

THE STRANGE™



THE HUM
WELCOME TO THE GRAND BAVARIAN
BY BRUCE R. CORDELL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
WELCOME TO THE GRAND BAVARIAN	4
PREGENERATED CHARACTERS	19

CREDITS

Writer/Designer
Bruce R. Cordell

Development
Monte Cook

Creative Director
Shanna Germain

Editor and Proofreader
Ray Valles

Graphic Designer
Bear Weiter

Cover Artist
Jason Engle

Cartographer
Hugo Solis

Artists

Grzegorz Pedrycz, Nick Russell, Joe Slucher, Matt Stawicki,
Cyril Terpent, Tiffany Turrill, Cathy Wilkins

Monte Cook Games Editorial Team

Scott C. Bourgeois, David Wilson Brown, Eric Coates, Gareth Hodges, Ryan Klemm,
Jeremy Land, Laura Wilkinson, George Ziets

Playtesters

Torah Cottrill, Sean "L.G." Gore, James "Vanessa" Herbert, Francois "Arlo" Labrecque,
Marc "Torah" Plourde, Sebastian Rives, Scott "Sybil" Robinson, Darcy "Jonny" Ross

Special Thanks

Shanna Germain (for directing my attention to the Hurn)

© 2014 Monte Cook Games, LLC

THE **STRANGE** and its logo are trademarks of Monte Cook Games, LLC in the U.S.A. and other countries. All Monte Cook Games characters and character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of Monte Cook Games, LLC.



INTRODUCTION

THE HUM (FROM WIKIPEDIA): THE HUM IS A PHENOMENON, OR COLLECTION OF PHENOMENA, INVOLVING WIDESPREAD REPORTS OF A PERSISTENT AND INVASIVE LOW-FREQUENCY HUMMING, RUMBLING, OR DRONING NOISE NOT AUDIBLE TO ALL PEOPLE.

The Hum is an adventure for *The Strange* suitable for beginning players. It starts on Earth, but characters eventually travel to a secret place in the recursion of Ardeyn called the Cathedral of Lotan.

The Hum guides the GM through a string of possible encounters, introducing nonplayer characters (NPCs), places, and creatures as the narrative unfolds. Of course, since the player characters (PCs) can do whatever they wish at any time after they learn about the situation, the order of encounters presented here is just one way things could go.



BACKGROUND

The Grand Bavarian hotel was built by Oscar Reinholdt (a “robber baron” of the Gilded Age who made his fortune in tobacco). The hotel opened on May 1, 1911, in Colorado, about an hour east of Denver. In its day, the Grand Bavarian saw many rich and famous guests, including a variety of Hollywood personalities, Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Houdini, and apparently even Nikola Tesla. In fact, Reinholdt and Tesla had a few minor business dealings back in the day.

The Grand Bavarian’s fortunes have since fallen. Once-lustrous facilities became dingy, repairs went long overdue, and guests dwindled. Ownership of the Bavarian passed to celebrity debutante Mel (short for Melissa) Delgado almost a decade ago. (Reinholdt was Mel’s great-great-great-grandfather.)

Mel has a secret she’s never shared with anyone: she is *quickened*, though until the hotel came to her, she was too freaked out by her abilities to fully explore them. Because of those abilities, she always felt like an outsider. Things were different at the Grand Bavarian. The place seemed to speak to her in a way no other place ever had. Enthralled with the oddities of the location, she threw herself into the role of hotel proprietor. She delighted in the strange sounds that echoed down empty halls, glimpses of “ghosts” darting through empty rooms, the sight of people who weren’t there standing behind her in mirrors, and, most amazingly of all, a device left behind by Tesla himself.

Mel reopened the Bavarian not long after, playing up the “haunted hotel” angle. She gave tours of floors where paranormal activity was thickest, showed off the “Amazing Tesla Science Engine,” and hosted yearly 1920s-themed masquerade balls. Her younger sister Olivia came to work at the Grand Bavarian as an accountant, which suited Mel fine—she didn’t want her sister to follow Mel’s earlier career as a debutante.

Everything was fine for a few years. Then, five

years ago, the Tesla Engine was stolen. Not long after that, a *translation gate* from the hotel to the recursion of Ardeyn secretly opened in the hotel. The other side of the gate opened directly into a subterranean temple dedicated to the imprisoned god known as *Lotan the Sinner*. A few of the staff members were possessed by demons, and things haven’t been the same around the Grand Bavarian ever since. (Mel didn’t know any of this when it first happened; she realized how bad things were only about a month before the adventure begins; see *Synopsis*.)

The translation gate has several side effects when it operates, including the noise it makes. Every time the gate powers up, it produces a low-frequency rumble that only particularly sensitive (and quickened) people can perceive. For these few, the sound is audible for miles—all the way to Denver, in fact.

For Mel, the Hum just seemed like one more indication that the hotel was the place for her. Only she and a few other people were able to hear it. It became a way for her to tell if others might be like her in some small way. The gate in the hotel opened in the furnace room, which she rarely visited; that’s what furnace men were for. So she never witnessed the gate in operation—not until it was too late for her sister Olivia.

The gate in the Grand Bavarian opened only twice in the first year. After that, the frequency of openings increased, as did the intensity of the Hum while the gate was open. Recently, the Hum intensified so much that several people in Denver and nearby mountain towns went insane. Some drove screwdrivers into their ears to stop the noise, and others killed themselves in grisly ways.

The suicides are what convince the *Estate* to send operatives to find out if the “Denver Hum” and related deaths reported on the news have anything to do with the Strange.

Thus enter the player characters.

Throughout this adventure, you’ll see page references to various items accompanied by this symbol. These are page references to *The Strange* corebook, where you can find additional details about that item, place, rule, NPC, or creature. It isn’t usually necessary to look up the referenced items in the corebook; it’s an optional way to learn more about the situation and provide additional information to your players. The exception is if a cypher or creature stat is referenced, in which case you’ll want the corebook nearby.

Quickened, page 22

Translation gate, page 134

Ardeyn, page 160

Lotan the Sinner, page 162

The Estate, page 148



WELCOME TO THE GRAND BAVARIAN

As an adventure designed to be run at a convention or game store in a limited period of time, *The Hum* throws characters right into the action. The adventure also presumes that the characters are operatives of the Estate.

SYNOPSIS

When investigating player characters arrive at the Grand Bavarian, they have the option of exploring the hotel before attending a masquerade party. PCs who do so might encounter a dangerous phantasm and possibly find a sealed-off room that contains a riled-up bogeyman.

Player characters who attend the masquerade discover what at first seems like a fun event with Mel Delgado acting as hostess. But the event is interrupted by the sound of the Hum. When the Hum is audible, it means the gate in the furnace room is open, and during that time, minor demons (called demonseeds) who have already secretly possessed most of the hotel staff take control of their hosts. The demonseeds try to round up all the party guests and send them through the gate to a bleak fate, unless the PCs stop them.

DELGADO'S PLAN

Mel Delgado is not among the possessed. By the time the adventure begins, she has learned the true, terrible nature of the Humming Gate because her kid sister Olivia was kidnapped through it a month ago. Given that Mel was already familiar with the existence of recursions, she quickly got over her initial disbelief at finding the gate in her furnace room, and she has worked on devising a rescue.

Mel invited previous hotel guests from all around the world to her masquerade party, but only people who had told her that they could hear the Hum. She did so in an effort to find other people with abilities like her own who might be able to help retrieve her sister “from the other side.” Mel’s invitations came in the form of Grand Bavarian Tickets, made up to resemble winning lottery tickets that gave the holder a free three-night stay, meals, and paid flights as an incentive to attend a 1920s masquerade ball.

Before the PCs show up, Mel is ignorant of the Estate or any similar group—she thinks she is on her own. So to find others who have special abilities, she seeds *cyphers* around the hotel, including the door prizes at the masquerade party. She knows that quickened people with the abilities she seeks will recognize the cyphers as something special.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

To conclude the adventure, PCs who agree to help Mel (or who stick to their original mission to deal with the source of the Hum) can go through the gate in the furnace room. In Ardeyn, they must face what they find in the Cathedral of Lotan: a being called the Necromancer and a magic-adapted Tesla Science Engine that keeps the gate open and the Hum alive. The characters may even rescue kidnapped hotel guests, including Olivia Delgado, in the bargain.

INTRODUCE THE STRANGE AND THE CYPHER SYSTEM

If you’re running *The Hum* at a convention or game store, begin by introducing the setting and game system of The Strange to the players. At some point early in your explanation (right after you describe the differences between paradoxes, spinners, and vectors), let the players choose from the pregenerated characters that come with this adventure (starting on page 19). When allowing players to choose, provide the following summary of each character.

- **Arlo Coulton:** Arlo is good with guns and knows his enemies’ weaknesses.
- **Vanessa Torgue:** Vanessa fights competently with her two nightsticks.
- **L. G. Babcock III:** L. G. is best at helping others and isn’t necessarily great at fighting. On the other hand, L. G. is great at persuading NPCs of almost anything.
- **Torah Bishop:** Torah is brash. She’s better at fighting than talking, unless she’s lying.
- **Dr. Sybil Holloway:** Sybil is a scientist who knows high-energy physics and who can cause objects to shatter at a distance if she can see them.
- **Jonny “Flip” McDaniel:** Jonny can see what’s hidden, and he can stun creatures from alternate recursions who find their way into worlds where they don’t belong.

Ardeyn Focus Sheets: These characters have translated to Ardeyn before, but at this time, don’t give players the Ardeyn focus sheets (starting on page 31) associated with each character. Wait until they pass through the gate in the hotel furnace





room and appear in Ardeyn. Then give them the focus sheets so they can access their Ardeyn foci.

Experience Points: As part of the introduction, tell the players that you're giving them 1 XP each, and that one of the things they can do with an XP point is reroll a bad d20 roll.

Introducing the system should take about twenty minutes (and no more than thirty). Once the players understand the basics, start the adventure.

DIFFICULTY AND EFFORT

If you're running this adventure at a convention or game store for players new to the Cypher System, tell them the difficulty level and target number of tasks, attacks, and defense rolls that they attempt. This allows them to figure out more quickly how the game works, and whether or not applying Effort for a particular task is reasonable.

ADVENTURE START: MEETING IN THE LOBBY

The PCs begin play already checked into their hotel, reviewing their mission. Read or paraphrase the following to the players if they haven't already been briefed.

read aloud

You're an Estate operative, and you've got a badge to prove it. The Estate is a secret organization that monitors activity on Earth that originates in alternate recursions and, generally speaking, puts a stop to it for the planet's safety. You've been touched by the Strange yourself and have abilities regular people wouldn't understand. Those abilities are what make you a perfect operative for the Estate.

You and your team were assigned a new mission: to investigate the so-called "Denver Hum." The Hum is a strange noise that only a small fraction of people can hear, and which no one is normally able to trace to a source.

Recently, the number of people hearing the Hum around Denver, Colorado, skyrocketed. With that additional data, the Estate was able to pinpoint its source as somewhere on or near the grounds of a hotel called the Grand Bavarian. The hotel is located in the mountains of Colorado west of Denver.

Thus, you have checked into that very hotel. You're here to explore the hotel, find the source of the Hum, and eliminate it.

You and your fellow operatives took your bags to your rooms and have now reconvened in the wide and somewhat dim, dingy, and underpopulated "grand" lobby of the hotel. Each of you found on your room pillow an invitation, addressed to "Grand Bavarian Guest," to attend a party in the penthouse ballroom,

a party that apparently starts about an hour from now. Except for your group, the only other person in the lobby is the concierge, Albert.

Albert is not especially talkative or helpful. Describe the lobby when the characters begin to wonder about the layout.

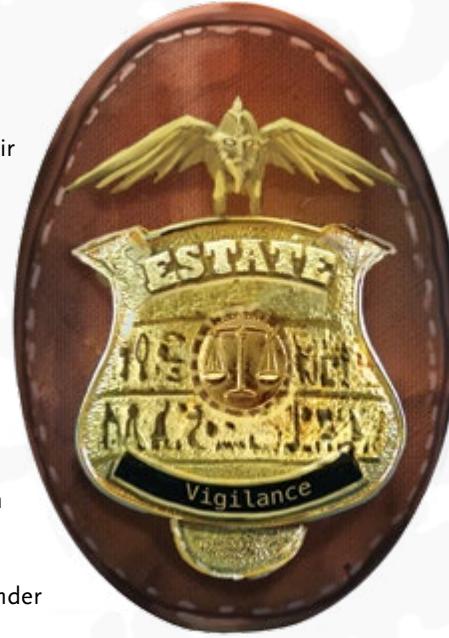
read aloud

Large windows look out onto the hotel hedge maze. Prominently marked hallways lead to a pool (drained), a restaurant (closed), first floor guest rooms, and an impressively large lobby elevator.

Ask the players to introduce their characters to the other players, including the connection information in each character's Background (in the second paragraph), if that information isn't a secret. The players may also decide to reveal their personal backgrounds (the first paragraph). Introductions should take about five minutes.

MORE ABOUT THE HUM, HOTEL, AND INVITATION

After the players introduce their characters to one another, they might have questions about their situation. Either way, read or paraphrase the following, which is information they received in a dossier that they read on their flight from Seattle, Washington, to Denver. (If PCs are interested or have some way to do more in-depth research, a few additional details about the Grand Bavarian's history are noted under Background, page 3.)



The Hum: The Hum is a mysterious sound heard in different places around the world. It's mysterious because only some people are able to hear it (around 2% of the population), but also because the sound is normally untraceable. None of the characters has heard it before, but the noise supposedly sounds like a distant, low-pitched rumbling. In the last few weeks, the percentage of those hearing the Hum has skyrocketed in the Denver area. Some people were driven insane by the noise, and they killed themselves by trying to block it out—often by driving pens or screwdrivers into their ears too enthusiastically.

Hotel History: The Grand Bavarian's fortunes have fallen since it was built in the early 1900s. Many of its once-lustrous facilities are in poor repair, and its guests are few. Ownership of the Bavarian passed to celebrity debutante Mel (short for Melissa) Delgado nearly a decade ago. Afterward, she dropped out of the public eye. Then about eight years ago, she reopened the property and marketed it as a "haunted hotel." She gave tours of floors where paranormal activity was thickest and hosted yearly 1920s-themed masquerade balls. She briefly claimed to have an old device built by Nikola Tesla, but apparently the Tesla Science Engine, as she dubbed it, was stolen five years ago.

Party Invitation: Inside a cream-colored envelope addressed to "Grand Bavarian Guest" is a stiff card on which is written:

"Welcome to the Grand Bavarian.

Ms. Melissa Delgado requests the honor of your presence at a masquerade costume party at four o'clock in the Bavarian Penthouse Ballroom.

Many amazing diversions are planned, and you won't want to miss them.

Cordially, Mel Delgado

P.S. If you require proper 1920s-themed clothing and masks, inquire of Albert the concierge."

After players have asked about the invitation, remind them that it's about 3:00 in the afternoon—an hour before the party starts.

Allow the PCs to discuss the briefing information, perhaps do a bit of roleplaying, and engage the concierge with questions. If the conversation lags, Albert says he has duties to attend to before the party starts (he points to the time on a large grandfather clock). After this, Albert disappears.



CHARACTER ROOMS

The characters' rooms are on the first floor, the same floor as the lobby. Instead of key cards, the PCs were issued old-fashioned big metal keys for their rooms. Each room is clean and pleasant, if a bit faded and worn.

Three small decorative circles

questions put to him in an obviously annoyed manner, as follows. Answers in parentheses are provided for PCs who somehow get onto Albert's good side or otherwise persuade him to talk.

- **How many guests are staying at the Grand Bavarian?**

"We don't give out that kind of information." (In addition to the PCs, the hotel has about thirty-three other guests, spread out among the 130 rooms. They all won some kind of contest Ms. Delgado was running, but Albert doesn't know any details. Most of the guests will probably attend the masquerade party.)

- **What staff is employed here?** "What, you want a job? We're not hiring." (The current staff is barebones: Albert, a few maids, a few cooks, and several contracted groundskeepers. None of the staff lives on the premises.)

• Mel Delgado owns this place? What can you tell us about her? "Her checks cash just fine." (Mel Delgado rarely interacts with Albert directly; normally, she writes out her instructions to him, including a recent note to send the new guests up to the party. The truth is, Mel doesn't like Albert, but she can't find anyone to replace him.)

- **Have you heard the Hum?** "The what now?"

(Sometimes Albert hears heavy things moving on floors above or below, when nothing of the sort should have been there to make such a sound, but nothing like a "hum." Then again, the hotel is haunted.)

• Anything strange going on around here? "Yeah, you wasting my time with questions." (The aforementioned odd noises, and about once a month, guests check out without taking their luggage, even though their keys show up in the key drop box. Plus, everyone knows that floors 2, 3, and 4 are haunted. Weird lights, shapes in mirrors, kids at the end of hallways where there shouldn't be any kids—that sort of thing. Read the brochure. This is the "haunted hotel!"

- **Do you have any masquerade costumes for us?**

"You can probably find something in here. I can't guarantee anything will fit." Albert wheels a hotel luggage cart out from a closet. The rack is thick with clean, vintage, elegant clothing (suits and gowns, and accessories), plus several masquerade masks of different styles. PCs who are interested can dress up quite stylishly.

ALBERT THE CONCIERGE

Albert McCoy wears a somewhat shabby suit and smells of stale smoke. When not engaging guests (which is most of the time), he is out front smoking or absorbed in watching soap operas on a small black-and-white TV behind the lobby counter.

Albert isn't naturally helpful, and he answers



EXPLORING?

If the PCs choose to spend the hour before the party investigating the hotel, see the Grand Bavarian Layout and Exploring the Hotel.



Mel Delgado was famous mainly because she came from money, she was beautiful and young, and she was adroit at publicity stunts, once upon a time.

Albert the Concierge: level 2, level 4 for tasks related to running an understaffed hotel



GRAND BAVARIAN LAYOUT

The hotel sits on a ten-acre parcel of land. The hotel grounds include a main structure, an attached garage, a hedge maze, and a parking lot. It's a somewhat dingy mansion that was once an elegant mountain chalet.

About twenty vehicles of various types are parked in the garage at any one time. Five belong to staff.

Hotel Wi-Fi is nonexistent, and cell service is patchy at best. (When the Hum begins, cell service, landlines, and all other forms of electronic communication with the outside world are disabled.)

Interior Hotel Layout: The adventure is divided into five principal parts. The elevator in the lobby connects to each level. Two sets of fire stairs on either end of the hotel do the same.

- Hotel lobby on the ground floor (see Adventure Start: Meeting in the Lobby)
- Floors 2 to 4 (see Exploring the Hotel)
- Penthouse ballroom on the fifth floor (see Party in the Penthouse Ballroom)
- Furnace room in the basement (see Furnace Room)
- Cathedral of Lotan through the translation gate in the furnace room (see Cathedral of Lotan)



HEDGE MAZE

The hedge maze isn't particularly well kept these days. If the PCs head outside the hotel to trace the maze, they find a wooden gazebo at the maze's center. The gazebo hasn't had a fresh coat of paint in well over a decade. A search of the gazebo uncovers a level 5 audio insulator cypher behind a loose board. The cypher was planted by Mel Delgado in an effort to find other quickened people that have abilities similar to her own.



AUDIO INSULATOR

Level: 1d6 + 2

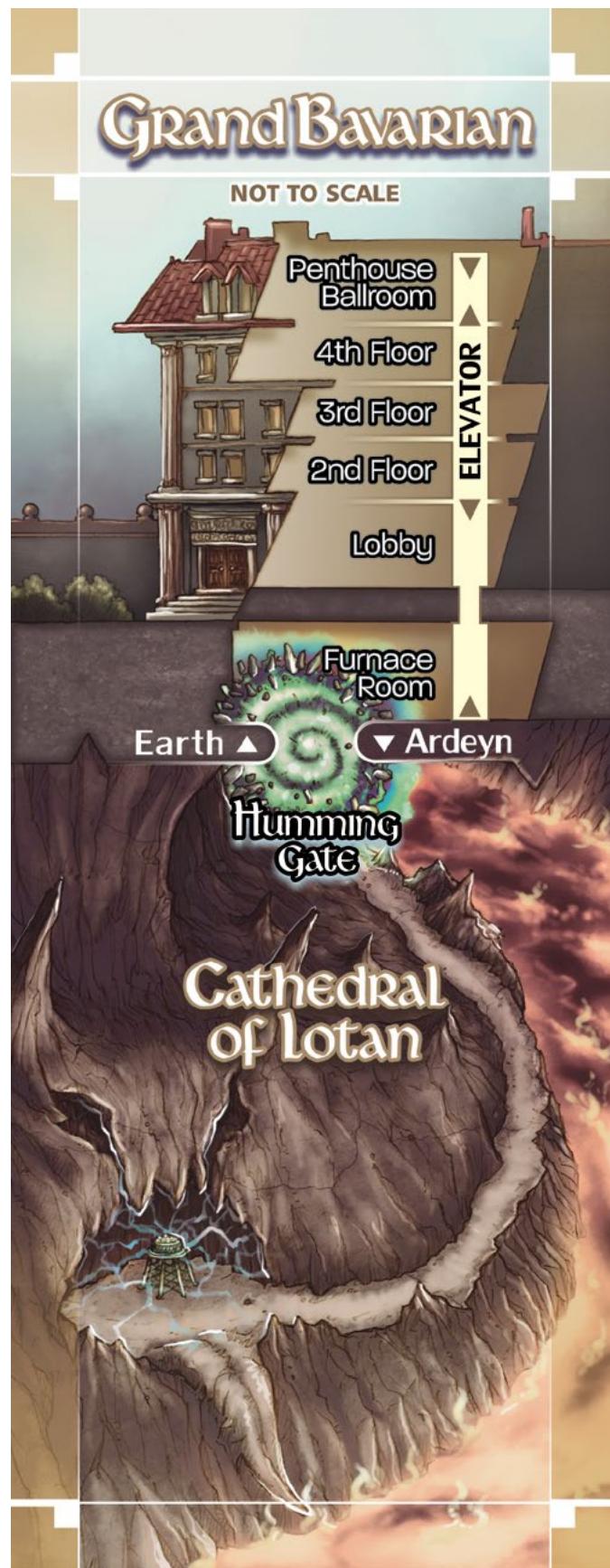
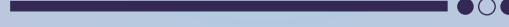
Earth: Explosive device (thrown, short range)

Ardeyn: A stone with a rune of destruction inscribed on it (thrown, short range)

Ruk: Wristband projector (long range)

Effect: Explodes in an immediate radius,

creating a static area of complete silence for one hour. No sound, regardless of frequency, can pierce the area from the outside, and sound made from within the area is extinguished instantly as if it never existed.



EXPLORING THE HOTEL

The hotel is too large to detail completely. If the PCs explore floors 2 to 4, use the information in this section. If the PCs spend all their time exploring and never go to the party, the Hum finally begins, as described in Party in the Penthouse Ballroom, three hours after the characters begin their exploration.

Game Pacing: If you're running *The Hum* at a convention or game store and you have only about an hour before you need to stop, tell PCs who want to explore the hotel that they find a lot of empty rooms but nothing out of the ordinary (though the absence of all other guests is a bit strange), and move on.

If more time remains or you're running this adventure as part of your normal campaign, PCs who explore these floors might have some or all of the encounters in this section.

Phantasm Ambush: If the PCs went to the party first and didn't explore the hotel beforehand, it's unlikely that they'll want to do so afterward; they'll probably go straight to the furnace room. If two or more hours of playtime remain, consider using the phantasmic parasite or bogeyman to ambush the PCs as they get on or off the elevator on their way to the furnace room.

DANGEROUS HAUNTING

The hotel has always been “haunted,” but the level of activity and danger to guests has rarely been as high as it is while the PCs are exploring. The increased level of activity is due to an ongoing ceremony occurring on the other side of the Humming Gate, which will soon reach its culmination.

KID AT THE END OF THE HALL

One or more of the PCs see a small crying boy at the other end of the hall, who immediately turns and moves out of view around the bend in the hallway. If PCs investigate, they may find a toy left behind by the “child” but no sign of the boy. The toy is a level 5 helpful companion cypher left by Mel Delgado as a way to find other quickened people.

Creature Encounter Option: If you have the time and desire for a longer encounter, you might decide the kid is actually a lure created by a **phantasmic parasite**. The phantasmic parasite tries to lure characters into the painted-over room or, if the Hum has already started, down into the furnace room to meet the furnace man.

*Phantasmic parasite:
level 4, level 5 for
deception*

A phantasmic parasite takes form as a psychic construct. It creates the construct by reaching into a victim's mind and finding someone or something to which the victim has an emotional attachment. The construct image then appears at some distance from the victim. The parasite feeds on the emotional stress created by the appearance of the phantasm. The more upset and worried the beholder, the more the parasite consumes. Thus, most parasites appear in some state of distress—weeping, whining, panicked. And when their viewers come forward to close the distance, the phantasm shrinks away, always pulling back to stay just out of reach.



HELPFUL COMPANION

Level: 1d6 + 2

Earth: 3-foot (1 m) tall cloth doll with button eyes and a stitched mouth

Ardeyn: Burlap dragon doll

Ruk: A solid-light hologram of a doll

Effect: The doll animates for one hour and acts as a level 3 companion creature. It accompanies you and follows your instructions. It must remain a short distance from you—if it moves farther away, it drops limp until you move back into range. You'll make rolls for it when it takes actions. The doll acts on your turn and can move a short distance each round. As a level 3 creature, it has a target number of 9 and a health of 9. It doesn't attack creatures, but it can spend its action to serve as an asset for any one attack you make on your turn.

SOMETHING IN THE MIRROR

When the PCs enter a particular room or emerge from the elevator facing a small sitting area, one of the characters sees something moving in the mirror: a terrible, monstrous parody of a person. Then it's gone. A PC might note an object lying on a stand beneath the mirror—a level 5 random annihilation cypher left by Mel Delgado. The cypher's presence, combined with the influence of the Hum, created an unhealthy resonance with the mirror.

Creature Encounter Option: The phantasmic parasite described above could also reveal itself in the mirror. It tries to lure characters into the painted-over room or, if the Hum has already started, down into the furnace room to meet the furnace man.



RANDOM ANNIHILATION

Level: 1d6 + 2

Earth: A small black box with a red button

Ardeyn: An amulet that opens to reveal an inset ruby



Ruk: A dragonfly that flutters its wings
Effect: When activated, the cypher begins to hum. After humming for one round, a random creature within long range is attacked with an acoustic bolt that inflicts 10 points of Speed damage (ignores Armor).

PAINTED-OVER ROOM

As the PCs walk along a hallway, they notice that one room has been sealed by being painted over completely with the same paint used in the hallway, including the room number. Investigation (perhaps taking a scraping with a pen knife) reveals that paint has been applied in several coats over the years.

If the PCs break down the door (a difficulty 4 Might-based task), they find a completely stripped hotel room, with three exceptions.

First, a blood stain mars the center of the floor. Someone died here, and the blood has gone into the wood.

Second, a cardboard box in the closet contains the skeleton of a dead cat, complete with dried ligaments and shed fur.

Third, the room is inhabited by a horrific presence: a **bogeyman**. In its normal form, a bogeyman is nothing more than a pair of disembodied red eyes that float inside a shapeless smear of shadow. As its action, a bogeyman reaches out to feed on courage. Any creature that can see it must make an Intellect defense roll. On a failure, the bogeyman inflicts 2 points of Intellect damage as the target's courage drains away, and blood seeps from the victim's eyes, nose, and ears. In addition, the difficulty to resist the bogeyman's attack increases by one step. This is a cumulative increase up to a maximum of five steps.

Each time the bogeyman inflicts Intellect damage, it becomes more solid, more real, taking the shape of whatever its beholder most fears. Its appearance is subjective to the viewer. One person might see a vampire, another a werewolf, and another a clown covered in blood.

PARTY IN THE PENTHOUSE BALLROOM

The PCs don't have to be punctual to attend the party. If they show up anytime within an hour or so of the start time (four o'clock), events go off pretty much as described here. If the characters miss the party entirely and show up several hours later, after the Hum

starts, they find an empty room with smashed tables, uneaten food, smears of blood hinting at some kind of terrible event, and the unconscious body of Mel Delgado.

The elevator is the easiest way to reach the penthouse ballroom on the fifth floor—just press the button labeled “B.” The elevator opens onto a long hallway set with tiny windows that run along the hotel's exterior roofline. Two sets of double

Bogeyman: level 3; all tasks related to intimidation as level 6; feeds on courage



doors are in the hallway, each marked “Ballroom.” The doors are closed, but music and conversation is audible through them. Read or paraphrase the following to the players who check out the ballroom.

read aloud

People in elegant clothing straight out of the 1920s, drinks in hand, stand talking in a massive ballroom beneath a mirrored ceiling. Everyone wears some kind of masquerade mask. Tables are set as if for dinner on the far side of the ballroom, though no one has yet taken their seat. Scratches music plays from a massive Victrola phonograph set in one corner. In another corner is a small bar, complete with a bartender serving complimentary champagne on ice.

Unless the PCs are being stealthy, every conversation in the room stops when they open the doors. All the partygoers slowly swivel their gazes to spear the characters with eyes glittering under the ballroom lights. After a beat, the partygoers return to their previous conversations.

Mel Delgado (whom every PC likely knows from publicity shots that saturated pop media years ago) doesn’t seem to be present.

INTERACTING WITH THE PARTYGOERS

The **partygoers** are a subset of the hotel guests (about twenty-five of the thirty-three guests listed in the register). If the PCs interact with the party attendees or the bartender, they can learn the following:

- “Mel Delgado holds a masquerade ball every year, but this one is something special. Everyone present won a ‘Grand Bavarian Ticket’—a free three-night stay with food and flights included. How could we say no?” (Inviting everyone who has previously heard the Hum is part of Mel’s strategy to find other quickened people powerful enough to help retrieve her missing sister.)
- “Ms. Delgado will be joining us for a toast when dinner starts, which should be any time now. Mmm, roast pork—doesn’t it smell delicious?” (Mel does indeed arrive right before the food, as described below.)
- “The hum? Now that you mention it, I did hear an annoying sound vibrating through the floor in the middle of the night. I thought it was the staff vacuuming the hallway, but when I opened my door to look, no one was there. Last time we stayed here, I heard the same thing. Isn’t that weird?” (Nearly everyone at the party is susceptible to the Hum.)

Partygoer: level 2; no attacks

Mel Delgado: level 4; health 21; long-range pistol attack for 2 points of damage; Spin Encouragement ability

If time permits and you want to use names and motivations for individual partygoers, use the following.

Dorothy Giles: Dorothy is an exuberant flapper, a bit tipsy already, but ready to dance “if there’s a contest this year.” Dorothy has nothing but admiration for Mel.

Jeff Sweeney: Jeff has a not-so-secret crush on Mel and is hoping to get her autograph and a picture of her when she shows up for the dinner toast. Jeff wears a black tuxedo with a top hat.

Franz the Bartender: Franz is unfailingly polite in his maroon tuxedo. When the Hum begins (see below), he reveals himself as a demonseed.

Hillary Benson: Hillary wears an Egyptian-inspired gown with a silver tiara, and the heel on her shoe is broken. She is a bit spooked because she saw a ghost down on the third floor. Despite the “haunted hotel” tours and the place’s reputation, the creature radiated evil so palpable that Hillary broke a heel trying to get away. She saw it right before the party started. If it was a special effect, it was a damn good one.

Jim Downs, Waiter: Jim is tight lipped but unfailingly polite in his white waiter’s jacket. When the Hum begins (see below), he is revealed as a demonseed.

Maria Rojas, Waiter: Like Jim, Maria is tight lipped but unfailingly polite in her white waiter’s jacket. When the Hum begins (see below), she is revealed as a demonseed.

MEL ARRIVES

After the characters have had a chance to talk to a couple of the party guests, **Mel Delgado** arrives, dressed in a fabulous sheer gown with a feathered masquerade mask. The calls of “Mel!” and “Miss Delgado!” from the other partygoers allow the PCs to recognize her.

Mel begins making the rounds, mouth wide with a smile, eyes sparkling behind her mask. When she sees the PCs, her eyes widen slightly in surprise, and (if no PC has approached her yet) she approaches them. There’s time for a bit of conversation before the events described below under Dinnertime Hum commence.

First Conversation with Mel: The player characters can learn the following from Mel during their initial conversation:

- “We don’t get many unexpected guests at the Grand Bavarian these days. But I’m glad Albert was able to find you some costumes. What brings you to my hotel?” (If the PCs say they’re looking for the source of the Hum, she visibly reacts in surprise. After a moment, she has



questions for the PCs, probably many of the same questions they have for her.)

- “Can you hear it? What do you know about the Hum?” (Mel is very interested in what the PCs know because, until she meets them, she thinks that she is the only one who realizes the Hum is more than just a noise. She quickly wants to put the PCs to her final test: to see if they recognize cyphers for what they are.)
- “Wait. Go pick a party favor. I mean, really. It’s important.” (Mel points to a small table near an entrance that has about four small cloth bags with red ribbons. These “party favors” are actually cyphers. The PCs are free to take a few if they wish, and Mel watches with avid attention to see if they recognize the cyphers.)

Conversation Interrupted: Before Mel can make anything of the situation, dinner arrives, and things get scary.

PARTY FAVORS

Four party bags remain on the table near one of the entrances. PCs who select a bag and look inside immediately realize that the object inside is a cypher. The four anoetic level 5 cyphers are as follows.

- **Lime-flavored hard candy (analeptic):** Substance restores a number of points equal to the cypher’s level (5) to the user’s Speed Pool.
- **Fragrant oil (armor reinforcer):** User gains +1 to Armor for one day.
- **Silver cufflinks (enduring shield):** For a day, the wearer of the activated cypher has an asset to Speed defense rolls.
- **Decorative glass egg (grenade, corrosive):** When thrown (short range), the cypher explodes in an immediate radius with a blast of corrosive liquid, inflicting 5 points of damage.

DINNERTIME HUM

Party conversations are interrupted when dinner is served. But just as service begins, so does the Hum, which dramatically changes things.

Read or paraphrase the following as dinner is served.

read aloud

A man wearing chef’s whites rolls a catering cart into the ballroom. A covered casserole platter fills the entire cart, and the smell of roast pork intensifies. The partygoers move to take their seats.

That’s when a strange noise becomes audible. The sound begins as a low, grating rumble but quickly jumps in intensity until it feels as if your entire brain is vibrating.

Several partygoers grab their heads, screaming, blood running from their ears and eyes. Some of them topple to the floor.

The two waiters, the bartender, and the chef react differently. The waiters and bartender brandish knives, and with eyes pulsing orange fire in time to the vibrating Hum, they attack the screaming partygoers. The chef physically swells, bursting out of his whites, to reveal a pale, bloated body spattered with blood, the puffy lips of its slack-mouthed face glistening with spittle. It picks up a cleaver from the catering cart and yells, “Souls for the Lotan the Sinner!”

If you haven’t rolled for initiative already, it’s time to do so now, but note the effect of the Hum on PCs below.

A FIGHT BREAKS OUT

The Hum: When the Hum begins, the player characters must succeed on a difficulty 2 Intellect defense roll or bleed for 1 point of ambient damage and lose their action on their turn. Each subsequent round, PCs who failed their initial defense roll must attempt a new one, with the same result on a failure. On a success, the PC is no longer subject to this particular effect of the Hum.

Demonseed Tactics: The two waiters, the chef, and the bartender are possessed by demons that serve Lotan from the recursion of Ardeyn. Despite inhabiting human beings on Earth, the demons retain some of their abilities thanks to the residual influence of the Hum. (Normally, once on Earth, a creature from Ardeyn would begin to experience degeneration of its abilities.) While the Hum sounds, the demons manifest their power as demonseeds.

The demonseeds brandish their cleavers to cow partygoers and even hack into a few guests to show they’re serious (unless the PCs intervene), but their real goal is to keep as many people alive as possible.

If the PCs intervene, the demonseeds turn their full attention to the characters. But if allowed to finish their tasks, the demonseeds bundle all the people (including the PCs) through the Humming Gate down in the furnace room.

Find the Flaw: If Arlo uses his *Find the Flaw* ability, he learns that the Hum is the demonseeds’ weak spot. If the sound stopped (or if the demonseeds could be insulated from the sound), they’d revert to normal humans, and the demons possessing them would again be submerged.

Partygoers: Many of the partygoers are incapacitated by the Hum. The rest are not fighters (except for Mel) and are easily cowed by cleaver-wielding demonseeds.

Chef Demonseed: level 4; health 21; two melee attacks with a cleaver as a single action that deal 7 points of damage; regenerate 1 point of health while its health is above 0

Waiter/Bartender Demonseed (3): level 4; short-range knife-throwing attack that inflicts 4 points of damage; knife melee attack

 *Analeptic, page 313*

 *Armor reinforcer, page 313*

 *Enduring shield, page 317*

 *Grenade, corrosive, page 318*

 *Find the Flaw, page 48*



Reverted Hotel Staff:
level 2; health 1

GM Intrusion: When a demonseed attacks the character, instead of using a weapon, the demonseed simply touches the PC, who must succeed on a difficulty 4 Intellect defense roll or her eyes flash with fire and she attacks an allied character on her next turn.

Mel Delgado: Mel fights, screaming in fury, “You can’t have any more of my guests, you bastards!” and, “Where’s my sister?” Mel is an NPC spinner and has the ability to translate. She can also use her **Spin Encouragement** ability as her action (instead of firing her pistol), shouting encouragement to allies in short range, allowing them to modify the difficulty of one specific kind of task (usually, attacks) by one step to their benefit.

Killing Possessed Hotel Staff: If a demonseed is reduced to 0 health, the demon possession ends, but the host isn’t killed. Instead, he or she reverts to a normal (though very wounded) person. See Ballroom Aftermath below.

BALLROOM AFTERMATH

If the PCs survive, it’s time to pick up the pieces. For starters, the characters may want to question Mel and perhaps the defeated demonseeds, who have reverted to normal (if dazed and bleeding) wait staff.

The aftermath goes better if the PCs use some interaction rolls to calm people down and make friends (or be commanding and intimidating, if that’s more their style).

The Hum Goes On: When the fight in the Ballroom concludes, the Hum continues (for those who can hear it); the sound continues to emanate from the Grand Bavarian for the rest of this adventure, until the PCs find a way to deactivate it. While the Hum remains active, cell service, landline phones, cable, and Internet remain scrambled.

Mel Comes Clean: Mel presumably saw the PCs stand up to the demonseeds, and she realizes they’re exactly the kind of people she’s been looking for:

- “Despite all I did to lure other recursors to the Grand Bavarian to help me, you showed up on your own.” (Mel has never heard of the Estate and is quite surprised to know such an organization exists, if the PCs tell her about it. Until today, she’s been too frightened to explore her abilities too much, other than to gather cyphers from an out-of-the-way recursion.)
- “A door to someplace *else* first opened in the hotel furnace room about five years ago. The first year it opened only a few times, but lately it’s been opening more and more. Whenever it’s open, people like me—people like *you* and me—can hear that strange hum.”
- “Keep in mind I didn’t know any of this until about a month ago, when my kid sister Olivia was taken by what lives on the other side.” (Mel breaks up a bit at this revelation.) “But I’ve put

the pieces together and come up with a plan to rescue her! Will you help me?” (If PCs inquire, she tells them about her scheme to find other quickened people by noting their reaction to cyphers. Mel got her cyphers by walking the beach of a small recursion she calls Oceanmist.)

- “The gate opens onto a hellscape filled with hungry spirits and demons. A place called the Cathedral of Lotan.” (The PCs recognize the name as a terrible place in Ardeyn.)
- “All this time that the door—I call it the Humming Gate—has been opening, demonseeds have been infesting my staff and stealing guests that no one would miss away to the Cathedral. I didn’t know! And I still don’t know *why*. But with you to back me up, we can go through and get my sister Olivia back! You’ll help me, right?” (Mel went through the hotel records and discovered that guests had been vanishing for years right when they were supposed to check out, which disguised their disappearances.)

Questioning Surviving Hotel Staff: The PCs can attempt to question defeated demonseeds, who revert to normal, though very weakened, people. They’re a bit confused and scared but provide the following information. First, though, the PCs must restrain Mel, who has a momentary break: she begins kicking any surviving hotel staff who have been subdued, calling them bastards and demanding they tell her what’s been done with her sister.

- “A demon looked out of the mirror at me, then entered my mind. It was awful. You can’t understand the things we’ve done . . . Thank God I can’t remember most of it.”
- “Normally, the demons made us take a hotel guest about once a month. But they said it was time for the ‘Five-Year Offering.’ We were supposed to subdue everyone at this party and bring them through the gate in the furnace room once it opened. If you hadn’t intervened, that’s exactly what would’ve happened. All the other guests in the hotel have probably been rounded up by now as well!” (It’s true—if the PCs check, they find no other guests or staff in the entire place, not even Albert.)

Dealing With Surviving Partygoers: In the aftermath of the bloody fight, Hillary Benson (or another named NPC, if Hillary didn’t survive) takes charge of dealing with the survivors, calming them, organizing the tending of wounds, and so on. She tells Mel and the PCs to go do what needs doing; she’ll handle things in the ballroom.



FURNACE ROOM

If the PCs descend into the basement, cinderblock hallways lead to a large set of steel double doors. A plaque over the doors reads, "Furnace Room." The sensation of the Hum is noticeably more intense near the doors. (Other rooms in the basement include laundry, storage, and maintenance chambers, all empty of staff.)

Game Pacing: If you're running *The Hum* at a convention or game store and you have only about an hour before you need to stop, skip the encounter with the furnace man—instead, the furnace room is empty (except for bloodstains smearing through the gate). The PCs can progress straight to the Humming Gate.

Too Early, Gate Not Open: If the PCs explore the furnace room early in the adventure, before the Hum begins, the gate is still closed. In that case, the furnace man hasn't manifested as a demonseed, and there is no connection to Ardeyn—yet.

Gate Is Open: If the doors to the furnace room are opened and the Hum is audible, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

read aloud

This basement chamber contains a massive iron furnace, as advertised. But more impressive is the floor-to-ceiling vertical whirlpool hanging in the air. Some kind of fiery scene is visible through the anomaly. The edges of the spinning oddity are crusted with tumbling shards of metal, stone, thorns, bone, and flesh. The Hum vibrates the very floor of this room, making your vision jitter and shake.

Estate operatives have seen translation gates, but this one is unlike any the characters have encountered (or heard of) before. To determine exactly what they're seeing, the PCs must get closer.

When they do (assuming there's time in the game session for this encounter), the furnace man steps around from behind the furnace, haloed in a mist of smoke, and shouts, "Hey!"

FURNACE MAN

The furnace man (demon-possessed, naturally) guards the gate while it's active. He attacks anyone investigating the gate or furnace. Mel helps the PCs defeat him if she's present.

Find the Flaw: Find the Flaw reveals the same flaw for the furnace man as the demonseeds in the ballroom.

Fighting the Furnace Man: If the demonseed is reduced to 0 health, the demon possession ends, but the furnace man isn't killed. Instead he reverts

to a normal (though quite wounded) person. He provides similar information as described for the demonseeds in the ballroom, except that he notes one additional point: "The Necromancer on the other side is possessed by a demon much more powerful than the one that infested me!"

HUMMING GATE

PCs able to investigate the gate for a few minutes learn more about it. Even if no one present is trained in knowledge of the Strange, Estate operatives have enough working knowledge of translation to work out the following points without an Intellect-based roll.

- Translation Gate to Ardeyn:** Translation gates are connections between two different recursions or, as in this case, between Earth and the recursion of Ardeyn. Creatures that pass through a gate appear in the connected recursion and are translated to "fit in" to the new location's context.
- Malfunction:** The Humming Gate is somehow malfunctioning. While it's operating, the connection is rough and turbulent, and it "leaks" influence from the other side. That influence manifests in the form of the Hum. The Hum apparently allows some creatures of Ardeyn to retain a limited ability to act on Earth while the gate is open and they are within several kilometers of it. (It's possible that the leakage is intentional, not a malfunction.)
- Intermittent Opening:** The gate is sometimes open and sometimes closed. Whatever is responsible for creating the gate is on the other side of the divide, in Ardeyn. To permanently disable the gate, someone will have to travel through it and disable whatever is keeping it open.
- The Other Side:** PCs who take a few rounds to study the gate's opening can eventually see what's on the other side.

THROUGH THE HUMMING GATE

When the player characters peer or step through the Humming Gate, read or paraphrase the following.

read aloud

Sheer cliffs drop to the flame-tipped waves of a magma sea that rolls across a subterranean vault of immense size. Castle-sized columns dot the sea, marching miles into the smoke-shrouded distance, supporting a stone sky lit by the fires beneath.

A path winds along the face of the cliff, apparently originating where the gate mouth opens. The path

Furnace Man
Demonseed: level 4;
health 21; Armor 5
against fire attacks;
two melee attacks
with 3-foot flaming
pipe wrench as a single
action that deals 5
points of damage

Reverted Furnace Man:
level 1; health 1

hugs the cliffs and leads toward a stone protrusion that extends like a pier over the burning tides far below.

Other than the magma waves, nothing visible moves. Gauging perspective is difficult, but PCs who study the scene believe that the path is about 1,000 feet (~300 m) above the waves, that the slender catwalk itself is about 6 feet (2 m) wide, and that the distant stone “pier” is probably about 500 feet (~150 m) away.



Draggable focus, page 52

Wields Two Weapons at Once, page 82

Operates Undercover, page 70

Looks for Trouble, page 68

Solves Mysteries, page 78



TRANSLATING TO ARDEYN

PCs who step through the Humming Gate translate to Ardeyn and appear near the Cathedral of Lotan (along a cliff-face path that leads directly to it). Characters with a *draggable focus* can choose to retain their Earth focus, which includes Vanessa (*Wields Two Weapons at Once*), L.G. (*Operates Undercover*), Torah (*Looks for Trouble*), and Jonny (*Solves Mysteries*).

Otherwise, all characters take on their Ardeyn focus and undergo a significant change. Read or paraphrase the following for the characters who are in the group, and give the PCs their Ardeyn focus sheets as you do so. Characters who drag their Earth focus with them still lose their regular Earth clothing and equipment and gain Ardeyn-style equivalents, where possible.

read aloud

You feel strange. Your clothing tugs, loosens, and shifts, and your skin prickles and tingles all over.

Arlo, your hunting knife lengthens and becomes the size of a scimitar, as your pistol fades away, to be replaced by a heavy bow.

Vanessa, your clothing flows and thickens, and your two nightsticks become two sharp, thin sabers. To you, it feels like coming home.

L. G., your pistol becomes mist, lengthens, and is now a bow. Your fingers warm as if with healing grace.

Torah, your machine gun fades away, and in its place is a blade like a scimitar. Suddenly, you can feel the dead, like firefly lights, stretching away in all directions, quiet and alone.

Sybil, it feels as if someone is pulling on your ears and nose, as both lengthen and your skin darkens to



a shade of beautiful ebony. You remember that once, your kind served a demigod called the Incarnation of Death.

And Jonny, your skin turns grey, stiffens, and becomes as hard as rock, and the sound of your feet on the ground thuds with a massive weight. Your flesh has become stone.

Nothing immediately threatens the characters when they step through the gate, so give them a few minutes to acclimate to their new foci. If anyone has questions, now is the time to answer them.

Mel Delgado also translates. In Ardeyn, she looks very much like she looked on Earth, but she wears green leather armor and carries a bow and quiver. Mel never had the courage to go through the gate alone before, and she doesn't know any more than the PCs about what they might face. But she hopes they find her sister.

The process of [translation](#) imparts some [knowledge about Ardeyn](#) to the characters. The relevant bits include the following:

- Ardeyn operates under the law of Magic and is influenced by Sumerian myths.
- Spirits of the slain live on in Ardeyn, and they are drawn into the subterranean Night Vault. A recursor who dies in Ardeyn would leave behind a spirit subject to the same rules of death.
- The entire land of Ardeyn is built upon the petrified body of a god called Lotan the Sinner.

CATHEDRAL OF LOTAN

The cliff-face path is a 6-foot (2 m) wide catwalk over a magma sea, as described above. The view through the gate wasn't perfect, though, so after the PCs acclimate to their new foci and look around a bit more closely, they notice a few additional details, which you can read or paraphrase to the players when they're ready.

read aloud

The farthest castle-sized columns in the magma sea serve as anchors for massive, red-hot chains. The chains seem to be securing something of truly alarming proportions, though just what isn't apparent, thanks to a black miasma of ashen smoke and streamers swirling about it.

Immediately behind you, a gate like the one in the hotel furnace room hangs in the air—it's the one you came through. A thick bundle of iron cables runs from the base of the whirlpool anomaly, past you along the cliff-face path, toward a stone protrusion that hangs out over the magma.

The Hum is as intense as ever.

What Are Those Chains in the Magma? A PC trained in Ardeyn knowledge knows that the Heart Core is where Lotan the Sinner's heart (in the form of a monstrous creature) is restrained by seven magic chains, and that demons swarm about the trapped god like smoke—which looks uncomfortably like what might be visible on the lake of magma. Probably best not to draw their attention.

Can We Destroy the Iron Cable Bundle? In a word, no. PCs who try cutting the iron cable bundle (level 7) discover that completely severing it with implements available to them in Ardeyn, or even with any cyphers they might bring to bear, will take a few days, at minimum. Long before then, the Necromancer shows up to investigate. It is obvious that the cable bundle is somehow responsible for generating the power that keeps the Humming Gate open. Tracing it to the power source seems like the thing to do.

ALONG THE CLIFF-FACE PATH

As PCs travel along the narrow cliff path, they notice more strange things.

Spirits: Drifting spirits, in the form of ghostly, partly humanoid wisps, wander the path. The spirits are mumbling, crying, moaning, or singing.

If Torah “the Windmill” Bishop is present and her [Shepherds the Dead](#) focus is active, she could use her [Question the Spirits](#) ability on one.

If not, the PCs instead find a living hotel guest who escaped from the cage (see below). The guest is dehydrated and mostly dead, but he can provide them with the same final bit of backstory that the spirit would have.

- The Necromancer controls the Cathedral of Lotan. She set up the infernal device that powers the Humming Gate five years ago. The device is called the Opener of the Way.
- The Necromancer feeds souls to the Opener of the Way, but only souls brought through from the recursion gate. She needs souls from Earth to keep the thing running, but it hasn't been enough. Now, the Opener of the Way must be “supercharged” by sacrificing several dozen souls from Earth at once, a ritual called the “Five-Year Offering.” That's about to happen right now.

Massive Relief-Carved Face: Moving closer along the path reveals that the pierlike extension protruding from the cliff is actually the broad, flat tongue of a relief-carved face of horror.

Hanging from the tip of the tongue is a cage on an iron cable. Inside the cage are eight people

Mel Delgado in Ardeyn: level 4; health 21; Armor 1; long-range bow attack for 4 points of damage; Spin Encouragement ability

Translation, page 125

What a Recursor Knows About Ardeyn, page 160

Shepherds the Dead, page 76

Question the Spirits, page 76

The Necromancer: level 5; health 15; Armor 1; long-range flesh-decaying attack against one target that inflicts 5 points of damage; short-range death spell attack (usable once per minute) that moves one target who fails an Intellect defense roll one step down the damage track; commands undead spirits

in various states of distress and heat exhaustion. Although it's difficult to tell from afar, Olivia is one of them, unconscious and as skinny as a rail from malnourishment.

Sounds of atonal, horrific singing emerges from the cavern of the mouth, but the players must get closer to see what's producing the sound.

CATHEDRAL SANCTUM

When PCs get close enough to see into the relief-carved face's mouth, read or paraphrase the following.



read aloud

The gaping mouth forms a sanctum of evil. A figure wrapped in leather, shadow, and fire floats a foot above the ground in the center of the chamber, singing to some kind of elaborate device that's discharging random bolts of electricity.

The device is a towerlike contraption that would be right at home in a steampunk movie. Thick cables connect to the device; one bundle runs back out along the cliff-face path to the translation gate. Another cable runs straight out of the mouth along the tongue and secures a cage that dangles 20 feet (6 m) below the tongue's edge.

In addition to many randomly wandering spirit wisps, four haunts with a more focused visage float around the machine, as if guarding it.

Tesla Science Engine: If Mel Delgado is with the characters, she exclaims upon seeing the contraption. It's the Tesla Science Engine that was stolen from her hotel five years ago, and the thieves were never caught. Now that she sees where it went, it dawns on her that the device has played a role in all that's happened.

Necromancer: The floating figure is the Necromancer, who currently serves as the only living priest of Lotan. The Necromancer is an Ardeyn native. She's also currently inhabited by a demon of Lotan, though that isn't immediately clear.

If the PCs can destroy (or remove important components of) the Opener of the Way, the Necromancer won't be able to open a translation gate to Earth anymore, and the Denver Hum will be silenced. Of course, the Necromancer and her four spiritual servitors attempt to stop anyone who interferes with the proceedings.

Find the Flaw: Arlo's Find the Flaw ability reveals that new spirits will continue to be summoned while the Necromancer (and the demon inhabiting her) remain active.

WHO GOES THERE?

When the Necromancer becomes aware of the PCs, she ceases singing to the Opener of the Way and regards them. She isn't really responsive to questions. She knows that the characters, having come from the cliff-face path, must be recursors from Earth, and that unless she can stop them, they'll probably try to stop her.

If Mel is with the PCs, she demands to see her sister. The Necromancer says, "Oh, it's you. Albert was supposed to have killed you. Shame he failed."

The Necromancer orders her servitor spirits



to attack. Ask the PCs to roll for initiative if you haven't done so already.

THE NECROMANCER OPENS THE WAY

Necromancer Tactics: With the same action she uses to command her servitor spirits to attack, the Necromancer makes an adjustment to the Opener of the Way. The adjustment increases the magnitude of the Hum another level (see below). After that, she joins the fight. She leads with her death spell and then falls back on blasting with flesh-decaying bolts.

If she is killed or otherwise significantly compromised, a swirling blot of darkness issues from her slack mouth; see *Inhabiting Demon*, below.

The Hum: After the Necromancer adjusts the Opener of the Way (using a complicated panel of electrical contacts and dials), the power to the translation gate between worlds increases, which intensifies the Hum.

Characters must acclimate to the new level, as follows: each PC must succeed on a difficulty 3 Intellect-based defense roll or bleed for 3 points of ambient damage and lose his action. Each subsequent round, PCs who failed the previous round's defense roll can attempt a new one, with the same result on a failure. On a success, the PC is not subject to more defense rolls to resist the Hum during this fight and can take actions.

Servitor Spirits: Four servitor spirits attack the PCs with single-minded fury. Each time a spirit falls, a new one appears a round later (thanks to the demon inhabiting the Necromancer), so that until the Necromancer is dealt with, the PCs continually face four spirits.

Inhabiting Demon: The demon inside the Necromancer does not emerge unless the host is defeated, on the verge of being defeated, or otherwise dealt with. While inside her, it replenishes one fallen servitor spirit on

its turn each round so the total number of spirits remains at four. (Each time this happens, the PCs notice a phantom demon face emerge from the Necromancer's face, which says "Arise!" and sinks back into her flesh.)

If the Necromancer is neutralized, the demon emerges and takes stock of the situation, not trying to hide itself. When the characters notice it, the demon threatens them: "Run, mortals; when I return, it will be with a demon army!" Then it flies off as a stream of black smoke, out toward the center of the Heart Core, presumably to summon a demonic lynch mob.

Alternatively, if the demon chooses to emerge without being noticed, it could attempt to secretly

Servitor Spirit: level 3; health 9; flies a short distance each round; melee flesh-decaying touch attack that inflicts 3 points of damage

Demon Possessing the Necromancer: level 5, level 7 for all tasks related to stealth; health 30; Armor 2; melee flesh-decaying touch attack that deals 5 points of damage, or possession attempt requiring Intellect defense roll to resist



GM Intrusion:
The demon possessing the Necromancer reaches an immaterial hand out through the host's flesh, grabs a character around the neck, and tosses the PC through the air. The PC ends up clinging to the edge of the tongue or cage, dangling over the magma sea. He must succeed on a difficulty 3 Might-based task to pull himself to safety.

S

Possession by demon of Lotan, page 265

possess a PC. If successful, the demon doesn't do anything immediately. But you can privately let the character know that something dark and malevolent has slipped into the back of his mind, where it waits.

Opener of the Way: level 3; health 25; Armor 1

Opener of the Way: The steampunk-style magitech device has an engraved metallic plaque over the control board that reads "Patent #21701, Wireless Transmission of Signal by Nikola Tesla." (No, Tesla never came to Ardeyn; this old Earth antique was recently retrofitted in Ardeyn after it was stolen.)

The PCs can destroy the Opener or try to figure out the antiquated control system. The control panel allows a user to decrease or increase Hum intensity, retract the cable holding the cage containing the sacrifices (including Olivia) up from where it dangles off the edge of the tongue, or switch off the power altogether (which causes the Humming Gate to close). Each of these options is a separate difficulty 3 Intellect-based task.

If the Opener doesn't get a huge new influx of Earth souls within ten hours, it will deactivate. The Necromancer was planning to lower the cage of sacrifices into the magma and then use the iron cable bundle to channel the released souls back up into the Opener of the Way.

Cage of Sacrifices: The large cage holds eight hotel guests (or more, if the partygoers from the ballroom also ended up here), plus Olivia. The

easiest way to free them is to use the control panel on the Opener of the Way to retract the cage from its precarious position, assuming the machine has been switched off. Otherwise, the PCs are looking at a dangerous descent on a swaying chain.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Hopefully, the adventure ends with the PCs deactivating the Opener of the Way, not dangling in a cage over a lake of fire. In the former case, if the machine is destroyed or deactivated, the Humming Gate closes (for good, if the device is destroyed).

Translating Home: If the characters close the Humming Gate, they'll have to translate back to Earth using normal rules of translation. Given their quickened nature, that shouldn't be a problem, all else being equal; reassure them of this fact if they become concerned about trapping themselves on the Ardeyn side of the gate.

If the characters begin a *translation trance* quickly, they can translate back to the furnace room of the Grand Bavarian before an army of demons arrives from over the magma sea to investigate. If one PC initiates the translation and a spinner hastens it, the translation back to the furnace room on Earth takes ten minutes. Note that if PCs translate in this fashion, they can take any surviving hotel guests they freed from the cage along with them. If they think of doing it, they can also take collapsed components of the Tesla Science Engine with them to ensure that the machine won't be restored and used to reopen the gate.

If you're running this adventure at a convention or game store, wrap things up either when the PCs fall to their foes, or when they eliminate the Necromancer, neutralize the Opener of the Way, and return to Earth, hopefully with a very grateful Mel Delgado and groggy Olivia in tow. In the latter case, congratulate your players. Explain that they've ended a threat that's culled hundreds of lives (and, in Ardeyn, souls) of innocent Grand Bavarian hotel guests. What's more, they've finally ended the Denver Hum, itself a source of annoyance, madness, and death.

EXPERIENCE POINT AWARDS

The PCs gain 2 XP each for discovering the source of the Hum and putting a stop to it. The PCs gain an additional 2 XP each if they save any of the hotel guests who were held captive in the cage in the Cathedral of Lotan. This is in addition to any XP earned by other means.



THE STRANGE

1

TIER

1

EFFORT

0

XP

Arlo Coulton

IS A Sharp-Eyed vector WHO

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

IS LICENSED TO CARRY ON Earth

• MIGHT •

• SPEED •

• INTELLECT •

POOL CURRENT EDGE

10

1

POOL CURRENT EDGE

16

1

POOL CURRENT EDGE

8

0

• SKILLS •

0 Initiative
0 Speed Defense
(w/no armor)
0 Balancing
0 Running

0 Perception

• ATTACKS •

MOD DAM

9mm pistol

Hunting knife

-1

5

2

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •
Find the flaw: GM describes an NPC's weakness, if it has one when not wearing armor, trained in Speed defense
Translation (better at easing)
Pierce (1 Speed point)
Fleet of Foot
Gunner: +1 damage with guns

• EQUIPMENT •

0

ARMOR

Clothing

Binoculars

Cell phone

9mm pistol with 3 magazines of ammo (medium ranged weapon)

Hunting knife (light melee weapon)

\$720

MONEY

• CYPHERS •

2

LIMIT

Sniper module (level 6)

Darksight (level 5)

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

ACTION
10 MINS

ID6+
1

10 HOURS
1 HOUR

• DAMAGE TRACK •

IMPAIRED

+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL
IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR
EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS
COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20
ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

DEBILITATED

CAN ONLY MOVE AN
IMMEDIATE DISTANCE
IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO
YOU CANNOT MOVE

THE STRANGE

CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

USE THE PRIMARY SHEET TO DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER ON YOUR STARTING RECUSION
USE A FOLDED RECUSION SHEET FOR EACH ADDITIONAL RECUSION IN YOUR GAME
THE INFORMATION ON A RECUSION SHEET MAY CHANGE FROM ONE RECUSION TO ANOTHER



•ADVANCEMENT•

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER
Refer to The Strange corebook

RECUSION SHEET HERE ↗

•BACKGROUND•

Arlo owes money to a number of people and doesn't have the funds to pay his debt.

In the recent past, while doing a little target practice, Arlo accidentally winged Dr. Sybil Holloway, leaving her badly wounded. It is up to Sybil to decide whether she resents, fears, or forgives Arlo.

•PORTRAIT•

RECUSION SHEET HERE ↗

•NOTES•

RECUSION SHEET HERE ↗

RECUSION SHEET HERE ↗

THE STRANGE

• ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER
Refer to The Strange corebook

CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

USE THE PRIMARY SHEET TO DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER ON YOUR STARTING RECUSION

USE A FOLDED RECUSION SHEET FOR EACH ADDITIONAL RECUSION IN YOUR GAME

THE INFORMATION ON A RECUSION SHEET MAY CHANGE FROM ONE RECUSION TO ANOTHER

RECUSION



PRIMARY

• BACKGROUND •

Vanessa is a native of Ardeyn, but no one on Earth knows it (she thinks). An evil sorcerer laid a curse on her when Vanessa turned 16, which she escaped by translating to Earth and taking up a new life. Things were hard at first while she adjusted, but Vanessa has made it work.

Vanessa noticed that "Flip" is also skilled with weapons, and regardless of how she feels about him otherwise, can't help but respect him for that.

• PORTRAIT •

• NOTES •

RECUSION HERE

RECUSION SHEET HERE

RECUSION SHEET HERE

RECUSION SHEET HERE

THE STRANGE

1

TIER

1

EFFORT

0

XP

L. G. Babcock III

IS A **Appealing spinner** WHO

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

Operates undercover ON **Earth**

• MIGHT •

• SPEED •

• INTELLECT •

POOL 9 CURRENT 0 EDGE

POOL 12 CURRENT 1 EDGE

POOL 16 CURRENT 1 EDGE

• SKILLS •

T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	

T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	
T	S
S	

- Pleasant social interaction
- Persuading & Deceiving
- Investigation
- Resist. persuas'n & seduc.
- Perception
- Cryptography
- Breaking into Comps.

• ATTACKS •

MOD DAM

9mm pistol

4

Practiced with light and medium weapons
Translating (better at hastening)
Enthrall (1 Intellect point)
Spin Encouragement (1 Intellect point)

• EQUIPMENT •

9mm pistol with 3 magazines of ammo (medium ranged weapon)
"Sleep inducer" headset (made by Dr. Holloway)

\$700
MONEY

0
ARMOR
Street clothes
Disguise kit
Light tools
Duct tape
Pen knife
Smartphone

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

• CYPHERS •

2

LIMIT

Stim (level 5)

Temporary shield (level 5)

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

ACTION
10 MINS

1D6+
1
1 HOUR

10 HOURS
1 HOUR

• DAMAGE TRACK •

+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL
IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS
COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

 IMPAIRED

 DEBILITATED
CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

THE STRANGE

CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

USE THE PRIMARY SHEET TO DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER ON YOUR STARTING RECUSION
USE A FOLDED RECUSION SHEET FOR EACH ADDITIONAL RECUSION IN YOUR GAME
THE INFORMATION ON A RECUSION SHEET MAY CHANGE FROM ONE RECUSION TO ANOTHER



• ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER
Refer to The Strange corebook

RECUSION SHEET HERE ↗

• BACKGROUND •

As a child actor, L.G. was loved and adored. As an adult, less so, so L.G. keeps it a secret.

Torah Bishop knows that L.G. was a child actor, but has kept that information private . . . so far. In addition, Dr. Holloway made L.G. a "science" machine that allows him to get a good night's sleep.

• PORTRAIT •

RECUSION SHEET HERE ↗

• NOTES •

RECUSION SHEET HERE ↗

RECUSION SHEET HERE ↗

THE STRANGE

Torah "the Windmill" Bishop IS A **Brash** **spinner** WHO

Looks for Trouble ON Earth

• MIGHT •

• SPEED •

•INTELLECT•

WHO

Brash

spinner

• MIGHT •	• SPEED •
POOL 10	CURRENT 0

• SKILLS •

O	Initiative
O	Ignoring fear/ intimidation
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
* 16 w/out armor	

Deceiving Healing

•ATTACKS•

MOD DAM

Weighted baseball
bat

DAM	SPECIAL ABILITIES
	Practiced in light and medium weapons
5*	Translation (better at hastening)
4	Fast Talk (1 Intellect point)
	Sleight of Hand (1 Speed point)
	*Brawler: +1 damage in melee (including with bare fists)
	Wound Tender: Trained in healing

• EQUIPMENT •

- Street clothes
- Leather jacket (light armor; 2 points subtracted from Speed Pool; costs 1 Might per hour)
- Weighted baseball bat (medium weapon)
- Submachine gun (rapid-fire medium weapon)
- First aid kit
- Utility knife
- Cell phone

\$400

• DAMAGE TRACK •	
	+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL. IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE
	CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE.

THE STRANGE

• ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER
Refer to The Strange corebook

CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

USE THE PRIMARY SHEET TO DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER ON YOUR STARTING RECURSION

USE A FOLDED RECURSION SHEET FOR EACH ADDITIONAL RECURSION IN YOUR GAME

THE INFORMATION ON A RECURSION SHEET MAY CHANGE FROM ONE RECURSION TO ANOTHER

RECURSION



• BACKGROUND •

Torah is part owner of a local bar, where she's something of a whiz at creating specialty cocktails.

Arlo and Vanessa seem pretty tough . . . and Torah secretly hopes that at some point she'll see who's tougher—her or them. In addition, Torah knows that L.G. was a famous child actor, despite the fact that he hides it.

• PORTRAIT •

• NOTES •

→ RECURSION SHEET HERE ←

→ RECURSION SHEET HERE ←

→ RECURSION SHEET HERE ←

THE STRANGE

• ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER
Refer to The Strange corebook

CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

USE THE PRIMARY SHEET TO DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER ON YOUR STARTING RECUSION

USE A FOLDED RECUSION SHEET FOR EACH ADDITIONAL RECUSION IN YOUR GAME

THE INFORMATION ON A RECUSION SHEET MAY CHANGE FROM ONE RECUSION TO ANOTHER

RECUSION



• BACKGROUND •

Sybil studied high-energy physics and found something strange in her experiments—something she published, although it got her thrown out of the ranks of respectable researchers.

Sybil created a scientific instrument designed to give L.G. a restful night's sleep, but she now fears unanticipated long-term side effects. In addition, Arlo Coulton accidentally winged Sybil during firearms practice a few months ago. She's fine now, and has yet to decide how she feels about him after the incident.

• PORTRAIT •

• NOTES •

RECUSION HERE

RECUSION SHEET HERE

RECUSION SHEET HERE

THE STRANGE

1

TIER

1

EFFORT

0

XP

Jonny "Flip" McDaniel
IS A **Graceful** **paradox** WHO
↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

Solves Mysteries ON **Earth**

• MIGHT •

• SPEED •

• INTELLECT •

POOL 10 CURRENT 0 EDGE

POOL 12 CURRENT 0 EDGE

POOL 14 CURRENT 1 EDGE

• SKILLS •

Speed Defense
Balance and careful movement
Physical performing arts

Intellect Defense
Perception

• ATTACKS •

MOD DAM

Light handgun

-1

2

Nightstick

-1

2

Exception

4

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Practiced with light weapons
Translation (better at initiating)
Exception (2 Intellect points)
Closed Mind: Intellect defense and Intellect armor
Spend points from Might, Speed, or Intellect to apply levels of Effort to any Intellect-based task.
Sleuth: Trained in Perception

• EQUIPMENT •

\$600
MONEY

2*
ARMOR

Street clothes
Laptop computer
Flashlight
Utility knife
Cell phone
Light handgun (light weapon)
Nightstick (light weapon)

*2 Armor versus Intellect damage only

• CYPHERS •

3

LIMIT

Corrosive grenade (level 6)
Disguise module (level 6)
Lift (level 5)

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

1 ACTION
10 MINS

1D6+
1

10 HOURS
1 HOUR

• DAMAGE TRACK •

IMPAIRED
DEBILITATED

+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL
IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS
COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO
YOU CANNOT MOVE

THE STRANGE

CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

USE THE PRIMARY SHEET TO DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER ON YOUR STARTING RECURSION
USE A FOLDED RECURSION SHEET FOR EACH ADDITIONAL RECURSION IN YOUR GAME
THE INFORMATION ON A RECURSION SHEET MAY CHANGE FROM ONE RECURSION TO ANOTHER

RECURSION
A



• ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER
Refer to The Strange corebook

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

• BACKGROUND •

An experiment Jonny conducted in his garage blew up, burning down his house and killing some family members. Jonny still dreams about the event.

Arlo is a good sounding board. After you talk to this character for an hour, you gain an asset on any intellect-based task you attempt related to the conversation.

• PORTRAIT •

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

• NOTES •

↓ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

Arlo Coulton

•PORTRAIT•

• NOTES

carries a quiver

10

Ardeyn

110

1

111

1000
CURRE

EDGE
POOL

GE
POOL CURRENT EDGE
8 0

S	Initiative
S	Speed Defense
T	(w/no armor)
S	Balancing
S	Running
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	

S	T	S	T	S
S	T	S	T	S
T	S	T	S	T
S	T	S	T	S
T	S	T	S	T
S	T	S	T	S
T	S	T	S	T
S	T	S	T	S

1

the flow: \mathcal{M} describes a

Shamsiir

NPC's weakness, if it has one
When not wearing armor, trained

in Speed defense
Translation (better at easing)
pierce (1 Speed point)

Fleet of Foot

Spent hours from earlier Specia or Intellect pool when applying Effort to increase bow damage

Clothing

Well-made bow and 24 arrows

Explorer's pack Tools for fetching

430cr
MONEY

Vanessa Torgue

•PORTRAIT•

• NOTES

Wields two weapons at once

Ardeyn

Equipment	
ARMOR	2
Clothes	200cr
Leather jerkin (light armor)	200cr
Sabre (light weapon)	200cr
Another sabre (light weapon)	200cr
Explorer's pack	200cr

• PORTRAIT •

Dr. Sybil Holloway

• NOTES •

Embraces Qephilim Ancestry ON Ardeyn

• MIGHT • • SPEED • • INTELLECT •

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
8	0	8	8	0	8	18	1	

• SKILLS •

T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T
S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S
T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T
S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S
T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T
S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S
T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T
S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S
T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T

• ATTACKS •

MOD	DAM
2	2
2	2

Sabre
Death kindred
(ignores Armor)

Luck pool: 3 floating pool points
Advantage: When XP used to reroll d20, add +3
Practiced with light weapons
Translation (better at initiating)
Premonition (2 Intellect points)
Shatter (2 Intellect points)
Mythlight abilities
Death kindred (1 Intellect point)
Looks like a qephilim

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Setting up
experiments
Knowledge of
the Strange
Qephilim Lore

ARMOR	0
Clothes	
Sabre (light weapon)	
Shield (asset to Speed defense rolls)	
Relic "Badge" of the Incarnation of Death	
Explorer's pack	

• EQUIPMENT •

MONEY	4000

• PORTRAIT •

• NOTES •

• MIGHT •

Abides in Stone

ON

Ardeyn

• SPEED •

• INTELLECT •

Jonny "Flip"
McDaniel

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
15	1		12	0	

• SKILLS •

T	S		T	S	
T	T		T	T	
S	T		S	T	
T	S		T	S	
S	T		T	T	
T	S		S	T	
S	T		T	S	
T	S		T	T	
S	T		S	T	
T	S		T	T	
S	T		S	T	
T	S		T	T	
S	T		S	T	

• ATTACKS •

MOD	DAM
S	4
S	2
S	4

Practiced with light weapons

Translation (better at initiating)

Exception (2 intellect points)

Closed Mind: intellect defense and

Intellect armor

Golem Body

Practiced in using fists as

Medium weapon

Golem Healing: Lose access to first single-action recovery roll each day

• EQUIPMENT •

1/2*	Pouch
ARMOR	chisel and hammer
MONEY	200 or Sabre (medium weapon)

*2 Armor versus intellect damage only