester, where Lake says there is somewhere safe.

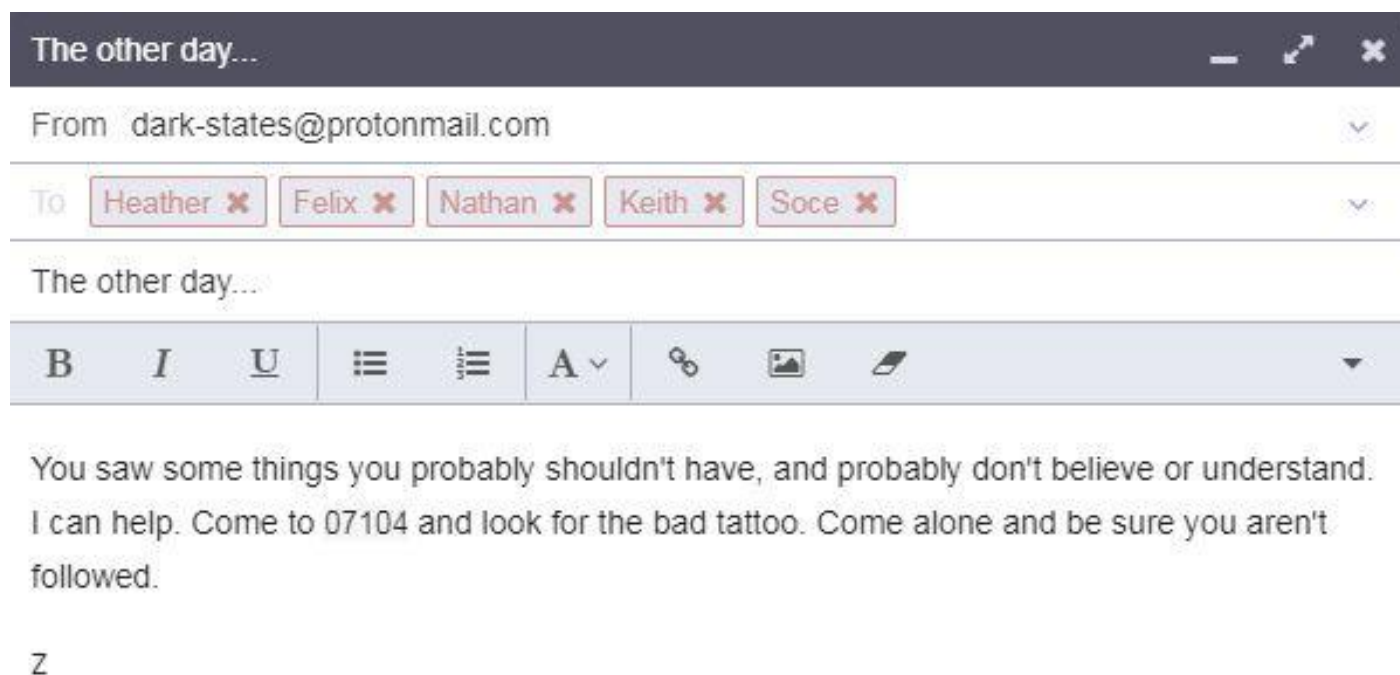
The ride for Heather, Keith, Nathan and Harvey finally pulls up outside Stubby's Diner, an SUV being driven by an Indian man with dreadlocks and a toothy smile. Once inside he introduces himself as Desi and asks them (**in a horrendous Indian / Jamaican accent!**) where they want to go, to which they reply downtown Manchester. He then asks them if they want to listen to some music but, without waiting for a reply, slaps the dashboard and some Indian Reggae begins to blare out as he tears off in a cloud of dust from the truck stop.

The two groups pass through the outskirts of Manchester, a once vibrant and busy city full of small businesses, but brought low by the recession. Streets are left unclean, many of the shops and buildings are boarded up or simply left vacant, and they spot a number of people gathered in groups on street corners and in doorways, looking malnourished, drug ridden and, in some cases, armed. Thankfully they pass through unmolested and arrive in downtown Manchester, which has retained some of its civility and charm, finding themselves outside the best hotel in town, which is not saying much, having two armed private security personnel on the door. Desi's group arrives first, with him slapping the dashboard the entire journey and singing along joyfully to his music. Heather asks Desi if there is anywhere good to eat vegetarian food around here, and Desi cheerfully invites them all to come down to his family's restaurant for dinner. As they disembark from the car a battered station wagon pulls up behind them and two men, one in clothes that plainly don't fit him and a flat cap and the other in a deerstalker and clutching a briefcase, step out. Nathan recognises them first and bursts out laughing, but Felix tells him to "find a way to amuse himself in private" before they all head inside.

The guards stop Heather, who is first to try and enter, demanding to know if they have ID, and also if they have a booking. Although they have the former they have not booked anything, and it takes

a short conversation between the security guard and someone else before they are admitted. Even then they check everyone for weapons and instruct anyone who is carrying that they need to deposit them in a secure area just inside before they go any further. Keith tries to persuade them that as a Major in the US Armed Forces he should be exempt but (**failed unskilled Persuasion check**) does not cut any ice with them. Thankfully Felix intervenes and uses his charms (**Persuasion roll of 15**) to let them allow Keith to bring it what he has. Nathan then tries the same but (**failed unskilled Persuasion check**) he is also told to leave the weapons. Felix chooses not to intervene. Inside they end up booking, as both Keith and Felix are rich (both have the **Rich Edge**), the entire top floor of the hotel for a night, as well as making use of the dry-cleaning, copying and other facilities in the hotel. Felix specifically makes ten copies of the documents that were given to him and packages each to a known recipient, before getting the hotel to summon a FedEx drone to deliver copies to the addressed individuals.

Harvey stays behind to investigate the software and firmware components of the eLenses that the military provided them with whilst the others step out to the local mall where they purchase some new eLenses and clothes, before returning to the hotel. Once they return they find that Harvey (**Knowledge: Computers roll of 6**) has uncovered something fishy about the eLenses when they boot, as if something is running in the background, and has disabled the location services before turning off all of the eLenses. They unpack the new eLenses and set them up, at which point they all receive an e-mail as below:



In addition Nathan receives an additional e-mail from the USPS telling him that they tried to deliver a parcel to his house but no-one was home so it is at the depot and can be shipped to another address if he replies to the email. It is the sender that troubles Nathan the most, as it is his dead brother. So he gives them the address of the hotel at which he is staying, and waits for it to arrive.

At this point 3xp was awarded to each PC with a player present and the benny pool was refreshed, resulting in Felix and Nathan gaining an advance. They take the following:

- Felix:
- Nathan: +1 Shooting, +1 Fighting (below controlling die type)

-End of Session 6-

Session 7: Wish You Were Here

Heather and Nathan go hunting for clues.

Session note: Harvey, Keith and Felix's players unable to attend, side mission undertaken by Heather and Nathan.

Heather's contact within the Silent Spring, Madeline, gets in touch and wants to meet with Heather in Manchester that evening, at Desi's Spice Academy. Keith and Felix meanwhile decide to take advantage of the facilities and retire to the Jacuzzi.

Whilst they wait for the dinner date Heather extracts the blade that she retrieved from Tori to further examine. Following some investigation by Nathan (**Investigation roll of 7**), they find some pictures of the same knife for auction at Sotheby's of London. The notes attached indicate that its origin is from the Second World War, used by the Ahnenerbe Division of the SS. They research some more information about the Ahnenerbe Division and uncover their occult nature, including information about its history, formation and base at Wewelsburg Castle. Heather also begins to connect information such as the name 'Baphomet' and the Teutonic chanting that was heard during the ritual. Harvey helps them to hack Tori's email account (**Knowledge: Computers roll of 13**) where they find some additional correspondence pointing to a dark web address, before retiring to his room complaining of a headache.

Heather and Nathan then turn their attention to the email from Z, and after some discussion identify that the number indicated refers to a zip code in Newark. Once they locate the zip code they search for tattoo parlours in the area and find that there are six, but one has the name 'Bad Intentionz Bar and Drill' a bar that also houses a tattoo parlour on the establishment.

It is now time to head to the restaurant, which is a short walk away, although both go armed, Nathan with a handgun and Heather with a taser. The walk is actually quite pleasant for the time of evening, although once across the river the signs of decay and poverty begin to reappear, with a number of boarded up properties, and the number of people out and about for a Saturday night begins to drop off. In the middle of the street however, amongst boarded up lots on either side, stands Desi's Spice Academy, lit with way too much neon and strobe lights.

They enter through a fake marble arch, to traditional Indian music and the hubbub of chatter from diners within. Desi approaches and greets them both warmly, asking if their friends were joining them, to which Heather says they declined. Desi gives them a wink and suggests if they would like a discreet table for two, which both Nathan and Heather decline, saying that they are just here to meet a friend. Desi gives them a big knowing smile and leads them to a table at the back of the restaurant, where he offers them some of the house speciality, a home brewed spiced rum. Nathan and Heather both agree although it takes Nathan aback by its potency (**2 bennies spent on vigor roll to avoid getting tipsy**). They then choose the Dosa platter, some slightly less alcoholic drinks, and wait for Madeline.

She arrives not long after, a blonde athletic woman in her forties whom Heather recognises immediately. Maddy first enquires as to the trustworthiness of Nathan, who is slightly offended, before Heather explains what happened at the school. Maddy confirms that Silent Spring were not involved in any way and challenges the assertions of some of the more fantastical elements of the story, claiming that they did not make sense from a scientific perspective, but both Heather and Nathan confirm what they saw was genuine. Heather complains about how they have made Silent Spring a scapegoat for the event, to which Nathan insists it would help if they stopped blowing things up. Both Heather and Maddy then berate Nathan for some time on the purpose of Silent Spring, to punish those who are polluting the environment, and that since the EPA was disbanded in 2026 there is no political method for dealing with such criminals. Maddy then asks for evidence of what was seen and Heather explains she has retained some samples of the slug in a plastic bag which she can send to someone within the Silent Spring movement to test.

Maddy then explains that their story has been contradicted by another who was at the scene and has been giving interviews to the news channels. When they scan the web they find that Brad has been interviewed and been in a press conference where he has confirmed the terrorist story and also asserted that he rescued the children single handedly, although not without being injured in the process. Heather is incensed by this betrayal and insists that they must get revenge on Brad for turning on them.

Finally Maddy also tells Heather that there has been some strange activity in New Orleans, it looks like a corporation, Norleans Biochemical, is allegedly putting something into the swamplands that surround the city, and that is having some hallucinogenic effects on the local populace. Two agents from Silent Spring that were sent to investigate have disappeared and Maddy has been asked to go check it out, and wants Heather to come along too. Heather offers Nathan's services as a private investigator, who demands payment for his services. Maddy says that funds could be made available for his help.

The meal draws to a close and Maddy takes her leave of Heather and Nathan, who begin to walk back to the hotel. It is now dark and, as they cross the bridge, a group of four dishevelled looking men are approaching them from the other direction. Not liking the look of this both of them cross the road, only for the others to do likewise. One calls out to them, asking if they have any money to spare, to which Nathan tells them no. Repeated requests for spare change come from the men as they approach, and Nathan draws his revolver to intimidate them into leaving them alone. Unfortunately (**critical failure on intimidation roll**) instead of intimidating them he instead empties the bullets from his gun onto the floor by accident. One of the men behind the others seems to be pulling something out of his pocket and Heather attempts to cross the road again as the other three converge on Nathan, who is busy picking up bullets from the floor. As the man approaches Heather attempts to taser him but (**failed unskilled fighting check despite +2 touch attack bonus and a benny spent**) sweeps wide. Thankfully the man also misses his attack on Heather as he attempts to bludgeon her with the butt of his handgun, whilst the other three gang up (**+2 attack bonus**) on Nathan. Still only one manages to hit (**d4 fighting and rolls of 1 for both other attacks**) and his attempt to push Nathan over fails (**opposed strength roll win by Nathan**), and in retaliation Nathan, who has now managed to reload some of his ammo shoots at the middle man (**double tap shot using rapid fire edge vs parry as in close combat, success but only 5 damage, resulting in shaken**) who backs off in fright. Yet again Heather and the man attacking her both miss, dancing around in the middle of the deserted road as they try to avoid each other more than anything else. Nathan manages to go before the two still attacking him and uses the butt of the gun, which is now empty of bullets, to bludgeon one of the other men. He succeeds (**fighting roll and 11 damage from attack**) catching the assailant on the hip and causing him to fall over in pain. The last man backs off; grabbing his fellows as he does so, but the man attacking Heather hasn't noticed and continues his assault, missing again. Nathan points his weapon at the man and bluffs him into submitting, as there are no bullets in the weapon (**exploding unskilled intimidation check of 17 and a benny earnt**) and the man capitulates, tossing his weapon and retreating with his colleagues, all the time complaining bitterly that they

are just looking for money for food. Nathan however has no sympathy for them and simply threatens to shoot them again, forcing them to flee, and allowing Heather and Nathan to complete their journey back to the hotel.

At this point 2xp was awarded to each PC with a player present and the benny pool was refreshed, resulting in Heather gaining an advance. She takes the following:

- Heather:

-End of Session 7-

Session 8: One of These Days

Two soldiers fight a supernatural foe at the end of the Second World War.

Session Note: Felix, Heather and Keith's players unable to attend, one shot using Weird Wars 2, no power points, setting rule also used.

Maurice Delacroix is a bloodthirsty US marine.

Bill Stevens is a British officer who is carrying the stiff upper lip of the empire.

They both have a job to do. And by god they're going to do it!

It is March 30 1945, and the war is almost over. Allied forces are crossing the Rhine and into Germany, whilst the Russians are approaching fast from the East. A squad from the Office for Special Investigations have sent a unit behind enemy lines, to Wewelsburg Castle, home to the occult Ahnenerbe Division of the SS and home of Heinrich Himmler. Their mission is simple, to take the castle and prevent the enemy from carrying out a last ditch attempt to repulse the allied advance. Capturing Himmler, should he be there, is a secondary mission, but his death would also be acceptable. Lastly, to complicate matters, it is understood that the Russians are arriving soon and that allied forces therefore have a time limit in which to carry out the mission, so it must be done today!

The team begin sat in the drizzle and mud amongst some trees to the south of Wewelsburg Castle as dawn approaches. The rest of their team (**allied extras**) comprises of:

- Sergeant Casey, a cigar chewing no nonsense kinda guy
- Private 'Stumpy' Serge, a joker with two fingers missing and a penchant for bad language
- Private Collinson, a large mountain of a man who is full of bravado
- Private Alderson, a bug-eyed maniac with a penchant for killing people

Maurice and Bill, who are in charge of the team, are discussing a full frontal assault, when Alderson informs them that there is movement outside the castle. They can see two guards on patrol with a dog, and Maurice decides to try to subdue the guards, kill the dog and steal their uniforms (**benny earned**). They creep up to a better position (**successful cooperative stealth roll**) and are now within range. The dog looks up in their direction but the guard (**critical failure on notice**) decides that the dog is being annoying and gives it a kick before lighting a cigarette. Maurice shoots the dog with his silenced pistol (**aimed shot to head with the drop for 19 damage**) and the dog collapses as the others rush the guards, grappling and choking out the guards into unconsciousness, before dragging them back into the bushes. They strip the guards and Maurice and Bill dress in the uniforms, which just fit, at which point Casey asks about the rest of them who are still wearing their allied uniforms. Maurice decides that they will go into the keep in disguise and lure out four more guards to strip them also (**another benny earned**). At this point



Bill notices that Alderson is stabbing the guards to death and objects in a very English manner, but it's pointed out this is war and they haven't got time for prisoners, so he relents.

Bill and Maurice head round to the main entrance of the castle, crossing a small bridge defended by sandbag machine gun emplacements. The guards question the pair and Maurice has to do the talking as Bill doesn't speak German. After a brief discussion where they claim to have lost the dog (**successful persuasion roll**), they are let through and find themselves in the main courtyard, with various people bustling about. They ask one of the guards to follow them, claiming they saw something suspicious outside, but he directs them to the office, inside the castle. Here they find a blonde, moustached German behind a desk, and Maurice tries to flatter the officer by praising his moustache. Unfortunately (**failed persuasion roll**) it doesn't work, but the officer instructs them to wait in the courtyard. Whilst Maurice is talking, Bill spots (**successful Notice roll**) a figure in strange robes passing down a corridor nearby, seemingly out of place amongst all of the uniforms.

Outside Maurice again tries to enlist the help of a passing soldier but this (**critical failure on persuasion**) is met with derision and some insulting in German ensues. As they are arguing there is the sound of growling and snapping as a very large wolf is led out of a nearby door on chain leash by a seven foot monster of a man whose uniform seems somewhat patchwork in appearance. He approaches them and bellows 'Brute follow' so, fearing that they might be uncovered, they head outside. Once back around where the rest are waiting, Maurice and Bill decide to jump Brute and take him down, but he just stands there as they dangle round his neck, and he lets go of the leash. The wolf immediately turns round and mauls Bill (**successful fighting roll for 10 damage, 1 wound**), tearing a chunk out of Bill's backside and ripping the trousers to shreds. The rest of the group charge out and Stumpy stabs the wolf in the neck (**8 damage, shaken**) and the knife entangles itself in the fur, whilst Alderson swipes its leg, causing it to fall over.

Whilst this is happening Maurice, who is wrapped round Brute's neck, simply tells him to walk into the bushes, which Brute obeys (**benny earned**). He then tells him to start stripping, thinking he can use the clothes on Collinson, and finds that Brute seems to be held together by stitching. However the rest of the group are barely keeping the wolf at bay, which is now making a lot of noise, so Maurice tells Brute to restrain the wolf, which he does. They all head back into the bushes before a spotlight is shone down on the area. After some discussion they agree that getting more guards isn't going to work, so they decide to have the rest of the squad play prisoner whilst Maurice, Bill and Brute are captors. They walk back into the castle, having removed the knife from the wolf and bandaged it, and are met by the officer in the courtyard, although some are snickering at Bill's bloodied backside hanging out of his trousers. He congratulates them for capturing the men, but when Maurice points out they stabbed the wolf, he pulls his Luger and insists on shooting one of them in retribution. Maurice convinces him (**multiple bennies spent on persuasion roll to succeed**) to stop, and they are instead instructed to take the prisoners down to the Inner Chamber. Brute is sent back to the kennels with the wolf and Maurice asks for two more guard to accompany them to the chamber. Once they are inside the castle proper and in a room which is full of books, parchments and maps relating to the location of the Holy Grail, Bill instructs the others to grab the soldiers. They grab and subdue one, but the other lets out a shout before Bill runs him through with a bayonet (**fighting roll with a raise, 13 damage**), killing him.

As they are undressing the soldiers a door to the room opens and two more soldiers look in on the scene. Bill throws a hand grenade at them (**exploded throwing roll of 27**) hitting the lead soldier in the head and causing him to fall backwards and the door closing before an explosion is heard and felt from the other room. Sirens are now blaring from the castle so the group forget about the uniforms and head down some stairs towards where they believe the Inner Chamber to be. As they go Bill throws another grenade into an adjacent room (**benny spent to make the throwing roll**) which explodes, setting some of the manuscripts and books on fire. German soldiers in this room are immediately tasked with stopping the fire.

Down the stairs the group follows a stone clad corridor, lit by torches, which then turns a corner. Waiting at the end of this short corridor is a solid metal door guarded by two monstrous looking men, although one has a machine gun for an arm and the other is wearing a gas mask and carrying a green vial. Luckily Maurice gets to go first and immediately throws one of his grenades down the corridor and they all duck back round. Unfortunately the guard with the machine gun is also wearing grenades and in the ensuing explosion (**3 AOE attacks doing multiple wounds each**) there is little left of either guard. A side effect is that dust and grit is thrown up into the air all along the corridor and the group has to slowly edge its way down the corridor as it can no longer see. As they are trying to force the door open, which is still attached but buckled (**cooperative strength roll**), the back of Alderson's head suddenly explodes. Behind him stands Sergeant Casey (**failed spirit roll against puppet**), M1 in hand and pointed at them, and without waiting Bill stabs him with the bayonet. Maurice actually hesitates as Casey mutters that he doesn't remember doing anything, but then (**bloodthirsty hindrance and benny earned**) he shoots Casey in the face.

The remainder thrust the door open to find a cabal of cloaked figures gathered around a central depression in a circular room which is lit by torches, in the middle of which a glowing orb is floating. Beyond them, at the far side of the depression is the leather-clad and partially cowed figure of none other than Heinrich Himmler himself. Everyone immediately goes for him but Himmler gets to act first (**level headed edge**). He throws a bolt at Maurice, who is knocked back and stunned (**bolt attack for 2 wounds, reduced to 1 by soak roll and benny spent**). Stumpy and Collinson both charge through the room but Collinson (**critical fail on Agility roll**) trips and stumbles head first into the glowing orb. Although he comes through otherwise unharmed, his hair is now on fire. Bill goes last and shoots at Himmler, but misses.

The following round Himmler goes first again and it is Stumpy's turn to feel Himmler's wrath. Another bolt from close range (**GM benny spent and exploding for 19 points of damage**) sends

him flying across the room to crash into the wall to the sound of breaking bones, before he slides lifelessly down to the ground. Bill shoots again at Himmler and this time hits him in the crotch but Himmler appears unharmed (**3 on damage roll +2 for hit to groin, but Himmler has an armor spell active so doesn't beat his toughness**) much to everyone's chagrin as the bullet passes through his leather robe without hitting anything. Cue jokes about the size of Himmler's genitals. Maurice has recovered (**successful spirit roll**) and decides to shoot one of the cabal who are transfixed on their ceremony, taking one down, and Collinson finally puts his hair out.

Next round, Bill gets to go first and fires yet again at Himmler, this time scoring an actual wound (**11 points of damage against Himmler's toughness of 6 + 2 points of armor and a GM benny spent but failed soak roll**), forcing Himmler to pause as he is shaken from these events. Maurice also now tries shooting Himmler but only catches his robes once more (**low damage roll below Himmler's toughness**) but then Collinson arises. Still smoking from the top of his head he raises his pistol and fires at Himmler, shooting him from the side and the bullet punctures both lungs of Himmler (**exploding damage roll of 36 and no GM bennies left to soak**). Heinrich Himmler, architect of the SS, is dead. As if reacting to this the very walls of the castle seem to shake to their foundations, and dust falls from the ceiling, and the glowing ball in the centre of the room becomes fiery in its intensity. The three remaining allies flee the scene, the cabal left cowering on the floor, and both Maurice and Bill make it out alive but Collinson, who is slower and further behind (**and also makes a failed agility check**) is caught in the blast.

Outside, past the blazing castle, the survivors are met by the scene of the remaining Germans fleeing as the Russians have arrived, killing everyone in sight. They do not look happy that the OSI got here first and burned the material they wanted to steal. But at least the monster of the SS is dead, so the vodka and cigars are shared.

-End of Session 8-

Session 9: Brain Damage

The group head to Newark and a meeting with the mysterious Z...

Session Note: Harvey and Keith's players unable to attend, PCs run as wild card extras.

It is morning in Manchester and the PCs have convened for breakfast in the hotel in which they are staying. Harvey is complaining of weird dreams from the night before, in which he seems to remember shooting Himmler in the nuts. The rest of the group think that maybe he has taken a blow to the head and is concussed but he assures them that he feels a bit better this morning. After some food, Nathan grabbing as much meat as he can to make up for the vegetarian menu the night before, the group discusses their plans. Heather and Nathan explain what they found out the previous evening regarding the blade, but Felix seems uninterested in that. However when Felix hears that Brad is taking all of the glory for saving people, he decides that he should mess with him. They all agree that they need to head to Newark to visit whoever Z is but they need to find some transport first, although Nathan wants to stay and wait for his package, which is currently in Pennsylvania and should be with them by lunchtime. So the rest head to the local mall, Felix and Harvey heading to a sound equipment shop whilst Heather and Keith head to a car hire place to rent a vehicle for the trip.

Felix first looks up Brad on the internet finds the company he claimed to own, but cannot find any mention of him on the website. He phones the company and persuades the receptionist (**persuasion roll of 14 after Benny spent vs 1 on opposed roll**) to give him Brad's cell number and email address, finding out that Brad is just a security guard at the company, not the owner.

Once he has this he checks with Harvey that he can make a call anonymous which Harvey says is easy (**successful Knowledge: Computers roll**) and then pays an elderly gentleman to purchase some voice synthesizing equipment on his behalf after discussion with Harvey, tipping the man for his efforts. Meanwhile Heather and Keith hire a new vehicle for them to use, and they reconvene at the hotel.

Once back there Felix uses the equipment to call Brad, pretending to be a member of Silent Spring and that they are going to find him and kill him. Brad is enraged by the call and starts swearing down the phone but Felix hangs up before he can get much further. Shortly after this Nathan's package finally arrives, containing two objects. The first is a metallic disc the size of a coaster, featureless apart from an indentation in what they assume to be the top. The second item is a letter, addressed to Nathan.

23rd February 2024

Nathan,

I'm sorry. I tried to deal with this on my own but it got out of hand. You have to understand I had to do it, there was no other option, they were after me. Hopefully when you get this I'll be standing by your side, and this while shit will be behind us. But if I ain't there then you gotta deal with this. I didn't mean to put you through this but I didn't know where else to go. They were onto me and I couldn't think where else I could put this where it might be safe.

What is it? I'm not sure but I know it's important. I found it in an alleyway, near the body of someone. Not sure who they were but they were in a bad way and there were burn marks all round them like there'd been a fire. Whoever the person was, they were dead, didn't need it no more. So I took it. Thought I might get some money for it, I needed money. But no-one would buy it, said it was junk. And I couldn't get it to do anything. 'Cept then I started getting this weird feeling, like I was being followed. Couldn't say for sure who or how they were following me, but I definitely kept getting the hairs on the back of my neck standing up.

Then, one evening as I was leaving the bar they came for me. Three men in suits, big men, who tried to get me into a van. Would've done except for the thing. It was in my pocket and got all hot, like it was burning. I had to get it out of my pocket it was hurting, but when I did it vaped those guys like they were made of paper. So I managed to get away, and I've been running ever since. I couldn't risk calling you, I think they are listening for me, and I think my online accounts are being watched. They're following me, tracking me somehow, and I think they're really after this thing. So I'm putting this thing in the US Postal Service System, ain't nobody finding it there. It's on a time delay so it should reach you in a while. I hope you can figure out what this thing is, and I hope it doesn't bring the bad things to you.

I gotta go now, I need to get rid of this thing before it get's rid of me. Hope to see you soon.

Aaron

Once he takes in the letter Nathan shares it with the others, and Felix reads it aloud to the rest of the group. No-one can make head or tail of the object, with Felix attempting to take a rubbing of the object but nothing appears. Eventually they decide to hit the road at which point the arguments start. Firstly it is over who gets to sit in which seat, even though it is a self-driving Tesla, and then why Heather hired a Tesla in the first place. Eventually they get on the road, and make a fairly uneventful journey south to Newark. Some four hours and many, many arguments later, they

arrive on the outskirts of Newark. The weather has warmed a little as they have driven south but as they hit the outskirts of Newark so does the population. The sidewalks become heaving with people going about their daily business or just hanging out on street corners. The traffic has also increased and before long they find themselves in a traffic jam whilst two men argue over a collision between two cars at an intersection. As they sit in the car and wait Harvey falls asleep, and a man begins to move up the road between the cars, leaning in to most and speaking to the passengers. Felix tells them to roll up their windows but Nathan who is in the driving seat decides to leave his open, mostly to annoy Felix. The man, looking homeless with a beard and a heavy coat, asks the PCs if they would like any tobacco, to which the PCs all decline, and then offers them something more illicit, but they are still not interested. He then opens one side of his coat which is lined with DVDs and Blu-ray discs and offers them some of these. This media, being completely obsolete, offers nothing to the group apart from some laughs, so he then he opens the other side which is full of pieces of computer hardware. Having failed to even sell them that the man picks up on Nathan's accent and asks if he is new in town. When Nathan replies to he is, and ignoring Felix's repeated requests for him to just fuck off, the man introduces himself as Billy, and tells Nathan that if he needs a guide Billy is more than willing to help. At this point Felix gets out of the car and surveys the scene, realising that it would be quicker for them to walk to the bar rather than wait. The rest agree and they set off, leaving the car in autopilot mode to drive to the bar when it is free from the traffic. Billy waves them off and reminds Nathan he will be around if Nathan needs help.

Before long they find themselves at Bad Intentionz, near the intersection of Broadway and 5th, a badly lit sign of a tattoo involving a busty girl wearing a cowboy hat beneath the gleaming neon of the bar sign. They head inside to find the bar moderately busy, Latino Metal blaring out from speakers as a Goth girl and Latino barman serve customers. Nathan asks for a round of scotches and then asks the Goth girl where Z is? Felix berates Nathan for just spitting out the name whilst the girl gives him a confused look before suggesting they take a seat in a booth. Whilst sitting Felix spies (**notice roll of 14**) that one of the security cameras is watching them and not long after this the girl approaches them and asks them to go downstairs where Mr Zee is waiting.

They find downstairs to be another bar, but deserted apart from one person. That person is a well-muscled Latino wearing a white vest with a pistol tucked into his pants. Without waiting for introductions he demands that they all hand over their weapons before they go any further. Everyone refuses, although Heather explains that she only has a knife. The man insists that they leave their weapons or they don't get to talk with anyone except him, but Felix insists they'll just walk. An argument ensues and the Latino pulls his pistol before any of them can act (**joker on initiative**) and aims it squarely at Nathan. The group backs off and heads back upstairs, where they wait. About twenty minutes later the same girl apologetically asks them to go back down, and that they can take their weapons. When they go back down there are now two people waiting for them. One is the Latino from earlier, still looking very angry, and the other is a portly, middle-aged Chinese man whose hair is thinning on top. They all recognise him immediately as their old Mathematics teacher, Zuming Feng.

He apologies for the actions of his friend, Angel, who he admits can be a little bit hot headed, and asks them to come with him. He takes them through a door to a backroom with a table and six chairs, with Nathan and Angel staring each other out as they pass. He tells them they might all need a drink to go with the conversation they are about to have and produces a bottle of vodka and six shot glasses. Once everyone has had a drink, he begins to tell them what he knows.

He asks them a question. Did they ever wonder where the school got its money from? Sure, it was a private school so parents paid for their children to go there, but the school also received money from other sources. Private organisations, wealthy patrons, even the government itself through front facing proxies were all making donations to the school, but not for the benefit of the children. Both the government and some of the organisations were carrying out experiments on a selection of the pupils, some of the best academic students in the country. When the PCs were there these

were limited to psychological experiments of some sort, enshrouded by hypnotic blockers to ensure the children were unaware of what was happening to them. Feng, being a relatively new teacher there at that time, had no direct involvement but he heard rumors from some of other teachers. What he did know early on is that he had been forced when he started at the school to sign a NDA, which prevented him from saying anything and, quite frankly, he had a wife and young children then and needed the job.

However more recently the experiments had taken on a more sinister turn. Physical experimentation had begun to take place, or so he had heard from other teachers, with implantation of 'cybernetic' devices capable of attuning to the host as well as biogenetic adjustments to 'enhance' the student. By this time Feng's children had grown and Feng felt he could no longer let this continue so he handed in his notice. Not being able to talk to the authorities did not mean he couldn't investigate what was going on at the school however, and he and a few other trusted people have begun investigating what experiments are happening and why. When he first knew of the experiments he was told that it was to make better students, in the words of the incumbent president of the time, to 'Make America Great Again'. However as time progressed he began to think that there was something else going on. That was when Memphis happened. He doesn't elaborate any more on this except to say that he saw some things similar to what he believes the characters have seen. It is at this point that he asks them to tell him what happened. Heather fills him in on the story, to which he asks questions at certain intervals. He is not sure what to make of the knife that Heather has, but wishes to investigate the slug slime some more, as well as the device that Nathan has just received.

This brings Feng to the reason as to why he contacted them. Well, the answer was fairly simple; they were all part of the experiment undertaken at the school whilst they were students. Felix decries this and claims he has no memory of any such event, to which both Feng and Heather explain that hypnotic conditioning may have suppressed the memories. And that this included everyone at the table that evening. He doesn't know what the experiment was; only that they were probably still being watched in some way and that the experiment was not over. When Felix presses him on what that has to do with anything Feng grows a little vague. What he saw in Memphis, and what they saw at the school, admittedly doesn't make any sense. And they are right, it doesn't, it defies natural and scientific laws. It's possible that some form of hallucinogenic agent was used at the school to induce such scenes, but Feng says that he managed to take some readings when he was in Memphis, and those results worried him greatly. What he saw, and recorded, showed that basic laws of physics were being altered, subtly but perceptibly, which should be impossible. The forces of gravity, electromagnetism and others were shifting, becoming unstable, which Heather links to the bats falling from the sky at the school incident. During this event, which he refers to as an incursion, such effects could have a profound effect on everything, the human body included. Long term, or possibly even short term, exposure could lead to insanity or even death. And he thinks that the experiments being carried out at the school are linked to these events in some way.

The reason he has contacted the characters is therefore twofold. Firstly, to warn them that they have been experimented on and that they should be wary of those around them, which Felix still refuses to believe. Secondly, he wishes to enlist their help in uncovering the truth behind it all. He suggests two courses of action that may help in this endeavour. The first is that he believes paper records of the experiments may still be on site at the school, in a secure facility hidden under the library and not the main school building which the players believed may have been burnt down to destroy the evidence. And secondly, with more urgency than the first, is that one of the main contributors of funds towards the experiments of the school, Ethan Russell who is CEO of Russell Holdings, headquartered in New York, is receiving a shipment of something that he wants kept hidden. This sparks Felix's attention, as this man is the father of the student that framed him when he was at college, now running a multinational corporation worth billions. The shipment is arriving tomorrow evening, on an unregistered Ukrainian cargo vessel called the Chernobyl Mect, which was uncovered by an agent that they have within his organisation. He wants them to help him to

intercept the shipment and steal it away before it disappears into Russell Holdings HQ; he believes whatever is on-board is important given that they are taking such precautions and risks bringing it in this way.

The characters have another shot of vodka. There is a lot to think about.

At this point all characters who were active are awarded 2 xp.

-End of Session 9-

Session 10: Comfortably Numb

The characters get to chill out in New York before making a raid...

Session Note: Felix and Keith's players unable to attend, PCs run as wild card extras.

Everyone sits in the upstairs bar at Bad Intentionz pondering the information they have just received. After some brief discussion Keith and Felix again decide to pay for everyone to stay at a hotel in Manhattan. The car is waiting for them outside so they all jump in, with Nathan in the driving seat and Heather in the passenger seat. As they approach the Lincoln Tunnel they are pulled over by a security checkpoint where the guard asks them some questions, despite Harvey transmitting his permit to travel and Felix showing proof of the hotel they have booked. Nathan claims to be here on holiday, but eventually Heather lets slip that they have come from the school reunion, but the security guard simply asks if they are all ok before letting them through.

They clear the Lincoln Tunnel to the sound of Bon Jovi blaring from the car, Heather having insisted that Nathan turn off the country and western music he had chosen. They find it is now twilight and sun streams through the cracks in the metropolis showing them a much different environment to that on the other side of the tunnel. The streets are clean and well kept, far less busy than Newark, and the streets are filled with expensive looking cars. At the hotel a valet takes their car to the garage whilst they check in to their rooms.

At this point they are given the option to do what they want for the next 24 hours. Will they undertake some research on Russell Holdings or the Chernobyl Mect? Will they scout out the dock where it is due to arrive and lay plans on how to best infiltrate the boat? Will they engage with locals to find some extra information? Nope. Well Heather does, retiring to her room to brush up on her Russian. Keith and Felix head to the bar downstairs, but Nathan and Harvey decide to hit the bars and clubs in town, it being Harvey's home.

Their first attempt to get into one of the many high class bars in Manhattan is met with failure as the two doormen refuse to allow Nathan in, based on the fact he is dressed in cowboy boots, jeans, a white 'wife beater's vest and a Stetson. Attempts to persuade them otherwise (**persuasion roll of 5 by Harvey with doormen exploding for 13**) are unsuccessful, so they next head to a clothing store to smarten Nathan up. The lady inside, Thelma, sells them a smart casual look and wants \$300, but Harvey (**exploding persuasion roll of 14 vs 3**) persuades her to pay only \$50 plus some signed mix tapes, and she also agrees to come meet them in the club they are heading towards, Men in White Kilts, later that evening. She also agrees to look after Nathan's old clothes until the morning when they promise to pick them up.

Back at the hotel Heather is watching the news about the aftermath of the school attack, a profile of the Principal emerging that ties her into Lily James, nominal head of Silent Spring, when she spots (**notice roll of 4**) something odd happening behind the reporter, who is reporting from the

edge of the cordon, as several trucks roll past. Although they are in the same green color as the rest of the army vehicles, they look more like security trucks than troop carriers. She takes a screenshot and shows it to Keith, who doesn't recognise it as a standard US military vehicle. Heather tries to contact the reporter, Trish, whom they last saw at the encampment, but has no luck, and Madeline is also not responding. Finally she starts posting some questions on social media about Tori, trying to get in contact with some of her friends and colleagues (**Benny earned**).

A few drinks later and now with a couple of socialites whom they have charmed, they hit the club and Harvey immediately takes up residence in the DJ booth (**knowledge: music roll of 11**), whilst Nathan cuts up the dance floor with some Texan moves (**exploding agility roll of 25!**), wowing the ladies with them. Later, over more drinks (**failed vigor roll from Nathan leading to inebriated state, -1 to all smarts and agility trait rolls**), one of the ladies asks him to tell a story about his previous jobs as a Private Investigator and he duly (**Benny earned**) tells a story about a man who tried to trick a company he was hired for into believing he couldn't walk. At this point the lady from the shop, Thelma, arrives but they are both now so drunk (**both at -1**) that they forget about her and head back to the hotel with the other two ladies.

In the morning, well lunchtime, the two of them emerge looking worse for wear and with no sympathy from the rest of the group. When they go to retrieve Nathan's clothes they find them piled up in the street, his hat squashed flat, and he remembers what happened. Unfortunately his attempts to smooth over the issue (**persuasion roll of 3 vs 14**) results in her threatening to call the cops, and they quickly withdraw. Luckily Heather has heard of Nathan's plight and has purchased him a new hat, although it is the cheapest, tackiest touristy cowboy hat she could find. Nathan is not impressed.

Finally the time comes and they head back to Bad Intentionz where they find Feng, Angel and two other men waiting for them. Feng explains that the plan is to load up into two dinghies with outboard motors down in the docks of Elizabeth Marina, and head over to the dock, which is over in Brooklyn where the Chernobyl Mect should be moored. They are gearing up with weapons and armor which Harvey, Felix and Heather all accept, and Heather uses some household chemicals and her knowledge (**naturalist edge and knowledge: eco-science roll of 10**) to concoct some tranquilizer which she loads into some needles. Feng also gives Heather a device that looks like an old smartphone, but he tells her that it checks for anomalies in various fields and will alert her if something is wrong.

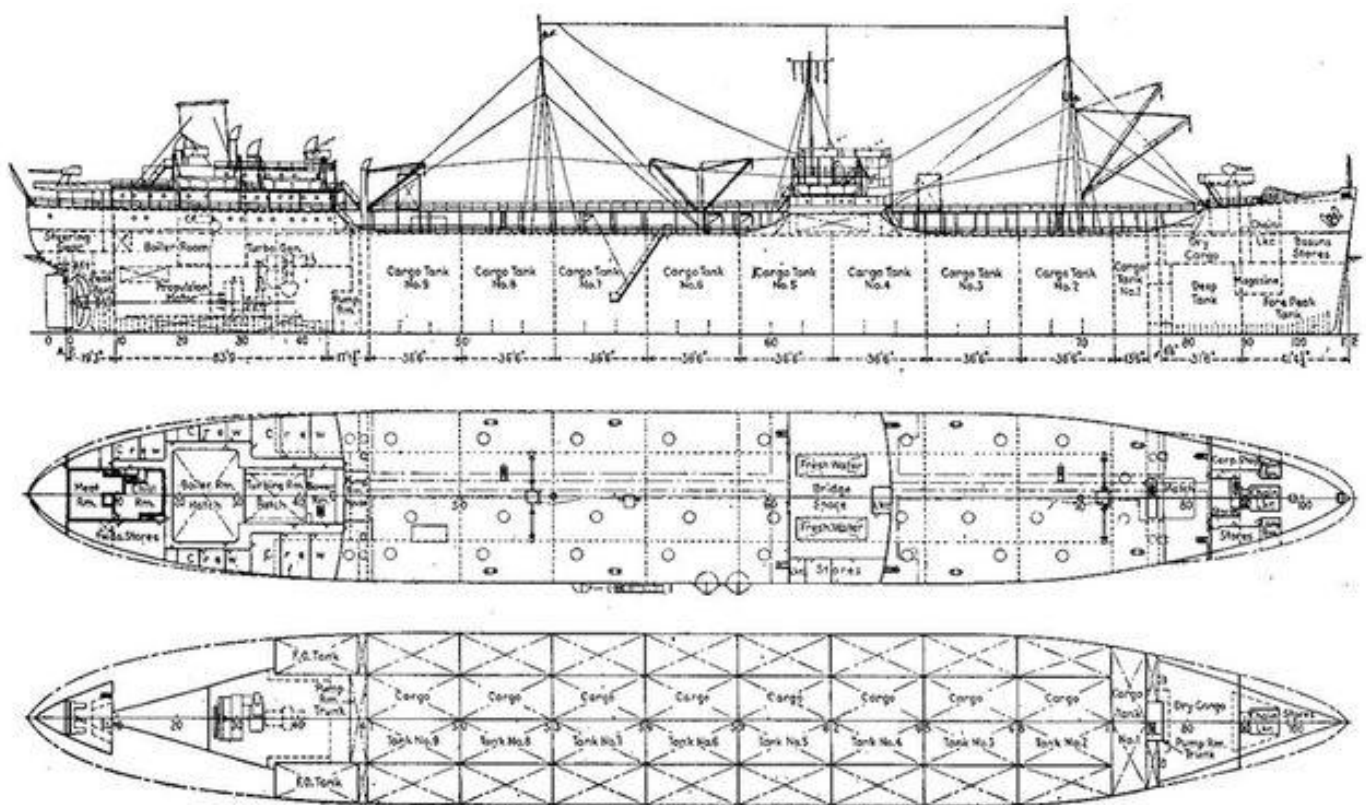
Feng also passes back the artefact that Nathan gave him. They have run it through a series of tests at a lab and found that it is made of a unknown material, one whose elements do not appear on the periodic table. In addition they found trace amounts of radiation being emitted from the object, as if it has a power source somewhere inside; although he assures Nathan the dosage is very low and not harmful. He also returns the bag of slug slime to Heather, indicating that there is some unusual biological activity occurring, that the cells are not dead and are constantly mutating with every cell division. However, the rate of cell division is matching the rate of cell decay, so it is not growing, simply changing. Into what though, he is not sure.

With that they depart and make their way to the boats, load up and set off. It is dark by now and there is little light on the water apart from the natural light of the moon and stars. There are a few boats in the area, including a pleasure cruiser, from which they can hear the sounds of laughter and music, and a police cruiser which they studiously avoid. Eventually they reach the end of the quay on which the Chernobyl Mect is moored, an old cargo ship, and the boat is dark apart from a couple of mounted lights near the gangplank.

They all climb up the ladder at the end of the quay (**Felix needs to spend a benny not to fall off whilst Keith has multiple explosions, literally floating up the ladder**) to find the quay deserted. Heather scouts forward first and reaches the gangplank without trouble, but still there is no sign of anyone, and the rest come and join her. At this point a number of them (**multiple notice**

roll successes) hear the sound of an engine starting up and then stopping again, coming from one of the warehouses on the dock. Nathan (**raise on Notice roll**) also notices a couple of what look like bullet holes in the hull of the vessel. Heather creeps up to the lip of the ship, and immediately finds two dead bodies on the other side, both of whom appear to have been shot. Further searching of the bodies reveals they don't look like sailors, more like soldiers, bearing Russian looking tattoos and with handguns. Heather's device is also recording some low level fluctuations in the infra-red part of the electro-magnetic spectrum. Nathan decides that they should hide the bodies so he and Keith dump them inside one of the funnels jutting up from the deck.

At this point Heather realises they really should have done some research on the ship, so she gets Harvey to pull up a deck plan of the ship which (**successful knowledge: computers roll**) he manages. They locate the dry cargo space near the prow of the ship and most head in that direction, past the bridge, whilst Nathan and Angel stay at the top of the gangplank to watch out for further intruders. It's not long before two men emerge from one of the warehouses, both armed, and saunter down to the start of the quay where they begin to smoke. They are talking in a language that neither Nathan nor Angel understand. Heather and the rest of the team meanwhile pass through the inside of the ship and reach the dry cargo bay, only to find it empty. They check the scene and (**successful tracking roll by Heather**) identify that a box was resident in the room until recently, but was lifted out of the cargo bay by a winch, and Heather's device is now recording some trace levels of something that had been affecting gravitational waves in the room. It looks like someone has got to what they were after before them.



Outside Nathan and Angel watch the two men smoking and, just as they are stubbing out their cigarettes, the door to the bridge opens and the captain of the ship walks out, although he looks distracted. Once outside he turns right and steps off onto the staircase, promptly falls down the stairs, clattering as he goes. This draws the attention of the two men, one of whom proceeds to start investigating whilst the other heads back to the warehouse. Nathan attempts to sneak up towards where the captain fell but (**unskilled stealth check failure**) is spotted by the man who shouts in a foreign language and begins to shoot wildly at Nathan. Bullets ping off of the metalwork around him but (**rolls of 2, 3 and 4 on automatic fire with a -2**) none hit him. Nathan returns fire with his pistol and (**successful hit after benny spent and with a -4 for range**) hits his

target, and the man drops. Nathan then returns to Angel and starts urging him to follow him to the warehouse and catch the other man, but Angel refuses, saying they should wait for the others. An argument ensues and Angel threatens to throw Nathan overboard.

The others finally make it back to the deck, and head towards Nathan and Angel. As they do so the figure of the Captain emerges ahead of them and turns towards the arguing figures who have not noticed him. Heather manages to sneak up on the captain with a syringe in hand (**successful stealth rolls, now has the drop, +4 attack**) and, despite noticing a lot of blood on the captain already, plunges the syringe into his neck (**successful unskilled fighting roll with +4 from drop and +2 from touch attack**). However, instead of collapsing to the ground the captain simply turns around to face Heather, and she can see in his slack-jawed visage that something is not right. Heather's device starts to let out a warning, but then she knew that already.

-End of Session 10-

Session 11: In the Flesh

The characters fight it out on the Chernobyl Mect and make a surprising discovery...

Session Note: Felix, Harvey and Keith's players unable to attend, PCs run as wild card extras.

The Captain stares at Heather with blood-filled eyes before lunging at her (**wins initiative**) but (**failed grapple roll**) Heather manages to escape from his outstretched clutches. Everyone else opens fire, luckily missing Heather and making his body look like Swiss cheese, but by the end of the volley the captain is still standing. Heather scrambles down the walkway with the captain following, and both disappear out of sight of the rest of the group, who give chase. Nathan also notices (**successful Notice roll of 12 despite -2 for dark conditions**) that two more silhouettes were making their way up the deck on the opposite side of the ship.

Heather has now reached the base of the stairs up to the bridge and, after a failed shot from the pistol lent to her by Feng, runs up the stairs. Meanwhile Nathan shoots the Captain from behind, this time hitting him in the leg and causing him to fall to the ground. Angel uses this opportunity to jump on the back of the man, using a pair of knuckledusters that have appeared from nowhere to pummel him. As he does this the other two men appear at the far end of the walkway and begin shambling towards them. Nathan goes for a headshot this time and (**exploding shooting roll of 22 after benny spent and exploding damage roll of 17 + 4 for headshot+2 for creature vulnerability**) causes the man's head to explode, and he stops moving although he is still upright. Meanwhile Angel (**successful fighting roll and exploding damage roll of 15**) punches straight through the back of the Captain's skull, and he ceases struggling. The last creature tries to swipe at Angel but misses and Keith then takes him out with another called headshot (**and another Benny spent**). Now that all of the enemies are down they head up to the bridge after Heather.

On the bridge they find more blood and papers in disarray, but little else to help them. However, as they watch, eight men emerge from the warehouse and begin fanning out in the direction of the boat. Heather asks Feng what he wants to do, and Feng says it is still a priority to track down whatever was on board the Chernobyl Mect and that they should prepare for trouble. Harvey suggests that he could remotely hijack a forklift that is on the quay, if they could load it up with explosives of some sort they could make a mobile bomb, which the others characters agree to. Feng suggests looking in the kitchen for gas canisters, and sends Nathan and Angel off to look into this, whilst Heather heads to the medical room to look for supplies. Heather is first to set off, whilst Nathan and Angel argue about who does what, and although she finds the medical room

unmolested, she can hear a banging noise from inside the ship, unsettling her as she believes that there are more people down there.

Nathan and Angel also hear the noise but ignore it and eventually find themselves at the kitchen door, separated from the rest of the ship by a heavy airtight door and which is sealed. Nathan and Angel then argue again about who opens the door, almost coming to blows, before Angel relents and opens the door to allow Nathan to peek in. A bulky man with a thick moustache and wearing a bloodied apron immediately lunges at Nathan with a kitchen knife but misses. Nathan and the man grapple each other (**two identical grappling results**), until Nathan manages to duck under and around the man (**successful agility trick leaving the man at -2**) to try and club him from behind. The man is much larger than him however and the blow bounces off (**low damage roll**) and Angel tries to punch the man but (**critical failure on fighting roll**) instead manages instead to punch the door as it closes slightly, bruising his knuckles (**resulting in shaken**). The man then manages to (**exploding contested strength roll**) push Nathan across the kitchen, knocking him over, before making a run for it down the corridor. Nathan tells Angel to get the canisters whilst he chases the runaway.

Up on deck the others, including Heather who is now back, watch as the armed men stop short of the quay and take up defensive positions. A noise behind them alerts them to something going on aboard the ship and they then stare in confusion as a large sweaty man in a bloody apron bursts from the below deck screaming in Russian, followed closely by Nathan. Nathan manages to tackle the man to the ground (**successful fighting roll**) and threatens him with a knife, which finally quietens the man, especially when Heather gives Nathan the tranquiliser syringes she made up. Once they get him up to the bridge Heather manages to talk to him, and he claims that some men came on board and shot everyone and he hid in the kitchen to escape. He points at the men on the dock and tells them that those are the men that did this. When Heather tells him that the crew attacked them he denies this possibility, saying that they were already dead. At this point Angel enters the room carrying two large gas canisters and asks if anyone has a light?

Harvey meanwhile has managed to hack the computer systems that control the dock (**roll of 5 on Knowledge: Computers roll**) but needs the ID of the forklift in question. Heather realises that there are binoculars on the bridge (**Benny earned**) and reads off the ID from the side of the truck. As she does this she hears the men on the dock start shouting in Kurdish and notices that two figures are approaching them, one from further up the dock and one from the quay they are on. She spies them with the binoculars and sees that the one from the quay is dressed the same as the men on the dock, but the other one approaching looks like a security guard, and they are soon shooting at him whilst leaving their colleague alone.

With this the forklift rumbles to life and Angel loads the canisters, then Harvey begins to drive it towards the group. As he does this the door to the warehouse opens and a covered flatbed truck rumbles out. The group on the dock have now shot the security guard down but the one who looks like them has reached them unmolested and, instead of joining them, attacks one of his colleagues before being beaten down. Then they retreat towards the truck as it makes a turn towards an archway at the rear which houses the exit from the dock. They decide that they need to speed up the forklift to get it close in time. Despite his lack of experience (**unskilled driving roll of 5 after 2 bennies spent**) Harvey manages to get the forklift within fifteen feet of the truck. Everyone unloads on the canisters. Nathan misses. Keith misses. Angel misses. Heather misses. Last to go are the two allied extras, Tony and Mike. Tony misses. Mike hits. As Mike shoots a number of the group on the dock fire at the bridge (**6 men all firing full auto, 18d6 rolled but -2 for full auto, -2 for range, -4 for cover needing 12 to hit**) and Mike is hit by a single round. The canisters explode (**5d6 damage, Nathan rolls 5 6s! Total area effect damage is 55**), shredding all of the men and blowing the truck over onto its side. Mike unfortunately takes a bullet to the chest and, despite wearing a Kevlar vest (**exploded 23 damage with -4 for Kevlar Vest**), is severely injured and put down.

Heather manages to stabilise Mike (**Healing roll of 15, a success and 2 raises**) although he is in need of a hospital, whilst Nathan, Keith and Angel head down to the dock. As they approach the end of the quay they spot three more of the group, who were in the back of the truck, are still alive and a firefight ensues. Angel is hit twice, but both times his Kevlar vest protects him, and they manage to take down the three remaining men, shooting one each. They approach the back of the truck and find the inside in disarray; a crate has broken open spilling the contents everywhere, mostly wood and some strange foam. Nathan digs around in it and pulls out a fist sized red gem that is glowing and he whistles with surprise. Keith takes it and wraps it in a jacket from one of the dead men, and they prepare to leave as emergency lights begin flashing in the distance. However as they are about to leave the bodies around them begin to move and a last man jumps up from the drivers cab, Assault Rifle in hand spraying bullets everywhere whilst screaming. He hits Keith twice, the first bullet in the leg (**22 damage, 4 wounds, Benny spent for a soak of 3 wounds, leaving 1 wound**) and the second in the chest which is protected by Kevlar. Angel and Nathan retaliate and the man drops down into the cab, shot.

They run for the boats back at the quay, with the shattered bodies of the men now risen up and following them, albeit in a painfully slow manner as many of them are badly injured. They all make it back into the boats except for Harvey who (**critical failure on agility roll**) falls into the water and begins to drown as he can't swim. Luckily Nathan manages to (**strength roll of 19**) pull him out, and they head away from shore. They watch behind them as the figures fall off the end of the pier into the water. From there they head back to the original launch and back to Bad Intentionz. Once back they all head downstairs and have a strong drink whilst Heather patches up Keith and Mike is taken to more involved medical attention.

Once recovered they check the news and find there is only a minor report covering a disturbance in the area, and then begin to investigate the gem. Nathan and Heather quickly (**Investigation roll of 15**) find that the gem is called the ***Heart of Darkness***, and was stolen from a museum in Baghdad three months ago. Heather believes that there is a link between this and the knife that they also found whilst Nathan thinks it is something to do with the object from his brother. What they both believe is that the government is after these artifacts. Because of the events that have taken place, Feng offers them a place to stay at a safe house that he knows nearby. They retire to rest and recuperate after a long day.

At this point the benny pool was refreshed and each active player received 3 xp. The following advances are taken:

- **Heather: New skill (Knowledge: Linguistics)**
- **Nathan: New edge (Trademark Weapon: Chiappa Rhino)**

-End of Session 11-

Heart of Darkness



Purported to have been created some time in the 10th or 11th Century AD, this fire opal is one of the largest of its kind. Early legends first place it in Baghdad at the court of a minor caliph during the 10th century, noted only for its beauty. However, during the time of the First Crusade, at the end of the 11th century, it is mentioned again but this time it seems to have taken on some mystical powers that were used to thwart the people's crusade. However, following the eventual defeat of the Byzantine Empire it is not mentioned again in this context.

It surfaces again finally in 1828, when a stone matching its description was listed in the inventory of the House of Kwan, one of the largest gem merchants in Hong Kong. According to the those records, the house patriarch developed a loathing for the stone claiming it was eating his soul, and sent it to a gem dealer in England. However, whilst en route to England the convoy was attacked by pirates and it disappeared.

Next, in 1833, a similar stone was briefly in the possession of a slave smuggler who operated in the West of Africa. He claimed the opal was worn by a tribal queen he captured near what is now Isa. He sold it (and her) to a plantation owner in the southern US, and nothing more is mentioned of her (or it) as the slave ship was wrecked and sunk in a storm shortly after.

Just before the onset of World War I, another gem matching the Heart's description was known to have been found of a man named Nassir ben Yusuf, the leader of a small group of religious fanatics in Baghdad. Just before the British invaded Mesopotamia, Yusuf was rumoured to have been killed by German agents, and the stone disappeared once again.

Rumour then places the stone near Rio de Janeiro. In 1952, an investigation into the brutal slaying of a police officer revealed that the officer had purportedly been looking for a buyer for a gem matching the Heart of Darkness' description, but no gem was ever found amongst his possessions.

Eventually the stone surfaced once more, this time in Australia in 1978, and remained there in the New South Wales Museum of Natural History. Eventually, with the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2004 the gem was finally returned to its home, where it was remained for some 28 years, before being stolen on February 15th of 2032. No signs of forced entry were seen, and the death of a security guard Tahir Ahmed, several days after have led many to believe that this was an inside job, but nobody has seen or heard anything of it since

Session 12: Burning Bridges

The characters race to intercept information and find more than they can handle...

Session Note: Keith's player unable to attend, PC run as wild card extra

The following morning Heather finds that she has had an email from Trish. It contains a map showing the route of the convoy that Heather previously saw, and it looks like it is heading for Ravenrock Mountain Complex in Pennsylvania. Trish explains that if the group can't stop the convoy before it reaches its destination, its contents will probably never be accessible again.

Heather relays this information to the rest of the group and they agree this should be their next course of action. Felix comes up with a plan to pretend to be state patrol officers by setting up a road block to stop the convoy and pretending a bridge is damaged (**for a benny earned**), and they settle on Manada Gap as the place to set their plan in action. Nathan manages to secure two fake police badges (**with a raise on a Streetwise roll despite a -4 for illegal item and -2 for rare, using a benny in the process**) and Felix persuades an official police clothier (**Persuasion roll of 14 with +2 for charismatic and +2 for acting**) to redirect a delivery of twelve uniforms to a location where he can retrieve them, although Heather has to alter hers to fit (**small hindrance offset by naturalist edge**) Harvey meanwhile hacks the state police database (**Knowledge: Computers roll of 9 with -2**) to create fake police accounts for them within the Pennsylvania State Patrol, whilst Heather manages to contact her contact Maddy, who is now in New Orleans, and persuades her to place an anonymous call to the local sheriff's office claiming that Silent Spring are transporting a dirty bomb along the road at that time. Unfortunately Harvey's next trick, to plant a request for local police vehicles from state law enforcement goes badly wrong (**critical failure**) and he alerts the police to an intrusion, creating a flag in the system and putting them on high alert.

Feng offers the services of Angel and four other members of his group, but declines to come himself, saying that he has work to do, and they decide to leave the Heart with him. With them all dressed as State Troopers they load up in the Tesla and an SUV, but Harvey spots (**notice roll of 20 vs Streetwise roll of 3, despite GM Benny spent**) an Arabic man sitting a brown Cadillac further down the street, watching them and communicating with someone. Felix instructs Nathan, who is driving the Tesla, to go round the block and approach the man from behind whilst Harvey hacks into his eLense (**Knowledge: Computers roll of 14**) and finds out the man is speaking in Arabic. He patches it through to Heather who picks up that the man is actually speaking Kurdish, talking to someone called Mahmoud, and is indicating that one car has left, the other is still there.

Nathan walks up to the car from behind and taps on the window, eventually getting the man to open the window, whilst Harvey blocks his communication. The man exits the car and claims he is doing nothing wrong, but when Felix exits his car and Nathan goes for his gun, the man bolts across traffic (**exploded Agility roll of 22**), leaping over car bonnets and dodging incoming traffic. Nathan and Felix give chase, with Felix being hampered by traffic (**Agility roll of 3**). However the following round the man (**who rolls a 1 on his Agility roll for a chase**) runs straight into a passer-by and Nathan jumps on top of him, clubbing him with the butt of his pistol (**successful Fighting roll and 7 damage, shaking him**). Felix immediately approaches the passer-by and placates him, so well in fact (**Persuasion roll of 18**) that the man wants to press charges against the man now curled up in a ball on the floor.

They drag the man inside and question him in the 'interrogation room', with Nathan playing bad cop and Felix good cop. Eventually they get out of him, after some slaps and threats, that he was working for Mahmoud, a friend of a friend from out of town, who asked him to watch the place and let Mahmoud know when they leave. Ezra, the man being interrogated, says that he understood that they had stolen something from him and he wanted it back. They decide to hog tie the man

and leave him under the watchful eye of Angel, who will stay behind with Feng, while the rest of them finally get on their way, although they also leave the Heart with them.

They arrive at Port Indiantown, the nearest town to Manada Gap, and enter the local sheriff's office. Felix, Nathan and Harvey enter the station and Felix speaks to the duty officer, whom he charms (**Persuasion roll of 14 including +7 for charismatic, attractive, acting and possession of uniform**) into believing that they had submitted a request but that the hacking attempt must have deleted it. She hands over the requisition forms for them to fill out and then sends them round to the motor pool where three patrol cars are waiting for them.



Having collected the cars they then head for Manada Gap where they set up their roadblock just before the bridge, using equipment from the patrol cars, leaving the lights on and even grabbing some local coffee and donuts to make it look like they have been there a while. Then they sit and wait. About an hour later Heather hears a buzzing noise in the distance, which they quickly identify as a drone, following the road and heading towards them. They try to act normal and the drone stops and hovers in front of them and Harvey (**exploding Knowledge: Computers roll of 19**) manages to hack the drone, although he does nothing apart from watch the feeds that are being sent back to the main convoy. Not long after a Humvee rounds the corner, followed by three solid looking trucks, and another Humvee at the rear although they can't see this vehicle. They stop in front of the group and two soldiers disembark to find out what is going on. Felix steps forward and explains that the bridge behind them has weakened supports and that they will need to progress over the bridge one vehicle at a time. The lead soldier is concerned that if this is the case then the trucks might not make it at all as they are significantly heavier than the Humvees. Nathan then steps forward and asks what is in the trucks but the soldier refuses to answer, indicating only that they are shipping some inventory to Ravenrock. When Nathan persists the soldier becomes agitated telling him that it is none of his business and he considers turning the trucks round and finding another route, but Felix persuades him that this would be time-consuming and impractical. The soldier indicates that the Humvees will go across without their men in them, and six more fully armed and armoured soldiers emerge and move to the edge of the road, taking up defensive positions. Felix starts to wonder if they've bitten off more than they can chew but Heather, who is in one of the patrol cars and is monitoring the radio, hears from the local Sheriff that they are on

their way to intercept some “goddamn terrorists carrying a goddamn dirty bomb”. She relays this information to the others and Felix immediately informs the soldier that they will have to put down their weapons and allow them to search the trucks because of this report. The soldier refuses **(Felix only manages a 4 on Persuasion despite 2 bennies spent which is beaten by the soldier’s smarts roll)**, indicating that for him to open the trucks would be a dereliction of duty and a court-martial offence, and offers to contact his CO, which Felix declines.

At this point a commotion is heard from the rear of the convoy and the reflection of flashing lights in the now fading light can be seen as the Sheriff arrives. A buck-tooth gangly looking man stalks down the road with a dozen deputies, spitting and cursing and wondering what the hell is going on! He sees the characters and asks what in the blazes the State Patrol are doing here, and Felix informs him that they had been informed that this convoy was actually a terrorist cell and they were to intercept them, which the soldier flatly denies. The Sheriff starts shouting at them all about what a titty fuck this all is and that no-one is going anywhere until they figure this thing out when Nathan tells Harvey to crash the drone on the bridge behind them. Harvey **(unskilled Piloting roll of 7 after 2 bennies spent)** manages to make the drone hit the bridge and debris flies everywhere, and Felix shouts that’s their drone at the soldiers. That’s when it all goes wrong. One of the deputies, unsettled by everything and jumpy, fires a round at one of the soldiers, although he misses. The soldiers in response open fire on the police, cutting them to ribbons. The characters all dive behind the cop cars whilst the local police try to retaliate, but they are caught in cross-fire. Then Nathan, Keith, Harvey and the four extras they have with them open fire on the soldiers. Nathan takes one out **(called shot to the head with a -4, but +2 for double-tap and +1 for trademark weapon)**, as does Harvey **(another called shot, this time using a benny to score a hit)** but the rest either miss **(Keith tries a called shot but misses)** or hits the body armour to no effect **(low damage scores)**.

Heather runs and jumps over the barrier at the side of the road and heads into the woods lining the road, hoping to sneak round **(with a successful unopposed stealth roll as they are busy looking elsewhere)**, whilst the rest continue their firefight. The local police are almost all dead now with only two remaining plus the Sheriff who has thrown himself behind the car next to Felix. Again Nathan takes out another soldier **(another called shot, avoiding the helmet)** and Harvey takes the fingers off another, and the soldiers begin to pull back, firing on the cop cars the characters are hiding behind, shooting out windows, tyres and paint work but not hitting anyone. Felix tells the Sheriff to call for back-up and he screams “I’m gonna call in the goddamn army” at which point Felix points out this is the army! As the soldiers pull back the characters spot another group of soldiers coming up from the rear of the convoy from the Humvee that was parked at the rear, which they seem to have forgotten about. With them as well, swearing and waving a handgun about, is Brad, who appears to be drunk yet again. Nathan and one of the extras manage to take out two more soldiers, one losing an ear, the other his face, before the rest get into cover behind the trucks, and a stand-off ensues.

Felix tells them that back-up is on its way and that they are all under arrest. The same soldier he conversed with earlier tells him no-one will be arrested if there’s no-one left to do the arresting, and that they opened fire first. Felix claims that they tried to attack them with the drone, to which the soldier replies that they did not, that someone hacked the drone and that he therefore believes there to be a third party on the scene, someone that has tried to engineer this conflict. Felix curses. They need to buy some time.

Step forward Nathan who presents himself to the soldiers, still holding his gun and claiming to want to talk, despite the rest of the players trying to call him back. The soldier tells him to drop his weapon, but Nathan refuses, saying that he wants to parlay. Without warning a man appears behind Nathan and **(successful Fighting roll with the drop and failure by Nathan to make opposed fighting roll)** grabs the gun from Nathan’s hand. No-one can understand where this man came from, who is dressed more casually than the other soldiers, with a bald head and Slavic features. Nathan attempts to wrestle with the man but **(lost initiative and success with a raise**

on Fighting roll) the man puts Nathan in a chokehold. Nathan manages to retrieve one of the tranquiliser syringes from his pocket that Heather gave him the day before and tries to stab the man with it, but misses (**failed fighting roll**). In response the man tightens the chokehold with one arm (**Vigor roll failed leading to one level of Fatigue being applied to Nathan**) whilst using the other arm to deliver a blow to Nathan's leg (**resulting in a shaken state**) dropping Nathan to his knees, although no-one can understand how he delivered the blow as he didn't seem to physically touch Nathan. Harvey also suddenly develops a stabbing pain from his head (**1 level of Fatigue, -1 to all actions**) and he steps out from behind the car to help Nathan. It is at this point that he recognises the man as one of the three men he saw in the SUV entering the school as they left several days past, and the man grins at him whilst choking out Nathan (**another failed Vigor roll and another level of Fatigue**) before Nathan finally (**exploded fighting roll despite the negative modifiers**) manages to stab the man in the neck with the syringe who grunts in surprise before collapsing to the ground. As Nathan slips to the floor in exhaustion he sees the moon rising in front of him, but for a second he sees it blink out of existence as if it was never there, before returning as pulses of light flash behind his eyes and he passes out.

-End of Session 12-