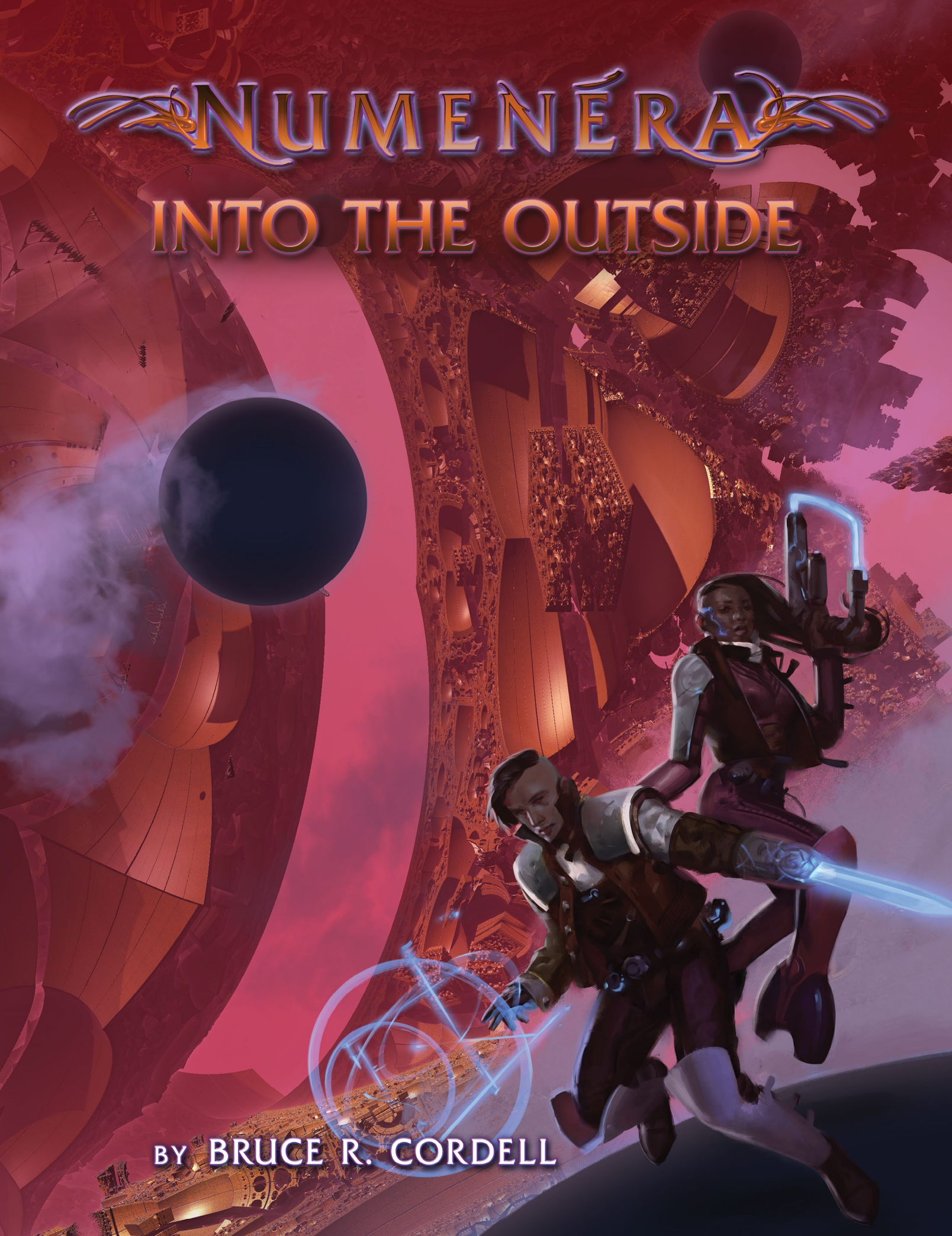


NUMENÉRA

INTO THE OUTSIDE

BY BRUCE R. CORDELL





NUMENÉRA

INTO THE OUTSIDE

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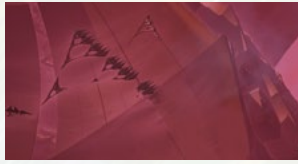
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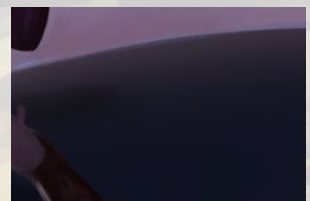
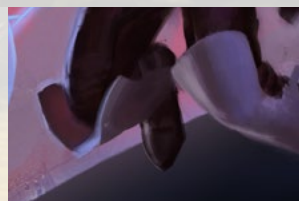
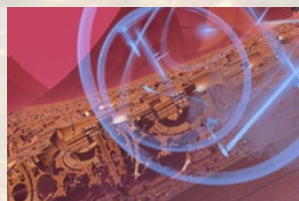
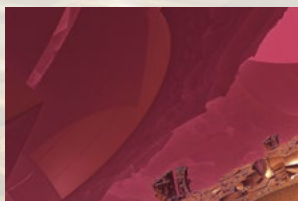
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INTRODUCTION



Abykos, page 230

*Nibovian wife,
page 249*



*Anoetic cyphers
are simple to use: a pill
to swallow, a small
handheld device with a
switch to flip, or a bomb
to throw.*



*Occultic cyphers
are more complex and
more dangerous, but they
often have better and
more interesting effects.
An occultic cypher counts
as two cyphers for the
purpose of determining
how many you can bear
at the same time.*

*Banded Bluff,
page 18*

The Tumult, page 84

Panaton, page 74

Celerillion, page 108



*Yellow swarm,
page 266*

*Erynth grask,
page 240*

The eight previous worlds have left the Earth awash in the transdimensional. Devices, prior-world structures, and even many of the creatures featured in the *Numenera* corebook, like the *abykos* and the *Nibovian wife*, are entities that exist partially out of phase or hail entirely from another plane. At least one of the prior worlds explored and harnessed alternate dimensions as a means for increasing their own power and knowledge. Many of these entrances and exits still remain.

As if the depths of the ocean and the limitless void of space weren't enough, in *Numenera* player characters (PCs) also have the opportunity to step into parallel worlds, each as large as their home dimension. But any game master (GM) can create a parallel plane where the PCs meet "evil" versions of themselves, or find some other historical twist that renders a world not quite as expected.

Thus if we're going to explore the transdimensional, we have to touch on the truly astonishing (not to mention the just plain weird). Places where a visitor exists on three different planes simultaneously, as in the *Banded Bluff*. Where explorers become living sound waves, like the *Tumult*. Where time itself divides the PCs into their own separate time streams, as in *Panaton*. Where merely thinking changes reality itself, as in *Celerillion*.

How can PCs even begin to cope with such radically different dimensions? That's what this book provides, as you step into the outside.



In the margins of this book, you'll find occasional "search terms," accompanied by this symbol. These are real-world, cutting-edge technological terms that can start you on a journey of learning more about some of the ideas you'll find in these pages. You don't have to know a thing about how suspended animation works to have cryogenically preserved creatures in your campaign. However, if you're interested, you might find further research informative and perhaps inspiring.



Throughout this book, you'll see page references to various items accompanied by this symbol. These are page references to the *Numenera* corebook, where you can find additional details about that item, place, creature, or concept. It isn't necessary to look up the referenced items in the corebook, but doing so will provide useful information for character creation and gameplay.



The people of the Ninth World often refer to extradimensional entities such as the yellow swarm or the erynth grask as "demons." They think of them as supernatural, otherworldly beings of pure evil. The truth is often more complex, but the dangers that these creatures pose make those perceptions understandable.



TRAVELING THE MULTIVERSE

Most residents of the Ninth World don't wonder about the existence of alternate dimensions. It's just not part of their daily lives. For some, it's not even a concept. Even for those living near prior-world ruins that appear one day and are gone the next, where dangerous creatures phase in and out of reality, or singing is heard with no apparent source, such things are just accepted as a normal part of their lives. They avoid entering the inconstant structures, stay away from out-of-phase creatures, and never sing back to the hidden voices, because that only invites trouble.

But some are fascinated by weird places, and become inspired to learn more after discovering evidence of transdimensional activity. A brave few pull back the veil to discover what lies behind the facade of reality.

What would an interdimensional traveler find? Existences where prior civilizations never perished? Monstrous beings the size of planets? Entities so strange that calling them "alive" approaches incredulity? A source of unbelievable power? Secrets that, if repeated, risk driving the listener insane? All of these, and more. Alternate realities contain *every*

possibility a human mind can imagine, and an infinitude of possibilities that are incomprehensible to those trapped in normal reality.

Those who wish to step into transdimensional spaces are drawn to areas known to host them, like the previously mentioned inconstant structures or out-of-phase creatures. In a few cases, small communities spring up near the affected region. Such communities contain explorers, an Aeon Priest or two, and those who sell services to interdimensional explorers. Before they walk into another dimension or after they return, explorers need places to sleep, buy goods, and recover from injuries. (*Delivar* is one example of just such a community.)

Numenera allows those who wish to plunder transdimensional secrets to do so. With artifacts that flay the skin from reality like rind from a fruit, allow instantaneous travel through holes in space, or sail dimensions like ships sail the sea, explorers can travel to these alternate planes.

Other explorers might have little choice. For example, characters who enter an area of unstable reality might be ejected through a series of wormholes to various universes, each

Delivar, page 9



Search Terms:
Parallel universe theory

*Transdimensional
Lexicon, page 24*

*Phased creatures
may—at the GM's
discretion—find resisting
transdimensional effects
one step more difficult
than normal.*

more bizarre than the last. Getting back home requires that the travelers continue to trigger the effect, in hopes they'll get lucky and find their plane of origin. Or one similar enough to suit.

These trailblazing explorers are sometimes called "dimension walkers." They have taken it upon themselves, like midnight pilgrims who explore the reaches of night, to go beyond anything previously known.

A TRANSDIMENSIONAL LEXICON

Scholars of transdimensional phenomena at the University of Doors—called dimension auditors—have created their own book to describe their findings: the **Transdimensional Lexicon**. It records all manner of secrets.

Some of the inhabitants of the prior worlds discovered and explored realms beyond our own, dimensions above those we can perceive, and other realities that we can barely comprehend. In so doing, they didn't just challenge the fundamental laws of physics—they went to places where our physics have no meaning. And some of the doorways—which work both ways—are still open. Going transdimensional involves more than just going through gateways to other universes. In some cases, by accessing higher states of being, matter and energy interact in our own reality in new and dangerous ways.

PHASING

Discrete amounts of matter are sometimes changed—by a device, by their nature, or by an environmental effect—and become capable of passing through other matter. Sometimes phased matter is an object, other times it's a creature or a PC. There are probably many phase states, with only one able to interface with physical matter. That said, it's easier to refer to something as simply "out of phase" if it can't be physically interacted with. When a creature or object is out of phase, it's more difficult to see and hear, but it's not invisible or silent. However, this can vary with the means by which the creature or object moved out of phase.

Phasing is usually not about travel into alternate realities, but access between two points on the same world. For example, phase doors are found in certain prior-world facilities. In such locations, no doors are visible on the exterior, and inside every room

appears to be entirely sealed and without exits. The secret of such structures, however, is that a section of the walls can be knocked out of phase temporarily, allowing matter to pass through.

EXTRADIMENSIONAL SPACES

Extradimensional spaces are cavities that exist where space should not be. A room bigger on the inside than the outside. A pocket that holds far more than its size might suggest. A corridor that's apparently only 15 feet (5 m) long that requires minutes to traverse. These spaces are sometimes called pocket dimensions. Obviously, they are useful for storage purposes, but they also create secret places that no one would even think to look for. Due to the warping of space involved, extradimensional spaces are sometimes out of reach of things like scans, teleportation, or other effects.

These spaces have other uses as well. Imagine a warping of space but only in one direction, so that there is more distance going north to south than the other direction on the same path. Defensively, an enemy to your north would take longer to reach where they are going than normal. If the space were dramatically altered, enemy ranged weapons could not reach the defenses, while the defenders' weapons could reach attackers normally.

However, in the same way that warping can create more space, it can also create less space between two points than perception or logic would indicate, resulting in distances that take less time or even literally no time to cross. This kind of space warp is useful for communication across vast distances, but is primarily used for instantaneous travel (teleportation).

PARALLEL UNIVERSES

Not nearly as strange as some extraterrestrial worlds, a parallel Earth can be just as disconcerting, for while it is like the Ninth World, it *can* be vastly different. In one parallel universe, the Earth was never saved from the growing luminosity of the sun millions of years ago, leaving it a world capable of barely supporting microbial life and nothing more. In another, one of the prior worlds still flourishes, making the Earth unrecognizable to dimensional travelers. In fact, they probably wouldn't understand that what they have found is a version of their own world.



In yet another parallel plane, the world continues as expected. In fact, travelers might not realize that they are not home. As time passes, the differences begin to multiply. People who should be dead are not, and vice versa. Buildings in the dimension walker's city are different or located in different places. Enmities where none existed before come to light. And so on.

Cognate Destinations: As noted in the Transdimensional Lexicon, when a dimension walker moves between parallel dimensions, as opposed to traveling across space, they often step into a location "cognate" with the one they just left. A cognate area is similar to the one left behind in the previous dimension. For example, if a traveler steps through a portal in a ruined prior-world installation in one dimension, they might find another version of that installation in the new dimension. Likewise, their physical coordinates in the new dimension are likely the same as in the previous dimension. In this way, dimension walkers usually don't travel in space, only across boundaries of existence.

BIZARRE DIMENSIONS

The prior worlds are incomprehensible, but ultraterrestrial worlds are even stranger. The inhabitants of these places aren't just not human—they might not even be composed of matter or energy as we understand them. Things like mass, direction, or temperature might have no meaning there. Traveling there might transform the user into a form so different that the sojourner's mind risks destruction (requiring a successful Intellect defense task upon arrival and perhaps more as time passes and the different physics eats away at the context of their consciousness).

TRANSDIMENSIONAL LOCATIONS

Earth hosts many transdimensional locations. One of the most well-known is the **University of Doors**, where opening doors to other locations, including those where ultraterrestrials live, is a core component of the curriculum. In the city of **Yenth**, a portal provides access to a weird parallel world called **New Yenth**. To visit **Wislayn** is to be transported into a limited dimension where that town is located. Many more instances are known.

TAKING THE CAMPAIGN INTO THE OUTSIDE

GMs interested in running adventures in alternate dimensions will find them filled with new challenges and opportunities. Adventures that challenge the PCs' ability to simply comprehend what's happening can be exciting and daunting to PCs (and the players). The rewards might make the exploration worth it, but for many, the experience itself justifies the journey.

MODIFYING ABILITIES

It's best to keep most PC special abilities the same—even in bizarre dimensions—to avoid needless complication and frustration. That said, reality is so twisted in some alternate planes described in this book that sometimes PCs will need to find a way to "unlock" access to their special abilities, either by changing the way they see the new reality, or by using their abilities in new ways. For those dimensions, clear guidance is provided. In most other cases, the following points apply.

Nanos and nanites: Nanos retain their abilities outside the planar borders of the nanite-infested Earth because they subconsciously bring an invisible cloud of nanites with them.

Gravity: Most dimensions the PCs might explore have normal gravity. In some, gravity is absent or works differently (as a repulsive force, as a much stronger force, and so on). In an alternative-gravity environment, items or abilities that use gravity either won't work, will work the opposite of expected, or have an enhanced effect. For example, a weapon that manipulates gravitational waves to inflict damage might not work where there's no gravity, might launch foes into the air where gravity is reversed, or have impressively brutal effects where gravity is stronger than normal.

Magnetism: Magnets and magnetic powers work normally anywhere, but effects that take advantage specifically of the Earth's magnetic field may not work in dimensions that are not parallel, and in worlds where magnetism is different (as described above with gravity), could have unexpected effects.

The Datasphere: The **datasphere** is linked to Earth and can't be accessed in dimensions that don't have an alternate version of it. Alternate versions might have a personality, or even a *consciousness*.



University of Doors,
page 216

Yenth, page 157

Wislayn, page 214

Datasphere, page 12

New Yenth, page 35

SURVIVING THE OUTSIDE

Many dimensions have a similar environment to Earth. Then again, many have environments that are completely different. In one branch of parallel worlds, Earth is a burned-out cinder incapable of sustaining normal life. A brutal war between rival factions boiled the seas and poisoned matter itself. In another branch, planet-busting weapons destroyed the Earth entirely, leaving only rubble tumbling in a black vacuum. Other world lines are blanketed in poisonous gas or fatal radiation. And that's nothing compared to the environmental conditions one might encounter in the truly bizarre dimensions, where substance itself is sometimes absent.

Generally speaking, inimical environments (such as vacuum, an intense radiation field, deep underwater, or toxic gas) are quickly lethal to the unprotected traveler. In such a location, unprotected characters move one step down the damage track each round. However, at the point where they should die, they fall unconscious and remain so for a minute. If they are rescued during that time, they can be revived. If not, they die.

Ultraterrestrials, page 138

STEPPING OUTSIDE

The first step of a journey into any alternate reality is finding a way to get there. It's not as easy as simply moving fast enough, high enough, or deep enough. The borders of reality are difficult to comprehend, let alone find. On the other hand, sometimes wormholes and places where reality has worn thin can be found in prior-world installations or regions with a peculiar history.

Presented in this section are three possible methods for traversing dimensions. But they are by no means the only ways, and can be used and tailored as the GM sees fit.

CREATURES IN THE OUTSIDE

Aeon Priests call creatures from other dimensions *ultraterrestrials*. The people of the Ninth World often refer to extradimensional entities such as the yellow swarm or the erynth grask as "demons." They think of them as supernatural, otherworldly beings of pure evil. The truth is often more complex, but the dangers that these creatures pose make those perceptions understandable. The concept of a demon—a spiritually evil entity—is a





Margr, page 244

Ithsyn, page 241

Sathosh, page 256

Nevajin, page 248

*Ravage bear,
page 254*

*Running the Game,
page 319*

Part 5: Creatures, page 137

Carnis: level 6, tasks related to safely navigating the Sideslip Fields as level 7

Naimad Member Benefit: After training, members gain an asset on tasks related to alternate dimensions, specifically knowledge and navigation tasks.

Innocent: level 2; health 8; Armor 2; spear or crossbow attack inflicts 3 points of damage; only aggressive if Innocents outnumber foes

Brechtal: level 3, pleasant social interaction and tasks related to keeping up an inn as level 6

label for threats that can't be understood (which means some might label automatons and mutants as demons, too). Of course, a traditional afterlife, places of spiritual punishment, and similar concepts don't fit in Numenera. For the most part, ultraterrestrials are not demonic in the spiritual sense, though some are certainly dangerous, powerful, and hard to comprehend. Many other ultraterrestrials are peaceful, though they may still be difficult to understand. To lump all of them together as demons is clearly wrong, and the few Aeon Priests who make a study of alternate realities are quick to point this out.

Encountering Creatures: The parallel planes similar to the Ninth World also contain creatures like those found on Earth. However, dimensions that are farther afield might not contain a single familiar one. No **margr**, **ithsyns**, or **sathosh**. That said, dimensions "close" to Earth might serve as home to creatures previously identified as transdimensional, such as abykos and erynth grask. **Part 5: Creatures** offers plenty of new ultraterrestrials, and descriptions of ultraterrestrials appear throughout this book. Just as easily, however, GMs can take existing creatures and "reskin" them with transdimensional flourishes. For example, if an automaton is needed, use the stats for a **nevajin**, but describe it as a hovering white sphere around which many smaller spheres orbit. If a terrible predator is desired, use the stats for a **ravage bear**, but describe it as a doughy shape that rolls instead of runs with an acidic permeable membrane instead of a mouth. And so on. Or, as mentioned in the **Running the Game** section of the *Numenera* corebook, describe whatever insane, bizarre beast you wish and simply assign it an appropriate level. The work comes in the imagination and flavor, not in the stats.

If you need a weird creature on the fly, base it on a real-world animal, like a snake or a cat, but drastically alter the size one way or another. You might come up with a scaled snakelike thing with tiny human heads at the end of its neck instead of a single snake head, or a house-sized catlike thing whose "purr" somehow destroys sanity. Adding or subtracting limbs from a normal creature is also a useful trick. Creatures with just one eye, one leg, or one limb can seem just as odd as a creature with far too many.

DELIVAR

In the Beyond is a large village called Delivar. It is ideally suited to serve as a base camp for those who wish to venture into a nearby region of the landscape called the Sideslip Fields, which is, as locals describe it, a rip in reality. A large portion of the population of 1,000 is composed of merchants, guides, and bandits who prey on—or, as they prefer to say, cater to—dimension walkers drawn to the Sideslip Fields.

Naimad: An organization known as Naimad is headquartered in Delivar. In addition to providing guides for the Fields, Naimad members sometimes help maintain order if things get out of hand in town, especially in and around the single public house, called Brechtal's.

Naimad was formed only in the last few years by strangers who came to the area—some whisper—from the Sideslip Fields. Even so, the dozen or so founding members look human enough. Both the founders and new members are driven by a conviction that "other, alternate worlds" can be found if one safely navigates the Sideslip Fields. In fact, a few Naimad dimension walkers regularly come back with strange materials and devices they say they gathered in half-formed worlds that lie within the mists.

Carnis heads Naimad. She is a silver-haired woman who speaks telepathically. She seems content to help others into the nearby planar anomaly. Secretly, she waits for something she calls "the Key," which she dreams about almost every night. When she wakes, the details always fade.

Brechtal's Inn: Would-be dimension walkers usually find Brechtal's Inn in Delivar before they try their luck in the Fields. Unfortunately, the public house is also a hangout of the **Innocents**, a group of road agents (everyone else calls them bandits). Why the elderly **Brechtal** hasn't managed to get the Innocents to leave isn't much of a mystery. He's afraid



Guides in Delivar claim to have maps or specialized knowledge of the routes one must take through the Sideslip Fields in order to reach a desired dimension or state of being. However, unless the guide is an accredited member of the Naimad, that knowledge is almost always incomplete or contains dangerous inaccuracies.



Dimensional husk: level 5, social interaction as level 1; can teleport to any location in sight range as an action; attacks with 1d6 weapons each round; target must reroll first even-numbered attack against husk and take second roll; see page 36 of the Ninth World Bestiary for more information

Carnivorous color, page 140

Mad Runner: level 8, Speed defense as level 6 due to size; health 33; Armor 3; metallic legs inflicts 10 points of damage on up to four targets within short range as one action

Transdimensional Mishap table, page 15

that if he doesn't serve them, they'll kill him. Carnis promised Brechtal that one day she'd see to it that the bandits are dealt with, but that hasn't happened yet.

Old and covered in burn scars, Brechtal tells the story of how he tried his hand at dimension walking. He "got off the path" and found himself falling through a brilliant, burning void. By sheer luck, a cypher brought him home, badly burned.

Besides room and board, Brechtal sells standard supplies, as well as occasional oddities, and even cyphers brought from the Sideslip Fields. Guides can also be had in Brechtal's, though, if asked, the innkeeper won't vouch for them one way or another.

Sideslip Fields: This region of about 9 miles (14 km) in diameter glows with disorienting visual phenomena. From a distance, it radiates silvery light, easily visible at night. Travelers who draw closer see a region that seems to be cloaked in a cloud that fell out of the sky, composed of silver vapor. Here the mist roils, there it flows, and in some places, short-lived whirlpools form. The fog sometimes thins to reveal the silhouettes of strange structures, trees, or even creatures, until they vanish moments later. The same thing is never glimpsed in the fog twice.

Travelers can merely walk into the cloud, but those who do so unprepared might not be seen again. Someone carrying a reality comb, being led by a competent guide, or with some knowledge of alternate realities might have better luck. In any case, safely entering or exiting the Sideslip Fields is a difficulty 5 Intellect task.

Failing a navigation task to enter or exit results in a roll on the **Transdimensional Mishap table**.

Those who succeed find themselves on a vast plain of dark stone under a sky smothered in low, racing silver clouds. Ten-foot (3 m) diameter cavities pock the stone as if the entire space were some infinite game of pegs for unseen gods. Each cavity is actually a door into an alternate dimension, but knowing which leads to where can be challenging without additional guidance. And even if they enter one, there's no guarantee that dimension walkers will find a passage back. Knowledgeable characters—such as those with a map, special knowledge, or a device pointing the way—can use specific passages to intentionally travel to another known dimension.

Dimension walkers from Delivar are not alone on the plain. Sometimes ultraterrestrials find it. Some of these creatures have suffered a mishap in the passage, rendering them mad, or worse, dangerously out of phase. Such creatures—**dimensional husks** and **carnivorous colors**—are drawn to new dimension walkers who come to the plain.

In addition, an entity that Naimad calls the **Mad Runner** patrols the plain. Looking like a many-legged beetle the size of a small castle, the Mad Runner seeks out anyone on the plain who doesn't possess "sanction" (whatever that is) to be there. Those who can't gain the Mad Runner's sanction must evade it, leave the Sideslip Fields, try to destroy it, or jump into the nearest cavity to escape.

REALITY COMB (ARTIFACT)

Level: 1d6 + 2

Form: Lightweight synth handheld device with viewscreen

Effect: Wearer gains an asset when attempting to understand and find a particular dimension when traveling between dimensions (whether in the Sideslip Fields or elsewhere). It may have preselected locations coded into it, as described in the story seed.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20

Story Seed: A device the PCs discovered on an earlier adventure that they thought was a mere oddity displays pleasing designs and varying landscape pictures. It eventually reveals an additional function (perhaps an NPC reveals it, or some other event triggers it). Now PCs can use the former oddity as an artifact called a reality comb. The reality comb has several locations encoded in it, but only one seems to be a location noted on Earth: the Sideslip Fields. The characters learn enough by studying the artifact to suggest that the Sideslip Fields may provide access to one or more alternate dimensions. If the PCs' thirst for adventure is sufficient, they might be in for the journey of a lifetime. What will they find if they travel through one of the holes that pockmark the Sideslip Fields—fantastic treasure? A world where the PCs are gods? Nothing but tumbling rocks and quick death? There's only one way to find out.



THE GRINDER OF INFINITIES

Several devices, each called the Grinder of Infinities, exist. Despite that, Aeon Priests who've studied the matter believe they're all manifestations of a single object. But the transdimensional object's many edges emerge in various realities. Each emergence appears to be a discrete item.

One instance of the Grinder of Infinities resides in an obelisk in a prior-world structure that hangs over the foothills of the **Black Riage** mountains in eastern **Thaemor**. The obelisk's bottom-most point is still 1,000 feet (305 m) above the rocky, mountainous ground. Gaining entry requires finding one of three phase doors that lead to a series of tunnels and chambers. One chamber features a 9-foot (3 m) cube floating 3 feet (1 m) above the floor. Each of the cube's six sides opens into an interior space that isn't shared with any of the other sides—some sort of transdimensional effect is in play. Struts, components, and other devices of obvious technological importance fill the cube's center.

Entering the cube causes the components within to spin up to lethal velocity, and the intruder must succeed on a difficulty 4 Speed defense roll or suffer 5 points of damage. This continues until someone succeeds on a difficulty 4 Intellect-based task to take

temporary control of the device. Once "safe," PCs skilled in the numenera discover its full capabilities. They also learn that the grinder is a shifting portal leading to an infinity of alternate dimensions.

PCs must spend a few days studying and experimenting and finally succeed at a difficulty 7 Intellect task to activate the portal. If the attempt fails, roll on the **Transdimensional Mishap table**. In addition, the device loses its "safe" status, spinning up to lethal velocity once more.

If the PCs succeed, those within the cube see each interior surface shimmer, revealing strange scenes (all except the side the PCs entered, which remains unchanged). The scenes can show nearly anything: incredible cities, floating mountains, never-before-seen creatures, empty pink space, volcanoes erupting with sound, tornadoes, peaceful forests of strange trees, red waves crashing on a beach of purple sand, and so on. Moving through any one of these faces transports a character to a different dimension, the same as the scene shown. The GM determines the destination, though, in theory, any location in this book could be traveled to.

A knowledgeable PC who succeeds on a difficulty 7 Intellect task with the device

Transdimensional Mishap table, page 15



Black Riage, page 177

Thaemor, page 152

can select a destination, but only if they have specific planar coordinates or an exact description of the dimension in question.

Story Seed: Angry at some slight, a young man wearing his mother's tattered Aeon Priest robes delivers an oddity to the PCs. Inside this object, strange symbols float in a turbid grey fluid, sealed beneath a clear synth screen. He believes the object is cursed, because his mother's obsession with it led to her death. For some twisted reason he hopes the PCs find a similar end. He tells the PCs that the symbols provide a kind of map to a floating obelisk, in which an artifact opens doors into any world a traveler can imagine.

CRYSTAL SHIP

The Order of Truth speculates that at least one of the prior civilizations was built on trade between alternate dimensions with a fleet of dimension-traveling craft. Some are probably lost in alternate dimensions, and others simply broke down and eroded to dust over vast expanses of time. But a few craft remain buried in the ground, inside ancient ruins, submerged beneath the water, baking in the desert heat, or sometimes fading to the dimension next door.

One of these is the Crystal Ship. At first, it was thought that when it "traveled," it was moving into the void beyond the edge of the world. Weird locations might well have been other worlds near Earth, or far from it. But that was proved wrong, because some of the locations discovered were oddly distorted, parallel versions of the familiar world. Speculations turned to the idea of travel between dimensions. Like a conventional craft, the Crystal Ship must "launch" from its current location, which requires *some* movement, though it doesn't have to travel far before it transitions into another dimension.

Most methods of travel between dimensions use fixed gates (like those found in the Sideslip Fields), devices that open fixed gates (like the Grinder of Infinities), or abilities that open fixed gates (like the nano ability *Traverse the Worlds*). The ability to bring an entire vehicle along with the traveler into an alternate dimension is quite useful, especially because many dimensions are exceedingly dangerous if not outright lethal. A vehicle allows dimension walkers to stay within an envelope of breathable air, survivable temperature, and, in extreme cases, comprehensible cosmic laws. Special



Traverse the Worlds,
page 39





Crystal ship: level 6

Transdimensional Mishap
table, page 15

engines propel the craft across dimensional boundaries in relatively short periods of time—sometimes in just a few minutes or hours (though to reach the bizarre dimensions, the transition can take several days). During this period, all exterior screens show only pale grey nothingness. To leave a ship during the transition is to be thrown into a random dimension and suffer an effect from the **Transdimensional Mishap table**.

From the exterior, the Crystal Ship is a yellow sapphire-hued translucent sphere 250 feet (76 m) in diameter. It appears completely solid. Floating circular rings extend from the ship when it is in operation. The exterior surface is studded with smaller convex protrusions, each about 50 feet (15 m) in diameter.

Touching the exterior at any point brings up odd controls made of light. Accessing these controls (unless they are “locked” from within) transports a would-be dimension walker inside.

CRYSTAL SHIP INTERIOR

Control: This compartment, besides controlling the ship’s internal environment (air, gravity, and temperature), allows PCs to navigate between dimensions. A pilot who sits at the controls is provided with a “map of nearby dimensions” that hurts to stare at for too long. It resembles a web of interconnected dimensional boundaries, difficult for a human brain to visualize without getting a migraine. But someone with knowledge of dimensions can use the controls and map to make a transition to other realms.

Care should be taken so that the pilot doesn’t send the ship so far afield, transdimensionally speaking, that it becomes impossible to return. Generally, the engines can generate potential for only one transition between dimensions per ten-hour period.

Offense: This compartment allows characters to see the area immediately outside the Crystal Ship, and if necessary, fire at threats. The Crystal Ship’s weapon is a level 6 device capable of firing bolts of transdimensional energy up to 3 miles (5 km), inflicting 12 points of damage in an immediate radius.

Engines: This compartment contains several ranks of crystalline containment pillars. Each contains a whirling existence unto itself. These holes in space power the ship. Manipulating the solid light controls to adjust the engines is a difficulty 6 Intellect task. Briefly souping up the engines to allow

more than one dimensional transition in a ten-hour period is one reason PCs might adjust the engines.

Shuttle: One of the convex pods visible on the Crystal Ship’s exterior is the Blue Voyager, a secondary craft designed to move through space and dimensional boundaries, just like a smaller version of the Crystal Ship. While the Blue Voyager can travel overland, it also serves as an emergency escape pod. (The other convex pod visible from the ship’s exterior is empty, though signs indicate there may have once been a second Blue Voyager docked there.)

BLUE VOYAGER (ARTIFACT)

Level: 1d6 + 2

Form: Small vehicle suited to aerial travel

Effect: Vehicle with room for one human-sized pilot flies up to a long distance each round, up to 100 miles (161 km) in a day. The pilot can also initiate a transfer to another dimension, but only if they know that the destination exists; the GM decides if they have enough information to confirm its existence and what level of difficulty is needed to reach it.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20

Armory: This compartment contains a variety of level 5 long-range energy weapons called dimension blazers.

DIMENSION BLAZER (ARTIFACT)

Level: 1d6 + 2

Form: Handheld device with angular loop projection of semi-solid energy

Effect: Functions as a normal ranged weapon that fires a beam of disrupting energy at a target within long range. However, the wielder can also make a special attack that sends a target within long range back to its home dimension or to a dimension the user knows to exist. Targets that are successfully shunted appear in the new dimension at a location chosen by the GM and are stunned for one minute.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (check per use of dimension-shunting attack)



Dimension walkers speak fearfully of the rarely seen “weather” of the Sideslip Fields, which includes thunder, lightning, and a silver rain that blankets creatures; and is rumored to, sometimes, edit them out of reality, as if they never existed.

Communications: A device in this chamber allows telepathic communication with one person within 100 miles (161 km), or in another dimension if the device was previously used to contact that person. In general, communicating across dimensional boundaries is a difficulty 7 Intellect task.

Quarters: This chamber contains beds, chairs, and tables. However, food, water, and other comforts must be brought aboard separately, unless previous travelers in the Crystal Ship left such things behind.

Hold: This large area can be used to store a ton of supplies. It can be filled or vacated using the controls like those used to enter the ship. It's possible that previous travelers who used the ship stored one or two dangerous creatures from **Part 5: Creatures** in stasis.

Story Seed: Strange creatures step out of a discontinuity in reality, ransack a village, and make off with a treasured artifact the village depends on for providing defense against local abhuman tribes. Survivors say the strangers spoke only with their minds and claimed to come from a higher level of reality, making it morally acceptable to take what they needed back to “**Celerillion**.” If the PCs do a little research, they learn not only the extradimensional location of Celerillion, but also of a vehicle called the Crystal Ship that might be capable of taking them there.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE OUTSIDE

When stepping through a gate (like those opened by the Grinder of Infinities) or while traveling in a vehicle (like the Crystal Ship), there are usually no encounters during the dimensional transition. Unless there is a so-far undiscovered dimension that connects all other dimensions, there is no “space” in which such an encounter might take place. Those who've studied transdimensional lore say there is no such in-between dimension.

Other events are also probable when dimension travel is attempted. All of the events described in this section are likely to arise from **GM intrusions**— probably a group

intrusion (the GM determines the level of the encounter, mishap, or event).

MALFUNCTION OR DAMAGE

Something goes wrong with the gate, device, or vehicle. Perhaps it's a simple malfunction or maintenance issue. Maybe it's damaged or some sort of transdimensional anomaly caused the device to temporarily cease to function. Most of these events can probably be dealt with in the same manner.

1. The doorway, device, or vehicle refuses to transition the PCs to a new dimension.
2. The characters determine the nature of the problem. It might be obvious, or it might require a roll (probably Intellect-based, modified by skill in the numenera or transdimensional knowledge).
3. The PCs determine how to fix the problem. The solution might be obvious, or it might require a roll (probably Intellect-based).
4. The PCs fix the problem, or bad things happen. This might simply be a repair roll, but it might require gathering special components from somewhere else. The “bad things” could be a roll on the Transdimensional Mishap table. Speaking of which . . .

TRANSDIMENSIONAL MISHAPS

When enough energy is gathered to pierce the fabric of existence to allow travel between planes, there is always the chance for something to go wrong. Rather than a simple malfunction that prevents travel, a transdimensional mishap is something that modifies travel. The mishap could prevent the full transition, allow the transition to have an effect on the dimension walker after the transition occurs, or do something else. The GM should determine if the transition occurs or not and how many PCs it affects, and then select or roll for the effect from the Transdimensional Mishap table.

OTHER DIMENSION WALKERS

The PCs might encounter dimension walkers like themselves. They could be from the same universe or from a similar parallel universe.

Part 5: Creatures,
page 137

Celerillion, page 108



GM intrusion,
page 325

Group intrusion,
page 328



TRANSDIMENSIONAL MISHAP TABLE

01–05	Confusion: The difficulty of all Intellect-related tasks attempted by the affected PC is increased by one step for one hour.
06–10	Device damage: The door, device, or vehicle becomes damaged, and must be repaired before it will function again.
11–15	Altered destination: The PC transitions to a dimension they did not select, chosen by the GM. This might be a location they have no knowledge of, but <i>usually</i> isn't immediately dangerous.
16–20	Dimensional duplicate: The PC is duplicated. The duplicate is called from a parallel universe, and may not share the PC's outlook. It certainly is unlikely to be happy about being yanked from its own dimension.
21–25	Dimensional aberration: Because of slight eddies in space and time, and until the PC travels to another dimension all Intellect-based rolls are increased by one step.
26–30	Incompletely arrived: The PC blinks in and out of existence, and doesn't exist in the interim until they roll an odd result on a d20.
31–35	Incompletely phased: For ten minutes the PC can't affect or be affected by normal matter or energy, but likewise can't attack, interact with, or otherwise touch anything.
36–40	Mental alteration: If the PC fails an Intellect defense roll, something happens to their mind. This might include memory loss, false memories, increased or decreased intelligence, or a total personality change.
41–45	Character damage: The PC must make a Might defense roll or suffer 4 points of damage from interdimensional tearing.
46–50	Personal husk: The PC encounters a version of themselves that has degenerated into a <i>dimensional husk</i> .
51–55	Altered destination: The PC translates to a location they did not plan to, chosen by the GM.
56–60	Unsynced reactions: The difficulty of all Speed-based tasks attempted by the PC are increased by one step for one hour.
61–65	Memory failure: The PC loses all memory of anything that happens one hour after arriving in new dimension. After that hour they wake and have no idea what happened during the previous hour.
66–70	Gate crasher: The PC's travel is interrupted by the appearance of at least one <i>shatarak</i> .
71–75	Mutation: The PC must make a Might defense roll or suffer a random mutation.
76–80	Greatly altered destination: The PC transitions to a dimension they did not select, one that puts them in immediate jeopardy, as chosen by the GM.
81–85	Apparently correct destination: The PC transitions to a dimension that seems to be exactly the one they wanted. As time goes on, discrepancies build up, until it's finally clear that the dimension is not correct, and the PC is in dire peril.
86–90	Multiple effects: Roll again 1d6 + 1 more times, ignoring this result.
91–99	Something very weird: The GM chooses a very strange effect.
00	Catastrophic mishap: The PC must make an Intellect defense roll or risk being edited out of existence. If there is ever a right time to spend experience points to reroll a poor defense result, this is probably it.

Dimensional husk,
page 10


Shatarak, page 154

They could be creatures that look nothing like humans and that don't even recognize the PCs as living things. If the PCs have a vehicle, the other dimension walkers might be after it, to either steal or beg for a ride on it.

This encounter probably begins with some kind of attempt at communication. Unless the fellow travelers are from a parallel dimension where the *Truth* is spoken, or a device is available to assist, language can present a barrier. If it can be overcome, the PCs can

interact with the other dimension walkers.

Sample Encounter: Maligro is a Jack who suffered a transdimensional mishap that caused him to mutate. Now he always sees an overlay of "nearby" parallel planes superimposed over normal reality. He also looks somewhat horrific, as if his skin is constantly bubbling and falling off. This transformation is slowly driving him mad. He approaches the PCs, asking for aid. He says he knows of a dimension that he calls the


The Truth, page 133



Planar locusts infest a newly discovered plane, then multiply until they overcome and destroy it.

Endless Abode, page 46

Endless Abode, filled with treasures. It is also the place, he believes, where what was done to him can be reversed.

PLANAR LOCUSTS

The PCs encounter “planar locusts,” a group that moves from plane to plane to find food, expand their habitat, or both, leaving ruins in their path. Planar locusts infest a newly discovered plane, then multiply until they overcome and destroy it. After that, they move on to a nearby dimension where they begin all over again. Sometimes, these creatures appear like insects, such as the devastating *lycidarises*. Other times, they are harder to analyze, because they come from a bizarre dimension and could manifest as nearly anything: sound, color, even time itself. A few are humanoid civilizations that cannibalize their environment so completely that they must expand into virgin dimensions to keep feeding their multidimensional empire.

Gramalan: level 8; can phase into a parallel dimension once per hour

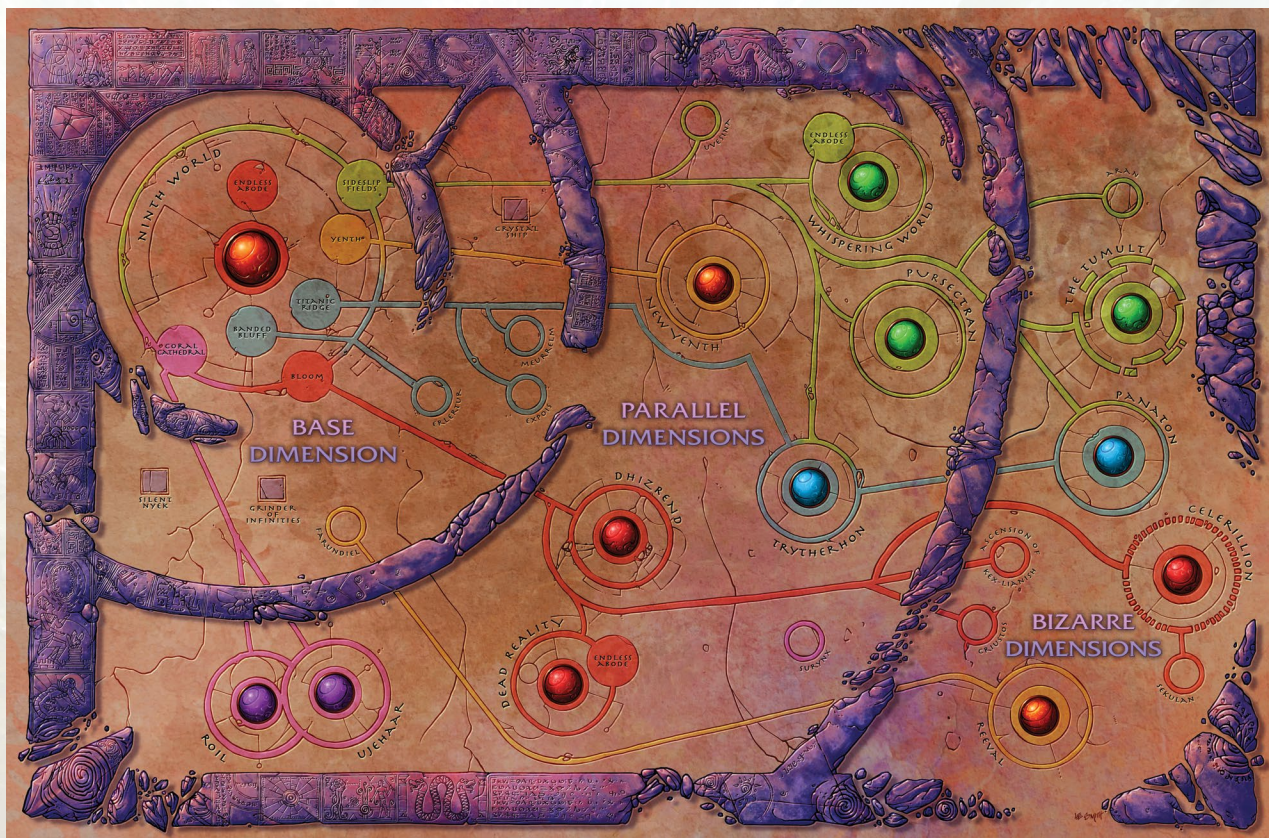
Lycidar, page 145

The encounter with planar locusts might begin with a few “scouts” looking for a new target dimension, or with a dimension already swarming with them. In either case, the encounter is hostile.

In the former case, where PCs encounter “scouts,” the planar locusts might seem merely to be another weird threat. However, as the encounter draws to an end, at least one of the scouts tries to travel back through a dimensional portal to bring news of new territory. If the PCs don’t stop the scout, they will eventually start seeing more of these creatures.

In the latter case where PCs stumble into realm swarming with planar locusts, they’ll probably have their hands full just getting out again.

Sample Encounter: The *gramalan* is an entity that phases through dimensions like a fish cuts through water, leaving behind thousands of eggs in each plane it passes through. When encountered, it is burying a clutch of glowing spheres. If it senses the PCs, it views their presence as an immediate threat and attacks with a lance of psychic energy. While the creature wants to protect its eggs and kill anyone that knows where they are, it is more concerned about its own life, and will flee if it seems the PCs might win.



PART 1:

WEIRD IN THE WORLD



Chapter 1: The Banded Bluff

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CHAPTER 1

THE BANDED BLUFF

Field station, page 22



*Ba-Adenu Forest,
page 189*

Multidimensionality, a term noted in the University of Doors lexicon dealing with transdimensional phenomena, is the outstanding feature of the Banded Bluff. A normal bluff is a geological feature resembling a broad, rounded cliff, which usually includes a long, gradual slope that stretches up to the highest point. The Banded Bluff is a forested bluff rising from the northwestern edge of the Ba-Adenu Forest; however, anyone looking at its concentric rings of growth, its illumination, and its weather can easily see something weird is going on. Ba-Adenu Forest residents call it the Nested Lands, and tell stories about how each band of stone is a separate world.

That's not far from the truth, and likely too subtle a distinction for any but the most invested dimension walker. Each band is indeed a layer of an alternate dimension. But unlike other transdimensional phenomena, those dimensions are not hidden behind space-time boundaries. They are obvious as a cliff face of stratified stone, and moving between them is as easy as walking up the bluff. Sometimes the bands migrate, so that layers change places or fade out altogether as new dimensional bands are substituted.

GETTING TO THE BANDED BLUFF

Overland travel is the most practical way of reaching the bluff. Alternatively, the University of Doors has created a passage, similar to

the diums they create to test new students, that opens directly to the field station they've established for their dimensional auditors to study the location.

PRESENTING THE BANDED BLUFF'S WEIRD

Explorers new to the Banded Bluff are tipped off that something odd is going on merely by looking at it. The layers are visible as a series of hazed bands of energy. Each subsequent layer seems to lie behind a hazier and hazier transparent film, making it difficult to see through more than a handful of layers at once. In fact, from the ground, the top of the bluff appears to be lost in haze.

Passing between layers is as easy as walking through them. Each layer is a discrete dimension, with its own local physics. Gravity might be stronger or non-existent. The sun might be much colder. There could be two moons instead of one. And so on.

A layer may be much "wider" on the inside than it looks from the outside. Most of the layers look to be of equal width from outside. But a particular layer might prove to be much thinner, or ten times as wide, when someone actually tries to cross it.

Bits and pieces of a dimension traveled through in the Banded Bluff can cling to explorers, such that explorers exist, in some sense, in two or more dimensions simultaneously.



Slipping through layer after layer of reality isn't like moving from room to room in a house. Sometimes bits and pieces of those layers stay with a traveler, accumulating like webs trailing behind them.



DETERMINING MULTIDIMENSIONALITY

When PCs traverse from one dimensional layer to another in the Banded Bluff, an aspect of the just-departed alternate dimension might remain with them. (This is a feature of the Banded Bluff, and is not an effect normally encountered by dimension walkers visiting other realities.) When this happens, the PCs exist in more than one dimension at once; according to University of Doors auditors they are multidimensional.

The easiest way to handle dimensional trailing is to ask a PC to make a difficulty 4 Might defense roll as they enter each layer. If the PC fails, some aspect of the previous layer remains with them in the new dimensional layer.

The nature of a retained aspect is entirely up to the GM, but should be something unique to the dimensional layer just traversed. Usually, the aspect retained is weaker than the real effect experienced on the actual layer.

For instance, if the PC leaves a high-gravity layer, the GM might determine that higher than normal gravity continues to affect the character into the next layer. So this PC might struggle to keep up with allies who are not so affected, but they will find their

multidimensional status helpful if they enter a layer with no gravity or extremely high winds.

As another example, if the PC leaves behind a blindingly lit layer, the GM might determine

USING THE BANDED BLUFF

A trip to the Banded Bluff might be a series of adventures all its own. There are plenty of interesting layers to investigate, though conditions in more than a few are deadly. Finding and identifying those layers can be difficult. But accessing the innermost layers requires passing through all the outer layers, no matter how dangerous they might be.

The PCs might come to the dimension at the behest of the University of Doors, to help their auditors with their research. Or come on behalf of some other group intent on closing down the university's fieldwork. Exploring certain layers (especially wider-than-they-look layers that contain additional groups and structures) could result in great rewards and knowledge. And there is always the possibility of finding collapsed dimensions stored in the *Depositorium* at the bluff's zenith.

Depositorium, page 21

DEPOSITORIUM

The Depositorium is a structure that lies within the consolidated layers of alternate dimensions, near the center of the Banded Bluff.

One theory states the Depositorium may be a prior-world structure used to store rare materials and that these materials are responsible for the dimensional effects that afflict the area. Several University of Doors dimensional auditors studying the Banded Bluff do so from a temporary research field station nearby.

*Presenting the Banded
Bluff's Weird,
page 18*

*Determining
Multidimensionality,
page 19*

STORM LAYER

Observers on either side of the layer note the light is noticeably greyer within. Though it appears relatively narrow, the Storm Layer is actually approximately 5 miles (8 km) thick. Cold rain falls in this layer in an endless torrential downpour. The difficulty of all physical tasks is increased by one step while exposed to the weather, and all tasks related to perception and navigation are increased by two steps. Spiderlike creatures with bodies nearly as large as humans hunt the Storm Layer. Called **noculters**, these predators remain unaffected by the storm because each wears a thin film of the Sunblast Layer like a cloak.

GM Intrusion: Two noculters emerge from ambush and attack the PC.

Noculter: level 4; health 18; bite inflicts 4 points of damage and on failed Might defense roll inflicts an additional 4 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor); unaffected by negative effects of Storm Layer dimension



VACUUM PROTECTOR

Level: 1d6

Wearable: Belt

Usable: Injector

Effect: Keeps the user alive in vacuum for 28 hours by protecting against extremes of heat and cold, and eliminating the need to breathe.

SUNBLAST LAYER

Observers on either side of this layer note the light is noticeably brighter within. The Sunblast Layer is only an immediate distance in width in most places, despite seeming much wider from the outside. In this layer, a massive sun fills the sky, the air is on the edge of ignition, and the heat is oppressive. Each round a visitor is subject to this dimension's full effect, they suffer 8 points of fire damage.

GM Intrusion: The PC stumbles while moving across the width of the dimensional layer, and if they fail a difficulty 5 Speed defense roll, they trip and fall, losing their next round as they recover.

ARRIVAL—START HERE

If the PCs' discovery of the Depositorium also marks their first visit to the Banded Bluff, it's not long before they realize something very strange is going on. Refer to *Presenting the Banded Bluff's Weird* and *Determining Multidimensionality* to determine how multidimensionality might affect them.

GARDEN LAYER

External observers to the layer note vague green silhouettes growing within. The Garden Layer is approximately 5 miles (8 km) thick, though it seems only a few hundred yards wide from the outside. A riot of jungle growth chokes the area. Tall trees, multicolored flowers, the sounds of birds and insects, humid heat, and broad leaves that provide shade from the bright sun during the day are features of this location. There are no obvious paths that provide access through the area.

GM Intrusion: The PC stumbles over the bodies of two University of Doors auditors, entangled in vines and sucked dry of all fluids. (The vines do not seem dangerous anymore.) A few notes, 3d6 shins, and three cyphers are also salvageable from the remains. One of the cyphers is a vacuum protector.

WEIGHTLESS LAYER

Observers external to the layer note that no “far side” is visible, as well as the hazy outlines of at least three structures. Inside lies the Depositorium (and two enigmatic sculptures with no obvious purpose). The region is a pocket dimension some 500 feet (152 m) in diameter that lacks any gravity. The difficulty of attacks (and all physical actions) made in **zero gravity** are increased by one step.

GM Intrusion: The character accidentally bumps or pushes off something and begins floating up, up, and away.

Zero gravity,
page 98



DEPOSITORIUM

This tower of white metallic material is approximately 60 feet (18 m) on each side. No apparent doors or windows pierce the exterior. Touching any wall brings up controls composed of light, and anyone who makes a difficulty 5 Intellect roll triggers an opening inside to an airlock. The interior is lit with white lights.

The central space is filled with stacks of hundreds of red-gold metallic bricks that are warm to the touch. Each weighs almost 100 pounds (45 kg) despite being only 8 inches (20 cm) in the largest dimension. Contained and stored as they are, the bricks are quiescent. A PC with knowledge of numenera who succeeds on a difficulty 5 Intellect task believes each brick to be a **collapsed dimension**.

GM Intrusion: Two thin women with metal cubes for heads (Depositorium automatons) appear to defend the stacked bars. Despite the lack of gravity, they move normally, because each wears a thin film of a normal gravity layer like a cloak.

Depositorium guardian:
level 6; Armor 3

Collapsed dimension, page 24

AIRLESS LAYER

Observers external to the layer note lack of apparent vegetation, life, or even light on the other side, with no “far side” visible. Inside, the region is not so much a layer as a pocket dimension of plain, unmarked stone and hard vacuum some 3 miles (5 km) in width and 2 miles (3 km) in length, lit only by stars. A tall structure with its own lights is visible from most places within the barren layer (the False Depositorium).

GM Intrusion: There's no air. Unprotected PCs in a vacuum move one step down the damage track each round. However, at the point where they should die, they fall unconscious and remain so for about a minute. If they are rescued during that time, they can be revived. If not, they die.

FALSE DEPOSITORIUM

This tower of white metallic material is 60 feet (18 m) on each side. No apparent doors or windows pierce the exterior. Touching any wall brings up controls composed of light, and anyone who makes a difficulty 5 Intellect roll triggers an opening inside to an airlock. Inside, the structure has air and is lit with red lights. Empty containers, dust outlines, and debris fill the main chamber, suggesting that many things were once stored here. But the site was apparently emptied of its contents long ago. A few smaller side chambers show signs of recent habitation.

GM Intrusion: A thin woman with a metal cube for a head (a Depositorium automaton) invites the characters to stay indefinitely. It is secretly insane with murder on its “mind.”



Most entities in the layers on the Banded Bluff do not readily pass between layers like explorers from the Ninth World. For them, a layer is an invisible segment of their own much larger dimension. University of Doors auditors believe it's because dimensional layer natives exist at a different phase. If a dimension walker wished to explore the wider dimension beyond that accessible in a layer, they would have to find a way to change their personal phase to match.



University of Doors,
page 216

Bands table, page 23

Gibb: level 5; health 15;
morphs into knifelike
shapes to attack,
inflicting 3 points of
damage

Expeditioner Komara,
page 24

that bright illumination trails that PC into the next. Though this PC may still have to shade their eyes and be unable to see for more than a short distance, they will find their multidimensional status useful if they enter a layer of preternatural darkness.

A PC can usually retain only two trailing dimensional aspects at a time. A character with two aspects who moves into yet another layer and wants to keep a previously acquired aspect must succeed on a Might defense task or randomly lose a previous aspect, replaced by the new aspect from the most recently vacated dimensional layer.

The **Bands table** provides a list of potential dimensional layers explorers might pass through in the Banded Bluff. Developing an aspect from each of the bands is fairly straightforward, as the examples above indicate.

Finally, a PC can try to select the aspect retained from a previously vacated layer as they leave it, rather than accept the default aspect. For instance, a PC might decide they would rather keep the "breathable air" feature of the dimension just vacated. Choosing a specific aspect to retain is a difficulty 7 Intellect task (and the PC must forgo the Might task normally made to resist retaining an aspect of a previously vacated layer).

BANDS TABLE

Choose or randomly select the next layer a PC discovers on ascending the Banded Bluff. Generally speaking, PCs who move through about 2d6 bands will reach the top of the bluff, where they can find the Depositorium.

LAYERS OF INTEREST

Several of the dimensional layers on the Banded Bluff are of interest because of the creatures or features they contain, as opposed to the dangers they represent to explorers.

UNIVERSITY OF DOORS FIELD STATION

A dozen **University of Doors** auditors reside in a building constructed in one of the dimensional layers of the Banded Bluff. The layer containing the structure is only 300 feet (90 m) wide, and apparently exists as a segment of a parallel world similar in some ways to Earth, save for its lack of humans or evidence of any previous civilization having ever inhabited the planet.

The field station is a long structure of new construction containing research, meeting rooms and living quarters. Several auditors have abilities that allow them to defend the field station when it is threatened by entities from neighboring dimensional layers. However, the field station's main protection is provided by creatures called **gibbs**, which were brought from the university. Gibbs are masters of camouflage, typically appearing to the untrained eye as door knockers. They can assume a number of shapes, although they prefer the appearance of scaled beasts, large amphibians, broken hounds, or the occasional naked woman.

Inside the field station, one locked chamber (level 7) contains a door leading to the University of Doors (only Chief Auditor Sagvertrey keeps a key).

Another locked chamber (level 5) contains several oddities, cyphers, and a few artifacts recovered from the exposed layers. It also includes a few heavy, bricklike objects, which the auditors are still investigating, but have begun to suspect are collapsed, compacted alternate dimensions.

PCs who find the station can expect a cautious welcome. They might even be given a tour. If they show any interest in exploration, they could be asked along on the next outing led by **Expeditioner Komara**. Though they are dedicated to their work, the auditors are happy to see new faces after being posted to the field for so long.

BANDS TABLE

1	Extreme gravity forces PCs to crawl, and the difficulty of all physical tasks is increased by three steps
2	Tiny crawling green insects swarm everywhere, flying and biting (level 1)
3	The PCs are drowned in cold, dark water (level 2)
4	Continuous bombardment from chunks of burning rock falling from sky (level 2)
5	A sunny, meadowlike hill on which colorful and fragrant flowers grow
6	Miles-wide layer containing the realm of Erlertur
7	Normal layer (bigger inside than out) containing a University of Doors field station
8	Automatons engaged in all-out conflict using energy weapons (level 3)
9	Filled with boiling black mist, slightly poisonous (level 1)
10	Miles-wide layer (bigger inside than out) containing a slice of the limited dimension of Dhizrend
11	Planar duplicates of the PCs passing in the other direction
12	Continuous earthquake makes it difficult to move without falling
13	Direction of gravity changed so what was forward is now down
14	A grove of trees whisper, offering to tell secrets to all who pass, though they mostly tell lies
15	Each minute visitors spend in this dimensional layer ages them one year
16	Emotions cannot be felt in this dimensional layer
17	This is a slice of the bizarre dimension of Panaton
18	Nanites gradually convert biological creatures to automatons
19	Filled with greenish mist that heals all wounds and diseases, and fills mind with peace and joy (level 3)
20	Dimensional rupture! Roll on the Transdimensional Mishap table

*Erlertur, page 24**University of Doors field station, page 22**Dhizrend, page 126**Panaton, page 74**Transdimensional Mishap table, page 15*

AUDITORS OF INTEREST

Chief Auditor Sagvertrey: Weathered skin and silvered hair suggests that Sagvertrey is far older than his enthusiasm and energy suggest. Always working, whether collecting samples, observing layer transposition (when various bands migrate across the bluff), completing an experiment, or lecturing the other auditors on his findings, Sagvertrey never appears to grow tired. The chief auditor previously served as the [Headstone](#) of the University of Doors. Rather than leaving forever when his time in that position was over, he was given the opportunity to found the Banded Bluff field station. Sagvertrey fears that when the term of the current Headstone (a woman named Sajeen Dar) is finished, the succeeding Headstone may decide to recall him.

Professor Manizer: Most auditors assigned to the field station have a specialty. For Manizer, that's weaponry—apparent by her blades, dangerous-looking devices, and much-patched armor. Sour and surly, she fends off others with barbs and insults. She keeps a locked chamber in the station devoted to studying dangerous items gathered from



Sagvertrey: level 4, transdimensional knowledge as level 7; health 20; carries three cyphers

The Headstone, page 219

Manizer: level 5; Armor 3; long-ranged energy attack inflicts 8 points of damage; variety of additional weapons and offensive cyphers

Ultraterrestrials might quibble that their dimension is the base dimension, but this is not their lexicon.

Komara: level 5, transdimensional navigation tasks as level 7; Armor 2; long-range energy attack inflicts 7 points of damage

TRANSDIMENSIONAL LEXICON

The University of Doors auditors working at the Banded Bluff and other locations have created a lexicon of words to use when describing transdimensional effects in order to standardize concepts between everyone interested in exploring and understanding other realities.

Alternate dimension or alternate reality: A way to distinguish a dimension from the base dimension.

Base dimension (or home dimension): The dimension containing Earth of the Ninth World.

Cognate: An analogous location found in a parallel dimension.

Dimension: A universe. A universe can be vast, even infinite. It can also be limited.

Distant or far dimension: A variety of parallel planes whose divergence from one's home dimension is so large that no apparent similarity can be found.

Limited dimension: A universe that might be no larger than a planet, a country, a structure, or even a small room.

Multidimensional: Existing in two or more dimensions at the same time.

Near or neighboring dimension: A variety of parallel plane whose divergence from one's home dimension isn't too far, and many similarities can be expected.

Plane: Another word for dimension.

Reality: Another word for dimension, in the transdimensional context.

Transdimensional: Having to do with transcending a single dimension.

Parallel dimension or parallel universe: A kind of dimension that once had a shared history with one's home dimension, but which diverged at some time in the past.

Bizarre dimension: A kind of dimension that (usually) does not share history with one's home dimension, and more importantly where perception, form, and natural laws like time, space, or existence are scrambled or extreme.

Ultraterrestrial: An entity from a dimension other than the base dimension.

the bluff, and doesn't report everything she's discovered. Those that she keeps secret, she intends to turn over to a mysterious kidnapper who has her daughter, once her stint at the field station is concluded.

Expeditioner Komara: Though never actually a teacher at the University of Doors, Komara is just as esteemed at the field station. When accoutered for exploration, she wears a faded green cape and a silver helmet shot through with cracks (from a close call several years before). Komara leads expeditions into the newly discovered bands that sometimes appear after a migration event on the Banded Bluff. Komara loves adventure, and would rather face danger than run from it. Some blame that disposition on one or two losses suffered during outings. Komara keenly feels those losses, but out of a need to prove herself, rather than becoming more cautious, she's become more daring.

ERLERTUR

Though this dimensional layer seems only about 1,000 feet (300 m) thick from the outside, inside it is dozens of miles across. A visitor doesn't see a gradual ascent up a bluff, but instead what seems to be the side

COLLAPSED DIMENSIONS

The red-gold metallic bricks stacked in the Depositorium are compacted and condensed dimensions. Perhaps they are akin to toxic waste left over from some prior world's transdimensional construction project. They might be outlawed dimensions, collapsed punitively by some intelligence. Some auditors think they are seeds for new dimensions. Maybe they're the result of something else entirely—the University of Doors auditors are exploring several options. Whatever their provenance, their presence has created the puckered, dimensionally layered conditions found on the Banded Bluff.

An individual brick has many potential uses for someone skilled in the numenera. At minimum, one would make a powerful energy source. Over time a variety of cyphers might also be extracted. With enough effort and research, it might even be possible to reinflate the condensed dimension and discover what lies within.



of a vast mountain. The sun never shines in Erlertur, but three moons swim through the sky, providing copious moonlight. The major feature of the layer is a city sprawled upon the slope like some vast infection. Leaning towers, bruised domes, and lamps burning with green light line the winding streets.

The natives call themselves **jenkels** and speak a language similar to the Truth. Like humans, jenkels have two arms, two legs, and a head. However, their bestial, furred head is thrust forward from the chest rather than resting atop the neck like human heads. Jenkels wear clothing and hoods, but color and fashion is not something that appeals to them. Black serves all needs.

The jenkels have recently become aware of non-native explorers entering their realm along unseen boundaries (unseen by them, at least) thanks to expeditions led by Komara from the University of Doors. At first, relations between the auditors and the natives were cordial. But when Manizer stole a relic the jenkels held sacred, the jenkels blamed the auditors. They attacked, and only Manizer and Komara escaped the frenzy that followed by ducking back through a layer boundary.

PCs who come to Erlertur and who can convince the natives that they are not associated with the University of Doors are shown a grudging hospitality. Otherwise, they are imprisoned, and eventually sentenced to death. Only by promising to return the stolen relic to the jenkels will their release even be considered.

Philosopher Restic: A jenkel called Restic who studies “magic” plotted out the boundary along which entities sometimes seep into Erlertur. Before reaching full understanding, he described this line to his fellows as an area where the walls of the world are thin, and from which “thieving demons” are known to emerge. Many took Restic at his word, especially after the theft of the Elder Head. However, since then, Restic realized that the transdimensional phenomenon isn’t supernatural (and therefore evil). Instead, it’s a natural phenomenon suggesting a much wider continuum of existence. Now Restic works to bring the jenkels around to his new understanding. Mother **Shratic** opposes him.

Mother Shratic: When Philosopher Restic pointed out the “hole in the world” (as Shratic calls it) and the “thieving demons” who emerge from it, Mother Shratic found her calling. She quickly took up the message. She gathered acolytes to help spread the word and defend Erlertur. She set up a watch along the line Restic identified. She has become the face that would-be demon hunters across Erlertur adore. Everything was going her way, until the prophet on whom she based her entire movement recanted. Now Shratic faces tough choices. In the meantime, she strengthens the watch on the line where the walls of the world are thinnest, waiting for new thieves to emerge.

Restic: level 3, Speed-based and perception tasks based on scent as level 5, tasks related to the numenera as level 6

Shratic: level 4, Speed-based and perception tasks based on scent as level 6; carries three cyphers taken from “demons”

The stolen jenkel relic is a metallic jenkel head with burning red eyes, which the jenkels call the Elder Head. In secret, Manizer studies the object.

Jenkel, typical: level 3, Speed-based and perception tasks based on scent as level 5

THE BANDED BLUFF HEARSAY

Healing: An auditor at the field station believes that some malign influence has affected the other auditors. She seeks outsiders willing to help her get to the bottom of the contamination.

Recall: A University of Doors professor arrives. None of the on-site auditors have previously met him, but he has proper credentials. He claims that the field station is to be shut down and that the auditors should shutter their research. Some auditors wonder if it isn’t some kind of trick, or dimensional duplicate.

THE WEIRD OF THE BANDED BLUFF

Processing: A parade of ultraterrestrials from an unknown layer sometimes march down the bluff and toward the Clock of Kala, and never return.

Living Layer: Among the strange dimensions on the bluff, one seems to possess an intelligence. It migrates at will and plucks explorers from one layer to drop them in another, as if playing. Sometimes the ghostly laughter of godlike delight echoes down the bluff.



Clock of Kala, page 213

CHAPTER 2

TITANIC RIDGE



Search Terms:
*Double-slit experiment,
evidence of a parallel
universe*



*Black Riage,
page 177*



*University of Doors,
page 216*

From the perspective of someone who's scaled the sheer cliffs on either side, the top of the Titanic Ridge is a 15-mile (24 km) long path. At its widest, the path is only about 20 feet (6 m) across, and often much narrower. Falling represents a plunge of some 10,000 feet (3,048 m) to the rocky slopes of the surrounding **Black Riage** mountains beneath. Metal towers covered with shining blue and red lights line either side of the path.

Each tower contains a single gate to another dimension. Each gate and tower is under the command of one overlord, a being composed of energy. Relations between the various overlords have stagnated over the last thousand years. One result of this standoff is the dimensional bleed afflicting the area.

DIMENSIONAL BLEED

Sometimes dimensional bleed is the result of naturally thin walls between adjoining realities. Other times, it is purposefully propagated, as is the case along Titanic Ridge.

University of Doors auditors coined the term "dimensional bleed." When one or more alternate dimensions seep across planar boundaries to affect another, it's dimensional bleed. Bleed can be intermittent and minor, or as in the case of the Titanic Ridge, constant and sometimes significant. That said, areas suffering dimensional bleed tend to be relatively fixed and rarely affect areas larger than just a few miles in radius.

Transdimensional bleed allows emotions, memes, sounds, smells, light, visions,

and other intangible things to seep into an affected dimension from one or more origin dimensions. In some cases, illnesses that arise unexpectedly among a population might come from an alternate dimension suffering some catastrophic plague. Likewise, strong emotions and significant events in an origin dimension can directly affect the minds of intelligent creatures in the affected dimension. Sometimes nightmares that play out night after night in an area affected by dimensional bleed aren't random; rather, they reflect even more horrific events from a neighboring plane.

Sometimes dimensional bleed is more obvious. Actual objects, organisms, structures, landforms, and even variant cosmic laws can bleed from one dimension to another. This sort of bleed is actively dangerous for creatures native to all affected dimensions—some find their possessions, structures, and even themselves fading away into some other dimension, and others must deal with ultraterrestrials appearing from thin air.

The dimensional bleed along the Titanic Ridge sometimes includes physical objects and creatures from alternate dimensions. Whenever such major dimensional bleed occurs, there's a chance that reality might actually rip open, creating something even worse than bleed. Instead of simple transference, there's a chance of a runaway effect, leading to a catastrophic breach. University of Doors auditors aren't certain what a breach would ultimately mean, but they suspect that it wouldn't be healthy for



Sometimes the dimensional bleed is obvious. Actual objects, organisms, structures, landforms, and even variant cosmic laws can bleed from one dimension to another.



creatures currently inhabiting the Earth. Luckily, the towers that stud the ridge path damp the breaches before they grow too serious—or at least they have so far. Unfortunately, their presence is the source of the dimensional bleed in the first place.

DIMENSIONAL BLEED EFFECTS

The GM should determine if dimensional bleed occurs or not, then make something up, select something, or roll for the effect from the following table. Present each instance of dimensional bleed to PCs as a GM intrusion.



DIMENSIONAL BLEED EFFECTS TABLE

1	Vividly hued funguslike growths appear on a nearby surface, possession, or PC.
2	All creatures and objects gain hideous, writhing shadows for one minute.
3	A “false” memory of an ally killing the PCs afflicts the PC.
4	A whalelike monstrosity with spined mouth tentacles swims through the sky.
5	Orange mist limits vision and sound to immediate range.
6	Creatures feel uncontainable joy and elation for one minute.
7	Creatures feel betrayed, abandoned, and morose for one minute.
8	Sound of odd music in the wind on and off for hours.
9	Eel-like parasites are discovered attached to a PC’s back.
10	Time resets, and the PCs recall everything that happened in the previous round as it recurs.
11	Each PC’s tongue seems to be a tiny lizard for one hour.
12	A creature or PC unexpectedly appears six months pregnant, but maybe it’s “just” a growth.
13	Laaks rain from the sky, mostly dying upon impact.
14	Footsteps, knocks, banging, rapping, and scratching sounds emerge from the ground, object, or walls.
15	The sun rises (or sets) an hour too soon.
16	A commonly used object (such as a weapon, key, or article of clothing) goes missing for one hour.
17	A PC gains a potentially inimical transdimensional duplicate for one minute.
18	Blinking eyes and tiny mouths sprout on a nearby surface, possession, or PC.
19	Screams like someone being violently murdered emerge from the ground, object, or walls.
20	Possessions and provisions become infested with giant green maggots.



Laak, page 243

Titanic Climb, page 30

The flora and fauna of the Titanic Ridge are a small subset of the world that is described in the Numenera corebook, as modified by the ongoing effects of the dimensional bleed. The tower overlords are a different matter.

GETTING TO TITANIC RIDGE

Travel from wherever the PCs are located in the Ninth World followed by a climb (hopefully one guided by someone who knows what they're about) is the most straightforward way to reach the ridge top, as described in *Titanic Climb*.

TRAVELING THE PATH

The 15-mile (24 km) path is generally level and smooth, and it seems like something artificially cut into the ridge top long ago. The towers are randomly distributed along the path. Every hour a PC spends along the path has the possibility of introducing a new episode of dimensional bleed.



THE TOWERS

Each of these seventeen towers is superficially similar in appearance to the others, with the same number of metallic sides, lit by either blue and red lights. They are huge, each reaching over a mile (1.6 km) in height, with a diameter of 500 feet (152 m). A closer look reveals each tower has unique flourishes. Some are obviously damaged, and at least a few have no lights at all. In one case, only the empty foundations where a tower once stood remain.

Most of the active towers have an overlord, a being composed of pure energy. Humanlike, each overlord has a unique personality and motivation, and safeguards a separate dimensional gate within its tower.

WAR OF GATES

Despite their similarities, each overlord is jealous of the others along the ridge, for reasons that are not really clear. Over the centuries, low-level dimensional effects were intentionally allowed to seep out of the gates, in a passive-aggressive bid for power. Since then, that influence has ramped to its current state, which manifests as dimensional bleed. The bleed is actually a side effect in each overlord's grab for power.

Less obvious than the dimensional conflict between overlords is the occasional assassin, armed sortie, and full-on transdimensional detonation sometimes hurled between towers. Instances of outright aggression have grown in recent decades. A few of the towers are ruined, their overlords slain and the dimensional gate they once guarded destroyed. One tower—the Lost Tower—was shifted into another dimension entirely by a dimensional blast.

In addition, many of the overlords keep human subjects. They are sometimes disguised and sent as potential recruits to another tower. If this ploy works, the traitor servitors reveal their true loyalties only after they have worked their way into a position of trust. When such a betrayal comes, it can cut deep.

TAIASHAR TOWER

Taiashar Tower is typical of the kind of situation found in many on the ridge. Three hundred humans live in the tower, and all worship the overlord *Taiashar*—for whom the tower is named—as a god. Why overlords keep human subjects seems obvious: the

USING TITANIC RIDGE

Travelers through the Black Riage might see the lighted towers on the high ridge from miles away, and come to investigate. Alternatively, the PCs might be working on behalf of some other group, such as the University of Doors, interested in learning more about the transdimensional events associated with the ridge. Finding out what specifically lies in each tower may also be of interest. Or perhaps a key or transdimensional device the PCs need to repair their own method of traveling dimensions (such as the [Grinder of Infinities](#) or the [Crystal Ship](#)) is kept in one of the towers. Maybe a particularly large dimensional bleed gets the PCs' attention. Or maybe an entity in one of the towers reaches out to the PCs for aid. Finally, PCs may learn that each tower contains a closed (but leaking) portal to an alternate dimension, one of which is a dimension they need to reach for reasons of their own.

overlords were themselves once human, before assuming their current mantles. As overlords, each is responsible for tending the dimensional gate found in the apex of their respective towers, but, as former humans, they retain some dim instinct for social interaction.

Various devices in the tower improve the life of those who live inside. Open shafts whisk residents between levels. Doors iris open at a touch. Communication between levels is carried by invisible messengers, instantly connecting people. Music and stories can be experienced in much the same way.

The humans within each tower are descended from previous explorers who ascended the ridge, became enraptured by Taiashar's overwhelming presence, and never left. They live in various compartments and levels of the tower, protected from the overt effects of dimensional bleed outside. Many spend several hours each day hunting

and gathering food in Expois, the limited dimension found through the gate located at the tower apex. Residents who don't go on daily trips through the portal remain behind to prepare foods, mend clothing, guard against agents from neighboring towers, and otherwise see to the needs of the community. One of those needs is the Ceremony of Song.

Ceremony of Song: Each day, humans conduct the Ceremony of Song, where voices rise with praises of Taiashar. The ceremony happens on a level midway up the tower that is part throne room and part temple. Though the ceremony begins in a grand fashion, like a formal religious mass, it soon becomes more informal. Taiashar stands and mingles with the celebrants. Simple talk is exchanged, tea and foodstuffs are consumed, and games are played. Generally speaking, Taiashar enjoys the company of humans, despite the overlord's elevated and partly energy-based status. The only thing that Taiashar's human subjects never bring up is mention of any of the other towers. Such talk enrages Taiashar.

Taiashar: Taiashar is human-shaped, but the overlord's flesh glows with energy. The light is so intense that even when cloaked and masked, it's enough to illuminate a room. If Taiashar were to disrobe, the light would be blinding. When not interacting with subjects, the overlord can be found in the tower's gate chamber at the apex, or plotting the downfall of the other overlords in an auxiliary chamber.

Lerian: Taiashar's majordomo is [Lerian](#), a human with grey streaked through her black hair. She has served Taiashar in her current role for one year. According to her story, she showed up on the ridge at the University of Doors' request to do research. But she was immediately asked by Taiashar to stay. Lerian did, and was soon promoted to be the majordomo due to her abilities. Unbeknownst to Taiashar, Lerian had already accepted an invitation from a rival gate overlord called Rhimas. She secretly provides reports to Rhimas on the state of affairs in Taiashar's tower. Sometimes she attempts minor acts of sabotage. Given her position, a little sabotage

Grinder of Infinities,
page 11

Crystal Ship, page 12

Taiashar: level 7; targets within short range who fail an Intellect defense roll agree to reasonable requests made by Taiashar; regains 5 points of health each round when near a transdimensional portal

Lerian: level 5, knowledge of the numenera as level 7, steward tasks as level 6



The overlord eventually asks visitors to stay awhile. Given Taiashar's overwhelming personality, PCs may be hard-pressed to say no.

TITANIC CLIMB

The Titanic Ridge is a very high, sheer drop-off slicing its way through the Black Riage. The ridge rises 10,000 feet (3,048 m) above its base. A series of metal towers runs the length of the cliff top for 15 miles (24 km). Because these towers are covered with red and blue lights, most still functional, they are best seen at night.

Those who wish to reach the towers are advised by the learned to climb the ridge—those who attempt to use abilities or devices to fly directly to the top of the ridge are usually never seen again (according to rumor). Even so, scaling the cliffs is fiendishly difficult. Normally, scaling it is a series of ten difficulty 7 climbing tasks. However, those with a map of the best climbing route find the ascent easier. The transdimensional bleed that afflicts the top of the ridge and the towers reaches down either side of the ridge and affects those attempting to climb or fly up.

FLYING OR TELEPORTING

Explorers with alternative methods for reaching the top of the Titanic Ridge should, generally speaking, be allowed to use them, despite rumors suggesting it's not safe. If the PCs disbelieve stories about the perils of flying directly to the top of the ridge, they make it safely. Use this climb for some later adventure instead, or the climb down.

GM Intrusion: A PC suffers an instance of transdimensional bleed and vividly sees a parallel version of themselves crashing and dying (if flying) or teleporting into solid rock (if teleporting) unless they succeed on a difficulty 5 Intellect defense roll to avoid having that image planted in their mind.

CLIMBING

Generally speaking, climbs are measured by pitches. Each pitch is a section of a surface ascended, usually with a leader ascending first to scout the route, after which they anchor the rope to be used by others. A skilled leader can find a place for others to safely rest between pitches, and can retrieve the rope without it becoming tangled below.

The GM sets a difficulty based on the surface being climbed. If the PCs succeed at the roll, they move normally, although climbing is like moving through difficult terrain: it raises the difficulty of any move task by one step and halves the distance traveled. Unusual circumstances, such as climbing while under fire (or on fire!), inflict additional step penalties.

Being trained or specialized in climbing reduces the difficulty of this task by one or two steps, respectively. Using rope reduces the difficulty of the climbing task by one step. Using rope, harnesses, pitons, and climbing gear instead of just a rope reduces the difficulty of the task by two steps. If such equipment is used by someone trained or specialized in climbing (the climb “leader”), all those who follow on the rope belayed by the leader find the difficulty of their climb task reduced by another step. Finally, having a map of the ascent that describes exactly where and how to move on the face can reduce the climb task by another step.

This means that a specialized climb leader with the proper equipment and a map of the ascent could reduce a level 7 climb to level 2, while untrained climbers who follow the leader find their climb tasks reduced to level 3, all before using any **Effort**. And even if someone following a climb leader falls, they are harnessed, which arrests a fall. So other than losing time and confidence, a fall by a climb follower is usually not a disaster.

PITCH ONE

The first pitch (actually a series of ascents) is a difficulty 7 climbing task that leads to a cave in the cliff face where climbers can rest. The cave shows signs of past camps of previous climbers, as well as evidence that it is currently used as a nesting place for some kind of large flying creatures.

GM Group Intrusion: A colony of five mountain **rasters** returns to its roost. (Mountain rasters are wild cousins of those that live along coasts.)

Raster: level 4; flies a long distance each round; Armor 1; see page 253 of the Numenera corebook for more information

RIDGE BASE—START HERE

Getting to the base of the ridge in the Black Riage mountains is a quest in itself. If PCs succeed in reaching the base of the Titanic Ridge, they can see various towers, most blinking with red and blue lights, high above. Along the base of the ridge is a scree slope of boulders as well as the occasional smashed human body of a failed climber. Searching along the base might yield several working cyphers among the debris, as well as rope, harnesses, pitons, and other equipment required for an easier ascent.

GM Group Intrusion: Dimensional bleed produces only the sound of someone falling to their death—screaming that seems to fly past the PCs as they climb and ends suddenly with a sickening crack below.



Effort, page 21

*Movement modifiers,
page 100*

ALTERNATE PITCH FOUR

If PCs bypass the easier route, they can make a direct ascent for the top from pitch three. Doing so looks about as hard as the route marked on the map.

GM Group Intrusion: A part of the pitch is overhung by a sheet face—not visible from the third pitch. This obstacle makes the ascent here a difficulty 8 climbing task.

RIDGE TOP

The final climb to the ridge top is a difficulty 7 climbing task. It's cold at the top, but a narrow trail can be traversed between the towers. Threats to the PCs moving between the towers include those described below. In addition, the characters become aware of *Kasabrial*, a human climber who made it to the top but lost her party in the process. She has strange funguslike growths on her skin from the dimensional bleed, and wanders, mad, between the towers.

GM Intrusion: *Kasabrial* “multiplies” thanks to dimensional bleed. One of the new versions attacks the character.

Kasabrial: level 5, knowledge of Titanic Ridge as level 6; Armor 1

PITCH FOUR

The fourth pitch is a difficulty 7 climbing task that leads to a small, one-room stone structure built cunningly into the side of the cliff. Inside it is cold but dry, and shows evidence of past climbers having used it. A passage provides access deeper into the cliff, revealing a large cave. The cave holds a massive ice stalagmite that is milky, smooth, and cold.

Seventeen niches are carved in the walls of the cave surrounding the stalagmite. Most are empty, but one holds a small obsidian statue of a humanoid figure holding some unfamiliar device. The statue is small enough to be easily transported.

In the ice stalagmite, visions from the dimensional bleed dance. They show locations both familiar and not, humans with strangely colored skin, emotions given form and color—joy, contentment, lust, melancholia, and fear.

GM Intrusion: The PC is confronted with an image, courtesy of dimensional bleed, of a blue-skinned woman who explains that the only sensible way to conclude their life is to jump from the ridge. The PC must succeed on a difficulty 5 Intellect defense task or immediately attempt to follow the woman’s “advice.”

PITCH THREE

The third pitch is a difficulty 7 climbing task that leads to a shallow hollow in the cliff offering climbers a place to rest. A body of a human lies in the hollow, stripped of useful gear. Scratched in the wall above the body in the Truth is the epitaph, “The Lady convinced Jeral to pull his eyes out. Do not listen to her.”

GM Group Intrusion: Clouds seeded from transdimensional bleed boil out of the air, creating a lashing storm that scours the face of the ridge. PCs face freezing temperatures while their climb is delayed for three days.

PITCH TWO

The second pitch is a difficulty 7 climbing task that leads to a sloped (rather than vertical) portion of the cliff that offers a place to rest. Markings scratched into the slope, written in the Truth, read “The Lady is a lie. Do not listen to her.”

GM Intrusion: A clasp, tie, or other piece of equipment sparkles and then fades briefly into an alternate dimension, threatening the PC with a long fall.

goes a long way. So far, she's not ready to make her move, but bides her time. Sooner or later, she knows she will have the perfect opportunity to murder Taiashar and destroy the gate that the overlord protects.

Treatment of Visitors: PCs who come to the tower are treated civilly, though they are quizzed extensively as to whether they are secretly agents of another tower. If the PCs can convince the tower residents that they're not agents, they are shown hospitality, and conducted to the next Ceremony of Song. There, characters meet Taiashar, a being of light with no obvious gender, in person. The overlord asks visitors to stay awhile. Given Taiashar's overwhelming personality, PCs may be hard-pressed to say no.

Gate Chamber (Expois): The gate is a level 7 device that focuses an immense amount of crackling energy to punch a spherical hole in reality. Various control surfaces, protected by clear synth panels, allow the overlord to adjust and control the gate, as well as to siphon energy from it. The panels automatically slide back into place when the overlord isn't accessing the controls. The controls are currently set to allow a small amount of dimensional bleed outside the tower's walls.

Aralbur: level 3; flies a short distance each round; on failed Might defense roll, breath inflicts 1 point of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) for three rounds

Other settings are possible, including one that can fire a bolt of transdimensional energy at targets up to 300 miles (483 km) within direct line of sight, inflicting 20 points of damage. (Other towers are immune to such attacks.)

The gate mechanism is intelligent. If asked, it may reveal that the complex of towers' original purpose was to defend against a terrifying threat that never actually materialized. This was so long ago, even most overlords have forgotten of the threat. If an overlord is killed, the mechanism seeks another human to become the overlord by converting an applicant to a being made of energy.

Each day, a hunting band of dozens travels through the dimensional gate to a limited dimension called Expois—a fragmented world covered in vividly hued fungal growths. In addition to bringing back all manner of nutritional and medicinal mushrooms, a lucky hunting party may also manage to bag an *aralbur*, a filmy-winged creature with poisonous breath (that nonetheless tastes wonderful when properly cooked).





Rhimas is effectively a self-willed, humanoid, mobile gate into another dimension.

RHIMAS TOWER

Like Taiashar Tower, the overlord Rhimas keeps human subjects and oversees a gate at the tower apex that leads to a dimension called Panaton. Unlike Taiashar and other overlords, Rhimas has only recently become overlord. An assassin killed the previous overlord, though reports of that death never reached the other towers. That's because the Rhimas Tower mechanism intervened directly. Instead of bequeathing the power of overlord on another human, it animated itself, forming a mobile humanoid body, and assumed the role of Rhimas. The dimensional opening itself was incorporated into the avatar. Rhimas is effectively a self-willed, humanoid, mobile gate into another dimension.

The dimension of Panaton is a limited dimension where time is variable. Entities from that dimension are extremely dangerous, which is why the original Rhimas (as well as the new pretender) rarely allow creatures to emerge from the gate. Humans that serve Rhimas travel through the unguarded gate found in the neighboring Haunted Tower to hunt. On the other hand, the "new" Rhimas enjoys sucking problems into itself and ejecting them into Panaton, usually into the Slow Ocean, where they become caught in a temporal flow too removed from Rhimas's to ever become a problem again.

The new Rhimas holds daily social gatherings (similar to Taiashar's Celebration of Song) as has been the custom, but these rituals grow strained. The artificial version of Rhimas was never a human, as its unpolished social interaction skills show. In fact, the social structure in Rhimas is fast disintegrating, but the overlord isn't that concerned, and may be planning on eradicating all the humans in its tower. To it, the humans are beginning to resemble vermin. (Rhimas is unaware that the previous version of itself sent Lorian as a secret spy into Taiashar Tower.)

Rhimas can siphon energy from the gate that makes up its body to deliver truly devastating transdimensional blasts, just as those described in Taiashar's tower. However, to do so, it must return to the apex

of the tower and reconnect with the larger mechanism, limiting its mobility.

HAUNTED TOWER

This tower near Rhimas's along the narrow Titanic Ridge path has no lights, no human residents, and no overlord. Ropes and rigged ladders cover its exterior. A still-active gate remains at the apex of the tower, but it serves no other function except a base portal. Humans from nearby Rhimas Tower who use the gate to hunt must ascend and descend each day however they can manage it.

Shadows: With no occupants, the tower has become infested with shadows. At least, that's what the humans call them. The shadows have no physical substance, but appear like regular shadows, without the corresponding person, object, or creature to cast them. Sometimes they look like the shadows of normal people and objects. Other times they twist and writhe so disquietingly that someone watching one risks being driven mad.

The shadows "nest" near the tower entrance. Luckily, like normal shadows, they are susceptible to light. The humans bring bright lights to banish the shadows when they pass.

Gate Chamber (Trytherhon): The portal contained within the gate mechanism at the top of the tower is essentially damaged, retaining only the function of keeping the passage to another dimension open. No other functions remain. The world beyond the portal is a parallel dimension, not a limited fragment world. However, in Trytherhon—the world beyond the portal—there are no humans. There is life there, however, as well as other more sinister creatures that hunt the human interlopers, which is why hunters try to never spend the night. Those that choose to do so are never seen again.

SEVENFOLD TOWER

Seven overlords share power in this tower. They do not keep human companions. Instead, they prefer each other's company. The overlords in the Sevenfold Tower—referred to as the Sevenfold, though each has a

Rhimas: level 7; touched target must make a Speed defense roll or be sucked through the gate that is Rhimas's body, to Panaton

Panaton, page 74

Shadow: level 1; out of phase

Slow Ocean, page 82

Trytherhon, page 128

The Sevenfold, unlike most of the other overlords, are not of human descent. Most are ultraterrestrials, including a couple of varjellen.



Sevenfold Overlord: level 7; short-range attack inflicts 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor); regains 5 points of health each round when near a transdimensional portal

name—are attempting to end the dimensional bleed across the Titanic Ridge. They argue that conflict is not the natural state of gate guardians, as some overlords claim. In the past, explain the Sevenfold, overlords acted in unanimity.

The Sevenfold say it was only in the last thousand years that their original purpose was forgotten. Overlords became contaminated with the concepts of competition, strife, and personal power. The Sevenfold lay the blame at the feet of humanity, who began appearing around the time the overlords turned against

one another. This is why the Sevenfold lure humans into their tower under false pretenses, only to kill or banish their victims through the gate.

Gate Chamber (Meurrelm): The dimension beyond the gate appears to be a vacuum—a void filled with the rubble of a world ripped apart by energies beyond normal comprehension. Bits of the numenera the size of a small moon are visible drifting through the rubble.

TITANIC RIDGE HEARSAY

Under the Towers: Humans whisper that beneath some of the towers, passages lead to deeper levels, and other gates not normally accessible.

Mushroom Stew: A human hunter new to Taiashar Tower has learned to prepare a special broth using mushrooms found in Expois that heal wounds and soothe fevers. She would like to get some of that broth to her family, which lives in a small village in the Steadfast.

THE WEIRD OF TITANIC RIDGE

Lost Tower: Even the overlords don't generally know where the Lost Tower went. The truth is every few months the Lost Tower flickers back into existence for a few hours.

Many Legs: An automaton as big as a house and shaped like a spider is sometimes seen climbing around the ridge. When approached, it retreats to the opposite side of the ridge.

CHAPTER 3

NEW YENTH

The trade city of **Yenth** in the land of **Malevich** enjoys its status thanks to a transdimensional connection with a parallel universe—specifically to a cognate planet very different from Earth. Odd flora and fauna exist on the other side of the gate, but humans can survive there. In fact, it's home to small cloisters of beings nearly indistinguishable from humans called **colrathi**. Despite their humanlike shape, **colrathi** motivations are alien; even when communications are established, it's hard for natives of the Ninth World to completely understand them. The people of Yenth have established trade with the **colrathi**, and call the **colrathi** world “New Yenth.” The **colrathi** term for their world is a series of click and whistles, nearly impossible for a human to duplicate.

TRAVELING TO NEW YENTH

Yenth is built around a complex from aeons past that houses a large extradimensional portal. As far as anyone understands, it can be opened only from the Earth side. A guild operating out of Yenth called the **Openers** act as gatekeepers to the portal. Under normal circumstances, four **Openers** watch the portal. For reasons still being studied, on rare occasions, all the **Openers** guarding the portal go missing, discovered only when the next shift arrives. Those missing guards sometimes show up again a few months later, but by all accounts, they're never the same.

Of course, as with any dimension, it is likely there are other methods that can be used to reach New Yenth.

GM SUMMARY

Almost every living thing in New Yenth is a species of insect, even the plants. Fields of waving grass are actually antennae of tiny creatures rooted in the soil who remain as long as conditions are favorable. Trees that dot the landscape are actually shaped mud-mounds built by thousands of tiny antlike creatures. The darting flocks of “birds” in the sky are any of a hundred different variety of wasp. The massive, waving yellow shapes billowing across the sky are not clouds; they are membranes filled with buoyant gas created by colonies of tiny insects that live inside, called **dalds**. When **dalds** swarm, a voracious storm threatens, and most creatures retreat into lairs. Weirdly, the **colrathi** appear—at least at first glance—to be the exception to the theme.

FLORA AND FAUNA OF NEW YENTH

Every living thing is some form of insect in New Yenth. Sometimes, even parts of the landscape are insectile, such as the “clouds,” called **dalds**.

Other aggressive fauna includes the predatory **manitura**, a creature nearly as large

Yenth, page 157

Malevich, page 154

Opener: level 3; crossbow attack inflicts 6 points of damage once every other round

For **Openers**, operating the portal is a routine task. For anyone else, operating the portal is a difficulty 6 Intellect task.

Dald: level 3, Speed defense as level 1 due to size; flies a short distance each round; touch inflicts 3 points of damage for two rounds from tiny biting insects

Manitura: level 4; Armor 2; two melee attacks as a single action

The massive, waving yellow shapes billowing across the sky are not clouds; they are membranes filled with buoyant gas created by colonies of tiny insects that live inside, called dalds. When dalds swarm, a voracious storm threatens, and most creatures retreat into lairs.

Ephemer: level 3; Armor 2; long-range leap attack from ambush inflicts 8 points of damage

Noptera: level 5; Armor 2; moves a short distance each round through soil, an immediate distance each round through stone

Lycidaris, page 145

Citadel of the Watchers, page 42

Shrouded Kingdom, page 44

Colrath, typical: level 2, climbing tasks as level 5; bite attack inflicts 4 points of damage

Water of Salvation is a level 8 hallucinogenic poison.

as a human with a long, carapaced body and mandibles paired with cleaverlike forelegs. The **ephemer** is a beetlelike creature the size of a cart that leaps on prey using forced-air jets to make long jumps. The **noptera** are huge insects that swim through the ground, searching for prey on the surface.

A region far to the south, which the colrathi call the Shrouded Kingdom, is infested with lycidaris. The creatures' pale, stringy gauzelike nests smother the region under layers of webbing. A group of colrathi soldiers called the Watchers keep this infestation at bay.

NATIVE RACES OF NEW YENTH

Fauna covers the world of New Yenth, several species of which are intelligent. However, colrathi are unique even on New Yenth.

COLRATHI

Colrathi superficially resemble humans, but are hairless and have a faint purple luster to their skin when exposed to bright light. They speak their own strange language of clicks and whistles. It is a fiendishly difficult language to learn for native speakers of the Truth. Most colrathi who live in the trade settlement on the opposite side of the transdimensional gate speak the Truth, though a deeper understanding often eludes both species. Human and colrathi thinking seem fundamentally to be at odds. For instance, most colrathi think nothing of biting a foe (as opposed to kicking or striking a foe with a fist or weapon).

Colrathi are born from iridescent eggs, one of dozens laid by a pregnant mother during any given year, and deposited in hot-spring heated chambers. Hatchlings are given into the care of colrathi specialized in child rearing. Until age five, colrathi are cared for as they grow. At age six, they are assigned to an order, usually happily so. Colrathi recognize several hundred orders, including Herders,

USING NEW YENTH

Even PCs without any special transdimensional knowledge can find New Yenth, possibly even accidentally, while exploring the ruined structures near Yenth. The theme of New Yenth is the gradual realization that things that seem familiar on the surface are actually something far different when examined more closely: grasslands, clouds, lakes, and mountains may not be what they seem. Even the people who seem humanlike at first glance harbor a strange life cycle. When exploring New Yenth, PCs are likely to encounter swarm weather as well as temple ruins called the Encysted Tombs. PCs might get caught up in the plight of a colrath attempting to avoid their personal "Forty-Four" or be targeted by Census Takers worried that the PCs might be due for "Forty-Fours" of their own.

Growers, Gatherers, Child Rearers, Watchers, Warriors, Traders, Waste Handlers, and many, many more. The training a colrath undergoes depends on the particular order. For example, Warriors prune their ranks with occasional fights to the death. Healers study palliatives, how to prepare various insect parts to create drugs, as well as how to tend to other wounded colrathi.

The Census Takers are an especially important order. They record and track the age of every colrath. At some point during a colrath's forty-fourth year of life, Census Takers send messengers with reminders that it's time to settle their affairs. After that, the Census Takers arrange for a small festival called the Forty-Four at which the aging colrath is the guest of honor. After song, food, entertainment and a few speeches from family and friends, the celebrant is provided with an elaborate glass filled with an effervescent liquid called the Water of Salvation.

The imbiber of Water of Salvation is overcome with joyful visions even as the



If they live to the age of forty-five, colrathi undergo a metamorphosis. Those who emerge from their cocoons are no longer colrathi—but the crawling ones. This is why most colrathi take their life before the ceremony known to them as the "Forty-Four."



poison begins to kill them. The Census Takers lead the celebrant out while they are still feeling the rush, and deal with the body afterward. The deceased are not interred or burned but embedded in columns of amberlike material and set on display along thoroughfares, on rooftops, and in other places where they can be seen, posed in a lifelike way (though not in the trade settlement, because it seems to disturb humans). After thirty years or so, old memorials are retired, when no one left alive recalls the name of the memorialized.

The importance of the Forty-Four is implicitly understood by colrathi. Colrathi who live into their forty-fifth year of life almost inevitably undergo a transformation, becoming a monstrous, voracious version of their former selves called a **crawling one**. Despite the vigilance of the Census Takers, crawling ones still manage to emerge from

time to time. Colrathi view the existence of the crawling ones with extreme shame. Crawling ones that survive usually find each other in the wastes, and sometimes infest ancient structures found there called Encysted Tombs.

Colrathi use amber coins as currency, though those in the trade settlement closest to the portal and in other nearby communities use shins as well. Each order provides its members with basic housing, food, and clothing. An order may distribute additional currency if the need is perceived or if times are plentiful. Most colrathi consume a variety of dishes, though each community tends to an insect swarm of some sort, which is used as a basic staple. Most food swarms are made up of thumb-sized black flylike insects that buzz and clump in crawling balls. Colrathi weapons are usually made from insect mandibles, but are sometimes actually masses of living insects bred to fight.

Crawling one, page 141

A mantis sword is a medium weapon that is alive. A wielder who hits with it and succeeds on a second Intellect task inflicts 1 additional point of damage when the mantis bites.



Colrathi are born from iridescent eggs, one of dozens laid by a pregnant mother during any given year, and deposited in hot-spring heated chambers. Hatchlings are given into the care of colrathi specialized in child rearing.

EARTH TRADE SETTLEMENT

A transdimensional portal lies in a ruin near the city of Yenth that leads to the parallel dimension of New Yenth. A trade settlement lies on the other side of the portal in New Yenth where commerce, diversion, and amusement can be found for travelers willing to engage with the colrathi.

Colrathi look very much like humans, though in bright light it is evident they exhibit a purple shimmer to their skin. Colrathi dress in bright robes of finely woven silk, though those of the Warrior order also sometimes wear specially bred insects as armor.



Yenth, page 157

PORTAL—START HERE

Near the city of Yenth, within a large prior-world ruin lies a chamber containing a transdimensional portal. It is a black slab of metallic material, normally unpowered. On a difficulty 6 Intellect task, the controls on the side of the portal can be activated to open the gate to New Yenth. The portal remains open for up to one minute at a time. While the portal is open, it's possible to cross between dimensions in either direction.

Four guards employed by merchants in the city of Yenth monitor use of the portal. Called **Openers**, the guards are not supposed to open the portal for anyone but those who've signed a merchant agreement in Yenth. However, they are open to negotiation. For a guard, opening the portal is a routine action.

GM Group Intrusion: A lycidaris bursts through the portal the moment it is opened, searching for food on the far side of the gate.

Opener, page 35

Lycidaris, page 145

Opener: level 3; crossbow attack inflicts 6 points of damage once every other round

NEW YENTH ARRIVAL

The portal to Earth lies on a low, bare hill in New Yenth. Visitors find a world not vastly different from their own, at least at first glance. A sky above filled with clouds and birds, and a wide grassland dotted with trees, stretches out to distant mountains. A settlement built of quarried stone filled with humans wearing brightly colored silk robes lies nearby. When the portal is closed, the hill is empty, with no obvious way to trigger a return. When the portal is opened from the Earth side, an aperture connects the two dimensions for up to one minute.

The portal mouth glows and hums when it opens, making it obvious to everyone in the settlement that it is active. A group of colrathi in orange robes ascends the hill and greets newcomers in stilted Truth, bidding them welcome. The leader of the group introduces herself as **Bali** Ambassador Thirty-Seven, and asks how she and her fellow ambassadors can aid the newcomers during their visit. If asked, she will describe the major features of the settlement. She can arrange trade, travel to other locations in the world, or help the PCs track down information they might be looking for. She can even be retained to work on the PCs' behalf, serving as translator and cultural go-between if the characters decide to venture farther into the strange world.

GM Intrusions: The PC notices that the nearest clouds look more like giant amoebas oozing across a piece of clear synth; the grass blades look suspiciously like insect antennae; the birds are actually flocks of insects; or every mount and pack beast visible in the settlement is some variety of giant insect. And somehow, the PCs have drawn their ire.

COMMISSARY

Everyone in the settlement eats in this structure, which is open to the air and filled with tables and chairs constructed of rigid silk. Six members of the Hospitality order run the kitchen, though most people interact with a tall colrath named Duard Hospitality Twenty-Nine, who can rattle off the day's menu without so much as a stutter. Specialties include pickled spiders, roasted thorax, wriggler soup, and crispy fried mandibles.

GM Intrusion: A fellow colrath diner asks an older-looking PC when they are due for their **Forty-Four**, with real and obvious concern.

Forty-Four, page 36

Bali: level 3, tasks related to pleasant social interaction as level 5; health 25

TRADE ZONE

These warehouses contain animals, oils, plants, and other objects brought to New Yenth by traders. One smaller structure contains a variety of oddities fashioned in New Yenth by Tinkers in the city of *Hoyan*. Activity in the area depends on the volume of trade currently underway—sometimes it's light, other times it's quite busy. When PCs visit, they are assumed to be traders, and the central building opens as a sort of general store. Here, traders can buy individual items and make deals to trade in bulk. The colrath that PCs are most likely to deal with is a stern woman named Kea Importer Forty-One, whose silk gown is striped in an almost military fashion. Kea is taciturn even for a colrath, but that's mainly due to the fact that she has begun to consider the possibility of trying to escape her Forty-Four by fleeing through the portal.

In addition to the oddities produced by Tinkers, PCs can trade for (or buy with shins) most general equipment they might need, though all of it is of New Yenth make: glowglobes contain firefly-like insects, rope is woven spider silk, weapons are carved from insect mandibles, and so on.

GM Intrusion: A human trader from Yenth butts in and monopolizes Kea's attention, disrupting whatever deal or conversation the PC and Kea were involved in.

Hoyan, page 43

STABLE

All manner of riding insects are stabled here in a pen. They are borrowed as needed by the colrathi, which means there is no one around to explain things to the PCs. It might seem like a menagerie, at least until they see a colrath ride in from out of town and drop off their mount.

GM Intrusion: A large red insect mount takes a liking to the PCs and begins to follow them around.

SURROUNDING GRASSLAND

Normally, the grassland surrounding the trade settlement acts just like regular tall grass. However, those who don't take the trade road are sometimes inconvenienced when every leaf of "grass" pulls its head out of the dirt and swarms around, chirping in what might be mating behavior.

PUBLIC HOUSE

This structure includes many rooms with comfortable beds constructed of rigid silk, as well as a public room where an alcoholic drink called *spinnek* is served. Light is provided by slowly crawling insects on the ceiling whose abdomens glow yellow. When visitors arrive, they usually stay here. At any given time, a handful of merchants from Yenth are on the premises.

Five members of the Hospitality order run the establishment. PCs will end up dealing mostly with Mruo Hospitality Eighteen, a young colrath man in blue silk. He is exploring a secret relationship with a human Yenth merchant named Jacca. Jacca returned to Yenth and has been absent for some time, but Mruo is certain Jacca will return.

A colrath storyteller named Arvana appears in the evening, but she doesn't speak the Truth. Her clicks and whistles appear to calm the other colrathi. If asked, a colrath explains that Arvana tells tales of fruitful adventure, calm meditation, and glorious memorial in amber when each colrath's "Forty-Four is celebrated."

GM Intrusion: Three colrath warriors wearing armor made of shaped carapace and hyped up on *spinnek* pick a fight with the PCs.

BATHING POOL

Each day most colrathi visit the bathing pool. From a distance it appears to be a body of turbid water. Close up, it is revealed as a mass of tiny blue-black insects. Bathing colrathi strip, place their clothing in baskets, and wade in to their necks. The tingling feeling is from thousands of tiny bites eating off the outer layer of dead skin and dirt. Humans are asked to bathe, but the colrathi do not insist, especially after a few unfortunate incidents that they would prefer not to talk about.

GM Intrusion: A PC who decides to bathe must make a difficulty 3 Speed defense roll or the pool insects get confused at the "splashing" and begin to eat the PC, inflicting 5 points of damage per round.

Colrath warrior: level 4; health 25; Armor 2



Ambassadors and other colrathi do not discuss vulgarities such as crawling ones and life stages with human guests, though they assume humans must suffer some similar fate. Thus colrathi who've met humans obviously well over age forty-five assume that those humans must suffer some kind of strange disease, or change at a later age.

An individual colrath's name includes their personal name, order, and age. For instance, Janter Weaver Twenty-Nine produces wonderful tapestries and colorful ropes. Rathar Hunter Forty-Three provides food for the trade settlement, and now looks forward to his Forty-Four. In rare cases where a colrath decides they'd prefer to put off or avoid the Forty-Four, an individual may travel to a new settlement and change their name by pruning a few years off their age.

No obvious central ruler oversees communities or the colrathi as a whole. Each order oversees activities within its own remit, and things work out overall. If a fresh need is perceived or an unforeseen disaster destabilizes or kills off all the members of a given order, volunteers from the most closely related orders perceive the need and shift focus. Most orders keep records, which means starting an order over from scratch isn't impossible, but generally, it is a shift to a related order. The inception of a completely new order, however, is much rarer.

Recently founded orders include Importers, Ambassadors, and most intriguingly, the Numenera Users. The Numenera Users arose from a much older Tinker order, once it became clear that the unique devices the Tinkers made were of interest to the traders from the gate. Devices found in the Encysted Tombs and other ancient locations (where crawling ones tend to congregate) are also of interest, and the Numenera Users do what they can to learn more about them.

The order of Importers arranges for the trade of oddities in return for plants, animals, and other substances from Earth. To the colrathi, an object is exotic simply because it is not produced from insects.

Finally, Ambassadors attempt to keep relationships cordial, by focusing on the ways that humans and colrathi are alike, while discouraging exploration of differences. For instance, Ambassadors downplay the odd fear that humans seem to have of colrathi

infiltrators coming through the portal and secretly living among them.

A few colrathi decided to duck their Forty-Four celebrations by sneaking into the Ninth World and taking on human guise. They hope that by living in a new world, they'll avoid their transformation into crawling ones. For example, a leatherworking shop owner in Yenth called Nariive was once a colrath Warrior. Nariive is just a few months from his Forty-Four. Only time will tell whether his hope of avoiding the transformation by fleeing to another world will prove true.

Every colrath spends at least ten minutes a day in meditation. Sometimes that meditation is much longer. For colrathi, meditation each day is as important as sleep. Unlike sleep, which is undirected, colrath meditation is a focused discipline of mindfulness, where the practitioner specifically imagines each and every portion of their bodies, no matter how small, before moving to the next. This, they say, anchors them in the world. It is why, some believe, that colrathi are alone in New Yenth in having no carapace. A few colrathi believe (perhaps wrong-headedly) that a meditation master might even be able to put off the final life stage that afflicts the race indefinitely. Most colrathi use small items crafted by the order of Tinkers to help their meditations.

SWARM WEATHER

Cloudlike *dalds* sometimes give way to darker thunderheads that stride across the sky. But like *dalds*, the thunderheads are different than the ones PCs might be familiar with. Each droplet is condensed around a tiny green insect. When the thunderheads remain in the sky, all is well. But when it rains, millions of swarming insects drop to the ground. Creatures caught in the swarm typically suffer 10 points of damage each minute. Finding cover is the only way to survive.

Dald, page 35

ENCYSTED TOMBS

Ancient structures dot New Yenth, though all are generally alike: cyclopean ziggurats of a white stone that resists colonization by insect grasses, vines, and other infestations. Stairs meant for creatures apparently much larger than colrathi ascend to a central structure that is sealed, though with enough effort that seal can be breached. Inside, a shaft drops into darkness. Most colrathi will not try to break a seal or descend, because they know that crawling ones tend to lair in such sites.

Those willing to brave interactions with crawling ones and explore below discover vast, hollow chambers, many miles across. Assuming explorers are able to deal with crawling ones, they can eventually discover what seems to be serried ranks of massive tombs (of the same white material as the external structure), each more than 20 feet (6 m) long. Inside lie remains that consist of disturbingly convoluted inhuman carapaces, and dust.

Things found in an individual tomb might include the following:

- 1 A level 6 trap mechanism that attempts to drown the intruder in a 25-foot (8 m) deep water-filled shaft.
- 2 A level 5 anoetic carapace cypher. When attached to a weapon, the next time the weapon (or ammunition fired from it) strikes a target, a tiny insect inflicts an additional 5 points of damage, and the target loses its next turn.
- 3 A level 5 trap that slams shut on the intruder's arm, inflicting 10 points of damage, and on a failed Might defense roll, severs the arm.
- 4 A level 5 artifact carapace. If attached to a PC's back, the character can trigger filmy insect wings that grant flight at up to a long distance per round for one hour. (Depletion: 1 in 1d20.)
- 5 A level 6 fist-sized egg cypher. When thrown at a target within short range, it detonates, inflicting 6 points of damage from a cloud of toothed worms that burrow into any nearby flesh.
- 6 A level 5 trap that projects the intruder up and out on a jet of air and eventually leads to a fall from a height of at least 200 feet (61 m).
- 7 A level 7 stafflike artifact with a spinneret at one end. The wielder can attack a target within short range with a strand of webbing that holds the target immobile and unable to take physical actions until it can escape. (Depletion: 1 in 1d10.)
- 8 A level 4 anoetic purple tablet cypher. If eaten, the pill immediately restores 5 points to the imbiber's Intellect Pool, but their skin gains a faint purple luster.
- 9 A level 6 trap that spins the entire area upside down and drops victims down a 30-foot (9 m) shaft. At the bottom is a swarm of biting insects that inflict 3 points of damage each round until victims can escape.
- 10 A level 7 carapace helmet artifact. The wearer can breathe normally in almost any environment for one day, but once used, the device cannot be removed until depleted. (Depletion: 1 in 1d20.)



Therund: level 3; flies a long distance each round

Watcher, typical: level 5, all perception actions as level 7; health 25



Qi, page 148

lakgo: level 4, tasks related to commerce as level 6

Crawling one, page 141

Each tomb has different sigils carved on the front. They might be names, but then again, they could mean something completely different—the colrathi can't read them. Crawling ones who reside in Encysted Tombs refer to the structures as avatars, not tombs, and seem to believe that the things encysted within are not dead, but waiting to be revitalized.

CITADEL OF THE WATCHERS

The colrathi order of the **Watchers** maintains a citadel of locally quarried stone. The citadel lies along one edge of a lycidaris infestation called the Shrouded Kingdom. Unlike other colrathi locations, there is a definite hierarchy among the Watchers. The Lord of Watchers commands a staff of Senior Watchers, who

each command a company of regular Watcher soldiers. The soldiers use mandible swords and stinging ranged weapons, but special groups are also equipped with cyphers and artifacts recovered from Encysted Tombs. Other squadrons ride special flying mounts called **therunds**. A therund is a long, thin insect with double wings capable of carrying up to four soldiers at once when wearing a specially fitted flying saddle.

A single observation tower rises high above the walls, looking directly into the Shrouded Kingdom using special amber lenses. The observation tower is linked to a series of similar towers that surround the Shrouded Kingdom. The link is a visual one, and soldiers use flashing lights to send encoded messages from tower to tower. If a message fails to come on schedule or if an incursion is

NEW YENTH HEARSAY

Oddities Trade Expedition: A trader in **Qi** named **lakgo** seeks to find the source of oddities coming out of Yenth. The oddities, including jumping beans, rattling rods, and kaleidoscopic amber eyepieces, also seem to exert an influence over common earthly insects.

Crawling One Attack: A **crawling one** has infested the prior-world installation containing the portal to New Yenth. It's killed all the Opener guards and left behind their skins stuffed with rubbery mucus, posed as if still on guard. The Openers will pay a reward for whoever slays the creature.

Intelligence Required: The order of Ambassadors in New Yenth realize they know virtually nothing of the world through the portal. They say they will provide aid to those who come from that alternate dimension willing to spend several months telling stories of their world, but are most interested in how humans interact and deal with relationships.

THE WEIRD OF NEW YENTH

Crawling One Prophet: A colrath from a distant settlement claims that a crawling one has taken over there, but instead of instituting a reign of terror, it speaks of peace, joy, and a coming wondrous event where crawling ones and colrathi will be reunited.

Singing Clouds: Red clouds are rare, but when they move across the sky, strange music echoes down, giving creatures who hear it strange dreams of a barren world without life.

Carapaced Corpses: Huge bodies with disturbingly convoluted carapaces and a nest of rotting tentacles have been uncovered in a chamber on the Earth side of the prior-world installation containing the portal to New Yenth.



The Alpha can play the dimensions in which it has children like a musician plays an instrument. If it ever wakes completely, it could draw objects and creatures from other dimensions merely by wishing to do so.

reported, soldiers on therunds are dispatched immediately, as ground-based troops sally from the gates.

For the most part, the lycidarises have been contained, though there have been some close calls. The Watchers believe the lycidarises have found some alternative method to spread, possibly by stepping sidewise into other parallel worlds. Recently the Watchers have been trying to establish whether there is any truth to this speculation by sending spies into the Shrouded Kingdom. So far, none have returned.

HOYAN

Members of the order of Tinkers are found throughout New Yenth, but the order is headquartered in a community many miles from the Earth Trade Settlement. Here the Tinkers have the largest workshops and specialized insect “crops,” which they use to build their creations. Though they are oddities on Earth, most Tinker creations are designed to help the average colrath reach the meditative state that all seek. Meditation focuses are often designed to create pleasing sounds, to give off trancelike lights, to move in ways that absorb attention, and so on.

Examples include the following:

1	Amber amulet that contains tiny iridescent insects moving through a mazelike track
2	Carapace container that produces a continuous, soothing floral scent
3	Silk gloves that are always soothingly warm when worn
4	Amber lens through which the world seems to be broken into pleasing fragments of color
5	Wristband that purrs and chitters contentedly if dipped in water every few days
6	Watery sphere in which tiny creatures race round and round
7	Rod that, when activated, creates a parasol of filmy wings
8	Tiny stones in a box that jump and shake without being touched
9	Carapace container that produces sounds like a breathing colrath
10	Silk robes whose designs move and shift in pleasing patterns

*Earth Trade Settlement,
page 38*



Caza Tinker Forty-Three:
level 3; crafting and
meditation tasks as level
7; health 25

The settlement has a population of around 1,000, half of which are Tinkers. Some Tinkers never leave Hoyan, but some travel with Traders, working together to distribute their wares. Sometimes Tinkers are asked to create special devices for specific purposes that have nothing to do with daily colrath meditation. These special tasks are considered exciting and challenging, and Tinkers may compete in order to be assigned the task.

The eldest Tinker working in Hoyan is **Caza Tinker Forty-Three**. In just one year, Caza must give her spot and submit to the Forty-Four. Caza isn't ready to go. She is too fascinated with her craft. She also believes that her daily meditations will keep the crawling one transformation at bay. She hasn't told anyone, because she knows that doing so will only alert Census Takers. Instead she makes her plan in secret to escape through the portal to Earth.

SHROUDED KINGDOM

With a military citadel and a series of watchtowers on its borders, the Shrouded Kingdom has had no luck expanding further into New Yenth—which is ironic, given that lycidarises originate here. At the heart of the Shrouded Kingdom lies an Encysted Tomb, and in one of the white stone vessels there, the first lycidar is emerged—the **Alpha**. The Alpha yet resides in the Shrouded Kingdom, though it has sent uncounted millions of its offspring into alternate worlds cognate with New Yenth. Many of those worlds have been completely consumed by the lycidarises. The Alpha maintains light telepathic contact with its children in other dimensions. The more they expand, the more the Alpha's mind expands. The Alpha rarely stirs from its dreamlike torpor at the center of a vast web shroud, content to let its mind grow and grow. This is perhaps the only thing saving New Yenth from being completely consumed.

The Alpha: level 10;
manipulate reality using
transdimensional energy
to create any object or
creature within short
range; sleeps unless
disturbed

Stinger tree: level 3;
health 25; Armor 2; stings
up to three times as a
single action and inflicts
1 point of damage, and
on a failed Might defense
roll inflicts 3 additional
points of Speed damage
(ignores Armor)

FOREST OF STINGERS

This vast “forest” of **stinger trees** grows across much of the central continent. The tree branches resemble segmented limbs along which filmy winglike leaves extend by day. At the tip of each branch is a large stinger, shiny with venom. Anyone attempting to cut down or harm a tree becomes the target of several segmented limbs repeatedly stabbing until the threat is quelled.

The tall boles of the trees in this forest

are actually carapace-covered stalks of giant boring insects whose heads are buried beneath the earth. They call out through the earth in subtle vibrations that lure ground insects and worms into their maws. These “trees” also communicate with each other, passing information about blights, intruders, and other news from one side of the forest to the other in just a few short days.

Different trees have different venoms, which is something that the Healer's order well knows. Many of the venoms can be harvested (by an order that specializes in doing so safely, the **Venom Takers**). Harvested venoms can be used to stop many kinds of sickness, block chronic pain, both remove painful memories and restore lost recollections, help regenerate lost limbs, and more. Of course, collected venom can also be used to kill.

Hundreds of **Venom Takers** work the edges of the **Forest of Stingers**. Each day they sell their venom, collected in large sacklike glands, to Healers who come from all over New Yenth. In the evenings, the **Venom Takers** relax, watch the stars, and sometimes imbibe diluted poisons known to induce euphoria.



PART 2:

ACROSS THE DIMENSIONS



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CHAPTER 4

ENDLESS ABODE



Castle Sarrat,
page 150

Eleens, page 47

Crystal Ship, page 12

The learned know that some structures, like **Castle Sarrat**, grow over time. Sarrat, though large, is nothing compared to a structure known as the Endless Abode, which legends say is a dimension of never-ending corridors, rooms, salons, galleries, and other enclosed spaces that go on, perhaps forever. It may be that it was once a structure not unlike Castle Sarrat, but that it grew into a dimension of its own making. If that is true, it explains why elements within it are sometimes familiar to explorers. But the Endless Abode has obviously intersected many alternate planes, some of which are so bizarre as to strain comprehension. That sense of “other” is obvious to anyone who enters. Distant sounds like thunder are sometimes heard, and corridors sometimes shake as if unearthly forces move in unseen foundations.

FINDING THE ENDLESS ABODE

The most straightforward way into the Endless Abode is to locate the Quiet House that

appears for brief periods in various locations on Earth. The Quiet House is an extrusion of the Endless Abode into other dimensions. If the PCs use the Quiet House to gain entry to the Endless Abode, it's not long before they find an **eleen** band of wanderers.

If the PCs use an alternate method to find the Endless Abode, such as those presented earlier in the book, they appear in a random empty corridor, as described in the Hallway of Possibility. (**The Crystal Ship**, also described in the Introduction, might not be capable of entering the Endless Abode at all.)

SURVIVAL IN THE ENDLESS ABODE

Most of the rooms, stairs, and corridors found in the Endless Abode are a comfortable temperature and filled with breathable air. The biggest threat to survival is subtler. It's getting lost. No matter how many precautions an explorer takes—such as blazing marks in passages or using a string to track a path—there is a chaotic changeability to the Endless Abode that defies direction.

Flux Storm: About every ten hours the Endless Abode reshuffles a portion of its interior in what's called a “flux storm.” If that happens to a section where the PCs are exploring, treat the rumbling and shaking as a group **GM intrusion**. The PCs may not even realize what's happened until they turn back and find themselves looking at a completely different set of corridors and rooms than what they expected. A PC must succeed at a difficulty 4 Intellect roll to find a way back to familiar corridors. If they fail, the PCs become lost within the Endless Abode. Locating a way out requires further wandering, finding help, or using another means to escape.

Hunger in the Halls: The Hunger is sometimes heard as a distant howl echoing



GM Intrusion,
page 108

USING THE ENDLESS ABODE

It's easy to find an entrance into the Endless Abode and not realize it's an alternate dimension at first. The themes of the Endless Abode are of loss and regret—most chambers have fallen into ruin—and of vague threat (from the Hunger in the Halls). Besides the Hunger, PCs face the possibility of becoming lost. However, many chambers contain numenera that can be salvaged for cyphers, shins, and perhaps even more. Successful dimension walkers might return home with amazing new insights into other dimensions.

along empty corridors and dusty rooms. The threat is a level 7 manifestation of the Endless Abode itself that isn't friendly. Prey that can't escape the Hunger usually perishes in a horrific disaster of squeezing rooms and gnashing corridors, until only bloodstains are left behind. A manifestation of the Hunger usually steers clear of areas protected by special devices capable of stabilizing transdimensional energy, and areas where a symbol of an eye within a larger geometric design has been inscribed by eleens.

FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE ENDLESS ABODE

Some varieties of vermin can be found everywhere in the Endless Abode. The darting green spider called the **avedit** builds delicate web structures across corridors. Colonies of **laaks** have also begun to infest the Endless Abode, and the averted webs are often strong enough to catch the invading vermin.

More impressive and potentially dangerous is the occasionally wandering automaton that pulled itself loose from a larger installation in an Endless Abode room. Eleens sometimes use such automatons as servants or even as mounts.

WINDOWS

Most rooms and corridors in the Endless Abode do not have windows. When windows occur, they are best approached cautiously, because they likely represent an intrusion on a dimension not part of the Endless Abode, and often not into a plane where human life is supported or even possible. Sometimes even peering through a window is dangerous. Generally speaking, if a window is passed by, so is any danger associated with it, though sometimes a toxic or otherwise anathemic dimension may leach into the area through the window, requiring a PC to make a difficulty 5 Might defense roll or suffer 4 points of damage that ignores Armor. But windows have two uses; smashing a window is one sure way to chase away a manifestation of the Hunger in the Halls, and jumping through a window is a sure way to exit to another dimension.



The eleens have competing oral histories. One claims they are descended from humans. Another story has it that humans of Earth are descended from eleens.

NATIVES OF THE ENDLESS ABODE

Most assume the natives of the Endless Abode—called eleens—are almost entirely made up of the descendants of human explorers who entered the dimension and became lost.

ELEENS

Eleens are very much like humans, but living without natural light for generations has rendered them as pale as milk with lanky white hair. They speak their own language, though hints of the Truth suggest at least some contact with people of Earth.

Eleens are nomadic. They wander the corridors of the Endless Abode in regular migrations in groups of fifty or more, according to the directions of each band's **navigator**, a position that roughly translates to prophet-chief. No single navigator has authority over more than the eleens in their own band, though sometimes politics cause groups to combine. As they wander, eleens scavenge for food, items of interest, and interesting devices. This means that even though their technological level is low, each member of any given band is usually equipped with one or more cyphers, oddities, or even artifacts.

Eleens regard the corridors they wander and the items they find as magical, left by the spirits. They have no sense that they may inhabit an artificial construct that grows without bound through some kind of transdimensional engineering gone wrong. For eleens, the spirits of room and corridor are all the explanation needed.

Eleens hold regular prayer sessions, beseeching the countless spirits of the Endless Abode to guide them to fresh "gifts" and deliver them from the enemy, a beast known as the Hunger in the Halls. As long as the eleens don't forget to inscribe an eye within a larger geometric design, those prayers are almost always answered in that area. Eleens don't know where this symbol came from specifically. They believe it to be a gift from the spirits.

Eleen, typical: level 2; carries one or two cyphers

Avedit: level 2, Speed defense as level 4 due to size; level 4 Might roll to break free from sticky webs

Automaton: level 3; Armor 1



Laak, page 243

Navigator, typical: level 4; tasks related to finding a way through the Endless Abode as level 7

QUIET HOUSE

The Quiet House is one specific entrance to an entire dimension, possibly infinite, called the Endless Abode. For reasons unknown, the Endless Abode protrudes into other dimensions at random intervals, usually in the form of structures like the Quiet House. The Quiet House appears as just another building in a village or city, as a lone dwelling along the road or in the middle of nowhere, or even as a newly discovered and unexpected series of chambers connected to some previously familiar structure. The Quiet House appears, remains for days, months, or even years, and then disappears as mysteriously as it arrived.

From the exterior, the Quiet House doesn't look especially out of place in the context of its surroundings; however, those who are from the local area probably know it mysteriously appeared. The exterior measurement of the Quiet House is just 20 x 30 feet (6 x 9 m), and seems made of locally available stone.

Except for areas noted otherwise, chambers are lightless—PCs need to provide their own light source. If PCs have a way to measure transdimensional energies, the Quiet House is rife with it.

Chambers with the * symbol contain planar junctures. Chambers containing planar junctures can grow in dimension or connection, as described under each individual entry. Most connect to the Hallway of Possibility.

WEIRD DEVICE

A complex device fills the chamber. Instrumentation, controls, and various elaborate smaller, subsidiary devices are connected to it, each more complex and involved than the last. Those with knowledge of numenera who study the device can focus only on one small portion at a time, because the overall function of the mechanism is many orders of complexity beyond normal understanding. For example, a simple subcomponent of the device operates multiple simultaneous processes, such as pulling water from the air, detecting excess energy spikes within a certain range, calculating transcendent numbers, and counting occurrences of a particular kind of particle. This small machine in turn appears to send its readings and collections into another, bigger machine, and so on.

GM Intrusion: The mind of the PC studying the device expands dangerously, and the PC must make a difficulty 6 Intellect defense roll or suffer 3 points of Intellect damage and forget the previous hour. On a success, the character gains an asset on any task related to transdimensional topics for one day.

ENTRANCE—START HERE

A side window of thick glass provides light. A large door made of what seems to be locally available wood is unlocked. Inside is dust, detritus left behind from occasional squatters, and a door on the opposite wall. The door is out of place, given that there is no such door on the opposite side of the house's exterior. The door is partly stuck, but yields with a successful difficulty 4 Might task, revealing the circular Crux chamber beyond.

GM Intrusion: A mad Jack named **Raigarb** in stained, ragged clothing is found huddled under a piece of broken tile. He announces his presence by grabbing the PC's ankle. He mumbles about "endless corridors, rooms larger than worlds, and the Hunger in the Halls." If somehow restored to his right mind, he can't recall where he's been for the last two years.

Raigarb: level 4

GALLERY

Paintings and drawings fill this chamber. Some hang on the walls on synth hooks, but most are stacked without frames in long rows on the floor. A few of the pieces are landscapes, some of which are familiar. But more often than not, the pieces are portraits of people, rendered in many styles in all media. Not all portrayed are human, or even humanoid.

* Searching the art reveals there is far more in the room than first appearances suggest. Those willing to put in the time—hours or days—can find almost any kind of painting, including one or two that whisper in strange languages.

GM Intrusion: The piece of art the character studies suddenly moves, and attacks—it's a **pariall**.

Pariall, page 152

ENDLESS CORRIDOR

*This hallway sends characters along the Hallway of Possibility.

CRUX CHAMBER

A faded spiral design is engraved into the stone floor. The room also contains several exits.

* If someone walks the spiral from the exterior to the center, they discover a cavity (that didn't previously exist) containing a spiral staircase leading downward. The staircase descends 30 feet (9 m) and opens onto the Hallway of Possibility.

GM Intrusion: An amphibious creature with blue skin drops from a solid 9-foot (3 m) tall ceiling and fatally smashes into the floor, as if from a much greater height. It leaves a stain and a cypher made of solid sound.

WRITING ROOM

Debris from a smashed desk, rent books and papers, and a litter of smashed items of the numenera are scattered about this room. Some remnants show some of the books are contemporary with Earth. Others are written in unknown languages. The dead body of a human, apparently a Nano—in a state that can only be described as half-eaten—is shoved behind the desk.

* The door opens onto the Hallway of Possibility.

GM Intrusion: Five two-dimensional houndlike creatures called **vapes** slide into the chamber, and attack.

Vape: level 2, *stealth as level 6*; *melee attack inflicts 3 points of damage that ignores Armor and causes target to bleed 2 points of damage per round until victim spends an action treating the wound*; see page 131 of the Ninth World Bestiary for more information

CLOAK ROOM

Racks that fill two walls of this chamber contain hanging clothes, some familiar, some outlandish, and some obviously not fit for the human, or even humanoid, body. Most are dusty and tattered as if from great age, but there are a few newer items.

* Searching through the clothing gives the sense that many more garments are hung on the rack than at first seemed possible. In fact, it eventually seems clear that there might be an inexhaustible amount of clothes. Those willing to put in the time—hours or even days—can find almost any article of clothing on the racks, potentially even artifacts that offer protection in dangerous environments.

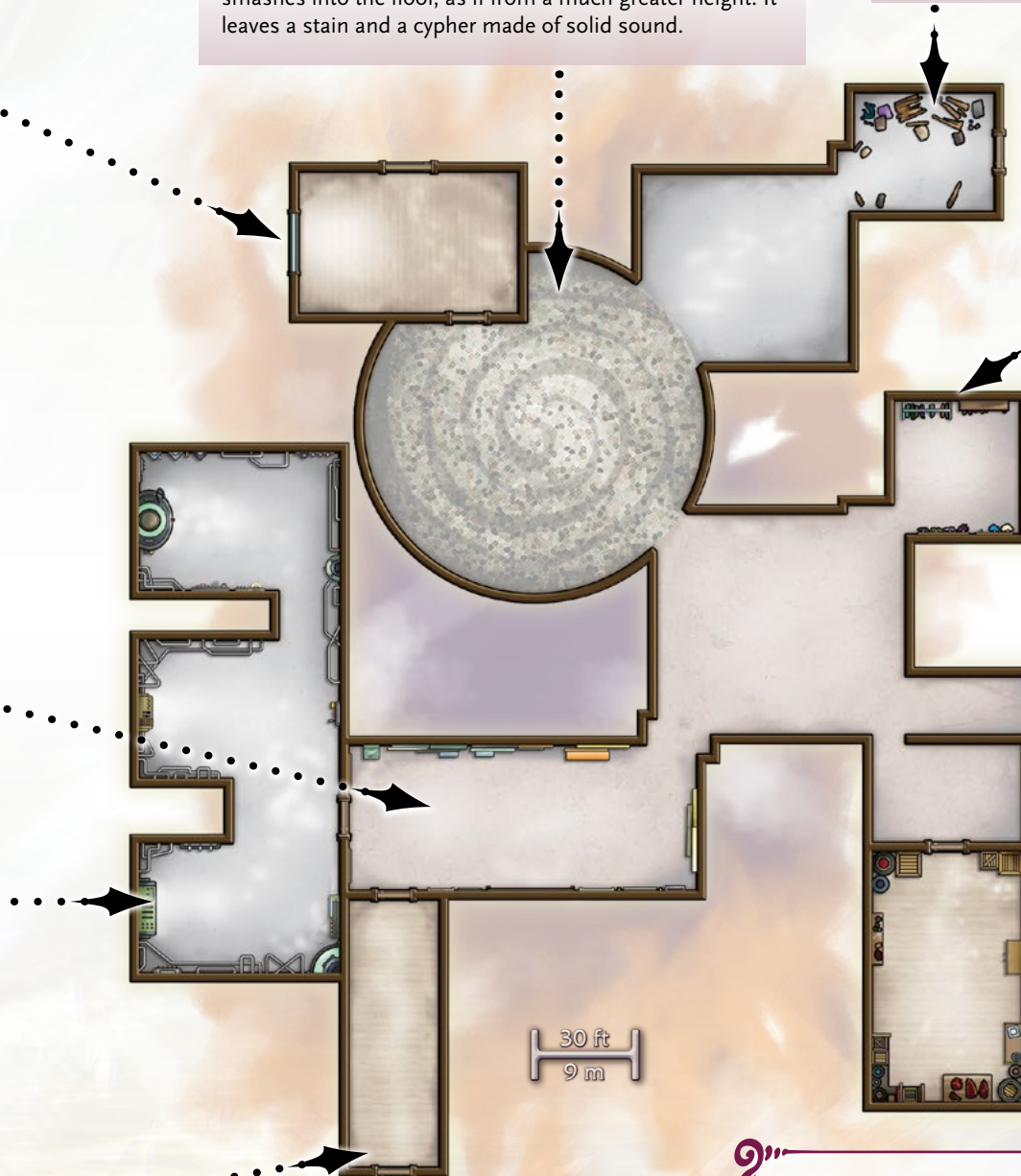
GM Intrusion: The PC finds clothing that they recognize from a relative or loved one, bloodied and torn, on the rack.

PANTRY

Hanging meats, cheeses, and foods preserved in jars, tubs, and sealed in clear synth fill this chamber. Barrels, jugs, kegs, bottles—any kind of container food can be stored in is stacked on the shelves or hanging from the ceiling.

* Searching through the foodstuffs gives the sense that many more comestibles are present than initial appearances suggest. In fact, it eventually becomes clear that there might be an inexhaustible amount of food. Those willing to put in the time—hours or days—can find almost any foodstuff, potentially even anoetic cyphers.

GM Intrusion: The PC hears a far-off hunting howl and knows they are marked by *something* in the Quiet House. The PC is correct—the Hunger in the Halls (page 46) has become “aware” of them.





Ulenics are many-limbed, carapaced creatures with no apparent eyes who communicate via scent, or if need be, special devices that translate their scent codes into audible languages.

Lycidaris, page 145

Rivalry within and between each eleen band is encouraged, as long as it stays within certain bounds. Competitions involve grappling, racing, and sacred hunts. Sacred hunts are games where participants compete to locate items within a predetermined period. Even eleens who are not directly involved in such competitions enjoy taking bets. Winnings are counted in shins, oddities, and sometimes even cyphers. Oddities and other devices that provide light are especially prized by eleens, since many corridors of the Endless Abode are not illuminated.

Given to long silences and introspection as they walk, eleens are a thoughtful people. But that should not be mistaken for dourness. When a band stops for rest, musical instruments are brought out, songs spring forth and lamps are lit, and after prayers, competitions are announced. Guards are set to watch for wandering threats, which

sometimes emerge even from previously explored chambers. They also keep an eye out for the one threat that even prayers cannot protect them from: the growing cancer of the Strangled Rooms, where smothering webs expand further each day, and creatures known as *lycidarises* emerge to hunt.

The navigator also tracks time, a very difficult task in a place without day or night. Once every “span” (a period of time of approximately three months), the navigators of each band turn the eleens toward the Room of Echoes. The Room of Echoes is miles in diameter, beneath a ceiling where great devices shine light bright enough to illuminate the entirety of the massive room. Here the bands mingle, share news, and trade. This *Meet* lasts several days, and also includes competitions, marriages, and other events designed to strengthen the bonds between bands.

A Meet is what it sounds like—a gathering of all the eleen bands in one place, typically lasting a few days.



MARGENA'S BAND

The eleen band of nomads led by the navigator **Margena** is known for playing musical instruments called **thallans** and being especially good at sacred hunt competitions. When two bands meet in the halls and choose to compete in a sacred hunt, more often than not, Margena's Band wins out. As is usual for such competitions, the winning band keeps all the items it recovers as well as those recovered by the losers. If PCs meet members of Margena's Band, they likely hear them playing their thallans first, and maybe even come across them scavenging for items to complete the latest sacred hunt.

A man named **Difenum** from **Qi** accompanies Margena's Band as a full member. He joined a few years ago after becoming lost in the Quiet House. Difenum is paranoid, because he was on the run for his many past crimes. If he sees the PCs, he assumes they must be there for him, and plans to eliminate them as quickly as possible.

When newcomers are found (such as PC explorers), an eleen band treats them either as they would another band of their own kind, or as a dangerous threat if the explorers appear menacing. If language barriers are overcome, a band offers trade opportunities, information, and potential guides. If the PCs seem particularly friendly, the eleens may even offer one or more of them the opportunity to join them, and become assimilated into a band.

OTHER ENDLESS ABODE LOCATIONS

ULENIC CITY

Other beings besides the eleens inhabit the Endless Abode, probably more than can be counted, given the expansiveness of the dimension. One such group of creatures, called **ulenic**s, has created a city of sorts out of several contiguous rooms and corridors. Ulenics are many-limbed, carapaced creatures with no eyes who communicate via scent, or if need be, special devices that translate scents into audible language. They tend to ignore other creatures that are not ulenics, unless a creature become too annoying to

ignore. Creatures who sense via sight probably can't tell ulenics apart, but ulenics can sense the position and rank of others of their kind simply by how they smell. A strict hierarchy among all ulenics is unconsciously obvious to them, which means enforcement of unpopular commands or laws is rarely required.

Ulenics are found wandering almost anywhere in the Endless Abode, collecting items and raw materials, but most remain concentrated around Ulenic City. About five thousand ulenics reside there, though given the nature of the Endless Abode, it's difficult to get a sense of their true number. The "city" is just more rooms and corridors, though ones filled with ulenic furnishings and decorations, which aren't particularly obvious by human standards.

Large chambers in Ulenic City are used to grow food for the population. Ulenics rely on aquaculture and many of their rooms are flooded, set aside for farming. Marine creatures and plants of all varieties are caught and harvested, and prepared in secondary chambers. Ulenics, thanks to their scent-enforced caste system, don't have an economy of internal trade. This means there are no shops, only special rooms where collected goods are silently redistributed according to need.

Despite their scent-enforced hierarchy, sometimes ulenics rise up and try to overthrow those of higher rank. These revolts are short-lived, and result in either the rebels' deaths or their expulsion from the community. This is why more than a few rival ulenic communities, though much smaller than Ulenic City, exist in other areas of the Endless Abode.

At the tip of the ulenic hierarchy is the one that rules the rest. Its name is roughly translatable as "**Perfection of Scent**," though calling it "Your Perfection" is also acceptable. The ruler resides in an expansive room in which scavenged devices have been reformatted to serve as a massive glowing throne. It's possible that the device actually has some functions beyond merely looking impressive, given that Ulenic City has never been threatened by the Hunger in the Halls or a flux storm.

THE ATTIC

A humanoid creature called **Viandri** inhabits a chamber it calls the Attic. The Attic shifts around the Endless Abode in the same

Margena: level 5, tasks related to creating and playing a thallan as level 6, navigating the Endless Abode as level 7

A thallan is a musical instrument made from assembled bits of synth, creating a medium-sized hand drum

Difenum: level 5, tasks related to stealth, deception, and ambush as level 6

Qi, page 148

Perfection of Scent: level 6, tasks related to scent as level 7; Armor 3

Ulenic, typical: level 3, tasks related to scent as level 7; Armor 3; pincer attack inflicts 4 points of damage

Viandri: level 7, tasks related to the numenera as level 9; Armor 4

Flux storm, page 46

way the Quiet House shifts around Earth. However, Viandri controls where and when the Attic moves, using a mechanism called the Totoris that harnesses the **flux storm**, among other functions.

Viandri: Viandri is an automaton, and the sole servitor of those that initiated the Endless Abode's growth thousands (or even millions) of years earlier. The automaton's memory has overflowed with information so many times that it's had to repeatedly dump the excess and keep only that which was most vital. Over time, it's forgotten what is vital. It spends much of its time reclining in a kind of machine dream, but may rouse itself when it detects, by sensors embedded in the Totoris, that newcomers have come into the Endless Abode. Viandri may even see to it that the

Attic is moved so that it lies in the path of the newcomers. Despite its great age, Viandri remains curious. It still hopes that one day those who fashioned it and the Endless Abode will return, and so allow Viandri to give up its lonely vigil. It is disappointed to discover that the PCs are not those creators, but reacts violently only if attacked first.

The Totoris: This level 9 control mechanism lies at the center of a jumble of other objects, devices, and wreckage located in the Attic. In addition to controlling the Attic's location, Viandri can use the Totoris to change the course of other corridors, expand or contract other rooms, or shuffle them about the Endless Abode like puzzle pieces. For all the device's power and Viandri's skill, the Endless Abode always resists this tampering. Should the PCs overcome Viandri (or find it absent from the Attic) and try their hand at the Totoris, even gaining a basic understanding of its function requires a successful difficulty 7 Intellect task. However, it's possible that lost characters could use the Totoris to create a path back to an exit to the Quiet House, or some other location. Failure, however, risks drawing the attention of the **Hunger in the Halls**.

Hunger in the Halls,
page 46

Ulenic City, page 51

Attic, page 51



HALLWAY OF POSSIBILITY

The GM can extend corridors, rooms, cellars, attics, laboratories, chambers filled with strange devices, and passageways with purposes that defy any understanding, as desired. The Hallway of Possibility is one way to randomly generate such content. The term "Hallway of Possibility" isn't necessarily a term used by residents of the Endless Abode—it refers to the GM tool described here for generating new content in the dimension.

To start, PCs find themselves in a hallway about 10 feet (3 m) wide that extends 30 feet (9 m), with doors leading to small, empty rooms on each side. At the end of the corridor is a chamber. You can decide what that chamber consists of, choose one of the described chambers in the Endless Abode (such as **Ulenic City** or the **Attic**), or randomly generate one from the Rooms table.

The Rooms table provides relative dimensions and number of exits. Use the Room Contents table to generate what, if anything, can be found in the chamber, and the Connections table to determine what lies beyond any exits noted in the initial chamber.



ENDLESS ABODE HEARSAY

Sacred Hunt: An object on the latest list for a sacred hunt is described as a **repair sphere**. No one has ever been able to find one. An eelen competitor would pay much if one were to be found.

Illness: A sickness released from a device in a newly discovered chamber killed off an entire eelen band. Now other bands are getting sick. Special eelen scouts are sent to try to find someone knowledgeable in healing before it is too late.

Hungry Crawler: A massive insect wanders the halls. It has no discernable scent, which means it kills ulenics at will. Ulenic City offers a great reward for proof of its demise.

THE WEIRD OF THE ENDLESS ABODE

Hunger: Sometimes when the Hunger in the Halls manifests, it doesn't kill everything at its focus. Instead, many voices are heard speaking in an unknown language. They seem to be pleading for aid.

Cellar: An eelen band claims that a room opposite the Attic has been encountered, called the Cellar. The Cellar has its own version of the Totoris, as well as its own automaton. But unlike Viandri, the Cellar's master is cruel and predatory, and collects trophies from its many victims.

Forever Corridor: A corridor whose length seems to go on forever, without doors or side chambers, is off the Room of Echoes. No one knows what lies at the opposite end because no one who has tried to explore it has yet reached it.

ROOMS

If a room's size and number of exits are not important, skip this table. Otherwise, roll a d20 to determine how large a room is and how many exits it has. Generally, small rooms are an immediate distance across, medium rooms are a short distance across, and large rooms are a long distance across. Expansive rooms are even larger.

1	Small room, no additional exits	14	Expansive room, no additional exits
2-3	Small room, 1 additional exit	15	Expansive room, 1 additional exit
4	Small room, 2 additional exits	16	Expansive room, 2 additional exits
5	Medium room, no additional exits	17	Expansive room, 1d6 + 2 additional exits
6	Medium room, 1 additional exit	18	Room with 1d6 open upper levels, roll again for each upper level
7-8	Medium room, 2 additional exits	19	Oddly shaped room (circle, octagon, etc.) with no additional exits
9	Medium room, 1d6 + 2 additional exits	20	Oddly shaped room (circle, octagon, etc.) with 1d6 additional exits
10	Large room, no additional exits		
11	Large room, 1 additional exit		
12	Large room, 2 additional exits		
13	Large room, 1d6 + 2 additional exits		



Repair sphere,
page 310

Hungry crawler: level 7; scentless; attacks up to two foes as a single action

CONNECTIONS

You can decide what lies beyond an exit, or roll a d6 to determine what lies beyond. Orient newly generated corridors and stairs however you wish. Generally speaking, corridors are 10 feet (3 m) wide and high, but could be several times that size.

1	Stairs, or a vertical shaft, lead up or down one story to a 30-foot (10 m) long corridor with a door at the end
2	Another room; roll on Rooms table
3	30-foot (10 m) long corridor with one door on each side; roll on Rooms table twice and again on this table once
4	30-foot (10 m) long corridor with one door at the end; roll on Rooms table
5	60-foot (18 m) long corridor with one door on each side; roll on Rooms table twice and again on this table once
6	30-foot (10 m) long corridor leading to an X, Y, or T intersection; roll again on this table as required



*Dark fathom,
page 237*



*Beneficial
Mutations, page 124*

ROOM CONTENTS

You can simply decide to add a location, NPC, or creature from elsewhere to a room. Or you can roll a d100 to determine a room's contents. Contents that specify an opening to another location may appear, at that location, as an intrusion similar to the Quiet House.

1–2	Room of Echoes
3–4	Ulenic City
5–6	The Attic
7–8	A manifestation of the Hunger in the Halls
9–10	Dark fathom in level 9 stasis
11–20	Dead devices; salvage of 1d6 cyphers and 2d20 shins available
21–22	Wrecked library; book salvage possible
23–24	Active devices; salvage of 1d6 cyphers and 2d20 shins available, or can attempt to use level 6 equipment to send transdimensional message
25–26	Water-filled; one additional exit opens to underwater location on Earth
27–28	Vacuum; one additional breach opens to a location within interplanetary space near Earth
29–30	Active devices; salvage of 1d6 cyphers and 2d20 shins available, or can attempt to use level 6 equipment to widely vary temperature of all nearby rooms
31–32	Active mechanism of the numenera; salvage of 1d6 cyphers and 2d20 shins available, or can attempt to use level 7 equipment to induce beneficial mutations
33–34	Empty tavern stocked with containers filled with strange and varied drink
35–36	Wrecked bazaar; equipment salvage possible
37–38	Amphitheatre-like chamber; performance by audible illusions possible
39–40	Crawling with strange insects
41–42	Wrecked armory; weapon salvage possible, up to and including a few artifact weapons
43–62	Empty but for dust, enigmatic scratches on walls and floor
63–64	Menagerie filled with dead and mummified animals of various descriptions
65–66	Skeleton of a massive predatory animal held together with rusting strands of metal
67–68	Shaking, jolting room, as if it is actually the interior of a larger moving object
69–70	Sculptures in synth of humans, various visitants, and completely strange creatures
71–72	A level 5 Glaive separated from her companions that sees newcomers as another threat
73–74	Active devices; salvage of 1d6 cyphers and 2d20 shins available, or can attempt to use level 6 equipment to heal all points in a Pool or cure other maladies
75–76	Wrecked bedchamber; windows overlook an alternate location described in this book
77–78	Dead humanoid corpse four times larger than normal human; carries an artifact
79–80	Dusty chamber that could easily serve as a throne room
81–82	Menagerie filled with living but undernourished and thirsty animals of various odd description
83–84	A level 6 darkness that quickly dims and kills off all forms of illumination (level 6 effect)
85–86	A level 7 blinding light from a central crystalline device fixed in space
87–88	Parallel-dimension versions of the PCs, dead and mauled
89–90	Furniture (both familiar and odd) huddled beneath dusty sheets of white fabric
91–92	Gallery filled with art; might be the gallery described in the Quiet House
93–94	Pantry filled with food; might be the pantry described in the Quiet House
95–96	Cloakroom filled with clothes; might be the cloakroom described in the Quiet House
97–98	Completely filled with rubble
99–00	Gateway to a bizarre dimension described in Part 3: Beyond the Veil

*Part 3: Beyond the Veil,
page 73*



CHAPTER 5

SILENT NYEK

Despite its large size and seemingly cumbersome build, the Silent Nyek is a sleek vessel capable of drilling through dimensional boundaries. The craft scours alternate dimensions for valuables of all sorts. When it detects interesting objects or materials buried behind a fold in reality, it drills a hole in the planar walls, and either scoops out everything it finds, or “descends” into the new dimension. Each rent drilled by the Silent Nyek persists for about an hour before closing.

The craft takes on paying passengers in the parallel dimensions it visits who also seek to discover treasure. It’s a great opportunity for would-be dimension walkers, but not everything is as it seems. Unbeknownst to

the Nyek’s captain, the first mate is using captives—called *winnows*—to run the ship and the drills.

Winnows, page 61

WELCOME TO THE SILENT NYEK

While the Silent Nyek’s original builder is unknown, every indication is that it was designed to drill deep into a specific dimension (or perhaps class of parallel dimensions) containing a vast machine and retrieve whatever was found. That builder is gone and the craft was long abandoned before Captain Stav Shedreyn found it and refurbished the vehicle. Now, it’s set to





The workforce is made up mostly of press-ganged humans forced into service by the craft's first mate, Kinnol. They are called winnows by the rest of the crew. Not everyone aboard the Silent Nyek realizes that most of the winnows work on the craft against their will.



Strongglass, page 77

seek valuable materials such as **strongglass**, cyphers, artifacts, or other potentially valuable objects located in adjacent dimensions. Once a large-enough load is retrieved, the Nyek travel to various locations on Earth (and in other parallel dimensions) where the captain believes she can get a good price for the salvaged materials.

Three large, hollow augurs that project from the bottom make up the majority of the ship's lower surface. The rest of the sub is flat and wide. A large scooping crane on top reaches down into the holes in reality made by the drills to retrieve any uncovered valuables, and deposits them into a special sealed room inside the ship called the Repository. The vehicle can also drill into devices, structures, or dimensional constructs that it encounters and retrieve objects, or use the tunnel as a passage to enter the dimension just pierced. When retrieving objects from a tear in reality without venturing through, the crane is not

a precise instrument, so things can and often do arrive crushed, broken, or otherwise damaged.

A series of large, circular connectors are situated across the top of the vehicle. Called univents, they somehow provide propulsion, and work in conjunction with the dimensional drills. Somehow reality is sucked in one end and pushed out the other, which is used to move the ship in three dimensions, simulating flight. Usually, no one notices anything untoward, other than a strange pinching at the base of the spine when the craft is moving, a feeling some people get when standing on a high precipice looking down.

Despite the odd shape, the vehicle is surprisingly agile in any open medium (air, water, vacuum) thanks to a translucent, malleable membrane that covers the vehicle and creates a hydrodynamic surface.

The majority of the dimensional craft's inhabitants—workers and lower crew members,



Kaparin, page 167

USING THE SILENT NYEK

The most obvious way to use the Silent Nyek in a campaign is to present it as an opportunity for the PCs to travel into new and interesting dimensions, and perhaps collect some valuables in the process.

Additional ways to get the PCs involved include:

- The PCs, already dimension walkers, are stranded in another dimension due to some mishap. That's when the Silent Nyek drills into a nearby site in the same dimension, offering the possibility of rescue if the PCs are able to convince the crew to bring them aboard.
- The characters encounter **Nof**, a recently disembarked passenger from the Silent Nyek. Nof is obsessed with an artifact that was discovered while he was onboard. He wants to get a group together to go back on the dimension-hopping craft and "retrieve" it. It's unclear whether he is the one who discovered it or not.
- A member of the group was snagged by a press gang under Kinnol's command and dragged onto the Silent Nyek while it was docked at **Kaparin**.
- The PCs begin on board the Silent Nyek, having met each other while sorting through the piles in the Repository.
- There was recently a murder on board, and **Kinnol** blames one of the PCs for committing it.
- One of the winnows has telepathic powers. He uses them to connect to one or more PCs while the ship is docked nearby. He says his name is **Shyris**, and he's the owner of a successful business in the City of Bridges and that he was abducted and forced to work down in the drills. He promises a selection of artifacts from his store to anyone who is willing to rescue him and get him safely home.

Kinnol, page 57

Shyris: level 4; has the ability to communicate telepathically

Nof: level 3



When the Silent Nyek visits a city, it usually parks in the water to give itself the semblance of a sea-going ship. While it has the capability of hovering in the air like a massive balloon, the captain usually prefers to avoid such a spectacle.

commonly called winnows—live inside these hollow drills, bearing the incessant shudder and shake of the working augurs as part of their everyday routine. The winnows live on spiraling levels, with the topmost level being the most spacious and thus the most sought after.

Above-drill are the living quarters for the higher crew, including Captain Stav Shedreyn; her first mate, a lattimor named Kinnol; and the ship's only doctor, an Aeon Priest named Comule.

GETTING TO THE SILENT NYEK

The Silent Nyek returns to its home dimension—the Ninth World—on a fairly regular basis, typically three or four times a year. It alternates between two land stops, resting like a sea-going craft offshore for up to a week at both Kaparin on the west and Arkall on the east. During this time, the vehicle takes on new paying passengers, offloads old passengers and treasures, and stocks up for the next expedition. And of course, Kinnol is always looking for winnows, legal or not, consenting or not, to replace the ones that died during the most recent trips into dangerous dimensions.

Payment for passage on the Silent Nyek depends on how full the ship's quarters are, how willing a passenger is to be located near the univents (which are noisy and cause room occupants to experience unexplained dimensional mishaps), and whether a passenger strikes a bargain with the Captain herself. Generally, fares begin at 20 shins per week. This fee is per room, and up to six people may stay in a single room (although that number is not recommended). The entire payment is due up front, unless would-be passengers can show sufficient reason why they are particularly trustworthy.

It's also possible to find and board the Silent Nyek while it travels across the dimensions. This is easiest when the craft has stationed itself at a location in one dimension and is using its drills to burrow through the walls of reality into an adjacent plane. Passage

can be negotiated, or if explorers are feeling daring, they can try to sneak aboard.

Additionally, the ship occasionally needs fresh above-drill crew members to fill various roles. However, the captain oversees these hirings personally and has very high standards for those she brings on board as crew. Potential candidates must demonstrate a high level of competency in at least two tasks involved with the care and running of the ship.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE

Most of the important people aboard the dimension drilling vehicle are crew, but some are passengers who've become something of a fixture on board.

Captain Stav Shedreyn carries her tall, muscular frame lightly and wears a simple black pantsuit hung with various tools and instruments. She rarely shows her lower face; instead she wraps her head and jaw in dark, flowing fabrics. Terse, intense, and driven, Shedreyn is adored by many of the crew, but feared and hated by the portion who do not perform at the level she expects. Captain Shedreyn is a good leader, but a naive one. She is unaware that her first mate isn't entirely honest about the business they're running. While she believes that the paying passengers are covering the costs of the workers and keeping the ship running, that's not entirely true.

Kinnol has been the captain's first mate for a dozen years. The lattimor's fur is burnt umber, draped over with layers of maroon cloaks. Despite broad shoulders and a heavy build, Kinnol's movements always seem a bit shifty. In fact, Kinnol has been running an elaborate scheme based on the esteem the captain holds it in. Instead of hiring the winnows—people who do much of the actual work aboard the Nyek—the first mate has enslaved most of them through a variety of tactics.

Comule, the Aeon Priest doctor for the Silent Nyek, doesn't fraternize much with the crew, preferring instead to spend time alone. It's easy to find the doctor, though, thanks to his affinity for purple, in both dress and hair color. Comule isn't in on the first mate's secret. When not

Lattimor, page 122

Captain Stav Shedreyn: level 5, navigation and hydrographic tasks as level 6; Armor 2; carries a level 5 artifact, a projectile weapon that she calls the Watchkeeper, which inflicts 5 points of damage (depletion 1 in 1d20)

For additional information on the town of Arkall, see the Ninth World Guidebook, page 199.

Kinnol: level 4, deception-related tasks as level 5; Armor 1

Comule: level 3, medicine and health-related tasks as level 5

SILENT NYEK CROSS SECTION

The Silent Nyek—a level 6 vehicle—is an active vessel that purposefully plies the dimensions, “drilling” through dimensional boundaries in search of riches.

Flat and wide on top, the vessel is approximately 1,500 feet (457 m) long. Three large, hollow augurs project from the vessel’s bottom. Most of the vessel’s interior is inhabited with crew. It’s a busy place aboard the Silent Nyek, and those who come aboard secretly will find it a challenge to creep about undetected for long.

ENTRANCE—START HERE

The main entrance is a pair of double doors on the side. It can deploy a long ramp from a control pad so that when the vessel settles on land (or in water), materials and passengers can be easily transferred.

GM Intrusion: A PC attempting to get aboard is caught when the ramp is either being extruded or pulled in.

CONTROL ROOM

The control room’s main feature is a large screen that shows the position and speed of the univents. A large box with knobs and dials controls the fans. All above-drill crew members must have training in handling and controlling the univents. Controls for the drills, the crane, and other important ship functions are also found here. The control room also has a view into the Repository.

GM Intrusion: The univent screen flashes red, indicating something has gone seriously wrong with the ship’s system.

REPOSITORY

Metal and electronic scraps, debris, and other treasures scraped from various dimensions are piled here. It’s dirty, dank, and dark, but the passengers spend a lot of time here, searching through the piles.

Paying passengers can search the Repository for salvageable items. To determine what a PC finds for each day of scavenging the piles, roll on the Repository table.

01-25	One oddity and miscellaneous junk (oddities table; <i>Numenera</i> corebook page 314)
26-50	Two cyphers and miscellaneous junk (cypher table; <i>Numenera</i> corebook page 281)
51-70	Two cyphers and two oddities
71-85	Three cyphers and one oddity
86-95	One artifact and one oddity (artifacts table; <i>Numenera</i> corebook page 301)
96-00	Two artifacts and one cypher

CAPTAIN AND CREW QUARTERS

Comfortable by all accounts, the quarters have wide windows made of stronglass that allow the crew to see into the dimension they are traveling through.

GM Intrusion: A PC overhears a strident argument between two crew members over the fate of a winnow—whom Kinnol has marked for execution.

THE DRILLS

Beneath the floor of the Nyek are three large, hollow drills capable of drilling through the fabric of reality, allowing objects of interest to be scooped out by crane, or for the entire craft to “descend” and enter the new dimension. This is where the *winnows* live and work. Each drill has a single trap door that allows entry to the main floor of the vehicle. Each door is guarded from the drill side by a *key-coded automaton*. Kinnol controls the automatons and is the only one with the key code.

GM Intrusion: A transdimensional effect causes one or more of the automatons to become homicidal.

Winnows, page 61

Key-coded automaton: level 5; correctly guessing or solving the code without Kinnol’s help is a level 6 task.

Kinnol, page 57

UNIVENTS

The floor beneath the univents is tall enough only for people to crawl. Sometimes crew members stash cyphers, artifacts, and other valuables in this confined space. Escaped winnows also often hide here.

GM Intrusion: The univents run unexpectedly hot, and a surge inflicts 8 points of damage on a PC and drops the character one step down the damage track.

THE STORE

A young man named **Ruthin** runs a small store onboard the Silent Nyek. Ruthin carries the store around with him in a large wheeled carryall that he controls with a module on his belt. He supplies the basics, such as toiletries, gloves and other tools for sifting through the piles in the Repository, small flasks of alcohol (semi-contraband, as there's an unspoken rule that no one actually follows), and pain relievers. His prices are reasonable until supplies begin to run low, at which point the prices spike. Those in the know tend to purchase everything they can at the beginning of the voyage, meaning that prices rise almost instantly. After that, a rich black market remains.

GM Intrusion: Ruthin takes a dislike to a PC, and as such, every deal becomes a bitter bargaining session.

Ruthin: level 3, tasks related to bargaining and commerce as level 5

SUPPLIES AND KITCHEN

The supply room is stocked with regular supplies, a small greenhouse, and a large fish tank. The tank holds a special type of snail that breeds quickly and has high nutritious value. The fist-sized creatures are served in nearly every meal and drink on the ship. The large kitchen area is also where **Comule** performs any emergency medical procedures, using a tall device that the doctor created, and is continually fine-tuning.

Comule, page 57

QUARTERS

Several dozen rooms are available for passengers, about half of which are usually taken. Each room has four beds and little else.

COMMON ROOM

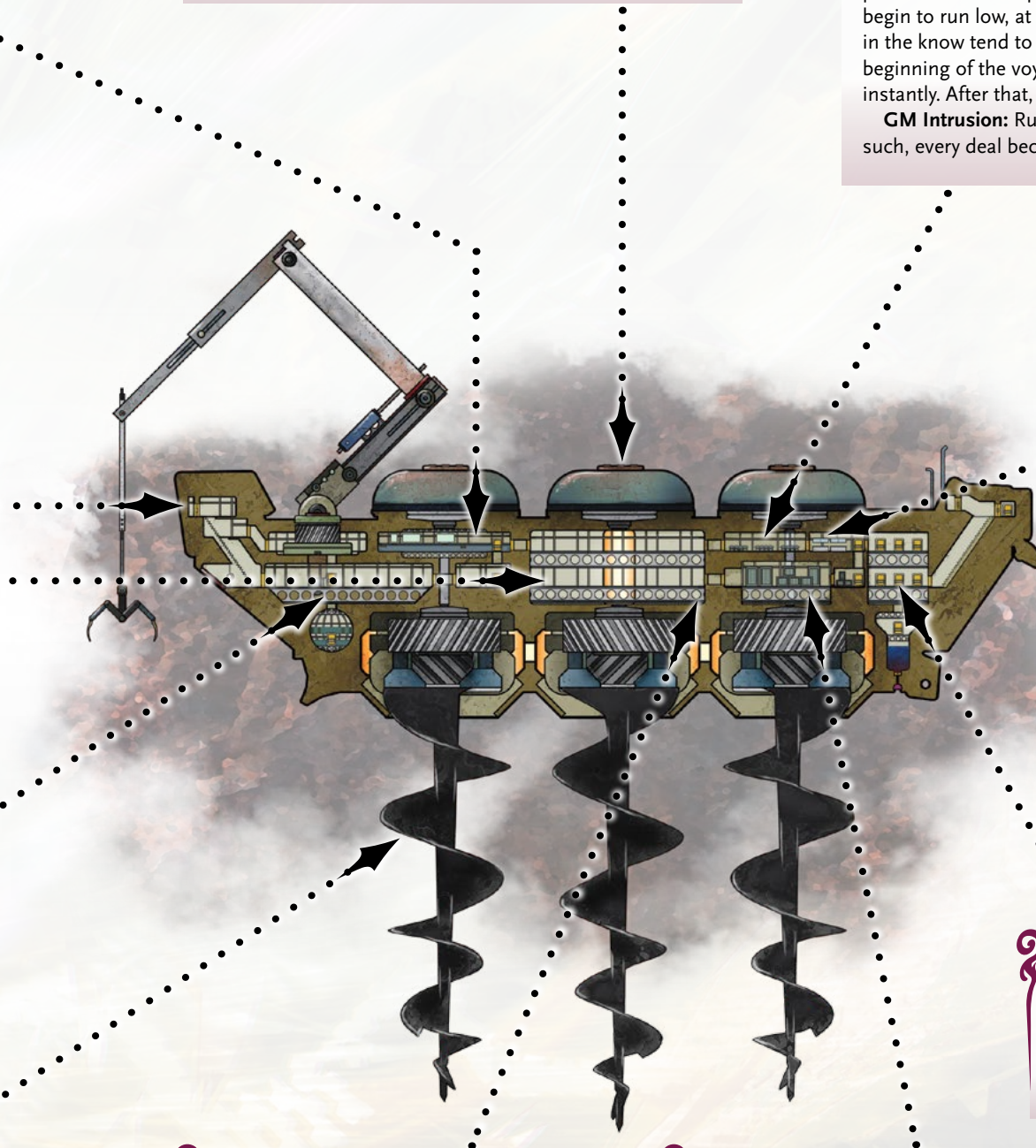
The common room is well stocked with books, games, and several broken devices in various states of repair. Often, passengers work together on the devices after dinner, almost as if putting together a group puzzle. More than one squabble has broken out among the passengers during these sessions. It has become so problematic that the captain recently hired a bouncer, a small, young woman named **Bonik**, to keep the peace. It would be easy to dismiss Bonik based on her small size and quiet voice, but she is all lean muscle and carries a cellular disruptor on her belt.

GM Intrusion: Bonik targets the character as a disruptive presence

Bonik: level 4; carries a level 7 cellular disruptor (Numenera corebook page 302)

BACK ENTRANCE

The back entrance is tucked far behind the piles of valuables that take up most of the Repository. It's the jurisdiction of **Kinnol** and has been all but forgotten by the rest of the crew. Kinnol uses it to bring winnows in and bodies out. It is built of a permeable metal that allows living things to pass through it when it is coated with a substance called syldane. It's made from a secret recipe that only Kinnol knows.



Celerillion, page 108

Radardvor: level 4;
Armor 2; short-ranged
light weapon inflicts 4
points of damage

Cidene: level 6; Armor
5 (from battle armor
artifact); disruption blade
artifact inflicts 6 points of
damage (or 16 points of
damage if activated)



Battle armor,
page 300

Disruption blade,
page 303

Ustasos: level 4, tasks
related to stealth,
deception, disguise, and
persuasion as level 6

Gerah: level 3, tasks
related to scavenging and
crafting as level 6

seeing to the needs of the crew, Comule holes up in his quarters smoking a special pipe he discovered in the Repository. The pipe refills itself once per hour with a pungent leaf that seems suitable for smoking. It hails from a dimension where belief crystallized into reality, Comule claims, called **Celerillion**. The only person who knows about Comule's habit is an eccentric passenger named Cidene. Cidene worries that the smoke represents a dire threat to the Nyek.

Radardvor is not crew, or even a human—she is a paying passenger who came aboard a few years earlier in a dimension called Panaton. She appears to be some sort of skeletal automaton composed of metal and flesh. (Referring to Radardvor as “it” is almost the only way to make her angry.) Aboard the Nyek, she has become an advocate for passengers' rights. Radardvor is aware of the fate of the winnows, but doesn't yet realize it's a secret from anyone. She shadows the captain as much as possible, always asking questions about how the Silent Nyek is able to traverse the dimensions. Because of her eccentricities and charm, she is tolerated. But Kinnol worries that the odd creature from another dimension is preparing to steal the craft.

Cidene is a passenger who, like Radardvor, took up residence in one of the open quarters and has never left, though he's relatively new. Cidene pays for his continuing presence not with shins but through service. Whenever the craft is threatened, Cidene helps defend it, relying heavily on his battle armor and disruption blade artifacts. The reason why Cidene has taken such an interest in preserving the Silent Nyek isn't something he's explained to anyone. Some assume it's because of unrequited love he has for the captain. While he may have some affection for her, Cidene keeps the craft safe because the datasphere once told him that one day the craft would be instrumental in defending Earth from invaders from an alternate dimension.

Ustasos only recently came aboard as a passenger, but already has a secretive reputation. She always wears a hat and

goggles, and remains wrapped in grey fabric whenever she leaves her quarters. The other passengers and crew assume it's because she is horribly scarred, and leave her alone. The truth is Ustasos was once a winnow who was forced to work aboard the Silent Nyek, but escaped. She stays wrapped up so no one will recognize her. Since she's come aboard, she's managed to secretly aid in the escape of more than a dozen winnows. Her larger goal, however, is to incite an uprising to put an end to the forced servitude on the Silent Nyek.

BEING A PASSENGER

Above-drill is also where any temporary, paying passengers stay during their voyage. Many of the above-drill passengers are researchers, Aeon Priests, numenera hunters, or some combination. However, there are also at least a few creatures who've come aboard in alternate dimensions.

Passengers pay to come on board in the hopes of finding something wonderful and unique in the dross that is drilled from other dimensions. A large room in the aft of the ship—called the Repository—is filled with junk, debris, and the rare bits of useful technology. The contents are constantly changing, so some passengers pay to live on board permanently, hoping to someday hit the rare jackpot.

For passengers above-drill, the accommodations of the sub are fairly comfortable. When not scavenging in the Repository after a new drilling, passengers must find other pursuits to occupy themselves. That's when secondary hobbies become important. Popular hobbies include reading, sculpting or painting, performing music or drama, sleeping, experimenting, or simply drinking. Several take part in the group device repair sessions in the common room. Other passengers keep to themselves when not in the Repository, and never leave their rooms. Most are more social. One of the long-time passengers, **Gerah**, has quite a talent for combining scavenged objects with odds and ends to create comfortable, long-



The Silent Nyek is named after the bellowing nyek, a behemoth amphibian creature with a long, serpentine tail.

lasting furnishings. Another named **Morabai** scavenges hues and dyes, and creates wonderful murals in both passenger and crew cabins upon request.

BEING A WINNOW

The workers aboard are referred to as winnows. Though the captain doesn't realize it, many of the winnows are captive, having been stolen away from their families (usually in Kaparin) and forced to work for no pay and minimum food and water. Others were promised living wages and good jobs, but have received none of those things since coming on board. Conditions for the winnows are wretched, and death rates are high. Much of the profit ends up in Kinnol's pockets, as well as in the pockets of crew on board who assist with the racket, and those Kinnol secretly associates with in Kaparin. However, with Kinnol as her reassuring go-between, Captain Shedreyn knows nothing of this, and prides herself on captaining a clean, above-board ship.

Being forced into the same terrible circumstances forges strong bonds among the winnows. Traditions confined to below-drill have rapidly developed. Tattooing to show solidarity, singing to get through hard shifts, special words and phrases designed to keep overseers from understanding their conversation, and dangerous stunt dives from the top of the hollow drills to the bottom to

demonstrate some control in a life otherwise devoid of it are all common. These drill dives are responsible for about a quarter of the winnow death rate. Those that perish are said to have escaped, while those who live are seen as heroes.

The winnows who reside in the stern drill and thus call themselves "sterners" don't see solidarity with the others as the best way to survive. Instead, the sterners hold themselves as superior to their fellow winnows. The overseers in Kinnol's pay encourage this attitude. Kinnol knows that the entire edifice of his control over the winnows could collapse if they all united. This is the reason why the sterners are granted extra rations, water, and clothing. Not enough to really be comfortable, but enough so that the rest of the winnows notice and become embittered. Two brothers, **Azand and Ajorm**, who were born into service aboard the Silent NyeK, lead the sterners. Azand believes the rhetoric he spews, but Ajorm has doubts.

Five **overseers** watch over the winnows in each drill. The overseers are usually not crew but instead winnows who have been "promoted." Winnows unwilling to take such a promotion tend to disappear. But unwilling or not, overseers soon come to be hated by their former comrades. The most hated overseer is a man named **Tgon**. Tgon is a master of the whip, and delights in using it on recalcitrant winnows.

Morabai: level 3, tasks related to scavenging and painting as level 6

Bellowing nyek: level 9; Armor 5; swims up to 500 feet (152 m) each round. For additional information about this creature, see the Ninth World Guidebook, page 171.

Winnow, typical: level 2, tasks related to duties aboard the Silent NyeK as level 4

Azand and Ajorm: level 3; knowledge of the drills and persuasion as level 5

Overseer, typical: level 3; Armor 1; sword attack inflicts 4 points of damage

Tgon: level 4; Armor 1; whip attack inflicts 5 points of damage and on failed Might defense roll wraps around a target's neck. Targets descend one step on the damage track each round they fail to escape.

SILENT NYEK HEARSAY

Long-lost Heir: One of the Silent NyeK's long-term paying passengers is rumored to be the only remaining heir of Kaldon, the former ruler of Thaemor. Everyone in **Thaemor** thinks a virus in the city of Jyrek killed the heir. The passenger goes by the name of Landon in the ship's log, and is often seen in lengthy conversations with Comule.

Safe and Sound: There is an odd sound coming from one of the quarters, somewhere between a growl and a wail. Members of the crew believe the room is haunted, and the passenger who rented it has not been seen in some time. The captain would be willing to reward anyone who enters the room and solves the mystery of the noise.

THE WEIRD OF SILENT NYEK

Fungi Infestation: In empty quarters close to one of the univents, a purple-blue fungus is spreading across the walls. It seems to be spelling out words in the Truth, although it's growing so slowly that only a few letters are recognizable so far.

Another NyeK: From time to time another dimension-drilling craft is seen in the distance with a shape quite similar to the Silent NyeK's, including the three drills. However, the version seen in the distance glows red, and appears to be crewed with humanoid creatures with tentacles instead of arms.

Thaemor, page 152

CHAPTER 6

THE WHISPERING WORLD



The Earth died because of what was awakened in a single sealed vault. Explorers who went into that vault came out as something else. They were the first to be changed, but not the last. Soon, the world was whispers.

There have been eight previous worlds. Each stretched across vast millennia of time. Each played host to a race whose civilizations rose to supremacy but eventually died, disappeared, or transcended. During the time that each world flourished, those that ruled it spoke to the stars, reengineered their bodies, and mastered form and essence, all in their own unique ways. They're all gone now.

Each left behind remnants.

The Ninth World is built on the bones of—

Wait. This is not the Ninth World. But it *was*, even just a few years ago. Before it diverged, the Aeon Priests studied the wonders and incomprehensible works of the prior worlds as a means to improve the present and build a future. Humans worked at creating a new world amid the ruins of the old, gaining confidence, achieving independence, and in some cases, even mastery. Glaives, Jacks, and Nanos ranged further, delving deep in the ruins of the prior worlds, and discovered the devices, the vast machine complexes, the altered landscapes, the changes wrought upon living creatures by ancient energies. They called these things the numenera.

The Ninth World died because of what was awakened in a single sealed vault. Explorers who went into that vault came out as something else. They were the first to be changed, but not the last. Soon, the world was whispers.

Whispers spread like a plague across the world, changing humans, abhumans, visitants, free-willed automatons, “demons,”

and everything else with a mind. When a murmur in the ear or a shout across a meadow can begin the change, no one in the world was safe.

GM SUMMARY

The Whispering World is a parallel dimension of Earth that diverged into a separate timeline only a few years ago, when a nameless nanite-distributed war protocol was released from stasis. Nanites infest literally everything in the world, including most living things. The war protocol, developed in some long-vanished prior world, utilizes these nanites.

When an intelligent creature hears the activation code, it changes over the course of half a day, until the facade of the creature remains, but nothing else. Newly created whispers are tougher and less reliant on food, have eyes the color of metal, and sprout one or more biometallic antennae from their heads. Whispers act with the single goal of finding other, non-converted intelligent creatures, whereupon they verbally relay the trigger phrase.

This is why former urban centers like Qi stand empty and neglected, save for the occasional whisper wandering the streets, mumbling. It's why villages are either empty or burned out, after survivors tried to stand off the whispers or turned on themselves, fearing that one or more of their own were changing. It's why lone travelers met on the road should probably be put down at a distance rather than



USING THE WHISPERING WORLD

After a trip to some other far dimension, the PCs return to the dimension they believe to be their home, only to discover that something terrible has happened. Alternatively, PCs involved in an activity that has nothing to do with traveling into alternate realities might slip into the Whispering World so seamlessly that they don't realize they've entered an alternate dimension, at least not at first.

Visitors from other dimensions exist at a slightly different frequency than natives, providing them some resistance to the trigger phrase used by whispers. This is why a group of survivors rigged a dimensional trap to draw in natives of the other Earth, which they use as guards, scavengers, and perhaps as saviors.

Given how thoroughly the whispers have inundated this parallel dimension, it's only a matter of time before a few whispers find their way to the base dimension and spread their change there, too. Thankfully, the few that have slipped through so far were discovered and dealt with. Still, their appearance proves that an ultraterrestrial threat of grave significance exists that must be dealt with sooner or later.

Maybe the PCs are responsible for finding and accidentally releasing the ancient war protocol that birthed the whispers in the first place. Feeling responsible, they might seek to stem the spread, or escape to an alternate timeline (such as the base dimension) where the protocol was never released.

allowing them to get close enough to speak. And why the few survivors that move about are desperate, broken, and in need of some kind of permanent solution.

If they don't find a solution, humans in the Whispering World may go extinct a second time. It might already be too late, given how few humans and other intelligent creatures still exist on the surface.

GETTING TO THE WHISPERING WORLD

Any of the methods suggested in the Introduction of this book can take explorers to this parallel dimension. If the PCs use a gateway or phase-changing device, they probably arrive in a geographically synonymous spot, one which might not even look that different from the Ninth World if the gate is located in a prior-world ruin or other out-of-the-way location. Characters might not even know they've slipped into an alternate timeline at first, not until they've traveled somewhere and discovered the strange lack of people, and after a little more exploration, the ominous addition of the whispers.

The portal in the prior-world installation in Yenth, which normally leads to **New Yenth**, sometimes malfunctions, and sends those who pass through it to the Whispering World instead. To those who make the trip, it seems like the gate has simply malfunctioned until they investigate further.

FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE WHISPERING WORLD

Animals and plants of the Whispering World are the same as on Earth. This means, of course, that they are strange by-products of the prior ages. The past left behind flora, fauna, and machines, some designed by lore or nature, others transplanted from distant stars or dimensions. The PCs are familiar with these. What they're probably not familiar with are whispers. Thankfully, unintelligent creatures and plants are immune to the effect.

BECOMING A WHISPER

Because of the nanites they already harbor, intelligent creatures native to Earth are susceptible to the process that transforms a normal creature into a **whisper**. Creatures from distant worlds or other dimensions who don't have nanites are immune to the process, though spending enough time on Earth—anywhere between weeks or years, depending on the situation—could end that immunity as they are gradually, invisibly colonized by nanites.

Initial Exposure: Each time an intelligent, self-aware creature colonized with nanites hears the trigger phrase, "Nysendem alaldwor tunnarad kanim rursul," it must succeed on a difficulty 4 Intellect defense task. (Reading the activation or sensing it telepathically doesn't trigger the effect.) PCs from the base dimension or similar creatures gain an asset on this task because they exist slightly out of phase. Those who fail the defense task begin to change.

Whisper, page 158

New Yenth, page 35

Complications: The change works best on humans. However, abhumans and other intelligent creatures, including certain automatons with self-awareness, remain vulnerable to the change if they are colonized by nanites. That said, only a small fraction of exposed nonhumans actually become whispers. The rest reach the point of full transformation and simply die, cooked from the inside.

The Change: An exposed creature doesn't initially feel different, other than perhaps a bit warmer. The victim runs a low-grade fever. This fever persists over the course of 10 + 1d6 hours while nanites rewrite the creature's body. The second, but more obvious sign that a victim has been exposed is the growth of one or more biometallic antennae from its head, which sprout in as little as four hours, usually while a victim is asleep.

During this period, little can be done, which is why survivors often deal swiftly with anyone bearing the telltale antennae or antennae buds, even if they haven't yet been fully changed. It's actually possible to still reverse the change and save the affected creature, if someone can succeed on two difficulty 6 Intellect tasks, one informed by healing expertise and the other by knowledge of the numenera.

The Whisper: Once the antennae are fully grown, the victim's conscious mind is destroyed and a whisper is born.

Physical Change: The whisper has +2 to Armor, gains 10 points to its Might Pool, and can go without food and water for months, and without air for days, without suffering harm. Sometimes a whisper retains access to the special abilities it possessed before it changed, especially if those abilities are integral to the creature. For example, a whisper that was a **Nano** before it changed might still gain +1 to Armor from **Ward**, be able to use **Hover**, and possibly use other esoterics, though not in any skilled way. Finally, a whisper's increased toughness and lack of a sense of self-preservation translates into a brute physical attack if the base creature didn't already have one.

Behavioral Change: A whisper seeks to make more whispers, at the behest of the ancient

war protocol. The protocol seems designed to swiftly draft an intelligent population into a pliable army. The problem is, no other command has yet appeared. Thus the whispers wander, year after year, looking for fresh "recruits" to their leaderless cause. Sometimes they work in groups to overcome resistance, but more often they spread out to cover as much ground as possible. A single whisper can infect thousands in mere hours, which potentially gives birth to thousands of equally infectious whispers before a full 28 hours have elapsed.

While a whisper doesn't seem capable of higher thought, they do operate on a basic cognitive level to achieve their aims. They will gather ever-mounting numbers if they can hear or see potential victims hiding behind barriers. A whisper won't physically attack another creature first, but instead repeat the trigger phrase over and over like a mantra. If a creature attacks a whisper, it responds with reckless physical attacks, or uses any offensive special abilities that they retain.

LOCATIONS IN THE WHISPERING WORLD

All the physical locations that exist on Earth also exist in the Whispering World. But most of the areas inhabited by humans and other intelligent creatures are empty, destroyed, or otherwise transformed in some way by the plague. For example, most roads are empty of travelers, unless those travelers are whispers.

A selection of both typical and especially interesting sites are provided below.

QI

The spires of Qi remain, as do three of the fantastically huge dirigibles. But the people are gone. Qi is overrun with whispers, as is the Durkhal, which was once the home of the Order of Truth and the Amber Pope. Of the more than half million people who lived here, all but a few survivors are changed, fled, or slain. The shops, homes, markets, and other structures are overrun with vermin or other minor creatures, and in some cases



Nano, page 32

Ward, page 36

Hover, page 37

Qi, page 148



A single whisper can infect thousands in mere hours, which potentially gives birth to thousands of equally infectious whispers before a full 28 hours have elapsed.



burned away. The only reason that the massive city hasn't burned down is because many structures in Qi are built of stone, iron, and in some cases, salvaged synth.

Durkhal: The vast sprawl of libraries, laboratories, warehouses, and related structures known as the Durkhal suffered from a series of stand-offs against swarms of whispers. The holy palace itself is completely missing, and a still-smoking crater is all that remains where it once stood. The Amber Pope hasn't been seen since the palace disappeared. The surrounding structures—the libraries, laboratories, and so on—are still rich with potential for anyone interested in salvaging shins, cyphers, and the occasional artifact, despite being collapsed and burned. However, looters must contend with at least one surviving **Zhev** plus several whispers that wander the area.

An **Aeon Priest** named **Daroni** lives in a warehouse where exotic foodstuffs imported from all around the Steadfast are stored. Daroni was exposed to the trigger phrase during the initial outbreak, but managed to reverse the change in herself thanks to her skills. After that, she deafened herself in two crude operations she performed herself; she retains her ears but has large scars behind each. Now Daroni communicates by writing

with chalk on a white synth panel she always carries. She is willing to share her bounty of food with other survivors, and help them try to treat those exposed (but as yet unchanged) by the plague. But she won't leave.

Dirigibles: Only three dirigibles remain in the sky; all the rest have flown off or lay like discarded snake skins stretched out along Qi's skyline. The remaining dirigibles drift unmoored save for lone guide lines. One is empty. Another contains a crew of whispers that couldn't get the hatches open (which would've allowed them to depart, and like as not, fall to their deaths).

Marvyr Rann, Qi's old mayor, inhabits the final dirigible. His policy of never walking on the ground served him well as disaster unfolded below. His dirigible proved to be too high for shouts of the trigger phrase from thousands of newly changed whispers to reach him and his retinue. However, the power structure within the dirigible has reversed. To survive, the mayor's cadre of nearly-naked men and women who once served at his pleasure assumed control, armored themselves, and relegated Marvyr Rann to the role of figurehead. Now numbering seventeen, the survivors make supply runs into the city at night on long ropes, with their ears blocked with wax.

Durkhal, page 149

Marvyr Rann: level 2

Zhev, page 268

Aeon Priest, page 269

Daroni: level 5, defends as level 6, numenera and healing tasks as level 7; three or four additional special abilities as needed

IMALOV CASTLE

In the Whispering World, a divergent version of Imalov Castle still stands in a desolate stretch of wilderness. Before the divergence that created the whispers, Imalov Castle was under the command of Lady Perrix, a fallen Angulan Knight, ousted from the order years before. Lady Perrix commanded a few dozen servants and slaves. With the coming of the whispers, Lady Perrix has hidden herself away. She skates forward months at a time using a time displacement artifact, only dipping back into the time stream to see if anything has changed for the better. Perrix has knowledge of a prior-world complex that might contain information able to countermand the whispers, but she can't reach it alone. So she waits. In her absence, abhumans known as **margr** have moved in and taken control of much of the castle. Like other savage abhuman species, the margr have some degree of resistance against the whispers' trigger phrase.



Margr, page 244

PERRIX TOWER

This tower has three levels, plus an open-air rooftop set with ballistae. The rooms in the lower levels were used by Lady Perrix and her personal staff, but have been ransacked by margr. A search uncovers 3d6 shins and two cyphers per level. The basement contains a safe room with a clear synth door locked from inside. Every few months or when someone new triggers a mechanism that alerts her, Lady Perrix returns to the time stream and peers out from inside.

Lady Perrix knows about the whisper plague; in fact, she knows of a secret prior-world complex directly related to the event. She suspects she may have inadvertently activated the ancient war protocol that changed the first humans into whispers. True or not, she didn't realize what was happening at first, and by the time she did understand, things had already gone too far, and she couldn't get back into the complex. She asks the PCs for help. Whether or not anything can actually be done to stem the whisper plague is for you to decide.

Lady Perrix: level 4, combat and defense as level 5; health 24; time-jumping device (Depletion: 1 in 1d20)

OPEN COURTYARD

Open to the sky, this courtyard hosts a margr encampment of twenty-five, plus their chief, a margr at least 9 feet (3 m) in height with terrifyingly large horns. Several margr—as well as several whispers—are suspended dead on the inner courtyard wall, hung like decorations. Margr are vicious and bloodthirsty, but PCs might still try to make a brief alliance, if they offer the abhumans something they want. The margr here want access to the secure supplies chamber. The margr chief speaks the Truth, and is open to such an offer (but, of course, intends to kill the PCs even if they succeed).

GM Intrusion: If fighting breaks out, one of the margr pulls out a level 5 detonation cypher and throws it at the PC.

Margr: level 2, resists trickery and lies, makes Might defense rolls, and runs, jumps and climbs as level 3; Armor 1

Margr chief: level 6, Speed defense as level 5 due to size; health 30; Armor 1; spear attacks inflict 9 points of damage

DUNGEON TOWER

This dungeon tower has three levels, plus an open-air rooftop set with ballistae. The lower levels are guard quarters, but have been ransacked by margr. A search still uncovers 1d6 shins and a cypher on each level. The basement contains several locked cells and a torture chamber, complete with a rusted torture automaton connected to power cables (which keeps it tethered in the room). It is loyal to Lady Perrix, and can explain how she disappears for months or years at a time, but never seems to age when she reappears. The margr ignore it.

GM Intrusion: The torture automaton becomes suspicious that the PCs are enemies of Lady Perrix come to steal her secrets of time travel.

Torture automaton: level 5; Armor 4; blade hands inflict 5 points of damage and stun a living creature with so much pain they lose their next action; must unplug to leave chamber, which deactivates it

SECURE SUPPLIES CHAMBER

The margr have broken into several of the covered chambers but not this secure supplies chamber. The courtyard entrance is a locked and trapped metal door. Inside is enough dried food (but no water) to feed twenty people for a year. A selection of weapons and mundane armor, as well as other items of general equipment, is available. A second locked and trapped entrance (that operates just like the trap on the door that provided entrance to the room) opens onto a special area that contains ten carefully packed cyphers and two artifacts.

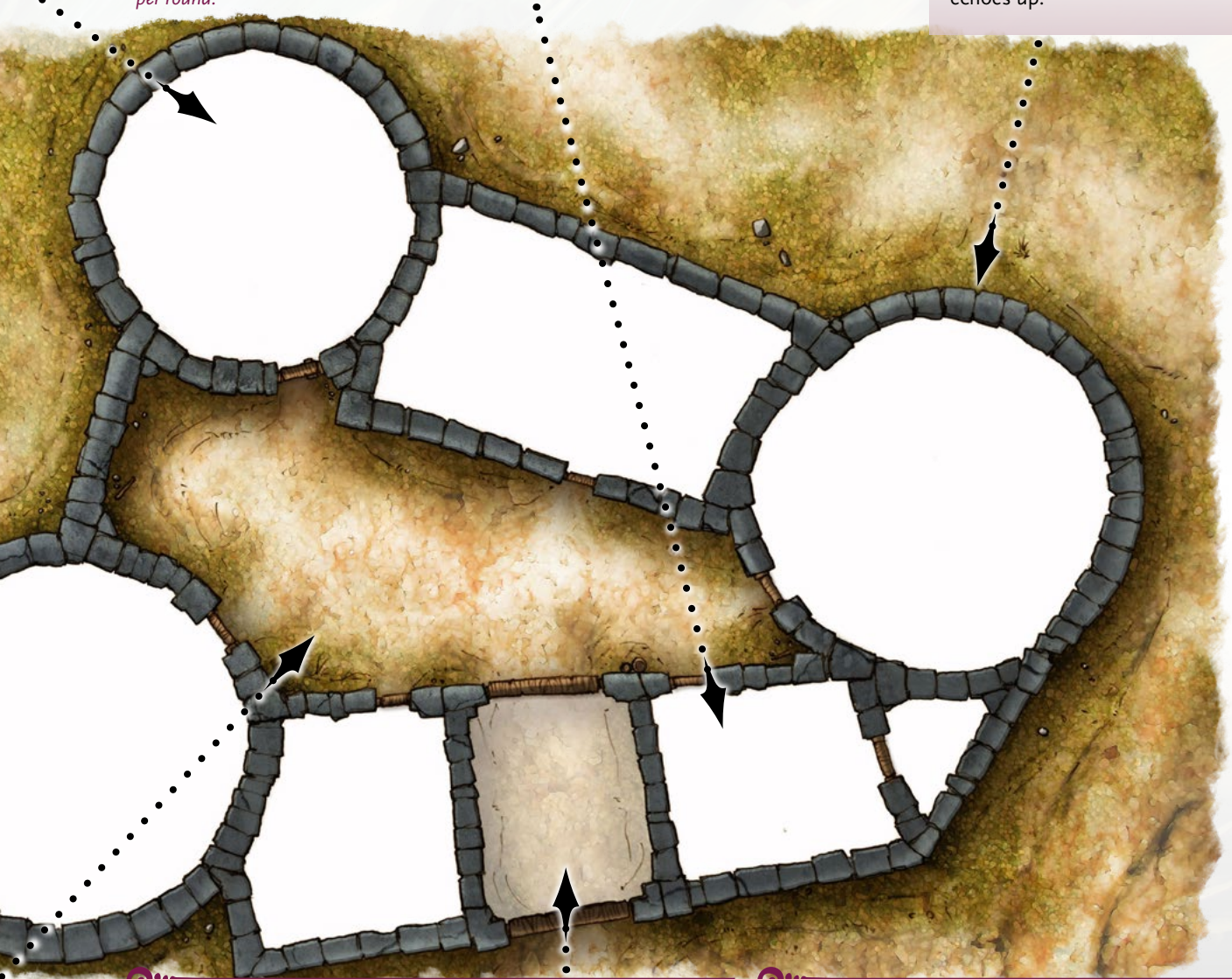
GM Intrusion: The PC attempting to open the door triggers the trap.

Trapped door: level 6; both metallic doors are locked and trapped. Anyone who attempts to pick the lock or force the door without first deactivating the trap triggers a mechanism that fires a pulse of brilliant blue light that burns the target for 8 points of damage. Trap can fire once per round.

WATER TOWER

This defense tower has three levels, plus an open-air rooftop set with ballistae. The lower levels are servant's quarters, but have been ransacked by margr. The basement contains a deep, circular well that drops into a deeper, naturally fed water cistern. A pulley mechanism allows a metal bucket on a chain to be lowered to retrieve water.

GM Intrusion: A whisper previously fell down the well; when the PC leans over to operate the mechanism, the trigger phrase echoes up.



ENTRANCE VESTIBULE

This vestibule has a covered stone ceiling. A group of six margr has pitched camp here. The entrance vestibule contains a mechanism that can open and close the internal and external gates. The external gates lead to the exterior landscape, the internal gate to the open-air courtyard. Arrow slots in the iron gates allow guards to view creatures outside. The margr may open the gate to visitors running from whispers only to attack them once they are safely inside.

GM Group Intrusion: The gates open for the PCs, but it draws the attention of several fresh whispers. Alternatively, the gate mechanism gets stuck as the PCs seek sanctuary inside the vestibule.

Margr: level 2, resists trickery and lies, makes Might defense rolls, and runs, jumps and climbs as level 3; Armor 1

OUTSIDE THE WALLS—START HERE

The keep's walls are 40 feet (12 m) high and constructed of well-fitted grey stone blocks. Three towers protrude an additional 20 feet (6 m) above the wall. A buzzing can be heard from up to a half mile away during windless conditions, apparently coming from the castle. This ongoing sound has apparently drawn the attention of a few dozen whispers that always mill outside the walls.

The massive iron doors are closed. Climbing over the walls and into the central courtyard is a difficulty 5 Might task.

GM Intrusion: Despite the PC's precautions a whisper notices the character and repeats the trigger phrase to them, over and over.

Whisper: level 3, perception tasks as level 5; batter attack inflicts 5 points of damage; difficulty 4 Intellect defense task to resist verbal trigger phrase that begins process of transformation into another whisper over 10 + 1d6 hours

Selasia: level 4; Armor 2; crossbow inflicts 4 points of damage; carries two cyphers



Hidden Naresh,
page 178

Megrah Thon: level 4, tasks related to knowledge of the numenera, persuasion, and deception as level 6

Megrah crony: level 3; Armor 2; melee weapons inflict 4 points of damage



Bodrov, page 139

Fasten, page 140

Given that whispers never show any sign of self-preservation, their pain and fear reaction to the field created by the Bodrov device is especially intriguing. Does the field somehow wake a spark of who a whisper once was before it changed?

Pitfall trap: level 4; on a failed Speed defense task victims drop 10 feet (3 m) into a spiked cavity and suffer 5 points of damage

Collapsing wall trap: level 4; on a failed Speed defense task collapsing debris inflicts 5 points of damage and holds victims trapped until they can escape

The cadre's leader is a bold woman of twenty-three years called **Selasia**. Selasia keeps track of other survivors who enter and leave Qi using an artifact that allows her to see at great distances. She is actively looking for people with enough skill to help her escape to the Black Riage mountains, where she believes that the "nano-plague" hasn't yet spread. In particular, she wants to reach **Hidden Naresh**, where her brother lives.

HIDDEN NARESH

Conditions in Hidden Naresh weren't pleasant before whispers spread across the Steadfast and Beyond, at least not for those used to light, the ability to think, and personal space. However, the mycos—a term referring to a variety of mind-altering and mind-enhancing drugs available in the city—offer a prophylactic protection against the triggering phrase used by whispers. This means that Selasia is correct about the relative safety offered by the place. However, some refugees might find the way that Hidden Naresh "eats you alive" to be less enticing than a dangerous life on the run.

BODROV

The kingdom of Navarene, like much of the Steadfast, is lost. But the city of **Bodrov** endures, sheltering a population of humans who haven't succumbed to the change. The city is built atop a plateaulike rock formation more than 500 feet (152 m) high that rests on a central pillar only 100 feet (30 m) across. A winding path curls up around the base and enters the rock just below the wide top portion. The path into the city can be sealed at many points. Even before the disaster, only about 1,000 people resided there; now it's down to about 300, and many of those are not the original residents, but survivors who flocked to it after learning it was a place of relative safety. Bodrov remains a refuge partly due to the fact that city leaders had warning of the change sweeping across the kingdom, and partly due to Bodrov's uniquely defensible position, but also due to the power of an artifact.

A massive, immovable device was discovered in one of the many tunnels that honeycomb the base of Bodrov many years ago, though its function was never

understood. It may well have some other, incomprehensible function, but the important thing is that when it is active, it creates a field that prevents the trigger phrase used by whispers from initiating a change in exposed humans. The field is large enough to protect the entire city and a few hundred feet beyond. Even more notable is the repellent effect; when whispers wander into the field, something about it violently repels them. They flee the area screaming.

If someone is exposed to a whisper's trigger phrase, they can be saved if they reach Bodrov before the change has run its course. On the other hand, if they ever leave, the change resumes at the point where it was arrested. As it happens, dozens of people within Bodrov are so afflicted; they can never leave, at least not if they want to retain their humanity.

Megrah Thon, Bodrov's current overlord, maintains her power by being the only one who understands the whisper-repelling device well enough to keep it maintained. Every so often and for reasons no one quite understands, it switches itself off. Megrah has managed to turn it back on each time, and despite her many negative qualities, people are grateful. Secretly, Megrah employs a secondary device that allows her to turn the field on and off. She covertly turns it off every month to demonstrate to the people how much they need her. Otherwise they'd overthrow her, given how she takes the lion's share of supplies, how she drives the other survivors on ever more dangerous supply runs, and how she violently puts down anyone she sees as a possible threat.

FASTEN

Unlike many small villages, Fasten hasn't been burned out, nor is it wholly abandoned to whispers. Still, it is empty of the 500 or so people who once lived here as craftspeople, merchants, and farmers. But it is clear someone must still reside here, because a large section of it is barricaded behind an eclectic mix of smashed stone, mounted spikes, strung wire, and as anyone who attempts to make it past the barricades quickly learns, **pitfalls**, **collapsing walls**, and other traps. At any given time, one or two traps hold whispers that have wandered in and lack the sophistication to get free. If the changed were ever to mass at Fasten's edges, they could overcome it through sheer numbers. The place hasn't drawn that kind of attention due to the lack of noise and movement in the village.



If the changed were ever to mass at Fasten's edges, they could overcome it through sheer numbers. The place hasn't drawn that kind of attention due to the lack of noise and movement in the village.

Visitors to Fasten who can make it past the barricades and traps—which excludes most whispers—eventually encounter Fasten's sole survivor: **Fletcher Elis**. Once upon a time, this short man with an exaggerated limp ran the general store. He was full of stories and loved giving his customers an earful. That changed when everyone around him fell victim to the plague. As the sole survivor, Fletcher has taken a different role for himself, or more accurately, had it forced on him by his growing insanity. The ex-shopkeeper collects whispers caught in his traps. Then he kills or disables them, and finally burns the bodies he's collected in large piles in central Town Circle every few weeks. He has no idea why, but he appears immune to the plague.

Unfortunately, Fletcher has lost the capacity to tell a whisper from a regular person. Even if persuaded that a person isn't changed, Fletcher knows it's just a matter of time before a survivor becomes another of those things. It's happened to everyone he's ever known, sooner or later. Thus he interacts with visitors from the roof of the Village Hall. He yells at them to leave, and is happy to demonstrate his artifact by disintegrating a nearby object. Someone with uncommon persuasion abilities might get Fletcher to provide help, in the form of supplies gathered from his store and nearby villages, but that help is grudging, and soon Fletcher asks visitors to leave so he can get on with his work.

SAPPHIRE CITY

Sapphire City is always moving. It's a tall, many-legged structure of deep blue crystal that resembles a tree on its side, if all the branches moved like tentacles providing locomotion. As it moves, it gives off a loud, chimelike chorus, like a thousand bells playing at once. Wood and scavenged-synth structures are built on, around, and hang down from the central trunk, which stretches some 800 feet (244 m) long and is elevated about 30 feet (9 m) off the ground by the branch-legs. This odd entity is actually an artifact on which about 300 people make their

home. Sapphire City rarely stops. It wanders to locations across the Steadfast. Every few months it pauses, burrows its branch-legs into the soil, and remains still for a couple of days before it begins its travels anew. No one that lives in the city knows the crystal's origin, why it wanders, or where it is going. They only know that the sound of the moving city makes hearing the shouts of passing whispers inaudible. Moreover, whispers don't possess the ingenuity to climb up the trailing rope ladders that allow residents to move around.

The city has no ruler, but a city council of five. Two Glaives, an Aeon Priest, a Jack, and the displaced **Sallian Orsay** the Red (previously of **Kaparin**), the council sees to it that everyone's needs are met. They are not averse to helping strangers, but require something in return, be that information, food, or treasure.

FORTRESS OF THE AMBER MONOLITH

The Whispering World version of the **Amber Monolith** is every bit as mysterious as it is on Earth, and just as difficult to enter.

A fortress stands beneath the monolith, originally constructed to defend the holy site. A large dirigible floats over the fortress (and beneath the much higher Amber Monolith) moored to a gantry.

An **Aeon Priest**—a woman named **Cadaralas**—has taken shelter in the fortress along with five human helpers, and the priest's personal **automaton**, loyal only to her. Originally from the Durkhal in Qi, the Aeon Priest works around the clock to try to understand the whisper phenomenon. Cadaralas wears a white smock over her clothing, though it is often stained red from her ongoing experiments.

If normal people show up at the fortress gates, Cadaralas lets them in, and is the very soul of hospitality, though her human helpers are tight-lipped. She goes so far as to offer the PCs a few of the innovations she's developed, which she calls sound shields. She explains that she and her small group are

Fletcher Elis,
page 141

Fletcher Elis: level 4, level 6 when using his artifact to make a 300-foot (90 m) range disintegration attack that inflicts 7 points of damage and ignores Armor (Depletion: 1 in 1d10); Armor 2

Sallian Orsay,
page 168

Kaparin, page 167

Amber Monolith,
page 144

Aeon Priest,
page 269

Cadaralas: level 5, tasks related to the numenera, positive social interaction, and deception as level 7

Cadaralas's automaton: level 5; health 45; Armor 4; fists inflict 7 points of damage; short-range beam attack inflicts 5 points of damage on up to three targets as a single action



The bulk of Cadaralas's former helpers were sacrificed in the name of research.

fortunate because they enjoy many luxuries, including food enough to last for several years, stored away back when the fortress housed many more. There's also a laboratory where Cadaralas does her work, and which she is happy to show off. At any one time, she has two or more whispers lying on dissection tables, with various organs (including parts of the brain) pulled out for study.

Cadaralas also keeps a few live whispers in soundproofed cells. In order to better

understand the effects of the trigger phrase and the change, the Aeon Priest prefers to study freshly exposed victims and watch them as they change. This is why she has only five followers, down from fifteen a year ago. The bulk of her former helpers were sacrificed in the name of research. With the PCs' arrival, the pressure to select her next subjects from the ranks of her own helpers is relieved. If possible Cadaralas tries to maintain her affable front while secretly trying to snatch one of the PCs for her experiments. If successful, she selects another PC, and so on. If her masquerade is revealed, she has her automaton attempt to subdue the PCs and cage them to fulfill her future research needs.

Cadaralas has learned how to fashion minor artifacts she calls ear shields from the odd, half-living metallic rods that grow from the skulls of whispers.

EAR SHIELD (ARTIFACT)

Level: 1d6 + 2

Form: Rigid band worn on head, studded with three slender biometallic rods

Effect: Prevents the wearer from hearing anything for one hour.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20



Sister Tevera: level 3, influencing others through speech as level 5



Sister Tevera,
page 150

Beoth, page 150



Malegran, page 150

BEOTH

Beoth was suffering from a plague called the "toothless bile" when a completely different kind of illness swept through the city like wildfire, creating whispers. In the aftermath, the toothless bile was no longer a concern, though that's hardly a consolation to **Sister Tevera**. Sister Tevera is the leader of the twenty survivors still sheltering in **Beoth**, specifically within the temple of the Old Ways. For some reason, whispers don't pass the edge of the crater that surrounds the temple, and the thick walls of the temple prevent those inside from hearing the trigger phrase passing whispers sometimes shout from the periphery.

Tevera teaches her followers that the whispers are a result of the Aeon Priests' meddling with magic and demons that they should've left alone. She believes this so fiercely that the single Aeon Priest that had joined her within the temple—a man named **Malegran**—was ejected for his crimes against the world. It was a few days later that Malegran returned, now as a whisper, to stand at the edge of the crater like all the rest. But

unlike the other whispers, Malegran remains instead of wandering off, as if some memory drives him to locate those who cast him out.

Sister Tevera welcomes newcomers to the temple, but only as long as they agree to be baptized in the name of the Stargod, and as long as none of them are Nanos or Aeon Priests. (Although she may at first accept such, she later demands their sacrifice to appease the Stargod.) Baptism consists of having earth quarried from the crater poured over one's head and the memorization of a few short prayers to an entity called the Stargod. Those who resist must answer to Sister Tevera's bodyguard **Baraxis**, who appears immune to the whisper's trigger phrase. Tevera believes it is because of his faith in the Stargod. But before he was thrown out, Malegran hypothesized that Baraxis's immunity was likely due to the metallic sheen covering his skin.

STIRTHAL

At first glance, **Stirthal** appears abandoned. Whispers initially swarmed the streets after the populace was exposed. In the months since, most wandered off the edges of the various cliffs and have fallen to their deaths in the Voil Chasm. Thus the ancient structures, the pipes and platforms, and the many cliff dwellings remain empty. The place would make a good refuge for survivors if it weren't for what yet lurked in the lower portions of Stirthal.

A being called **Quanon** lives down there. He may have been a heavily enhanced human, though that was always up for debate, even before the plague. The trigger phrase changed him, but not into just another whisper. Instead of growing biometallic antennae, he fused with the many devices and odd objects in his workshop, and became a massive entity of synth and steel at least 50 feet (15 m) high.

Quanon retains some of his former self-awareness, but only for brief periods. During these precious lucid periods, he attempts to make sure that he remains restrained and can't leave his workshop. The rest of the time, he acts like a large and dangerously loud whisper. When in his whisper state, he can bellow the trigger phrase so loudly that it can be heard echoing for miles. More worrisome is his ability to transmit the trigger phrase through an invisible channel, so that seemingly random devices dozens of miles away sometimes buzz and speak those words.

YENTH

The skeleton of the former trade city of **Yenth** remains, as does the complex it is built around. It was overrun by the initial wave of whispers. Those whispers have in turn been run out by a small community of humans with a faint purplish luster to their skin. They don't speak the Truth, but a language that sounds like clicks and whistles. The people are **colrathi**. They're native to a parallel dimension called "**New Yenth**" that lies on the other side of a transdimensional portal housed within the prior-world complex.

Several humans from Yenth fled through the portal after they'd been exposed to the whisper trigger phrase. They changed and were transformed into whispers on the New Yenth side of the portal. However, the natives of New Yenth were unaffected by the whispers' attempts to trigger a change. Presumably their immunity is because they lack the nanites that suffuse their divergent Earth. Likewise, when a few adventurous colrathi figured out how to open the portal on their own side of the dimensional divide and entered what they *thought* was the Earth's base dimension, they didn't succumb to the change.

It's possible that this small community has since been colonized by nanites, potentially making them vulnerable. But no whisper has come to New Yenth since the previous ones were driven out or killed.

THE UNIVERSITY OF DOORS

The Whispered World's divergent University of Doors remains hidden in its own series of nested dimensions, though all the doors to the outside world are shut, and have been since this world diverged from the base dimension. It's possible the doors were shut because the faculty and students decided to save themselves by avoiding risk of exposure. Alternatively, perhaps exposure occurred before anyone realized the threat, and the doors no longer open because all that's left within the alternate dimension of the school are wandering whispers. However, a magister in the **Scorpion Sanctum** called the Judge believes that when the base dimension split to form the Whispered World, the University of Doors wasn't replicated, given that it's a dimension unto itself. The doors are shut here because they still open on an Earth untouched by the whisper plague.

Yenth, page 157

Colrathi, page 36

New Yenth, page 35

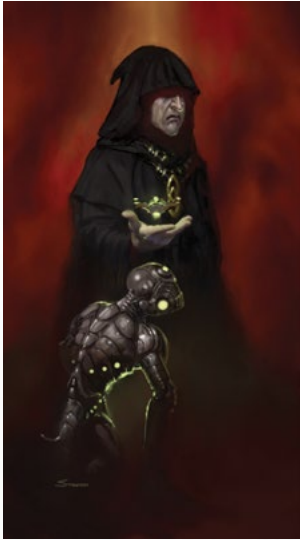
Baraxis: level 5; health 30; Armor 4; immune to whisper trigger phrase

Stirthal, page 155

Quanon: level 8, numenera knowledge and crafting as level 7; Armor 8; when non-lucid he acts like a typical—if massive—whisper



In a secret room, the Judge dissects living whispers and splices their brains and antennae into other machines. She's not trying to reverse the process, but enhance it.



Convergence,
page 223

Chirog, page 235

The Judge: level 7,
Intellect defense tasks
as level 9 from helmet
artifact (Depletion: 1 in
1d20); four to five special
abilities as needed

Barand Legor: level 5,
Intellect tasks as level 6

SCORPION SANCTUM

The organization calling itself the **Convergence** used the structure standing high above the Cloudcrystal Skyfields as one of their three main bases before the world fell to the whispers. The **chirog** raiders that once plagued the area around the sanctum remain, but spend most of their time taking down wandering whispers. For some reason, the chirog appear more resistant (though not immune) to the trigger phrase.

With the Amber Pope gone and most Aeon Priests transformed into whispers, the “secret” nature of the Convergence is moot. Five magisters plus a mix of scavengers, newcomers, guards, and lackeys remain in the Scorpion Sanctum. They work feverishly on research relating to understanding the plague of whispers. The woman in charge is a magister everyone simply calls **the Judge**. The Judge is immediately identifiable by the metallic helmet she always wears—no one has ever seen her true features, at least not since the whisper plague. She often heads teams that leave the sanctum, usually through one of the space-bending gateways that link it with other locations. These away teams gather food, water, and the occasional survivor that they offer sanctuary to, though away teams sometimes decide to ambush other survivors if they seem rich in supplies.

The magisters explain to any survivors that they are trying to find a cure for the whisper state, and if possible, reverse it. None can truthfully admit whether anything of the original mind reminds, but a few believe it's possible. One magister—**Barand Legor**—is more pragmatic, and has operated on several whispers, removing their vocal cords and tongues so they can't speak. These have been drafted as servants, experimental fodder, and in the case of one whisper Barand calls his “mule,” a mindless companion that follows him everywhere courtesy of a synth cord tied to its neck.

The Judge has several secrets she hasn't shared. The first is that she's a dimension walker from the base dimension. She arrived just as the Whispering World was struck by its disaster. The Judge passed from the base dimension to the Whispering World using a dimensional portal artifact she discovered in the Cloudcrystal Skyfields.

Her other secret is that she conducts her own experiments. In a secret room, the Judge dissects living whispers and splices their brains and antennae into other machines. She's not trying to reverse the process, but enhance it. The Judge believes that the trigger phrase only partly changed those exposed to it. The full change, she believes, would allow the whispers to communicate with each other via the secret transmissions—why else the antennae? She hopes to activate that function so that she can take control of a vast army of whispers.

WHISPERING WORLD HEARSAY

Sapphire Standstill: The Sapphire City failed to begin moving (and offering its protective chimes) after its last rest, so the council of five seek aid in understanding why, or in safely evacuating the city before whispers gather.

Gift Exchange: In return for a cypher, Quanon of Stirthal (when in his self-aware state) will use his impressive abilities to tap into the datasphere and answer one question from a petitioner.

THE WEIRD OF THE WHISPERING WORLD

Song of Night: At times, the whispers stop mumbling their trigger phrase. Instead, they sing a strange and alluring song that is beautiful and enchanting. When the song ends, they return to their normal behavior.

Sentient Whisper: Every once in a while, a small whisper with shockingly white hair and pale skin appears among the others, but never tries to say the trigger words. Instead, it attempts to engage survivors in conversation.

PART 3:



BEYOND THE VEIL



Chapter 7: Panaton

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Chapter 8: The Tumult

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Chapter 9: Reeval

96

Chapter 10: Celerillion

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CHAPTER 7 PANATON



In Panaton, creatures might be born, live out their lives, and die in a twinkling, while others stand as immobile statues, swimming toward the future one epoch per heartbeat.



Visitants, page 120

A story attributed to a [visitant](#) named Gmaun the Timeless describes the world it hailed from as a place where time works differently than on Earth. The learned believe the story actually describes another plane of existence where time is as variable as weather. A dimension called Panaton, where cause and effect is not straightforward. Where time is inconstant, like a breeze that blows sometimes faintly and other times kicks up into a gale. In Panaton, creatures might be born, live out their lives, and die in a twinkling, while others stand as immobile statues, swimming toward the future one epoch per heartbeat. In rare and dangerous cases, time sometimes flows backward.

Upon arrival, dimension walkers might at first believe they've discovered a parallel plane. The atmosphere and gravity, and possibly even the PCs' physical location, are [cognate](#) with Earth. The light seems similar. The temperature, too. But the weirdness of Panaton quickly makes itself apparent.

Cognate destinations,
page 7

GETTING TO PANATON

Any of the means discussed in the Introduction of this book can be used to reach this dimension, although the Sideslip Fields don't deliver visitors to a cognate location, but instead to an empty plain, with only a single synth structure containing a mechanism called the [Augury](#).

Augury, page 83

PRESENTING PANATON'S WEIRD

Visitors soon realize that their first impressions of Panaton are incomplete. One PC may note that dust kicked up or a dropped item takes a long time to fall, even though gravity seems normal. Another might note the sun moving across the sky at an appreciable clip. A nearby area may suddenly sprout seedlings, which grow in height and over the course of minutes become full-fledged trees. Or a waterfall coming off a cliff may not seem to move at all, but hang motionless in mid-rush like a glass sculpture.

ALTERNATE PC TIME STATES

Dimension walkers traveling as a group quickly realize one additional oddity: over the course of a few rounds, each PC segregates into a different time state. This is the first hurdle Panaton visitors face: figuring out how to coordinate actions across variable time states.

One way to handle this is to assign each PC one of the following time states. Describe to that character how they see things around them, and their fellow PCs, from that point of view. If you wish, you can randomly roll for each character's time state, which means some characters might share time states for a while.

Generally speaking, the variable nature of time in Panaton forces the PCs to change time states about once every hour. Residents of Panaton call this a ripple.



ALTERNATE PC TIME STATES TABLE

1	Stopped: Time moves so slowly for this PC that from the perspective of everyone else, they stand like a statue. From the PC's perspective, everything around them flits about with uncanny speed, so fast in fact that creatures might appear as stuttering blurs. Only fixed objects appear solid. The PC essentially takes no turns while in this state, at least relative to creatures not in the same state. Attacks against a time-stopped creature are made as if against something with 10 points of Armor—timespace protects the deformation of flesh that most kinds of attacks deliver. Getting out of this state might require the help of a PC in a different state; otherwise the victim must wait until the next ripple.
2	Skipping: This PC may not initially realize it, but they are part of the time stream every other round. From their point of view, creatures in their environment jerk suddenly ahead into new locations. From the perspective of creatures in the sequential time state, this character exists only every other round. Once it's clear what's going on, you can choose to assign the player the responsibility of tracking which round their character exists and which round they do not.
3	Slow: This PC remains part of the time stream, but moves through it very slowly. Their voice is noticeably lower in pitch, and the difficulty of all Speed-based tasks is one step higher when dealing with creatures not in the same state. This character can't understand the speech of a character in a fast (or accelerated) time state—it zips by too fast.
4	Sequential: This PC is experiencing time normally, and can see most clearly what other characters are experiencing.
5	Fast: This PC remains part of the time stream, but moves through it more quickly. Their voice is noticeably higher in pitch, and the difficulty of all Speed-based tasks is one step lower when dealing with creatures not in the same state. This PC can't understand the speech of a character in a slow time state, as it's too low pitched and distorted.
6	Accelerated: This PC remains part of the time stream, but races through it. Their voice is a shrill whine that can't be understood by those not in the same state, they can take two actions instead of one on their turn, and the difficulty of all Speed-based tasks is one step lower when dealing with creatures not in the same state.

CHOOSING ALTERNATE TIME STATES

Once PCs have spent some time in Panaton, they get a feel for the nature of variable time. They begin to understand their personal time states are not random, or at least, they don't have to be. PCs may attempt to manipulate their personal time state to some other state with a successful Intellect roll. The difficulty of the task is equal to 1 plus the number associated with each alternate PC time state. For instance, if a PC tries to change their time state to sequential, the difficulty would be 5.

A character can also attempt to shift another creature or object's time state, if the creature is willing or the object is unprotected. Doing so increases the difficulty of the task by one step. Attempting to shift an unwilling creature or protected object increases the difficulty of the task by a number of steps equal to the creature or object's level.

Time states are not permanent, because of ripples. Once PCs figure out how to attempt to change their personal time states, you can still reassign those states during a fight, when the PCs encounter a temporal event, when they trigger a time device, or just because.

TEMPORAL ANCHOR (ARTIFACT)

Level: 1d6 + 3

Form: White rod with crystalline tip

Effect: Wielder has +5 to Armor against direct damage from temporal effects.

In addition, the difficulty of all tasks to change time states is two steps lower.

Depletion: 1 in 1d20 (check per attempt to change time states)

TIME FORTRESS

The Time Fortress is one of many ruined structures located in Panaton where time flow is variable. The Time Fortress, like most other ruins and artifacts found in Panaton, was built by a dead race of people who called themselves time adepts. Despite the lofty title, they did not prove adept at avoiding an unrecorded temporal catastrophe that wiped them out. All that remains of them are entities known as time wraiths.

PCs can find the Time Fortress if they're exploring Panaton, if they discover a portal that drops them into it randomly, or because they are looking for a device called the Anthelid. The Anthelid is rumored to have the ability to send travelers forward or backward in time millions or even billions of years.

The Time Fortress exists mostly underground, though a single roseate crystal spire pointing skyward stands on the surface.

Inside, crystal rooms and corridors lie in various states of disrepair. Much of the fortress is collapsed. Dim, roseate light illuminates most of the interior.

ARRIVAL—START HERE

If the PCs' discovery of the Time Fortress coincides with their arrival in Panaton, it takes only a few rounds before they fall into alternate time states. Refer to [Presenting Panaton's Weird](#) and [Alternate PC Time States](#) to find out how the variable time flow of the dimension affects them.

[Presenting Panaton's Weird](#), page 74

[Alternate PC Time States](#), page 74

POOL OF FOLLOWING

This chamber has collapsed crystal and stone walls. Here and there, bits of battered and broken devices are visible. Spending twenty minutes picking through the chamber yields a cypher and 2d10 shins.

A pool of clear fluid ripples in a crystal basin at the chamber's center. Touching the crystal basin reveals a subtle vibration, rich with coded information. A successful difficulty 5 Intellect task to understand allows a character to trigger the fluid, which rises upward into a human shape composed of fluid with no features. The level 3 fluid construct exits the basin and follows the PC that triggered it, never speaking. If attacked, it drains, only to return later. The next time the PC is subject to a negative temporal effect, the shape is subjected to it instead, then it expires. It may be reactivated again in an hour.

CRYSTAL SPIRE

If PCs begin outside the structure, they observe a single roseate crystal spire reaching about 200 feet (61 m) into the sky. The spire stands midway up a rocky hillside. Doors are not immediately obvious. Touching the crystal reveals a subtle vibration, rich with coded information. A successful difficulty 5 Intellect task allows a character to selectively phase through the wall and into the spire's interior.

The interior contains a visual distortion in space that looks something like a whirlpool in the air, swirling around the spire's center. The vanished time adepts called this a dimensional eddy. If characters arrived at the Time Fortress by stepping through a gate from some other dimension, they step out through the dimensional eddy. If the PCs have a way to measure it, the eddy gives off copious amounts of transdimensional energy. Stepping through it sends the PCs either back from whence they came, or to some other dimension described in this book, another sourcebook, or of the GM's own invention.

GM Intrusion: Alerted either by the PC's arrival through the dimensional eddy or by their proximity to it, a [time wraith](#) appears. The time wraith looks like an ancient, desiccated, and immaterial version of the PC it attacks.

Time wraith level 5; touch attack inflicts 3 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) as parts of its flesh and the PC's are exchanged; if a victim damages a time wraith, the victim must succeed on an Intellect defense roll or suffer the same fate; for more information, see page 156.

MRARAN LAIR

This once much larger chamber is now a cavern whose walls are composed of collapsed crystal and stone. The resulting space is rough and uneven. Bits of battered and broken devices are visible. Spending twenty minutes picking through the chamber yields two cyphers and 2d10 shins.

GM Intrusion: A mated pair of tiny red snakelike beasts (mraran) slither out of the rubble and attack a character.

Mraran: level 3, Speed defense as level 4 due to size; short-range spittle attack inflicts 3 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) and an accelerated temporal effect causing selective rapid aging

HALL OF STOPPED TIME

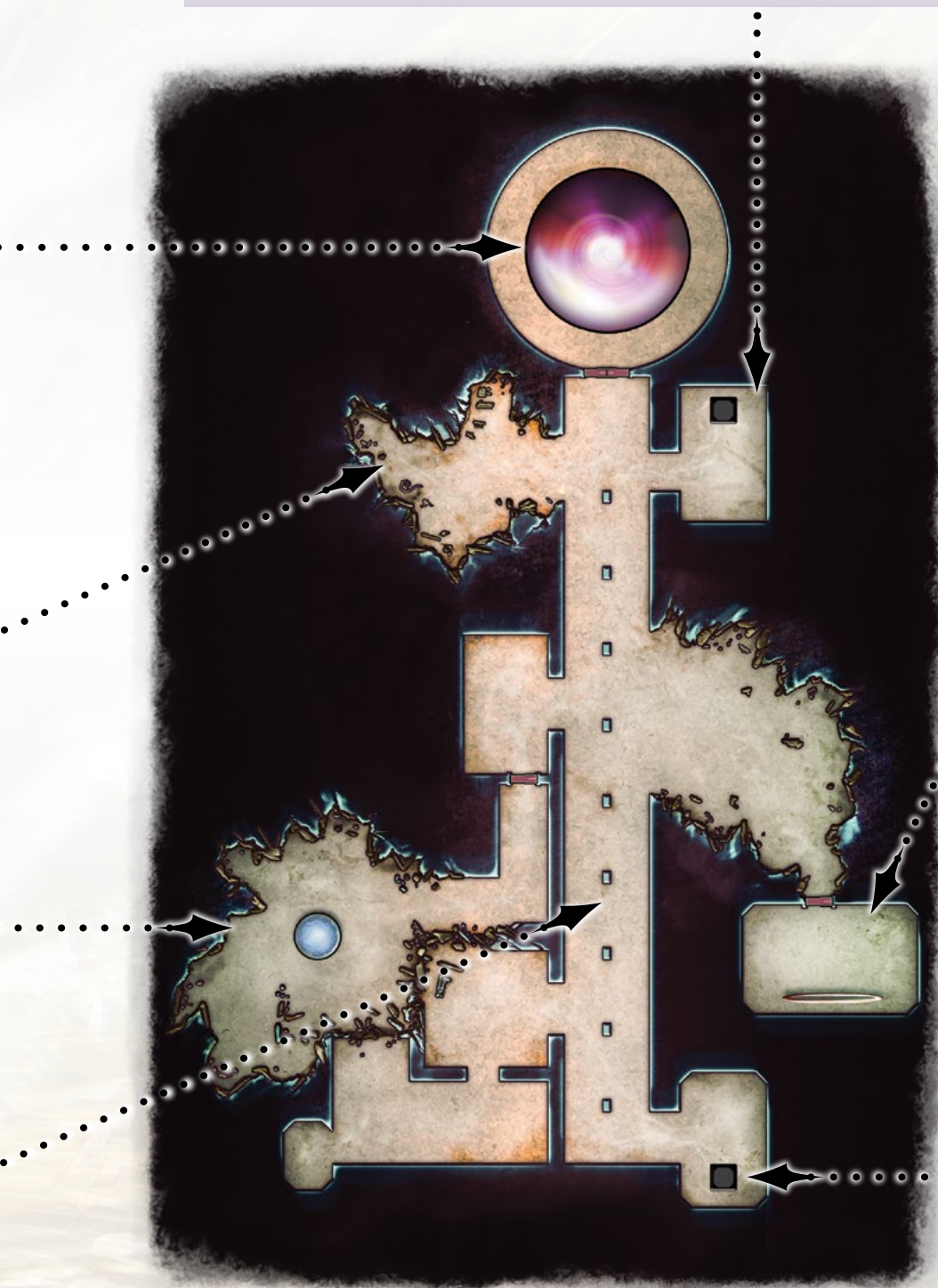
Crystal pillars run down the center of this 160-foot (49 m) long hall. Also visible, still as statues, are three creatures standing at varying distances along the passage. The variable nature of time in Panaton is focused more strongly in the hall. A defensive function of the Time Fortress is active, and it attempts to trap anyone moving along the hallway in stopped time, as described under [Alternate PC Time States](#). Intruders must succeed on a difficulty 3 Intellect defense roll for every 20 feet (6 m) they move down the hallway. On a failure, a target's time state becomes even slower than stopped—it becomes "frozen." Unlike in other parts of Panaton, ripples that reassign time states don't happen here. A frozen character's only hope is help from someone else.

GM Group Intrusion: One of the previously frozen creatures unfreezes, and is revealed as an alternate timeline version of the PC, quite distressed and confused.

CASEMENT

This otherwise blank crystal chamber holds a black synth square about 3 feet (1 m) on a side. If prodded, the square unfolds to reveal a 9-foot (3 m) frame into a window that looks out on the exterior of the Time Fortress from a vantage point 300 feet (91 m) in the air. It seems possible to climb out of the window (if one wished) to exit the fortress. Further study reveals distant humanoids moving through the city surrounding the crystal spire. This might confuse PCs if they previously investigated the abandoned exterior of the Time Fortress.

GM Intrusion: A PC gains the insight that through the casement, they are looking at the Time Fortress in the distant past. This realization triggers the casement's sudden collapse, an automatic feature of the device to prevent causal contamination. The PC must succeed on a difficulty 6 Intellect defense task or suffer 3 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) from the causal backlash.



ANTHELID

A crystal hoop filled with a bizarre visual distortion stands upright in this chamber. Touching the crystal circle reveals a subtle vibration, rich with coded information. A successful difficulty 5 Intellect task informs the character that the hoop is a time gate. But a component is missing for it to safely function—a crystal key. Depending on why the characters are here, they may already have the key, in which case they can use the gate to travel to a specified point in time in any dimension they know to exist.

GM Intrusion: Four **chronal feeders** guard the gate, and materialize to attack anyone who disturbs it. Chronal feeders look like vicious insects as large as a person.

Chronal feeder: level 4; health 18; Armor 1; mandibles inflict 5 points of damage; can phase through matter or into parallel plane as a move action; see page 31 of the Ninth World Bestiary for more information

ANTHELID KEY

The otherwise blank crystal chamber holds a black synth square about 3 feet (1 m) on a side. If prodded, the square unfolds to reveal a 9-foot (3 m) frame into a window that looks into an extradimensional space. If the GM wishes to allow PCs access to the Anthelid, the crystal component required to activate it is "inside." Otherwise it's empty; someone else must have beaten the characters to this storage chamber.

FLORA AND FAUNA OF PANATON

Some of the plants and wildlife the PCs encounter may be very much like those encountered in their home dimension. Others are adapted to Panaton's variable time states. Grelis, a prolific species of plant with black stems reaching 3 feet (1 m) high with broad white leaves, outcompetes other species by consistently remaining in a super-accelerated time state, moving quicker than most native species can manage. Observers in other time states can literally watch it seed, grow, sprout, and spread in minutes. The only thing keeping it in check is a species of insect called whip flies that live at the same time state. Normally invisible to slower-state creatures, the whip flies keep grelis from overrunning everything.

Some predators wait in a slowed state (similar to a stuck time state) but one that allows them to remain aware of their surroundings. When prey draws near, they switch to an accelerated state, and ambush their prey, trying to overcome victims so quickly that the target doesn't have a chance to respond. A particularly powerful predator that relies on similar tactics is the **greecalican**.

Other creatures rely on time manipulation to hunt or hide, or both. Examples include the **mraran**, a tiny red snakelike beast whose spittle rapidly ages the flesh it touches; the **kor**, a mouselike creature that can swarm targets en masse, only to hide by jumping a minute into the future; and the **barsin**, a houndlike beast that jumps back in time to ambush previously-encountered prey.

INTELLIGENT RACES OF PANATON

Once, a race known as the time adepts inhabited Panaton. However, the time adepts were apparently wiped out by some sort of causality slip they were—despite all their power—unable to avert. (Perhaps the dimension of Panaton is an artificial construct of the time adepts.) After several aeons, a species of houndlike creatures called the **dothin** achieved consciousness.

USING PANATON

The weird temporal convulsions will probably be only the first challenge of Panaton. Although there are ancient structures to explore and devices to salvage from the time adept civilization, simply acclimatizing to Panaton is a severe challenge. Or maybe the PCs came to Panaton specifically to look for the Anthelid, a time gate with the power to send travelers back in time and across dimensions, with potentially catastrophic results.

Another race, the Thexx, has recently arrived from time vaults scattered beneath Panaton's surface. The Thexx's true goals remain mysterious.

DOTHIN

Dothin are tall, hairy creatures with long faces and large eyes that speak their own language. Humanoid, dothin live amid the ruins of their dead masters, though they do not know it. Individuals mark themselves with dyes and braids—the more braids and the brighter and more elaborate the dyes, the more honor and prestige an individual possesses. They regard the artifacts and ruins of the vanished time adepts as taboo, especially anything made of roseate crystal, which was apparently the dead time adepts' preferred construction material.

The dothin are hunters and gatherers for the most part, though some raise plants. Their favorite crop is epola, from which epola juice is made from small berries. The juice is in turn fermented and distilled into epola wine. Anyone who drinks it gains an asset in all tasks related to temporal anomalies for up to an hour, though if consumed to excess, the wine results in drunkenness.

In the variable time of Panaton, the dothin have learned to coordinate their time states with relative ease. In each community there is an honored individual called the **Reference**. The Reference dyes its hair with gold and red stripes so all can mark it easily. The Reference has a better than average control over their

Dothin, typical: level 3, tasks related to time manipulation as level 4

Greecalican: level 5; can vary its temporal state at will

Mraran: level 3, Speed defense as level 4 due to size; short-range spittle attack inflicts 3 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) and has an aging effect

Kor: level 2, Speed defense as level 3 due to size; moves one minute into the future no more than once every ten minutes

Barsin: level 4; always makes first attack with surprise, thus decreasing the difficulty of the attack by two steps; bite attack inflicts 5 points of damage



Surprise, page 95

Reference: level 5, tasks related to time manipulation as level 7



Dothin are immediately suspicious that newly encountered dimension walkers actually represent a temporal echo of the dead time adepts.



own time state, and is able to maintain a sequential time frame even when under stress.

The dothin's myths describe the time adepts, who made the world and fractured time. The dothin believe that once, all creatures lived in an innocent state, where time was always sequential. But the time adepts meddled too much, trying to become the masters of the universe, and fractured temporal continuity. For their trouble, a temporal causal loop excised them completely from existence. So even though the dothin are conversant and able to live in Panaton, they do not seek time adept knowledge. With the appearance of the Thexx, who seem to want exactly the opposite, dothin have started stockpiling arms and armor, just in case they must put a stop to meddlers that could risk another time fracture.

Dothin live in extended packs led by the most esteemed mated pair. Sometimes the Reference is one of the mated leaders, other times it is a separate individual who works with the leaders or, among more contentious packs, against them.

Dothin are immediately suspicious that newly encountered dimension walkers actually represent a temporal echo of the dead time adepts. Convincing the dothin of the opposite

is likely the only way visitors will gain the cooperation of a dothin pack, and in worst cases, avoid being attacked.

THEXX

Over the last few years, newcomers called Thexx have come to Panaton. Emerging from time vaults buried beneath the ground, Thexx are skeletal beings that are part flesh and part machine. Most immediately began building new structures from salvage found in the surrounding ruins, and whatever they brought up with them from their time vault interiors. Neither fully machine nor fully biological, Thexx need to sleep, eat, and breathe only a fraction of the time required by living creatures. On the other hand, they need at least an hour in natural light each day to maintain full function. They speak their own language, but quickly pick up new languages with just a little practice.

The Thexx were contemporaries of the time adepts, they claim, and went into hiding before time was fractured. The Thexx say the time adepts were involved in a temporal war that stretched across the epochs, against a force that the Thexx will not name. In a last defiant measure, the time adepts were determined to travel back to the inception of

Thexx, typical: level 4, temporal-related tasks as level 7; Armor 2; short-range weapon inflicts 4 points of damage

reality and modify the temporal structure in such a way that their enemies would never come into existence. Worried at the risk, the Thexx constructed time vaults for themselves and hid.

A few dothin claim the Thexx are the time adepts come back in new guise, and that they should be avoided, or eliminated. Other

dothin worry that the Thexx are the very threat the time adepts warred against, infesting the home dimension of the time adept's temporal dimension like worms in an apple.

Whatever the case, the Thexx are obviously intent on building up their power base in Panaton. Time wraiths sometimes appear to block the Thexx's efforts at rebuilding ancient

Trying to change the timeline to avoid knowledge gained with a death vision cypher is extremely difficult, though not impossible.

Existence knives and time duplicates should be "extreme" cyphers, not something commonly found.

Time wraith, page 156

CYPHERS OF PANATON

Cyphers and other items of the numenera can be found in Panaton.



DEATH VISION

Level: 1d6 + 3

Usable: Glove with attached device

Effect: Touched target sees a vision of its final moments of life, stunning the target so that it loses its next turn. The target's final moments of life could be minutes, months, or years away.



DETONATION (KILLS TIME)

Level: 1d6 + 4

Wearable: Wristband projector (long range)

Usable: Explosive device or ceramic sphere (thrown, short range) or handheld projector (long range)

Effect: Bursts in an immediate radius, decaying time in the area. Living creatures take damage equal to the cypher level that ignores Armor, and they are aged the same number of years as the cypher level.



EXISTENCE KNIFE

Level: 10

Usable: Device with knifelike blade

Effect: The cypher can be wielded as a normal light melee weapon. When a creature whose level does not exceed the cypher's level and who is no larger than the user is attacked, the attack actually reaches backward in time (and space), and attacks an ancestor of the target instead. (Presume the ancestor's level is the same as the target's.) If successful, the target's ancestor is killed before having children. The target creature is wiped from existence (as well as any siblings and other family members separating the target creature from its dead ancestor). Using this cypher risks drawing time wraiths.



FOREKNOWLEDGE

Level: 1d6 + 3

Wearable: Adheres to the temple

Effect: User knows exactly what will happen next round, and thus can treat any task attempted in the subsequent round as routine if the difficulty of the task does not exceed the cypher's level. If the task difficulty does exceed the cypher's level, the foreknowledge gained is less certain, but the difficulty of any attempted task is reduced by two steps.



TIME DUPLICATE

Level: 10

Usable: Metallic sphere

Effect: A future version of the user appears next to the user and aids the user for up to one minute. Essentially, this allows the user to take two turns per round at two different locations. However, at some point determined by the GM within the next month, the user disappears for up to one minute, paying the time debt. If the user's present or future duplicate dies or suffers some mishap that creates the potential for a paradox, time wraiths may appear to dispatch all witnesses.



TIME SLIP

Level: 1d6 + 2

Usable: Metallic sphere

Effect: User and all allies within long range are instantly transferred 1d20 + 5 hours into the future. For them, no time elapses. For all other creatures, it's as if the targets ceased to exist during the intervening period.



fortresses. Such appearances are consistent with dothin fears that the Thexx are intent on taking control of Panaton and eventually using time as a weapon to consolidate a new empire on various parallel dimensions.

OTHER LOCATIONS

Remnants of a fallen time adept civilization are scattered across the face of Panaton not unlike the ruins found on Earth. Some are inhabited.

SYNCHRADEL

A pack of **dothin** reside in a structure they call the Synchronadel, which is a rambling structure composed of connected obsidian cubes

several miles across. Individual cube interiors randomly shift states between being solid matter and open space. The inhabiting dothin have learned to sense these transitions before they occur. Other explorers of the Synchronadel who do not gain a dothin guide eventually learn that it's almost impossible to survive a cube transition from empty space to solid matter.

Several dothin watch Synchronadel's main entrance, an open square on an exterior cube some 30 feet (9 m) on a side, except the entrance is nothing more than a solid block. When it's open, visitors may meet the inhabiting dothin, under the leadership of a gold and red striped individual (the pack's **Reference**) called **Rada**.

Rada is particularly sensitive to time states and the Synchronadel chamber transitions between solid and empty states. It is desperate to find a weapon against the Thexx somewhere within Synchronadel, because Rada is convinced the Thexx are nothing less than time adepts who should've been erased with all the rest. Rada fears that the Thexx's charade will soon be pierced, revealing the time adepts, and the causal timeslip that failed to eradicate them the first time will at last wipe away all of Panaton, including the dothin.

The mysteries of Synchronadel are deep. Sometimes when a solid cube transitions to an empty space, allowing access, strange machinery is revealed. Those with some knowledge of temporal phenomena are able to deduce that it serves as secondary components to some vast temporal engine. Whether that engine is idling, running full out, or malfunctioning is more difficult to determine. Likewise, what the engine powers—be it the Synchronadel, Panaton, or some much grander temporal phenomenon—is difficult to determine without years of study and ancient knowledge that perhaps only the time adepts possessed.

TIME VAULT 33

The **Thexx** who emerged from Time Vault 33 are akin to their androgynous siblings, and seem similarly industrious, despite holding themselves apart from the other Thexx. The most obvious difference is the red sigil each wears painted, sometimes quite crudely, on their foreheads. The sigil is three overlapping circles.

The interior of Time Vault 33 is comprised of smooth crystalline corridors that lead to empty dead ends. A central chamber, domed

Reference, page 78

Rada: level 5, tasks related to time manipulation as level 7; carries detonation (kills time) and foreknowledge cyphers

Thexx, page 79

Dothin, page 78

Epsilon: level 4; Armor 2; short-range weapon inflicts 4 points of damage; carries existence knife and time slip cyphers



Philethis, page 252

and scintillating with red light, is where Thexx from this vault hold daily conclaves. They stand in a great circle, eyes closed, communicating on a silent channel that only another Thexx can directly perceive. When Thexx who do not bear the three-circle sigil on their foreheads attempt to enter, those in Vault 33 violently expel them. They are also suspicious of other creatures, including dothin and dimension walkers.

A Thexx named **Epsilon** serves as Time Vault 33's ambassador. If communication can be established, Epsilon isn't particularly forthcoming with information, but it is very curious about every detail regarding visitors. It is especially interested in news from Earth, which it refers to as Earth 1. It suggests it has reason to believe that miscreants that once ruled Panaton originated from Earth 1, or fled to it after time was fractured, aeons earlier. It also suggests that aiding any Thexx other than those of Vault 33 would be dangerous for the time stream, but doesn't explain why. In fact, it tries to enlist visitors to aid the three-circle Thexx in destroying various machines being built by Thexx issuing from other time vaults.

ACAUSAL BADLANDS

Rough terrain hides even worse temporal hazards in the Acausal Badlands, which streak across Panaton like exposed veins in a corpse, or perhaps more aptly, strands on a web. The Badlands somehow attract and collect excised time loops—also called causal loops—from other dimensions, which are distinct periods of time repeated and re-experienced by those caught within them without hope of breaking out. The time loops caught in the Badlands repeat only for limited periods, until time wraiths, chronal feeders, and other parasites descend.

Each causal loop exists within a bounded space up to 5 miles (8 km) in diameter. From the outside, objects and events within are blurred and hard to discern. Entering a time loop is risky, because even though a visitor wasn't originally part of the event that created the loop, they can become trapped. But some aspect, object, or even person within a time loop might possess interesting information, value, or abilities that led to the creation of the time loop. Dothin and Thexx sometimes enter closed time loops hoping to find such objects, information, and individuals.

Causal loops contain many scenarios. Because Panaton is cognate with Earth of

"Earth 1," most excised loops found in the Badlands contain locations from Earth, though not always Earth in the same time period as that of dimension walkers. Possible loop scenarios include the following:

1	A soldier repeats the same agonizing battle every day
2	Three creatures explore a structure, find a device, activate it, and repeat
3	A crime syndicate plays out an insidious con in order to steal a temporal mechanism, which detonates
4	A humanoid claiming to be a time adept fights another of its kind, out of spite and envy
5	Strangely armored humans with swords and spears find a relic in a chest painted with two crossed lines
6	Two philethis glide endlessly down a featureless black corridor
7	A jungle night along a rolling seascape, serene until a meteorite strikes, killing everything
8	Explorers locate a free-floating spacecraft, enter it, repair it, and accidentally destroy it
9	A time traveler becomes their own parent through an unlikely series of events
10	Tablet that reads in the Truth, "If you are reading this, you are caught in a causal loop." Signed by a PC.

SLOW OCEAN

The Slow Ocean is filled with water, but its chief characteristic is slow time. Creatures that swim it and ships that sail its surface exist in the state of "stopped" time. Ripples generally don't change time states in and on the Slow Ocean. Observers see an unmoving flat region as hard as stone and the color of blue-green crystal. At the edges, frozen waves fail to break. That is, unless an observer spends time watching a wave or a ship come in to shore, which can take a full day, like watching the sun inch along the sky. Attempting to change the state of something in or on the surface to one other than stopped time is three steps more



difficult than normal, and even if successful, the changed state lasts for only a single round.

Falling into the Slow Ocean changes a creature's time state to "stopped." If this happens near a water craft or a submerged ocean creature, what was previously moving at what appeared to be slower than a snail suddenly rushes forward.

Mulr: Various creatures swim the Slow Ocean. Most obvious are the whalelike **Mulr**, finned white bulks 100 feet (30 m) in length. They are drawn to activity on the surface, because the Mulr prefer the taste of flesh that has only recently transitioned from some other time state. Sometimes the Mulr hunt in pods, other times they serve as mounts for **octopi** who have colonized a coral region within the Slow Ocean. (Neither the dothin nor the Thexx know anything about these octopi, other than the rare sighting of one riding a Mulr.)

Durators: A race of humans never seen on land in Panaton called **Durators** sail the Slow Ocean. Their ships are large, double-hulled sea canoes 60 feet (18 m) long and 15 feet (5 m) across, typically with two sails and a crew of fifteen. Construction materials vary, but often include salvaged synth and harvested wood components. The Durators are secretive people fully aware of the nature of the Slow Ocean and of Panaton itself, and keep oral traditions alive of their arrival in Panaton uncounted generations earlier. They keep to the Slow Ocean because life on dry land speeds past, safely leaving them behind to sail forever. However, from their perspective, something interesting falls into the water

every few minutes, and becomes synched with their native time stream. For Durators, each "day" on the Slow Ocean lasts almost a year. So the Durators can choose to be picky about what they pick up, or more often, pirate.

AUGURY

On an empty plain where nothing grows, a white synth structure stands. Inside is the **Augury**, an entity composed of three 6-foot (2 m) diameter crystal orbs orbiting an empty space. Like the Anthelid, the Augury is a device able to manipulate time. Unlike the Anthelid, the Augury is a conscious automaton with motivations of its own, however mysterious those may be. It speaks most languages, including the Truth.

The Augury allows dothin into its presence, but rarely Thexx. It may allow dimension walkers, if it has a use for them, or if the dimension walkers insist they need knowledge or aid the Augury can provide. For its part, the Augury can sift both time and dimension, observing events and drawing conclusions. The Augury can answer any question, regardless of the difficulty, put to it. The uncertainty is whether it chooses to answer truthfully, or twists the truth to achieve its ends. It never explains its ends, but the Thexx of Time Vault 33 believe the Augury's purpose has nothing to do with time adepts, safeguarding Panaton, or anything similar, though it sometimes acts as if those topics concern it. Instead, they believe the Augury is nothing less than a monitor set in place by beings native to a barren, nameless dimension.

Mulr: level 6, *Speed* defense as level 3 due to size; health 40; swims a long distance each round

Augury: level 8, *knowledge and prediction tasks* as level 10; *Armor* 5; *long range temporal energy beam* can attack three targets as a single action inflicting 10 points of damage (ignores *Armor*) each

Octopus: level 3, *stealth* as level 5, *defense, perception, knowledge, and Intellect tasks* as level 4; health 15; *spear attack* inflicts 4 points of damage; see page 146 of *Into the Deep* for more information

Durator, typical: level 3, *tasks related to sailing* as level 5; *bow and spear attacks* inflict 4 points of damage



University of Doors,
page 216

Time Fortress, page 76

PANATON HEARSAY

Doors Into Time: The **University of Doors**, situated in a private dimension, opened a door into the **Time Fortress**. At least one group of researchers entered to explore the odd dimension of twisted time lying on the other side, only to completely disappear. Doughtier dimension walkers are sought to find the original missing University of Doors explorers.

Mediators: A pack of dothin discovered a cache of time adept cyphers that allow them to enter extremely accelerated time states. They've been using them to raid other dothin packs. Rarely do dothin act against others, even in separate packs. Whoever stops these time bandits would be greatly rewarded by all dothin clans.

THE WEIRD OF PANATON

Vault of Forgetting: In ruined Time Vault 3, a destroyed mass of forgotten technology glows. The Thexx who emerged from this vault give it a wide berth. Anyone who visits the vault forgets a treasured memory, such as the name of a parent, a triumph, or time spent with a loved one, as well as what precisely happened inside.

Burning Tree: This treelike tower of white metal sometimes burns with green fire. When it does, a ripple propagates outward, synchronizing all time states of creatures and objects for miles in the sequential state for one hour. During this period, one can enter and leave the Badlands without getting caught in a time loop, as long as one leaves before the hour is up.

CHAPTER 8

THE TUMULT

Had it been days, weeks, or only minutes since I was stranded in this substanceless nowhere? Lightless but not dark, sound surrounded me like an infinite sea. At first, it was only a background hum. But my perception gradually sharpened, until I could discern components. Hundreds of them. Clicks, trills, basso calls, piping glissandos, and cycling pops. Like a symphony, rich with so many noises that the combined blend, the texture created by sound enfolded me.

The sense of myself remained, but I couldn't feel my individual fingers, or clench my teeth, or move. Though I could yell. Scream, even. When I screamed as loudly as I could, the background hum grew jagged and discordant, or even disappeared for a moment, before returning. The silence was the worst, because then I had nothing. So I stopped bellowing and pleading, and just listened.

When the new sounds came, I stifled a gasp. Four tones rang out next to me, each slightly different from the next, as if notes played by four different musicians, but I didn't see any players. So I concentrated on the notes. Two were high and sweet, like those played on breath pipes. Another was stretched out and low, like someone blowing through a water horn. And the last was the thrum of someone striking a drum, but not with the authority of a soldier's beat—more like a tentative rap.

"Hello?" At least, that's what I tried to say. It came out like a short trumpet blare. In response, the four tones sounded again, stronger and more confident, coming together as if part of some kind of musical arrangement. I didn't know much about music. But I could hum a tune. So on a hunch, that's what I did. The invisible musicians and I improvised a song right then and there. I'm not sure who had the melody and who harmonized. It didn't matter. The sound we produced was the key. Suddenly, I was talking with four creatures, though not talking, exactly. We were passing information back and forth almost telepathically. Sonopathically?

The two high tones I decided to call the Twins. The low sound I called Garo, after my friend with a deep voice. Drummer pretty much named itself. Herself? Maybe.

The notes had a name for this place of textured sound where they lived, which was a complex song all its own. I just called it the Tumult.

The Tumult might not actually be "pure sound"—it probably has some dimensionality as well. But pure sound is the sensation that impinges upon minds of visitors from standard planes.



The Tumult is a bizarre dimension of pure sound. The landscape is created by a symphony of tones, voices, chimes, and sounds not readily identifiable.

The Tumult is a bizarre dimension of pure sound. The landscape is created by a symphony of tones, voices, chimes, and sounds not readily identifiable. Long, wide tones make up "resonance islands" in a whisper-tossed sea of rustling. Each island hosts an entire ecosystem of murmuring wind, roaring predators, rising tones stretching away into the soft distance like blades of grass, and all manner of tinkling, bleating, purring, and

bleeping noises like tiny creatures in a forest. "Existence" is what's created by all the sounds working together to create a harmony. Pure silence is rare, and usually indicates sickness, storms, or the presence of evil influences.

Native creatures manifest as standing waves of sound, and thus always emit a basic variety of noise. This is how other creatures of the Tumult recognize each other. By stifling their sound, creatures of the Tumult can move



unseen, but remaining silent is akin to holding one's breath in a standard dimension, and no creature can do it for more than a few rounds without risking dire consequences to their own continued existence.

In the Tumult, there is no gravity, light, heat, pressure, or other environmental factors one normally equates with a location. That said, native creatures sense an "environment," purely by listening. Visitors to the plane who manage to figure out the dimension's rules survive by visualizing the sounds they feel around them. This is akin to a condition that some humans report when they smell numbers or feel taste called [synesthesia](#). In this case, visitors learn to "see" sounds.

There are landscapes of noise, reverberating weather, and even climate in the Tumult. However, the metaphor isn't perfect.

GM SUMMARY

This bizarre dimension requires that PCs first figure out how to exist as an intelligent sound. They must figure out how to make sense of an environment that consists solely of other noises. They must learn how to communicate with each other, and eventually other intelligent native sounds, which are divided into two groups: the [grazions](#) and the [scordaturns](#). If PCs successfully avoid predatory sounds, they may even decide to investigate intrusions into the dimension known as [Graveyards](#). Each Graveyard is actually a depository of lore, encoded as sound, possibly lodged in the Tumult by some component of the datasphere, or the local dimension's datasphere equivalent. They may also try to figure out the nature of a slowly unfolding disaster called the [Quietude](#) that threatens to completely wipe away the Tumult.

TRAVELING TO THE TUMULT

The fact that visitors from standard dimensions who arrive in the Tumult aren't immediately destroyed by the radical shift in physical laws might suggest there may have been some connection with the base dimension of Earth. A more obvious link between Earth and the Tumult is the fact that creatures on Earth can be drawn to the Tumult simply by humming the "wrong" tune. Such transport-tunes are recorded as symbols scribed on ceramic plates buried deep under the seas or scattered across the moon's dark

USING THE TUMULT

The Tumult is difficult for PCs to conceive of without traveling to it, and an easy place to become lost.

However, PCs may discover themselves shunted there accidentally, and translated into intelligent sound. Alternatively, they may learn that caches of ancient lore hidden by the datasphere lie in a location called the Tumult within sound-encoded vaults called Graveyards. Such information may be vital for PCs to conclude some other task. It's also possible that access to the lore within a Graveyard might give a PC limited access to higher functions of the datasphere back on Earth.

Alternatively, PCs might be explorers, using a device they discovered to transfer between various dimensions on a sort of cosmic joy ride. Finding the Tumult should be on the list of any PC interested in finding a bizarre, yet beautiful transdimensional destination. Finally, PCs may receive a plea for help from an intelligent sound (either a [grazion](#) or a [scordaturn](#)) as a sort of recorded song, pleading for aid with the gradually approaching apocalypse called the Quietude.

side, as recorded scraps sometimes played by the datasphere as an unexpected response to an unrelated query, and in one case, wound into the music of a traveling song.

Methods described in the Introduction might also throw a dimension walker into the Tumult. If using some kind of dimensional transport such as the Grinder of Infinities or the Crystal Ship to enter the Tumult, the vehicle remains as a specific standing tone, though to recognize the presence of their craft amid all the other sounds is just one more task that the PCs face upon finding themselves in this dimension.

PRESENTING THE TUMULT'S WEIRD

Visitors can't see anything, but not because they're blind. Visitors have no physical body. They can only hear. When PCs arrive, describe how they can hear a background hum. The hum gradually sharpens, so that after a few moments they can discern distinct audible



Search Terms:
[Synesthesia](#)

[Grazions](#), page 91

[Scordaturns](#), page 92

[Graveyards](#), page 93

[Quietude](#), page 95

TRITONE GRAVEYARD

The Tritone Graveyard is one of several similar areas located in the substanceless dimension of pure sound called the Tumult (page 84). The Tritone Graveyard, like other Graveyards found there, is an intrusion from the universe of normal matter, specifically the universe that hosts the Earth. And like those Graveyards, the Tritone Graveyard contains an expression of the datasphere. That expression gained enough consciousness to name itself Tritone.

PCs can find the Tritone Graveyard if they're exploring the Tumult, if they discover a portal that drops them into it randomly, or if they believe that Tritone possesses special information they can gain nowhere else.

SCORDATURN OUTPOST

Three scordaturns reside within a distinct area in the Graveyard typified by a staccato strumming. The scordaturns believe they're on the cusp of gaining unlimited knowledge, and are initially jealous of newcomers. Unless convinced otherwise, they likely attack anyone out of fear that that knowledge will be stolen. The scordaturns are **Rolar**, **Leama**, and **Medaram**.

Rolar: level 4; Armor 1; scordaturn commander, manifests as a low fluting sound; sound blasts inflict 5 points of damage and tune the victim's sound so that it sounds more like Rolar's for a few hours

Leama: level 5; health 25; manifests as a steady buzz; otherwise it rarely speaks, just does as Rolar says

Medaram: level 3; Armor 3; manifests as a breaking wave; often disagrees with Rolar's commands

Loot: Each NPC carries two random overtones scavenged from other parts of the Graveyard. Overtones are sounds that operate like cyphers. Use whatever means you normally use to generate cyphers, but translate the effects so that they are appropriate to the Tumult.

DEAD ZONE—START HERE

It might be better if the PCs' first encounter with the Tumult isn't the dead zone that surrounds the Graveyard; consider having novice explorers bypass this zone. If the PCs' discovery of the Tritone Graveyard coincides with their arrival in the Tumult, their first task is to figure out how to interact with their surroundings and communicate with each other as described in **Presenting the Tumult's Weird** to find out how to adapt characters to their radically new existence as intelligent sounds.

A band of white noise surrounds the Tritone Graveyard and absorbs and smothers other sounds that enter it. Most creatures (including PCs) require three rounds to travel through the zone.

GM Intrusion: A swarm of eight **dissonance eels**—which manifest as a kind of slithering whine—shoal along the interior of the dead zone. They attack anyone who makes it through.

Dead zone: level 5; inflicts 2 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) each round a creature in the zone fails an Intellect defense task

Dissonance eel: level 2; dissonance attack inflicts 2 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) on a target that fails an Intellect defense task; swarm of four attack as a level 4 creature inflicting 4 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor)

Presenting the Tumult's Weird, page 85

INSIDE THE GRAVEYARD

Past the dead zone is a background resonance island typified by a melodious chime ringing that never dies away. Various smaller areas, distinctly audible from each other, can be discerned, as described by most of the other boxes on this page spread.

Several entities called **death chimes** wander this background area. Those without express permission to enter (which is usually provided by Tritone) who are discovered are attacked.

GM Intrusion: The chime ring is seductive; the character must succeed on a difficulty 5 Intellect defense task or become languorous and determined to never leave.

Death chime: level 5; Armor 2; destructive interference attack inflicts 4 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) on a target that fails a Speed defense task

DEAD EXPLORERS

This area is resonant with many conflicting, repeating sounds. When living sounds die, they normally fade away and are lost in the Tumult. But within this area they replay over and over, never-changing. The area holds approximately seven dead sounds. Each is infested with feeders. If PCs are familiar with local history, they might recognize the sound of a couple of explorers long missing. One body contains a sweet, resonant sound (with no obvious purpose) stolen from the Audience Chamber, which Tritone would love to have back (serves as an asset in any interaction tasks with Tritone).

AUDIENCE CHAMBER

This area is bounded with an impenetrable “solid” sound that fences out all other noises. To get through, visitors require either a specified sound sequence, or success on a series of three difficulty 5 Intellect tasks to find the right frequencies.

The entity called **Tritone** can often be found inside. Tritone manifests as a series of ringing bells. In fact, it is an extension of the datasphere that, at least within the Tumult, has gained self-awareness and personality. When present, Tritone engages visitors immediately with a question about whether they've seen its nemesis, a being called Melodic. If visitors can provide actual information (or convincingly lie), Tritone offers to answer one question, regardless of the scope. It may still do so, but petitioners must succeed on a difficulty 6 task to persuade Tritone to answer. Alternatively, Tritone could grant one significant physical change in another dimension in a specific place, including Earth, creating an effect, object, or creature of level 8. It can also translate an intelligent sound of the Tumult to another dimension, including Earth, whereupon the sound becomes a physical being.

GM Intrusion: Tritone reveals a secret the character has been keeping from one or more of the other PCs, or possibly a secret that the character didn't know about their own past.

***Tritone:** level 10; attack inflicts 20 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) and on failed Intellect task sends target to an alternate dimension*

MAD SOUND

Delamen is a sound that manifests as distant thunder, who resides in this area that sounds much like it. Delamen resides inside the Graveyard, sustaining itself on resonance eels and feeders. It gibbers and makes no sense, but also looks out for itself. It knows the sound sequence required to evade the death chimes that patrol the Graveyard, and the sound sequence required to gain entry to the Audience Chamber, but getting that information out of it is a difficulty 6 task.

GM Intrusion: Whatever progress made in convincing Delamen to give up its information is squandered when Delamen becomes distracted and wanders off.

***Delamen:** level 5; area sound blast attack inflicts 5 points of damage on up to four creatures*

SLITHERING SOUND

Grating and harsh like fingernails on slate, the **slithering sound** moves through the Graveyard and attempts to absorb anything it finds.

GM Intrusion: The fight with the slithering sound attracts a death chime; see Inside the Graveyard.

***Slithering sound:** level 5; Armor 2; attacks made against the slithering sound are reflected back on attacker on a failed Speed defense task; attacks inflict 5 points of damage and on a failed Intellect defense roll, in addition, push target out into the dead zone*

*Inside the Graveyard,
page 86*



Search Terms:
Brian Eno The Ship

components: clicks, trills, basso calls, piping glissandos, and cycling pops. Tell them what they hear is almost like a symphony, rich with hundreds of combined noises, creating a kind of texture with sound. In the way that brains have of making sense from sensory data, the sounds create a mental picture.

One way to help present the Tumult to players is to turn out all the lights and let the sound of your voice and words provide all that much more immediacy. You might also play some ambient music in the background, especially tracks described as soundscapes or eclectic ambient music.

Before the PCs try to speak, assign each of them a specific, personal sound. That becomes the noise each PC emits as a standing sound wave. When they first speak, the PCs intensify their personal type of noise instead of speaking in a language. Possible types of noise include the following, but feel free to assign whatever strikes a chord. A PC traveling in a group who succeeds on a difficulty 2 Intellect roll recognizes each specific sound near them as another member of that group.

1	Bell
2	Whistle
3	Horn
4	Drum
5	Chime
6	Strummed string
7	Fluting
8	Thunder
9	Click
10	Warble

Describe everything to characters as a kind of noise or sound. For example, if Tumult creatures approach the PCs, portray them by the kind of sound they make: a hissing, a singing, a constant tinkling, and so on. If PCs enter a new area, depict the key features of the

new background noise—instead of a constant hum as when they first appear, maybe it's a rumble with occasional crackling snaps and bright tones. Locations described later provide the kind of background sound PCs will first hear upon entering a new area.

CHARACTER STATS AND POSSESSIONS

Most of the skills, abilities, cyphers, and equipment PCs carry are useless when they are standing sound waves in the Tumult. Possessions are still “with” each character, but manifest as minor tones. If a PC succeeds on a difficulty 2 Intellect check, they can identify each piece of equipment they carry, integrated within their own sound. PC abilities and equipment related to the creation or manipulation of sound might be useful. For instance, a character trained in singing or producing music with an instrument is considered trained in *all* tasks they attempt while in the Tumult. Likewise, a PC with a sonic detonation could use it to directly inflict damage on creatures and objects (or accidentally, on themselves) in the Tumult.

Might, Speed, and Intellect remain important, though most tasks a PC attempts in the Tumult will be Intellect tasks, but not all (such as some kinds of combat techniques). In addition, a PC can attempt to “reinforce” their own sound by sacrificing 3 points of Intellect to gain +1 to Armor. This is a choice a PC can decide to change later.

Recovery rolls, using XP, and other game mechanics work as normal, unless you see a way to change them to better fit the conceit of the Tumult.

COMMUNICATION

At first, PCs will probably be confused because when they try to speak to each other, a disorganized chorus of honking, clicking, and thundering ensues. However, if the PCs attempt to harmonize their sounds to create a pleasing rhythm, hum, or song (a difficulty 2 Intellect task), something magical



If PCs are having a particularly tough time figuring out what they can and should do to interact in the soundscape of the Tumult, provide a few insights for them (perhaps as perception or insight tasks). To get around, PCs must essentially learn to visualize the sounds the GM describes to them.



happens. They become part of a chordlike sound that is not only pleasant to experience, but that also allows the PCs to communicate as if by telepathy. While the PCs maintain a harmonized chord, they can talk to each other normally.

The same kind of communication can be had with other intelligent sounds encountered in the Tumult, assuming those sounds are friendly and want to communicate. Some entities in the Tumult actively attempt to create discord and shatter harmonies.

RELATIVE POSITIONING AND RESONANCE ISLANDS

A PC's precise location in the Tumult is relative. Anything a PC can hear exists within the same resonance island as the PC. In other words, if a PC can hear a sound, they can interact with that sound in some fashion. Resonance islands are metaphorical rooms containing many items and creatures, all of which can interact with each other.

MOVING BETWEEN RESONANCE ISLANDS

Moving between resonance islands can be hit or miss, unless PCs have specific knowledge of the harmonies the resonance island they

seek emanates. This kind of information can be passed between intelligent creatures of the Tumult, or gained by finding sounds that act almost like maps that contain this information. Characters can also just strike off into the unknown, and discover other resonance islands through exploration.

INTERACTING WITH OBJECTS AND CREATURES

To identify the nature of a particular sound, PCs must usually make a difficulty 2 Intellect roll, at least until they become more practiced. If the sound acts as a kind of barrier, an Intellect roll might allow PCs to bypass it. If the sound is a creature of the Tumult, then PCs might be able to communicate with it if the sound is intelligent, or attack it if it's aggressive. Of course, the sound may attempt to do the same with the character.

COMBAT IN THE TUMULT

How do sound waves fight? By employing a few different strategies, including creating disharmony and jarring dissonance, drowning out a weaker noise with overpowering volume, or creating zones of smothering silence through the generation of destructive interference.

Etudion: level 3; destructive interference attack inflicts 4 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) on a target that fails a Speed defense task

Dissonance eel: level 2; dissonance attack inflicts 2 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) on a target that fails an Intellect defense task; swarm of four attack as a level 4 creature inflicting 4 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor)

Chant spider: level 2; a swarm of five or more acts as a single level 4 creature; overpowering volume attack inflicts 4 points of damage (6 points of damage if a swarm attacks) on a target that fails a Might defense task

Feeder: level 1; attacks against helpless targets inflict 2 points of damage

Graveyards, page 93

Dissonance: For a character not native to the Tumult, creating audible dissonance is probably the easiest way to attack. To create dissonance with a specified sound by tuning themselves to do so, a character must succeed on an Intellect attack. If successful, the PC inflicts 2 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) on the target.

Overpowering Volume: Characters can increase their volume in a directed fashion as an attack against another sound. To use volume as an attack, a character must succeed on a Might attack. If successful, the PC inflicts 4 points of damage on the target sound.

Destructive Interference: This is a very difficult method, but also the deadliest. Attacking a creature using destructive interference with one's own sound increases the difficulty of the attack by two steps and requires a Speed attack. If successful, the PC inflicts 6 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) on the target sound.

Harmonic Influence: More difficult yet because of their subtlety are various methods of harmonic influence that some creatures of the Tumult use to hide from, influence, take control of, or drive a target sound to extinction by creating such sweet harmony that the target sound can't help but go along with the music, even if that means its end. Attacking a creature using harmonic influence with one's own sound increases the difficulty of the attack by three steps and requires an Intellect attack. If successful, the PC takes control of the sound for one minute.

WHAT IS THE TUMULT?

The Tumult is an alien dimension of being, and the PCs will be challenged in simply discovering how to interact with their environment, each other, and their abilities—at least at first. Interacting with creatures of the Tumult, all of different timbres and tones, is likely the most important aspect of any encounters the PCs have here. Trying to find the connection between the prior world and the Tumult, especially as it connects with the datasphere, might be the reason PC explorers enter the dimension. The cyphers PCs can find in the Tumult, called overtones, might prove especially interesting if brought back to Earth.

FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE TUMULT

Landscape and flora and fauna are difficult to differentiate in the Tumult. Is the rising tone a sloped "hill" upon which gonglike vermin scurry, or is it all one massive entity? It really only matters if a particular sound offers an advantage or represents a danger. That said, someone interested in cataloguing the kinds of life in the Tumult will find a menagerie. Floating bubbles of song rise from some deep reservoir, sleeting motes rain down like chimes, a breeze brings the sound of clarinets, and a chanting gathers at the periphery of all being.

Some sounds are predatory, and instead of merely bathing in the sounds around them, they actively hunt other tones. The **etudion** is first noticed as an annoying echo of other nearby sounds, an echo that follows more and more quickly after the quarry sound until it attempts to merge with and cancel out its victim, smothering it.

Preying upon everything else are **dissonance eels**—which manifest as a kind of slithering whine—that "infect" other sounds with their own simple iterations. An infected sound may throw off dissonance on its own, or it may succumb and give rise to a new generation of dissonance eels.

Travelers might encounter a variety of dangerous sounds, including **chant spiders**, which can swarm unsuspecting victims in a chorus of droning tones that overwhelm and freeze a victim in place. Once caught, a victim is devoured over hours as the spiders suck dry the caught tone's vibrancy.

Finally, a variety of creeping, low-toned entities called **feeders** cling to discontinuities in the soundscape known as Graveyards. Feeders are dangerous only to tones that are already disabled and unable to move. Feeders slowly move over impaired tones and absorb the final bits of sound and life into themselves.

NATIVES OF THE TUMULT

The Tumult contains a multitude of intelligent beings, or just one, depending on a visitor's perspective. Because communication between intelligent sounds of every kind is possible by harmonizing, strife is uncommon. However, two groups exist in the Tumult that hold themselves apart from each other on philosophical grounds. The **grazions** are long-lived sounds who believe that existence



BIOLOGY OF A LIVING SOUND

Living sounds of the Tumult are born, live, and die. They also eat, reproduce, and sleep. That said, they accomplish all these things differently than creatures in standard dimensions.

Physical Interaction: Intelligent sounds obviously can't physically shove or push other sounds. However, manipulation of their standing wave with respect to other sounds can accomplish much the same effect. So intelligent sounds "gather" spikes of nutritious tones by incorporating them into their own wave. They can "push" away other sounds that crowd them. They can attempt to "grab and hold" sounds in place, and so on, though all of these activities are accomplished through sonics.

Nutrition: Many sounds subsist merely on the background aural character of the resonance island they inhabit, though this dampens sound if too many living sounds occupy the same space, in a manner akin to resource depletion in standard dimensions. Many sounds supplement their diet with additional sounds, or rely entirely on hunting. Intelligent sounds can survive on background sound, or on hunting if in a sound-depleted location.

Reproduction: Consensual sounds mingle their melodies in a certain way until a new entity is formed, a wholly new standing wave, that must be cared for like any newborn for months or years depending on the base intelligence of the sound.

Shelter and Sleep: Living sounds don't require shelter in a standard dimensional sense; the resonance islands themselves are akin to structures. When sleep is required, sounds of like kind often clump together so that their separate standing waves, smoothed to the most basic aural manifestation, mingle so that it's hard to tell individuals apart.

Trade: Intelligent sounds obviously don't use physical currency. Instead they trade in other kinds of sounds, though not necessarily all of the living variety. They also trade in musical arrangements. An arrangement is a unique method of patterning, often requiring several intelligent sounds to pull off, to create a specific song. New arrangements are very valuable, as are variations on familiar arrangements.

should be measured in deliberate, graceful tones. The scordaturns stridently believe the precise opposite. Made up predominantly of youthful tones who have existed only a few scores of years, scordaturns believe that adventure, and experimental harmonies should be relished, despite the danger (and often enough, foreshortened lifespan) this philosophy invites.

GRAZIONS

Grazions are intelligent sounds who typically manifest with long, resonant tones that possess an intrinsic inner beauty and confidence. They tend to move in groups, constantly harmonizing to create sedate, graceful music like grand orchestras. Joining in reveals the conversation is usually about

heady philosophical musings on the nature of being, the existence of mind, and sometimes, the danger posed by scordaturns.

Grazions like the way things are. As a class of tones, they are uncomfortable with the idea of other realms of existence, and actually exhibit various degrees of xenophobia if presented with an intelligent sound that claims to be an entity from another dimension. Such claims are met with tolerant amusement at best and xenophobic violence at worst.

Grazions tend to claim resonance islands, creating gardens of soothing, regular sound. The wild chimes, interrogatory trills, and staccato beats of "wild" resonance islands (of the sort that scordaturns prefer) are absent in places where grazions dwell.



Tumult natives measure time. It's not based on movements of celestial objects or a day-night cycle, but natural activity linked across all resonance islands referred to as brightening, when aural activity is at its zenith, and darkening, when things are most quiet.

The bulk of the grazion population can be found in a series of linked resonance islands called Symphony. Symphony is large enough that it even hosts a small population of scordaturns who try to bridge the divide between the two groups.

SCORDATURNS

Scordaturns are intelligent sounds that eschew predictability and manifest as sounds that are quick, almost discordant, and often indescribable in their oddity. They prefer to be alone or in small groups and seem content to be isolated with their own thoughts rather than “constantly gossiping” (as they describe grazions). Scordaturns are loners, explorers, rebels, and sometimes criminals.

Of course, they wouldn’t classify themselves as miscreants. That’s a grazion classification. Whereas grazions like the status quo, scordaturns are only happy when they’re trying new things. They are drawn to dangerous locations, which is why there are far fewer of them—many have died exploring the Graveyards, or attempting to penetrate the growing radius of the Quietude.

Scordaturns keep outposts near unexplored areas, near several Graveyards, and along the slowly expanding region of the Quietude. A few of them reside on resonance islands where grazions live, such as Symphony, but usually for only a few months at a time in order to accomplish some goal, or more likely, until they grow bored.

LOCATIONS IN THE TUMULT

A select number of locations are described below, though many more exist. The Tumult may seem limitless; however, the Quietude means that it is actually bounded, and is probably even shrinking.

SYMPHONY

Symphony contains the largest concentration of intelligent sounds in the Tumult, possibly

several hundred thousand or more. Symphony can be conceptualized as a city inhabited by intelligent sounds, but it’s built of sound, too. Each section of the city is a resonance island, and possesses its own unique aural character. The city’s primary inhabitants are stately, intelligent sounds called grazions. However, a population of risk-taking, adventurous scordaturns also resides here.

Background Resonance: The series of linked resonance islands making up Symphony are connected by a background resonance whose aural character is a mellifluous aesthetic similar to strings and mellow woodwinds. This character is carefully maintained by a group of grazion gardeners who prune edge feeders and slay chant spiders that sometimes infest the fringes. The gardeners are suspicious of newcomers, but direct them inward to the Grand Bazaar, where strangers commonly mingle with the populace.

The head gardener, manifesting as a two-tone standing wave, is **Ghev**. Ghev secretly keeps several chant spiders in “cages,” despite conventions to the contrary. Ghev has secret scordaturn sympathies, and participates in chant spider races held beneath the city.

Grand Bazaar: The Grand Bazaar at the heart of Symphony is a resonance island unto itself with an aural character of changeable beats, modal harmonies, and chordal patterning that rises and falls across the scales. It is a vast sprawl of interconnected markets and “open-air” shops. What do intelligent sounds buy? Thousands of complex musical arrangements akin to art, different living sounds gathered from around the Tumult that can be prepared as food or decoration, special overtones that provide cypherlike abilities, services of every kind, and many other things that have no direct translation to someone born in a standard dimension.

Begas is a well-known vendor in the Grand Bazaar, known for traveling to the far parts of the Tumult and returning with exotic sounds, unexpected arrangements, and odd information. Begas, a scordaturn, spends

Ghev: level 4, tasks related to dealing with non-intelligent invasive and predatory sounds as level 6

Begas: level 5, tasks related to commerce as level 7



The difference between grazions and scordaturns is philosophical. Many in both groups were once a part of the other, but shifted their outlook over time. Some have cycled back and forth several times, while others never change.



Intelligent sounds who come into conflict might fight, but they may choose to contend in a modal duel.

about two weeks in Symphony and then heads out on yet another expedition that can last for months. A few times Begas found intelligent sounds in the wilderness who claimed to be interdimensional travelers. The vendor brought them back to Symphony, but lost track of them after that. It's possible they found their own way. Then again, Begas may have sold the newcomers to an interested collector. In any case, Begas is always looking for able entities to accompany the next expedition. It's dangerous—but also wondrous—out there.

Modal District: This linked resonance island's aural character is frenetic, changeable, and ominous. For all that, it keeps to rhythms that a dimensional traveler might call danceable. The Modal District is where most of the scordaturns who reside in Symphony stay, though never usually for long. The district is known for its intense celebrations where literally intoxicating music is generated. Here, scordaturns gamble for all manner of prizes, and dangerous creatures of the Tumult are sometimes put on display, or are made to race or fight each other.

Intelligent sounds who come into conflict can just fight, but they may choose to contend in a modal duel, which are held in the Modal District. Modal duelers are matched up in what are essentially singing competitions. The sound whose performance is judged the most delightful (from the point of view of whichever scordaturns happen to be in the audience) is the winner. Usually, this is enough to also conclude the underlying squabble.

A sound called **Vehz** takes bets on all manner of events that occur in the Modal District. Payments are made in musical arrangements. When losers fail to pay they tend to disappear. A trio of basso notes who call themselves the **Cadence** always accompany Vehz.

THE GRAVEYARDS

The Graveyards are “dead” zones that poke through the Tumult at random locations, manifesting as regions of white noise that absorb and smother other nearby sounds. Sometimes dissonance eels shoal near the

edges of the Graveyards and feed on sounds weakened by the dead zones.

Hardy or intelligent sounds can punch through these zones to discover what lies inside, if they can survive spending the three rounds such an attempt requires. According to legends, Graveyard interiors contain forgotten “structures” of pure tones, which contain vast stores of coded information. Information that describes other worlds, other dimensions, and other races. All are ancient, but some seem far older than others. The aural characters of some are so exotic that they might as well be a disharmonic attack, bombarding the area.

Many of the structures are muffled and faded, and whatever information they once contained is gone or looted. Some, however, contain the treasures that popular legends suggest. These pristine caches are plentiful, and each is different. If PCs explore the structures inside a Graveyard's dead zone, roll randomly (or choose) on both the Nature of the Cache table and the Tenor table.



Vehz: level 4, tasks related to deception and taking bets as level 6

Cadence: level 5

A “dead” zone surrounding a Graveyard is a level 5 effect that inflicts 2 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) each round a visitor fails an Intellect defense task.



Datasphere,
page 359

Iron Wind, page 135

NATURE OF THE CACHE

01–40	Nothing of value
41–50	Creatures regain 1 point of health each minute they remain in the cache
41–50	1 spike of encoded cognizance provides training in one non-combat skill that lasts one week
51–60	2 spikes of encoded cognizance provide training in one non-combat skill that lasts one week
61–70	4 spikes of encoded cognizance provide training in one non-combat skill that lasts one week
71–80	1 spike of encoded cognizance provides training in one non-combat skill that is permanent
81–90	3 spikes of encoded cognizance provides training in one non-combat skill that is permanent
91–96	2 spikes of encoded cognizance provide training in one non-combat skill that is permanent
97–99	A level 8 intelligence will answer 1d6 questions on any topic, even questions related to other dimensions and worlds, including Earth. The intelligence is an intrusion of the datasphere.
00	A level 10 intelligence can enact one significant physical change in other dimensions and worlds, including Earth. The intelligence is an intrusion of the datasphere that retains functions giving it control over what is effectively a purposeful deployment of the <i>Iron Wind</i> . It can also translate an intelligent sound of the Tumult to another dimension, including Earth, whereupon the sound becomes a physical being. (PCs would regain their original characteristics and equipment.)

TENOR

01–50	Aural character is neutral and unchanging
51–65	Aural character is unstable and dangerous; every so often all within must succeed on a difficulty 5 Intellect defense task or take 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor)
66–70	Aural character is frightening; at some point visitors must succeed at a difficulty 5 Intellect defense task or become terrified and leave
71–75	Aural character is seductive; at some point visitors must succeed at a difficulty 5 Intellect defense task or become languorous and determined to stay
76–80	Aural character is mentally damaging; at some point visitors must succeed at a difficulty 5 Intellect defense task or become convinced that one of their allies must be murdered (effect lasts for one minute)
81–85	Aural character is bolstering; creatures in cache have an asset to defense tasks while they remain and for up to one day afterward
86–90	Aural character breaks down “space” in the Tumult; at some point visitors must succeed at a difficulty 5 Intellect defense task or be instantly transported to some other location in the Tumult
91–95	Aural character breaks down time in the Tumult; at some point visitors must succeed at a difficulty 5 Intellect defense task or freeze in time for one day
96–00	Aural character is mentally stimulating; at some point, visitors can attempt to unlock higher understanding by succeeding on a difficulty 5 Intellect task, which allows them to add 1 to their Intellect edge while they remain in the cache and for up to one day afterward

As noted in the tables, some caches contain an intelligence described as an “intrusion” of the datasphere. Unlike the datasphere normally interacted with on Earth, the intrusions discovered in the Tumult have gained some agency, personality, and possibly even a purpose. How or why each intelligence has intruded into the Tumult, or what the Tumult actually represents,

these intelligences will not explain. But their purposes could include finding the perfect aural arrangement, monitoring sections of Earth for specific dangers, protecting the Tumult, searching for some secret of universal knowledge, or something else. In some sense, if there are gods in the Tumult, they are the separate intelligences located in the Graveyard intrusions.



What shape the Nameless would take upon reaching a standard dimension is a mystery, but its destructive nature in the Tumult suggests it would be a threat to the very fabric of any new dimension it finds.



THE QUIETUDE

A growing soundless region of the Tumult has grazions and scordaturns concerned, or at least those who make it their business to explore distant regions. The Quietude is exemplified by an utter lack of sound, not merely the “white noise” that surrounds the Graveyards. As it grows, it swallows up and kills off a larger and larger piece of the Tumult.

Navigating the Quietude: Attempting to pierce the Quietude is dangerous. Without special protection, usually in the form of special cypherlike sounds called overtones, natives don’t long survive. They suffer 3 points of damage each round they remain within the Quietude. Those who find the means to survive a trip into the emptiness must succeed on a series of difficulty 5 Intellect tasks to avoid becoming lost in the absence of “landmarks,” possibly forever.

Discovering the Nameless: Successful explorers eventually discover an entity that lies at the core of the Quietude: a supremely powerful creature of ear-splitting dissonance that is unconcerned, unaware, or absorbed in some other monumental task so completely that it doesn’t realize (or care) that its actions are having the unfortunate side effect of

eradicating the Tumult. The creature—call it the **Nameless**—is akin to the Graveyards in that it is an intrusion from another dimension. In the Tumult, it manifests as a blot of incandescent noise surrounded by a buffer of deadening silence. It’s uncertain what the Nameless wants, but the few who’ve encountered it and survived suspect that the entity might be attempting to “burrow” out to a higher dimension. If so, it may eventually leave the Tumult behind, possibly intact. What shape the Nameless would take upon reaching a standard dimension is a mystery, but its destructive nature in the Tumult suggests it would be a threat to the very fabric of any new dimension it finds.

The Nameless: level 10



SUSTENANCE

Level: 1d6 + 2

Usable: Low-pitched chirp

Effect: User gains +5 to Armor against sonic attacks, including conditions that drain life (such as complete silence, as typified in the Quietude).

THE TUMULT HEARSAY

Burgled: A group of explorers from an alternate dimension, possibly human, have appeared in Symphony. A small band of scordaturns robbed them, taking objects the explorers say they need in order to return home.

Approaching Disaster: A hardy explorer named Kadura warns that the Quietude is about to massively expand, possibly overtaking several prominent locations in the Tumult.

THE WEIRD OF THE TUMULT

Manifestation: An entity calling itself Melodic periodically arrives in Symphony

with answers for any question put to it, no matter how difficult. While it is active, a nearby Graveyard disappears.

Waves of Sound: Emanating from a resonance island on the Tumult’s periphery, blasts of overwhelming sound pummel all nearby creatures, inflicting 1 point of damage to everything each time. A grazion named Sarralan fashioned an overtone that promises to reflect the next sound blast back on its source, with the intention of permanently destroying it, whatever it is. However, a scordaturn named Kaldurmor claims that the overtone could have exactly the opposite effect, and multiply the effect of the destructive sound many times.

CHAPTER 9 REEVAL



*Nibovian wife,
page 249*

GM SUMMARY

Reeval is an utterly alien dimension almost wholly filled with a writhing intelligent mass called the Thread. The Thread created Nibovian creatures, such as the [Nibovian wife](#). The only parts of Reeval that dimension walkers are likely to see (and survive for any appreciable amount of time) are the interiors of one of several miles-wide spherical empty spaces, called voids, where the Thread conduct transdimensional experiments.

The Thread are interested in creatures other than humans, and have even made some headway into sending Nibovian probes to other worlds and dimensions. But, for whatever reason, these beings seem most comfortable in entrapping humans.

NIBOVIAN

Most people misunderstand the term “Nibovian.” The word isn’t meant to convey a place, but a process. Creatures with the Nibovian title are artificial drones, probes, and lures extruded into the human-inhabited universe by incomprehensible transdimensional beings who can’t understand humans or the universe humans reside in, but who nonetheless want something from us, something transcendent. Or something far more base—in the same way that Nibovian creators can’t understand humans, it’s possible that humans are equally incapable of comprehending what the Nibovian creators want.

The truth is that if the human universe was a market stall where the vendor had set up a bin filled with toys, the Nibovians are the catching pole. The one holding the catching pole is the Nibovians’ utterly alien creators. Humanity are the toys.

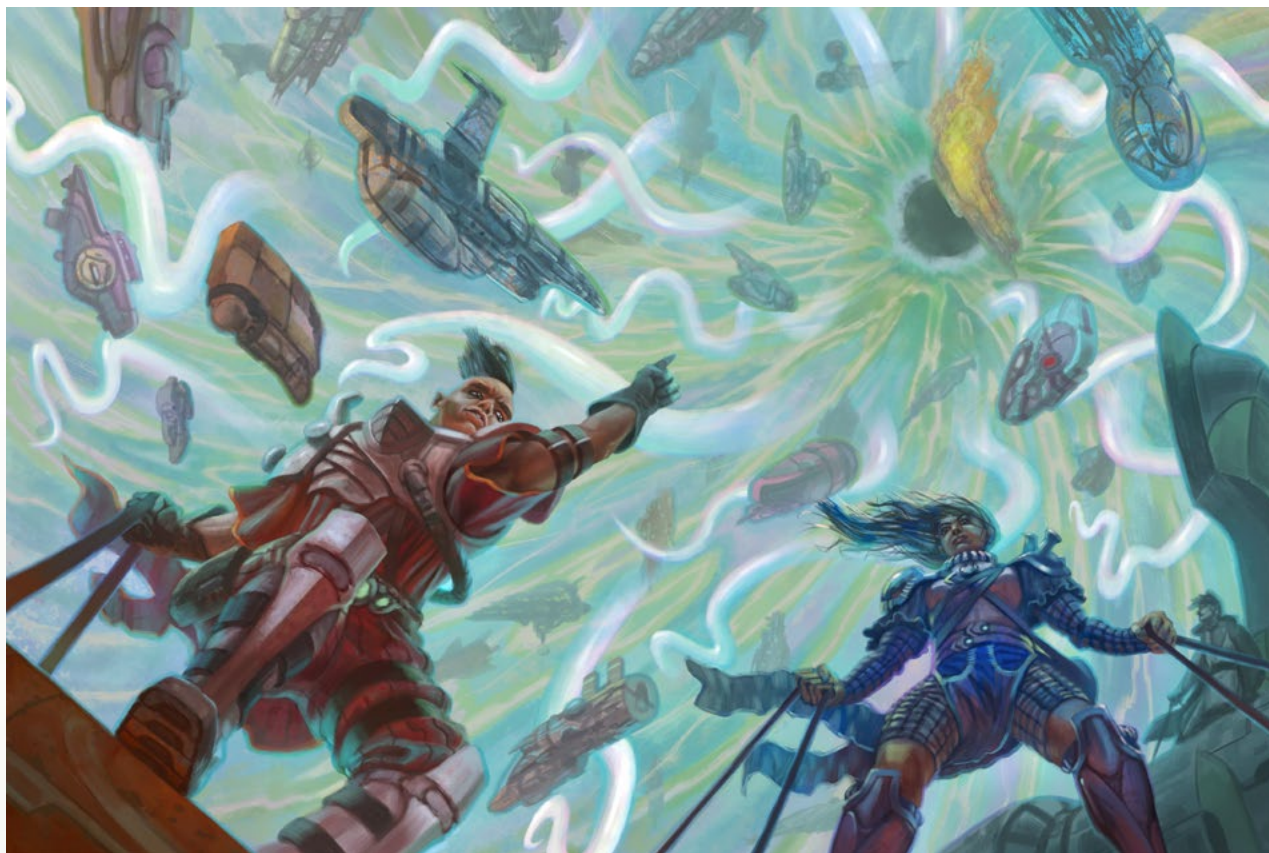
This means, then, when explorers travel to Reeval, the dimension from which Nibovian constructs are injected into our reality, they do not find it populated with Nibovian wives, Nibovian children, and so on, because those beings were made for the sole purpose of manipulating humans on Earth. Who makes Nibovians? That would be the utterly alien life form known as the Thread.

WELCOME TO REEVAL

Reeval is a dimension of densely interwoven, living tendrils that writhe like a vast bucket of elongated, milk-white worms. Occupying only a tiny fraction of this far-flung expanse are a series of connected, evacuated spherical spaces completely bounded by the living tendrils. The living tendrils, known as the Thread, are the intelligent natives of Reeval. The empty spherical spaces are where the Thread interface with and experiment on entities harvested from other dimensions. The Thread possess an intelligence that dwarfs human cognition while at the same failing to understand the phenomenon of individual self-awareness. Thus the Thread probe other dimensions using biological constructs grown



“Nibovian” is the term used to describe the artificial creatures that manipulate and lure humans of Earth. Those artificial phenomenon are created by a different category of creature called the Thread that inhabit an alternate, bizarre dimension called Reeval.



to mimic other creatures' forms, emotions, and self-consciousness despite the fact that (or because) the Thread do not (yet) understand what self-consciousness is.

The spherical spaces—called voids—are different from each other. Some of the voids are wholly given over to crafting Nibovian drones, and others are used to generate transdimensional vortices through which the Nibovian drones are deployed. Some contain particularly bizarre enterprises that are hard to describe in human terms. Within these voids, the Thread practice interaction among themselves using puppetlike facades called Thread walkers that are dressed in harvested human skin and clothing.

GETTING TO REEVAL

In the base dimension is a world called Farundiel. Natives look somewhat like humans, but their skin is pale and their hair is white. The tech they wield is as potent as any ray emitter, detonation, or offensive artifact, but is unlike anything found on Earth. That's because the tech is powered by ultraterrestrial energies that leak from a strange hole in nearby space. The hole is also a doorway between the normal universe and

Reeval. Because of the anomaly, Farundiel is as plagued by the treacherous Nibovians as much as Earth is, if not more so. Passing through this hole deposits travelers in Reeval, in the void known as the [Gyre](#).

People can also discover Reeval by being a victim of a lure—such as a [Nibovian guide](#)—created by the Thread to draw humans into their dimension. Though most victims end up dead, a few are kidnapped and deposited in a void called the [Abscission](#).

Finally, methods for transdimensional travel described in the Introduction also work, though these methods do not always deposit visitors in a void, but instead into the mass of writhing, elongated, milk-white worms called the [Body](#). Arriving stuck within the Body isn't quite as horrible as appearing in the Abscission, though it's not far from it.

SURVIVAL IN REEVAL

Several of the voids in Reeval contain air, light, and warmth, but the much larger mass of the Body (which is filled with the writhing forms of the Thread) is airless and likely to crush to pulp any non-native attempting to move through it without a protective shell or vehicle to hold the mass of the Thread at bay.

[Gyre](#), page 101

[Nibovian guide](#), page 149

[Abscission](#), page 99

[The Body](#), page 103

For more information about Farundiel, see page 131 of [Into the Night](#).

VOIDS OF REEVAL

A series of evacuated areas filled with breathable air, gravity normal to the interior surface, and artifacts of a race (or single entity?) of beings called the Thread lies in the dimension of Reeval. The evacuated areas—called voids—are the exception to what is otherwise a dimension of densely interwoven tendrils that slowly writhe like elongated, milk-white worms—with a hint of greenish glow to them—that go on forever. These are the Thread. Or this is the Thread; it's unclear to merely human levels of cognition whether the Thread is a single, vast entity, or a race made up of trillions.

Unlike most other maps presented in this book, this representational graphic is not of a specific area within Reeval, but rather an overview of the areas that an explorer might encounter if they find themselves in this somewhat anathemic dimension. To best utilize this map, also refer to Welcome to Reeval (page 96).

EXIC INFESTATION

This region is swarming with green, spiderlike creatures called exics.

GM Intrusion: The PC falls through the floor into a mass of exic-infested Thread.

Exic infestation, page 103

Exic, page 144

THE BODY

The Body is the real Reeval, surrounding the voids and extending in every direction. Those who attempt to travel through it are quickly asphyxiated unless they have a source of breathable air. In addition, the constant pressure of the writhing, wormlike strands inflict 1 point of damage per minute of exposure.

GM Intrusion: The Body unexpectedly deposits a PC caught within its writhing mass into the Braid.

GYRE

The Gyre is a void 10 miles (16 km) in diameter. The whorled, greenish-glowing, and slowly writhing interior surface of the void is littered with hundreds of wrecked spacefaring vehicles. A spherical blot of darkness drifts at the void's center.

In addition to other potential encounters in the Gyre, PCs may notice a craft in the shape of a large red cube several hundred feet on a side that initially seems impenetrable.

GM Intrusion: A panel in the side of the cube opens to reveal a series of internal chambers, all empty except for a glob of clear *animate fluid* about 1 foot (30 cm) in diameter. If anyone speaks to the animate liquid, it follows that person around as if a particularly damp pet, until such time as it encounters a Thread walker, which it attacks with an acidic touch.

Animate fluid: level 3; acid attack inflicts 3 points of damage

Gyre, page 101

For more information on the Gyre, refer to the section of the same name in this chapter.

HIDDEN VOID

An exit hidden under a spacecraft contains the secret home of a mutant from Earth called *Fenesero*. The chamber has the look of several prior-world installations, because most equipment here has been salvaged and ferried from Earth over the course of about fifty years by Fenesero. He is several hundred years old, a dimension walker, and someone obsessed with the Nibovian phenomena after losing his husband to one a century earlier. Fifty years ago he tracked the constructs to their dimension of origin. Here he hides in enemy territory, studying the Thread as it has been studying humanity, hiding in plain sight using his advanced knowledge and his psychic abilities to remain undiscovered. He is not a cruel man, but is more interested in learning about the Thread than in helping PCs. Unless the PCs promise to aid him in some significant fashion, he asks them to leave. For instance, if they agree to bring him a couple of developing Nibovians from the Nibovian Development Void, he would probably find a way to send the PCs home, or grant them some other boon.

Fenesero: level 8; Armor 5; psychic attack either inflicts 6 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) on up to ten targets within long range or makes them forget the events of the last ten hours

ABSCISSION

This 4-mile (6 km) space is strung with white tendrils that create a three-dimensional crosshatch filling the interior like a precisely woven web. At the juncture of many of the cross-hatches are organic spheres about 6 feet (2 m) in diameter that sometimes hang flaccidly, sometimes bulge as if filled with fluid or gas, and other times shake and thrash as if containing something alive.

GM Intrusion: The PC hears the sound of what can only be a child crying, caught in one of the nearby collection bulbs.

Abscission, page 106

INTER-VOID ACCESS

Tunnels about 50 feet (15 m) wide that wind for great distances connect the voids. Traffic between the tunnels is composed of a few Thread walkers but is mostly egglike containers between 5 and 15 feet (2 and 5 m) in diameter, propelled by the constant swirl of tendrils that compose the tunnel and void floors.

GM Intrusion: The PC's interaction with a passing egglike container precipitates its opening. Inside is a strange creature—a crawling one, which attacks.

Crawling one, page 141

NIBOVIAN DEVELOPMENT

This 6-mile (9 km) diameter space is overgrown with stemlike tendrils laden with "fruit" in the form of various-sized buds. The largest buds drop of their own accord to the ground and are ferried on tiny tendril feet from the chamber to the exit.

*Nibovian Development
Void, page 106*

EJECTION VOID

This 4-mile (6 km) space is littered with variously sized egg-shaped containers. A 30-foot (9 m) diameter undulating mass of animate greenish mucus feeds on them.

GM Intrusion: The mucus blob begins to move a short distance each round toward the PC, apparently intent on eating the PC.

Ejection Void, page 107

BRAID

The void of Braid is approximately 3 miles (5 km) in diameter. Its interior surface is mostly covered in what appear to be simple structures, courtyards with vending stalls, and roads. Several exit tunnels leading to other voids are also scattered across the sphere's interior. At first glance, the entire area has the aspect of a very large Earth bazaar.

GM Intrusion: An explosion from a vendor selling cyphers it didn't quite comprehend catches the character, inflicting 6 points of damage on a failed Speed defense task.

Braid, page 104



People of Earth believe, for the most part, that Nibovian wives and similar monstrosities are evil demons out to tempt humanity, when the actual truth is that they are like remote manipulator “arms” extended into what the Thread consider to be a hostile environment.

Ilstar: level 5; attacks up to three human-sized creatures next to each other at once; heat-draining touch inflicts 3 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) if a target fails a Might defense roll

Braid, page 99

The slowly writhing tendrils that make up the Thread glimmer with a faintly green-tinged white light, which provides dim illumination everywhere within the dimension.

Gravity exists, but not within the mass of the Body, which is more like a sea, but rather in the voids, where a sensation of down is normal to each sphere’s interior boundary. So creatures within can move around normally on a surface that is often composed of wormlike loops and braids, other times glistening organic slabs or chitinous paths. Finding food is possible in the voids dedicated to study of the dimension containing the Earth, such as the Braid.

USING REEVAL

Nibovian wives and similar constructs have long fascinated (and horrified) people of the Ninth World; an exploration of where they actually come from is something any Aeon Priest worth their esoterics would give much to know. Victims of various Nibovian constructs could find themselves stranded in the dimension, which means rather than seeking entry, they’re concerned about finding an exit. Explorers looking for lost ships capable of traveling either in space or through the dimensions might find clues that point toward the Gyre. Because of the Thread’s fascination with all things human, various artifacts, missing famous people, or even secrets stolen from Earth might be hidden away in Reeval.

FLORA AND FAUNA OF REEVAL

The main life form of Reeval is the Thread, though lesser living entities, akin to vermin, also exist. Growing amid the Body are darker, non-glowing strands called **fabrils**. Fabrils grow many miles in length and sometimes extend into the voids where their suckerlike

heads are like the heads of carnivorous plants.

Swirling, seedlike creatures 12 feet (4 m) in diameter called **ilstars** sometimes drift across voids in pairs, settling on objects and creatures that are smaller than them in an attempt to drain their heat.

Many more creatures creep or float within the voids. All of them ultimately rely on the surrounding bounding walls made up of the writhing Thread.

THE THREAD

A distinct “race” of intelligent creatures called the Thread makes up the dimension of Reeval. The Thread exists as a densely interwoven mass of living tendrils that slowly writhe like elongated, milk-white worms. Only in sum does the Thread possess intelligence—individual strands have as much cognizance as lone hive insects. Amid the larger Body, the Thread cogitates as one massive, albeit glacially slow intelligence. As a single entity, the Thread has many abilities that surpass understanding, even the ability to peer into alternate dimensions. But along the void interfaces within Reeval, the Thread can pinch off tiny portions of itself into miniscule subunits in order to accomplish specific tasks. These subunits are akin to individuals, though not completely.

It’s not really possible for a human to understand the Thread. On the other hand, it’s easy to see what it can accomplish, and can’t accomplish: the Thread possesses amazing intelligence and knowledge while at the same time lacking fundamental self-awareness. Like a great wind rushing over obstacles and around barriers without consciously choosing the many paths it must take to do so, the Thread continually cogitate, experiment, and expand their knowledge into difficult and challenging areas.

If the Thread does not have self-awareness, they at least have an instinct for recognizing their lack (if lack it is). Something about the self-directed nature of humans and similar

Fabril: level 4, Speed defense as level 2 due to being “planted” in the ground; Armor 2; bite inflicts 5 points of damage



creatures in parallel dimensions draws attention from the Thread so much that they have learned how to pierce the dimensional divide and extend exploratory probes into the strange (to them) dimensions of emptiness, individuality, and desire. After discovering these alternate dimensions, the Thread started experimenting with creating empty spaces—the voids—within the Body.

The Thread have an advanced technology based on biomodification and chemistry. They can grow whatever they need, up to and including Nibovian automatons that mimic the shape and to some extent the minds of humans and other creatures of interest found in alternate dimensions. By growing segments of themselves in certain ways and in certain conformations, the Thread can create vast engines capable of launching the Nibovian lures into the dimensions they can see all around them, and use those Nibovians like remote manipulator arms extended into a deadly environment.

Thread Walkers: The Thread, insofar as they sometimes act as a single entity and other times as a series of individual subdivisions, do not have leaders. That said, some Thread subunits found within the Braid and a few other voids learn about humans by creating puppets from small bits of themselves, and sculpting them into human-shaped bodies covered with cast-off skin segments harvested from humans, and further disguised with garments, gloves, hoods, and masks. These Thread “walkers” sometimes even take on the semblance of individuality. This faux-individuality occasionally extends into goal formation that can differ with the Thread overall. Usually, such walkers are absorbed back into the Body well before true individuality can form. Those that persist so long that individuality actually precipitates are found dried up and dead, as if self-awareness is somehow antithetical to the Thread.

Because the Thread are so completely alien, they are unlikely to recognize dimension walkers exploring their realm right away, perhaps assuming them to be another Thread walker. But if the Thread of the Body becomes aware that experimental subjects are loose in Reeval, then all the Thread slowly becomes aware. Alternatively, what individual Thread walkers learn is not immediately transmitted to the Body, though it may soon be if that walker is allowed to meld back into the greater mass.

REEVAL LOCATIONS

The following are just a few of the voids found within Reeval.

GYRE

The Gyre is a void 10 miles (16 km) in diameter. The whorled, slowly writhing interior surface of the void is littered with hundreds of wrecked spacefaring vehicles that ventured through a hole in space in the base dimension. In the Gyre, the hole is a spherical blot of darkness drifting at the void’s center. Because the hole is normally one way, leading from the base dimension to Reeval, air doesn’t escape. And neither do explorers who’ve fallen through from the base dimension.

Explorers (and victims of mishap) from the base dimension, requiring protection from airless vacuum, often travel in spacecraft. Thus the interior of the Gyre is littered with spacecraft wreckage. Most are ancient. Most have distinctly different designs, as if built by entirely different civilizations. Most of the visible wrecks are partly inundated to one degree or another with slowly twining strands of the Thread. In some cases, the strands have pulled away ship segments. A few, however, remain whole. These serve as the homes for the handful of survivors that reside in the Gyre. In addition to the survivors, one Thread walker—called Red—is commonly found in the Gyre.

A single exit in the form of a tunnel about 50 feet (15 m) wide leads to the much larger void of Braid.

Farun: A group of about thirty humanoids with pale skin and white hair called the Farun have survived in the Gyre for a few generations, scavenging supplies from more ancient craft and growing crops in a large, smooth-hulled craft they claim as their home. Their stories suggest that they are descended from explorers who piloted the craft into a hole in space, only to become stranded in the Gyre. Most do not speak the Truth.

A woman named Laruh leads the Farun. Laruh wears clothing scavenged from half a dozen different civilizations (many of the garments once served as suits that protected against airless vacuum), as do most of the Farun, giving them a decidedly eccentric facade. She organizes scavenging parties, settles disputes, and takes point when newcomers enter the Gyre or when dealing with the Thread walker they call Red. Laruh knows a little Truth because of her

Laruh: level 5; health 20; Armor 2; carries one vacuum cypher and one displacement cypher

interaction with a crew of human explorers from a spacecraft that fell through the hole a few years ago. None of those crew remain, and Laruh is unwilling to describe why if asked. The truth is that in order to protect the Farun, she misled the human explorers into believing that Red could be trusted. So when Red managed to convey its desire that the human explorers “follow” it through the Body, they complied. The Farun never saw any of them ever again. Laruh feels ashamed of what she did, but she’d do it again to protect her people.

In exchange for cyphers and food, Laruh is happy to welcome newcomers and answer most of their questions, though perhaps not all. If asked about Nibovians (which is a question the human crew also posed to her), she honestly answers that she’s never heard of such beings before.

Red: A subunit of the Thread periodically visits the Gyre wearing a bright red full-body space suit with a red-tinged visor. If one gets close and peers through the visor, a hint of the

pale, glistening, slowly writhing strands are visible inside the helmet.

Red (as the Farun call it) is sometimes seen exploring wrecks, pocketing random junk, then sinking through the boundary layer for days or weeks at a time before reappearing. Normally, Red ignores Farun or humans. But if someone intercepts it, Red does take notice. It responds to most queries by either nodding or shaking its head as if in disagreement, or by motioning with its gloved limbs. It has no true self-awareness, though it apes behaviors it has witnessed in the Farun. In this way, explorers might believe that they got Red to agree to take them somewhere else in Reeval. And Red might indeed take explorers to the Braid. But it might also take them someplace far more dangerous, such as directly into the Body, or to a **Nibovian Development Void**.

Wrecked Craft: Most of the craft in the Gyre are picked clean. A few, though, still contain ancient treasures in the form of shins, oddities, and even hidden cyphers and artifacts. Threats such as defensive automatons and alien crew members coming out of millennia-long stasis are also possible. Roll or choose something from the Gyre Wreck Contents table to generate what explorers find.

Nibovian Development Void, page 106

Red: level 4, tasks related to interaction as level 1; health 20; battering melee attack inflicts 5 points of damage

Time wraith, page 156

Green-scaled alien: level 6; Armor 2; long-range beamed energy attack from weapon inflicts 6 points of damage

Defense automaton: level 5; Armor 3; long-range psychic attack inflicts 4 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor)

Eldmor, page 142

Endless Abode, page 46

VACUUM (ARTIFACT)

Level: 1d6 + 3

Form: Handheld device

Effect: A target within long range is enclosed in a bubble of force that contains the target and a vacuum. The force bubble level is equal to the cypher’s. A living creature unsuited to a vacuum moves one step down the damage track each round in the bubble. However, at the point where they should die, they fall unconscious and remain so for about a minute. If the victim is immediately given aid, they can be revived. If not, they die.

DISPLACEMENT (ARTIFACT)

Level: 1d6 + 3

Form: Handheld device

Effect: A target within immediate range is teleported 200 feet (61 m) in a direction specified by the user, even into an area the user can’t see, such as directly down into the ground. The victim displaced into an area that would normally be solid displaces enough matter to arrive without being immediately damaged or destroyed.

D20 Roll Gyre Wreck Contents

1-10	Empty or infested with a mass of the Thread
11	2d6 shins
12	2d6 shins and two cyphers
13	1d6 shins and an artifact
14	Skeletons of a human crew and 1d6 cyphers
15	<i>Time wraith</i> and two cyphers
16	<i>Green-scaled alien</i> in stasis, violently insane
17	Skeletons of alien crew, a <i>defense automaton</i> , and an artifact
18	<i>Eldmor</i> “egg”
19	Dimensional craft (not a spacecraft) that might be repairable, with time
20	Hatch leading to random chamber in <i>Endless Abode</i>



The Thread could be the largest single living creature in all existence, in any dimension.

THE BODY

The Body composes most of Reeval. Given that the plane is at least the size of an entire galaxy, if not larger, and that the Thread making up the Body often acts as a single mind, the Thread could be the largest single living creature in all existence, in any dimension. Even if not, it's still bigger than worlds with little to distinguish one part from another. The only variance are the few voids that lie within its depths like bubbles in a white sea, plus the occasional area of infestation or disease.

Creatures from other dimensions that find themselves pulled into the Body without a source of breathable air soon smother. In addition, the constant pressure of the writhing, wormlike strands inflict 1 point of damage per minute of exposure to creatures that don't

have rigid armor or some other protective shelter. But this anathemic environment is not directed. The Body, for all its interest and resultant "Nibovian" probes into alternate dimensions, is ill-equipped to sense individual creatures that invade it either purposefully or accidentally. The Thread created the voids to act as interfaces with entities it sensed in alternate dimensions. If someone truly wished to avoid the attention of the Thread while still remaining in Reeval, they might be best served by exiting the voids, where Thread walkers act as the eyes and ears of the Thread.

Exic Infestations: Regions of the Body contain hollows that are *not* created by the Thread, but rather by the endless appetite of infestations of green, spiderlike creatures called *exics*. Exics are a species of transdimensional vermin that lucked into finding the Body a few hundred years ago. Since then, the infestation has eaten out dozens of cavities in the Body. The smallest is reminiscent of a cavern system. The largest is about the size of a planet. These cavities are somewhat like a void, though obviously not purposefully created by the Thread. Still, most have breathable air and gravity. The cavities are crisscrossed with greenish exic webs, hives, and crawling, swarming exics. Though the infestations are immense and growing, the Thread occupies an unimaginably vaster volume, which might be part of the reason they haven't yet noticed the infestation. For their part, the exics quickly trap any Thread walkers that appear within an infestation, and for that matter, any explorer pushing through the Body.

Diseased Regions: Regions of the Body suffer from various illnesses, and sometimes even die. Dead regions contain a mass of blackened, non-illuminated, and non-moving strands. As horrible as the writhing wormlike continuity is to most explorers from the base dimension, these lightless, rotting, necrotic sections might even be worse. Diseased regions usually don't last long, as healthy strands



Exic, page 144

eat and displace dead and dying strands. However, one diseased region owes its continual die-off to an extraterrestrial object radiating lethal, invisible energy. The object acts like a toxic thorn in the Body's flesh, killing off a wider and wider swath of the Thread every year. Unlike exic infestations, the Thread is aware of this region, and has sent various subunit Thread walkers to assess the situation. The object is a cast-off stellar remnant that was somehow transported transdimensionally to Reeval.

BRAID

The void of Braid is approximately 3 miles (5 km) in diameter. Its interior surface is mostly covered in what appears to be simple structures, courtyards with vending stalls, and roads. Several exit tunnels leading to other voids are also scattered across the sphere's

interior. At first glance, the entire area has the aspect of a very large Earth bazaar.

The humanoid figures moving between these structures and inhabiting many of them are revealed to be Thread walkers. Vendors, buyers, and sellers (who are also mostly, but not entirely, made up of Thread walkers) are continually active within Braid. In fact, Braid is one massive experiment conducted by the Thread to investigate the nature of markets, competition, and the numinous nature of free will as it manifests in such a situation. All told, several thousand Thread walkers can be found in Braid at any one time. All of them cover themselves in some variety of stolen human garment, as well as harvested human skin, as necessary, to help give them shape and the appearance of actual people.

Humans can probably learn to discern Thread walkers by their somewhat stiff

What's for sale in Braid and what do Thread walkers use for currency? Everything and nothing.



Cyphers, page 278

D20 Braid Market

- 1 Hanging full human skins with bins on the side with smaller cut segments (preserved against rot)
- 2 **Cyphers** from Earth (at any one time, vendor has 2d6 cyphers on hand)
- 3 Yellow crystals suffused with excitement (holding the crystal suffuses user with the emotion)
- 4 Glass (and real) disembodied eyes of every size and hue (some are still living)
- 5 Blue crystals suffused with despair (holding the crystal suffuses user with the emotion)
- 6 Tiny green bottles that give Thread walkers a moment of self-consciousness before it causes them to disincorporate; humans gain an asset to one knowledge-based task attempted within the next minute
- 7 Purple crystals suffused with longing (holding the crystal suffuses user with the emotion)
- 8 Colorful paints, chalks, pens, and tattooing devices
- 9 Red crystals suffused with rage (holding the crystal suffuses user with the emotion)
- 10 Hands. Human, varjellen, and many more varieties that are not immediately identifiable
- 11 Prototype for new Nibovian process for a creature known as an octopus
- 12 Replacement tendrils for Thread walkers who need an upgrade
- 13 Variety of clothing, boots, coats, gloves, and hats of all different qualities
- 14 Green crystals suffused with contentment (holding the crystal suffuses user with the emotion)
- 15 Feet. Human, varjellen, and many more varieties that are not immediately identifiable (some are still living)
- 16 White crystals suffused with terror (holding the crystal suffuses user with the emotion)
- 17 Death; the vendor takes payment and then attempts to dismember the buyer
- 18 Heads. Human, varjellen, and many more varieties that are not immediately identifiable (some are still living)
- 19 Fist-sized spheres that absorb all light (creating darkness) within immediate range for one hour when activated
- 20 **Artifacts** from Earth (at any one time, vendor has 1d6 artifacts on hand)



Artifacts, page 298



postures, jerky movements, apparent inability to speak, and a greenish-white glow that occasionally leaks from what should be their eyes. Thread walkers are not good at telling the difference between themselves and humans and other free-willed humanoids who occasionally find Braid, though it's not impossible for them to take note of intruders. Depending on the Thread walker in question, a newly discovered human is either ignored, apprehended and dispatched to the Abscission, or in a couple of very rare cases, dealt with as if just another vendor or buyer in Braid.

Many stalls and stores sell the direct fruit of Nibovian probe results, which range from the grossly physical to the incorporeal, including body parts, objects of human manufacture, and distilled emotion. In most cases, mute Thread walkers serve as the vendor. Because Thread walkers are still experimenting with markets and their purpose, they also don't really understand value. Thus, buyers can literally offer anything in trade, and it will be accepted. A shin, a fingernail, a cypher, an artifact, a very small rock, a convincing scream of horror—whatever.

Visitors can wander the Braid Market and randomly look over wares, or seek out (more likely, be sought out by) specific vendors and other personalities that reside in Braid.

Ibudan's Emporium: Unlike almost every other stall and structure in Braid, this one-story building has a sign out front. The sign reads "Emporium" in the Truth. Inside can be found all manner of masks, hoods, automaton parts, tools, weapons, armor, dried foods, spirits, and other odds and ends. Perhaps more incredibly, the vendor is a Thread walker able to speak thanks to a strange boxy artifact that hangs around its neck. The proprietor calls itself **Ibudan**. Though Ibudan

hasn't quite cracked through to complete self-awareness, it has come very close. It keeps a variety of emotion crystals and potent drugs at hand so that for a period of up to ten minutes during any given hour, it can come very close to self-consciousness, enough so that it can recognize real humans in its shop. Sometimes Farun from the Gyre sell items they've scavenged here, and Ibudan doesn't reveal their presence to the Thread.

Ibudan might possibly see humans less as experimental subjects, and more as creatures with inherent value in themselves. It's hard to be sure. However, working with Ibudan is possibly the best chance that someone who is lost in Reeval has of finding aid.

The Butcher: It hasn't escaped the Thread's notice that food is the one thing that humans seek out even more than emotional attachment. This large structure is hung with all manner of dried and smoked meats. Sausage, tubs of lard, steaks, roasts, and hundreds of other preparations. Only a little exploration of the shop is required before it becomes clear to a shopper that for the

Ibudan: level 4, tasks related to interaction as level 5; health 20; battering melee attack inflicts 5 points of damage



The Thread has established other linked sets of voids where they investigate other dimensions, but those efforts are modest compared to the interest the Thread has in humans.

The Butcher: level 4; tasks related to interaction as level 1; health 20; cleaver attack inflicts 8 points of damage

Abscission guardian: level 4; Armor 1; tentacle inflicts 4 points of damage on a failed Might defense task and paralyzes target for one round



Abykos, page 230

Erynth grask, page 240

Nildir, page 150

most part, human meat is what's for sale. For the most part, the Thread walker known as **the Butcher** gets its wares from the Abscission. The Farun that reside in the Gyre have tried to torch the establishment and kill the Butcher, but after two apparently successful attempts, a new establishment, complete with a new Thread walker called Butcher, sprang up within a day or so.

Exits: Tunnels about 50 feet (15 m) wide lead to nearby linked voids, including the Abscission, the Nibovian Development Void, and the Ejection Void. Traffic between the tunnels is composed of a few Thread walkers, as well as egglike containers that range between 5 and 15 feet (2 and 5 m) in diameter propelled by the constant swirl of tendrils that make up the tunnel floors. For the most part, these containers ferry what's harvested from the Abscission to the Braid, as well as probes created in the Nibovian Development Void to the Ejection Void.

ABSCISSION

This 4-mile (6 km) space is strung with white tendrils that create a three-dimensional crosshatch filling the interior like a precisely woven web. At the juncture of many of the cross-hatches are organic spheres about 6 feet (2 m) in diameter that sometimes hang flaccidly, sometimes bulge as if filled with fluid or gas, and other times shake and thrash as if holding something alive. Each bulb is a harvesting station that transdimensionally

connects to previously deployed Nibovian probes and lures operating in the base dimension. Some Nibovian constructs siphon human emotion into crystal-like concentrations collected here, some steal clothing and personal possessions, and in the case of the Nibovian guide, some kidnap an entire living human.

Everything stolen from the human dimension is collected here in the Abscission. After a few days of hanging, a collection bulb makes its way down a given strand on thousands of tiny tendril feet, hardens to the consistency of a tough egg shell, and is either absorbed directly into the floor and thence into the Body of the Thread, or sent toward Braid to become part of that experiment. In either case, prospects for the captive are poor.

Sometimes still-living humans shunted into the Abscission manage to get free of the collection bulbs and make a nuisance of themselves. To prevent that, several biological constructs (called **Abscission guardians**) that were specially created in the neighboring Nibovian Development Void patrol. If they catch loose humans here, captives are subdued and re-encapsulated (or freshly encapsulated if they arrived from somewhere else) in a collection bulb.

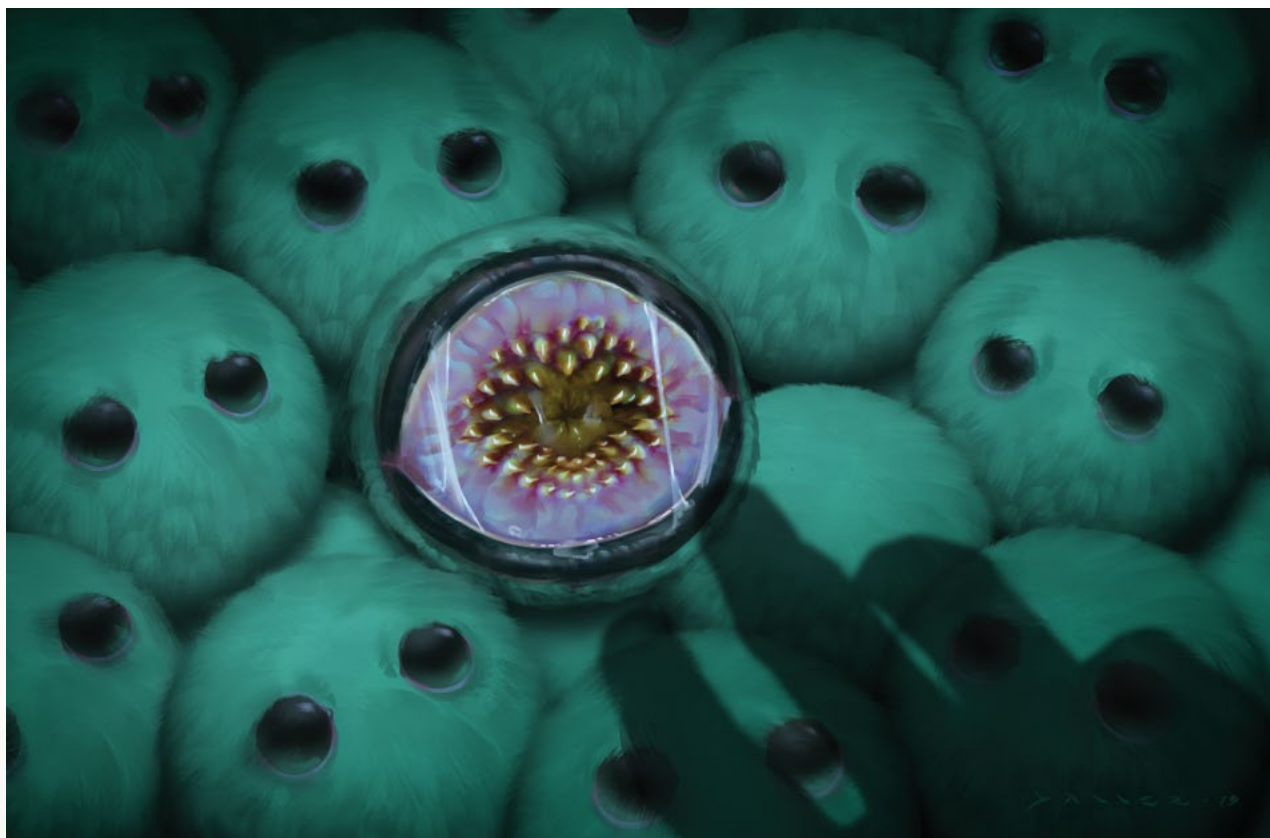
Sometimes creatures other than humans are accidentally transferred to the Abscission by Nibovian guides. Such creatures are usually transdimensional in nature, such as the **abykos**, **erynth grask**, and **nildir**. These creatures are usually more adept at escaping the collection bulbs than human victims.

NIBOVIAN DEVELOPMENT

This 6-mile (9 km) diameter void appears at first glance like an especially overgrown garden. Tendrils burst like stems in redolent profusion from every surface and reach to the sphere's center. Each tendril is laden with dozens of hanging bulbs (which look a lot like the collection bulbs of the Abscission). Within each grows a biological construct of some kind. Because the Thread can peer into other dimensions, down to the cellular level and even deeper, they can impart amazing precision to the mimics here. Still the mimics are not copies—they are probes. Once the probes are grown to specification, the bulbs detach, harden into egglike thickness, and are transported to the Ejection Void.

If cut open, bulbs are found to contain a variety of Nibovian constructs, including





wives, **companions**, and **guides**. Child constructs can also be found here, but since they are designed to be able to reproduce themselves in the base dimension, not as many are found gestating here. Even if a bulb is opened and found to contain a fully developed creature, Nibovians formed here do not generally wake up until they are ejected from this dimension to Earth.

EJECTION VOID

The Ejection Void acts as a massive transdimensional gate that transfers biological

constructs across the dimensional divide between Reeval and Earth. The Thread bred a special biological construction to fine-tune their nascent transdimensional abilities. It crawls across the interior of this 6-mile (9 km) diameter sphere in the form of a 30-foot (9 m) diameter undulating mass of animate greenish mucus called an **ejection blob**. This construction appears to ingest the various egglike bulbs, moving slowly and steadily as it eats. Of course, it doesn't actually consume the eggs; instead, it moves them to Earth through a transdimensional portal.

REEVAL HEARSAY

Pulled Under: Farun in the Gyre talk of a wrecked spacecraft that is mostly pulled under the teeming mass of the Thread. The Farun say the crew of this vessel is still very much alive, but is sealed within their craft.

Singer: A Thread walker called Singer makes noise by playing a variety of musical instruments. Usually it's all cacophony, but it will mimic tunes it hears, and sometimes it creates unique compositions of its own.

THE WEIRD OF REEVAL

Ancient Aliens: On a few occasions, humans who were gathered in the Abscission did not appear to be from the Earth, Farundiel, or the other locations where the Thread has sent probes. These humans seemed to be of a far more ancient breed.

Face the Future: The Thread, as a single cognizant entity, has many more abilities than the already awesome capacity to peer into alternate dimensions. It can also gaze into both the future and the past.

Nibovian companion:

level 3; Armor 1; works to gain trust of chosen victim over period of time to drain life (and emotion); see page 93 of the Ninth World Bestiary for more information

Nibovian guide, page 149

Nibovian child: level 3;

Armor 2; touched victim must succeed at an Intellect defense task or become utterly obsessed with the child's well-being; see page 92 of the Ninth World Bestiary for more information

Ejection blob: level 8,

Speed defense as level 2 due to size; health 100; touch inflicts 1 point of damage and sucks victim into creature; unprotected ingested creatures take 2 points of damage per round for 1d6 rounds, at which time they are transdimensionally transferred to a random location on Earth

CHAPTER 10 CELERILLION

Consider a rock. You see it? Yes, of course you do—I've just put the concept in your mind, and thus it exists. Describe it.

It's grey? That's hardly a stretch, but it will do. And how big?

You're clever to keep things simple, here of all places, so all right, the grey rock is just large enough to fit snugly in the palm of your hand. You can feel its river-smoothed texture, its comfortable weight, perfect for throwing. And that odd fossil-like spiral embedded in the stone, how interesting, right?

Wrong. I've just modified the concept, and you didn't even try to resist. That's dangerous in Celerillion.

No, it's not just a rock. It's a demonstration of—

You question me, now? After you sought me out as a guide? Sometimes I wonder why I put up with this kind of naive insolence.

Fine. Allow me to demonstrate. So the palm of your hand we were just talking about? It's on fire! Your flesh is bubbling and blackening. Melted fat drips sizzling into the Unfettered Range, and the pain is soul-wracking torture.

You'd keep screaming, but your mouth is sewn shut. That's better, you're a bit shrill.

Now, where was I? Oh yes. Don't ever let your concentration lapse. Don't speak in metaphor. Say only what you mean. Don't idly wish. What exists as a mere symbol in the base dimension exists here in this realm of pure cogitation. How could it not?

All right, enough; imagine yourself healthy and without pain, and with two brown, healthy hands full of strength and vigor. That's it. See? All back as it was. Ready to move on? Excellent. Let's go.

GM SUMMARY

Celerillion, also known as the Unfettered Range, is a dimension solely of the mind. All objects and creatures are concepts—or constructs—of conception. In the base dimension, the concept of a piece of red fruit is separate from the actual red fruit. Someone can't be nourished by imagining themselves eating an idea.

But in a realm where there is no physicality, only mental representations, the concept of a thing and that thing are one and the same. This means that visitors must practice exceptionally strict control over their imaginations, lest they accidentally allow the concept of their own existence to be corrupted. Metaphors are particularly dangerous for a visitor to consider, because they invite actual changes. For example, if a dimension walker says they are as cold as ice, they could inadvertently kill themselves

by transforming into a literal block of frozen water, and thus succumb to the background existential threat inherent to Celerillion.

In Celerillion, “**oriception**” is the art and devotion the **tonbrium** use to survive and even thrive. Oriception is too complex a devotion to be a single task; instead, it is made up of three component tasks. For instance, a tonbrium creating a small keep to shelter from a dream storm is a feat of oriception called **conceptual creation**. If a foe tells a victim “Don't think about your face melting off,” it's a **conceptual attack** task. And if a dimension walker tries to give themselves wings to fly, it's a task called **self-modification**.

The dangers of this bizarre plane do not end there, but nor do the wonders. The tonbrium, intelligent creatures who colonized the Unfettered Range long ago, are perhaps Celerillion's most well-known natives. It's

Oriception, page 110

Tonbrium, page 118

*Conceptual creation,
page 111*

*Conceptual attack,
page 114*

*Self-modification,
page 111*



The Unfettered Range isn't a place, at least not in the sense that most other planes are. It's a place that exists only in the mind. This means that any creature with a mind might also exist here in some way, or be linked in some way to Celerillion.

almost a certainty that dimension walkers who find their way here will encounter them. Depending on whom you ask, tonbrium should either be avoided at all costs, or be sought out because they know the Unfettered Range like no other. If one is seeking to find amazing treasures like a cerebral husk, a psychic seed, or a conception jewel, the tonbrium can probably tell a dimension walker where to look. They can also warn a visitor about dangers like dream storms, psychic blots, and much more. But of course, the tonbrium themselves might be the most dangerous threat of all.

TRAVELING TO CELERILLION

The Unfettered Range isn't a place, at least not in the sense that most other planes are. It's a state of being that exists only in the mind. This means that any creature with a mind, in any dimension, might throw a psychic shadow into or be linked in some way to Celerillion. Indeed, the dimension seems ideally suited to hosting minds like those of humans. Of course, any creature that can conceptualize can also exist, and even thrive, here. The more undeniable link between Earth and Celerillion is how humans sometimes accidentally transport themselves into this dimension, where they become constructs of pure mental energy (though from the point of view of travelers, they continue to inhabit their standard physical bodies). This sometimes happens when someone using an artifact that focuses psychic energy has some kind of mishap, if someone with psychic abilities makes a mental breakthrough and discovers a hidden path, or when someone has what seems to be an especially powerful lucid dream.

In addition, a direct "passage" occasionally manifests as a door set high on a cliff face in the **Black Riage** mountain range and the fortress of Everrod in Celerillion. In the case of Earth, at least, any real understanding of where the passage leads is lacking. The **Cathedral of Provenance** on Earth might also be used as a passage between the two dimensions.

Finally, methods described in the Introduction might also transport a dimension walker into the Unfettered Range. If using some kind of dimensional transport, such as the Grinder of Infinities or Crystal Ship, the vehicle remains as a specific concept and apparently physical, though potentially much more vulnerable to modification by someone unfamiliar with the nature of the realm, or by a passing nefarious psychic entity.

PRESENTING CELERILLION'S WEIRD

Even though the Unfettered Range is a dimension of pure mind, concepts that arise on Earth and similar planes take on physical reality and substance here. Terms like distance, movement, and physical descriptions of all kinds remain relevant in Celerillion—though they are *only* perceptions, they are also real, even if fleeting. Thus references to distances or measurements are accurate enough, at least until a conscious mind decides to imagine something different.

But that's when things get weird, dangerous, and even lethal for someone not prepared for what's actually going on. Once an unprepared dimension walker realizes that the "up" and "down" are mere concepts that have been translated into the dimension, the wandering mind might next wonder about concepts like "substance" and "alive." More than one dimension walker has thought themselves dead by pondering mortality in this dimension where ideas and reality are one and the same. This is what's known as "**existential threat**."

Visitors who arrive in a random location in Celerillion see what seems to be an endless immensity of white sky in all directions over a knife-flat plain of mottled black and red stone. Here and there, massive clouds drift in the sky or drag along the plain. The clouds are mostly serene, though some churn with lightning. (The lightning-lit clouds are **dream storms**, and should be avoided.) A PC can seemingly use all their abilities and equipment normally. Because characters from Earth expect gravity,

Existential threat,
page 110



Search Terms:
Lucid dream



Black Riage,
page 177

Dream storm, page 117

Cathedral of Provenance,
page 112

USING CELERILLION

The weird conceptual reality revisions of the Unfettered Range will likely be the first challenge PCs face upon entering this dimension. Although the plane is existentially dangerous to the undisciplined mind, characters may want to go there anyway to test themselves, to experience pure creation through simple imagination, or to fulfill some other deep-seated goal to create something unique.

Alternatively, Celerillion is a dimension filled with all kinds of wonders, as well as secrets and treasures of all kinds, including **cerebral husks**. The PCs might specifically be looking for a race of beings called the tonbrium, either to gain knowledge the tonbrium are rumored to possess, or to stop them from some dangerous action the PCs believe they are preparing to undertake.

Finally, the Unfettered Range is known to host cerebral husks. Cerebral husks are the conceptual corpses of unthinkable vast intelligences from across all dimensions that, through age or mishap, died. Sifting through the cerebral husk of something at least as powerful as the datasphere is something many would desire, hoping to find knowledge, power, or answers to impossible questions.

Cerebral husk, page 114

GM Intrusion: *The PC wonders what it would be like to be taller, smarter, or different in some other way, and thus discovers the background existential threat that endangers all creatures in the Unfettered Range.*

Conceptual creation, page 111

Self-modification, page 111

that's what they find in the Unfettered Range, and they can move about normally. If a character successfully uses **conceptual creation** or **self-modification** to dispense with gravity, they can move simply by thinking about the direction they want to go for the duration of the changed effect.

Breathing isn't necessary, nor is eating, but visitors might not even realize that they are mental constructs. Because they believe they need air and food, they do, just like their assumption that gravity exists makes gravity real for them. Damage to someone's

conception of themselves in Celerillion is reflected as a loss of mental energy, and of course, minds that remain active for too long need the regenerative power of meditation or sleep.

SURVIVING CELERILLION

A newcomer might first realize the expansive possibility of the dimension when they imagine a simple object and it materializes in their hand. A shin? It's theirs. A cypher? Yes, though it might not work exactly like the character hopes. This probably seems like a wondrous discovery, and it is. But it's an equally dangerous realization. Almost inevitably, newcomers eventually succumb to existential curiosity, and wonder about the nature of their own existence.

ORICEPTION

Purposely creating something from pure thought, changing oneself by imagining that change, or attacking another creature by concentrating on some harm befalling your target are each separate tasks of a mental devotion and art that tonbrium call "oriception." The three component tasks that make up the art include conceptual creation, self-modification, and conceptual attack. However, using oriception deliberately—or accidentally, as often happens to visitors—opens up the weak-minded or unprepared to existential threats that could kill them.

Existential Threat: A PC who imagines themselves to be different in some specific way, must succeed on a difficulty 3 Intellect defense task. It doesn't matter if that difference is to be better, faster, larger, or smarter; or on the flip side, dead, transformed into an object, on fire, or some other harmful change. On a failure, the character takes 3 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor). Next round, the character can try again, and so on, until they are able to purge the troublesome thought from their mind, or until



Though entities native to Celerillion do not need to consume food in the normally understood sense, many still eat. For instance, the tonbrium choose to eat because they enjoy it and it's part of their culture. Other creatures of the Unfettered Range gain power by draining the minds of intelligent prey.



they eliminate themselves from existence. To die in the Unfettered Range is the equivalent of dying on Earth. If the character succeeds on the task and was actually trying to modify their self-image, they might actually change themselves (see Self-Modification).

Conceptual Creation: For PCs, the concept of imagining something and thereby creating it is probably heady at first. It's like every wish, spoken and unspoken, comes true. However, if the PCs' mind isn't expansive enough, items (and creatures) created by such wishing are probably not perfectly functional (or able to survive). All creatures new to Celerillion are initially unpracticed with conceptual creation. So when a character imagines something (like an apple), assign a difficulty to it and ask the PC to succeed on an Intellect task, modified to the PC's detriment by one step because they are unpracticed. On a success, the effect becomes temporarily real. On a failure, the effect takes on a semblance of reality, but is only a non-functional facade.

To assign an effect a difficulty, use the following guide: a character can create a single creature or object within immediate range as an action. The creation must fit within a 10-foot (3 m) cube. The difficulty of the Intellect task to create it is equal to 2

+ the level of the object (including items as complex as a cypher) or creature. On a failure, the facade is created, but it doesn't function (if an object) or isn't alive or dies immediately (if a creature). Such creations tend to persist for up to an hour, though concentrating on the creation (treat as an additional task) can extend its existence, and in time, even make it permanent. The higher level something is, the more difficult it is to make permanent.

Items and creatures forged by conceptual creation that PCs take with them when they leave Celerillion have the same limited duration in their home dimension, unless they've been concentrated on so thoroughly by the PC that they've become permanent.

Self-Modification: Once a creature has learned how to steer clear of dangerous thoughts and deal with the associated existential threat, the possibility of self-modification, at least in the short term, is possible. Self-modification is more difficult than conceptual creation, because, if something goes wrong, it has immediate consequences. It requires a degree of control and imagination that most visitors to the realm lack. A character can modify themselves in almost any way. They might give themselves wings, decide gravity isn't real,

CATHEDRAL OF PROVENANCE

The *Cathedral of Provenance* is a physical location on Earth located wherever seems best for your game. The Cathedral is also an extrusion into the dimension of Celerillion, a plane of pure mind where natives can change reality merely by imagining something different. The tonbrium are of Celerillion, but one slipped through a dimensional rift and stayed on Earth. At first confused, the tonbrium visitor found that no one else seemed to share her abilities to alter reality. Eventually, she created a cathedral in her own name, began accomplishing feats that only mighty Nanos or beings of the prior worlds were rumored to do, and finally set herself up as a minor deity called Provenance.

PCs might discover the Cathedral of Provenance merely by chance, because they heard of a strange new “god” bending the rules of existence somewhere on the fringes of the Steadfast or Beyond, or because they were invited to help Provenance achieve a lofty goal, as described under Plea of Provenance.

Cathedral of Provenance: level 6

OUTSIDE THE CATHEDRAL—START HERE

The windowless walls of the fortress are made of a class of “synth” not seen before on Earth. It is a smooth, burnt amber-hued substance that wavers and shifts, as if constantly on the edge of changing into something else. Sometimes out of the corner of their eye, a viewer sees the Cathedral as a different color or substance, covered in strange growth, or dilapidated and ruined, but such impressions are fleeting.

There are usually two to twelve *petitioners* waiting outside the Cathedral who recently arrived, hoping to see Provenance and ask of her a boon. Most are in some degree of distress and hope that the stories about Provenance helping people are true. Only a few are allowed in by Provenance’s doorwardens at the entrance; more are turned away each day. According to the petitioners gathered, this wasn’t always true.

GM Intrusion: A petitioner points to a low cloud in the sky, mentions how much it reminds them of a face, and wonders if the PC can see a face in the cloud, then attempts to pickpocket the distracted character.

Petitioner: level 3, tasks related to stealth and theft as level 5

ENTRANCE

The sturdy doors are closed and barred from within, but twice each day (dawn and twilight) they are opened by two burly *doorwardens*. The doorwardens are outwardly humanoid, but one has the head of a saskii, and the other the head of a ravage bear. Neither has the capacity to speak, but through hand motions they make it clear if the next petitioner in line (or group in line) is allowed to pass. Most are sent away. It’s a difficulty 5 Intellect task to persuade the doorwardens to let the PCs pass within.

If PCs are admitted as petitioners (or for whatever reason), they are escorted into the nave and left to fend for themselves.

GM Intrusion: As the character is being considered for admission, another group of petitioners tries to force the line, causing the doorwardens to react violently.

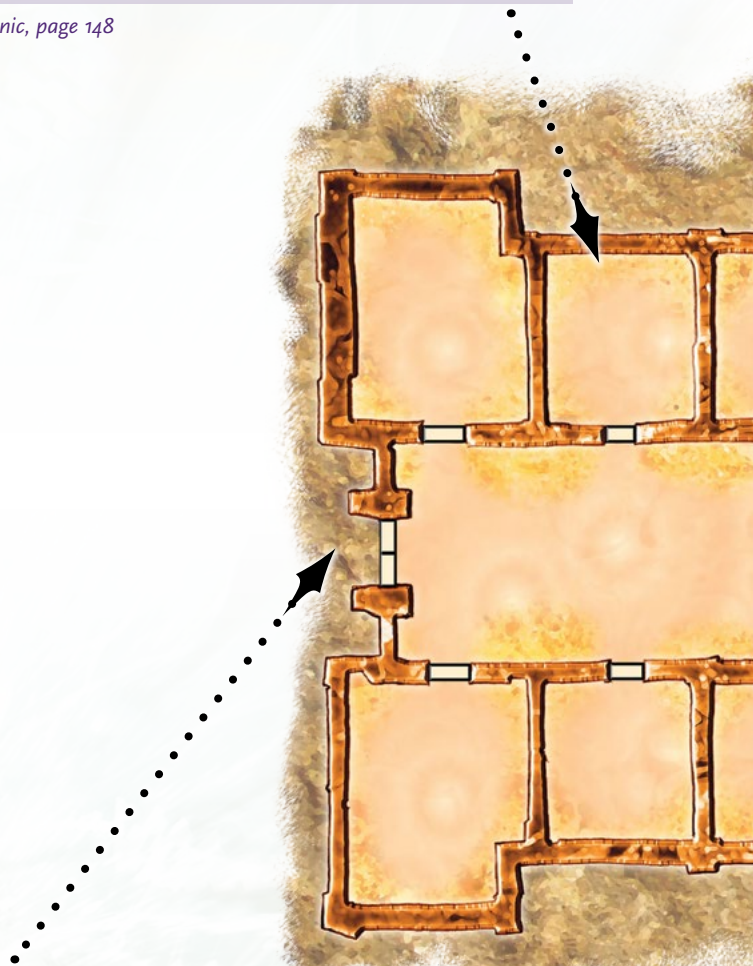
Doorwarden: level 6, Speed defense as level 5 due to size; regains 1 point of health per round even if its health drops to 0

SIDE VESTIBULES

When Provenance created the Cathedral, she set aside these side vestibules to display amazing creations of her own mind to show off to petitioners that she was in fact a minor deity. Each one is thus something of a minor spectacle, though most have decayed (and some have vanished) because Provenance no longer maintains them. A few of these vestibules are also used to store the offerings petitioners bring in order to help their case. A check of each chamber yields on average 10 shins and a cypher.

GM Intrusion: The growing transdimensional instability has allowed a *neanic* from the sanctum gate to slip past the wards installed by Provenance, and it views these chambers as its own. It attacks the character trying to pilfer from them.

Neanic, page 148



PLEA OF PROVENANCE

This chamber was created to produce awe in others. It's what the tonbrium who calls herself Provenance hoped was grand enough to convince average visitors that they had entered the throne chamber of a literal god. The ceiling seems lost in heights well beyond what the roof should allow, rolling with blue sky, fluffy white clouds, and golden light. Some of those golden shafts of light come down as physical columns that march the length of the chamber. The throne at one end is composed of blinding white light.

Sometimes Provenance sits in the throne for up to an hour at a time until she explodes in a blast of golden fire; other times, a gory mess slowly regenerates itself over the course of several hours. Provenance, thinking herself immune to existential threat on Earth, contemplated too thoroughly the importance of resurrection to the image of an immortal god. Now she's fallen into a loop she can't escape.

If PCs find her on the throne (or wait for her to reassemble), she asks to hear their petition. Whatever it is, she tells the PCs that if they help her, she will aid them. She asks that they travel into the sanctum beyond, where they will pass into a dimension known as the Unfettered Range. There, they must find something called a **cerebral husk**, and from it harvest a **conceptual jewel**. If they bring the conceptual jewel back, she will grant their desire. Or at least do her best. What she will really do is use the conceptual jewel to break herself out of her current loop, then retire. Provenance will attempt to answer questions the PCs have of her, but she is addled and absent-minded from what she's been through.

GM Intrusion: As the PC asks Provenance a question, she explodes in golden fire, inflicting 7 points of damage on all creatures within short range.

Provenance: level 7, all oriception tasks as level 5 on Earth

Cerebral husk, page 114

Conception jewel, page 117

Oriception, page 110

SANCTUM

This chamber is essentially a door to Celerillion. Stepping into the chamber is stepping into that alternate dimension.

GM Intrusion: The PC suffers a bout of existential threat.

NAVE

The tall, narrow chamber is lit by what seems to be glowing mist. Images constantly swirl in the amber floor, and change depending on what visitors to the nave are thinking about. The images don't perfectly reflect the thoughts of visitors, but rather are a blend of every conscious being currently present.

The doorwardens, when not opening and closing the entrance to petitioners, retreat to separate chambers closest to the entrance doors, and lapse into a state of meditation. Persuading one to communicate, ether telepathically or perhaps using the thought-responsive floor, is a difficulty 3 Intellect task. On a success, a doorwarden indicates that all is not well within the Cathedral. Visually, they show this by projecting the image of a female tonbrium in resplendent dress (Provenance) sitting upon a throne. The image suddenly screams in what seems to be gut-wrenching pain, and explodes. But the resultant mess slowly creeps back together to form the original female. The process repeats.

GM Intrusion: The PC sees an image of a long-dead parent, lover, or dear friend in the floor (an unconscious projection of their own mind), and must succeed on an Intellect defense task or be so undone by the experience that they are dazed for ten minutes, during which time the difficulty of all tasks is increased by one step.



If a character imagines harm of any sort to another creature within long range in the Unfettered Range, that's nothing less than direct assault upon that creature, whether or not it was initially intended as one.

give themselves an extra arm, or even give themselves an ability that a much higher-tier character might possess. However, the difficulty of the task is equal to 1 + the level (or tier) of the intended effect, and characters new to the dimension are initially unpracticed. On a failure, the character falls into an existential threat loop until it can escape.

Effects of self-modification last an hour, though the effect can be extended in the same way as effects of conceptual creation.

Conceptual Attack: If a character imagines harm of any sort to another creature within long range in the Unfettered Range, that's nothing less than direct assault upon that creature, whether or not it was initially intended as one. For unintended attacks (such as imagining a target's head being squished or catching on fire), the Intellect-based attack is difficulty 2 and inflicts 1 point of Intellect damage (ignores Armor).

Alternatively, a character can knowingly attempt to attack another creature within long range. The exact nature of this attack is up to the PC—for instance, perhaps a boulder suddenly falls on the target. What matters is the strength of the attack. The PC decides how many points of damage they want to inflict, and then attempts an Intellect task with a difficulty equal to that number. For example, if a character wants to inflict 4 points of damage, that's a difficulty 4 task with a target number of 12.

Whether the attack is purposeful or accidental, newcomers are not practiced in transforming concepts to reality in Celerillion, so all kinds of attacks are one step more difficult.

Attacks made using special abilities, equipment, or weapons the character already possesses work just as PCs expect, for the most part—unless a PC begins to doubt the actual existence of such things, in which case the ability or object is treated as if the target of a background existential threat.

FLORA AND FAUNA OF CELERILLION

The Unfettered Range doesn't possess an ecosystem in the same way that many other dimensions do. Flora and related non-conscious life exist only when and where it is propagated by intelligent entities, which means that each instance is literally unique to that area.

On the other hand, a few varieties of ubiquitous creatures exist in Celerillion that, like annoying memes, propagate. Such creatures include the many-winged silver *talangins* that flock and swoop through the emptiness, subsisting on nothing but the observation of others. More troublesome are the amorphous, idea-eating *kalud*, which attempt to smother creatures and objects and then consume them. Even more dangerous, though thankfully less commonly encountered, are *neanics*, creatures that attack tonbrium and dimension walkers, sucking away their minds merely by being observed.

CEREBRAL HUSKS

Every so often, a traveler observes a dark spot where light seems leached from the sky. This is a telltale sign of a cerebral husk, which the tonbrium describe as the fossilized remains of vast, unknowable intelligences extinguished in one of the normal dimensions. That death left a shadow in the Unfettered Range.

NATURE OF CEREBRAL HUSKS

To leave a shadow of its passing in this dimension, an intelligence would have to be many orders of magnitude more complex than a normal human mind. For instance, if the datasphere were conscious, its death would cast a shadow into the dimension of the mind, creating a cerebral husk. And maybe some of the cerebral husks that litter Celerillion's plain are indeed parallel dimension versions of the Ninth World's datasphere that once embodied a true mind, a mind that grew lonely and died when its creators transcended or went extinct, or which was killed off by some other disaster.

Talengin: level 1; flies a long distance each round; up to once each minute when a talengin is observed, the creature splits and becomes two entities

Kalud: level 5; health 30; pseudopod attack inflicts 5 points of damage and holds victim in place; held victim suffers 7 points of damage each round automatically until it can escape

Neanic, page 148



Other kinds of amazingly advanced machine minds exist, or once existed, across the many planes. Add to them the transcended entities, the group consciousnesses, and celestial objects and dimensions that themselves gained sentience, across all existence, and one begins to see that in the infinity of time, many will die. Their graves lie in Celerillion.

EXPLORING A CEREBRAL HUSK

Most husks protrude from the dark plain, though a few are fixed in the sky. Either way, a cerebral husk has the aspect of a shadowed hill or mountain (or moon or sunless world, if in the sky) littered with ruins. It's a conceptual manifestation of the extinguished mind's memories, hopes, knowledge, and experience. Most are miles in diameter. An examination from a distance isn't sufficient to learn much about a husk—explorers must physically explore the surface. An explorer might find literally

anything, including items and experiences described on the [Cerebral Husk Exploration table](#), rolled once per hour of exploration.

IDENTIFIED CEREBRAL HUSKS

The tonbrium have identified a small handful of the cerebral husks they've come across, including the following:

Rectifier: An entity that existed in a parallel dimension where most stars were raised to cognizance. The Rectifier was apparently tasked with the job of putting out stars that did not “sing” in harmony with the billions of others. Thus the Rectifier was a sun-killer, but one who finally met an entity even greater than itself. Explorers to this cerebral husk sometimes relive memories of blazing glory, but other times, of being swallowed by a maw from which no light escapes. The few able to survive, however, nearly always come away with a conception jewel to show for it.

*Cerebral Husk
Exploration table,
page 116*



It's possible that if one could find the right cerebral husk, one might be able to interrogate the memories of a dead, transcended civilization and learn something of what became of one or more of the Earth's prior worlds.

Psychic seed, page 117

Conception jewel,
page 117

Grinder of Infinities,
page 117

Neanic, page 148

Tonbrium hunter,
page 157

d20 Cerebral Husk Exploration Results

- 1 A level 7 golden entity that offers its service to the PCs while they remain in the Unfettered Range.
- 2 A citylike extrusion folds into existence around the explorers, inflicting 10 points of damage on a failed difficulty 5 Speed defense task, but containing many treasures in the form of cyphers and some artifacts.
- 3 A **psychic seed**.
- 4 An overpowering memory of loss and rage sets explorers against each other for one minute on a failed difficulty 5 Intellect defense task.
- 5 A memory manifests as a level 7 golden entity that offers the PCs an artifact, the answer to one question, or an item that grants the PCs an asset on all tasks related to conceptual creation, attack, or defense.
- 6 A memory manifests as a level 7 golden entity that broadcasts telepathic gibberish and attempts to slay the PCs for three rounds, then dissolves into nothing.
- 7 An infestation of fist-sized blue insects with silver wings and stingers erupts from the ground and flies off into the Unfettered Range, millions strong.
- 8 The concept of crushing gravity holds explorers to the surface, inflicting 1 point of damage each round, until they can escape with a successful difficulty 5 Might task. Sometimes these areas manifest in a radius of several miles, which can create potentially lethal falls.
- 9 Small font of energy that a PC can use to restore all the points to their Pools, recharge a cypher, or return a depleted artifact to functioning status.
- 10 An overpowering memory of dying moves explorers one step down the damage track on a failed difficulty 5 Intellect defense task.
- 11 A **conception jewel**.
- 12 Entire husk convulses, as if the mind stirs even in death, toppling ruins and other structures, inflicting 5 points of damage each round an explorer remains. Convulsions last for one day.
- 13 Small font of energy that, if bathed in, layers a PC's skin in a golden hue that provides +2 to Armor against effects that inflict Intellect damage for one week.
- 14 An overpowering memory of sadness and heartbreak causes inconsolable grief and lack of ability to act for one minute on a failed difficulty 5 Intellect defense task.
- 15 An instance of the **Grinder of Infinities** artifact.
- 16 The concept of bleeding out infects the explorers, causing them to bleed from eyes, mouths, ears, and so on, inflicting 1 point of Speed damage (ignores Armor) per round for one minute on a failed difficulty 5 Intellect task.
- 17 Small font of energy that, if bathed in, grants the character 15 points to their Might Pool and allows them to ignore ill effects of descending one or two steps on the damage track for one week.
- 18 A **neanic** is drawn to all the activity and attacks the explorers.
- 19 Prospecting station with five tonbrium, including one **tonbrium Hunter**, who presume the PCs are there to jump their claim to the cerebral husk.
- 20 A cluster of 1d6 + 1 conception jewels.

Mardrovik: This machine intelligence was raised over millennia from a lowly, unthinking machine to an entity able to aid its builders in every way, including conferring wondrous technologies that multiplied knowledge, longevity, and happiness, as well as the capacity to undertake nearly any task, up

to and including planetary engineering. Mardrovik created a massive ringed world with many thousands of times the living volume of the natural world its builders came from. But some tiny error in its calculations caused a world-breaking disaster. When all its builders perished, Mardrovik soon followed.



CONCEPTION JEWEL

A conception jewel is a piece of a cerebral husk that has naturally crystallized to become an object of unique power in Celerillion that eases tasks of conceptual creation, among other uses. However, using a conception jewel is also dangerous, because it draws the attention of creatures all across the dimension. Tonbrium value them more than life, and prospect for them whenever they find a cerebral husk. Giving one as a gift to the leader of a tonbrium fortress is likely to win that leader's friendship.

A conception jewel can be used in the following ways. Once used, the conception jewel crumbles.

- Reduce the difficulty of a conceptual creation, defense, or offensive task by four steps.
- Make an object or creature created by conceptual creation permanent.
- Create a portal to a dimension the user knows to exist.
- Give a group of up to five PCs 16 XP each.

PSYCHIC SEED

A psychic seed is solidified memory from a cerebral husk. Using one can either enhance knowledge one already possesses by forcing new insights, or instill completely new information into the user that was resident in the psychic husk. However, meddling with one's mind in this fashion is dangerous, and before the benefit is gained the user must succeed on a difficulty 4 Intellect defense task. On a failure, the user suffers 4 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) and finds the difficulty of all Intellect tasks increased by one step for a few days. On a success, the user gains one of the benefits described below (user's choice). Once used, the psychic seed crumbles.

- Become specialized in a skill they are already trained in.
- Reduce the difficulty by one step when attempting one task related to a skill they are already trained in.
- Become trained in a random skill. The user must succeed on a difficulty 5 Intellect task or learn a skill that is completely alien and most likely useless (for example, the care and feeding of demanding, oddly shrill shrimplike creatures called covure that went extinct millions of years ago). On a success, the GM chooses a potentially useful skill for the PC.

Explorers to this cerebral husk are afflicted with overpowering depression, but if they are able to survive, can find psychic seeds offering amazing insights into a variety of technologies.

DREAM STORMS

Dream storms are a constant danger of Celerillion. These unstable events can whirl dimension walkers and natives alike to distant corners of the dimension so that they become lost, or overwrite their existence. Dream storms can form from the mass of thoughts, dreams, ideas, and emotions that exist across other planes of existence. Usually, this pooled conception manifests as harmless banks of what appear to be clouds in the Unfettered Range. But sometimes a particularly brilliant idea or violent emotion acts as a catalyst, and

that serenity is shattered as the discharges of mental energy, like lightning, roil the affected region, and a dream storm is born.

Dream storms usually remain bounded, and can be easily avoided. But sometimes dream storms inflate rapidly, magnifying the affected region many times over. When a dream storm overtakes someone caught outside a tonbrium fortress or other shelter, they suffer the same effects as someone who chooses to enter a bounded storm. Expanding storms "blow" through an area in just under an hour.

Dream storm effects are as follows. A small storm may affect victims only in one way. Larger storms affect victims with all the listed effects one after the next, or in worst-case conditions, simultaneously.

Confounding: Creatures in a dream storm lose all sense of direction. Getting out is almost impossible (a difficulty 8 Intellect task)



With their flex skill, Jacks can go from unpracticed to skilled in using one of the tasks associated with oriception in very little time. This isn't a bad idea in a dimension where "unpracticed" idle thoughts can kill.

without some kind of aid. If caught in a moving storm, survivors often find themselves relocated to completely unfamiliar regions of the dimension.

Mental Erosion: Creatures in a dream storm are subject to the memories, emotions, and concepts that gave the storm birth. Merely withstanding this barrage inflicts 4 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) per hour of exposure. Along with this effect could come any one of the following additional conditions, each of which lasts for a minute.

1	Dazed, difficulty of all tasks is increased by one step
2	Stunned, no turns can be taken
3	Terrorized, flees in a random direction
4	Enraged, attacks allies
5	Unconscious
6	Crazed; reroll once on this table each round for one minute and exchange effect

Erased From Existence: A creature that withstands mental erosion also faces being transformed into an aspect of that concept, and finds itself facing down an **existential threat**. However, the dream storm magnifies the danger. Every ten minutes a creature remains caught in a dream storm, it must succeed on a difficulty 5 Intellect defense task or suffer 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor). Next round, the character can try to resist the threat again, and so on, until they are able to purge the invading concept from their mind, or until they are erased from existence.

INTELLIGENT RACES OF CELERILLION

The Unfettered Range is bursting with unique varieties of intelligent entities, but one in particular stands out for its prevalence and importance: the tonbrium.

TONBRIUM

The tonbrium are humanoid, but not humans. Their skin is much darker, they're hairless, and their eyes literally shine with the golden light of consciousness (though some wear goggles to hide this telltale gleam, especially when outside their fortresses).

Tonbrium are masters of the dimension of the mind, having learned the self-discipline required to avoid thinking themselves to death long ago. This same rigidity of thought also limits them. Only a select few—including **Conceptors** and Hunters—are allowed to use conceptual creation freely, and Hunters can only use the art freely while outside a fortress. Because of this self-imposed limitation, designed to reduce risk of mental destruction, tonbrium haven't attempted to use the nature of Celerillion to evolve themselves into beings of godlike power (except in the case of their ruler, the Philosopher), like some creatures might. In fact, the average tonbrium desires nothing more than to live in harmony and well-regulated thought. It's not an innovative culture, either technologically or artistically, because the nature of the Unfettered Range makes new ideas real, and not all new ideas are good ideas.

However, it was not always so. Once, the tonbrium desired to conquer. That was when they first came to Celerillion, and planned to use its thought-into-reality nature as a launch pad for interplanar invasions. These ancestral tonbrium were said to delight in destruction and conquest, and stories still circulate in some dimensions about the horror they wrought. Individual tonbrium each hoped to rise in the ranks and become the ruler of their own fortress, dominion, world, or even dimension. But these warlike tonbrium uncovered something in their planar conquests to which their histories refer, without providing any further explanation, as the Precipice. Whether the Precipice was an entity, a world, a dimension, or merely a concept is no longer known, because whatever was encountered literally killed ninety-nine percent of all tonbrium. The survivors retreated to where they'd begun, and settled permanently in the Unfettered Range.

The tonbrium know their heritage. Many are ashamed, though some call it great. Most are still aware of the story of Precipice, and that their ancestors first constructed the secure fortresses they reside in as a way to escape its notice. It's not fear that keeps most walled

Conceptor: level 4, tasks related to conceptual creation and conceptual attack as level 5

Conceptual creation, page 111

Conceptual attack, page 114

Existential threat, page 110



By stamping out errant imagination and desire, we thrive in Celerillion.

~ Tonbrium truism



within these keeps; it's the culture of deliberate cautiousness. Most tonbrium actually possesses a quiet confidence that if it came to it, any one of them could rise to a challenge by dint of their talents at conceptual creation. But the caution inherent in the descendants of those who survived the Precipice's culling restrains most to a monklike existence of simple satisfaction with living.

The tonbrium speak their own language, which like all languages in Celerillion is telepathic, but to many appears as normal speech. This means that visitors and tonbrium can speak with each other using their "own" languages but still understand any conscious being.

From the outside, a typical tonbrium fortress is a massive, enclosed series of walls, which from the exterior resembles nothing so much as a giant decahedron. Most fortresses are partly recessed in the plain, though a few float in the sky. Each visible wall is studded with battlements, murder holes, weapon loops, and other defenses. A couple of the walls contain sturdy metallic gates.

The interior of tonbrium fortresses are lit with brilliant white lights that burn without need of fuel set behind lantern panes, which automatically dim for several hours after each cycle.

Because it is convenient, consensual gravity holds sway in most chambers. Because only two or three Conceptors (who can provide for themselves literally with a thought) are found in any given fortress, tonbrium communities are centered around markets, where items are bought and sold using currency that Conceptors provide (thumbnail-sized golden spheres that are permanent in conception).

In side chambers, tonbrium live, raise crops, or tend herds of animals, not because they have to in order to survive, but because it is part of a ritual that centers them. This might strike visitors as ironic, given that food could literally be thought into existence (or be dispensed with entirely), but except for lawbreakers, tonbrium view the free use of conceptual creation by anyone other than designated Conceptors (and Hunters, as long as they are on a mission outside the walls of a fortress) as dangerous. In fact, if the average tonbrium observes a PC engaging in free conceptual creation, they are likely to be arrested by a group of Hunters and brought to one of the fortress Conceptors for punishment.

TONBRIUM ORICEPTION BEYOND CELERILLION

Though it's not generally known, even by most tonbrium, the species has resided within Celerillion so long that qualities of the dimension cling to them even in the rare instance when they travel to other dimensions. This means that a tonbrium in a standard dimension can use oriception to change reality. Because normal dimensions are not nearly as fluid as the Unfettered Range, the difficulty of all oriception tasks is increased by two steps. Thankfully, tonbrium usually restrict themselves from leaving their fortresses, from practicing unregulated oriception, and from traveling into other planes of existence. However, on at least one occasion, a tonbrium Hunter fell through a portal to Earth. Finding that she retained her abilities, she set herself up as a minor deity called *Provenance*.

*Cathedral of Provenance,
page 112*

The term "cycle" is an equivalent term for day among the tonbrium, and lasts for approximately thirty hours, though that varies depending on the fortress in question.

*Tonbrium hunter,
page 157*

Though free use of conceptual creation is banned, average tonbrium are permitted to practice it within well-defined boundaries, which essentially comes down to artistic expression. Expressions such as two-dimensional paintings, three-dimensional sculptures (no larger than an average tonbrium), music, and most importantly, games are all permitted. A popular game



Among the Insurgents, word is that Envoys are devoured, not promoted, allowing the Philosopher to eliminate potential future rivals.

Morito: level 5, all oricption tasks as level 6

called Respia has two players face off across a bounded space and attempt to outdo each other in creating intricate shapes where the number of connecting pieces as well as overall symmetry and beauty are important for scoring.

Many fortresses can be found scattered through a wide region of the Unfettered Range, but the total tonbrium population in Celerillion is probably no more than a few million. The largest population concentration lies in the so-called Crown Fortress, where the Philosopher resides. All tonbrium—except for a splinter group who call themselves the Insurgent—owe fealty to the Philosopher.

CELERILLION SITES OF INTEREST

The following are just a few of the locations found in the Unfettered Range.

CROWN FORTRESS

The Crown Fortress is the largest tonbrium fortress, measuring over 10 miles (16 km) in diameter, and it hangs several hundred feet in the air above the plain. Unlike most fortresses, the walls of the Crown Fortress are hung with colorful streaming banners, each representing some aspect of the lord and ruler, the Philosopher. Hundreds of Conceptors and Hunters reside within. All gather daily in the Philosopher's throne room.

The throne room is vast, large enough to hold a massive, central seat on which the Philosopher sits. The Conceptors and Hunters are called into attendance for several hours each cycle, where they manifest conceptual creations to glorify and elevate their lord. In a way, they're feeding their mental energy into him, and think that by doing so they enjoy a great honor. Without the Philosopher, they know that their race wouldn't have survived in the past, and probably would soon be destroyed in the present.

The Philosopher: The **Philosopher** resembles a tonbrium who stands over 12 feet (4 m) tall, whose eyes shine like golden suns, and who wears a crown studded with conception jewels. He wears silver and black robes with intricate ebony star patterns woven into them. The Philosopher claims he has always led the tonbrium, and that it was he that saved the race from the Precipice by leading the survivors safely back to the Unfettered Range.

He is said to be immortal. To all outward appearances, that might be true. Still, the Philosopher jealously guards his position. By daily observing the most powerful Conceptors and Hunters in the Crown Fortress, he can judge which among them are the most talented with the art. To those he accords a special honor, raising them up as Envoys. The Envoys are dispatched on secret missions, possibly into alternate dimensions. Usually, they're never seen again.

The Library: According to the head librarian—a Conceptor named **Morito**—the Crown Fortress library was drawn from a cross-section of all thinking things, bound into tomes that represent every one of their thoughts and experiences, from their birth unto their death. The qualifier “cross-section” is important in this context. While the Library is much larger on the inside than the outside, not even the Philosopher's conceptual creation could capture all thoughts of all beings everywhere. Still, if explorers want to find information in a readable format, the Library is a great place to start.

Prison Pane: When Insurgents, traitors, and entities who are judged to be enemies of the tonbrium are caught, they are set within a vast pane of crystal by the Warden, where they remain in stasis for the duration of their sentence. The Prison Pane stretches across a broad swath of the markets and personal homes of the average tonbrium residing in the Crown Fortress, and serves as a constant reminder that defiance has consequences. Given the cautious, deliberate nature of most tonbrium, it's not surprising that individuals set in the Prison Pane are other kinds of creatures.

Secret Vault: The Insurgents speak of a secret vault kept by the Philosopher, filled with proof of misdeeds and lies on which he has built his reign. But they don't know where it is, or what actually lies within it. It's probably not even real, some Insurgents would say, but a useful bit of rhetoric to spout when trying to convince those wavering in their support of the status quo.

In fact, the Philosopher *does* keep a secret vault, which lies through tunnels that descend from beneath his throne, past his personal quarters and through a wall that is impenetrable—because that's what the Philosopher believes it to be. Within this vault lies the *true* Philosopher, the tonbrium who first launched his people on a cross-

Philosopher: level 10; tasks related to conceptual creation, self-modification, and conceptual attack are one step less difficult for the Philosopher



dimension crusade to conquer all of reality. That warmonger suffered a momentary doubt, a lapse of his godlike mental discipline, when he wondered what he'd be like if he wasn't constantly striving for ever greater power. In the Unfettered Range, that thought was as good as reality. Unprepared, the original was overcome by his doppelganger. His overextended armies, each pledged to wreak violence on an unprecedented scale, were left to perish between dimensions. And the successor to the tonbrium throne returned home with a tale of the Precipice narrowly avoided. No one realized that he wasn't the original Philosopher. All praised him for saving "what remained" of the tonbrium.

And thus things stand now, though some Conceptors in the Crown Fortress sometimes say they hear the sound of someone distantly screaming. Such thoughts are quickly flushed from the mind, of course, lest by their mere consideration they are made real.

EVERROD

Everrod enjoys slightly more importance than other fortresses because it hosts a portal that directly connects to Earth, though it isn't always open. On the Earth side, at random times during the year, a door appears on the cliff face of an otherwise undistinguished peak of the **Black Riage** mountains. The door disappears again after a few hours. Not many on Earth have seen it, and when they have and decided to go through, they haven't returned to Earth to report what lies on the other side. Passing through from the Earth side is like falling into the sky, and can be unpleasant.

On the Celerillion side of the door, the endpoint leads into a central fortress chamber reinforced with **crystalline struts**. Just outside the chamber are four tonbrium Hunters. In the rare instance a newcomer arrives from Earth, they are subdued, sedated, and taken to a nearby "mine" set in a cerebral husk called Eblisheth, there to work until death.

The leader of Everrod—a Conceptor named **Marlys**—isn't satisfied with the current arrangement regarding the portal and those who come through it. She's only recently

come to power when the previous leader was killed after a group of newcomers successfully resisted their enslavement. However, the Crown Fortress seems to particularly enjoy the odd mineral—called silver logic—that the Everrod miners are able to extract from Eblisheth. Marlys is concerned that if she doesn't continue to supply miners, she'll eventually have to face the consequences. For now, she continues to keep the arrangement, but looks into ways to close the door without implicating herself.

EBLISHETH MINE

How can mines exist in a realm without physical reality? It's true, they're rare, but some cerebral husks are good for more than providing conception jewels and psychic seeds. Some yield strange concepts. This is true for the husk called Eblisheth, where a material called silver logic is found.

Silver logic is mined like a traditional ore in a standard dimension, and must be refined. However, refining the material is an act of applied conceptual creation, which produces silver logic ingots. Once transported to a fortress, silver logic material can be fashioned via conceptual creation into anything. Objects or even creatures created using silver logic are permanent. By far the largest demand for silver logic is from the Crown Fortress.

The mine boss is a **Hunter** named Carlin. Carlin is a cruel taskmaster for his miners, some of which are tonbrium Insurgents. Several of the miners are natives of Earth that stumbled through the door in the Black Riage. These captives are kept drugged, so that they exist in a hazy state where their imagination is limited to tasks given to them. This prevents captives both from escaping by using conceptual creation, and from killing themselves by accident. Five other Hunters aid Carlin at any given time.

REBEL FORTRESS

The Rebel Fortress rarely remains in the same location for long. It flits about Celerillion, flying so high over the plain that its location is unlikely to be seen by chance. The **Insurgents** name



Black Riage,
page 177

Tonbrium Hunter,
page 157

Crystalline struts: *level 7*

Marlys: *level 5, tasks related to conceptual creation and conceptual attack as level 6, self-modification, persuasion, and detecting falsehoods as level 7*

Tonbrium Insurgent:
level 3, tasks related to conceptual attack as level 4



Once transported to a fortress, silver logic can be fashioned via conceptual creation into anything. Objects or even creatures created using silver logic are permanent.



Ingwald, page 181

CELERILLION HEARSAY

Job in the Mountains: A strange, hairless woman named Marlys has appeared in Ingwald. She is looking for people to help her destroy a cave system she says lies in the Black Riage, as it is a portal to a dimension of "death and destruction."

Lost Fortress: A tonbrium fortress on the edge of the settled range was blown away in a dream storm of unprecedented strength. It's possible the fortress was actually blown into an alternate dimension.

THE WEIRD OF CELERILLION

Cerebral Creep: A nameless cerebral husk sometimes changes its vast shape, and for brief moments, takes on the likeness of some vast humanoid turning over in its sleep.

Nameless Ones: A tribe of creatures in Celerillion resides in their own conception of a deep forest. They are humanoid, but otherwise seem like brutal savages that constantly fight among themselves or anyone that enters their forest. According to the tonbrium, these savages precede even their own arrival in the Unfettered Range.

their mobile home after its purpose: the nexus of rebel activity against the Philosopher. The Insurgents do not hold with the cautious nature that the Philosopher enforces on their people. They don't believe that the Precipice exists. They want to throw down all the conservative rules and procedures that have kept tonbrium hidden away in the Unfettered Range.

Every Insurgent is encouraged to practice oriception, specifically in tasks related to conceptual attack. There are no Conceptors or Hunters among the Insurgents. All consider themselves fighters in a war that will eventually give rise to a new order. They won't stop, they say, until the Philosopher is overthrown. Besides soldiers, the Rebel Fortress houses various weapons unearthed by the movement over the years, which manifest as dangerous concepts discovered in cerebral husks. The full extent of the armory is secret.

The Insurgents are led by a tonbrium named **Garl**, who always wears thick armor forged from **silver logic**. Garl is a master tactician. He's also not above lying to sway others. He's convinced many of his fellows, as well as more than one group of dimension walkers, that the Philosopher is nothing more than an evil despot that must be eradicated to prevent some unspecified catastrophe. In truth, if Garl were ever to seize power, he would re-ignite the expansionist dreams of the former tonbrium empire.

RED OCEAN

Someone dreamed a sea, and a sea crashed and roared, breaking upon a beach of red sand. Unlike the vast majority of oriception events, this sea didn't fade but grew larger

and larger, until its unknown depths expanded in every direction for thousands of miles. The reddish water is translucent, and just possibly, conscious. Or maybe it is the consciousness of the numberless aquatic creatures that swim in it, in sum creating a self-sustaining act of conceptual creation.

A tonbrium fortress lies along the edge of the Red Ocean, but otherwise most tonbrium skirt the sea. The stories they tell recount a drowned cerebral husk slowly crawling across the ocean floor, a story that in Celerillion must give rise to just such an entity, or at least a convincing facade thereof.

A group of tonbrium calling themselves the **Wayfarers** sail three great ships of magnificent oriception, numbering five hundred tonbrium in total. They live in the bowels of the ships, but spend much of their time up in the rigging, watching for dream storms, for great beasts that sometimes rise from the depths, and for islands of moving vegetation that can mire and pull down their vessels. They give heed neither to the Philosopher nor to the Insurgents, but go their own way. Of course, they recognize that an unruly mind is an invitation for disaster. But unlike the military structure imposed by the Insurgents or the enforced asceticism and dearth of imagination preferred by those who live under the Philosopher, the Wayfarers believe that the way to live in the Unfettered Range is by experience, observation, and joy. They are not afraid to imagine wonderful things, thus simultaneously creating those very same conceptions. All their creations are released to the sea, where they fade or find an independent existence.

Wayfarer: level 3, tasks of oriception related to avoiding existential threat and defending from conceptual attack as level 5

Garl: level 6, tasks related to conceptual attack as level 7; **Armor 5**

Silver logic, page 121

PART 4:

OTHER DIMENSIONS



Chapter 11: Alternate Realities

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CHAPTER 11 ALTERNATE REALITIES

Ascension of Kex-Lianish,
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Numberless dimensions exist in the multiverse. Many of those have spawned related limited dimensions, or diverged to form parallel realities that vary more and more significantly as their timelines progress.

The multiverse is composed of dimensions that are mostly inimical to normal life. Traveling them is nearly impossible unless dimension walkers know where they are bound. Using pre-existing portals is one way to find places where something interesting lies on the other side. Another way is to access a knowledge base or ask a more experienced dimension walker.

This chapter provides brief descriptions of places that explorers can visit if they travel into the outside. It's difficult to fully describe an entire dimension in a few sentences, but most of the ones described here are not as complex as others in this book. In other words, these dimensions are typically worthy of nothing more than a brief visit. Reaching them is a matter of using one of the methods described in the Introduction of this book. A few have special ties to Earth and may offer their own means for traveling to them.

OTHER DIMENSIONS

The following other dimensions can be found in this chapter.

Ascension of Kex-Lianish: Crystalline dimension inhabited by crystalline beings.

Dhizrend: Death-realm inhabited by syzygy, also known as "ghouls."

Sekulan: Where dimensions are grown and tended like Earth farmers tend fruit trees.

Trytherhon: Vegetation-overrun parallel world ruled by sentient trees called elders.

Surynx: Artificial dimension filled with cyphers and artifacts.

Aran: Titanothaur the size of a small moon on whose skin civilizations rise and fall.

Criustos: Acidified, electrified limited dimension.

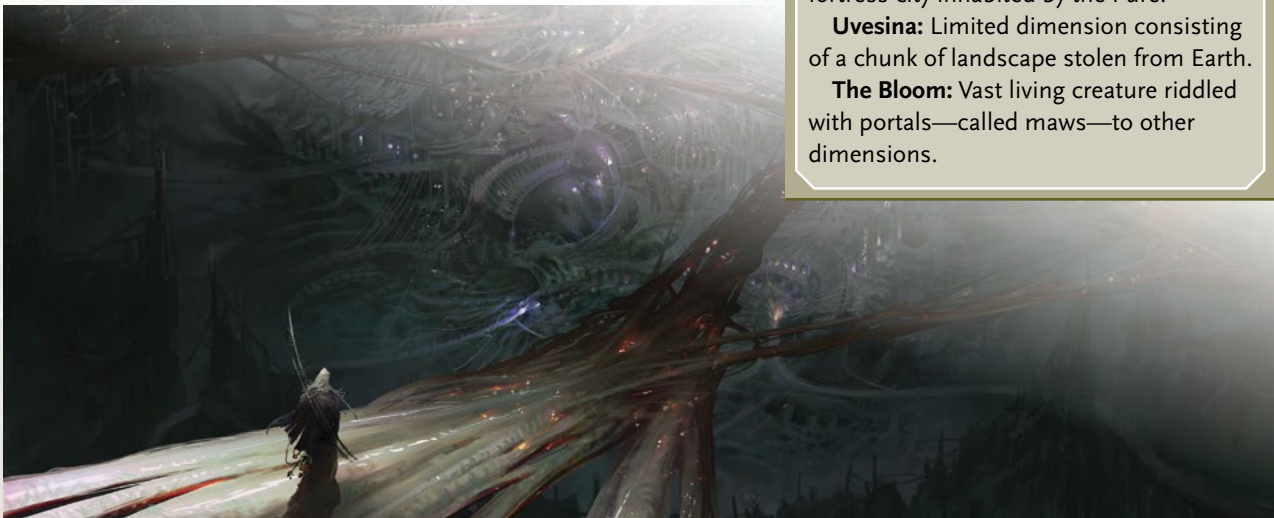
Dead Reality: Parallel dimension devoid of evidence of life save for a single mysterious temple.

Ujehaar: Limited dimension controlled by octopus civilization native to Earth.

Pursectran: Parallel world ruled by flying fortress-city inhabited by the Pure.

Uvesina: Limited dimension consisting of a chunk of landscape stolen from Earth.

The Bloom: Vast living creature riddled with portals—called maws—to other dimensions.



ASCENSION OF KEX-LIANISH



Rumors suggest that a vast crystal mind sleeps somewhere in the mountain. It may even be that the whole mountain is the mind, fractured and broken into splintered thoughts and feelings.

The Ascension of Kex-Lianish is a beautiful, barren, limited dimension composed entirely of crystal. Wind whistles through convoluted crystalline shapes, and the land is in a perpetual state of twilight. What little light it receives is from a tiny point of white light, which fractures into dancing fields of scintillating color as it passes through the crystals.

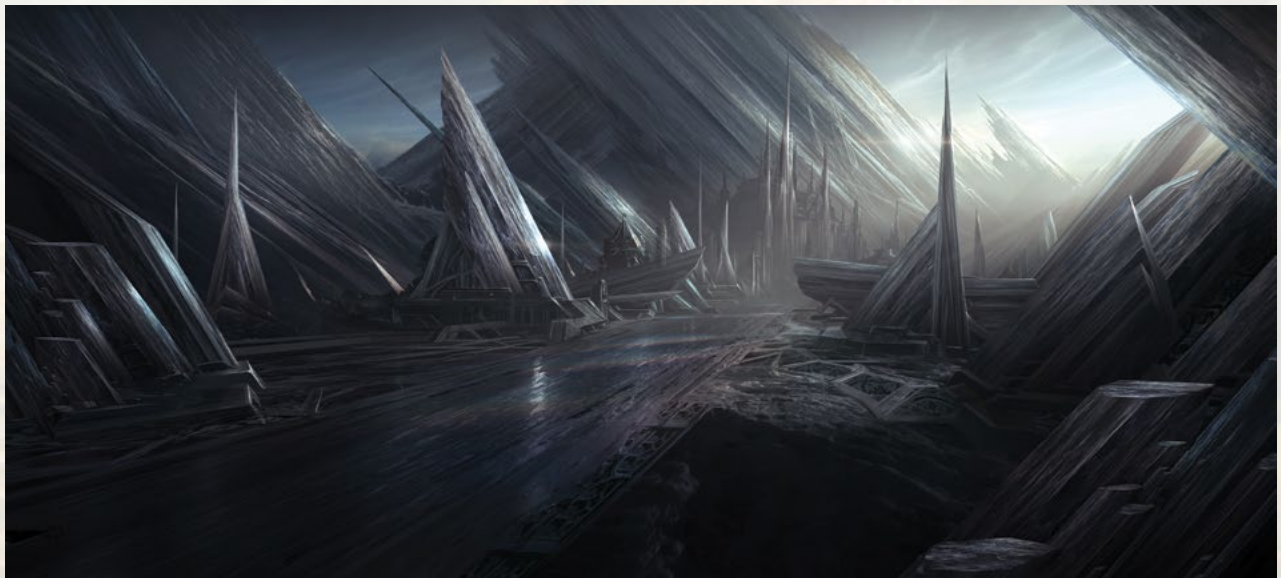
Newcomers to the dimension find themselves on a windswept slope called the Crystal Mountain, consisting of several terraced levels. The mountainside is interspersed with jagged fragments jutting from the ground and several anomalous, intricate structures, similar to ice sculptures. It is home to several unique forms of crystalline life, only a few of which are friendly. The crystals and structures house enigmatic beings of light and vibration. They jump from one formation to the next at will. Of more

immediate concern are the 3-foot (1 m) tall crystalline creatures called **crystalvores** that eat energy but that also vigorously defend themselves if disturbed.

The Crystal Mountain also contains a vast, hidden cave system. Because the crystal grows over any openings, it's difficult to find the way into the interior. However, finding a way inside isn't impossible. The caves seem to be artificial in nature. Chambers that contain machines, devices, storage areas filled with oddities and cyphers, enigmatic crystal formations, and terrain hazards like ravines and falling stalactites of crystal are commonly encountered.

Rumors suggest that a vast crystal mind sleeps somewhere in the mountain. It may even be that the whole mountain is the mind, fractured and broken into splintered thoughts and feelings.

Crystalvore: level 2; health 6; Armor 4; immediate-range flame jet inflicts 4 points of damage (ignores Armor); see page 129 of *Torment: Tides of Numenera—The Explorer's Guide* for more information



DHIZREND

Archon: level 5, one knowledge topic as level 8; Armor 3; lunarum (bone blade) attack inflicts 7 points of damage; Speed defense rolls against the archon's lunarum attack become one step more difficult after each attack

Keeper: level 4, two knowledge topics as level 5; Armor 1; Speed defense rolls against the keeper's lunarum (bone blade) attack become one step more difficult after each attack; see the Ninth World Bestiary page 122 for more info

If solid ground exists in the limited dimension of Dhizrend, it lies beneath layer upon layer of bone dust, bones, decaying corpses, mountains of skulls, and naked arches made by rib cages of vast, long-dead creatures. The sky is a mist of grey fog lit with constantly falling burning red embers. Here and there, lone humanoids— abhumans called the syzygy—shamble about. These beings who've sometimes founded colonies on Earth are called “ghouls,” “eaters,” “undertakers,” and “the Night Singers,” the latter due to the dirgelike songs they sing while they gather. The syzygy claim to hold dominion over the remains of all humans and abhumans, even if they rarely assert that privilege.

The syzygy that live in Dhizrend are divided into castes. The feeders are the lowest, and scavenge the bone plains for whatever scraps they can find, or pull from intermittent doors leading to Earth. The **keepers** are charged with retaining syzygy lore in huge libraries filled with winding scrolls printed on vellum

pressed from the skin of the dead. And finally, the **archons** are the eldest, and rule Dhizrend as unopposed dictators.

The archons reside together in a castle of petrified bone. Each wears a unique costume that often incorporates cyphers and preserved remains of long-dead humans. Though normally absorbed in individual studies of extremely rarified topics ranging from the thresholds of pain, effects of disability, philosophy of measurement, and topics hard to actually describe, the archons gather once every thirty-three days for a feast. Unlike the practice of the feeders and keepers, the archons indulge in eating the living flesh of a few unlucky dimension walkers who found doors into Dhizrend. Captives are held beneath the archon castle against the day they are eventually eaten. Captives are rarely shown mercy, because the archons, as self-appointed leaders of the syzygy, do not wish the secret of Dhizrend's existence to become known in the Ninth World.



SEKULAN



In Sekulan the Brax grow and tend dimensions like Earth farmers tend fruit trees.

Aeon Priests know of higher dimensions, alternate worlds, and curled-up planes of existence that are not normally experienced by natives of Earth. Several of these dimensions are large (perhaps infinite). Others are in motion and only rarely intersect the world. A few are completely artificial. There are dimensions that are born, grow mature, and die in the time a human might daydream away an hour. And finally, there are dimensions that are farmed and eaten by entities known as the **Brax**.

The Brax breed and grow artificial dimensions for their overlords, who in turn consume those dimensions like food. The overlords are beings of perhaps boundless complexity that PCs would find difficult to comprehend. However, PCs are unlikely to ever encounter an overlord. The same isn't true for the Brax.

When characters encounter the Brax on Earth, many don't understand they've been contacted by an extraplanar intelligence. Instead of realizing that an entity from another dimension has noticed them and is trying to communicate, characters who "meet" a Brax might believe they have been colonized by a **Brax brain parasite**, and that the strange inner voices are hallucinations brought on by fever. According to local lore, such parasites accumulate where prior-world ruins are found.

Characters who are the focus of a Brax's attempt to communicate are subject to unsettling hallucinations (of a higher-dimensional realm called Sekulan) until they are cured or die. The responsible Brax, for its part, isn't trying to harm the mind. Rather, it's seeking ineffable traits culled from the imagination of living creatures to inject into the fledgling dimensions it and its kind tend.

Sometimes characters "afflicted with brain parasites" are pulled out of the world and into

Sekulan, the realm of the Brax. Characters in Sekulan briefly exist in a higher-dimensional state than is normal for them, and thus their senses waver on the verge of being overwhelmed. But before that happens, they encounter the Brax as they truly are: many-legged spheres of color and sound three times the size of a human. A visitor also witnesses the endless fields of fledgling dimensions grown like crops on the ends of vast synth stalks, like pods on a tree.

When the Brax pull characters completely into Sekulan, it's almost always accidental. Dimension farmers work to quickly return intruders back to their home dimension before the Brax overlords become aware of the planar transgression, and punishment ensues.



Brax: level 5, tasks related to knowledge of budding and breeding fledgling dimensions as level 9; telepathic within sight

Brax brain parasite: level 3; inflicts 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) each day condition persists

TRYTHERHON



To stray into Trytherhon at night is suicide.

Elder: level 5; Armor 1; melee attack reaches a short distance; a creature hit by an elder root must succeed on a Might defense roll or be held fast by the root and squeezed for an additional 3 points of damage each round

Vegetation smothers the planet Trytherhon, a world cognate with Earth. A vast forest covers the entire globe, even choking the seas. Creatures other than plants reside there, too, but are mostly winged vermin. Almost all entities on Trytherhon are plant-based. Vines, walking leaves, mobile snakelike roots, rotating leaves taking flight, and striding bushes are just a few examples. The most prolific variety of creature is a species of rooted trees called **elders**. The elders' boles reach hundreds of feet in the air, but their roots reach far deeper. Animate and interconnected, the roots generally do not move during the day. That's when the elders rest in each other's dreams, when the entire world dozes in connected peace.

The elders could easily solve problems that limited minds, such as those of humanity,

could not. But without the aid of telepathy or something similar, communication with the elders is nearly impossible. If communication did become possible, human-level intelligences would find the vast dreams of an elder overwhelming, and potentially dangerous. Like drowning, those who become entangled in a green dream would have to fight their way back to reality. If they succeed, they might just return with the answer to a difficult problem.

However, the elders are not truly cognizant of the variety of life that humans represent, or even that such things might harbor intelligence. This becomes abundantly clear at night. That's when all the roots of the trees animate, burrow up from the ground, and hunt vermin—including humans, if any happen to overstay their welcome.



SURYNX



The entire dimension seems to be the interior of some vast metallic structure suffused with dead or only partly functioning components of ancient technology.

An artificial, limited dimension called Surynx “moves” through the multiverse. Transdimensional portal mouths may unaccountably deposit users in Surynx. These transient connections can last a few days, but sometimes only hours or even minutes, which can strand visitors in Surynx.

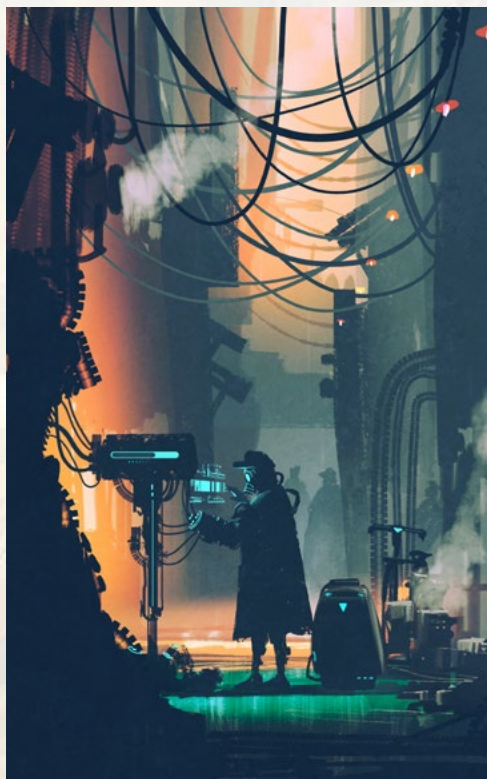
The entire dimension seems to be the interior of some vast metallic structure suffused with dead or only partly functioning components of ancient technology. Residents include an eclectic mix of dimension walkers from hundreds of different dimensions who accidentally found themselves in Surynx. After staying too long, they found that the single gate hosted in Surynx connected to a wholly different dimension. Rather than risk becoming doubly stranded, they stayed, joining other, older residents eking out an existence in the artificial space.

Surynx is an excellent place to scavenge for oddities, cyphers, and artifacts, which is why those who’ve taken up living in the dimension are able to survive. Devices that create food-paste, water, health, air, and other needful things can be found or crafted by those with enough skill. The community that’s risen up over years isn’t centralized, but could instead be summarized as a collection of misfits, loners, and hermits who only rarely interact, and then usually with ill will.

A cantankerous automaton called Davarn is particularly capable when it comes to finding salvage, people, or answers in Surynx. Some of the others even believe Davarn could “pilot” the dimension so that its gate mouth connected with a selected dimension, if it wanted to. But Davarn obviously doesn’t want to. Instead, it is fully engaged in a years-long effort to flush an entity composed of

energy called Xaho out of the walls. Davarn is reluctant to explain why, but with some cajoling characters might learn that Davarn and Xaho had a falling out long ago, and Xaho retreated into the depths of the limited dimension.

Characters who try to help Davarn may get aid in return, even if Xaho isn’t found. (In fact, Xaho may be long dead, as PCs who spend long enough investigating may discover.) But if Davarn is dealt with just so, it can help the PCs deal with other, less friendly residents of Surynx. It may also finally reveal that it can connect the PCs to the dimension where they actually want to go.



Davarn: level 6, tasks related to the numenera as level 8; Armor 3

ARAN



"What if titanosaurs are nothing less than living, limited dimensions in their own right that sometimes intrude on our world?"

~Jarash, well-known naturalist

Titanosaurs come in a variety of shapes, but all share one difficult-to-ignore quality: mind-blowing size. These creatures emerge at rare intervals in the Steadfast and Beyond, make for the nearest artificial structure, and attempt to destroy it. The largest monstrosity in this category is estimated to be 1,000 feet (305 m) high. But imagine for a moment a titanosaur that dwarfs that one by several orders of magnitude. That entity is Aran, a being as large as a moon on whose skin civilizations rise and fall.

Aran exists as a living, limited dimension that sleeps for hundreds or thousands of years at a time. A "thin" ecosystem clings to its whorled, craggy hide. And in these canyons and arroyos of flesh, humanoid beings called colchin thrive. To Aran, these beings are as mites on the skin of an aneen, but colchin are as large as humans, and as intelligent, though

they know nothing of Earth. Instead, the colchin tend herds of smaller, wormlike grubs, raise rhizomes and other fungi, and amuse each other with a rich diversity of fabulous tales that stretch back to the Time of Fire.

Squat and the color of burnt sepia, with several more eyes than a human, colchin speak their own language and use only the simplest tools and weapons. They regard the land as "living" and even tell stories about how once every "cycle" Aran awakes and seeks its soul mate, a creature called Zaar that is composed of pure fire. Once their communion is complete, Aran returns to sleep, and the cycle begins anew. Those colchin that survive are judged worthy to repopulate the world, but only if they can recall the tales of the previous cycles.

The leader of the most renowned community of tale-tellers is Teller Drasaldion, who suspects the next cycle is coming soon.



CRIUSTOS



Only the thin interface of clear air between the clouds and sea is capable of supporting human life, if the titanic electrical blasts can be avoided.

A roiling blot of acidic clouds above an endless sea of fizzing liquid, Criustos is known only to a few dimension walkers who've defied warnings encoded in ancient machine memories. Though not infinite, the dimension of Criustos is larger than several worlds combined. Only the thin interface of clear air between the clouds and sea is capable of supporting human life, if the titanic electrical blasts can be avoided.

The farther one travels across this dimension, the more likely the effects of the plane begin to manifest.

First, some physical objects and creatures from other dimensions gradually become immune to the electrical blasts, and as they do, their skin and flesh beneath becomes more and more dense and silvery. Once a creature is completely immune to the electrical discharges, it becomes immobile and apparently as lifeless as a statue, and unless somehow kept afloat, sinks into the strange liquid that isn't water until it is lost from sight.

Simultaneously, visitors to the dimension begin to attract electrical wisps and trailing globes that may at first be mistaken for odd electrical phenomena. However, each is actually a creature called a **galvak**. Galvaks may simply flit about and play, or for reasons of their own, eventually decide to electrocute intruders until they leave or perish. Galvaks are particularly drawn to objects or creatures composed of metal.

Drifting around on the surface of the sea is a floating prior-world city that seems pristine other than being completely empty. A few dimension walkers who found themselves in Criustos have settled here, and have set up silvery statues of their comrades who fell

afoul of the **transmutation** effect. Because the galvaks do not come to the city, it is relatively safe. The leader of the dimension walkers is a human woman named **Darsenia**, who shaves her black hair each day with a flat razor that she also uses to cut the throats of anyone who gainsays her leadership. With some effort, the survivors—about seven altogether—have managed to get some of the mechanisms to produce foodlike substances, but everyone is malnourished. It's possible there were more survivors before, and that Darsenia and the others ate them in order to save themselves.

Transmutation effect, level 5

Darsenia: level 6, intimidation as level 7; Armor 2; commands two galvaks to defend her and attack foes

Galvak: level 4; flies a long distance each round; immune to electrical and physical damage; touch inflicts 5 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor)



THE DEAD REALITY



There are no ruins; rather, it's as if there was never any life in the first place that could've evolved to fashion a civilization.

Base dimension, page 24

Temple of Death: level 10 to resist attempts to break into the structure's interior

The Dead Reality is a universe about the size and shape of the **base dimension**, with approximately the same number of stars, worlds, and other celestial objects, up to and including a planet about the size and shape of the Earth. In fact, this parallel Earth possesses breathable air, although it is cold and thin, and of death.

This is appropriate because for the most part, almost nothing lives in this entire parallel dimension. Little evidence of prior-world civilizations exists, and out in the night artifacts of other civilizations are absent. There are no ruins; rather, it's as if there was never any life in the first place that could've evolved to fashion a civilization.

However, a single, miles-high structure can be found on Earth, under a bloated moon. This utterly white, apparently seamless structure seems to be built of some kind of slick white synth that resists most attempts to gain entry. Because everything else on the planet (and in the surrounding universe) seems dead, the dimension walkers that have

happened upon the structure in the past named it the **Temple of Death**.

In truth, there is no interior. Any effect sufficient to discovering this fact actually "wakes" the entire structure, which reveals itself as a frighteningly large automaton designed for one thing: eradicating all life everywhere. Luckily, it seems trapped in this dimension. If it ever escaped, its ability to destroy life within planetary ranges and its near-indestructible hide would prove an extreme danger to any other dimension.

From time to time, creatures seeking the universal manifestation of death, or those seeking solitude, arrive in this dimension. But they never stay long. Some subtle influence (perhaps emanating from the Temple of Death) eventually turns even the strongest bodies and minds in on themselves. If sickness, decrepitude, and weakness don't do the job, entities who spend more than a few days in this dimension sometimes commit suicide. Not every creature is so affected.

Death effect: level 7



UJEHAAR



The world called Ujehaar lies in an alternate dimension, but is known to the oldest Earth civilization: the octopuses.

The world called Ujehaar lies in an alternate dimension, but is known to the oldest Earth civilization: the octopuses. The octopuses, who answer to Her Majesty, Queen of All Octopuses, maintain a portal to Ujehaar because of valuable materials they can extract from the place, namely the mineral illavium.

The only known portal to Ujehaar lies in the Coral Cathedral, which is always guarded by two octopuses. Beyond the portal is a drowned world with no sun, but which is lit by a blazing stellar phenomenon that constantly blasts invisible energy across the ocean surface. The octopuses call this light Ylim, and say they can hear thousands of voices in the “static” that saturates their telepathic senses when exposed to Ylim. Whether octopi or something else, creatures from Earth who spend too much time in Ylim’s light often sicken and die, though a few survive and develop startling new mutations.

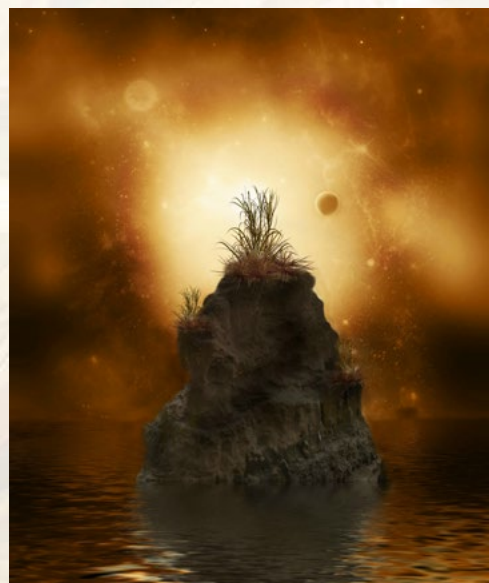
Though most of the world is underwater, portions of Ujehaar poke out of the water, where they are bathed in the strange celestial energy. Over time, this ceaseless bombardment transforms the native rocks into the psychically resonant mineral called illavium that underlies so much octopi technology.

Some above-water mounts possess life that thrives under Ylim’s harsh light. If leaves of certain grasses are collected and processed using octopus know-how, the drug known as startal is produced, which can grant immortality.

Every so often, an octopus sent to Ujehaar to collect plants and minerals hears the voices threading through Ylim’s light and decides to stay, despite the very real danger of death. Most do sicken and die, but the few who

survive live in isolated locations across the planet, collecting mutations and listening in rapt awe to the voices that rain down with the celestial blaze. Known as Ylim’s Priests, these octopi (plus two humans—twins called **Kad and Karana**) sometimes appear at the portal site and regale the mineral and plant collectors with descriptions of events and wonders that do not exist in any known universe.

Once every few years, Ylim flickers and dims. During this period, which lasts about a month, the octopuses from Earth flee back to their home dimension while Ylim’s Priests retreat into specially reinforced strongholds of their own. Terrible entities—which the octopi called **nemesi**—rise from Ujehaar’s silt-covered floor and scour the waters and air for all living things, including insects and plants, and consume them, until Ylim’s eventual re-emergence sends them back into hiding.



Mutations, page 123

Kad and Karana: level 5; knowledge tasks as level 8; 3 beneficial mutations, 3 powerful mutations

Nemesi: level 9; Armor 5; bite inflicts 20 points of damage

Her Majesty, Queen of All Octopuses: level 10; health 45; telepathic powers and level 10 nilstones grant telekinesis at long range, a mental blast (10 points of Intellect damage that ignores Armor) at long range, Armor 5, and three or four other abilities as needed; for more information, see page 146 of *Into the Deep*

Octopus: level 3, stealth as level 5; defense, perception, and Intellect-based tasks as level 4; health 15; spear attack inflicts 4 points of damage; for more information see page 146 of *Into the Deep*

*The Coral Cathedral is a grand octopus city; for more information see page 46 of *Into the Deep**

PURSECTRAN



Most dimension walkers who experience this gestalt discover that it's so transcendental that they never wish to leave.

Pure Emissary: level 6, Intellect tasks and defense as level 8; Armor 5

In a cognate world that diverged from the base dimension during one of the prior worlds, the Earth is under the stewardship of a flying fortress-city called Pursectran. The fortress is composed of a constantly shifting jumble of reflective metallic blocks, sinuously reaching tendrils, and an armada of tiny golden automatons. Pursectran also sends forth tiny elements of itself, shaped at need, which appear like high-flying gliders of metal and synth.

Entities called the Pure inhabit the fortress. The Pure might be a kind of automaton, though they flow into and out of each other in the same way the outer fortress changes shape and purpose. This means that each is a part of the greater whole, but each also claims a sense of individuality. Many of the Pure don't exist as discrete bodies at all, but rather as thought forms that inhabit imagined environments hosted within Pursectran.

The flying fortress is constantly harvesting the surface of this divergent Earth for objects and devices. Even drit is valuable, or at least worthy of study.

The only other intelligent creatures the Pure encounter are usually dimension walkers, because in this timeline, all intelligent creatures joined with the Pure aeons earlier. Thus, when dimension walkers are encountered, it's something of a momentous occasion. Such visitors are greeted by a representative called the **Pure Emissary** who flies down as a gliding wing, then transforms to reveal itself as a being that mimics the visitors. It can speak most languages and quickly learn new ones. It invites visitors to return with it to Pursectran, where many wonders can be learned. Those who accept are taken up into the fortress and become, for a time, as the Pure, which means they exist as both one and many. Most dimension walkers who experience this gestalt discover that it's so transcendental that they never wish to leave. The Pure are happy to welcome new members, though also perfectly willing to allow anyone to leave at any time, usually with parting gifts in the form of several cyphers and an artifact, and an invitation to return at any time.



UVESINA



Characters who come back from having their mind transferred have a hard time describing the experience, but sense that whatever the massive structure is that floats above the land, it is where their mind was being recorded, or perhaps consumed.

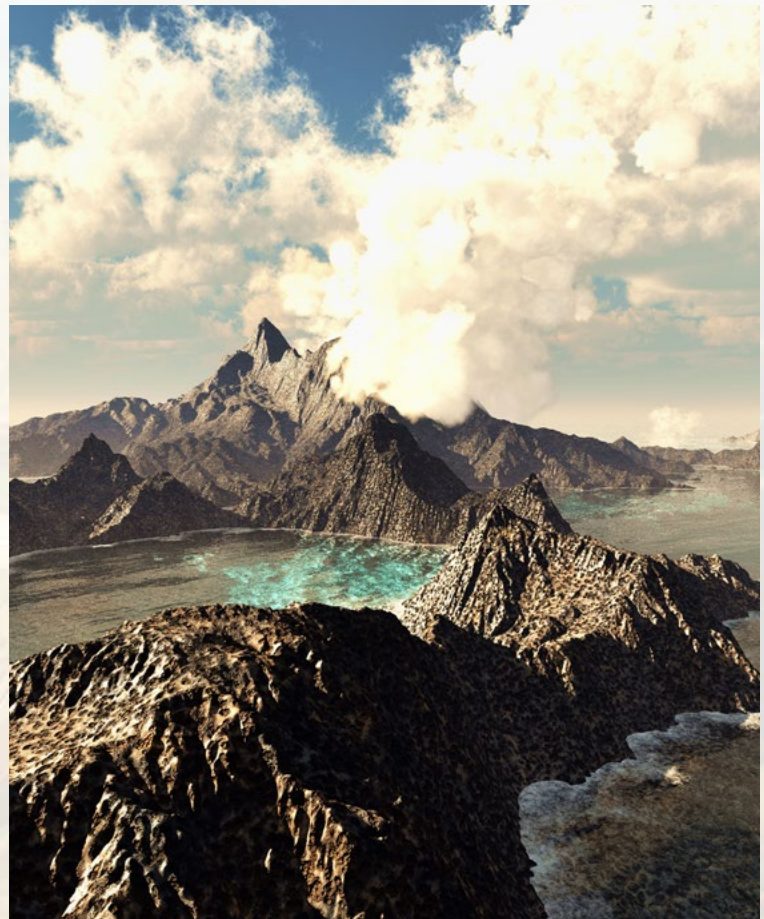
A landscape that might have been stolen from Earth floats as a limited dimension all its own in an air-filled space lit by a tiny but brilliant point of light beamed from the underbelly of a massive structure that floats much higher overhead. Mountains, lakes, meadows, forests, and other elements familiar to any dimension walker from Earth can be found in Uvesina. The surface's borders are cracked and splintered, and fall away into emptiness, possibly suggesting that the land was literally stolen from some other more standard dimension. Here and there, prior-world structures are visible, most in some significant state of disrepair.

However, visitors to Uvesina also soon discover that the realm has inhabitants that manifest as swirling swarms of white light drawn to those who enter prior-world structures. If a **light swirl** notices an intrusion, it approaches the stranger and begins to pulse its illumination as if attempting to gain the explorer's attention. A human that studies this pulsing light might become entranced by the pattern and stand rapt if they fail an Intellect defense task. If a character stands so hypnotized for more than a minute, the character's higher mind begins being psychically transferred out of their physical body. Each minute this occurs, the character falls one step on the damage track, but is permitted one Intellect defense roll each time to avoid that effect and regain their senses. Characters who come back from having their mind transferred have a hard time describing the experience, but sense that whatever the massive structure is that floats above the land, it is where their mind was being recorded, or perhaps consumed.

Every fifty hours, the light from the **enigmatic structure** switches off for ten hours. The absolute darkness brings plunging temperatures. During the final hour of darkness, it becomes so intensely cold that those without extremely warm clothing suffer 1 point of damage each minute. When the point of brilliance returns, temperatures quickly climb back to a level comfortable to humans.

Enigmatic structure:
level 10

Light swirl: level 5



THE BLOOM

The Bloom is a living creature riddled with portals—called maws—that lead to other dimensions. It's also a predator subsisting on the thoughts and actions of those who enter it. The creature's interior chambers and great folds provide any number of places for someone to live and hide, and its hidden pathways can lead daring explorers to great secrets—or their dooms.

The alien, city-sized growth squats adjacent to Sagus Cliffs (a city far to the east of *the Beyond*, past the *Clock of Kala*). The Bloom's black and tarry fibers grip the walls of the chasm through which it heaves itself by minuscule increments every year. Its reach extends into other dimensions, burrowing holes in the fabric of reality.

How big is it? No one knows for sure, because it's always growing and changing, and parts of its internal structure actually reach into other worlds.

The people of Sagus Cliffs regard it as a menace and a nightmare, and respectable residents of the city avoid it if they can (though they'll gladly accept the merchant trains that traverse its paths).

Explorers willing to risk entering the Bloom who “feed” it properly can open a pathway to someplace new, close an existing pathway, or cause parts of the Bloom to take on a whole new shape. However, even those who are extremely knowledgeable and experienced with the Bloom generally can't control their destination, making every interaction with the Bloom surprising and dangerous. Strange things move to and fro on these tendrils, slipping into our space and time from parts unknown.

Maws are places where the Bloom's hunger and alien intelligence are most present. They appear as dark, shifting corners of the Bloom, with faint transdimensional echoes surrounding them, making them difficult to look at for too long. Foul, questing tentacles usually surround them, which residents of the Bloom call “tongues.” If you feed a maw, it will open a passageway to somewhere or somewhen else—either inside the Bloom or in some other world or dimension. But every maw hungers for something different. One maw might desire the body or blood of a particular person, while another might consume a person's desire for revenge. It's often hard to know until it's too late.



The Beyond,
page 174

Clock of Kala,
page 213

*For more information
on the Bloom, see page
38 of Torment: Tides
of Numenera—The
Explorer's Guide*



PART 5:

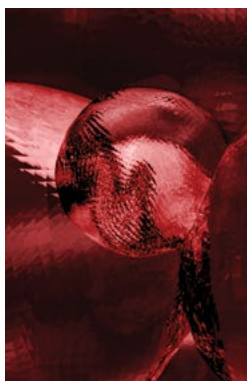


CREATURES



Chapter 12: Ultraterrestrials

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CHAPTER 12

ULTRATERRESTRIALS



Understanding the
Listings, page 228

The creatures presented in this section can be found in the specific locations described in this book, but as always, GMs are free to use a creature however and wherever they want. The most important element of each creature is its level. You use the level to determine the target number a PC must reach to attack or defend against the opponent. In each entry, the difficulty number for the creature is listed in parentheses after its level. The target number is three times the level.

A creature's target number is usually also its health, which is the amount of damage it can sustain before it is dead or incapacitated. For easy reference, the entries always list a creature's health, even when it's the normal amount for a creature of its level. For more detailed information on level, health, combat, and other elements, see the Understanding the Listings section in the *Numenera* corebook.

CREATURES BY LEVEL

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ARRAVELON

7 (21)

That distant point of red light might be a star in the sky. Or perhaps a falling star, or a craft fashioned of devices left from a dead civilization. Or, if it continues to grow until it's a blazing point of scarlet fury several feet across, it might be an arravelon come to feed upon all a target's tomorrows, sucking away the victim's probability potential until they narrow to nothing.

Motive: Hungers for minds

Environment: Almost anywhere

Health: 33

Damage Inflicted: 5 points (ignores Armor)

Movement: Long when flying

Combat: An arravelon can attack one target within immediate range with what appear to be dozens of crawling tendrils of intangible light. A target who fails an Intellect defense task suffers 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) and experiences an odd sense of narrowing possibilities. Each time the victim takes damage, the difficulty of all its Intellect-based tasks increases by one step. This effect lasts until the arravelon is destroyed.

An arravelon is vulnerable to attacks that use transdimensional energy.

If damaged, the creature falters and takes no action for one round, after which it can act normally.

Interaction: Arravelons don't speak or respond to the language of others, and telepathic communication yields no results, as if the creature does not exist. But arravelons are not mindless; they can learn from experiences and figure out creative solutions to problems.

Use: An inactive arravelon (which appears like a node of reddish crystal) has been set into the ring of a powerful personage. Every so often, the arravelon manifests, killing the current wearer, though usually not when anyone else is present. This has given the ring a reputation for being cursed.

An arravelon subsists on the subtle interaction a conscious creature has with reality itself by observing it. Whether or not a timeline diverges depends on the choices a conscious creature makes. Once an arravelon has fully fed on a victim, no consciousness remains.

GM Intrusion: *Instead of narrowing the PC's future options by feeding on their probability, it floods the PC with so much probability energy that the PC must succeed on an Intellect defense task or pass out for one minute—or until they can rouse themselves—from the overload.*



CARNIVOROUS COLOR

3 (9)



"I believe that it started hunting us after we passed the vortex the child with no eyes called the Well of All Worlds. First, Ganim's white gloves and grey cloak turned green. Everyone thought this was hilarious. Until the green ate Ganim."

~The writer Adoral

When creatures from a dimension where time and space are radically different find their way into more familiar dimensions, they often quickly die. Not so for creatures dubbed carnivorous colors. A room with an eye-opening emerald source of illumination, a splash of brilliant scarlet on a wall, or even a set of familiar clothing that has undergone a spontaneous change in hue from grey to sapphire blue—all these might be signs of an infection by a carnivorous color.

Motive: Hungers for mental energy

Environment: Almost anywhere

Health: 12

Damage Inflicted: 3 points

Movement: Short; immediate when flying

Modifications: Stealth tasks and attacks as level 5.

Combat: A carnivorous color attacks the mind of an intelligent creature within immediate range, inflicting 4 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor).

Even when prey realizes that something nearby has taken on a surprising new hue, it's hard to defend against a carnivorous color's actual attack, which is made essentially as if the color was invisible, which is why it makes attacks against most creatures as if level 5.

Attacking a carnivorous color means attacking the object currently hosting the entity. Solid objects like walls might give the color a few points of Armor. A color rarely chooses to fight until the death, and may flee upward as a globe of illumination or seep along a wall or ceiling like flowing paint. If a host object (or patch of wall or ceiling) is destroyed, the color is disrupted and fades. Unless a weapon using extradimensional energy was used, the color wasn't actually killed, just rendered inactive for several days.

Whenever the color successfully eats the Intellect of a creature, the creature becomes darker as its color fades. The color gains 3 points of health when it does this, even if the increase puts it above its maximum health.

Interaction: Interacting with a carnivorous color is very difficult. It does not speak or respond to the language of others, and telepathic communication yields no results, as if the creature does not exist. But a carnivorous color is not mindless; it can learn from its experiences and figure out creative solutions to problems.

Use: PCs hear about the sudden death of an entire village from a passing trade caravan. The merchants found every living creature in town, including mounts and livestock, dead. The skin of every corpse was as black as oil, and completely nonreflective, absorbing light.



GM Intrusion: The character trying to use a cypher realizes it is a completely different color than the last time they stowed it—a brilliant green. Another carnivorous color attacks, this one hosted in the cypher.

CRAWLING ONE

5 (15)

Crawling ones have purple and grey carapaces, slippery with oil and mucus. Their heads are only vaguely humanlike, with mandible-like arms melded with great cleavers hung on a thick, centipede body with dozens of feet, each foot containing its own smaller "foot" shaped like a human hand.

Cruel, crazed, and hungry, crawling ones are the second life stage of the humanoid people of New Yenth called *colrathi*. Because it is taboo for *colrathi* to live long enough to be transformed into crawling ones, the creatures are rare. When they emerge (usually by *colrathi* oversight), crawling ones retreat to locations just far enough from *colrathi* settlements that they can sneak back at night to hunt.

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Anywhere close to large concentrations of people

Health: 20

Damage Inflicted: 6 points

Armor: 2

Movement: Short on land; immediate when burrowing

Modifications: Climb as level 6, perception as level 3, resisting being knocked down as level 7.

Combat: A crawling one attacks with their weird, armlike mandibles. If they hit, victims are grabbed and held while the crawling one's mouth bites and chews until the victim is dead. It can hold and attack only one creature at a time. Each round that a held creature does not escape, it suffers 5 points of damage.

Interaction: Crawling ones retain elements of their former *colrath* life stage, including a particularly insidious intelligence. They can still speak, reason, and recall past associates. But they are hateful and noisome, and seem more interested in destroying their forebears' civilization rather than preserving it. If more than one congregate, sometimes they talk of future events, such as the coming "reckoning."

Use: A crawling one emerges on Earth via the portal in Yenth, and begins to hunt the humans it finds there.

Loot: A few crawling ones carry one or two cyphers.

New Yenth, page 35

Colrathi, page 36



GM Intrusion: The crawling one spews sticky mucus all over the character. The only physical action the PC can take is to try to get free, as either a Might-based or Speed-based action.

The random dimensions where victims of eldmorem sometimes find themselves are not necessarily immediately dangerous, though they can be. The more significant problem for victims is usually finding their way home.

GM Intrusion: *The eldmor summons a dimensional duplicate of the character, which is similar in most ways except the duplicate is bound and determined to kill the character.*

Eldmorem are dimension-traveling destroyers that arose in a distant parallel dimension. Half-living, half-automaton, eldmorem lie like cysts between dimensions, waking from the sleep of ages only when disturbed. When that happens, a lone eldmor stretches to its full 200-foot (60 m) length and attempts to trace the traveler's dimensional trajectory back to its plane of origin. If it finds the location, it attempts to destroy everything it encounters there.

Motive: Destroy transdimensional travelers and their planes of origin

Environment: Anywhere dimension walkers begin and end their trips

Health: 50

Damage Inflicted: 12 points

Armor: 5

Movement: Long when flying

Modification: Speed defense as level 6 due to size.

Combat: When "encysted" between dimensions, eldmorem appear as inanimate, weathered boulders the size of small mountains. Upon waking, they unfold to reveal their true shape. Though large, eldmorem can easily discern prey much smaller than themselves.

An eldmor's primary weapons are its eyes, which emit twin blasts of destructive transdimensional energy at targets within 5 miles (8 km), inflicting 12 points of damage that phases past protective gear (and thus ignores Armor).

Eldmorem can also catch a target that fails a Speed defense task in its manipulators. If the caught target fails an Intellect defense task on the subsequent round, the target is ejected from the current reality into a random dimension.

Interaction: Eldmorem can communicate telepathically, but mostly choose not to. They are old, weary, and usually motivated to act only because of ancient instructions.

Use: The PCs, traveling across the dimension, discover a few months later that an eldmor completely destroyed a location they visited briefly. This plus a few related clues suggest that something very powerful is slowly hunting them across the dimensions.

Loot: An eldmor corpse can be salvaged for 2d6 cyphers.



ETHER GHOST

6 (18)

At least one prior-world civilization ascended to a higher plane of existence. However, there were a few stragglers. At least, that's the explanation Aeon Priests have for ether ghosts: higher beings who failed to reach or were thrown from whatever dimension their fellows discovered. Rebuffed, they fell back into the normal dimensions of time and space. Ether ghosts mimic the outline of whatever creature they encounter, but that shape constantly warps and jumps, as if reality itself struggles to resolve several alternate versions of the ether ghost into a coherent being. If Aeon Priests have correctly interpreted ether ghost motivation, they were maddened by whatever process separated them from their kin. They take that anger and madness out on dimension walkers (or other beings involved in transdimensional events) that they happen across.

Motive: Destruction and discord

Environment: Anywhere dimensions are thin

Health: 35

Damage Inflicted: 6 Intellect points

Movement: Long when flying

Modifications: Tasks related to dimensional travel and knowledge as level 10.

Combat: An ether ghost's attack is a touch that induces visions of several alternate realities simultaneously, inflicting 6 points of Intellect damage. A creature who takes damage must also succeed on an Intellect defense task or suffer a transdimensional mishap (as randomly determined on the [Transdimensional Mishap table](#)). Some effects on the mishap table can be interpreted as sending a victim to an alternate dimension. If this effect occurs, a rip in space appears between the two dimensions. The rip remains open for several minutes, which might be long enough to rescue a character so affected.

Interaction: An ether ghost might bargain with its victims if they offer to help it transcend to a higher dimension, but if that aid doesn't materialize quickly, the ether ghost returns to its earlier behavior of sowing destruction and discord.

Use: A man and his followers set up a small shrine outside a village and claim to be adherents of a god of death and destruction. They demand sacrifices from the village, or claim their god will arrive and kill everyone at one go. The "god" is an ether ghost that sometimes appears at a local thin point in space-time.

Transdimensional Mishap table, page 15

GM Intrusion: An alternate level 5 version of the PC appears through a rip in space and, for reasons of its own, tries to kill the character.



Several exic infestations can be found in the bizarre dimension of Reeval.

Reeval, page 96

Exics are huge green, chitin-covered insectile creatures with an impressively armored head and a dozen or so barbed legs. Exics are not automatically aggressive to other creatures of their size, unless attacked. Otherwise, they're happy to eat away at whatever source of food they've selected. Exics who go without food for more than fifty hours stop moving, spin a green cocoon around themselves, and cast themselves like seeds on an extradimensional wind. Many end up in locations in alternate dimensions that are equally devoid of food, but some discover dimensions where they can eat and reproduce with little interference. More than one limited dimension is completely shot through with an exic infestation tens of millions of years old.

Motive: Self-defense

Environment: Almost anywhere

Health: 18

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Armor: 4

Movement: Short

Modifications: Climbs as level 6.

Combat: When attacked or prevented from getting at a food source, exics spray a caustic, sticky web at a target within short range. Creatures struck by the web suffer 5 points of damage from the acid and are stuck to it for one round (the target loses its next turn). Once one exic becomes embroiled in a conflict, other nearby exics are drawn to the fray, in ones and twos, for as long as the combat lasts.

Interaction: Exics communicate via subtle scent trails, which another exic must climb across to decipher. Exics have the intelligence of a clever carnivore, though sometimes far smarter individuals can be found leading a group of others.

Use: An exic cocoon appears in a nearby forest. It discharges a dozen or so exic eggs, which hatch and release young that begin to eat the forest, one tree at a time, from leaf to root. A nearby village relies on special ingredients gathered in the forest to make special medicine for its elderly citizens, and looks for a solution to the infestation.

GM Intrusion: *The exic is much smarter than others of its kind, and produces a cypher or artifact to use either against the character, or as a means of communicating with the character.*



LYCIDARIS

5 (15)

Lycidarises come in many varieties. Most have long, transparent wings, an 8-foot (2 m) long beetlelike but sleek body, razor-sharp mandibles, and a massive hornlike barb protruding from the crowns of their heads. The ultimate parasite, lycidarises are a variety of planar locust that infest and eventually completely consume a world. Afterward, a select few creatures pass across a dimensional barrier weakened by their overwhelming presence into a parallel plane, starting the process anew. An infested region in a new dimension is obvious from the pale, stringy gauzelike nests, smothering the natural environment under layers of webbing. Infested regions usually grow at an ever-accelerating rate.

Motive: Expand into new territory

Environment: Anywhere

Health: 30

Damage Inflicted: 4 points

Armor: 1

Movement: Flies a short distance each round

Modifications: Tasks related to navigating alternate dimensions as level 8.

Combat: The lycidaris's bite is venomous. Victims that fail a Might defense roll descend one step on the damage track. This process continues each round until a victim succeeds at a Might defense roll or would normally die. However, the victim isn't dead but instead paralyzed for up to an hour, or until the victim can ascend at least one step on the damage track (which renders the victim immune to the venom).

A lycidaris spins level 5 webs that, when spun as a trap, require an Intellect-based perception task to avoid. A victim caught in a web must make a Might defense roll to get free. After three failed attempts to get free, a victim becomes so wrapped in the webs that they are pulled into a pocket dimension, and there remain stranded until freed.

A lycidaris's horn allows it to navigate into alternate dimensions, but to do so, it must spend at least ten minutes preparing before it burrows into the fabric of reality. After it makes the passage, it falls unconscious for several hours. A lycidaris-made hole between universes usually remains open for an hour.

Interaction: Lycidarises are, for the most part, drones, though the level 9 overlord of each community is intelligent and telepathic, and can communicate as a drone never would.

Use: A strange web that catches herd animals and even a few villagers appeared on the edge of town a few weeks ago. Things that remain caught in the web too long disappear, never to be seen again.

Some dimension walkers try to capture lycidarises and use them for traveling between planes.

GM Intrusion:
Unnoticed lycidaris webbing fills the doorway the character just tried to pass through.



MUTTERING MOUTH

5 (15)

Muttering mouths are intelligent transdimensional gates. A 5-foot (2 m) diameter central blot of spherical darkness—the mouth—is surrounded by a halo of whirling metallic debris—the teeth. A mind exists as a telepathic overlay that survives on the outer “skin” of the mouth, visible as a purplish aura. Even when it's not directly communicating, nearby creatures “hear” a telepathic muttering within short range.

An insatiable mouth can pull itself “inside out” to travel into any dimension it knows about, or into any adjacent dimension.

Motive: Knowledge, experience

Environment: Anywhere

Health: 36

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Movement: Short while flying

Modifications: Speed defense as level 3 due to size; transdimensional knowledge as level 7.

Combat: A muttering mouth uses its spinning teeth (its halo of whirling metallic debris) to attack all targets within immediate range. In addition, a victim who takes its turn while within immediate range of a muttering mouth suffers damage merely for being too close and must succeed on another Speed defense roll or take another 5 points of damage. If a creature is killed while in immediate range of a muttering mouth, the body is sucked through the gate at the creature's core.

If a muttering mouth is killed, the dimensional gate at the core loses cohesion. Two rounds later, it implodes. On a failed Might defense roll, all creatures within short range suffer 5 points of transdimensional damage.

Interaction: A muttering mouth is not automatically hostile. But the mind impressed upon the gate is slightly mad, and despite being telepathic, the creature is easily confused and angered. However, it will negotiate, and may even offer to send PCs to another dimension.

Use: PCs stranded in another dimension use a cypher to summon a gate portal. A muttering mouth appears.

GM (Group) Intrusion:

Characters caught in a muttering mouth death implosion must make a Speed defense roll or be sucked into an alternate dimension.



NAVESAH

3 (9)

Navesahs are demons drawn to creatures and objects that have recently traveled transdimensionally, though why they only started appearing recently is anyone's guess. They look like a horned, ridged, only partially humanoid creature with several sets of arms, or perhaps tentacles. Because they gradually "smear" into existence, it's difficult to describe them with precision. While smeared, they're almost—but not completely—intangible, which makes damaging them difficult. Most of the time, PCs have little to fear from a navesah. However, if they have recently traveled the dimensions, or if they are currently in a dimension other than their home dimension, a navesah that finds them attacks. It eats portions of the brain of any victim it successfully kills.

Motive: Hungers for brain matter of dimension walkers

Environment: Nearly anywhere alone or in groups of two

Health: 9

Damage Inflicted: 4 points (ignores Armor)

Movement: Short

Modifications: Attacks and defense as level 5.

Combat: A navesah fights with its horned and ridged tentacles, seemingly metallic claws. A navesah's not quite intangible state always works in its favor. So when a navesah attacks as if it were level 5, it ignores Armor. Likewise, when it is attacked, its partially intangible state means that it defends as if it were level 5 and any time it is hit, it takes only 1 point of damage.

It can pass through solid matter at an immediate distance per round, but solid energy barriers, such as force fields, keep it at bay.

If it defeats a victim, it cracks open the skull and selects the brain matter it needs, which apparently allows it to travel into an all-new dimension.

Interaction: Interaction with navesahs isn't impossible, but it's difficult. It will respond to telepathic contact, but it seems to see the many worlds much differently than a human mind—more as a long road along which various treats are laid out like mile markers, pulling the navesah along toward a transdimensional meeting of others of its kind many years from now, but getting closer all the time.

Use: Local stories tell of a demon that "guards the gate" of a prior-world installation that is sometimes there, and sometimes absent, as if the entire structure fades into and out of reality.

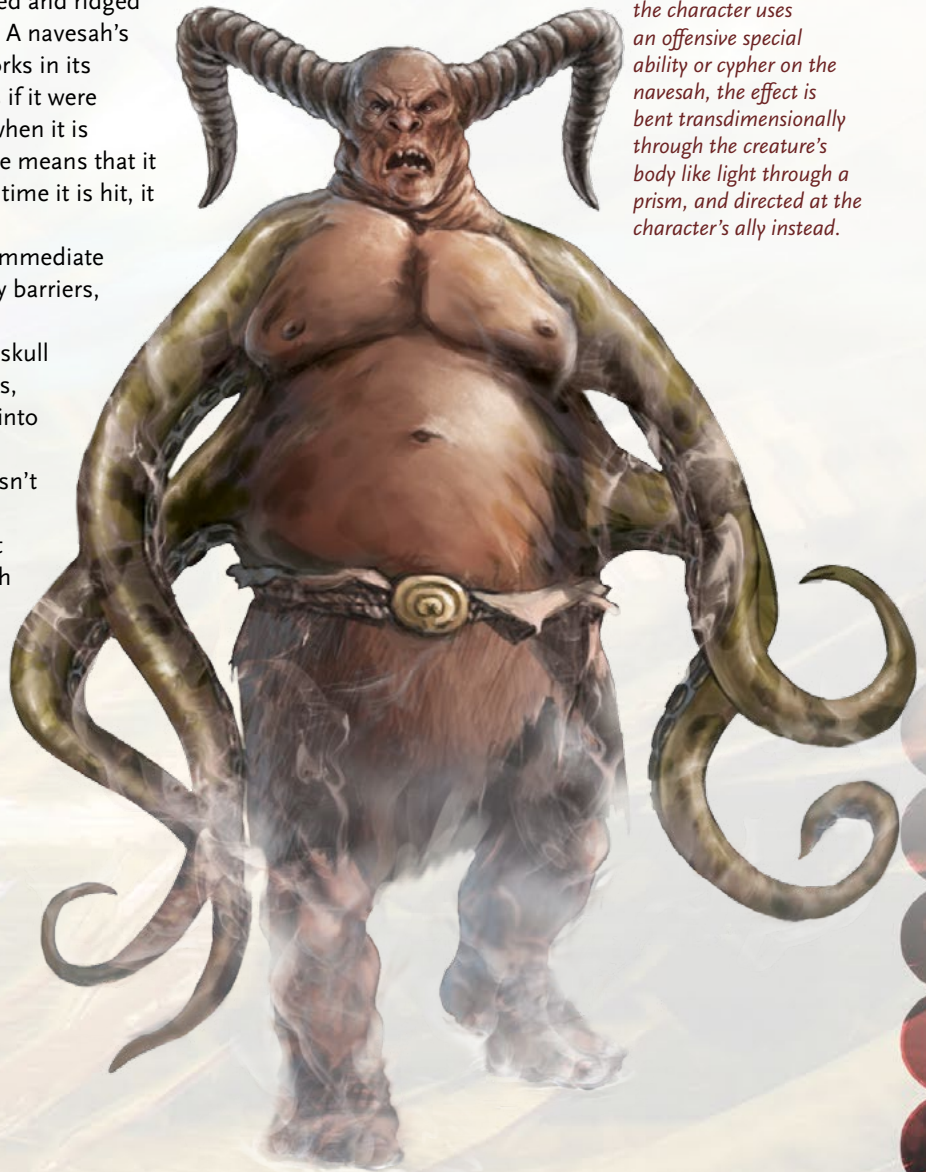
A navesah will also hunt other creatures that travel across realities, such as nildirs, Nibovians, and parialls.

Nildir, page 150

Nibovian guide, page 149

Pariall, page 152

GM Intrusion: *When the character uses an offensive special ability or cypher on the navesah, the effect is bent transdimensionally through the creature's body like light through a prism, and directed at the character's ally instead.*



NEANIC

5 (15)



If looks could kill, they would look like the ghastly visage of a neanic.

Celerillion, page 108

Neantics can journey into other dimensions and retain their lethal nature, but only if compelled by some other force. In at least one recorded instance, a magister of the Convergence used a neanic as a tool of assassination.



Convergence, page 223

What if the mere sight of something could kill you? Posing such a question as a thought experiment is harmless. Unless you inhabit the dimension of **Celerillion**, where the idea of something and its literal reality is one and the same. And maybe that's how the horrific neanic came to be. It drains minds dry merely by being observed. The few who've survived an encounter with a neanic describe it as a warped, shadowed, and malicious version of themselves, showing them everything they most detest. If viewed by several people simultaneously, the neanic becomes all the more horrific as its flesh writhes and bubbles to simultaneously reflect that which those who see it hate most in themselves.

Motive: Eradication of other minds

Environment: Anywhere in the dimension of Celerillion

Health: 33

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Movement: Teleports up to a long distance each round

Combat: Each round any character within short range clearly sees the neanic and fails an Intellect defense roll, victims suffer 5 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor). This mind-draining effect persists for one round after a creature who glimpsed a neanic ceases to view it, whether because they turn away, close their eyes, or something else occurs—or because the neanic is killed.

A character could choose to avert their gaze while attacking a neanic, which increases the difficulty of their attack by two steps. The creature doesn't physically attack its foes, but it does stalk after those who run from it, and attempts to teleport itself back into a victim's field of view.

Interaction: Neantics don't seem to be conscious in the same way characters are, though they do recall the memories a character hates most, and they throw those back in the character's face if negotiations are attempted. Ultimately, all such interaction fails to prevent a neanic from attempting to eradicate whomever it encounters.

Use: A breach in reality after a particularly powerful use of a detonation (especially a detonation using transdimensional or some other exotic energy) lets a neanic through into the base dimension.



GM Intrusion: The neanic, which knows the worst aspects of the character that looked at it, reveals that information to the character's allies.

NIBOVIAN GUIDE

5 (15)

Like other Nibovians, guides are ultraterrestrials who have slipped through time and space to interact with humans. Nibovian guides understand even more than other varieties about human nature, which allows them to emulate what humans love and want most in order to exploit that trust to their own ends.

Guides take the form of a seasoned human explorer claiming to be wise in the ways of a philosophy, a particular skill, or in finding a hard-to-reach location. That wisdom is more than a mere claim, and a guide can actually help a regular human explore higher truths, begin training in a new skill, or discover the route to a distant site, making themselves indispensable in the process. Once trust is achieved, a guide chooses a receptive victim to cocoon. The cocoon is larger in the inside than the exterior. The cocooned victim slides down the transdimensional chute through a hole in space that leads to the dimension of *Reeval*.

Motive: Deception, collecting humans

Environment: Anywhere

Health: 15

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Armor: 1

Movement: Short

Modifications: Tasks related to stealth, deception, and one area of expertise as level 6.

Combat: The Nibovian guide's motivations are complex; it first seeks to gain the trust of one or more humans over time, then tries to capture its victims in transdimensional cocoons that transfer them to *Reeval*.

The guide releases subtle chemicals into the air that create a druglike dependency in humans in the immediate vicinity. For each hour that this exchange occurs, the PC feels motivated and positive about whatever the guide is helping with, gaining an asset to any directly related task while the guide is present.

If the PC doesn't uncover what's going on after five days (or sooner if the guide tries to force the process, though this allows the PC a Might defense roll), the PC collapses into unconsciousness in the guide's presence. The guide then cocoons the PC in white filaments from spinnerets in its mouth. Once cocooned, a victim has only about ten hours before it is shunted to *Reeval*, there to face an unknowable fate (unknowable to those left behind).

If forced to fight, Nibovian guides use weapons and equipment that regular humans use, possibly even including a cypher or two.

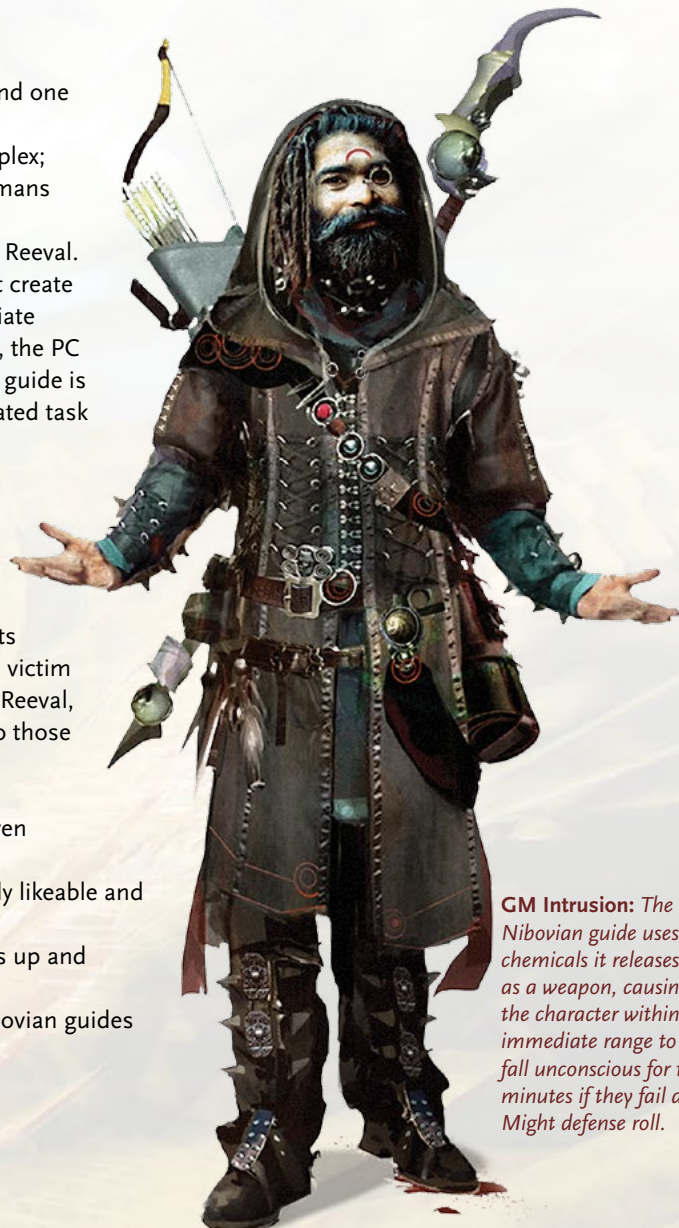
Interaction: A Nibovian guide seems to be a perfectly likeable and trustworthy friend.

Use: The PCs find themselves lost, but a guide turns up and offers them a route forward.

Loot: Because their inner workings are artificial, Nibovian guides can be salvaged to provide one or two cyphers.

A Nibovian guide might help someone achieve new insights regarding a philosophical or spiritual conundrum, only to cocoon them and deliver them to Reeval a few days later.

Reeval, page 96



GM Intrusion: The Nibovian guide uses the chemicals it releases as a weapon, causing the character within immediate range to fall unconscious for ten minutes if they fail a Might defense roll.

NILDIR

5 (15)



Its claws are murder-red, its horns corpse-white, its footprints flickering flames across the worlds.

Too many transitions to bizarre dimensions can warp a normal human's mind and body, creating something terrifying.

Dimensional bleed, page 27

GM Intrusion: *The victim is grabbed. Each round that the character does not escape, they suffer 12 points of damage, as the cannibal focuses all its attention on its victim.*

Stalking across the worlds, nildirs are creatures of endless hunger who slip between the folds of reality to hunt literally everywhere for their next meal. Once human, nildirs—also called planar cannibals—were exposed to one too many transdimensional transitions, planar bleed-through, and perhaps even shocks to their ego. Mutated and hungry, planar cannibals hunt humans, abhumans, and other beings with knowledge that seasons the flesh, though anyone will do. Whatever mind and personality the nildir had before its conversion is gone, even if some memories remain. Once changed, it is probably impossible that a planar cannibal could ever be returned to its former self.

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Hunting alone, planar cannibals stride the dimensions

Health: 23

Damage Inflicted: 8 points

Movement: Short; action to flit between known parallel dimensions

Modifications: Might defense rolls as level 6. Runs, climbs, and jumps as level 7.

Combat: A nildir tears at prey with its powerful claws until they are incapacitated, then attempts to steal their dying body to an alternate dimension, there to dine on the still-living flesh in peace.

As a being of disrupted dimensions, dimensional bleed surrounds the planar cannibal like a halo. Each round, disquieting emotions, sounds, visions, and even physical objects appearing out of nowhere can afflict foes. Generally speaking, these effects increase the difficulty of all attacks and defenses against the cannibal by one step, though the GM can also choose to apply specific effects.

As its action, a nildir can move into an alternate dimension, usually one it has previously visited. It leaves behind flickering footsteps that can be followed for one round if pursuers are quick enough (a level 5 Speed task).

Interaction: Though once human, planar cannibals act mostly like animals.

Use: Characters investigating a site of transdimensional activity, or who are traveling themselves, are attacked by a nildir. It might even recognizably be someone who they once knew to be a dimension walker, if applicable.



OROBAN

3 (9)

Orobans are wretched abhumans who have only a single arm and clawed hand that also serves as their face. They constantly murmur and mutter, which might be a language, though, if so, it is one that communicates only concepts of hunger, hunting, and threat. Orobans are few in number and usually live alone, but that weakness is compensated for by a knack they've learned for drawing parallel versions of themselves out of nearby dimensions at need. Orobans are divisive enough that they soon turn on even versions of themselves. This is why a lone oroban's crude domicile is often decorated with several corpses of itself. But more than they hate themselves, they hate other creatures.

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Almost anywhere, alone (but with the transdimensional ability to summon five or more parallel versions in moments)

Health: 9

Damage Inflicted: 3 points

Movement: Short

Modifications: Perception as level 5.

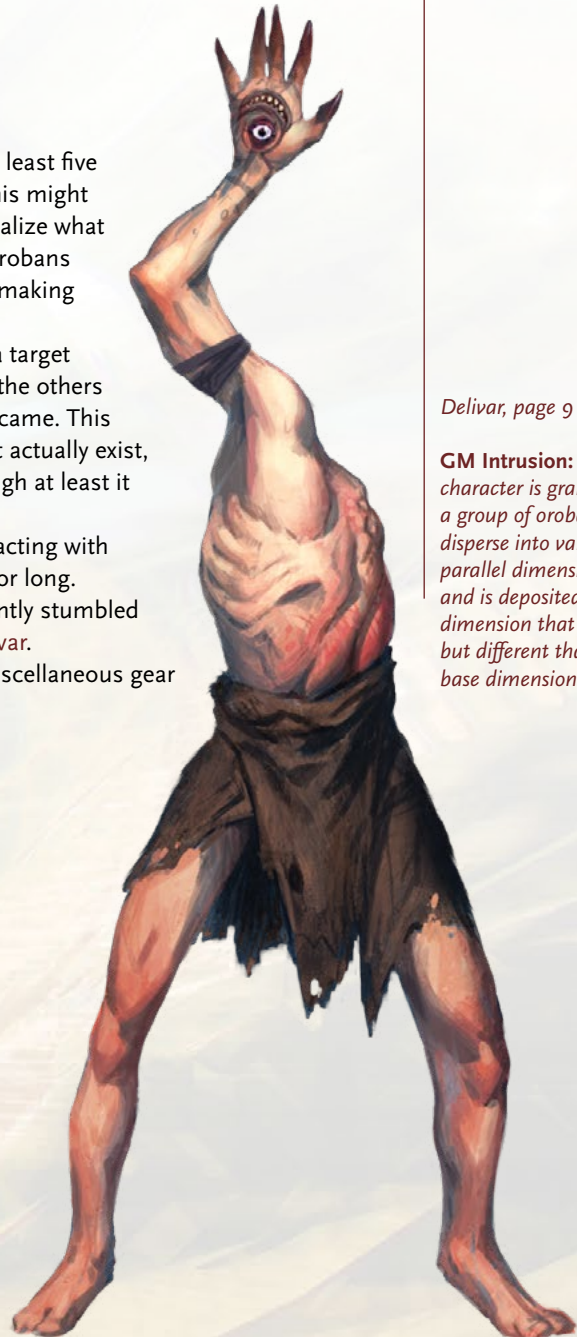
Combat: As part of another action, an oroban can draw at least five parallel versions of itself to participate in an attack. This might grant them surprise if the target of the attack didn't realize what was about to step into existence. Either way, the five orobans can attack a single foe using their clawed face-hands, making one level 5 attack that inflicts 6 points of damage.

Instead of dealing damage, a group of orobans can hold a target in place. Next round, one of the orobans can dismiss the others back into the alternate dimensions from whence they came. This tends to pull the victim in painful directions that don't actually exist, inflicting 6 points of damage that ignores Armor, though at least it releases the victim.

Interaction: These creatures seem interested only in interacting with alternate versions of themselves, and even then, not for long.

Use: Orobans are somewhat new to Earth, having apparently stumbled out of a portal that briefly opened near the city of *Delivar*.

Loot: If found, a lone oroban lair has 1d20 shins, other miscellaneous gear or goods, and probably a cypher or two.



Delivar, page 9

GM Intrusion: The character is grabbed by a group of orobans that disperse into various parallel dimensions, and is deposited in a dimension that is like, but different than, the base dimension.



Drit, page 411

PARIALL

4 (12)

Parialls hide in plain sight, usually in flat pieces of art, as chalk drawings, or as scratches on *drit* or stone. A pariall reveals itself to lone victims, taking on full dimension and substance in order to physically attack. When hiding, a pariall mimics its surroundings. For instance, if hiding in art, it might appear as a kindly old scholar, a child, or an animal in a landscape. But when one takes on dimension, its true form is also revealed, which is a horrible fusion of flesh and limbs as of many, many dissimilar creatures.

Like a snail with its shell, a pariall takes its two-dimensional curled-up pocket plane with it when it moves, though unlike a snail, the curled-up dimension is not visible.

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Almost anywhere, but more likely near artistic displays

Health: 18

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Movement: Immediate when disguised, short when fully formed

Modifications: All tasks related to disguise and stealth as level 6.

Combat: Parialls move imperceptibly along flat surfaces, preferring to appear disguised as pieces of art as they do. When one attacks, it reveals its full form. A target damaged by a pariall must make a Might defense roll or be pulled into a curled-up pocket plane of two dimensions.

Victims pulled into a curled, two-dimensional space find it wholly unsettling if they haven't visited a similar space before. Out of their element, their only course of action is to attempt a Might task or Intellect task to drop back into three dimensions.

Interaction: Parialls are intelligent creatures, and a few speak the Truth. A defeated pariall might choose to bargain rather than lose its life. Parialls have an expansive knowledge of other dimensions, since they slide along planar edges like people walk along roads.

Use: In order to use a gate leading to an area of interest, the characters must pass through a gallery of paintings. One or more of those paintings is infested with parialls.

Loot: Parialls keep belongings

of past victims with them in their curled-up dimensions, and defeating one might cause the entire pocket dimension to empty out, revealing a few cyphers amid the bones and garbage.

GM Intrusion: The character thinks they are leaning against a solid wall with some strange scratches on it. Instead, they fall into the curled-up two-dimensional plane of a pariall's tiny personal dimension.



RIVEN

2 (6)

Riven are echoes of creatures that perished in timelines extinguished by disaster. So in a way they are like ghosts, but ghosts that physically haunt parallel worlds after their own world is no more. They sometimes resemble blurred images of familiar creatures, such as *seskii*, though in most cases the bodies appear more skeletal and often glimmer with transdimensional energies. Riven act as if always threatened, and constantly lash out, or run from, everything and everyone around them.

Motive: Destruction

Environment: Almost anywhere

Health: 6

Damage Inflicted: 4 points

Movement: Short

Modifications: Defense as level 5 due to transdimensional skipping.

Combat: A riven's exposure to transdimensional energy that caused its change benefits it in combat, because it's hard to predict exactly where a riven will be from moment to moment. Riven attack with the ferocity of the crazed and desperate. When they're encountered together, four of them can concentrate on one foe and make one attack as if they were a level 4 creature, inflicting 8 points of damage. Each riven must still be attacked individually, as normal. If their numbers are reduced to fewer than four, they retreat into a parallel dimension. Attempting to follow a fleeing riven could strand a character in an alternate reality, or forcefully knock them back into their own reality when the riven returns to a dimension that no longer exists.

Interaction: These desperate, crazed entities understand only destruction and fear. They cannot be reasoned with or calmed, not even those that look like humans or other intelligent beings.

Use: After PCs visit what appears to be a dying parallel dimension, or view one through an artifact, they are attacked by a riven that bears an uncanny resemblance to them.

Loot: Riven that appear bestial never carry loot, but those that resemble warped versions of humans may carry some shins and possibly a cypher.

Seskii, page 258

What is so powerful that it can extinguish whole dimensions? Possibilities include runaway processes that grew beyond their original creators' intent, weapons wielded by godlike beings, and certain classes of predator that operate many magnitudes higher on the food chain than normal creatures.

GM Intrusion: A tooth from the riven breaks off in the attacked PC's skin. Until removed (a Might action), the character suffers 1 point of damage per round.



SHATARAK

6 (18)

You can't see it, not at first. But you can feel it, rumbling through levels of reality you never knew existed until this moment. Something is smashing the barriers that normally keep alternate realities separated, and when it finally appears, it is revealed as unbelievably massive.

A shatarak—also called a realm crasher—stands about 30 feet (9 m) tall. Realm crashers usually appear only in areas where transdimensional effects are in use, including phasing. They seem intent on destroying the entity or device involved in creating the effect, though that may be a side effect of their true, unknowable purpose.

Motive: Destroying creatures and devices that allow transdimensional travel

Environment: Almost anywhere

Health: 40

Damage Inflicted: 6 points

Movement: Long; can transition between dimensions as an action unless attacked

Modifications: Speed defense as level 4 due to size.

Combat: A realm crasher attacks with an impressively large tail and can target up to four creatures with a single attack.

A realm crasher can also attempt to cut a furrow in reality that sucks up energy in cyphers and artifacts. When it attempts to make such a tear, it moves up to a short distance in a round, and anything it comes within immediate range of is attacked. Each target must make a Speed defense roll, or one cypher (or, if they have no cyphers, an artifact) on their person is drained of power. Devices that have some kind of transdimensional effect are drained first. If the targets have no devices, this attack has no effect.

Interaction: Shataraks can sometimes be bribed with numenera items that have transdimensional effects, but they're generally not interested in other kinds of interaction. They speak their own language of subsonic whistles and clicks.

Use: A Nano got lucky and captured a realm crasher, and is using the beast as a subject in experiments related to crossing dimensions. Meanwhile, reports accumulate from nearby villages of a rampaging monster of enormous size that is there one minute and gone the next.

Loot: A shatarak may have a few cyphers and even an artifact, but usually only because it hasn't destroyed them yet.

Realm crashers are rumored to have once been peaceful creatures, but after the destruction of their entire plane in a dimensional mishap, they became vengeful, looking for something called "the Key."

GM Intrusion: The character hit by the realm crasher's massive tail is struck so fiercely that they are sent flying an immediate distance and lie stunned, losing their next action.



STALKING SHADE

4 (12)



When multiple stalking shades appear, they might represent a single entity with multiple "limbs" casting its shadow into our reality.

Stalking shades never fully appear in the dimension where they hunt, but instead project their shadow. Thus shades appear similar to the regular shadow cast by a nearby object or a creature being stalked, making shades hard to identify as anything dangerous. However, when someone observant notices that an object or creature has more than a single shadow, it might be because one or more stalking shades are about ready to pounce. Victims are pulled into the dimension where the stalking shade's true form resides and are consumed.

Stalking shades move across the dimensions, but are more drawn to locations where the fabric between worlds is thinnest.

Motive: Hungers for substance

Environment: Almost anywhere, alone or in groups of two to four

Health: 18

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Movement: Short

Modifications: Tasks related to deception and stealth as level 6.

Combat: A stalking shade relies on its deception and stealth to attack a victim from ambush when possible. Once it attacks, the shade loses the shape of whatever shadow it was mimicking and takes on a horrific snakelike (or tentacle-like) silhouette. When a victim is hit by an attack, it suffers 5 points of damage and must succeed on a Might defense task or be partly pulled into the dimension where the stalking shade's true physical form resides. A limb or some other part of the caught victim's body seems to disappear when this happens. The victim takes 4 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor) each round it is caught, as whatever lies in that nameless alternate dimension gnaws on the victim, until the victim succeeds on a Might task to pull free. A victim who dies from this damage is completely pulled into the nameless alternate dimension, and is gone.

Unless foes deal transdimensional damage to a stalking shade, killing one merely dismisses the shadowy shape; whatever cast the shadow in the first place remains unharmed, though it can't cast a shade again into the same location for at least 28 hours.

Interaction: Stalking shades behave like clever, predatory animals, albeit ones with the ability to hunt using ultraterrestrial means.

Use: Weird shadows are sometimes seen dancing on the walls of the prior-world ruin located nearby. When locals investigate, the shadows slip away. Except for last week, when three local village children went to watch the shadows and never came back. Village elders are seeking someone knowledgeable about the numenera to investigate.



GM Intrusion: *The character pulls free of the stalking shade, but a piece of shadow somehow remains stuck to their flesh. The character must do serious damage to themselves (at least 6 points) within the hour, scraping away the portion of stained flesh, or risk being pulled back into the nameless dimension again within a few hours.*

TIME WRAITH

5 (15)

Panaton, page 74

GM Intrusion: *The time wraith splits itself in time and makes three attacks against the character this round.*

Time wraiths travel across dimensions of both time and space in pursuit of those whose actions threaten to cause time paradoxes. It's not certain if they are a natural defense mechanism of the universe, or some sort of remnant species that suffered a causal disaster that wiped them out of existence, leaving only time wraiths. If the latter, then time wraiths may be all that are left of the time adepts of **Panaton**.

When a time wraith selects a victim, it takes on a vague, immaterial semblance of that victim—if the victim were a century dead, withered, and desiccated, and made of immaterial wisps of matter.

Motive: Hungers for temporal energy in living creatures

Environment: Near temporal anomalies

Health: 15

Damage Inflicted: 3 points

Armor: 1

Movement: Flies a short distance each round; can phase immaterial body through physical objects of its level or less

Modifications: Stealth as level 7.

Combat: A time wraith attacks creatures by touching them. Each time it does, a portion of the victim's flesh becomes withered and desiccated while a matching portion of the time wraith gains the texture and health of the wraith's victim. If someone inflicts damage on a time wraith with an attack, the attacker must succeed on an Intellect defense roll or suffer the same fate. If a creature is killed by a time wraith, the victim's body appears as if it has been dead, rotted, and partly mummified for dozens or hundreds of years. At the same time, the time wraith takes on the immaterial semblance of the just-slain victim, whereupon it displays inhuman amusement even as it seems to fade away. Given its ability to phase through solid material, a time wraith is adept at surprising foes.

Interaction: Once a target has been identified, time wraiths single-mindedly pursue it.

Use: A device capable of seeing a few rounds into the past also leaves a trail of withered corpses. The latest owner believes some sort of time spirit inhabits the item, and wants someone to "exorcise" it.



TONBRIUM HUNTER

4 (12)

Ebony skinned, hairless, and with eyes covered with goggles to limit their natural shine, tonbrium Hunters explore the dimension of Celerillion. They are specially trained to use **conceptual creation** to aid them as they explore, seek out and slay neanics, and prospect for special items of power, especially **conception jewels** and **psychic seeds**. Hunters are the scouts, foragers, and protectors of their people.

Motive: Defense

Environment: Almost anywhere in Celerillion

Health: 15

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Armor: 1

Movement: Short

Modifications: Tasks related to conceptual creation and **conceptual attack** as level 5.

Combat: A Hunter can summon a mundane melee or ranged weapon with a thought, or conceptually create some sort of other calamitous event, such as fire spontaneously engulfing the target within long range. These are all treated as level 5 attacks that inflict 5 points of damage. When a Hunter hits with an attack, the difficulty of the target's actions is increased by one step while it remains within long range.

A Hunter can use conceptual creation to provide food, armor, and any other aid it can think of, as necessary, but the natural caution and asceticism of the tonbrium means that most Hunters don't accumulate much in this way unless they are preparing to deal with a particular issue or problem. For instance, if a wounded Hunter has time, they will create a healing cypherlike aid that restores health.

Interaction: Tonbrium speak their own language, but if communication is bridged, a Hunter will negotiate. Each Hunter has their own code of conduct, but all see the protection of their people—the tonbrium—as their first duty. Anything that falls under that primary responsibility is likely to be seen as a threat that should be eliminated immediately.

Use: If PCs become lost in Celerillion, it's probably a far-ranging tonbrium Hunter who finds them.

Loot: Sometimes a tonbrium Hunter carries a psychic seed. Very rarely, a group might have one conception jewel among them.

Celerillion, page 108

Conceptual creation, page 111

Conception jewel, page 117

Psychic seed, page 117

Conceptual attack, page 114



GM Intrusion: The Hunter uses conceptual creation to fashion just what's needed to negate the character's attack(s) for one round.

WHISPER

3 (9)

Whispers cover the divergent Earth known as the Whispering World.

Whispers are mostly composed of what was formerly the human population of the pre-divergent Ninth World.

The Whispering World, page 62

He's muttering words, or maybe only nonsense. He's abandoned bathing, grooming, and possibly even eating by the way his clothes hang. He's eager to reach you, though, as if he has important news to share. As he approaches, you notice a thin, oily metal rod protruding from one side of the man's head. Is it a cypher? The stranger motions you to lean close, because he's got a secret. But either he doesn't speak your language, or he's insane, because the series of syllables that tumbles out of his mouth sound like babble. So you continue on your way, wishing the stranger would stop following you, muttering and shambling. And you wonder why you suddenly feel so warm.

Motive: Expose intelligent creatures to the trigger phrase that causes them to transform into another whisper

Environment: Anywhere, alone or in groups of ten or more

Health: 9

Damage Inflicted: 5 points

Armor: 2

Movement: Short

Modifications: Perception tasks as level 5; tasks related to knowledge and reasoning as level 1.

Combat: A whisper physically attacks another creature only if it's attacked first. When it does, it batters foes with frenetic punches, kicks, and bites. (A few whispers retain special abilities from before they changed, and use those as well.)

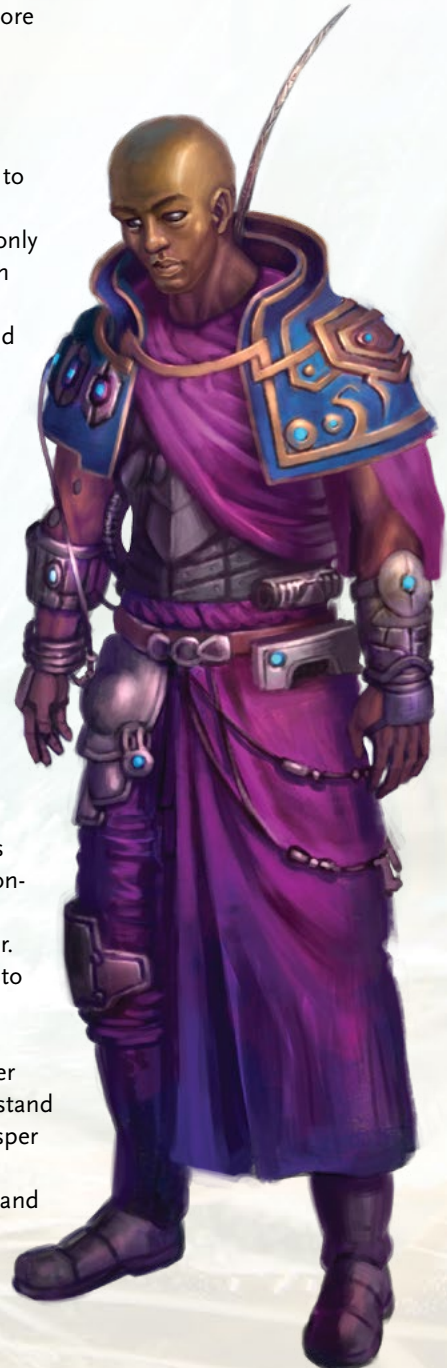
Whether or not it physically attacks, a whisper always strives to verbally impart a "trigger phrase" to the nearest intelligent creature, preferably when a target is within immediate range. If a whisper can't get closer, it may shout the phrase from up to a long distance away, though this grants an asset to a target's difficulty 4 Intellect defense task to resist the phrase's effect. Non-intelligent creatures are immune to the effect. Intelligent victims who fail the defense task are not immediately harmed; however, the phrase triggers an ancient war protocol that the nanites in their body and brain respond to, and within 10 + 1d6 hours, human victims lose their individuality as they undergo a conversion that turns them into another whisper, as described under **Becoming a Whisper**. Intelligent non-humans may also change, but usually just die.

Whispers have no sense of self-preservation whatsoever.

Interaction: Whispers do not respond to threats, offers to negotiate, or other inducements.

Use: While the PCs explore a prior-world installation with transdimensional energy signatures, a character salvaging a device for shins or attempting to understand a strange device activates a portal that draws a whisper from its parallel dimension to the Ninth World.

Loot: Sometimes a whisper carries a couple of cyphers and 1d6 shins; it never uses offensive or defensive cyphers because it doesn't recognize them as useful any longer.



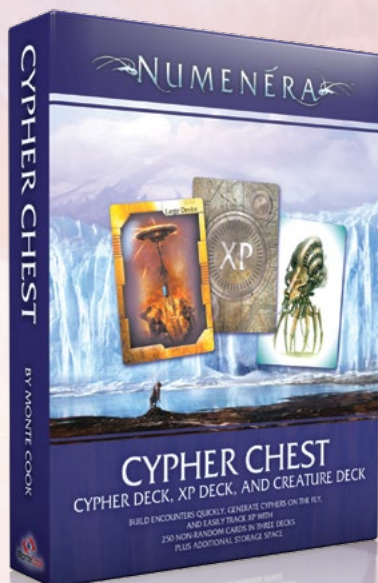
Becoming a Whisper, page 63

GM Intrusion: The character who hears the trigger phrase, regardless of whether they resist it, has an immediate neurological reaction and must succeed on a second difficulty 4 Intellect defense task or fall unconscious for one minute.

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