

CITY AT THE CENTER OF THE EARTH

SPACE

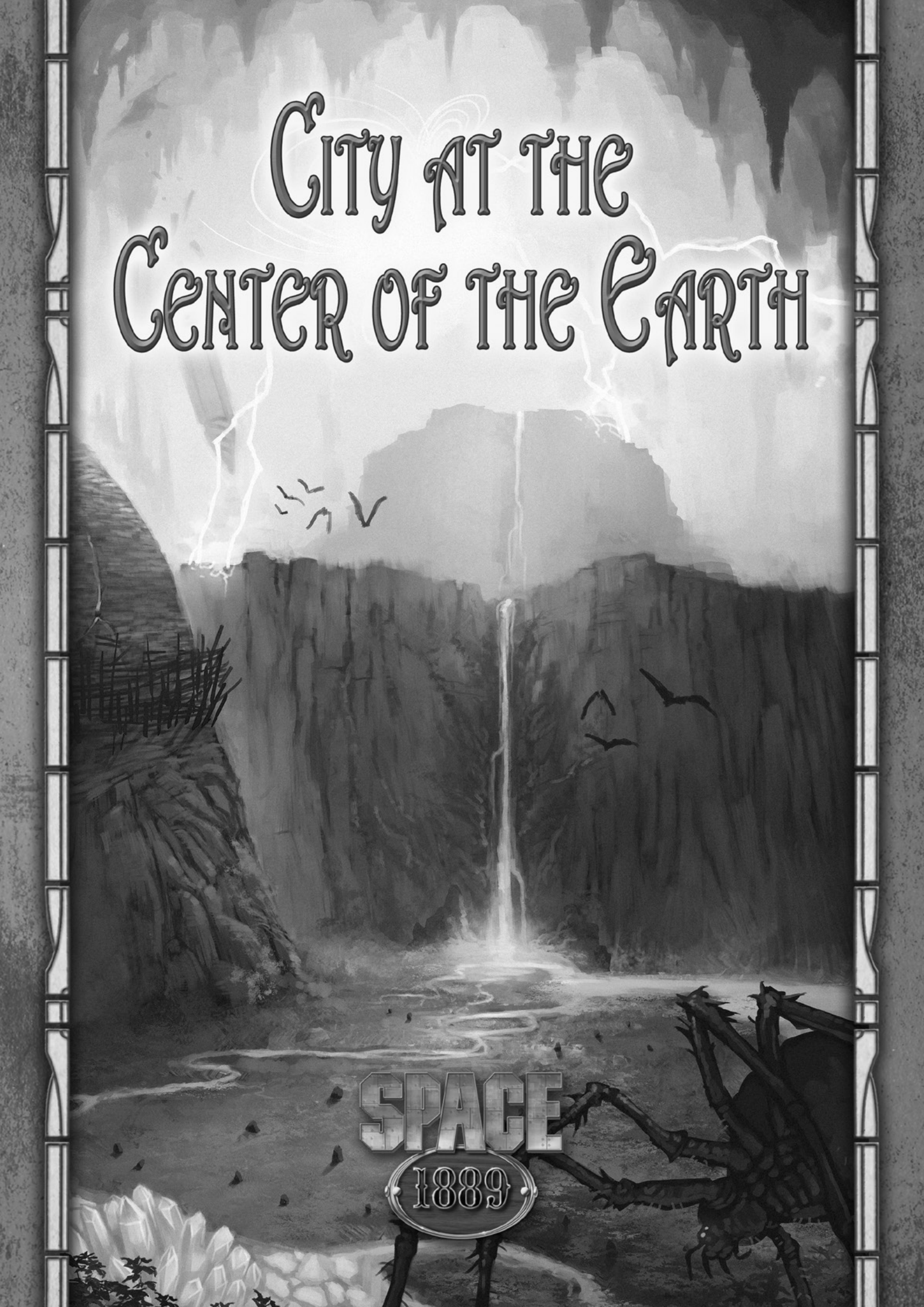
1889



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City at the Center of the Earth

By Kieran Turley

Nations: All, especially German.

Archetypes: Academics (especially archeologists and linguists), Adventurers and Explorers of all sorts, Engineers, Reporters, Scientists (especially Geologists), Soldiers.

Introduction

A scientist called *Elke Egger* has invented a giant Mole Machine (similar to a Mole Drill (**Core Rules**, p. 235) but slightly larger) in order to explore the depths of Earth. Elke has been fascinated by rumors of Morloch-like peoples in the depths since she was a child when her nights were torn asunder by nightmares of creatures living beneath her house. Through journals translated from ancient texts, diaries kept by her grandfather, and exploration of Stone Age tunnels in Europe, Elke believes that she has found the possible location of a city beneath the earth belonging to a lost civilization called the Untlor. If Elke can prove her hypothesis she can guarantee her place in history as a renowned explorer and maybe put her childhood terrors behind her.

Elke is from Heidelberg, studied in France, and worked as an engineer for *Schlesische Analysemaschinen-Produktion (SAP)* (See **Core Rules**, p. 235) until a few years ago. Ordinarily there would be no way that the company would have hired Elke as an engineer. But her family connections, her astounding intellect and the intercession of *Margarete*, the daughter of the SAP industrial manager *Guido Henckel von Donnersmarck*, who also works at the company, won her the post. Elke is frequently compared to Ada Lovelace; her keen wits a match for the inventor of the first algorithm.

Fräulein Egger is internationally famous amongst certain circles and a former colleague of hers, now an agent for the *Difference Engine Corporation (DEC)* keeps a weather eye on her at all times. The agent, *Klaus Weiss* (p. 26), is a little paranoid and believes that Elke's work with the Mole Machine is leading to some kind of new breakthrough. He is of course correct, Elke has figured out how to use a difference engine to calculate the position of a Mole Machine or Mole Drill underground given information such as starting position, speed, and incline. This breakthrough could revolutionize the nature of underground exploration and make Elke a very wealthy woman if she were to release it to the public.

Adventure Background

This scenario has its genesis in the actions of the Phaeton aliens over ten millennia ago when they chose to tamper with the natural progression of life and extinction on Earth. The Untlor are a hybrid race of modern human and Neanderthal stock, possibly the last of that lost race in the solar system. Around 10,000 years ago, when the Phaeton people first came to Earth, they discovered the last

remnants of the Neanderthal people, gathered them together, and placed them with some modern humans in a special environmental dome far beneath the Earth as a social and ecological experiment. The failing of the Phaeton race caused them to hastily abandon their experiment, leaving this tiny outpost, which the natives call *Phar*, to survive and develop on its own for thousands of years.

The Neanderthal and *Homo sapiens* populations interbred for generations, resulting in a mixed race that contains characteristics of both peoples. See **Appendix 3** (p. 25) for details of the Untlor race. A peaceful hunter-gatherer society, living in harmony with nature, arose in Phar and persisted for thousands of years. This was not to last, however. A few decades ago, a fluctuation in the Environmental Dome's source of heat and light, a device called the Inner Sun (p. 24), created a breach in the cavern wall. This break led to the series of caves the Phaetonians used to transport the early humans to Phar in the first place, eventually carrying brave Untlor explorers to the surface world. The curious Untlor, members of the peaceful religion known as the Cult of Light, stepped into a world they could barely comprehend, little suspecting the horror that awaited them.

At first everything went well and the Untlor even made a friend in the form of *Ansgar Egger*, Elke's grandfather. Ansgar's estate near Heidelberg in Germany played host to a dozen or more eager explorers to whom he taught both German and English. Ansgar even travelled once to the great city of Phar, fascinated by its unique flora and fauna. The elder Egger never told his family of his new friends and kept their existence secret. Ansgar provided all manner of goods to the Untlor, most of which would have been regarded as junk by surface dwellers but which the Untlor found charming. Ansgar didn't realize that his gifts would spell the end of the Untlor civilization.

Ten thousand years of genetic drift wasn't enough to make the Untlor immune to modern diseases and the explorers brought back terrible plagues that all but wiped out their community. In addition, the breach in Phar's walls put pressure on the Inner Sun, causing it to further deteriorate. A dark cult, the Cult of Lor, emerged from the ruins and, blaming Ansgar, the Cult of Light, and the surface for their woes, they sealed the tunnels, slew the priests of the rival religion, and discarded all the surface world artefacts. Coincidentally, sealing off the tunnels restored some vitality to the Inner Sun and so cemented the cult's power. The cult of Lor rules over the ruins of Phar, practicing bloody sacrifice to appease their dark and diseased god. For long decades the Cult of Lor has ruled with an iron fist, using terror and violence to control the population of Phar.

What the Cult of Lor couldn't know is that overthrowing the Cult of Light lost them the key to keeping the Inner Sun hale and hearty. An amulet carried by one of the Cult of Light trapped on the surface is the only means to reset and recharge the Inner Sun.

The Untlor explorers left behind one final gift for Ansgar, a male Untlor child whose mother died of pneumonia in the old man's arms. The childless Egger adopted the boy as his own, calling him Andreas, and raised him on stories of a world beneath the Earth, stories that Andreas would tell to his daughter Elke. Ansgar died in a fall from a horse before he could tell Andreas about his true heritage, but passed onto him the strangely-made black hexagonal amulet that Elke wears to this day.

Adventure Summary

Elke Egger hires the PCs to accompany her on a fantastic journey of discovery into the depths of the Earth. Following in the footsteps of Jules Verne's adventurers, the PCs descend into the darkest recesses of the planet to find a lost city of strange beings that prove that not every modern man may be all he appears to be. Along the way they encounter prehistoric creatures, strange humanoids, industrial spies, and may learn that Elke, and perhaps one of them, isn't quite what they appear to be.

Getting Your Players Involved

The best way to get your adventurers involved is if they have some kind of personal stake in the situation. Elke could be a relation, an old lover, or a former friend. If you wish, you could use Elke as an NPC expert on some previous adventure, establishing her as a person the PCs care about or at least know to some degree. Elke travelled extensively in her youth and could easily have met characters from any number of locations such as Europe, Asia, the Americas, or even the off-world colonies. You could encourage your players to tell you how they know Elke, and why they would care about her success. This would be an excellent place to offer a Style point in exchange for an engaging backstory.

Elke could also hire the PCs, especially if they have a reputation as problem solvers, scientists, or students of linguistics. Elke

isn't sure of what she might find beneath the Earth but believes she will require strong backs and people who understand geology, archaeology, and ancient writings. She has no clue that there are actual living beings beneath the earth and so doesn't plan for this. Elke expects to find the ancient ruins of a Palaeolithic civilization of cave dwellers, not an advanced culture of living fossils.

Another option is for the PCs to be agents of a foreign power who have gotten wind of Elke's plan. In this case the adventurers must figure out how to integrate themselves into Elke's team, perhaps ambushing and impersonating experts she has already hired. This makes for more intrigue and might suit groups that enjoy infiltration missions. This also puts more onus on the PCs to make the introductions and might be easier on the GM if he has headstrong players who don't like the usual plot hooks.

A final option, which would require significant rework to the adventure, would be to have one of your PCs receive a large trunk as a bequest in her grandfather's will. The trunk contains the same journals that Elke Egger found in her attic, a deed to a disused warehouse where the PC's grandfather stored his Mole Machine, and plans for an expedition to the lost city. In this case Elke could be slightly older and brought on as a technical consultant, perhaps mentioned as the daughter of a friend in the journals. It might be that when the PCs get to the warehouse Elke is already preparing for the voyage downward. If you use this option, the PC with the grandfather can take Elke's place as the grandchild of one of the Untlor.

Part 1: Getting There

The Egger Estate

However you get the PCs introduced, eventually they get to the point where they arrive at Elke's ancestral estate; a large but slightly run down mansion set on a few hundred acres of prime farmland just outside of Heidelberg in South Western Germany. The impressive wrought iron gates hang slightly open and a group of angry men and women stand outside, shouting and chanting something about their rights as workers. If the PCs investigate they discover that Elke recently dismissed almost her entire household staff without warning, accusing them of some unspecified crime.

The staff are understandably upset and are demanding an explanation and their final month's pay. They don't enter the grounds despite the open gate; when asked why, they explain that they did but Fräulein Egger's "mad Russian" threatened to shoot them if they came within sight of the house. One of the menfolk shows his hat, which has a bullet hole clean through it, as proof. The Butler, *Dietmar Weber*, leads the group, he is the only servant who has been with the Egger family for more than a few years; the others were hired on when Elke returned home from her studies. The crowd are disinclined to let the PCs past and so the adventurers will have to persuade or intimidate their way into the estate, perhaps promising to discuss the situation with Egger.

A tramp loiters to one side, bottle of cheap wine in hand. The tramp is one of Weiss's agents, keeping an eye on the comings and goings at the house. An observant PC might notice that the tramp wears quality shoes or seems to have washed recently. The man knows little about Weiss personally, but if cornered

you can use him to give away as much information as you wish about Klaus's plans.

A winding drive leads up to the house and the sprawling cluster of outbuildings that huddle around it like piglets around a sow. The adventurers might expect to be greeted by the usual flock of servants but Elke's recent mass dismissals means that she keeps only *Piotr* and *Waltrun* (See **Dramatis Personae**, p. 29, for details) as full time servants and both of them spend most of their time in the workshop helping Elke.

Fräulein Egger and her Mole Machine

As the adventurers approach the house they can hear the muffled sounds of metal against metal as Fredrick pounds a piece of hull plating into position on the Mole Machine. Following the noise, the adventurers find the massive stone and metal outbuilding where Elke and her servants are putting the final touches to the Mole Machine. If the adventurers know Elke already, she gives them enthusiastic and likely oil-stained greetings. If this is the first time they have met, Fräulein Egger is slightly more reserved but still less standoffish than one might expect from an aristocrat. She is eager to meet anyone who might help her in her enterprise and gladly shows the adventurers around the Mole Machine's interior, ordering Waltrun to arrange tea and spiced apple strudel for her guests to enjoy back in the main house.

The Mole Machine is enormous, at least double the size of existing Mole Drills, with tracks for burrowing down into the earth and a massive drill dominating the front. There are three exit

hatches, one in the rear, one on top, and one at the side; Elke wasn't sure how the machine would be orientated when it came to rest and so made sure she'd always have a means of egress. The Mole Machine rests at an angle of 45 degrees with its nose pointed downwards, ready for drilling to commence. Egger is quite happy to discuss the science behind the Mole Machine and delighted to find a scientific mind to share her work with.

If the adventurers ask about the servants outside, Elke explains that she fired them because she suspected them of theft. Some of Elke's plans went missing last week and she is convinced that someone stole them, perhaps to sell to one of her rivals. Elke is under a lot of stress and usually wouldn't have taken such a drastic action; in fact, she's feeling rather guilty about the whole thing. The PCs can easily convince her to hire back the staff since she has already convinced herself that this is the right course of action. During this exchange Waltrun looks increasingly uncomfortable (see her background description, p. 29) and eventually bursts out with the truth: She didn't steal the plans for a change, she actually set fire to them by accident while playing with a Bunsen burner. Waltrun can show the half-destroyed plans as proof of her actions and pleads with Elke for leniency. Once she realizes it was an accident, Elke immediately relaxes and forgives Waltrun, sending the maid out to the main gate to let everyone back in. Once things are sorted and the servants are back in the house, the PCs can expect royal treatment from the staff who are delighted at having their jobs back.

Once back in the house, Elke takes time to explain her research into the long-dead civilization she believes rests beneath the Earth. She explains her plan to excavate the ruins and draws parallels to the lost lands of Atlantis, Mu, and Lemuria, claiming that perhaps "sinking beneath the waves" could mean that the cities were never aboveground to begin with. She wonders aloud about the possible cultural connections and though her interests are mostly scientific, it is easy to see that she is inspired by the possibilities of a common root for all civilization. Elke takes questions and even criticisms with an assured ease; she respects the PCs' opinions as experts and tries to convince them that they'll be completely safe travelling in her new drilling machine. She does caution the PCs that there seems to be some outside interest in her expedition but she can't fathom why; she hasn't considered the use a mining company could make of the *Navigatrix* (see p. 23) so she assumes it must be some crazed academic from the nearby university. A few academics have vocally ridiculed her theories and Elke believes that one of them could be behind the people she's spotted watching the estate from time to time.

As Gamemaster you should use this time to give hints into the characters of Waltrun and Piotr (see **Dramatis Personae**, p. 29). Adventurers poking around the Mole Machine—even with Elke's blessing—find themselves under Piotr's watchful and uncommunicative eye. They may find the religious icons that the Russian leaves here and there or discover his vodka still hidden near the Mole Machine engine. Neither is a particularly damning piece of evidence against Piotr's character but it is enough perhaps to make already suspicious characters even more so. Anyone watching Waltrun can plainly see she is nervous around strangers, and that this rises to a near panic around anyone from Bavaria, anyone professing to be an investigator, or anyone who asks her probing questions. Anyone with *Empathy* or similar skills might notice Waltrun's fascination with fire; perhaps while she is stoking the grate in the lounge for example.



Red Herrings and Cheating

Cheating is rather "dirty pool" but in the name of story a Gamemaster might fudge things to make the adventure more interesting for the characters. If the adventurers seem to be uncovering the truth too easily, then you can divert attention away from their chosen target, throw in red herrings, change evidence to point at other NPCs, or simply change the actual bad guy. If the PCs guess the bad guy in the first ten minutes, you could introduce evidence that says that the NPC couldn't have committed the crime, then later the PCs could find out that the evidence is bogus and that they were right the first time. This can be more satisfying and make for a more interesting session.

The Night before the Big Dig

Elke suggests that the PCs stay the night in her home before setting off the next morning. Elke isn't a great conversationalist if the topic strays from science, but is quite passionate about women's rights. Elke blames the outdated attitudes that prevented

her from studying in Heidelberg University for the lack of time she spent with her grandfather in his later years. Even now, she's putting pressure on the local government and the University to admit women onto the campus. In reality Heidelberg University didn't admit women until around 1899 but Elke may accelerate this. Elke's will, mentioned later in the adventure, offered the University a grand endowment if they agreed to change their policy on enrolling women. At some point during the conversation, Elke mentioned that the adventurers might consider making a will, and that she is happy to send for her lawyer if they would like to do so immediately. After all, it is just good sense when heading into the unknown.

That night the adventurers' sleep is far from restful. At about 1am a shout of "blood and murder" is raised through the house, waking staff and guests alike. One of the maids finds a footman called Michael Schmitt hanging by his neck in one of the guest rooms. Schmitt isn't quite dead, and quick action by a PC skilled in medicine can save his life (Difficulty 2 *Medicine* check). Michael doesn't awaken right away, and is likely to stay in a coma for days or weeks, enough to prevent him giving a personal account unless the PCs choose to delay their trip, something Elke will not allow.

A note, left in his room, explains that he can't live with being blackmailed anymore and that what Mr. Weiss asked him to do was unconscionable. Michael describes Weiss as pure evil, a man willing to destroy everyone and a great danger to Fräulein Egger. If the PCs ask the staff about Michael, they find out that he was quiet, well-liked, and was unusually devoted to Fräulein Egger. If asked, Elke privately explains that Michael has a secret, a "socially delicate issue", but won't go into it further. Elke took him in as a servant when another family dismissed him from service and he has been with her for years since.

If asked about Weiss, Elke can recall working with a rather vicious man of that name back in her time working in industry but she can't imagine that a normal person would hold a grudge for that long or be as dangerous as Michael suggests. Elke eventually concludes that it must be some other man, perhaps some rival academic. This scene serves to bring Weiss into the spotlight as a potential enemy and to add a bit of drama into the overnight stay.

Who is in Charge?

If possible, let the PCs take center stage when it comes to decision-making during the adventure. Elke makes it quite clear that while she is financing the expedition, she wants the PCs to lead it. She is an engineer, not an explorer, warrior, or diplomat. Elke is just happy if she can prove her theories right and uncover her grandfather's connection to the Untlor. You can use Elke to provide insights and to give the PCs a push in the right direction if required, but she should take a back seat to decision-making. If the PCs try to rely on her for instructions, have her make disastrous or unpopular decisions to try to get them to take the lead. Some groups may prefer to be told what to do, in which case you can allow Elke to take a more active role, at least until the PCs decide to step up.

Part 2: The Descent

The following morning the PCs are free to make any preparations they wish before departure. Elke has access to a small amount of mining explosives (a box of 24 sticks of dynamite, see **Core Rules** on p. 225), a few old but serviceable shotguns, and a bewildering array of tools that she happily shares with the adventurers. When everyone is ready to go, the adventurers, Elke, Piotr, and Waltrun board the Mole Machine, seal the doors, and start up the vehicle. The noise inside the Mole Machine is deafening and Elke offers the adventurers beeswax earplugs and notebooks for communication. The Mole Machine descends at an angle of 30 degrees making walking around slightly difficult. Handholds and leather loops scattered throughout the vehicle assist those determined to do so.

While the adventurers descend into the Earth, Weiss and his men wait in a nearby estate. They have a Mole Drill on loan from the DEC and once they get word of the PCs' departure, they move to pursue. The Mole Drill (**Core Rules**, p. 235) is much faster than Elke's Mole Machine, allowing them to catch up with ease. Navigation is an issue, but Weiss directs his vehicle into the collapsed tunnel dug by the Mole Machine, allowing him to follow the PCs since he just needs to keep his vehicle inside the pre-bored passage of stone and soil. This does mean that he has to move a lot slower than his vehicle's maximum speed so his crew can feel the changes in vibrations when they leave Elke's tunnel but the Mole Drill is so much faster than the Mole Machine that it matters little.

You can choose which of the following encounters you would like to run during the descent into the caverns of Phar, or you

can choose to run them all. The encounters serve to highlight the dangers of underground travel and also move the story along, hinting at a larger back story. Elke stops the Mole Machine on a fairly regular basis to recalibrate the Navigatrix and to check the machinery. Remember, this is not a mass-produced vehicle and it requires a staggering amount of maintenance to keep it operational, even more so than a Mole Drill. Since the ground in this region is riddled with small caverns, Elke asks to stop in these to check the Mole Machine's hull for damage and to make her calibrations. These breaks are the ideal time to spring encounters on the PCs or just to run a few roleplaying encounters between Elke, Piotr, Waltrun, and the adventurers.

Encounter 1: Shades of the Past

The Mole Machine breaks through into a cavern, dropping 20 feet and suffering some minor damage in the process. The damage requires a short stop and Elke suggests getting out and having a look around; they are explorers after all. The cave is 50 feet wide and a little over 100 feet in length. Examination shows that it was at one point part of a larger network that collapsed. One end of the cave shows a natural collapse (*Craft* with a fitting specialization or *Science (Geology)*; Difficulty 1). Someone skilled in *Demolitions*, *Craft (fitting specialization)*, or *Science (Geology)* (Difficulty 2), can tell that someone used explosives to collapse the other cave

end. There is some evidence that the cave was used as a roadway in the past, with small objects made of bone, leather, and wood discarded here and there. The origin of these objects is unclear and most are so corroded or degraded as to be unidentifiable except as man-made. A handful of chipped and worn bone tools can be found with a difficult *Perception* test (Difficulty 4).

The cavern walls are unusually smooth and someone skilled in engineering, geology, or stone-working (even a sculptor) can tell that they are not natural. A natural water-made cave might have smooth walls but the stone of its walls (granite) is not easily worn by water, and the cavern has an unnatural softened-hexagonal cross section. Anyone familiar with the Martian canals might notice the similarities in the working of the stone, as if it had been melted and reworked by great heat.

The skeletal remains of a body can be found partially buried in the cave-in. A hero skilled in *Science (Biology)* or *Medicine* can tell that the skeleton is that of an adult male. The cause of death seems to have been a crushing blow to the head from the cave-in, but a *Medicine* or *Perception* roll (Difficulty 2) spots a small hole in a rear rib and a stone arrowhead lodged in the sternum from behind. This person was shot in the back by an arrow.

The body has other secrets to confound the investigators. Firstly, the bone structure looks odd and a Difficulty 4 *Medicine* test reveals that the body has a number of unusual traits. The differences aren't obvious, and if this person were alive they might appear for all intents and purposes human, but they have a number of usually benign mutations. The bone density is much higher than that of a normal human, the limbs slightly shorter, and the skull slightly bigger. In common parlance, this man was "a tough nut". Any character with an interest in phrenology will likely have a field day, and the Gamemaster should have fun making up all manner of nonsense for this debunked branch of science. A *Medicine* check (Difficulty 1) tells the PCs that the bones have been here at least 10 years; if they beat Difficulty 4 you can reveal that they have lain here for approximately 50 years.

The body has a small item around its neck, an amulet almost identical to the one that Elke wears. The amulet has the same hexagonal shape and strange glyphs but is made from black stone with green paint rather than the unidentifiable materials of Elke's. If shown to Elke she expresses shock and wonder; she suggests that maybe this person knew her grandfather in some way. The truth is that this body belonged to a former member of the Cult of Light, who, injured by Cult of Lor fanatics, couldn't get back to Phar in time before the tunnels were collapsed.

Elke suggests drilling into the cave-in to see if there is something more to be discovered. This would be a short diversion but anyone with *Science (Geology)* or *Craft (Miner)* can tell that this area has undergone significant tectonic shifts in recent times and the unstable cavern might cause damage to the Mole Machine. If the PCs go ahead with drilling through the cave-in, the roof collapses, causing the drill to jam, stripping a number of gears, and sending shrapnel flying through the passenger compartment. Treat the flying gears and burst steam pipes as a 3 L area attack (see **Core Rules**, p. 210) on everyone in the Mole Machine. After 24 hours of repairs the PCs discover that the caverns beyond the cave-in have totally collapsed.

Encounter 2: Echoes in the Dark

A leaky boiler (possibly caused by one of the Mole Machine's earlier misadventures) means that the adventurers need to find a new source of water or use their supply of drinking water to

restore the steam pressure. Using drinking water is not a good idea but anyone making a *Survival* or *Science (Geology)* (Difficulty 1) test can tell that natural caverns often contain water and some searching might reveal a hidden source. Sure enough, the next time the Mole Machine breaks through into a cavern they find a small natural drip which can be collected over the course of a day to restore the lost water. The adventurers can also widen the natural fissure, increasing water flow so that they can restore the water in a matter of hours.

During this time the adventurers have a chance to hear Weiss and his men following them. The Mole Drill that Weiss uses is much faster than Elke's Mole Machine and he stops the vehicle regularly so that he doesn't catch up too quickly or lose track of the adventurers. Adventurers outside of the Mole Machine might hear Weiss's machine with a Difficulty 4 *Perception* roll; this drops down to Difficulty 3 if the adventurers actively listen against the rock. The noise stops about five minutes after it is first heard as Weiss stops his machine, waiting for Elke to restart hers again.

Encounter 3: Rats in the Walls

This encounter is optional. After a two days of travel, the PCs find themselves in a cavern filled with breathable air and beautiful clear rock crystals and purple quartz. The sheer volume of quartz makes the find quite valuable but a dedicated mining expedition would require days to get everything. A few hours of work garners about £ 100 (2000 marks) worth of crystal. The cavern is honeycombed with holes in its walls, floor, and ceiling. Any attempt at mining attracts the attention of the *Tretch* (p. 22). A small colony of the creatures burrowed their way through the collapsed breach in the Phar cavern and made their way here. The insects they survived on soon dwindled to nothing and the *Tretch* are now starving and desperate; a group of humans looks like a wonderful snack to them at this moment. The creatures attack savagely and without provocation.

You can adjust the number of *Tretch* to the capability of the PC party. You should give the PCs the opportunity to act heroically, perhaps saving one of the NPCs from a *Tretch* or from falling into one of the many holes in the cavern floor. Encourage clever use of the razor-sharp rock crystal outcroppings and the many pits. Use of explosives or larger guns won't collapse the cavern roof but will send rains of sharp crystal shards down on everyone involved, a scary but non-injurious effect.

After the battle you can give the PCs a chance to detect Weiss's Mole Drill once again. This time the Difficulty is one higher because Weiss has stopped his own machine.

Encounter 4: Fires of Hell

The Mole Machine lurches suddenly as it breaks into a massive cavern, the giant vehicle plummeting downward before striking a yielding surface. The PCs don't know this but the Mole Machine has just entered a fast-flowing river of molten magma. The magma river is part of the system used by the Phaetonians to reset and recharge the Inner Sun. Not that the PCs care about this right now, all they know is that the Mole Machine's outer hull is getting very hot indeed. Luckily for the PCs, Elke anticipated great heat and the vehicle has a double-hull that slows down the thermal exchange and prevents the PCs from becoming instant barbeque.



The reprieve is temporary however, the hull can only last a few minutes against this temperature. In case the PCs don't guess, Piotr announces that they are half-submerged in some kind of magma river or lake but they should be okay if they can get to a wall and drill away from the molten rock. The next part of the scene is interrupted by a second crash and a great shudder, the sensation of movement then stops.

The Mole Machine has become wedged between two 100-ft-tall rock pillars. What the PCs do next is up to them, they need to come up with a way to get free before they are roasted alive. Only the lower half of the Mole Machine is submerged, so the adventurers can use the hatch on top to get outside. There are a few different ways that the PCs could free themselves:

- they could try using crowbars to tear themselves free
- they could set explosives to blast a pillar down
- they could try some engineering trick such as venting water to create an explosion of steam to lift the machine upwards.

There are, of course, other options and the PCs will no doubt find a solution for themselves.

The second issue comes with exiting the magma river, and anyone standing outside (remember that the Mole Machine is only half submerged) for a moment or two can see a rocky shelf nearby that they can use to get back out of the river. Anyone spotting this can also see a strange object high above on the cavern roof: an egg-shaped object about the size of a house, protruding from the ceiling. The object is black, shot through with green crystal veins and silvery orbs. Something moves inside the object, visible as a shadow through the green crystal veins. This is the recharge chamber that the adventurers may encounter later if they manage to overcome the threats that await them in the caverns below.

Make the PCs aware that the environment outside the Mole Machine is extremely hostile: the air is unbearably hot and the heat coming off the lava will cook unprotected flesh in a matter of minutes. The characters will need to act quickly and to protect themselves, by swaddling up in wet cloth, for instance.

Among the Mole Machine's equipment is a single aluminized heat-resistant suit.

Encounter 5: Arrival

After hours of constant travel, the Mole Machine shudders, slows, and a terrible grinding noise echoes through the entire vehicle. The Mole Machine has just struck the exterior wall of the cavern housing Phar. At this point the adventurers have to decide what they want to do. The rock they have just struck is extremely dense, similar to the tunnel they encountered earlier, and the drill will require quite a bit of time to burrow through it. The Navigatrix states that their target lies directly ahead of them. The group can't exactly go outside to investigate (at least not without a lot of digging), so all they know is that they have hit something unusually hard. The Mole Machine can burrow through the rock, but it takes about ten minutes. Elke gets visibly excited at the prospect of breaking through what she believes is the "city wall" to the lost civilization.

Once the Mole Machine breaks through the outer wall, it plummets over thirty feet to the cavern floor. All characters take 3 points of nonlethal damage from the fall. The PCs can make an *Acrobatics* roll with a Difficulty of 2; each success reduces the damage they take by 1.

The Mole Machine takes a fair amount of damage from the fall and it will take Piotr at least 24 hours to fix it with Waltrun lending a hand. Anyone with the appropriate *Craft* skills can lend a hand since the damage is mostly to the superstructure. Each additional qualified person cuts the repair time down by 8 hours, to a minimum of 8 hours. If you wish, you can decide that the adventurers need to find some piece of technology or material to repair the Mole Machine to give added impetus to their journeys throughout the caverns. Leaving Piotr and Waltrun behind also makes for interesting opportunities when it comes to Weiss and his crew. Since Weiss is following the PCs' tunnel, his Mole Drill will drop through the cavern roof on top of or beside the Mole Machine, possibly causing more damage. See the sidebar **What About Klaus Weiss?** for more ideas on how to use Weiss and his men.

The cavern the Mole Machine has fallen into is one of the unlit sub-caverns that radiate out from the main cavern. The cavern is used as an ossuary where the bodies of the dead are stripped of flesh by insects before being carefully placed in small alcoves all around the edge of the chamber. At least that is what used to happen, since the great plagues the Untlor simply bring their dead here and leave them to rot. The Mole Machine has fallen into the direct center of the cavern, onto a massive pile of bones and decaying corpses; a horrific sight to be sure. See the entry for the Ossuary below for further details and encounters.

As the adventurers pick their way around the cavern, have them make a Difficulty 2 *Perception* check. If they succeed, the adventurers see two Cultists of Lor enter the cavern, carrying with them a bag containing a young Untlor man, *Pros'Pro*, who they believe they have beaten to death. The cultists take one look at the adventurers and the Mole Machine and run screaming back to their master, dropping the bag in the process. If the adventurers fail the *Perception* check they still spot the cultists, but have no chance to stop them getting away. Pros'Pro is a follower of D'to and believes in his non-aggressive resistance to the Cult of Lor. Use the standard Untlor statistics provided in the Appendix for Pros'Pro (p. 25). The young man has zero Health, requiring a First Aid check to get him to the point where he can speak (See

What about Klaus Weiss?

Klaus is intended to be a wild card; you can use him to back up the Cult of Lor with extra firepower, and he can also turn out to be the real enemy if the Cult of Lor proves too easy for the PCs to deal with. Just imagine what would happen if Klaus had a hot air balloon on his Mole Drill and used it to bomb the PCs or steal the Inner Sun! This could make an amazing additional section towards the end of the adventure with the adventurers trying to shoot down the balloon without damaging the sun, or perhaps creating their own flying devices to try to catch Weiss.

Another thing to consider is where Klaus and his men arrive. If they follow the tunnel bored by the Mole Machine they will come out directly on top of the adventurers' vehicle, except perhaps a few hours later. This can lead to some interesting complications, perhaps allowing Weiss to take Piotr and Waltrun hostage, or forcing the adventurers to salvage parts from both vehicles to create a single, functioning device. Weiss might also decide to steal the adventurers' transport, making the trip home very long and interesting indeed.

Klaus really wants revenge on Elke, and he would love to be able to prove that she wasn't even human. It would be a dream come true for Klaus if he could put Elke in a cage and parade her around Europe as a "cavewoman". If the PCs show no real interest in Klaus, you can ignore him completely and say that he got lost or fell victim to one of the many dangers along the way. If the PCs really despise him, you can use him in further adventures where he might become a recurring villain.

Core Rules p. 212). Pros'Pro speaks English with a strong German accent. You can use Pros'Pro as a guide for the PCs: he can tell them a little about the geography, history, and culture of Phar

and the Untlor. The young man's poor language skills can be used as an excuse not to explain too much to the PCs.

Pros'Pro is wary of the PCs at first but this changes when he glimpses Elke's amulet. He points to his own amulet (a crude wooden imitation) and tells her that his people knew she would return to help them. He tells them that they must speak to D'to, an elder who knows the true meaning of the amulet. Pros'Pro offers to lead the adventurers to D'to but allows them time to wander where they wish in Phar, only warning them of the dangers of the Cult of Lor. Pros'Pro is in awe of the PCs, he touches their clothing and any metal objects they carry hold a strange attraction for him. Pieces of technology such as guns, compasses, or watches leave him totally awestruck; remember that he comes from a society that lacks high technology and metalwork—even finely woven cloth is a wonder to him.

Elke is interested in meeting D'to but she also wants to explore and find out more about these people who are living in isolation from the rest of the world. She expected to find a deserted underground cavern with a few bones, not a society with hundreds of living beings. Elke suffers from decision paralysis, and goes with whatever course of action the adventurers suggest.

What now?

From here it is up to the PCs to decide where they would like to go and what they want to do when they get there. You can use the NPCs to push the characters in a particular direction but players usually have more fun if they can decide for themselves what they want to do, so keep interference to a minimum. The next part of the adventure is more of a sandbox and the PCs can encounter the various areas and people in whatever order they like. The zones described in part there have optional encounters that you can use to add color to the setting.

The following events should occur: the PCs should figure out that the Inner Sun is unstable and likely to die soon, and they should find out that the recharge chamber holds the key to saving the Untlor. Outside of this, they can learn more about the Untlor race and culture, guess about their origin from tales or artwork, discover new lifeforms, and maybe figure out Elke's ancestry into the bargain. Elke becomes increasingly enchanted by this underworld, feeling a deep kinship to its people and a responsibility for its fall. As time passes it should become clear that Elke has no wish to return to the surface and if the adventurers manage to save the Inner Sun she stays behind with "her people".

Part 3: The Caverns of Phar

The cavern where Phar lies is massive, stretching over 18 miles from side to side, with three large side caverns and a host of smaller tunnels not shown on the map (see p. 12). Most of this land is extremely fecund and, due to the strange properties of the Inner Sun (p. 24), requiring little or no fertilizer. The main cave is lit by the Inner Sun which hovers high above, close to the cavern roof. The sun's light roughly follows the surface sun's pattern, providing 12 hours of strong sunlight, 4 hours of dim light, and 8 hours of starlight. At its darkest, the cavern is lit akin to a moonlit night.

Two plateaus rise from the cavern floor, the larger hosting the ruined city of Phar, and the other, taller one, the Cult of Lor stockade. A river, called the Pharflow, rings the entire cavern, starting life as a mighty waterfall high on the Phar plateau. Visibility is high in the cavern despite environmental disturbances and you can easily see to the other side of the cavern in most cases.

The land below the plateaus, collectively known as the herdslands, provides a rich diet of grasses and berries to the animals that graze here. The Untlor often come here to hunt and gather fruits to supplement their diets. Herds of mammoth and Uroch

(see p. 21) wander the caverns, grazing on the plant life that replaces itself at a rate inconceivable on the surface. The plants and animals from the Appendix (starting p. 21) can be found in great numbers here.

Strange stone domes dot the main cavern; these stones are about 2 yards tall and about the same in diameter. The domes possess between 4 and 16 curved triangular-shaped panels that point to the apex of the dome. The panels are inset 1 inch into the stone and some have the remnants of clay tablets left inside. These domes were part of the Cult of Light religion, marking the passage of time and the celebration of festivals. Priests would place painted tablets into the depressions, changing them at different feast times and updating them with new calendar events. These tablets also served as a form of educational tool and a few of the tablets serve as Rosetta stones between English and Untlor. You can use these stones to relate some of the Untlor history, give an insight into their language, and to indicate that there was a dramatic shift in their society a few years ago.

Dying Sun Encounters

Run these encounters as the adventurers travel about the caverns. They serve to highlight the effect that the fluctuating Inner Sun is having on Phar and its hinterlands. If asked about the sun, the Untlor can tell the PCs that these events never used to happen before but that in the last few years they have become commonplace. The Cult of Lor claims these events show that the people must embrace Lor fully to be saved.



Hunting-Gathering and Farming

The Untlor are masters of living in harmony with nature and grow small crops of grains, fruits, and vegetables all year round to supplement the meat and fish they hunt for. Before “the great death” the land supported a population of thousands with ease. Now a few hundred at most eke a living from a dying land. Blights, pests, and fungus from the surface world plague crops in the same way that diseases ravaged the people.

Despite the Cult of Lor’s efforts to burn away diseased crops and animals, the maladies continue to run their course, albeit at a slightly slower pace. The Inner Sun, already under pressure from millennia without maintenance (ever since the Phaetonians left) and an ineptly repaired breach, struggles to purify the air and water while providing heat. The sun no longer enhances fertility and combats disease like it once did, only adding to the misery of the remaining Untlor. If it were not for the massive drop in population, the land would not be able to sustain the people anymore and famine would ensue.

Run one of these encounters whenever you want to spur on the PCs or demonstrate the increasingly erratic Inner Sun. You can roll randomly or choose from the list, whichever you prefer. Try not to overuse these encounters as it strains belief that the Untlor could survive in such a deadly environment; it also makes for boring play if all the adventurers do is fight the environment. You could also consider what might happen to the Mole Machine while the PCs are away and what effects some of these encounters might have.

- **Sudden Eclipse:** Without warning the light dims and finally flickers out. The Inner Sun stays dark for 10–20 seconds, enough time for the PCs and any nearby animals to get spooked. You can save this encounter for a tense moment such as just before a battle, while the PCs negotiate tricky terrain, or with panicky wild beasts nearby.
- **Eerie Wildlife:** The plant life in this area is wilted and yellowed through lack of sunlight. The area spans around 100 yards and is almost perfectly wedge-shaped with its apex pointed toward the Inner Sun. Anyone staying in the area for a few minutes notices a strange quality to the light here but nothing they can put their finger on.
- **Heat Blast:** A small yet incredibly hot blast of heat nearby vaporizes an animal or a grove of Groma shafts (p. 23). The blast could also turn a puddle into steam or superheat a stone to the point of shattering. If the adventurers are travelling with any

of the Untlor, the latter can explain that this is a new phenomenon, only occurring in the last few weeks.

- **Ice Rain:** Without warning an icy-cold rain falls from the cavern roof as if someone had turned on a shower. The rain contains small chunks of ice that get larger and larger until it is raining football-sized masses. If the PCs don't find shelter quickly they will be pulverized. This encounter should gradually build, giving the PCs a chance to take little or no damage if they move quickly.

- **Solar Flicker:** The Inner Sun flickers and dims for a few seconds. This can be a prelude to *Sudden Eclipse* above, giving the PCs a hint that things aren't as good as they might seem. Any Untlor with the party say a short prayer whenever this flicker happens. These flickers have been happening for many years now as the Inner Sun struggles to regulate itself.

- **Blinding Glare:** The light in the caverns grows to blinding levels over the course of a few seconds. The light stays this way for a few moments before returning to normal. This is a good encounter to include during a combat to make things interesting. The PCs and their enemies might have to fight blind due to the dazzling effect.

- **Temperature Fluctuations:** The PCs stumble into a patch of extreme heat or cold. There might be frost on the ground or steaming puddles of water. The adventurers might even come across the body of an animal which has been flash-frozen. The level of heat or cold is up to you but should be immediately noticeable.

- **High Voltage:** Lightning arcs across the cavern roof in strangely geometric patterns. Someone with *Science* might theorize that the air has been ionized in some way to encourage the charge to travel in certain directions. If the adventurers are carrying a

large amount of metal they might be struck. For the next few minutes the adventurers find themselves giving static shocks to everything they touch. Nobody touch the explosives...

- **Gas Pocket:** The adventurers come to a micro pocket (10 foot radius) of unusual gas or even a vacuum. The pocket should be impossible and there might be a dead body in it. The body might have something interesting on it or its appearance might give the adventurers a clue as to the nature of the pocket and why they might not want to enter it. Possibilities for the gas in the pocket include hydrogen, chlorine gas, a weird hallucinogenic, or an anaesthetic.

- **Stormy Weather:** Hurricane-force winds batter the area or a small tornado appears from nowhere. The adventurers will need to take cover. As with other effects, this windstorm is best used at a dramatically appropriate moment such as when the adventurers are traversing somewhere that requires balance or during an encounter with someone you want them to bond with; there is nothing like sheltering from a storm together to build a relationship.

- **Strange Gravity:** The adventurers enter an area of extremely unusual gravity. A low-gravity location might be an interesting place for a battle if you would like to have some John Carter-style combat in your game. A high gravity location could be dangerous with delicate items getting crushed and adventurers plunging through bridges that would ordinarily have held their weight. You could also have areas of zero gravity or gravity that works in reverse or at an angle to the normal plane. This could allow people to walk up cave walls or fly briefly.

- **Alien Creatures:** The Phaetonians intended to conduct a number of experiments with the Untlor which they never got a chance to perform. Introducing new species to watch the interaction was



one of these. The Inner Sun controls a number of stasis chambers studded in cave rooves and floors throughout the caverns. One of these creatures breaks free either just by chance or because of the PCs' actions (just one more reason not to throw sticks of dynamite around). The creature (alive or dead) could be a being native to the Phaeton homeworld, a dinosaur reconstructed by Phaeton technology (see **Core Rules** pages 108-112), an example of megafauna, or something else entirely. If you want to give a hint of the Phaetonian involvement, the being could be the dead body of a Selenite transported here from the Moon.

Locations

The Pharflow (1)

The *Pharflow*, also known as the Endless River, runs around the main cavern, with smaller streams criss-crossing the land. The Pharflow, combined with the daily rain showers, provides all the water required for life in the cavern. The river has its source in the cavern roof above the central plateau. The impressive torrent dives nearly 400 yards straight down to a wide plunge pool, and then cuts through the plateau in a narrow gorge, until reaching the edge where it falls a further 50 yards to the cavern floor. The Inner Sun's instability has effected the temperature in the river, causing it to fluctuate wildly, occasionally boiling and at other times freezing over. Sometimes it switches between the two extremes within a few seconds, causing massive explosions of steam or freezing swimmers or waders in place. The Pharflow's water drains into hidden reservoirs beneath the cavern floor where it is routed upward and back to the waterfall to begin the cycle anew.

Encounters

- While the characters wade or swim in the river, it begins to slowly freeze over in a wave. The PCs need to get out before the icepack catches up to them and entombs them in place. A difficulty 2 *Athletics (Swimming)* roll is required to get out before being trapped in the ice.
- A young child, no more than a toddler, is found floating on a rapidly dissolving chunk of ice. The river is warm, not hot, but the child cannot swim and his makeshift raft won't last long. At the Gamemaster's option, a Water Lurker (p. 22) may lie in wait beneath the surface, patiently waiting for the ice to melt to enjoy an easy meal.
- A pygmy mammoth (p. 21) roars and dashes from the river in a terrible panic; the water boiled suddenly, burning it badly and driving it into a killing frenzy.

Ossuary (2)

Once upon a time the Ossuary was a sacred space where the Untlor buried their dead, using insects to strip away the flesh and putting the carefully preserved bones into family alcoves. Since the great dying and the fall of the Cult of Light, bodies are simply dumped here following ritual sacrifice (the most common cause of death these days). Examining the bodies here reveals that most of them suffered terrible crushing trauma. This injury is due to the Cult of Lor's favorite method of sacrifice: placing heavy rocks on top of a person until they are crushed to death. This is meant to imitate a natural cave-in since their deity, Lor, is a demon of caves and darkness. The alcoves each have clay

tablets resting inside them that list the names and dates of those who died. Some of these tablets are unspeakably ancient and a mathematician can determine that the dates go back thousands of years. You can be more specific if you wish, hinting at the exact age of the Untlor civilization.

Encounters

- While exploring the alcoves the adventurers find a piece of technology such as a gun or compass that clearly doesn't belong here. The technology might have a maker's mark indicating it was made in Germany in the current century. If you really want to drop a hint, you can have it inscribed from Ansgar to one of the Untlor priests he encountered.
- One of the bodies isn't as dead as it first appears; a mad cultist (for stats see p. 28) lies in wait to ambush an unsuspecting PC. The cultist has a poisoned spear (3 L damage) which he hurls at the nearest PC before running away. The cultist has no intention of getting caught and waits until the adventurers are at maximum range before throwing and running for safety. This kind of attack is typical of cultist interactions with the adventurers; the cultists are actually quite scared of the adventurers and prefer to hit and run whenever possible.
- A young Rackn (p. 22) lurks inside a body, waiting for lunch to wander by. The Rackn bursts from the corpse's chest and attacks. It is an immature specimen and so you should reduce its dice pools by one. Any Untlor present requests the creature's dead body as a snack, breaking off the legs to eat like one might crab legs.

Mushroom Farms (3)

This area was once a secondary source of food and medicine for the Untlor. All manner of fungi dot this warm and wet cavern but the old allotments have long been abandoned and the mushrooms grow wild all over the cave. Some of the fungi here haven't been seen on the surface world in thousands of years. If you want to hint more about Elke's connection to the place, she might recognize some of the unusual species, claiming her grandfather or father used to cultivate them.

Encounters

- If any of the group choose to sample the mushrooms, remember that despite appearances they don't have the same internal biology as the Untlor and what is okay for them is not always okay for a baseline human. Mushrooms that Elke or the Untlor find perfectly edible could cause sickness or hallucinations in normal humans.
- The air in this cavern is laden with spores, a PC might become infected with all manner of strange fungal ailments. These can take effect immediately or over the course of days or weeks. It is recommended that the infection be as horrible-looking as possible without inflicting much actual damage. The black doors in the Phaetonian complex cure this infection immediately (see p. 17).
- A fungus, distantly related to the famous "Zombie Fungus" *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*, has taken up residence in the near-dead body of an Uroch. The creature has been driven mad by the fungal infection (which sprouts in a grisly manner from its mouth and ears) and charges the PCs. After the combat, PCs who entered melee must make resistance checks against infection (Infection rating 2). Anyone failing the roll takes 1 lethal damage a day until dead, at which point the fungus turns them into a shambling zombie intent on finding a warm, wet place to lay down and reproduce (see **Core Rules** starting p. 213). The "zombie" attacks anyone who disturbs them until about a week after death, at which point their body is almost totally devoured

by the fungus and cannot move. Early and aggressive medical treatment such as the application of topic creams and perhaps cutting away of infected flesh can stop infection.

Clay mine (4)

The entrance to this cavern shows evidence of moulds for bricks and other clay implements. The Untlor used clay extensively in building, as bricks, tablets, and tiles. The cavern is almost abandoned these days, with nobody willing to put the effort into constructing new buildings. Mud and clay drips from the cavern roof, a system carefully designed by the Phaetonians to keep the Untlor supplied with the materials required for civilization.

Encounters

- A colony of Hammer Bats (p. 22) have taken up residence here. Disturbing them causes them to hammer against the cave walls in unison creating a terrible noise audible from anywhere in the cave system. The vibrations cause the clay dripping from the roof to quicken its pace and the cave quickly becomes a quicksand mire. Have each character make a difficulty 2 *Athletics* (*Jumping or Running*) check to get out of the cave in time; those failing become stuck in the semi-liquid clay and should follow the rules for suffocation (**Core Rules**, p. 214) unless rescued by their fellows.

- This is a good place for the adventurers to encounter the Cultists of Lor. Their leader, *M'mo* (p. 27), has sent his men (for stats see p. 28) through the cavern to seek out the PCs at all costs. The high cultist wants Elke's black amulet (see p. 26), knowing that it has "the power of the gods" but not understanding exactly what it represents. The cultists attack but are slightly hampered by the fact that *M'mo* wants the PCs alive, so they only strike to injure and stun. The cultists call for surrender first, hoping to scare the adventurers. A good *Intimidate* check might scare off the cultists since they are convinced that the PCs are some kind of demon-spawn. Include as many Untlor cultists as you think will give the PCs a good fight. You could also include Weiss (see the options for using Weiss presented in the sidebar **What about Klaus Weiss?**) here if you want to make things particularly interesting for the PCs.

- Someone searching through the discarded clay tablets nearby can find writings explaining the Untlor's recent history and the rise of the Cult of Lor. They can also find some fine examples of Untlor art that might sell for a good price to museums on the surface as "genuine tribal art".

- The clay that pools throughout the cavern is mostly only a few inches deep but in places it fills deep pits. It would be easy for a human to stumble into one of these pits, panic, and end up drowning in mud.

Herdlands (5)

The Herdlands consist of rolling grasslands broken up by stands of Groma growth. Pygmy Mammoths and Uroch herds roam the landscape, sometimes scattered by the occasional Untlor hunters or predator. Light winds blow constantly through the area, blowing Cave Cotton across the ground and allowing Cave Bats to glide effortlessly through the darkened skies. Stone domes dot the landscape here, some acting as signposts to travelers with images showing what to expect if you travel in a given direction. To the outsider this place is both wild and beautiful, and even with the strange events and the dying sun it still radiates a sense of wonder.

The effects of the dying Inner Sun are most obvious here with plants and animals suffering from its malfunction. This is a good place to roll on or choose from the **Dying Sun Encounters** table, p. 11.

Encounters

- The PCs find themselves the object of scrutiny by a small group of Untlor hunters (p. 25). The group doesn't let the PCs get close, moving away if pursued, but might leave behind something as an offering to the "spirits" since that is what they regard the adventurers as. The offering could be food, a small piece of art, a weapon, or even a piece of human technology carefully hidden from the Cult of Lor.

- A great rumbling fills the air. A group of cultists spotted the PCs and decided to stampede a herd of Uroch (p. 21) toward them in the hopes of taking them out. The cultists fear the PCs and would rather not face them in a fair fight. Have each PC make either an *Athletics* or *Animal Handling* roll. For each success less than 3 an adventurer gets, they suffer a horn attack from one of the Urochs.

- The adventurers come upon a true mystery: the boiler and some parts of a steam engine, rusting away in the middle of nowhere. The engine was one of the many pieces of broken technology the Cult of Light brought here to study. When the Cult of Lor took over, they found the rusting lump of metal too hard to move and abandoned it where it stood. Faithful Untlor have tied hundreds of pieces of colored cloth to the boiler, each one representing a prayer or wish. If there is an Untlor with the adventurers, they can explain that their people sometimes pray to the old gods, hoping that if they attach the prayer to the engine they will be heard.

- Cresting a small rise, the PCs see a young Untlor woman sitting atop a dead Mammoth. The woman, *A'te*, has just completed her rite of passage to become an adult hunter by killing the Mammoth single-handed. However, she is not well, the animal managed to land a mighty blow that crushed her ribs. A skilled doctor might be able to save *A'te*'s life (a difficulty 3 *Medicine* check) and thereby earn the respect of the Untlor community.



Plateau of Phar - The Old City (6)

The Plateau of Phar has two main access points, a broad roadway cut into the cliff face and a hidden pathway used by the mad brothers of the Forbidden Gate (p. 16). Neither is guarded since there are no enemies to speak of, but cultists of Lor do use the main road from time to time as part of their daily activities. The remnants of a sophisticated pulley and lift system can be seen at the cliff top but it is long decayed and virtually useless.

At its height, the city of Phar was a wonder to equal the great cities of the ancient world such as Thebes, Alexandra, or Memphis. The Untlor were quick to introduce new technologies and ideas from the surface world into their city. A few houses have simple padlocks, a forge stands empty in one corner of the city, and a handful of rusting oil-lamps lie scattered around the streets. Paintings and pictures from the surface world (mostly pages torn from books or advertising posters taken from notice boards) decorate rooms in most houses. Trinkets and simple tools can be found in nearly every home, most of them broken parts of larger objects. Hex nuts and cogs were popular items to dangle from necklaces and forks were sometimes used to decorate hair.

Homes are constructed of clay bricks and Groma wood. Art decorates most walls and pottery was clearly highly advanced. Walking through the abandoned city, one finds evidence of an advanced culture where people lived in harmony with each other. Notable buildings include a central town hall where meetings were held, an outdoor amphitheatre, a library of clay tablets (mostly broken through neglect as the shelves they were stored on collapsed), and a mill wheel driven by the force of the Pharflow.

When "the great death" came (see p. 25), the people abandoned the city as diseases swept through it. The Cult of Lor declared the city unclean and off-limits to the faithful. Those breaking the taboo were sacrificed to Lor. Aside from a few brave or foolhardy souls, nobody has entered the city in years. A few cultists patrol the city perimeter in a lackluster fashion.



Encounters

- A long, low building houses an impressive library of clay tablets and a few real books (written in a mixture of English and German). Someone searching the library can discover hints to the Untlor's early history. If the PCs stay here long enough, they might disturb a Tretch or Rackn nest and find themselves with quite a fight on their hands.
- Someone examining the mill quickly realizes that it was more than simply a tool for grinding the Untlor's version of maize: a second wheel uses the constant flow from the Pharflow to measure time with amazing accuracy. Stone and clay calendars stored nearby cover a span of three dozen centuries at least. A few hours of research might be able to put a rough timeline on events for the most recent centuries.
- The adventurers come into contact with the guards posted by the Cult of Lor. The adventurers can try to hide, intimidate, or fight depending on their preferences. This group of guards is more skilled than the usual cultists and have +1 die to all their rolls. As with other cultists, they prefer to bombard the adventurers with spears and shy away from melee combat. At least one of the group runs off to tell M'mo what is going on while the others engage the adventurers.
- While wandering through the deserted streets the adventurers get the feeling they are being watched. K'wi, one of the three mad men from the Forbidden Gate (p. 16), lurks in the shadows. He is in the city to steal more artefacts for the shrine at the Forbidden Gate but the adventurers have caught his attention. The combination of their strange appearance and the surface world technology they carry with them makes the PCs irresistible to the mad Untlor. K'wi offers to bring them to his home; promising to reveal "secrets" if they come with him. If another Untlor is with the PCs, they will try to dissuade them from following K'wi.

Plateau of Phar - Village and Fields (7)

The Plateau of Phar contains a second settlement; a village that plays home to the remnants of the Untlor population, now measuring in the hundreds. Fields of cultivated plants surround the settlement but they are poorly tended and not very productive; the knowledge lost after the Cult of Lor took over and the fluctuations of the Inner Sun have cost Untlor food production dearly. The tightly packed homes are mostly made of Groma wattle and daub. The village smells of decay, wood smoke, and unwashed people.

The Cult of Lor only comes to the village to select victims for sacrifice or to take offerings to the temple, so the PCs can wander the place with impunity.

Encounters

- Approaching the village, the PCs find themselves face-to-face with a small group of Untlor women, one of whom wears a strange silvery cloak. These women are three of the Untlor's elders, sent to intercept the humans and deal with them. The elders are fearful that the adventurers' appearance might draw the ire of the Cult of Lor, and want them to leave as soon as possible. They recognize the amulet that Elke wears as a symbol of the Cult of Light but don't know of its true meaning. If the adventurers travel with Pros'Pro or ask for further information on the strange amulet, the Elders begrudgingly allow them to speak to D'to. The silvery cloak is a scrap of Phaetonian material, it is self-repairing and never gets dirty; it is also a symbol of the elder's authority and she will not part with it willingly.

• The most obvious person to speak to in the village is D'to, the eldest and the most respected person in the village (p. 28). The Untlor have a deep respect for the elderly and the wisdom they can impart. When D'to sees the amulet he begins to weep openly. He never thought he would live to see the amulet return to Phar. He explains that the priestess who carried the amulet was his mother, and that she was lost with her new-born child (Elke's father) many years ago. D'to asks after the origin of the amulet and the PCs or Elke should be able to figure out that D'to and Elke are in fact uncle and niece. Elke is both stunned and emotional about this revelation; now the feelings of alienation she has felt all her life make sense, she has a family that she never knew she had.

D'to can tell the adventurers the exact function of the amulet Elke wears. The old man knows that the Cult of Light used it as a key to enter the "home of the gods" where they breathed new life into the Inner Sun. D'to knows that the home is somewhere inside the former Temple of Light, now the Cult of Lor stockade. Once the villagers find out what is going on (they unashamedly listen in on the conversation), the adventurers are swamped with pleas to help. The Untlor are keenly aware of the effect their dying sun is having on their society and beg for help.

• While wandering the village the adventurers come across many Untlor suffering from minor ailments, easily curable by modern medicine. The PCs can make a lot of friends and get a lot of respect by treating these unfortunate people. *Medicine* rolls should be Easy, even a single point in the *Medicine* skill being enough to help these people.

The Forbidden Gate (8)

This was the original breach in the rocky environmental shield that protects the Untlor cavern from the outside world. Today the 100-yard-high rent is stuffed with rocks, various pieces of wreckage, and a huge amount of material and objects from the surface world from red bricks and broken crockery to paintings and tools. The giant crack in the cavern wall is clearly visible from nearly every point in the cave. The Cult of Lor deposited the material here to keep out the "evils of the world above". Most of it is rubble from Phar but it also includes any material from the surface the Cult could find.

The Forbidden Gate is home to three crazed brothers, driven mad by torture at the hands of the Cult of Lor. These madmen, K'Cro, K'wi, and G'eebs, know a lot of hidden lore about the cavern and have explored beyond the barrier wall using a small tunnel they excavated through the hastily-made plug. They even know an alternative route to the Inner Sun's recharge chamber but without the amulet all they can do is walk around it and use it as a place to hide. The shadow the adventurers saw in the **Fires of Hell** encounter earlier was K'Cro, who was hiding from the Cult of Lor after they attacked him and G'eebs.

Encounters

• K'Cro and K'wi aren't hard to spot, they have a small tent near the base of the plug, where they currently sit, trying to figure out how to rescue their brother from the cult. (If the PCs have met K'wi previously, K'Cro sits here on his own). Sadly for the pair, G'eebs was the brains of the group, and they are not having any luck coming up with a plan. The appearance of the PCs both excites and terrifies the remaining two brothers who constantly push each other forward to speak to the adventurers. If the PCs treat the nervous brothers well, they might offer a bargain: if the adventurers help rescue G'eebs from the Cult of Lor, then the

brothers will show them what they call "the place of the gods" (the Recharge Chamber, p. 19).

• The trash heap is huge and filled with all manner of garbage. The Cult of Lor dumped a lot of surface world stuff here so at the Gamemaster's option there could be a few objects the adventurers might find useful such as a functional shotgun, a handful of bullets, or certain critical tools.

• While searching the junk, the adventurers find themselves face to face with a crate of highly unstable nitroglycerin bottles. These explosives are highly sensitive and one wrong move is enough to cause them all to explode. The adventurer who found them needs to make an *Acrobatics* test (Difficulty 1) to avoid setting off the explosives now that they have been disturbed. If the adventurers wish to make use of the explosives, a Difficulty 3 *Acrobatics* test followed by a Difficulty 1 *Demolitions* test is required to get them out of the rubble and make them safe to transport.

• Hidden beneath a cunningly concealed entrance is a tunnel the brothers constructed leading through the breach. The tunnel is fairly stable and half way through the adventurers find a secret shrine that the brothers built to worship their own deity which seems to be some odd mix of technology and a face from an old theatre playbill. The shrine is a mess but the chaos does contain a fist-sized chunk of green crystal the brothers found in the recharge chamber. The function of this crystal is a mystery left for the Gamemaster to explore.

Plateau of Lor (9)

The Cult of Lor took over this high plateau when they destroyed the Cult of Light temple, a clay-brick pyramid-dome, is now partially hidden inside a massive stockade built by their destroyers. The pyramid-dome reaches to the cavern roof but the crumbling nature of the clay bricks, combined with religious taboos, means that nobody has been able to climb to the top in centuries. The stockade covers about a tenth of the plateau's surface area and abuts the edge of the plateau on two sides, thereby saving on wooden stakes.

The cult has no real enemies worth speaking of and so normally only a pair of cultists is on guard duty at any one time. With the appearance of the humans, the cult is on high alert and a dozen men patrol the stockade. The guards can summon the hundred or so cultists in the compound with a single shout. The stockade itself holds a few dozen huts and a larger structure of Groma staves built around and above the old pyramid-dome. This structure is where M'mo lives and prays fervently to his god to deliver him.

The plateau is the highest point in the cavern but a localized mist shortens visibility from the plateau to about one mile. The plateau features multiple stands of Groma and dozens of ruined clay-brick buildings, offering plenty of opportunity for stealthy groups to hide.

Encounters

• A narrow path winds its way up from the base of the plateau to the top. This path, barely wide enough for two people to pass each other on foot, is the only way to the top of the plateau and is guarded night and day by a pair of cultists who stand at its top. The cultists have rigged a rockfall trap near the top of the path which they can trigger by pulling a lever. Treat the rockfall like an explosion from a single stick of dynamite. The triggering lever can be seen from the path and a quick-thinking PC might be able to shoot or otherwise disable the mechanism or the cultist pulling the lever.

- The plateau's central area consists of naturally flat stone with a single slab of rock raised up like an altar. This rock is actually an execution block: victims are tied to the stone, then a Groma lattice is placed over them and rocks are slowly placed on top of it, the victim being slowly crushed to death over the course of hours or even days. Death is horrible and agonizing. G'eebs, brother of K'Cro and K'wi, is currently laying on the slab, a few stones sit on top of him but many more lie nearby. G'eebs is hurt, but not too seriously yet, given a few more stones he would likely be irrevocably injured, his internal organs crushed. A dozen cultists stand around G'eebs, chanting and praying. A throne-like chair stands empty nearby; M'mo normally officiates these ceremonies but he is worried that the outsiders will appear and slay him, so he hides within the stockade. The cultists are used to only minor resistance from the other Untlor and a concerted attack—particularly one using guns or explosives—causes them to flee.

- At the base of the plateau, near the edge where the stockade lies, is a secret tunnel that leads up into the pyramid-dome's central chamber. The only people who know about this are K'Cro, K'wi, and G'eebs. The mad brothers use this to bribe the adventurers into helping them rescuing G'eebs. The tunnel winds up in a spiral and is filled with immature Rackn, not yet dangerous to humans but still rather creepy in vast numbers.

- The stockade consists of a 10-foot high wall of sharpened Groma staves with a simple gate of the same material. Holes in the wall allow defenders to stab attackers with long spears. There are no guard towers; lookouts are posted in the fort since it has the best overview of the area. Twenty large huts fill the courtyard between the stockade wall and the fort. A few cages hold prisoners yet to be sacrificed. About 100 cultists live here with about 70 or so being around at a given time. A single stick of dynamite, carefully placed, is enough to blast a sizable hole in the Groma staves.

- The fort consists of a wall of tightly-spaced Groma staves lashed together with sinew, with a slanted roof of the same material. The fort covers the lower levels of the pyramid-dome and uses them as its rear wall. A single doorway of the same material

blocks passage into the fort. The fort's interior is a simple long corridor running the entire perimeter of the pyramid-dome and is filled with small shrines to Lor and a series of simple chambers (divided by curtains) used for eating and sleeping. The entrance to the pyramid-dome is hidden, but a careful inspection can find an amulet-shaped hole in one wall. Pressing the amulet into the depression opens the stone door allowing egress into the pyramid-dome. A quarter of M'mo's men fight to the death before allowing the PCs access to the fort (the other flee at the first sign of strength or after a decent *Intimidation* roll) but M'mo himself surrenders if it looks like he will be killed.

Piotr and Waltrun

While the adventurers range about the cavern, Piotr and Waltrun are pretty much left to themselves. While there is already quite a lot happening in the caverns, if the PCs take a shine to one or both of these NPCs you could have them travel with the adventurers or get caught up in some other endeavor. The pair would make excellent targets for Weiss and his henchmen, who might kidnap them to use as leverage against Elke. Of course, Piotr and Waltrun might turn the tables and capture Weiss and his henchmen, which would make for an interesting turn of events when the adventurers return to the Mole Machine.

Alternatively, Waltrun is fully capable of getting herself into trouble, the temptation to light fires grows with the pressure she feels when left behind in the caverns. A single grassfire in the herdlands might cause untold devastation.

Part 4: The Heart of the Matter

The Pyramid-Dome and Beyond (10)

This structure looks like an angular beehive, something between a true pyramid and a dome. The outside is coated in clay bricks but underneath it consists of a black material similar to the substance that Elke's amulet is made from. The substance is criss-crossed with green crystal that glows and pulses with light. Behind the pyramid-dome door, the adventurers find a long flight of stairs leading downward through the green-shot material. Here and there, observant PCs might spot that the black material melts or drips for a moment or two before returning to solid form or vaporizing. Even advanced alien technology such as this must eventually succumb to the ravages of time.

The stairs seem a little narrow and small for humans or Untlor to use with comfort, hinting at their alien origin, as do the odd proportions of the steps. The crystal that lines the walls is almost completely indestructible, requiring great explosive force to remove from its position or even to crack. The steps go down about

twenty meters to a chamber beneath the pyramid's center. As the PCs walk down the steps, the green crystal pulses and glows with bright light. It also reacts to touch, as if scanning the toucher.

A featureless black door made of the same advanced material blocks passage to the central chamber. The door is not intended to stop people from entering the chamber, instead it is a means of decontaminating anyone entering the pyramid. The door appears hard but once pushed upon with a fair degree of force (enough to push 10 pounds or so), it liquefies and pulls a person through into the next chamber. The door cleanses any poisons or diseases present in anyone passing through it. It is a terrible shame that the Cult of Light didn't know of this property (or have the amulet to gain access to it) or it might have been able to save many of its people. Anyone with *Medicine* and who has evidence of the doors' effect, such as a cured skin condition, can theorize about their purpose. If you want to build tension, you can say that anyone passing through the door is simply sucked inside and cannot communicate with anyone else unless they pass back through

the door. You can also describe a feeling like sudden coldness passing through the body of the person walking through the door.

Beyond the black door is a beehive-shaped central chamber of the same black and green substance. A circle of gleaming silver sits in the center of the room. This circle is a lift which takes those standing on it (with the amulet) to the recharge chamber. A rope dangles down from a shaft in the chamber roof: it belongs to the three brothers, who use it to gain access to the recharge chamber high above. The crystal veins in the shaft stand out, allowing for basic handholds, explaining how the three brothers climbed it in the first place. A well-hidden secret passage leads down to the base of the plateau; this is how the three brothers gained entrance to the chamber.

Experimentation and Phaeton Technology

The material found everywhere in the pyramid and beyond requires strange alien energies to maintain its form. Without constant contact with the pyramid and the other structures, it dissolves into an acrid-smelling goo in a matter of hours. Disruptions in the power supply due to extreme age are what cause the occasional liquefaction of the black material that the adventurers might notice from time to time. Chipping away the stuff, which is harder than steel, is difficult and ultimately unrewarding. The amulet Elke carries has its own embedded power source and so does not dissolve.

The green crystal found throughout the Phaeton technology serves both as a power source and as a communication medium. The crystal directs the black stuff and provides the energy needed to sustain it. This is the reason why there are no tools lying around in the recharge chamber or nearby; the Phaetonians simply used the walls to create whatever tools they needed for a short time, then returned them to the walls when finished with them. Experimenting with the crystal and black stuff together results in strange and unpredictable effects that ultimately result in both objects being destroyed or some horrible injury to the experimenter.

The crystal is hard as diamond but could conceivably be chipped away and examined at length. There isn't a microscope powerful enough on Earth that can figure out the structures involved in the crystal but there might be something of ancient Martian design hidden away in one of the city-state archives that could possibly give further hints of its function. Such an adventure is outside the scope of the current scenario but might lead to a series of interesting follow-up adventures.

The adventurers can either climb the rope or take the lift up through the shaft. If the adventurers choose to take the lift, they are taken on a dizzying ride, first straight up, then at a 15 degree angle, then across, the total distance travelled hard to calculate but being at least three miles. Those climbing the shaft have to walk this distance, a draining experience to say the least.

Encounters

You could insert the following encounters if you want to enhance this section of the scenario:

- The passage has suffered a small cave-in at this point, little more than three or four man-sized rocks. The lift-disc pitches the adventurers off as it comes to a sudden halt before the cave-in. You may wish to have the characters make *Acrobatics* checks, taking 2 points of nonlethal damage minus 1 for each success they get on the *Acrobatics* check. Clearing the cave-in takes a few minutes and allows the lift to progress. Alternatively the adventurers can walk from this point.
- While the fires of the Inner Sun don't touch the inside of this passage, the effects of its degeneration can still be felt. A magnetic fluctuation somewhere nearby creates an arc of viridian energy that neatly bisects the lift passage. The lift-disc speeds towards it, the disc itself passing harmlessly under the horizontal arc while anyone on the lift needs to make a difficulty 1 *Acrobatics* check to avoid taking a terrible 5 L injury. If you feel that this damage is too punishing for your group, you can reduce it or share it across multiple failing PCs.
- A single Rackn (see p. 22) wandered into the passage years ago through the secret entrance. For years it has fed off the liquefying black stuff and green crystal, growing strong. The creature has double the attributes of a standard Rackn (or more if you want to make it truly terrifying) and can immerse itself in the passage walls, sinking into them as if they were made of mud. The ripples of energy caused by the adventurers' passage drives it into a frenzy, causing it to lash out and attack. The Rackn retreats back into the walls if significantly injured, only to reappear moments later, its injuries plugged by black stuff and limbs replaced with liquid. To kill the creature the adventurers must do enough damage to take it out in a single round.

At the Threshold

The lift stops at the floor of another round, roughly beehive-shaped chamber about 10 yards across. Like the other Phaetonian-designed chambers the adventurers have seen, it follows the black and green motif but the emerald lines in this room follow a much more obvious pattern, mixing complex fractals with circuit-board designs that the adventurers are almost certainly unfamiliar with. No human scientist or engineer can come to understand the technology at work here except on a very basic level. The technology base is simply too different and literally thousands of years more advanced. While a player might recognize a circuit, a character is certainly never going to make that logical leap: remember that most of the technology of the *Space: 1889* era (with the exception of certain artefacts or ancient Martian technologies) is based on precision mechanics and steam power. This chamber possesses one exit, a door similar to the one in the pyramid below, intended to clear poisons and diseases from the person walking through it.

Twin puddles of what looks like liquid silver lie near the door. These are the long-dead remains of two Phaetonians, rendered to dust by a weapon of unknown provenance. The silvery puddles are the remains of clothing, partially destroyed and grafted to

the floor material by the same weapon that killed the wearers. Someone with a knowledge of metals can posit that the pools were subjected to a change on some fundamental level that rendered it hard yet brittle. The adventurers can easily chip off bits of the material which, while sharp and metallic, can be crushed and broken by human hands like eggshell. The material retains a look similar to that of the cloak worn by the elder in the village and so the adventurers might guess that they are looking at the remains of some alien race. A difficulty 3 *Perception* check spots an area where someone removed something from the pool at some point in the past (this was the amulet, plucked by one of the early Untlor explorers and used by the cult for centuries to reset and recharge the Inner Sun). At the Gamemaster's option, the adventurers might find some piece of Phaetonian technology—but be careful, a single alien device could have staggering repercussions for the future of the *Space: 1889* world.

Passing beyond this antechamber, the adventurers find themselves in another beehive-shaped room but in this case quite massive, over 100 yards across. Every surface in the chamber flashes with pulses of green energy which flows back and forth in fairly regular patterns. Seven entrances, including the one the adventurers came from, line the walls of this room, spaced at regular intervals. One of the portals, marked with an Untlor symbol for the Cult of Light, leads to the Recharge Chamber (p. 19). The chambers beyond these portals are all identical in size and shape to the first antechamber above. One might wonder why the Untlor Cult of Light, in the many times they had come here to reset the Inner Sun, never explored. The answer is simple: they regarded the place with holy reverence and disturbed it only when they were in dire need. Even the mad brothers only entered the Recharge Chamber. Short descriptions of each room follow:

- The first chamber has a horrible stench to it, kept fresh after all these years. In the room lie the desiccated husks of a dozen Selenites. The adventurers have no way of knowing that these are sentient creatures, unless they have travelled to the Moon at some point in the past. As far as the adventurers can tell, the decaying corpses seem to be those of giant insects. In fact, the adventurers might make a logical leap and assume they are the ones who constructed all this, but they were in fact nothing more than servitors and repair technicians. There is some evidence of cannibalism; the Selenites were sealed in this chamber during the Phaetonian civil war (see p. 24) and slowly starved to death. The Selenite bodies are mostly fused together but a few chitin plates can be wrenched off if the PCs wish to take samples for later study.
- The second chamber was a storage location but the material stored here was either taken away during the Phaetonian war or perished over the countless ages. The walls and floors of this chamber form natural shelves but the decaying nature of the technology means that the shelves sometimes collapse into black goo, reforming a few seconds or minutes later. A character making a difficulty 3 *Perception* check might spot a large diamond, gleaming in the chaos of reforming shelves, the diamond is nearly flawless and about 300 carats, making it a worthy companion to one of the Stars of Africa found in the English crown jewels (the total value is approximately £ 400,000). The PCs could retire and live like kings if they were to take the gemstone with them. The dynamic nature of the chamber means that it is difficult and possibly deadly to traverse. It takes 3 rounds to get to the diamond and another 3 to get out of the chamber. Each round an adventurer spends in the chamber he must make an *Acrobatics* check (the Gamemaster may decide that *Athletics* is also appropriate), the difficulty increasing by 1 each round, starting at a difficulty of 2. If the adventurer fails a check, he takes 1 point of lethal damage from the various spikes, crushing floors, and energy discharges.

Getting the gem is a dangerous proposition but worth it if the adventurers have the necessary skills.

- The third chamber seems to be dead, no green crystal illuminates it, and no sounds issue forth. This was a sleeping and meditation chamber for the Phaetonians but there is no way for the adventurers to realize this. Anyone spending more than a minute in this chamber is engulfed in the black material. The room supplies the "victim" with air and under normal circumstances would allow the sleeper free if they performed certain gestures with their arms or simply struggled enough. This release mechanism no longer functions but the adventurers can either cut their friend free or apply an electric current to the black stuff which causes it to release the adventurer.

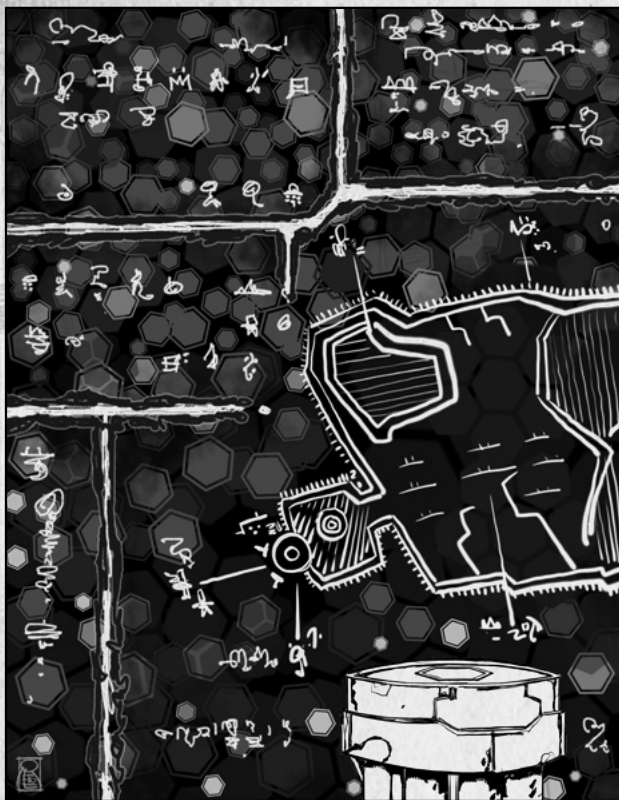
- The fourth chamber contains dozens of small pillars, each about 6 inches wide and about head-height for a human. Strange glyphs appear on each pillar but what they mean is anyone's guess. The adventurers could have seen such glyphs during expeditions to the deepest depths of Luna or to ruins found throughout the asteroid belt. The source of these glyphs is the people of Phaeton. Someone writing down all of them might spend a lifetime trying to translate them; the language lacks a Rosetta stone and the structure is simply too alien for a human mind to make the logical leaps required for translation. Someone touching their head to one of the pillars gets a rude shock, a massive burst of mental static, like someone screaming in their mind. The first contact causes 3 points of nonlethal damage but a second attempt inflicts 6 points of nonlethal damage. A third try by the same person likely kills them outright or leaves them with a crippling mental condition. The room was a kind of library or archive but the human mind isn't meant for the direct synaptic connection the Phaetonians used and all a human gets from the connection is pain. The Gamemaster might use this connection for future adventures; the human mind might not be able to process the information right away but some hints, images, or pure information might surface later as dreams or visions.

- The fifth chamber seems much like the others but a few seconds after the adventurers enter they find themselves floating above a holographic representation of the environmental dome surrounding Phar. The adventurers can see large sections of the cavern in real-time though there are quite a few blanks where the sensors no longer function. Many of the areas flash, drawing attention to the fluctuations caused by the Inner Sun. The adventurers' physical gestures seem to control the zoom and viewpoints and the controls are fairly intuitive. Green glyphs superimposed over the holographic images give specific information about people, animals, and environmental phenomena but the adventurers have no real means of interpreting these data. This is where the Phaetonians monitored their experiment and gathered data for further research.

- The sixth exit leads to the Recharge Chamber which controls the Inner Sun. This entrance has been marked with an Untlor symbol sometime in the distant past.

The Recharge Chamber

The Recharge Chamber is the same size as the other chambers but has three windows of green crystal that look down on the magma rivers far below. The adventurers can easily spot the place where the Mole Machine was trapped in the **Fires from Hell** encounter from the windows. The recharge chamber has only one obvious point of interaction: a small pillar about waist-height that has a depression which just matches the amulet carried by Elke. The



Phaetonians could reconfigure the controls of this room at will with the hand-held devices they carried but none of these survive on Earth. Green glyphs glow all over the walls here, flashing in what looks like a warning manner. Images of the breach in the

environmental dome (The Forbidden Gate) and the point where the adventurers burrowed in remain flashing even after the sun is reset, hinting that unless the breaches are fully sealed the environment within the dome will still be less than perfect.

Placing the amulet on the pillar activates the reset sequence for the Inner Sun, causing the magma river below to dim noticeably as the Inner Sun draws power from it. The reset takes hours to complete but most warning symbols immediately stop flashing, the remaining ones progressively dimming or winking out. Only the images of the breaches will keep flashing. If the adventurers don't think of it, Elke theorizes that they can seal the breaches with modern concrete or a solid construction of Untlor bricks.

A Final Battle, or Not

At this point in the story, before the adventurers actually get to reset and recharge the Inner Sun, it might be cathartic for them to engage in some final enemy. Some groups don't relish combat while others might be itching for a fight. If the adventurers have taken anything from the Phaetonian chambers such as chips of material or the diamond from the second chamber, then you can have them attacked by the Phaetonian guardian golem (see **Appendix 3** for statistics, p. 24). Alternatively, if they haven't encountered M'mo or Klaus yet you might have either of these villains show up to ruin the adventurers' day.

Aftermath and Further Adventures

What happens next is up to the adventurers. Elke has no desire to return to the surface world, offering the adventurers part of her estate in exchange for their silence about her location and the Untlor (a clause to that effect, naming a PC she knew previous to the scenario, is buried in her will). She wants nothing more than to stay with the Untlor who she believes she can help; they are after all her people. Elke already made a will before she left, naming Piotr and Waltrun and her other servants as the main beneficiaries. She also leaves considerable funds to Heidelberg University on the condition it set up an undergraduate program for women. Piotr and Waltrun are extremely reluctant to leave Elke behind but she insists that their lives are on the surface world.

The social situation in the cavern changes dramatically with the reset of the Inner Sun. Diseases evaporate overnight, ailing fields become fertile again, and the strange phenomena stop. The PCs and Elke are hailed as saviors and the Cultists of Lor desert in record numbers. M'mo doesn't take the loss of power well, and if the adventurers haven't defeated him he leads a last desperate charge against them with his remaining men, perhaps backed up by Klaus Weiss if he is still around. The Untlor stand up to their wayward cultist sons and help the adventurers to defeat M'mo if necessary.

Getting back to the surface is a fairly easy matter. Elke programs the Navigatrix to reverse its path and asks the adventurers to destroy it once they reach the surface, or at least to destroy the punch

cards that contain the exact location of Phar. If the adventurers ask to keep the Mole Machine and the Navigatrix, Elke reluctantly agrees though it would take a lot of work to maintain both; they are not really artifacts in the game sense, they are prototypes which would require an expenditure of experience points and time to turn into artifacts (along with the Gamemaster's permission).

Any number of further adventures could arise from this scenario, a few suggestions are given below:

- Elke's notes contain calculations that point to a number of other environmental domes similar to Phar. What wonders might lie in these domes? Transplanted creatures from the Phaetonian homeworld perhaps, or maybe early prototypes for a servitor race that didn't work out quite as well as the Selenites? Not all domes might have fared as well as Phar's: the adventurers might find terrible devastation wrought by exploding suns, domes where disease ran amok, destroying everything, or perhaps domes where a lone Phaetonian master remained to play at being a vengeful deity. These micro-worlds could open the doors to Phaetonian technology or hint at their current location on the Moon if you wish to take your game in that direction.

- Maybe not all the environmental domes were constructed on Earth, perhaps there are hidden outposts on Mars, Mercury, or Venus? Who knows what kind of wonders and horrors such domes might contain. Maybe somewhere there is a sender or receiver device like the ones the Phaetonians used to travel beyond the

destruction of their world—and similar to the ones that secret services like ‘Abteilung Z’ found on more than one planet. What strange adventure might await the persons who can activate such a device? These adventures would take the adventurers beyond the core of *Space: 1889* and should be used sparingly or one might lose the flavor of Victorian age adventures. Take H. G. Well’s *Time Machine* or some of the works of Clark Ashton Smith as your guidelines here.

- As mentioned before, accessing the Phaetonian archive might grant more than just a terminal headache. Those that interfaced with the archive might find themselves awakening late at night after drawing strange maps, plans, or vistas. The information one who has interfaced with the archive receives should come at a price in terms of sanity and great mental pain. Nightmares and fugue states should be the least of their worries.

- Piotr and Waltrun make good contacts for future adventures. Newly enriched by Elke’s endowments, the two might inadvertently get involved in strange criminal endeavors or political plots. Their original social class might make being independently wealthy a burden: they don’t have the manners or contacts to make it in high society and could make easy targets for those who seek to separate them from their money. Either of the pair might call on the adventurers for help when things go badly for them.

- Diseases or creatures from the caverns of Phar might make it up to the surface world. A single Rackn egg can lead to a massive infestation and with no natural predators the adventurers might be the only ones with the knowledge necessary to deal with a horde

of giant spiders. Political groups or governments would kill to get a new disease they could use against their enemies.

- The Navigatrix is incredibly valuable but so complex that creating a new one would involve taking the old one apart piece by piece with no guarantee it would ever function again. How many governments or organizations would kill for a means to navigate by difference engine alone? The impact on underground, underwater, and space travel is incalculable and possibly too much for a campaign. Imagine the damage a single maniac with a Mole Drill and a Navigatrix could cause if he decided to undermine the foundations of major government buildings or worse, reroute rivers or other bodies of water.

- If the adventurers don’t encounter Weiss or he survives and escapes, he can become a recurring enemy. He might transfer his obsession with Elke onto one of the adventurers, swearing to bring them down. Weiss makes a terrible foe, willing to do anything to cause someone’s downfall and capable of creating long-running plans that take years to come to fruition.

- Elke corresponded with quite a few experts in various universities concerning the legend of lost underground cities. One of these, a young man with a slight case of paranoia, might wonder where Elke vanished to and his investigations might lead him to the adventurers’ doorstep. Can the PCs figure out a way to put the young man off the scent while maintaining their reputations? Perhaps the young academic has the coordinates to what he believes is another underground city?

Appendix I: Flora and Fauna

Most of the animals and plants below are only found in the caverns surrounding Phar. The few species that have made their way out through the cavern breach were not acclimatized to the darkness and cold of true subterranean living and died quite quickly. If you wish, some examples of these dead creatures might show up from time to time in museums as unexplained curiosities. In addition to the trials of getting to the surface world, the creatures in Phar depend on a particular mineral component of their diet which is provided by the Inner Sun; this was one of the Phaetonians’ ways of making sure that the creatures didn’t escape and somehow “pollute” the surface world. There are numerous smaller insects and creatures in the caverns, feel free to make up your own creatures but remember that new predators should be kept to a minimum since there are already quite a few.

Pygmy Mammoth

At a little under six feet tall, this mammoth is a tiny yet still impressive example of its kind. The Pygmy Mammoth is much stronger than its size would imply and can hold its own against a full-size modern elephant. The mammoths are relatively docile unless they feel threatened, at which point they tend to stampede with little warning.

Animal Companion 2

Archetype: Animal Health: 12

Primary Attributes

Body: 6 Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 0
Strength: 6 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1 Initiative: 2

Move: 8 (16)* Defense: 6

Perception: 4 Stun: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	6	4	10	(5)
Stealth	2	1	2**	(0+)
Survival	0	2	2	(1)
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Trample	2 L	-1	11 N	(5+) L

*Four-legged creatures double their move rate when running.

**Pygmy Mammoths suffer a -1 Size penalty on Stealth rolls.

Uroch

An arcane form of Auroch long since extinct on the surface, the Uroch stands a little over 4 feet tall and possesses a wicked temper when provoked. The Uroch’s horns can hurl a human though the air with little effort. It takes almost no effort to provoke an Uroch though a human skilled in *Animal Handling* will spot this almost immediately.

Animal Companion 1

Archetype: Animal Health: 6

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 2 Intelligence: 0
Strength: 3 Willpower: 4

Secondary Attributes				
Size: -1	Initiative: 4			
Move: 5 (10)*	Defense: 6			
Perception: 4	Stun: 3			
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	4	7	(3+)
Stealth	2	0	3**	(1+)
Survival	0	3	3	(1+)
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Horns	1 L	+1	8 L	(4) L

*Four-legged creatures double their move rate when running.

**Urochs receive a +1 Size bonus on Stealth rolls.

Tretch

An omnivorous, Alsatian-sized tusked rat capable of burrowing through almost any material short of solid rock. Tretch usually eat plant material and carrion but when they get desperate they will hunt other animals. Tretch have longer limbs than normal rats and lack any hair whatsoever.

Animal Companion 1				
Archetype: Animal		Health: 4		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 2		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 3		Intelligence: 1		
Strength: 3		Willpower: 3		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: -1		Initiative: 4		
Move: 6 (12)*		Defense: 6		
Perception: 4 (8)		Stun: 2		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	3	5	(2+)
Stealth	3	1	4**	(2)
Survival	1	5	6	(3)
Talents				
Keen Sense (+4 on smelling-based Perception rolls)				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	+1	8 L	(4) L

*Four-legged creatures double their move rate when running.

**Tretch receive a +1 Size bonus on Stealth rolls.

Rackn

Rackn are aggressive giant spiders about the size of a small dog. Their population is kept under control because they are the favorite food of Cave Birds, Hammer-Bats, and the Untlor. The spiders lack webs, relying on stealth, speed, and a poisonous bite to give them the edge they need. Rackn are carnivores but will also happily eat carrion. Adult Rackn eat Cave Birds and Hammer-Bats while young Rackn find the situation reversed.

Animal Companion 1	
Archetype: Animal	Health: 4
Primary Attributes	
Body: 2	Charisma: 0
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 1
Strength: 2	Willpower: 3
Secondary Attributes	
Size: -1	Initiative: 4
Move: 6	Defense: 6
Perception: 4 (8)	Stun: 2

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	2	4	(2)
Stealth	3	1	4**	(2)
Survival	1	5	6	(3)
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Bite	2 L	+1	7 L	(3+) L

*The Rackn's bite induces a poison which causes 3L (See poison rules in the Core Rules, p. 217).

**Rackn receive a +1 Size bonus on Stealth rolls.

Water Lurker

Water Lurkers are giant blue-black snakes that hide beneath the water or in the mud surrounding the Pharflow. The creatures are ambush hunters, waiting for their prey to walk by unwittingly before looping their coils around them and crushing them, or dragging them beneath the water. A single human-sized meal can keep a Water Lurker fed for months. Water Lurker eggs are considered a delicacy among the Untlor, mostly because they are so difficult to find. The Untlor used to hunt the Lurkers quite aggressively for their fangs, keeping their numbers low, but now the creature's numbers have recovered and they are starting to get out of hand.

Animal Companion 1				
Archetype: Animal		Health: 6		
Primary Attributes				
Body: 4		Charisma: 0		
Dexterity: 3		Intelligence: 1		
Strength: 4		Willpower: 2		
Secondary Attributes				
Size: 0		Initiative: 5		
Move: 7		Defense: 7		
Perception: 3		Stun: 4		
Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	4	4	8	(4)
Stealth	3	4	7	(3+)
Survival	1	3	4	(2)
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Constrict	2 L	0	10 L	(5) L

Hammer-Bat

These massive bats possess a 2-foot wingspan and a hammer-shaped head which helps to focus their sonar. They mostly eat fist-sized molluscs from cave walls, using their heads to crush the snails before swooping down to devour the creatures. A swarm of Hammer-Bats feeding can be quite eerie, as they hammer their bony skulls against the cave walls in unison.

Cave Birds

These bone-white, red-eyed birds mostly feed on berries and small insects. Their curved beaks—stained crimson from berries—give them a rather terrifying appearance but they pose no threat to humans and are actually quite tame. Cave birds love to eat young Rackn and watching one with a fist-sized spider writhing in its beak only adds to its eerie appearance.

Osti

These rabbit-like creatures are small, furry, and quite cute. The creatures have two natural bioluminescent spots, one on their back and one on their forehead which only serve to make them stand out for predators. They are the favored snack of just about every predator in the caverns but despite this they seem quite friendly. This engineered docility and rapid breeding rate makes them the ideal base food for most of the predators that lurk in the caverns.

Stigu

This strange black vine tastes terrible raw but when boiled is hearty, nutritious, and sweet-tasting. It can be pounded into a paste that forms a strong glue when mixed with animal fat.

Mas Mus

A spiky red flower that gives off an enchanting scent and also happens to taste fantastic if you pull off the spikes.

Gromoh

A yellow berry that produces a contraceptive effect when applied topically as a paste. The berries allowed the Untlor to control their population but now they hardly seem necessary.

Osto

Clusters of oversized berries whose disgusting-looking insides taste like spinach. Inside the berry skin (which is poisonous) is a massive wad of brown pus-like goo that resembles a brain.

Groma

A bamboo-like plant that serves as the Untlor's primary building material when combined with Stigu glue, used for everything from hut walls to spear shafts. Groma is heavier than bamboo and about fifty percent stronger.

Cave Cotton

A cross between a fungus and a moss. The green fluff balls resemble tumbleweeds and can be found throughout Phar and the associated caverns. The Untlor weave cloth from the twisted Cave Cotton fibers.



Appendix 2: Technology

Egger's Mole Machine

Similar to the Mole Drill (see **Core Rules**, p. 235) but much larger, slower, and temperamental. The Mole Machine lacks speed, traveling only about a mile per day, but can carry a larger complement of people and includes an Analytical Engine to calculate its exact position underground (the Navigatrix). The Mole Machine uses a lot less coal than the Mole Drill, using only a ton of coal per day which somewhat makes up for its much slower speed. The Mole Machine carries ten tons of coal and has five tons of cargo space which Elke has almost totally filled with scientific devices and exploration gear.

Vehicle	Crew	Passengers	Weight
Mole Machine	2	10	50t

Areas in the Mole Machine

Control Room

Placed near the rear, this room closely resembles the driver's compartment in a steam train with a forest of levers and dials. A chute funnels coal from the rear storage areas into a plate where

it is shoveled manually into the furnace. Opposite the furnace a great difference engine constantly ticks, counting out the yards and feet moved. The great machine pulls information from measuring wheels on the hull, a pre-programmed map, a compass, and three different spirit levels. A series of manual levers allows slight corrections for unexpected events such as drops and equipment malfunctions. Without the "Navigatrix", as Elke calls it, there is no way that she could precisely locate the cavern housing Phar.

Cabins

The Mole Machine has two cabins, one for men and another for women. There are four bunks with hooks for four hammocks if beds become an issue. Each has a tiny bathroom attached with a sink and a toilet.

Lounge

This area contains a dining table and chairs (bolted to the ground), a few overstuffed leather arm chairs, and basic gas lighting. Lights are kept low to reduce the impact on the air quality. A tiny kitchenette has a fixed pot with boiling water funneled from the engineering system. Despite Elke's assurances about the quality of the water, everything tends to taste vaguely of motor oil and PCs may wish to stick to dry rations.

Engineering Deck

The Mole Machine's underside plays host to most of the engineering works since leaks would naturally pour downwards and one doesn't want to be under a pipe spewing boiling water. A smart engineer might be able to create a rather effective booby trap using the pipe works if necessary.

Storage Deck

The machine's upper deck serves as a massive storage area, filled with all manner of devices such as diving suits, water/air pumps, and an impressive collection of books on subjects such as geology and archaeology (Elke is no expert in these topics and wants to have a backup just in case).

The Inner Sun

When the first refugees from Phaeton came, they intended to study planet Earth. The Phaetonians built sub-surface caverns where they experimented with the peoples, creatures, flora, and environments of the planet above in isolation so as not to interfere with the natural planetary development. The Phaetonians abandoned or were forced from these caverns at the time of the outbreak of their civil war. The Untlor's home is one of these caverns, possibly the last of its kind, most of the others having been destroyed by time and the vagaries of plate tectonics. If other caverns survive, there is no telling what manner of wonders and horrors might yet be buried in the dark.

The Inner Sun provides light and heat to the Cavern of Phar, controlling the climate and allowing flora and fauna to flourish as if it were on the surface. The Inner Sun requires resetting every few years, a job once fulfilled by the Cult of Light using the same hexagonal amulet worn by Elke Egger. Since the Cult

of Light were all but destroyed by the Cult of Lor and the amulet was lost, nobody has been able to reset the Inner Sun and so its natural deterioration has accelerated massively. If the sun can be reset using the hidden engineering chamber it could last countless centuries more. If left as it stands, the caverns of Phar will likely become uninhabitable in a matter of years.

What may happen when the sun is moved is anyone's guess: it may explode, shatter, crumble to dust, or continue functioning normally. Controlling the Inner Sun requires a command console, which is no longer functioning, so it continues with the same instructions it was given countless centuries ago. Getting to the sun to touch it would require the use of a flying device such as a hot air balloon or an artifact since it hovers about a foot from the roof of the cavern.

The Inner Sun appears as a glowing ball of yellow-white light about one yard in diameter. The object's surface is warm to the touch and slightly yielding. It is physically impossible to reach inside the sun since the opposed pressure and heat increase exponentially the further in one probes. Even a mighty steam piston would either bounce off or be melted to slag if it tried. The Inner Sun can be carried fairly easily, if awkwardly, by a normal human since it is almost weightless.

When moved to a new location the Inner Sun works to create the light, heat, and environmental conditions it has been set to mimic. The location doesn't matter so it will try to do this at the bottom of the ocean, the top of a mountain, the Martian deserts, or the surface of the sun. Of course, putting this kind of pressure on the Inner Sun results in its near-instant destruction. The Sun really only functions well in a cavern or somewhere else completely sealed. If placed in a mountain valley it might survive for a few decades, which may be the source of the myths of hidden temperate valleys in impossible places like high mountains and the Antarctic.

Appendix 3: Dramatis Personae

Phaetonian Guardian

The Phaetonians left this automaton behind by accident. It slavishly follows its last command: to keep everything organized in the control chambers. It doesn't regard humans or Untlor as sentient beings and quite happily smashes them to a pulp if they move any objects from their appointed places. Some corruption in the guardian's ancient programming means that it doesn't care if damage is done to the interiors of the chambers or even if the adventurers were to stampede a herd of bison through the area. All it cares about is returning objects and materials back where they belong.

The Guardian is roughly humanoid and stands over 9 feet tall. It can manipulate the configuration of its limbs to create blades and other tools. The Guardian is made of the same black and green material as the chamber walls and spends its time immersed in a chamber floor, only emerging if the adventurers do something to activate it. At the Gamemaster's option, attacking the green crystal lattices that cross its body, or applying electrical current to the creature, might cause additional damage or cause it to act strangely.



Primary Attributes

Body: 7 **Charisma: 1**
Dexterity: 3 **Intelligence: 1**
Strength: 7 **Willpower: 3**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 1 **Initiative: 4**
Move: 10 **Defense: 9**
Perception: 4 **Stun: 7**

Health: 11

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Athletics	7	2	9	(4+)
Brawl	7	2	9	(4+)

Talents

Blind Fight, Lethal Blow*, Quick Draw

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	-1	8	(4) N

* The Guardian automatically shapes weapons from its black stuff body and so doesn't need to meet the prerequisites for this talent.

The Untlor

Hybrids of Neanderthals and modern humans, Untlor are shorter than modern humans, about 5 foot 4 inches on average, with aquiline noses and slightly shorter limbs. They possess red-blond hair and excellent night vision. They also mature a lot faster than modern humans, being fully grown at about 9 years old, but live to about the same age. These physical characteristics—excluding the rapid maturing, of course—aren't enough to differentiate an Untlor from a modern man. It is almost impossible to tell the difference between an Untlor and a slightly strange-looking modern human without a medical examination.

Untlor are as intelligent as modern humans (some much more so) and have developed art, language, music, and rudimentary technology. Lacking population pressures, the Untlor haven't progressed much in terms of technology and still operate a hunter-gatherer society with some small-scale farming.



Untlor society was fairly peaceful and with their contained ecosystem they have learned to live carefully in harmony with nature. This society underwent a massive shift 35 years ago when their explorations of the surface world led to "the great death". The failing of the Inner Sun has only intensified this societal shift and now a powerful end-of-days cult—the Cult of Lor—rules over the remnants of a once peaceful people.

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Charisma: 2**
Dexterity: 2 **Intelligence: 2**
Strength: 3 **Willpower: 2**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative: 4**
Move: 5 **Defense: 5**
Perception: 4 (6) **Stun: 3**

Health: 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Animal Handling	2	4	6	(3)
Archery	2	3	5	(2+)
Athletics	3	3	6	(3)
Brawl	3	3	6	(3)
Linguistics	2	2	4	(2)
Survival	2	4	6	(3)

Talents

Alertness, Tough

Equipment

Traditional knee-length tunic, knife, simple jewelry. Hunters carry three small hunting javelins.

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	6 N	(3) N
Javelin	1 L	0	6 L	(3) L

Elke Egger, explorer and engineer

As the only child of Andreas and Anna Egger, Elke grew up with her every whim indulged. Anna passed away shortly after Elke's birth, leaving the child to be raised by her father and a series of nannies. Andreas, an engineer and inventor with multiple patents to his name, encouraged his daughter's interest in mechanics and the two spent long hours working on a bewildering array of devices in his workshop. Elke could read at age three, could disassemble a steam engine by the time she was eight, and had her first patent issued at age fourteen. Her father, who had spent much of his own childhood reading books and listening to Ansgar's tales of underground civilizations, told her all manner of strange tales of the fantastic. The nannies were quick to blame these tales for Elke's terrible nightmares and strange fixation with "unladylike" topics such as science and engineering.

The odd-looking Andreas Egger never fit in with the upper class society which he was adopted into, so he had no issue with sending his daughter to an engineering academy in France instead of a Swiss finishing school as was expected for a girl of her age. Elke faced an uphill battle against the sexism of her instructors and fellow classmates but eventually impressed them all with her unflagging enthusiasm and straightforward manner. Elke's project work drew the attention of the German difference engine company Silesian Analytical Engine Productions who offered her a post (albeit at a quarter of the pay of her male counterparts) upon her graduation. This position had the added benefit of being close to Heidelberg where she could stay close to her father, who had grown quite ill in her absence.

Elke doesn't beat around the bush: when she wants something she makes it plain to everyone. She is very open to the opinions of others, though perhaps a little too honest in her criticism. Elke spent a lot of time abroad following her studies and as well as speaking a host of languages she has a very broad view of the world. Her work with Silesian Analytical Engine Productions allowed her to study under some of the greatest scientific and engineering minds of the age and she has honed her skills well. Elke's father passed away after a long illness three years ago, precipitating her departure from Silesian and causing her to become preoccupied with old projects of his that lay rusting in his workshop.

One of these projects was the Mole Machine, which she upgraded and completed. While working on the machine, she discovered her grandfather's old notebooks in a dusty attic, notebooks filled with cryptic notes about lost cities underground and snippets that sounded like her father's bedtime stories. What if these fantastic tales had a basis in fact? Perhaps the caves that dotted the underside of Europe were more than simple isolated natural phenomena but instead were ancient roads across the world? Spurred on by imagination and a little guilt for not spending enough time at home while her father was ill, Elke began frenzied research into the possibility of prehistoric underground cultures.

Ansgar's journals, combined with folklore and scientific studies, gave Elke all the information she needed to make an educated guess about the location of Phar. Now all she needs to go is to assemble a few experts and take a voyage into the one place on Earth that truly terrifies her. Despite of her fear of underground spaces, Elke really wants to uncover the mystery tucked away in her grandfather's journals; if she could find this lost city she could solidify her place in the history books.

Appearance

Elke's most striking feature is her curly red hair which she wears tied back in an unruly ponytail. She's quite short and solidly built without being overweight. She is surprisingly strong and more than one would-be suitor has found himself on his ass in the dirt after trying to push his luck. At 30 years of age, Elke's unmarried status is a source of constant irritation to her aunts who live in the north but so far they've been unsuccessful in finding her a husband. In truth, Elke has never found someone who could keep up with her mentally, and has no intention of marrying "some damn fool".

Elke wears men's clothes and protective gear while working, though as her one concession to decorum she wears dresses most of the time outside her home. Egger wears a strange black amulet on a leather thong around her neck. This is the only piece of jewelry she wears. The amulet is hexagonal in shape and made of an unidentifiable but diamond-hard material (an advanced polymer but nobody in this era would recognize this). The amulet has strange symbols reminiscent of hieroglyphics etched into it and is inlaid with green crystal.

Primary Attributes

Body: 3	Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 6
Strength: 3	Willpower: 3

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 8
Move: 5	Defense: 5
Perception: 9	Stun: 3
Health: 6	

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (History)	6	1	7	(3+)
Craft (Electronics)	6	2	8	(4)
Craft (Mechanics)	6	2	8	(4)
Investigation	6	1	8	(3+)
Linguistics	6	1	7	(3+)
Pilot (Mole Machine)	2	2	4	(2)
Science (Engineering)	6	4	10	(5)
Science (Geology)	6	1	7	(3+)

Talents

Intelligent, Tinker

Equipment

Mole Machine, tool belt with common tools, black amulet

Klaus Weiss, Psychotic Industrial Spy

Klaus spent his early life in a brutal orphanage where he experienced near constant physical and mental abuse. This harsh upbringing left him mentally scarred. Weiss has an explosive temper, is quick to blame others for his mistakes, and possesses merciless ambition. Any of these defects would be a deep one in an average person but the combination makes him a dangerous wreck of a human being. Weiss will do anything to get what he wants, including reprehensible acts that most human beings wouldn't contemplate for a moment.

Weiss was a rising star in the Silesian Analytical Engine Productions organization. Using intimidation and deceit, he took credit for the work of others and rose quickly through the hierarchy. That was until he tried to claim Elke Egger's work as his own. She refused to let him take credit and a company investigator turned up his previous sordid dealings, acts of intimidation, and blackmail. He was fired and his employers made sure that Weiss's actions became common knowledge so he was left almost destitute and unable to find a job in any reputable business. Just as Weiss contemplated some serious criminal activity, he got an offer from the Difference Engine Corporation to work as an agent for them. Weiss jumped at the chance and spent time in America spying on the competition before being sent back home to keep an eye on his former colleague.

Weiss blames Elke for his downturn in fortune, has focused all of his singular rage on her, and would do anything to destroy her slowly and painfully. He plans to disgrace her publicly, discredit her work, ruin her financially, and finally when she has nowhere to go, he will kill her. Weiss is not a very nice man, and Elke's willingness to hire people with dubious pasts means that she has given him more than enough tools to infiltrate her household and find weaknesses. Elke's crusade to uncover the secrets below the ground might just give Weiss what he needs to destroy her once and for all.

Klaus uncovered Waltrun's secret and threatened to expose her unless she agreed to spy for him. Waltrun reluctantly agreed but is wracked by guilt over the whole thing. The maid doesn't know of Weiss's history with her mistress or of his intention to kill her. In fact, Weiss has told her nothing and all she knows is that she must meet him once a week on her half day off to give him papers she has stolen or copied, and tell him of Elke's movements.

Weiss has convinced his superiors that Elke has made the breakthrough of the century and has used company assets to allow him to follow her. In truth, Weiss doesn't comprehend the world of possibilities that the "Navigatrix" offers; all he cares about is stealing Elke's work and if possible killing her in the process.

In combat Weiss always goes for the kill: he chooses an opponent he sees as weak and guns them down. Klaus loves a surprise attack and is fond of using dynamite-based traps. Weiss is a coward at heart and if he can intimidate an opponent into surrendering, he will take the opportunity rather than risk getting hurt. If his plans go awry, Klaus enters a sort of berserker fury, lashing out mindlessly at everyone around him.

Klaus is a plain-featured man meticulous about his appearance, often stopping to pick a piece of lint from his suit or to pat down his perfectly oiled hair or moustache. Some might consider this vanity but it is a symptom of his need to control his environment. Getting Klaus dirty or disheveled makes him irritable and liable to make mistakes.

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Charisma: 3**
Dexterity: 4 **Intelligence: 4**
Strength: 3 **Willpower: 3**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative: 8**
Move: 7 **Defense: 7**
Perception: 7 (9) **Stun: 3**
Health: 6

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	3	6	(3)
Bureaucracy	4	3	7	(3+)
Con	3	5	8	(4)
Demolitions	4	4	8	(4)
Firearms	4	4	8	(8)
Intimidation	3	4	7	(3+)
Larceny	4	4	8	(4)
Linguistics	4	2	6	(3)
Stealth	4	3	7	(3+)
Streetwise	3	5	8	(4)

Talents

Alertness; Fearsome; Quick Draw

Equipment

Webley Mk I Revolver, Expensive clothing, spare ammunition, dynamite (12 sticks)

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Webley Mk I Revolver	3 L	0	11 L	(5+) L

Weiss's Goods

Klaus has hired a group of thugs to help him carry out his plans. These men don't know or trust each other but are very well paid and share Weiss's bloodthirsty nature. Klaus chose men for their skills as well as their strong backs; you should give each of them 4 levels in skills such as *Piloting (Drilling Machines)*, *Survival*, *Medicine*, *Craft* (any), *Science (Geology)*, and *Demolitions*. Most are disgraced members of their original professions with personal or psychological issues that drove them to crime.

Primary Attributes

Body: 3 **Charisma: 1**
Dexterity: 2 **Intelligence: 2**
Strength: 3 **Willpower: 2**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative: 4**
Move: 5 **Defense: 5**
Perception: 4 **Stun: 3**
Health: 5

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	4	7	(3+)
Firearms	2	4	6	(3)
Stealth	2	4	6	(3)

Talents

High Pain Tolerance

Equipment

Winchester Rifle, half their pay for this job, once good yet now shabby clothes.

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Winchester	3 L	0	9 L	(4+) L

M'mo, Cult of Lor Leader

This crazed cultist rules over the Cult of Lor, and by extension all of Phar, with an iron fist. M'mo is a very dangerous man because he is a true believer; he genuinely believes in the cult's aims and holds onto his power as only a fanatic can. While his followers vary in the strength of their convictions, M'mo honestly believes that what he is doing is right and holy, so much so that he murdered the founder of the cult a decade ago when he found him lacking sufficient faith.

M'mo wasn't always such a fanatic. He was a student of D'to as a child (where he learned to speak German and English) but was taken and indoctrinated by the cult as punishment for D'to speaking against them.

M'mo believes that through human sacrifice and devouring the flesh of those made holy by sacrifice, he can keep the dark power of Lor from destroying the remainder of his people. While M'mo makes a great show of claiming that the cult protect the people from the evil spirits from above, deep down M'mo is genuinely terrified of his own deity, so terrified that he thinks nothing of annihilating any and all of his people as long as he is last in line.

M'mo is tall (for an Untlor) and slightly overweight; his Neanderthal ancestry is strong and he is possessed of a barrel chest and powerful arms. M'mo, like most of the cultists, wears only a loincloth and covers his skin in a grey paste made from ashes. He carries a spear tipped with a dark-green crystal that has thus far proven unbreakable. This crystal is similar to the one found in the mad brothers' shrine.

M'mo rules from his Groma-wood stockade that surrounds the old Cult of Light temple. His throne room hides the entrance to the Inner Sun's reset chamber. M'mo has his people primed to look for Elke's black amulet; they must bring it to him if they find it. M'mo knows the amulet is important but doesn't quite understand why.

Primary Attributes

Body: 4 **Charisma: 4**
Dexterity: 2 **Intelligence: 2**
Strength: 5 **Willpower: 2**

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0 **Initiative: 4**
Move: 7 **Defense: 6**
Perception: 4 **Stun: 4**
Health: 9

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	2	3	5	(2+)
Athletics	5	2	7	(3+)
Brawl	5	3	8	(4)
Con	4	3	7	(3+)
Intimidation	4	4	8	(4)

Linguistics	2	1	3	(1+)
Melee	5	4	9	(4+)
Performance	4	4	8	(4)
Talents				
Knockout Blow, Parry				
Equipment				
Dark-crystal spear, three throwing javelins				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	8 N	(4) N
Dark-crystal spear	3 L	0	12 L	(6) L
Javelin	1 L	0	6 L	(3) L

Cult of Lor Cultist

These fanatics believe every word spoken by M'mo and adhere to his every word as law. The cultists believe that the great unseen beast, Lor, awaits them in the caves beyond Phar, only kept out by the strength of their devotion and the constant sacrifices they use to keep him at bay. Years of mental abuse and brainwashing means they are lost causes and very unlikely to turn from their current course. The cultists lack the basic farming, hunting, and gathering skills known to the Untlor, they are parasites, totally dependent on the people they bully for survival.

Primary Attributes

Body: 3	Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 3	Willpower: 1

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 5
Move: 6	Defense: 6
Perception: 4	Stun: 3
Health: 4	



Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Archery	3	3	6	(3)
Athletics	3	4	7	(3+)
Brawl	3	4	7	(3+)
Melee	3	4	7	(3+)
Talents				
None				
Equipment				
Loincloth, spear, three javelins*				
Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	7 N	(3+) N
Spear	3 L	0	10 L	(5) L
Javelin	1 L	0	7 L	(3+) L

*Some cultists poison their Javelins with toxins of varying degrees of strength.

D'to, Untlor Speaker

D'to is what the Untlor call a "Speaker"; what another culture might call a wise man or village elder. Like M'mo he speaks perfect English and German, passed down from a cultist of Light that escaped the Cult of Lor's purge. D'to once spoke out against the Cult but following the capture of M'mo he has remained silent for fear of greater reprisals. The Speaker knows the truth of the surface world but keeps it to himself. D'to also knows the location of the hidden door in the Cult of Lor fortress which leads to the reset chamber. Once he sees the black amulet Elke carries, he realizes there is a chance for his people to flourish once again. He begs Elke to consider helping his people. If the relationship between Elke and D'to is revealed, the old man weeps for joy; he thought himself to be the last of his family and discovering that he has a niece makes him overwhelmingly happy.

Despite his age and failing health, D'to has the respect of the Untlor people and can work with the adventurers to free his people from the Cult of Lor. D'to wears the simple knee-length cave cotton tunic common to the Untlor, his grey hair shaped in elaborate braids. The elder uses his paints to document the history of his people on the cavern walls. He also decorates the pillars found throughout Phar during various celebration periods. D'to refuses to carry weapons or to fight and will happily let someone beat him to death without raising a hand against them, something that the cultists have occasionally taken as an invitation. As a result, he bears the scars of a dozen near-deadly beatings.

Primary Attributes

Body: 2	Charisma: 4
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 3
Strength: 2	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 5
Move: 4	Defense: 4
Perception: 5	Stun: 2
Health: 4	

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Academics (History)	3	3	6	(3)
Animal Handling	4	3	7	(3+)
Art (Painting)	3	3	6	(3)
Craft	3	4	7	(3+)
Diplomacy	4	2	6	(3)
Empathy	4	2	6	(3)
Linguistics	3	2	5	(2+)
Medicine	3	1	4	(2)
Survival	3	4	7	(3+)

Talents

Animal Affinity

Equipment

Paint and brushes

Waltrun, Elke's Pyromaniac Maid

Waltrun was born in a small village in rural Bavaria where she developed a rather unsettling fascination with fire. When she was thirteen her family sent her to Munich to work as a maid in a wealthy family home. The job paid poorly but kept the young woman out of trouble until the day she got distracted while playing with the coals in one of the upstairs fireplaces. The fire burned out of control and took out an entire row of upmarket terraced houses, killing three people.

Guilt-ridden and on the run from the police, Waltrun took her savings and fled to Baden-Württemberg and took up employment with Elke Egger using false references. Elke didn't bother checking the references, since all she cared about was having a maid who wasn't fussy about grease spots on the carpets. Waltrun's interest in steam technology, or at least the furnaces that power them, was an added bonus as far as Elke was concerned. The young woman has learned more than she realizes about science and engineering while helping Elke out in her workshop.

If Elke were a little less distracted with her preparations she might have realized that Waltrun is acting unusual. Ever since Klaus Weiss blackmailed Waltrun into spying for him, she has been racked with guilt. The young woman admires Elke greatly and feels terrible about her actions. If interrogated, she is likely to spill everything with little or no effort on the interviewer's behalf.

Waltrun speaks halting English with an American accent from her time in Munich, where the wife of the family she worked for was American. Though short and skinny, Waltrun is surprisingly hale and works tirelessly to keep Elke's home spic and span.

Primary Attributes

Body: 4	Charisma: 2
Dexterity: 2	Intelligence: 2
Strength: 2	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 4
Move: 4	Defense: 6
Perception: 4	Stun: 4
Health: 6	

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	2	1	3	(1+)
Con	2	1	3	(1+)
Craft (Domestic)	2	4	6	(3)
Linguistics	2	1	3	(1+)
Science (Engineering)	2	1	3	(1+)

Talents

Time Sense

Equipment

Uniform and tools for carrying out her job.

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	3 N	(1+) N

Piotr, Handyman

Piotr joined Elke's service a few years ago during a stopover in Russia, when she realized that a second competent set of hands was needed to perform the more manual work on her Mole Machine. As an added bonus, Piotr used to be a street boxer, and can dish out a nasty punch when the situation calls for it.

Piotr doesn't really like to talk and can be rather brusque in his dealings with others. His abrupt manner puts people off when speaking with him, and his thick Russian accent makes it difficult to understand the few words he does say. Oh, and he hates being asked to repeat himself. Elke and Waltrun both learned early on to understand his accent and Waltrun has even developed a small crush on the surly Russian.

Piotr loves to sing, though not before an audience, unless he is in a particularly good mood. The "engine vodka" he distills serves as a powerful cleaning agent (he sometimes uses it to clean his shirts and his feet) and a handy firebomb. Contrary to what the PCs might expect, the grim-faced engineer doesn't drink and is quite a devout member of the Orthodox faith. A sharp-eyed PC may note the small icons that Piotr hangs over particularly troublesome pieces of equipment.

Piotr is quite short, with a barrel chest and a pronounced nose; these features might make the PCs wonder if he is an Untlor in disguise but this is not the case, although if the GM wishes he can come up with a way to make this possible such as by saying Piotr is part of a small cadre of Untlor that survived unbeknownst to Elke's grandfather and came here to watch over her and perhaps find a way home. Having a bunch of Untlor manage to escape in the chaos is possible but stretches the imagination a little perhaps.

Primary Attributes

Body: 3	Charisma: 1
Dexterity: 3	Intelligence: 3
Strength: 3	Willpower: 2

Secondary Attributes

Size: 0	Initiative: 6
Move: 0	Defense: 6
Perception: 5	Stun: 3
Health: 5	

Skills	Base	Levels	Rating	(Average)
Brawl	3	4	7	(3+)
Craft (Blacksmithing)	3	4	7	(3+)
Linguistics	3	1	4	(2)
Pilot (Drilling Machines)	3	2	5	(2+)
Science (Engineering)	3	2	5	(2+)
Streetwise	1	4	5	(2+)

Talents

Knockout Blow

Equipment

Tool belt and protective leather clothing

Weapons	Rating	Size	Attack	(Average)
Punch	0 N	0	7 N	(3+) N

Appendix 4: Handouts



Everything Jules Verne could have written.
Everything H. G. Wells should have written.
Everything Arthur Conan Doyle thought of
but never published – because it was too fantastic.

SPACE 1889

City at the Center of the Earth

Since inventors Edison and Armstrong set out on their first journey to Mars in 1870, mankind has been enthused by the worlds lying beyond the Ether, and nations and enterprises, inventors and explorers have ventured into the depths of space. German inventor Elke Eggers, however, has no interest in going up. Driven by her memories of the fantastic tales her grandfather Ansgar used to tell her about underground civilizations, she has dedicated her life to seeking ways to voyage underground and find the mysterious **City at the Center of the Earth**.

This adventure is set on Earth and—in particular—inside it. On an adventurous journey à la Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth* and in particular Edgar Rice Burrough's *Pellucidar* novels, the characters join Elke Eggers in her giant Mole Drill, digging its way towards the Earth's core. But sabotage and unknown threats make the voyage challenging and dangerous. Will they reach the mysterious city Elke Egger is convinced exists down there? And if so, which mysteries and secrets await the adventurers there? What creatures live in the gigantic caverns deep down in the center of the Earth? And, where do the inhabitants—and possibly even builders—of this 'World beneath the World' come from?

The adventurers can be of any nationality, even if the starting point of the journey is set in the German Empire. The events in this adventure challenge various character archetypes with tasks matching their expertise: Academics, Scientists, and Explorers are best suited for this endeavor, of course, but Engineers, Mechanics, or Soldiers will be useful as well.



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