

NIBIRU

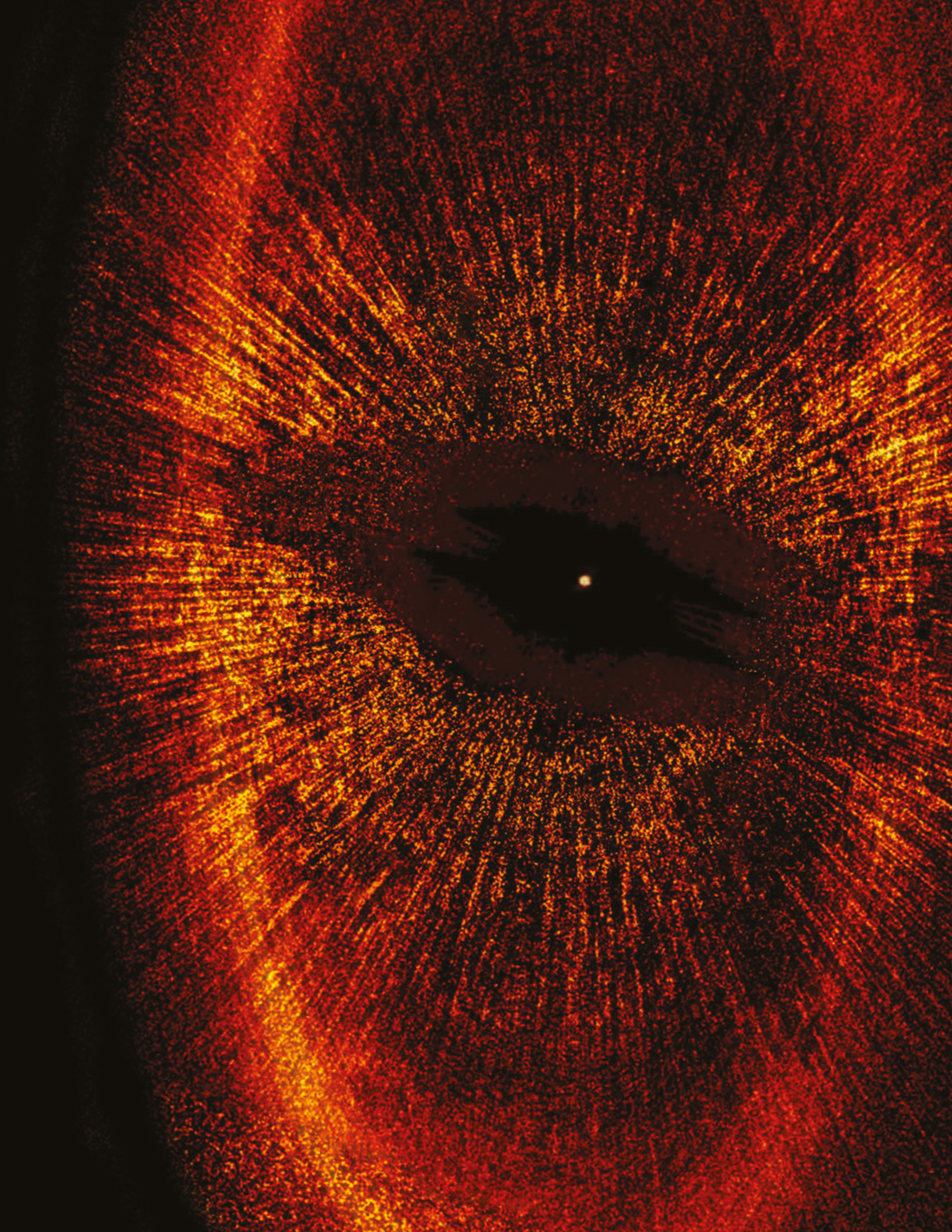
A SCIENCE FICTION GAME OF LOST MEMORIES







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**“NIBIRU: A SCIENCE FICTION GAME OF LOST MEMORIES”
HAS BEEN CONCEIVED BY THE FOLLOWING HUMANS...**

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CHAPTER ONE



FIRST STEPS



THE SKYLESS WORLD



The stars shone bright on that fateful night, more than four thousand years ago. Under the midnight sky, the Mesopotamian winds carried away the scents of incense, the echoes of laughter, music and joyous celebration. The temple's construction was over.

After weeks of festivities, prompted by the Third King's return, the city fell asleep. In their dreams, they saw the holy debts repaid—their souls lifted gracefully to the stars.

But suddenly, something happened. An instant of daylight tore the mantle of night apart, its shine blinding those below. The most deafening noise ever experienced by humanity accompanied the light—so loud, as if the cosmos itself let out a desperate cry. Petrified, they gazed at the sky above. Then they saw it—their dream, realized—for the one and only time.

Nibiru, their second home, passed by.



SECOND HOME

What would life be like in a skyleless world? What would it be like to be born, live and die in a place where grass doesn't grow, where the wind doesn't blow and with no horizon to set your sight upon?

Let's imagine that, one day, humanity found itself living inside of a massive space station. The consequences to this are more important than the reasons: The water we drink supplied via giant pipes. The air we breath pumped through kilometers-long shafts.

The flickering lights above us, our only refuge from the innate darkness of this weird world. Every conception of nature, changed. Every known aspect of our world, warped.

What would we dream of? What would we be afraid of? What would we fight for?

These are your first steps into the strange world of Nibiru. You count yourself among the many inhabitants of this space station, a monstrous machine designed to do who-knows-what. Will your purpose be to find the answer to that question? Will it be to survive the darkness and carve out a life for yourself and your loved ones? Will it be to delve deep into the farthest lands of this skyleless world, desperate to know what's behind the curtain? Whatever will be the path you choose, remember: The choices you make will have consequences—for you and the ones who will join you.

Nibiru is a **Science Fiction Role Playing Game of Lost Memories**. A role playing game is a game in which the players take on the roles of other people, immersing themselves in a fictional world through the characters they choose to portray.

Remember when you used to play pretend with your friends, playing villains and heroes during playground hours? *Nibiru* is very much like those school yard games. The difference is that, in this case, there is a set of rules—some unspoken, some duly written—in order for the narrative to remain consistent, for the story to flow coherently, and for the people involved to enjoy the experience to the fullest!

In each adventure you embark on, you and your friends will step into the shoes of characters (also known as PCs, or player-characters) for whose portrayal, actions and choices you will be responsible. One of the players will be the Narrator who, instead of playing as another character, will describe the world as it is experienced by the PCs, narrating the consequences of their actions, impersonating the people they encounter, serving as a mediator, and helping the story unfold.

Once the group is set, you will all need a place where you can get together (we suggest a comfortable, quiet location) and a reasonable amount of time so you can all get ready and play for as long as you wish. Nibiru sessions usually last for 3 to 5 hours, though your group will soon find out what is best for you! It is always important to agree on the type of game you want to play; will it be more of a political game, trying to uncover the schemes of Nibiru's rulers? Will it focus on the horrors of the station, or maybe pan out as a fully-fledged epic centered around exploration?

Reaching a consensus on the type of story you'll tell is crucial to achieve a great gaming experience. Likewise, if you are going to touch upon sensitive subjects, it's important for everyone to agree to be on the same page.

THE STORY STRUCTURE

*A single **Session** is akin to a TV series episode, sometimes serving as a staging point for events to come, sometimes ending in a cliffhanger, sometimes self-contained, but always pushing the story forward. A **Story** or **Arc** comprises anything between one and many episodes, with a beginning and an end, and with a plot that revolves around certain themes, locales and characters defined by the Narrator. A **Series** or **Chronicle** covers several arcs, with the constant being the PCs involved. You could commit to a slowly developing tale, with secrets that reveal at the close of every story, or maybe create an anthology of loosely connected tales revolving around a specific theme.*

It should be in everyone's interest for all players to have fun. If this seems not to be the case at any point, speak up! Mind that some people might have a hard time showing discomfort. All players should have the other in mind when partaking in this experience, which makes for one of the most important set of rules we could convey to you. This set of arrangements, which should happen before the game starts, is the **social contract**. After that's set, you will only need to get some pencils, erasers, paper, a bunch of four-sided dice and you will be set to craft an unforgettable story!



A SCIENCE FICTION GAME

Nibiru exists to evoke wonder, provoke thought, and excite your imagination. Although those initial questions we introduced in this chapter will hopefully find their answers in your adventures, there are other things you might think of when faced with the idea of human life on Nibiru. Many works of science fiction have tried to envision our species living in unnatural conditions, with varying degrees of meticulousness, through concepts like the O'Neill cylinder and the Stanford torus. In Nibiru, we've tried to paint a consistent, somewhat scientifically accurate picture, while at the same time taking some liberties for the sake of fiction, and to delve into the philosophic themes that the genre has always excelled at exploring.

Many works of fiction and art inspired Nibiru. Here are a few of those sources:

- *2001: A Space Odyssey*, based on the novel by Arthur C. Clarke.
- Ridley Scott's *Alien*.
- *The Martian*, based on the novel by Andy Weir.
- *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and *A Scanner Darkly* by Philip K. Dick.
- Tsutomu Nihei's manga series *Blame!*.
- Alfred Bester's *The Stars My Destination*.
- Larry Niven's *Ringworld*.
- *The Expanse* series by James S. A. Corey
- Various works from Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke. These have been a great source of inspiration, and we highly recommend diving into them if you enjoy your journey across the station!

OF LOST MEMORIES

The people that you will portray are not like the rest. Your kind has one very important thing in common; they awoke in the cold of Nibiru without most of their memories. These are the **Vagabonds**, and theirs is the struggle of remembrance. Their old lives are broken; their new lives will see them struggling to pick up the pieces. All of this, while wandering in a world they cannot comprehend.

The Vagabond condition results in memory being a core theme to the *Nibiru* experience: the rules allow for storytelling to happen not only "forwards" (living through the adventure and getting to determine the fate of your characters) but also "backwards", as the unveiling of each new remembrance reveals the tales and tribulations that comprised your characters' past lives.

MOOD

Role playing games generally have a set mood; an atmosphere they try to convey via their rules, their setting's premise and their presentation. *Nibiru* is no exception, and we have designed it as weird, but relatable. Your characters might be special in some regards but, outside of their strange condition, they bleed and suffer—they love and hate and laugh as anyone does. This doesn't mean that extraordinary stuff does not happen; it abounds in a place as alien as the station! We have, however, chosen to give some humane grounding to the world so that no matter how strange Nibiru might seem, humanity's touch will always remain familiar.

Speaking about humanity, let us establish that its relationship with the station is conflicted. On the one hand, some regions seem to be tailor-made for us: providing fresh air, water, food and pleasant temperatures on a silver plate. On the other hand, once you stray off the beaten path (and you will, given how curious human beings can get), you'll encounter the cold entrails of a world that bears no resemblance to our species' true birthplace. This machine, as happens with any other tool, has a purpose—inevitably bringing to mind questions about it, and about our role within it.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The *Nibiru Corebook* is divided into several chapters tackling different aspects of the game, be it the world, the rules, advice on how to tell stories, etc. In addition, you will find advice for narration at the turn of every page! We have included story hooks and ideas in almost every section, under the **Tale-Sparks** headers, so that you know how to implement *Nibiru's* lore into your adventures.

First Steps will introduce you to Nibiru and the history of humans in the station, exploring the basic structure that makes up the station, and retells the major events that marked humanity's journey across the skyless world.

From the Core We Hail is a chapter dedicated to the peoples and locales of the Core Sectors; where life thrives, where civilizations rise and fall and where the legacy of humanity is most present.

Halls of Penumbra explores the vast territories of the Outer Reaches; a sparsely populated territory that showcases the untamed face of Nibiru, and how society shapes up to be when the world around them falls apart.

The Umbraic Frontier collects tales and rumours about the Umbra, beyond the Outer Reaches. The most inhospitable place in Nibiru holds many secrets, and strange things we're yet to discover call it home.

Storytelling Engines contains the rules of the game—the mechanics that allow the plot to flow and bring your story into motion, as well as advice on how to utilize the rules to suit your gaming table's tastes.

The Vagabonds focuses on *Nibiru's* protagonists; who are they, the nature of their condition and how to create and portray them in a way that is engaging and rewarding.

Of Cracking Skin and Shimmering Steel introduces the many life forms that inhabit *Nibiru*, as well as AIs, their origins and relationship with humanity.

By the Lamplight provides guidance to Narrators, from planning your sessions to theme and mood-focused storytelling; all to ensure the best experience possible. It also contains *Annex 1: The Science of Nibiru*, which sheds light on the inner workings of the Skyless World, and the world building efforts that went into conceiving it.

Watershed is a story you can play with your group as an introduction to the setting, focusing in a troupe of Vagabonds facing moral conundrums in their first encounter with *Nibiru's* strange communities.

LEXICON

The following is a list of commonly used terminology that is relevant to the setting...

AI: Artificial Intelligence. When repurposed to perform a specific task, AIs are referred to as automatons.

Aliltu: The bedrock of *Nibiru's* societies, this term defines a social class that is educated in a variety of vital trades, the labor of which is allocated by a settlement's ruling council according to their priorities.

Antumbra: Common name for the Core Sectors.

Arku, The: The first settlers, tall and fragile due to low G—these are the inhabitants of the Core Sectors.

Ascendant: An electromagnet-powered machine that travels across vertical tunnels, connecting the Core Sectors with the Outer Reaches.

Barge: Some of the latest wind-riding technology allowed for the production of barges—ships that travel along the Torus (mostly for trade purposes).

Bioelectric: Almost the entirety of *Nibiru's* fauna is of bioelectric nature—organisms that developed adaptations to use *Nibiru's* power as nourishment.

BrightTown: One of the Habitats of *Nibiru*, A small, countryside village surrounded by a black abyss.

Core Sectors, The: The place where the first human settlements developed, and where gravity is closer to Earth's. Most of *Nibiru's* population lives here.

Core, The: The nucleus of the station, producing the energy consumed by humanity and the station itself.

Cycle: A standard unit for measuring long periods of time, based on the energy bursts that supply the city of Ashur. It equals three of Earth's months.

Deathspitter: The default weapon of the peoples of *Nibiru*—shooting splinters at terrifying speeds over short distances.

Dreadlands, The: One of the Habitats of *Nibiru*. A prison for the senses; a collection of tragedies designed to breed and nurture Nightmares.

Dreamlands, The: One of the Habitats of *Nibiru*. It is made up of a collective remembrance that connects different individuals that live in the station.

Enki's Covenant: A secret organisation, hell-bent on acquiring knowledge to gain power. They have a widespread network of informants and act as bogeymen to Vagabonds—the memories of whom they covet.

Enēšu, The: The settlers of Penumbra, shorter than average due to the higher artificial gravity.

Fungi: Fungal life forms are commonly found throughout *Nibiru*, and are key to the sustainment of human life (given that most of human nourishment stems from fungi-based cooking).

G-LOC: Loss of consciousness due to excessive g-force, it mostly affects the Arku that venture into the farthest reaches of Umbra without proper preparation.

Harbingers: Ancient AIs, one of which is said to have taught humans everything they needed to survive.

Hašû Song: Recorded conversation between a human and *Nibiru's* artificial wind currents, also used to name the many locales of the Torus.

Kabādu: The World's Punishment, gravity has a great significance for those who suffer because of it—with cults forming around the idea of it being a punishment the world doles to those who dare leave Antumbra.

Krajj: A greyish paste manufactured from fungi. It is smoked in long pipes—causing your metabolism to quickly adapt to your environment’s artificial gravity.

Leviathan, The: The mother of all beasts. An entity that roams the Darkness and reigns supreme over most life forms in Nibiru.

Machine, The: One of the Habitats of Nibiru. It is the source of the Rogue Affliction—a computer virus that triggers an awakening of consciousness in Nibiru’s AIs, which some Vagabonds used to inhabit.

Memotech: A specific device utilized by Enki’s Covenant to scour through people’s remembrances.

Našparu: Antumbric designation for the members of a ruling council. Each city-state has different methods to pick ruling council members, generally revolving around small communal elections.

Nergal: The pride of the Covenant, this Wandering Necropolis silently traverses the Torus, stopping from town to town to hold celebrations of passing, and to trade in the rare and miraculous paleweed.

Nibiru: The star of Nineveh, the diamond amidst a pebble-parade—where all the action happens.

Nightmare: A strange entity that feeds off of electric pulses within a host’s amygdala. They are original from the habitat known as the Dreadlands.

Outer Reaches, The: The outermost part of Nibiru’s habitable zone. The higher gravity pull of this region results in their peoples having a different physical complexion than their closer-to-the-Core cousins.

Penumbra: Common name for the Outer Reaches.

People’s Shepherd, The: The One Harbinger, founding father of Ashur. It is said that it taught humanity how to survive—an idea that is now widely rejected.

Pilgrims: The main religious organization of Nibiru, they believe the Core is a divine machine and that it is humanity’s destiny to eventually become part of it.

Ring, The: The periphery of the Core, practically unlivable due to the high temperatures found therein.

Rogue AIs: Automatons that have been consumed by the Rogue Affliction, to the point in which they cannot perform the duties they were created for anymore.

Rust Hunters: A profession based on capturing and decommissioning rogue AIs, sometimes extracting their core for re purposing.

Scavengers: Derogatory name for the tribes that inhabit the dark corners of Penumbra. Their societies are built on pillage, illicit activities and conquest.

Second Ring, The: Unknown to humanity, the Second Ring is the place in the Darkness where most Habitats are located, past the 1.6G line.

Service AIs: The largest population of AIs in Nibiru is classified as Service AIs—any kind of automaton made to serve humanity.

Silu: The Antumbran corporatocracy that was born out of the credit system, and that thrived along with the Penumbric colonization process.

Šiknat Napišti: Nibiru as a living entity—a concept born of the Cults of Silence, and a dominant notion in Umbra.

Torus Corridor, The: The largest concentration of inhabited vaults in Penumbra is located along the Torus’ periphery—thus its name.

Torus, The: A gigantic tunnel that goes from the Core Sectors to the Outer Reaches and then back, it has a specific metal plating that allows for barges to be built based on electromagnets, enabling travel through it.

Ummânu: This social class is mostly seen in the largest settlements across Penumbra and in almost all city-states of Penumbra, comprised of dedicated craftspeople that excel at one particular discipline.

Vagabonds: The peoples that come from afar. They hold no memories of the times before their awakening.

Water Worshipry: A tradition of the Cults of Silence, hailing from Penumbra and Umbra, centered around underwater sleep and dream interpretation.

Whisperers, The: An ancient group of gifted individuals. They have long since disappeared from the world.

Wild, The: One of the Habitats of Nibiru. The vastness of the station seen through feral eyes.





HOUSE IN THE STARS

The skyless world is a machine of nigh-inconceivable complexity, fuelled by a seemingly endless stream of power flowing from its center towards millions of terminations, built to last for millennia and to preserve the precious life found therein. Although its design remains a mystery, the most important components of what make Nibiru are, conceptually, easy to observe and comprehend. The station is a disc-shaped structure, roughly measuring 3600 kilometres in diameter. Its rotation generates artificial gravity in such a way that approximately 20% of its total surface can be inhabited. Human societies have traversed much of Nibiru for thousands of cycles, and yet, they still have the grand majority of it to discover.

At the centre of Nibiru lies the **Core**, the giver of all light. The Core hides all manner of strange mechanisms designed to bring the world to life. The nature of the Core is shrouded in mystery, and it has been regarded as a deity and a living thing by many belief systems across the station. A ring of colossal facilities surrounds it, thundering pillars that rise as far as the eye can see, and labyrinthine complexes—all bursting with raw power. These are the locales of the Ring; the bulk of the station's power-generating machines, as well as the birth-point of Nibiru's power lines.

The first inhabited area of the skyless world is that of the **Core Sectors**, the first of the Umbras (also referred to as "Antumbra"). The cradle of civilization is today a massive sprawl of overgrown city-states, where 95% of Nibiru's peoples live. With over 60 populated vaults, and spanning great expanses and long hallways, the main turning points of human history happen within the Core Sectors.

Past the Core Sectors, the **Outer Reaches** (often referred to as "the Reaches" or "Penumbra") are located. It is the largest populated sector of the station, sparsely dotted by small settlements and colonies, where hard-working industrialist and fortune seekers live.

The **Umbra**, which lies beyond, is a place of non-life where no one dares venture forth. The world itself crushes anyone who treads there, choking the life out and breaking the bodies of those stupid enough to brave the dark.

The grand majority of Nibiru's space is a sea of tunnels and hallways, serving as arteries to connect the vaults that keep life intact. Great expanses serve as nexi to which many of these tunnels converge, as well as hub from where important aspects of the station's functions can be monitored. A small percentage of the structures found in the station are structural in nature: they are there to make sure that the mechanisms of the world work as intended.

VAULTS

Vaults are the sphere-shaped structures wherein settlements are built. These structures range from a couple hundred meters to several kilometers in diameter, and are connected to massive lifelines, accessible via service tunnels located below the surface of the vault. Lifelines keep the life support systems of the station running, ensuring that vaults are supplied with clean air, water, and providing exhausts through which resources can be recycled.

STORYTELLING LESSONS STEEL PLAYGROUNDS

Knowing how to introduce and depict the locations you will visit in Nibiru is essential to accomplish an immersive experience. Although most of the times these locales will be easy to picture and to evoke (such as the lush forests of a fantasy world, or dark cities here on earth), the skyless world can sometimes be very strange—as any alien superstructure should be.

This is not necessarily bad though; although some of the most iconic landscapes of Nibiru will be represented here, the fact of the matter is that (in a big part) you are free to toy around with the station. The strangeness of it should enable you to come up with interesting ideas, to make Nibiru fit your story (and not the other way around).

There are several types of vaults in the station, such as water-filled reservoirs and fuel depositories, as well as massive hubs and trade centers. Explorers and settlers have long ago designed a categorization system that groups habitational vaults in three classes (A, B and C). Class A vaults are those that are fully supplied with water and power, most often found in the Gate's Shadow region of the Core Sectors. Class B vaults are vaults that have no access to either power or water, which doesn't mean that they aren't livable (given that many settlements were founded in Class B vaults, provided they could get their hands on the missing resources). They are mostly found in the Outer Reaches. Class C vaults, often referred to as "dead vaults", are generally deemed unlivable, either due to malfunctioning life support and/or a lack of resources necessary to sustain standard living conditions. They are generally found in the Umbra.

Aside from the complex systems that make for each vault's inner workings, the largest, most central vaults generally have two types of sub-structures called detachments and dependencies. Detachments are smaller zones, accessed from within the vault, that serve as expansions for the vault's main living area. Some of the largest vaults in the Core Sectors feature dozens of detachments, which are usually dedicated to specific purposes (such as special industrial areas, residential zones, prisons, etc.). Dependencies are smaller vaults located outside of the main structure, in its immediacies. They are not considered vaults in their own regard due to the fact that their life support systems are dependant on those of the main vault.

STRANGE WORLDS

Many of the vaults found in the far reaches of Nibiru bear the scars of their history; sites where violent events took place, where entire peoples met their doom, or where strange occurrences happened without anyone noticing. Vaults are in and of themselves a puzzle, and exploration-centered adventures can gain a lot from creative usage of these structures, and the secrets they keep.

NETWORKS

The veins and arteries of Nibiru are akin to the great swathes of land that separate the towns and cities of our world; an incommensurable network that extends throughout the whole station. Although the grand majority of these is comprised of processing lines, air supply tunnels and service shafts (which remain largely unexplored), the hallways used everyday by humans to travel throughout Nibiru stand as the most iconic, and are home to a big part of Nibiru's strange fauna as well as some small human communities.

From the triangle-shaped hallways of Gate's Shadow, passing through the colossal expanse of the Torus to the circular tunnels of Umbra and the Outer Reaches; the networks that run across Nibiru dictate not just the way in which societies grow and work, but they also mark the rhythm of your stories, with challenges awaiting at every turn, and at the end of every corridor.

As civilizations rose and fell, societies learned to use the space delineated by the hallway networks to their advantage (growing food, creating exchange markets, setting up watch-posts and tolling stations, etc.). The dynamics of inter-state relationships are deeply dependent on how each ruler manages the networks within their domains, including those of trade and warfare.

FACILITIES

Central facilities comprise all of the space dedicated to the functioning of Nibiru. From complex mechanisms that serve to transform materials, to gigantic reactors and power processors in the innermost parts of the skyless world, Nibiru is an intricate machine that houses a plethora of mysterious mechanisms, all designed to fuel the station's hidden purpose.

Among the many facilities in the station, one of the most important ones are the strange places called Habitats. These facilities vary in nature; some might be more "conceptual" than concrete, but what they do have in common is that they exist and are revealed in the game via the memories written by the players.

THE CORE

Purveyor of Nibiru's lifeforce and heart of the skyless world, the Core is the basement upon which everything in Nibiru is built: an incredible machine that works over thousands of years to power the colossal station and all its facilities. Each of its eight thundering power generators work in a constant cycle, consuming iridium radioisotopes to produce massive amounts of electricity, which is then distributed across the station following that same cycle. The Ring is the name given to the immediacies of the Core, where its main mechanisms for distribution are housed. High temperatures, low-to-no artificial gravity and exposure to hazardous materials make these areas unfit for living, thus the reason why the entry points into these regions are extremely hard to find.

The peoples of Nibiru have based their time measurement systems around the cycles of the Core, another of the reasons why it holds quasi-mythic status among them. These are the most used units of time...

A **Flicker** is a period of time, of unknown duration, that begins with the initial startup of the Core's functions, and ends with its dimming and, ultimately, its shutdown. Flickers are cycles in themselves—they are, in essence, the time period between resets. Its actual existence is a matter of debate among the peoples of Nibiru.

An **Assyrian Cycle** measures the period between energy bursts experienced at the vault of Ashur, and was established during the Assyrian Supremacy. It's the most widely used time unit for long periods, and it equates to three Earth months.

A **True Cycle** is a locale-based time unit that is used mostly in the far reaches of Penumbra and Umbra, due to the fact that the energy takes longer to reach these locations after their corresponding power generator emits its burst. The further away you are from the Core, the more people use True Cycles instead of the Assyrian Cycle, with the former generally used only when speaking to foreigners and when referencing historic dates. While a True Cycle in Ashur lasts three Earth months, a True Cycle in the Umbraic settlements of the Archaean Sorrows lasts close to seven Earth months.

Finally, **Lapses** are akin to Earth days, though they reference the sleep cycles of the peoples of Nibiru. They last for 22 Earth hours, and are fractioned in hours and seconds, just as in our world.

WHAT LIES BEYOND

As you wander off the beaten path, into hidden tunnels, monstrosly cold facilities and into lands of solitude and silence, the world's rules bend against you. More than ten hundred kilometers away from the Core, the pressure from the artificial spin gravity becomes so oppressive that your heart has problems getting blood to your brain. Hallucinations, loss of consciousness (which is generally deadly at this point) and the weight on your body make traversing the regions known as Umbra a nigh impossible task. However, there are a few bold individuals who dare venture here, lured by the promise of forbidden lands, as well as answers about the nature of the Skyless World.

The Umbras are akin to the deep oceans of Earth; vastly unexplored, standing in the way of knowing about the universe outside—like a massive black wall covering the entrance to Plato's cave. Even with the cutting-edge technologies of the current era, the immense pressure that results from Nibiru's artificial gravity makes it impossible to traverse past the borders of Penumbra. This is the reason why, when treading the expanse of 2G, only the best equipped, the boldest and the most ambitious survive (and even then, no one manages to go much further than the oppressive 2.6G where many of Nibiru's lost facilities lie.

LORE BITES

THE LANTERNS AT 2.6

Under the bone crushing, mind numbing pressure of the 2.6G line, pale orange lamps light up the all-engorging darkness of Umbra. The source of this light is unknown; no charted power lines run this far (at least not carrying any electricity) and the images captured at the 2.6 line show the outline of an ominous structure, moving at a fast speed, with no radiation readings of any kind.

Even though super-resistant drones have been able to reach this point, humans would never survive the artificial gravity of this region—their fragile organs and soft skin tearing apart under their own weight. The fact begs the question; how do Vagabonds escape it?



FLICKERBURST

THE AGE OF SILENCE

Marked by the rhythm of Nibiru's pulsating heart, humanity's history in the station revolves around the dynamic of the Core's behaviour—its light bursting through endless corridors, only to dim itself over the course of thousands of cycles. Each of these millennia-long beats is known as a Flicker, and the stories and legends you will experience with will be set in the third of these periods—briefly retold in this section.

As the pulse of the Core's rebirth reverberated across thousands of kilometers, hallways and vaults lit up. In the midst of this primordial yawn, following on the footsteps of long forgotten entities, small human groups found their way into the great unknown. These were the *Arku*; the inhabitants of the Core Sectors. Within the vaults of the Antumbra, they found warmth and water, as well as fields of ripe fungi to harvested. The plentiful bounties of Antumbra signified easy living; a perfect environment to grow technologically and culturally. With time, four settlements surfaced to harbour the grand majority of human life in the station: the city-states of Ashur, Charchemish, Ur and Ankuwa.

Each of the city-states developed its own set of laws and edicts, largely promulgated by elder councils, priesthoods and monarchies. The cults that formed at the dawn of time revered all that amazed and enthralled the *Arku*; the lights that shone overhead, the strange life forms that ran wild, and the mysterious relics left behind during previous Flickers.

This state of abundance in which the *Arku* lived was, however, a double-edged sword. As generations came and passed, the city-states and their ruling councils pushed

THE PEOPLE'S SHEPHERD

The first recounts of humans settling the Core Sectors are usually sprinkled with fantastic recounts, references to the occult and the "strange forces at work" throughout the station. Though most of these are seen in the present as innocuous legends and tales, the mention of a grand, paternal figure known as the People's Shepherd appears consistently in scriptures, mainly those of Assyrian authorship. The People's Shepherd is today revered as the founding father of Ashur; an ominous presence that guided their people to the vault and taught them how to establish the foundations of their culture.

the idea that it was their set of values that enabled this way of life—with new cultural adoptions surfacing to justify the power held by those at the top. Furthermore, when humanity's boundless curiosity led the *Arku* to meet each other under the yellowish lights of Nibiru's hallways, these differences in belief led to small-scale clashes. Conflict and struggle became another contributing factor for the growing isolationism of the city-states; each people found strength in their state-fed convictions, reinforcing the ideas that had driven them to conflict in the first place.

Fortunately, not everyone saw these encounter as a chance to sharpen their ideological knives: those that took the opportunity to exchange ideas found themselves enlightened by radically different ways of thought. With that, the first trade agreements were established under the shadow of the Pond—a massive reservoir; containing the region's entire water supply.



As cooperation grew between the cities, and with the exchange of customs in full motion, the peoples of Nibiru acted swiftly on their adventurous spirit. They ventured into the unknown hallways beyond—forging the first tales of exploration and treasure hunting.

The end of the Age of Silence came along with a group of nomads of unknown origin who arrived at the gates of Antumbra to push civilization into a new era.

THE AGE OF WHISPERS

In audience with the rulers of the four city-states, the fifty-or-so newcomers introduced themselves by putting a show that was beyond the world's wildest dreams. They Whispered to the station, and the station replied: Vaults' floor plaques rose with a single word, water rained down from the ceilings, and lights danced to the rhythm of their hum. To the Arku, it was clear; the real gods of Nibiru made their appearance.

The Whisperers did more than just flaunt their wondrous speech skills. They taught the Arku how to observe, understand and utilize the Nibiru's technological marvels. Leading the people into strange, otherworldly structures, they adjusted the world's temperature to make it more pleasant, they optimized air circulation across tunnels to favour the growth of fungi plantations, and they opened the waterways—from massive reservoirs into new, unsettled vaults. The Whisperers paved the way for people to colonize the whole region, and along this trail of new found glory the Arku celebrated. Everyone, bar the ones who ran the show.

In short time, the Whisperers faced the wrath of the Antumbran aristocracy, who spread rumours about the Whisperers and their practices. From the high echelons of Assyrian society to the small hamlets at the edge of Antumbra, the cautionary tales spread like wildfire. A wave of violence followed, as inquisitors faced off against the Whisperers and their followers. The city of Ur was sacked of its precious works of art, and the Dials—the wide hallways that connected most of the region—were painted red in the wake of the Antumbran conflict. After the smoke cleared, the last remaining Whisperers fled back into the shadows of the world, leaving the Antumbran realms behind.

Among the remnants of the Core Sectors' societies, the city-state of Ashur remained untouched. While the rest of Antumbra struggled to rebuild their lives, the leaders of the Assyrian city-state seized control of many territories, and the ultimately tragic Age of Whispers made way to the Assyrian Supremacy.

THE AGE OF STRIFE

From the balconies of the Ochre Palace, the Primarch of Ashur found herself reigning over the devastated peoples of Antumbra. The Assyrian citadel, which had grown in a state of constant war against its dependencies, sent summons to the far corners of the Supremacy (the name they had given to their domains), calling for the ruling councils to gather at the Four Dials. There, they swore fealty to the Primarch, acknowledging her as ruler of all.

The peace that came afterwards allowed the civilizations of Antumbra to rise from the ashes, undoubtedly changed by the conflict. Diversity, brought by the assimilation of new cultures, brought revolutionary ideas—which culminated in an industrialization boom. Factories were erected, powering an industrial complex that operated with ruthless efficiency. On the one hand, it enabled massive technological leaps: In just over five hundred cycles, science went through a series of revolutions that would take thousands of years to develop on Earth. On the other hand, however, the industrial complex left hundreds of miles of service and supply tunnels unusable, tearing at the fabric of Nibiru to fuel the development of the Antumbran peoples.

Hundreds of cycles passed, and rumours circulated about a newly founded settlement in the locked-out vault of Nineveh. This vault had remained inaccessible since times immemorial, which made it so that the rumours were met with the Primarchy's disbelief. In the vault's interior, a nomadic people (which had escaped the conflict of the Age of Whispers) managed to settle in, carrying with them a piece of technology that would change everything: an AI known as EUROPA.

THE DEAD VAULTS OF ERRA

The ravaging of the Antumbran North led to the loss of almost all access to life support systems in the area. The North was shredded, reprocessed in the frantic search for more construction materials. Today, the whole region undergoes a slow but steady repair process (which is intermittently halted by lack of resources). The local populations have experienced toxic floods, oxygen leaks, structural collapse and a myriad of different inherited disasters. The Dead Vaults of Erra were hit particularly hard, left entirely in the dark and with no oxygen whatsoever. Today, they are widely known as a common destination for research groups, which take advantage of the area's state to study the station's inner systems.

EUROPA seemed to exert rule over the people of Nineveh. As soon as the Primarch's envoys approached the city, the AI established contact. In the meantime, secret gatherings bloomed in the immediacies of Nineveh; whispered pacts of defiance against the Primarchy. An army of EUROPA's surrogates marched alongside a rebel force—fighting the Assyrian military for control of the Dials and the subject vaults of the Supremacy. When the revolutionary forces reached the first dial, the Ashur Dependencies turned against the Ochre Palace, demanding the Primarch's surrender. The Supremacy was no more.

THE AGE OF DISCOVERY

With a pact struck, Ashur gave up its claim for dominance. In a few cycles the oppressed identities of many city-states in the Core Sectors experienced a rebirth, and the leaders of this new age set their course to new beginnings. Innovation sparked, fuelled by new discoveries in science and technology. Nineveh opened itself to the world, and with time the rest of humanity started producing their own automatons.

It was when humanity thought it had reached a dead end that they found a series of massive vertical shafts, hidden beneath the vaults of Antumbra. They went on for hundreds of miles, into places unknown, where the world itself stepped on the curious and the bold. This horrific curse was named *Kabādu*, the World's Punishment, and it spared no one. The cursed place was baptized as Penumbra—the Outer Reaches—and soon saw the arrival of courageous expeditionaries, who built roaring elevators known as Ascendants.

The colonization of Penumbra infused the Arku with great determination; strange findings, unknown flora and fauna and the possibilities for new beginnings saw the city-states tangled in an arms race to spread out into untamed lands. Life there was not easy; high pressure and the vaults' poor conditions caused the settlers a lot of suffering. In those forsaken depths, humanity stopped living in order to survive.

Cycles passed, and the frontiers of Penumbra expanded, as well as the cultural gap between the Arku and the *Enēšu*—the inhabitants of Penumbra. Radically different worldviews sparked countercultures, as the colonies—largely controlled by Antumbra—felt increasingly dissociated from the values of their motherlands. As the settlements of Penumbra come together, and with the slowing down of the expeditionary efforts, the present day finds the Age of Discovery fading. Who knows what will take its place?



CHAPTER TWO



FROM THE CORE WE HAIL



WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Back when Ashur was just a small village amidst the dark of the vault, my ancestors built these spiral contraptions, which they used to listen to the sound of the ventilation system overhead. They'd tell stories about how strange entities hummed to soothe them into sleep. These were the times when the shadow of the world instilled fear in people's hearts, when they didn't know what was beyond the vault gates. Hundreds of cycles later, we conceived this collection of machines, drowning that hum amidst the cacophony of progress. Ultimately, it led us up to here: at arm's reach of the world's ceilings, atop a Karian arcology, wondering where those stories went. From up here, we can hear the hum, louder than ever, if we so desire it. And yet, no one cares to listen...

Antumbra lies before the world's beating heart; a bastion of light where the first civilizations rose to greatness. Its city-states, with the millions toiling under the shadow of majestic arcologies, with their history flowing through Nibiru's veins, are the greatest legacy of humanity—the perfect place to tell stories of community and cohabitation.

Spreading outwards from the Core's outer carapace, there's a sea of tunnels, service conduits and vaults that stretches on for miles, with a higher structural density than anywhere else in the station. The region has stable temperatures, and is thoroughly supplied with power, as well as enjoying optimal life support systems.

The Core Sectors are comprised of several regions, the most important of which is called Gate's Shadow. This is where most of the stories set in Antumbra will take place, where the ancient sovereign states rose to prominence: the home to over 20 million souls.

THE THEMES IN PLAY

The first theme, which sets the type of interactions and gameplay you'll experience in the Core Sectors, is that of **The Social Game**. The Antumbran city-states are strictly policed, well-oiled machines, making it so that characters will lean towards taking a diplomatic (or manipulative) approach to solve their problems. The hook for these adventures will generally come via a specific contact, a certain social event, a job contract, etc. It's a great environment to play in if you like social games, in which character interaction take a central spot in the narrative.

The second theme, which will help structure your stories and provide scope, is that of the **Ripple Effect**. In a society as compact and complex as that of Antumbra, nothing is a product of machiavellian conspiracies—because no one could ever get away scot-free. The larger the conflict player characters find themselves wrapped-up in, the more likely 'whos and whys' can be traced back to a wide number of factors. This opens up interesting avenues for story progression, as it becomes easy to craft a story based in the slow uncovering of the trials and tribulations of the Antumbran rulers and the ruled, investigating simple incidents and events—which might be seemingly unrelated at first—to end up with a big reveal of extraordinary proportions. In the same way, when player characters want to exert change in their society, it's sometimes through smaller, coordinated acts that the path of revolution is paved.

The third theme is that of **The Advent of Scarcity**, which speaks of the overall tone and mood of your stories. Antumbran civilizations developed in a state of abundance, thanks to their never-faltering life support systems, their massive vaults, and the plentiful bounties found therein. With that said, several factors seem to indicate that this

state of abundance is in decline. As the councils of the Core Sectors theorize on their uncertain future, they turn to Penumbra—either as the solution, or as the source of all their problems. Aspiring leaders preach in the streets, speaking of the glories of yesteryear, while the younger generations flee to the depths of the world, following promises of awe and wonder. What will be your role in the cycles to come?

COMMUNITIES OF THE CORE SECTORS

The *Arku* (the term used for the natives of the Core Sectors) are, first and foremost, a collective of low-g born peoples. The artificial gravity in Gate's Shadow generates pressure about 30% lower than that of Earth, which has several physiological implications. These people are usually taller, have more delicate bones, and lower heart rates. Slower metabolisms result in a particular lifestyle: the Arku take their time, and have the means and wants to use that time with what's fulfilling. This is affected by cultural trends—and tradition is a big thing in Antumbran society. But how do they manage to do all of that?

The inhabitants of the Core Sectors are used to a life of overall comfort. Their vaults are fully functional, their life support and food supply are plentiful (their lower calorie intake most certainly helps!), and their necessities are covered. Their worldview stands in contrast to that of the Enēšu (the inhabitants of Penumbra). For the Arku, the station is their provider, rather than a treacherous entity with whom they coexist. The rapid advance of automation only helps foster this vision.

Even with that, the Core Sector's communities are not devoid of conflict. The advent of the Enēšu and the colliding worldviews have resulted in a wave of xenophobia of scary proportions. Furthermore, the rise of a new social class—the Silu, leaders of the credit-based enterprises—is pitting the people against the state, as seeds of inequality start to take root in Antumbra.

Is this their first time in an urban setting?

Your character's past might have seen them either passing through or even living in a city, but for those who didn't, the experience can be shocking.

What is the first thing your character thinks when they think of the city, and why?

People develop ideas based on their personality about the places they inhabit. What word comes to your character's mind? Some think "dirty". Others think "elegant". "Stressing", "charming", "hellish"—all of those are valid, and can shape your character's behaviour at the table, their agenda, and their outlook on life.

STORYTELLING LESSONS ANTUMBRAN CHRONICLES

If playing in the Core Sectors, determining which city they'd like to be based in is of the utmost importance. While games set in Penumbra are more about exploration and discovery, in Antumbra the real action happens in the metropolitan regions. Each of the major city-states of Nibiru is unique; you might as well treat them as characters themselves, thinking about their personality, their attitude towards their residents, and any other relevant traits. Check out page 28 to learn more about the cities of Antumbra.

Once you've done that, it's brainstorm time! Want to narrate a chronicle based on greed-fueled internal conflict? Pick Tarsus! Yearning for stories that tackle automation—and the inevitable problems it brings? Go for Nineveh! Hungry for narratives of corporate espionage and backstabbing? Move in to Charchemish! There's plenty to choose from, though if you are undecided we recommend to use the featured settlement of Ashur, on page 30—which is thoroughly fleshed out and comes with a wealth of different tale sparks!

What do they want the city to be like?

Never forget: the characters in your stories are exceptional. They will enact change in the world, and in those who surround them. Your first stories might be more subtle, but you'll eventually want to head towards a climax that (if well executed) will stem from the characters' ambitions.

LANDS OF ABUNDANCE

The lands of Gate's Shadow are pierced by hundreds of triangle-shaped hallways, running through the Five Dials and into the Pond—a massive water reservoir that supplies the entire region. A complex system of automated life support facilities hide beneath layers of steel plating, accessible through narrow service corridors. This system regulates the region's humidity, monitors oxygen levels and transforms Antumbra into a sort of fish-tank wherein humanity finds its needs satisfied.

Most of these hallways are flanked by large air conducts, service tunnels and powerlines, thoroughly blanketed by miles of, primarily, red fungi and blue fungi (which help filter the air and grant a particular scent to the regions they traverse), as well as a variety of small, wild animals that roam the less transited sections. Though the main hallway sections that lead into statal vaults have been swept clean, most of the Core Sectors still preserve the verdant landscapes of yesteryear.

STATAL CHECKPOINTS

Each city-state controls people flow through statal checkpoints, positioned along the main hallways of Antumbra in long intervals. Typically, one needs to be credited by a particular city-state in order to enter its territories. Penumbraic immigrants are generally required to go through one of these, though sometimes those who don't hold the necessary credits attempt to bypass these through dangerous service tunnels.

THE OUTBACK DOMAINS

The skeleton of Antumbra goes beyond hallways and vaults. During the early days of the Supremacy, hidden structures were discovered beyond the serpentine service tunnels. From massive power nodes and matter-processing facilities to air purification facilities and fuel reserves, these locales were never meant for human life—and yet, some collectives decided to settle in.

Whether fueled by necessity or curiosity, many of them thrived. Today, most of the domains are ruled by family enclaves, sole owners, or councils. They hold a tense relationship with the city-states, with the latter often raising claims to these territories under many a different pretext. Though some of these are based on convoluted readings of territory law, others highlight the dangers of settling structural facilities—putting at risk the life support of the Antumbran metropolis. With the discovery of Penumbra, many of these enclaves have cooperated with the exploration complex to apply the same methods they used to live in the innards of Nibiru to the cold reaches below.

TALE-SPARKS

- *Eris, the overseer of a local Domain, hires the PCs (since they'll know to be discreet) to locate the source of a short circuit, which puts in danger not just the domain but the entire power supply of the city-state of Tarsus. What will the characters find?*
- *The PCs overhear a conversation between a group of Enēšū and a checkpoint operative. The operative seems to be trying to assist them in sneaking past, yet the PCs had heard before that the suggested route was heavily patrolled. What will they do?*

LIFE IN A (STEEL) NUTSHELL

Once an indomitable expanse of empty hallways, the Core Sectors harbour a collection of monstrous city-states—with arcologies like fingers that grasp the world's ceilings and tunnels that bleed life into colossal Class A vaults. From the ochre sprawl of Ashur to the pristine, pearly geometries of Nineveh. From the tranquil, static-riddled fields of Karik's Crescent to the roaring engines of Tarsus' Ascendants. Each state has a unique identity that's jealously guarded behind 10 metres of titanium armor; a shell safeguarding (as well as shaping) the lives within.

The cities of Antumbra tend to breed a very special kind of citizen. The state incentivizes sticking to the rules. "As long as you grow in the direction you are told, you won't lack food, shelter and entertainment". The Networks (akin to the Internet of our world) are not connected on a global scale, each being unique to each vault—thus furthering isolation. State-sponsored narratives of identity and loyalty do the rest—and so, the modern Arku is born.

LORE BITES MAQLUTU

In the Age of Strife, as the Supremacy sought to sweep the board clean of their opposition, one young city stood as a meeting point for the adversaries of the Primarch. Uruk was, by that time, a known hub for artists and creatives—a shimmering vault flanked by an ever-growing oasis of buzzing blue fungi. Ashur had much to envy from the peoples of Uruk—and so it was decided that the settlement would be made an example of.

Five kilometers from the entrance to the vault, the Assyrian forces established a blockade and built an ominous frame, which supported a strange, bullet-shaped contraption nicknamed Maqlūtu. With the opposition as a witness, they fired the massive bullet along the tunnel, which ravaged everything in its path before blasting through the gates of Uruk, and turning the vault into a city-sized furnace.

The casualties within the vault might have been in the tens of thousands, but the most horrifying consequences were prompted by the horrendously loud sound of the bullet. The peoples in the surrounding dependencies of Uruk, as well as the Assyrian forces stationed in the blockade, experienced horrifying injuries due to it, with most survivors left permanently deaf. Understandably, this terrifying creation would never be used again.

THE ONES BELOW

Abundance does not entail equality. Even the richest city-states have their downtrodden: people whom the system, made to foster loyalty, has not treated kindly. Antumbran law is made to mold citizens to an ideal, and those that cannot provide what the system needs are shunned. This rejection is none so harsh as that which the poor of Earth's societies face—but it's still noticeable.

The Enēšu face a similar fate, as diametrically different worldviews, coupled with the reclusive nature of the Arku (and the different physiologies of both groups) certainly don't help fending off anger and xenophobia.

TALE-SPARKS

- *Her's was the presence you've felt during the last meetings and that you couldn't get out of your head. She says she knows you from a past life. That she is in danger, owing credit to a gang. She knows you are a Vagabond. Will you lend a helping hand?*
- *A group of Enēšu were taken to an illegal factory, yet one of them escaped and reached out to you. All others have ignored his plea—will you assist him in getting revenge against those who employed him against his will?*

THE ONES ABOVE

Those who rule over Antumbra tend to resemble a distorted reflection of their people. On the one hand, their public image evokes the most hailed aspects of the ideal citizen. On the other, almost everyone knows that to reach those heights one needs to consider sinking to new lows—to break the mold in ways that most people would deem immoral. The ones above—whether for legitimate or illegitimate reason—do know their societies in a profound way, and are almost always the grand architects behind many of their triumphs and defeats.

TALE-SPARKS

- *She has ruled this side of the Redfields district since the beginning, hiding her dealings under a bureaucratic mountain. Those she favors find it easy to do business; the rest, don't. Taking her down will mean breaking her rules, or defeating her at her own game.*
- *He runs the best security agency this side of the Chaldean District—and at the same time funds wrongdoers—creating his own demand for profit. One lapse, after a few drinks, a subordinate talks too much. Now you know. What are you going to do?*

A DAY IN THE LIFE...

Ninsunu's routine starts early, when the first lights make their appearance—their reflection on the neighbour's tin-strapped rooftop briefly blinding her. She gets up, unplugs the cord that feeds into Patches' haven, and approaches it. While patting the Sparkling's head, she grabs a mug and slots a fungi-rack into the teapot, choosing a red-brown blend this time around. The aroma of the infusion quickly fills the room, and right on the beep she grabs the mug and sips, heading towards the windows.

With a soft clap the blinds are set aside, revealing the forest of steel below. 120 metres above Scabbard Square, the arcology's regiment of window-cleaning drones dance in circles. She turns her back on the view and goes to the dressing room. The state network informs her that she'll be doing farm work today, and so she picks the green, aislant outfit along with basic tools. Stepping into the light at the end of the room, she opens a drawer and looks at the most important piece of the set; her MAT. She picks a checkered, base-cream one from her collection (she doesn't get to use this one that often) and rolls it over her forearm, booting it up. The news broadcast starts up automatically, and with her prep done she takes her keycard and leaves the building.

On the way to the elevator, she listens to the refresher on blue fungi harvest (farming was one of her favourite disciplines during school, and the last time she did it was about three cycles ago). Once she arrives at the site, the Ummānu runs that same refresher to her and her task group, and gives them tools. The next five hours, she works at the plantation and catches up with some of her work colleagues, asking about their rotation. One of them got to work with the Royal Archiver!

After the job is done, she heads to the supply center and checks the statal stock. Bless the Shepherd! Ashur is a farming powerhouse, and so there's plenty of choice when it comes to picking your food. She chooses the Sparksoup with blue fungi, and heads over to the Neck via the nearest elevators. There, she checks the available attractions, and decides to check in to a glass sculpting class and to hit the club afterwards. She meets her friends at a joint near the lower levels of the Neck, and dances through the night. The MAT lets her know when's the best time to head back home, and when the lapse turns, she takes the elevator up and back to the arcology. Her food must have gotten cold by now!



THE PLAYERS

The current political climate of Antumbra is that of change. The marked trends that ruled the world over the last two hundred cycles are starting to wane. In times of insecurity, people choose to lay back on their traditions, finding refuge in the nostalgia of past glories—with all that comes with them.

Here we present the current events that are most likely to spark conflict in Antumbra (and thus, elsewhere) and that we think might be a great driving force for stories.

DUSK OF CURIOSITY

The known world's expansion has now reached the edges of Penumbra. The settling of the Flooded Countries is now seeing people living in places that would have been considered unlivable a hundred cycles ago. Exploration and colonization is still one of the most profitable ventures in Nibiru, but it is also more expensive and out of reach than ever before.

The civil unrest along the Torus Corridor doesn't help this. After several generations of being raised away from the warmth of the Core, the Eněšu have grown into a very distinct people from those that came first. The effects of higher pressure have quickly changed their physiognomy—and the hardships they constantly face have forced to adapt a radically different worldview than that which is cultivated in Antumbra. With every passing cycle, the Arku find themselves more and more at odds with the local councils within each of the Penumbraic settlements: all made worse due to the growing lack of resources.

INFORMATION POCKETS

The Networks of Nibiru are nothing like our Internet. Instead of being a global information highway, they are confined to the walls of each city-state, under their own protocols and rules. Now, thirty cycles after the creation of the first Network, several organisations fight for the right to open the flow of information to the whole of Antumbra.

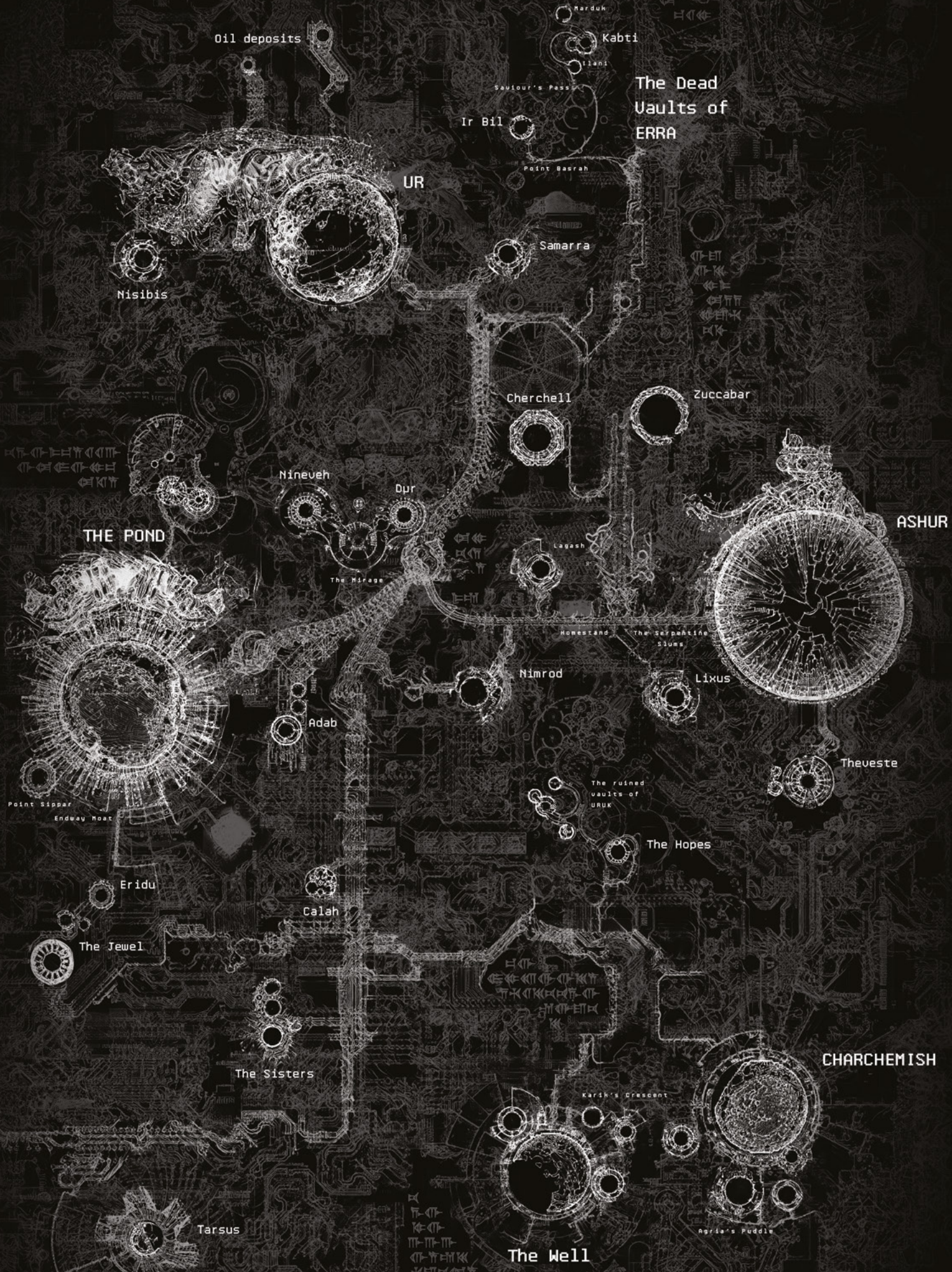
The same cultural barriers that isolate people from any one city-state block the way for those who aim to build a more open society. As the ruling bodies tighten their grip on what's shared, what's promoted and what's denounced, the first underground servers start to pop up, with illicit networks that serve to promote the boundless sharing of ideas. Vagabonds above all rely on these to find each other and protect each other—and so it is that the creation, use and safekeeping of these networks becomes paramount to their survival.

HUMAN DISPLACEMENT

Even if the Networks continue to foster isolation, people are more aware of the world beyond than ever before. When crisis strikes Nibiru, they do not hesitate to search for a new home. This is specially true to the Eněšu, who grow up hearing about the glory of Antumbra, and who increasingly suffer the ravages of overwork and poor health conditions. This, paired with the rising costs for colonization efforts, has seen the expeditionary complexes offering citizenship acquisition credits (or CACs)—cutting down costs and compensating workers with the promise of entry into the Core Sectors' societies. The result? An ever growing currency system, that fuels discontent, exploitation, displacement, and conflict.

Towards The Assyrian Waste

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NINEVEH

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS Δ) - THREE DEPENDENCIES
 POPULATION: APPROX. 500,000
 GOVERNMENT: AUTOMATED MONARCHY
 TOP INDUSTRIES: SPECIALIZED MACHINERY, LUXURY ITEMS
 OFFICAL RELIGION: NONE

The strange city of Nineveh, also known as the City of Lights, is unique in many aspects. Ruled by a complex AI called EUROPA, which controls the city's administrative bodies, Nineveh is an isolationist society that heavily regulates their citizens' lives in order to maximize equality and safety. Although its tech production is unrivalled, Nineveh has placed strong protocols against the replication of its technologies. Nineveh's citizens see themselves as dedicated, prioritizing study and artistic pursuit.



CHARCHEMISH

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS Δ)
 POPULATION: APPROX. 1,000,000
 GOVERNMENT: SILU COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FINANCIAL, EXPEDITIONARY TECH
 OFFICAL RELIGION: NONE

Charchemish went from a scavenger outpost to a powerful Assyrian satrapy, to then be returned to its original peoples in order for the Primarchy to pay for post-war reparations. Its council operates under a set of rules—the Archaean Principles—that ensure that the Silu who buys a place in the council is required to give back a considerable part of their earnings to the city. Charchemish has thrived thanks to the Umbraic colonization, though its meritocratic model has brought much distress to its people.



TARSUS

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS Δ)
 POPULATION: APPROX. 800,000
 GOVERNMENT: CORPORATIVE COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: HEAVY MACHINERY, AI, FINANCIAL
 OFFICAL RELIGION: PILGRIMS OF THE CORE

The birthplace of the first Ascendant stands at the vanguard of colonization industries. Founded after the discovery of the Penumbraic tunnels, Tarsus and its Penumbraic sibling of Sienna were once seen as the umbilical cord feeding the newborn villages of the Outer Reaches. Today, Tarsus looks to compete with other Antumbran city-states by transforming itself into an industrial powerhouse, with the objective of seeing most of its people living in Penumbra in the near future.



ASHUR

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS Δ) - FIVE DEPENDENCIES
 POPULATION: APPROX. 4,000,000
 GOVERNMENT: ASSYRIAN PRIMARCHY
 TOP INDUSTRIES: MILITARY, FOOD, COMMON GOODS
 OFFICAL RELIGION: CULT OF THE SHEPHERD

The self-proclaimed cradle of humanity exists today at a crossroads between the weight of its legacy and the necessity of keeping up with the current age. Now that the war reparations have been paid, the Primarchy seeks to cement Ashur's power in their food production, while at the same time fighting off the wave of nationalism that threatens the city-state's inner balance. The peoples of Ashur might be divided politically, but they unite in their pride, and their faith in the figure of the Shepherd.



UR

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS Δ) - ONE DEPENDENCY
 POPULATION: APPROX. 600,000
 GOVERNMENT: TRADITIONAL COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: LUXURY ITEMS, TOURISM
 OFFICAL RELIGION: CULTS OF SILENCE

Ur has preserved most of its traditions intact across the ages of Nibiru. Its beauty and the unique craftsmanship of its people have attracted many a curious philanthropist, yearning to carve themselves a piece of the vault to call their own. Part of the population expresses great discontent in this, pushing the ruling council to stop treating their home as a luxury retreat. For better or worse, the resources poured into Ur have enabled it to stand the test of time as a true relic of the past.



NIMROD

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS Δ) - FOUR DEPENDENCIES
 POPULATION: APPROX. 300,000
 GOVERNMENT: CORPORATIVE COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FINANCIAL
 OFFICAL RELIGION: PILGRIMS OF THE CORE

Nimrod's Wager saw its people moving to the dependencies to make the main vault the largest credit market in Antumbra. The place has become more a gigantic trade house than a city; a bloated maze, full to the brim with all kinds of goods. Nimrod's culture values self-sacrifice, but even with its best aspects, the Wager has deeply damaged life quality. To make matters worse, their excessive power usage has resulted in a widespread, intermittent flicker that is making a lot of people nervous.



KARIK'S CRESCENT

TYPE: V. CONGLOMERATE (CLASS Δ) - TWO DEPENDENCIES
 POPULATION: APPROX. 800,000
 GOVERNMENT: TRADITIONAL COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FOOD
 OFFICAL RELIGION: NONE

When Archaean merchants found the known world's most fertile land in Karik's Crescent, they quickly resigned to their citizenship to settle down in the newly discovered zone. After the two-hundred-cycle long Wars of Fertility—which saw the settlers fighting against Archaean power—the Karian peoples shaped up to be a strong (if scarred) collective, becoming the most important food producer in Nibiru. Today, they stand to protect their riches while competing for the food supply trade against Ashur.



THE SISTERS

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS Δ) - TWO DEPENDENCIES
 POPULATION: APPROX. 1,500,000
 GOVERNMENT: SORORAL MONARCHY
 TOP INDUSTRIES: MILITARY, SPECIALIZED MACHINERY
 OFFICAL RELIGION: NONE

The warring princes and their legend originated in the immediacies of this triad of vaults, now widely known as the Sisters. The youngest city-state to rise under Gate's Shadow, its people came from a handful of exiled Assyrian families, united under one banner. Since then, they have fostered a culture based on devotion to their leaders' family values and martial prowess. The Sisters hold the only professional army in the world, and are seen as an interventionist state; which keeps other states very wary.



III ASHUR

The first recording of the Arku of Assyria saw them prostrate in reverence to their object of worship. Nothing less but a wandering idol by the name of “Shepherd”. It seems this entity led them for about half a cycle across the Way of Tears and into the vault of Ashur, where they found water and food aplenty. For ten cycles the Shepherd stayed, and then—from one lapse to the other—it left the Assyrians and their newborn culture behind. The rest is known history. The people never forgot their messiah, and still today they dwell, restless, on the reasons for its departure.

The myth of Ashur and its people is one of the oldest, best known stories of Antumbra. In its past, the Assyrian Supremacy reigned over most of the Core Sectors. Today, however, their empire is a distant memory, and its people stand divided on the matter of their legacy. A civilization that struggles with lingering demons, while trying to find a place in an uncertain future. Not unlike the protagonists of our stories...

This section gives you an overview of the society of Ashur, and opens up the city’s gates so that you may use it as a playground for storytelling.

THE SEVERED KINGDOM

After the Pact of the Four Dials, Ashur plunged into disarray. The Primarchy lost control of all of their outer territories, and saw four of its five dependencies uprising for autonomy. The struggle between them and the city-state would last for another hundred cycles, before settling in the Pact of Communion, which granted these four dependencies the right to pass their own laws.

During these times, the Primarchy’s authority was put to

the test. The boiling pot that was the Assyrian population smoked out notions of patriotism, of manifest destiny, and all other imperialist constructs, leaving at the bottom the cruelest traditions of Ashur for the Skyles World to see. The Red Rite; a celebration of mass hysteria that marked the ascension of every new Primarch, was stripped of its romanticized visage, and hither and thither the statues and idols of the past were brought down without mercy.

Generals and warlords, both home and abroad, lost their privileged status: before, they were branded as heroes, and respected at the same level than the royal council members. Some of them, particularly those that came from fringe settlements, were charged with crimes of treason. The military class, embodiment of ferociousness, was put to shame—and the youth pushed for a revolution in politics that would set out to mend the wounds of their nation’s barbaric past.

When it came to religion, the clash of two major ideologies split the people in two. On the one hand, there were the **Revolutionaries**. They saw the interpretations of early recordings as misrepresented and misused. The fact that the People’s Shepherd had chosen them was a gift of fate, a sacred grant that they were obliged to honor. It did not give them the right to rule over others.

The latter idea was championed by the **Supremacists**; the traditional arm of the Assyrian state religion. They saw the fall of the Supremacy as a test put in place by their messiah to prove their worth. It meant that if they were to preserve their traditions, the Shepherd would return to guide them once more to victory.



With the passing of the cycles, the Revolutionaries fought for their voices to be heard, and during the Cycle of Banishment, they toppled the head of the creed. It was then that the Primarchy had to accept the new doctrine, which conveyed a message of unity; that **the Assyrian people had been trusted, by the Shepherd, to captain their own fates**, and that the honor of such a gesture signified the true blessing of being chosen.

THE WAYS OF ASHUR

The Assyrian religion, unlike that of the Pilgrims (the most widespread creed in Antumbra) focuses on the original tale of the People's Shepherd, and establishes a lineage of Primarchs that are said to descend from the person whom the Shepherd entrusted with its teachings. This creed is held only in Ashur and its dependencies, as well as in the Penumbraic diaspora.

This religious edict didn't solve all of the problems that plagued Ashur, but it did cement the ideological grounds upon which a new type of leadership would rise. In a society as rigidly traditionalist as this one, there was bound to be some concessions. First, the office of the Primarchy would continue, and so would the Red Rite (though it'd be duly regulated). Second, the Supremacists would be allowed seats in the council, as safekeepers of Ashur's oldest traditions.

ASSYRIA, TODAY

The Age of Discovery opened the way for the Primarchy to expand its borders. This initiative, however, wasn't poised by the ruler of Ashur. It was prompted by a newly born collection of private enterprises, which sprang at the dawn of the current age, pushing to see their homeland reaping the bounties of Penumbra.

Among these organisations, three stood over the rest. **The Waywatchers' Consortium**, a group of veterans from the wars of old, earned credit for their might and reputation—defending the young colonies from threats unknown. **Akkad Customs**, a joint logistic effort between Ashur and Charchemish, specializes in supply runs to Umbra. Finally, the **Redfields Outreach Foundation**—a collective of farmers and technicians that dreamt with making a paradise out of the Outer Reaches—attempts to refuel the imperialistic ambitions of old Ashur by creating a monopoly on Penumbraic food production.

For the current Primarch, the struggle of the future will be have food supply at its core. The current production is barely capable of coping with spiking demands, and the

Penumbraic infrastructure could be hundreds of cycles away from feeding the Arku. They have commissioned the construction of massive industrial arcologies, each built to house a hundred floors of farmland, to make Ashur “the world's granary”.

Although most of the people see this as a wise move, a growing number of Assyrian Arku feel like the over-reliance on primary industries is another sign of Ashur stagnation. Technology, which moves faster than ever before, has seen most city-states leaving Ashur behind. Slowly but surely, as borders open up, the Assyrian youth exposes the Primarchy and its monarchic rule for what it is—an inhumane regime, from which the most regressive traditions of Ashur stem.

THE SOCIAL SCHEME

From the moment the Arku are born, they are protected by the law of their city-state and have the right to all essentials. These are: Food, water, health, education, access to the arts, the right to leave, proper living quarters, and the Right of Recess—which designates particular periods of a person's life when they'll be under no obligation to provide labor to the city-state.

During the first fifteen cycles of life, a child's guardians tend to live under Right of Obligation, with their required labor cut in half in order to properly accompany their child during their first cycles. The following 55 cycles are divided between primary education (where children learn about communal life, their city's history, science and language), and labor education, where they learn about the roles of adults in society, and start delineating their roles and identities. Bar the office of the Primarch and their family, Ashur goes by a pretty standard Antumbran social structure. In it, the grand majority of the adult population (seventy cycles old and up) are separated in four groups...

TALE-SPARKS

- *Under a webfarm's tunnels, the Aliltu toil for many hours a lapse. Actually, more than they are supposed to. An Ummānu is taking advantage of the farm's systems to have them work extra time, delaying the doors' automated system, and quickly archiving any complaints they receive. One fearful worker asks for the PCs help to uncover the fraudster. What will they do?*
- *A member of the Assyrian Ruling Council seems to be funneling resources to Penumbra, in an attempt to help their family—stationed close to the settlement of Suruptu. It is known for this kind of act to be considered high treason. The PCs know of this due to mere chance—what will they do with this information?*



Below the office of the Primarch are the bodies of the **Assyrian Ruling Council**, the **Tallaktu**. Since the Age of Whispers, it has undergone many changes, and today it's formed by chosen representatives—bringing to discussion the issues relevant to Assyria. The Tallaktu has sixty representatives, or **Našparu**: Thirty envoys of the Promised Vault of Assyria and its Detachments, fifteen Honorable Našparu of the Dependencies, one Našparu of the Diaspora, five Royal Advisors and nine Našparu of the Umbras.



New to the social order of Ashur and many other Antumbran city-states, the **Silu** form what you could call a “corporatocracy”. Originated from the imbalance brought by the economy of statal credit, they enriched themselves beyond regulatory boundaries by outplaying the city-states, the Domains and the colonies. Today, they stand in a constant state of litigation with the Antumbran potencies, launching grand expeditions to the lands beyond 1.8 with the hope of finding an eden they can call their own.



The **Ummânu** are specialists. Since time immemorial, the Antumbran wise councils reckoned the need for dedicated artisans and savants. Whether devoted to the fine arts, or to science and education, they channel their passion to push the boundaries of culture and knowledge. They work six hours per lapse, and have all their basic needs covered by the city-state's redistribution scheme. Non-essentials that are functional to the Ummânu's craft tend to be provided by the city-state, though anything else requires the citizen to work extra hours.



The **Aliltu** are the bedrock of Antumbran societies. By law, they work a total of five hours per lapse, in a wide variety of sectors (be it construction, agriculture, administration, etc.) as required by the ruling council. They have all their basic needs covered by the state, and they can procure non-essentials to varying degrees, depending on their their willingness to work an extra hour per lapse and to expand to a wider range of sectors.

1

THE GATEWAY DISTRICT

Entryway into the Assyrian vault, this district is a massive marketplace—the designated zone wherein statal credits can be exchanged, and where most foreign traders are set up.

2

THE COCOON

The largest detachment of the Assyrian vault contains a self-governed village at the center of a massive webworm breeding facility, which feeds the entire Assyrian textile industry.

3

THE NECK

During the Age of Whispers, the floorplaques of Ashur were lifted to make way for a series of underground precincts, now dotted with a myriad workshops and entertainment venues wherein Assyrians spend a lot of their free time.



2

4

3

6

PALACE DISTRICT

The Palace District comprises the Ochre Palace, the Primarchs Square and the many offices of the Tallaktu. Atop a strange elevation sits the house of the Primarch, the Ochre Palace, wherein the Primarch's family, the Assyrian Archiver and a small personal army take residence.

7

THE FOUNDRY

For most of its history, Ashur trusted its manufacture industries to its dependencies. Still, the main vault always had a small cluster of facilities in the Foundry. The district grew considerably during the cycles before the Pact of Communicon, to shield Ashur from the economic cosequences of the dependencies' fight for autonomy.

4

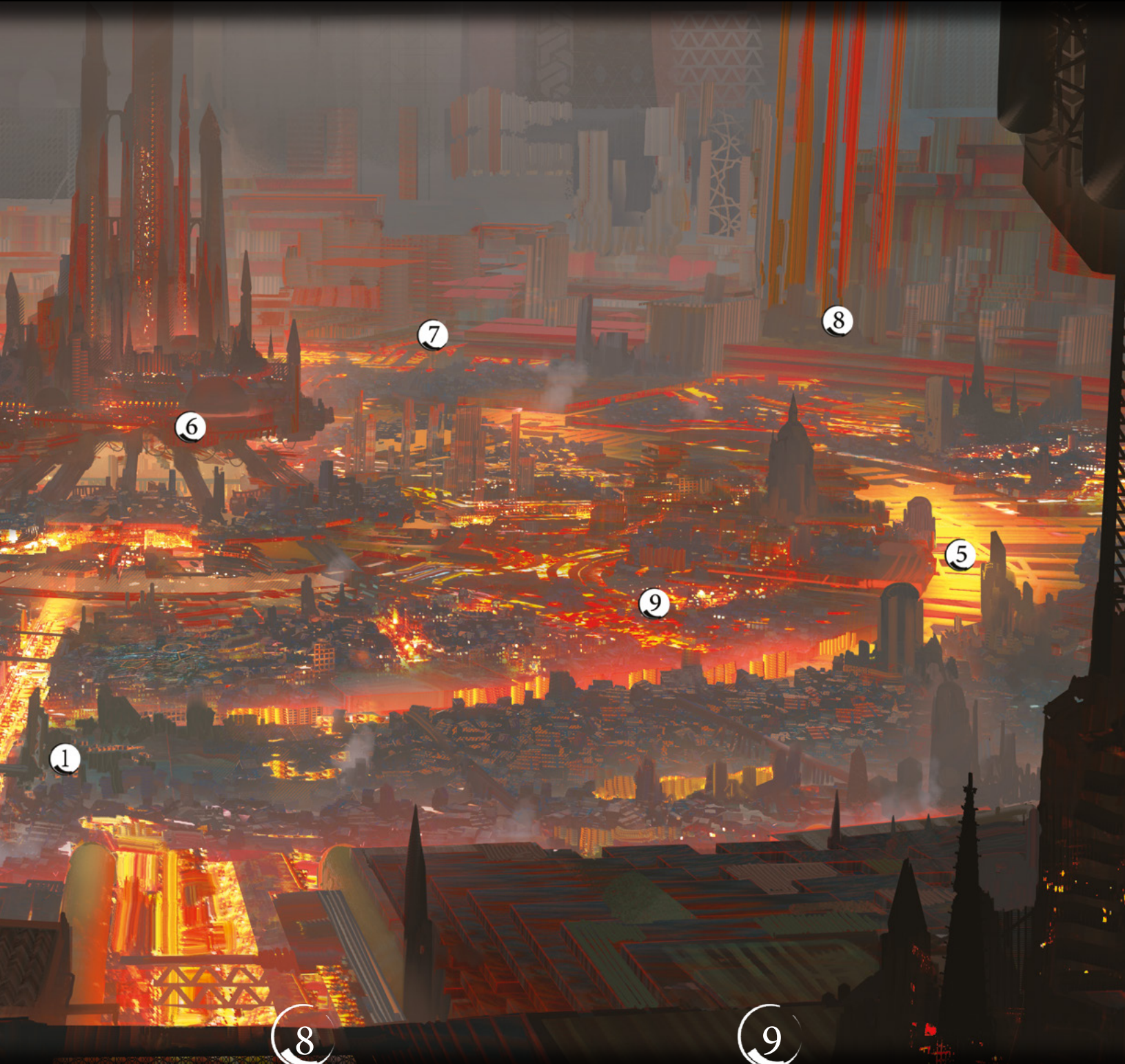
REDFIELDS

This district is run by the Redfields conglomerate; an ambitious project spearheaded by a group of Assyrian Silu. The zone will soon feature five towering arcologies, which will house colossal amounts of farmland.

5

THE LITTLE SISTERS

This district, located in one of the underground compartments below the Neck, is made up of several compartments wherein immigrants from the Sisters live. It's widely known as a problematic zone, primarily thanks to the apathy and neglect of the Assyrian ruling council.



1

6

7

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8

LEAPERS' POINT

Surrounding the landing pad of the Ascendant V, Leapers' Point is the Assyrian gateway into the lands of Penumbra. Most offices dealing with Assyrian endeavours in the Outer Reaches and beyond are found in this district, as well as a small community of Enesu.

9

THE OLD CITY

The mythic site of the ancient settlement of Ashur has been preserved for thousands of cycles in what is known as the Old City. Most of the Našparu live in this district, wherein you can also find a varied assortment of temples for the many creeds of Ashur.

THE GATEWAY DISTRICT

Serving as entrance to the city, the Gateway District bears little to no resemblance to its past self. Today, it is one of the main sources of inter-statal credit. Travelers gather around the central plaza to munch on local delicacies and to splash credits on the riveting designs of the School of Ashur. The Ochre Way—a massive avenue that dips down into the lower levels of the city—has its origin here. Along the labyrinthine corridors that run parallel to Ochre Way, all manner of shady deals are struck, while the steel visage of the Lamassu arcologies towers over the millions below.

WHY GO THERE

Information found across the Assyrian Network is as biased as it gets. If you want *to know what's happening outside*, you go to the Gateway District. Here, visitors might share a story or two, even trade in foreign wares.

A myriad different mannerisms and customs give color to the hustle and bustle of the area. Whereas in other parts of Ashur outsiders would stick like a sore thumb, the District offers a chance *to lose yourself in the crowds*.

Big chunks of the district have been bought by the Silu, which means unregulated work, which means opportunities for the undocumented. Either *to find a transient home* or *to land an easy job*, the area can be a good place to start if you intend to stay in the city for a long time and you find yourself creditless.

WHO TO MEET

Atour is a passionate Assyrian historian, an Ummānu that has been stationed in the plaza to introduce people to Ashur and its legendary past. He'll generally be shouting enthusiastically at bypassers, and trying to call attention to the PCs. This gives you an interesting way of having them interact with someone, while giving some exposition about the city and its background.

Right below the piercing silhouette of a black glass convention center, there's a crowded establishment the locals refer to as *Esmar*. The owner, *Aramina*, tends to take an interest in new faces, and will generally share some rumors if the PCs help spread the word about *Esmar*. *Aramina* can point the PCs in the right direction, and is knowledgeable of the Vagabond condition. You can use them to drive the characters into a new adventure, and to let them know to protect their identities.

Yonan is a recruiter for one of the local Silu, taking volunteers for a tour of *Penumbra*. He is generally looking for surveyors and logistic support workers for the settlement of *Suruptu*, and is an ideal contact to talk to if the PCs want to go to the Outer Reaches.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The PCs get lost in the corridors of the inner district, and so they end up in a warehouse, teeming with people from Penumbra. Confounded with them, they are taken to a sweatshop, revealing an illegal manufacture complex. How big is this operation, and what will the PCs do?*
- *A BrightTowner has an auction house that they use to recover objects from their Habitat. It seems like a famous collection might show up to town, containing several relics of BrightTown, and thus they ask the PCs for help to win the auctioned items at all costs.*

REDFIELDS

Once a problematic area destined to manufacture, the Redfields district became the talk of the region thanks to the decree of the Primarch, establishing the Redfields Conglomerate as the legitimate authorities over the district. Since then, an ambitious project led by the ruling council of Silu seeks to transform the district into the food producing powerhouse of *Antumbra*. A series of massive arcologies, dedicated to expanding Ashur's farmland, climb higher with the close of each lapse. One wonders, once they are finished, what will the Redfields Conglomerate do?

WHY GO THERE

The Conglomerate take their responsibility as arbiters and administrators very seriously. One should take care of disturbing the peace here, yet for those who have a friend in the inside, laws seem to bend favorably. Jurisdiction issues on top of messy, noisy streets make it the perfect place *to make a quick escape*.

The roar of building machinery and the rhythm of the pneumatic hammer against steel pair up to assault the senses, as copper dust lifts up from the vents below ground. It might not be the best place to live near to, but the massive construction sites offer plentiful opportunities *to get an easy job*.

The Redfields' leadership lives and observes the works from a small enclave in the north of the District. The zone is peppered by many distinguished establishments, the perfect places *to network with the Silu*.

WHO TO MEET

Among the many powerful people in the District, an Ummānu by the name of *Deeana* stands out. Holding the



construction contracts of the three largest arcologies in the district might be a minor thing compared to the fact that she is a Dreadlander. Of course, no one outside of her and her family knows of this, but the fact that a Vagabond occupies a position like that might be pivotal for the PCs plans.

At the same time, the Redfields enclave is one of the sites wherein Enki's Covenant is based. The Covenant has bets placed on the success of the Assyrian Dream, and some of the faces of the Covenant's leadership in Ashur want to be there when the credits start flowing in. One of them, **Shamiran**, is responsible for the coordination of the Covenant's information network in the Torus Corridor.

Jammal is the leader of a rebel cell of Enesu, fighting for the rights of workers brought from Penumbra to work in the Assyrian Dream. They are a Corpus Priest, as well as a Vagabond of the Machine, known for having tagged (together with a group of rogue AIs) the TIAMAT arcology with the sign of Free Penumbra.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The sudden collapse of one of the arcologies quickly triggers the District's response system, blocking the exits while the PCs are inside. With the zone under a lockdown and the Covenant marching along the city watch to question the locals and secure the District, the PCs have to trust their instincts to avoid Enki's grasp.*
- *The KISHAR arcology is almost finished, yet it's been reportedly infested with a colony of shocktails. The PCs take on the risky job, which would give them an "in" in the Redfields enclave. But how come the infestation happened? Is someone behind it?*
- *In spite of the public's opinion, an investors fair will soon be held in the enclave, with many a resourceful Silu taking part. This is the chance for the PCs to bring an idea to fruition, or to strike at the heart of what many believe is a corrupt, elitist system that has taken root.*

THE PALACE DISTRICT

There's probably thousands of recordings in the Assyrian Archive about the rise of the Palace District. Although most of them differ in their portrayal of the event, they all agree that it was a famed Whisperer who—during an audience with the council of Ashur—commanded a dozen large steel placques to elevate the Ochre Palace over the Assyrian plateau.

A circuit of gardens and arthouses preface the boulevards and plazas that lead into the council buildings, where the Tallaktu work the cogs and wheels of Assyrian society, all under the shadow of the Ochre Palace.

WHY GO THERE

The Palace District was once at the epicenter of Antumbran society. The Primarchy might have paid reparations, but they still retain a big body of works from all over the known world. If you want *to be inspired* by Nibiru's artistic history (and see for yourself why so many of these works are being rightfully claimed for by their original owners), this is the place to go.

This is where things get done. For better or worse, it is the Tallaktu who dictate how Ashur will employ its resources and, if anything, it is a place you should at least get acquainted with if you want *to make things change*.

Several times in history, Vagabonds arrived at the Palace District *to have an audience with the Primarch*. Their existence is a secret passed from one ruler to the next, and though the attitudes of previous rulers towards the amnesiac kin ranged from empathetic and compassionate to hateful and power-envious, the current Primarch is (mostly) apathetic to them.

WHO TO MEET

The watchful eyes of *Tyareh*, one of the Covenant's most dangerous Nexi, are always set on the Palace District. Though they are generally more worried about the doings of the ruling council of Ashur (as they try to secure government resources for the Covenant's endeavours), they are still trained to be alert to any signs of Vagabonds, and might pose a danger to the group.

Khamur and the signatories of the *Groundswell* (a proposal for the decolonization of Penumbra) are a small group of Tallaktu that vouch for the rights of self-determination of the dispossessed and the left behind. Although they might have heard rumors about Vagabonds, these haven't been confirmed—which is somethin the group might want to address.

Hosting as much information as all of Ashur's archives put together, the *Assyrian Archiver* is surely an important figure in a society that is known for dwelling in nostalgia quite often. Every Assyrian citizen has the right to speak with the Royal Archiver once per cycle, with most people asking questions about their lineage, their passions and the history of their district.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The group is contacted by a desperate Vagabond, who's trying to find out if they are being chased by Tyareh. They ask for help figuring this out and, after finding out that this is indeed true, they about what is to be done. What will be the consequences of the group's actions (or lack thereof)?*
- *The PCs overhear a conversation, wherein a group of individuals plan the assassination of a Groundswell signatory, during a tour of Penumbra, framed to make it look like the Enesu did it. How will they stop them? And if they do, who will take issue with it?*

THE FOUNDRY

Sealed away in the largest detachment of of Ashur, the foundry is a massive industrial district that saw its heyday during the times of the Supremacy. It's since been largely abandoned—turning the area into a derelict maze.

WHY GO THERE

To find home. The Assyrian council knows that there are people living among the ruins of the Foundry, but the conversation has stalled—mostly focusing on how to reclaim the area, rather than “how to push people out”. Small communities have formed in the carcasses of old machine factories, with the largest one (nicknamed *Sulūlu*) becoming increasingly notorious.

Some of the assembly lines are still littered with usable material, inviting opportunistic souls *to scavenge and repurpose* anything of use. Prized parts are said to be moving across town and into the Cocoon, and some people have even found automatons amidst the clutter.

There are several blocks in the southern wall of the detachment that are still operational, producing small parts that are then taken to the Assyrian dependencies (where most of Ashur's industrial complex exists). These manufacturers use the retrofitted tunnels under the detachment to move stuff out to the dependencies, which presents a way *to make an escape from the city*.

WHO TO MEET

Under fungi-carpeted ceilings, the flashing of strobe lights reveal a river of tangled cables like vipers viciously sticking their fangs into the main Assyrian power line. **Khyyo** is the snake charmer responsible for keeping the lights on at Sulūlu, and so far has gotten away with their hijacking job. They're always willing to share their knowledge of Nibiru's power systems.

Malki is one of the only adherents to the birther tradition that actually speaks their mind about it. Granted, they do go about this the smart way, hiding behind whispers and rumours to make sure the only the right people manage to find them. Malki is known for having helped birthers conceive according to their beliefs, and will always go out of their way to give guidance.

Belo's Surveyors are a small gang that is starting to take hold of part of the Foundry, scouring the place for valuables and preying on those who happen to hit the jackpot. Belo is connected with the black market, and is know to have helped many Enēšu make it to Sulūlu.

TALE-SPARKS

- *A strange flicker in the main vault of Ashur raises concerns among the Tallaktu, who order an inspection of the Foundry and the communities-living within. It seems like Enki's Covenant will work alongside the government for this. Can the group prevent this? And if they cannot, how will they keep their community safe?*
- *As they scour the junkyards along the darkest wall of the Foundry, the group wakes up a rogue Hauler AI, which starts to race across the narrow, rust-covered streets towards the ramshackle capacitor at the center of Sulūlu. How will the group avoid disaster?*
- *The livelihoods of the inhabitants of the Foundry are in peril after the Tallaktu decide to address the advent of scarcity in the Assyrian dependencies by quickly reclaiming the detachment and turning it into farmlands. Whatever the outcome, the consequences will be dire.*

LEAPERS' POINT

The gateway into Penumbra and the lands beyond has a tumultuous history; the Ascendant V was built more as a vanity project than to satisfy a real need, during a time in which the Assyrian people were in crisis. The communities that developed around Leapers' Point evolved from the guildhouses and workshops into a haven for innovation and creativity. It also serves as the center for the statal credit fund, which manages Assyrian interests in Penumbra and Umbra.



WHY GO THERE

The Assyrian community of Enēšu are mostly concentrated in Leapers Point, working at the crafthouses found in the periphery of the landing pad. If you want **to look for technical advice**, this is a good place to go, specially due to the good natured community found therein.

Along the perimeter that's laid out close to the Assyrian border, there's access to an open network which services the Enēšu. This might be a bit limited in terms of knowledge and resources, but it's not under the scrutiny that the main Assyrian network is, so if you want **to utilize a network service securely**, this is a great option.

Of course, you probably go to Leapers' Point **to travel to Penumbra**. The Ascendant V is equipped with an industrial clamp, meaning it can carry several tonnes of cargo along with up to twenty passengers. As with most ascendant trips, they start and end quite violently, and you tend to be sleepy or dizzy during the middle section (given the krajj quantities pilots pump into the passengers).

WHO TO MEET

Among the logistics personnel working at the landing pad, you might be lucky to find **Zaya**. She is said to know how to slip any package past customs—as long as you pay what she demands, and as long as it is not sent to an Arku.

Panna is a Vagabond from the Dreadlands who lives in the immediacies of the glassworks alley. She works in the credit fund, and thus she has access to information about those who use credit to utilize statal services. She uses this to track down Vagabonds and create a registry—which she hasn't decided on how to use yet.

A musician of the Penumbraic town of Suruptu, **Sharo** believes that it is with music that he will be able to reach out to Antumbran society to build a case against the colonization of the depths. His songs are aggressive calls for independence that showcase a great deal of personality, and are quickly part of the local landscape.

TALE-SPARKS

- *Sharo wishes to make himself known by playing at the largest venues in Ashur. Although doesn't have enough credit to access the city, he wishes to make a deal with you to distribute his record. It seems like his previous attempts have made him made several enemies. How will helping him? Who will stand in your way?*
- *The group sees some of the designs of the Enesu glass workshops in the city—meaning someone is stealing ideas from the community at Leapers' Point. Who's responsible for doing the "scout work", and whose artistic reputation is about to get stained?*

THE COCOON

As a gift to the Primarch, the legendary Rama brought ten webworm larva, which were taken to the recently settled detachment of Theveste. With time, it became breeding grounds for dozens of webworms, transforming Ashur into a leader of textile production. Today, the Cocoon has a complex network of breeding circuits, as well as textile factories and even a small, autonomous town at its center, housing its Ummānu community.



WHY GO THERE

Whilst the vault of Assyria is under the watchful eyes of the city guard, the Cocoon and its autonomous ruling council are an entirely different beast. The council has concealed ties with several cartels, which utilize the Cocoon as a black market entryway. If you want **to access the Assyrian underbelly**, this is the place to go.

The krajj cartels know how **to use alternate routes into Penumbra and the worlds below**. Though the price for passage might prove too high, it might be the only way out of the city if you find yourself in a sticky situation.

The Ummânu rule here, but soured ties with the city have drained their resources. Though this opens opportunities for the undocumented **to land a job**, most would go to Penumbra before working in an Assyrian web farm.

WHO TO MEET

Under the weight of a dozen levels of tangled up breeding tunnels, a warehouse block stores the surplus stock of Theveste's farms. **Tammuz** oversees the area, and is responsible for much of the smuggling happening in Theveste—hiding tech inside web cylinders, loaded into unidentified vehicles, destined to who-knows-where.

Weird tales are told at the labour houses of the Cocoon, one of them pertaining to **Hunain**, a caretaker of the upper circuits. Hunain is said to have solely contained the “fourth lapse crisis”, when seven worms escaped their circuits. The truth might be unknown, but his story is spreading fast, and will soon reach the city's upper levels.

The Weavers are a group dedicated to spreading Assyrian culture through fashion, weaving stunning mantles and organizing volunteer missions to give out clothing to displaced communities across Penumbra.

TALE-SPARKS

- *Noting that the PCs come from outside, the Weavers ask them for help with a particular distribution run. They are looking to take a load of mantles for one of the outback domains of the Assyrian immediacies, which has lost access to power and is in a dire situation.*
- *The PCs hear a member of Enki's Covenant talking to one of their contacts about Hunain's identity, saying they'll make a move on him soon. If the PCs don't do nothing about it, they'll see one of their own taken. How will they help him escape?*
- *In a crowded bar along the workshop belt of Adad, a gathering of smugglers take place. They have a plan to use their pooled resources to build a covert Ascendant within the entrails of Theveste's underground structure. How will the PCs use this information? How will they get involved with it?*

THE NECK

The early cycles of the Supremacy saw Ashur drowned in the reverb of howling machinery. Back then, the Primarch commanded the construction of the Neck—a roof that would divide the vault in several levels, optimizing space. In time, the Neck became home for the ever-growing underground communities of Ashur.

WHY GO THERE

There are plenty of options in the upper levels **to have some fun**, from Umbraic flower parks, L&Ms (light and music shows), rAIsles (where trained technicians play with rogue AIs) and food circuits (which provide thematic experiences through food tasting).



THE OLD CITY

The middle levels have a hundreds of workshops and stalls. Most of Ashur's autoctonous art comes from this place, and either *to learn the crafts of Ashur* or *to immerse yourself in the city's culture*, there's plenty to do here!

Carved out of the vault's base, the lower levels of the Neck are home to low-credit residents. Many a social movement saw its birth here, and its identity most certainly resonates with the struggle of the amnesiac kin. If you want *to learn of the people's struggles* and to fight for your cause, this is a good place to start.

WHO TO MEET

A Vagabond of the Machine who goes by the name of *Ninva* has an *rAIsle* show in which they sit inside of a glassbox to teach a Rogue AI to play the piano. Ninva seems to be an expert when it comes to AI behaviour, and they are always open to be consulted regarding automatons and AIs.

Ninlil is an expert of Nibiru's oldest religions, the Cults of Silence that stemmed from humanity's fascination with the Skyless World. They hold great knowledge about the myth of yesteryear, and of the communities that still partake in the rites and customs of their ancestors.

The *Northern Fury*, a famous brewery that stands close to the northern wall of the lower Neck, is managed by *Mona* and her family—a merry bunch that has a reputation of deep commitment and care for their community. If you are in trouble, and possess a kind soul, this is a good place to rest and find temporary solace.

TALE-SPARKS

- *In the lower levels, an automated garbage reprocessing facility services the workshops above. Lately, the AI has been acting strange, inserting weird patterns in the final products. Upon seeing one such pattern, the PCs gain a memory of Ashur's distant past. What does it mean, and why is this memory resurfacing now?*
- *In the wake of the Primarch's edict to increase work load for the Aliltu, a bill to reduce resource allocation for establishments across the lower Neck is passed discretely. Mona knows that the Tallaktu see these places as staging grounds for popular revolts, and wants to raise awareness of the council's sneaky play. How will the PCs act?*
- *Rumors are spreading about a hidden workshop in the Neck, wherein Birther AIs (page 178) are built. Asia, Yona and Babu wish to conceive, and so they ask the PCs to find this secret workshop and lead them to it.*

The Old City was the place where the first Assyrian nomads settled, guided by the mysterious AI known as the Shepherd. Upon their arrival, a crescent-shaped lake had formed, cradling their newborn village as it grew to connect (and eventually absorb) other smaller settlements found across the vault.

Today, the Old City is a monument to nostalgia. Many Našparu live in this part of the city, close to the original ruins of the first settlement, sharing their lapses with the many visitors who come to admire the architecture of ancient Ashur. The district is crowned by a series of churches and temples, that accommodate many different faiths—with the Church of Rust, dedicated to the Shepherd, standing taller than all the rest.

WHY GO THERE

The religious bodies of Nibiru have a home in the Old City, and most are welcoming irregardless of background (though this may not be the case for the autoctonous cult of of the Shephard). If you want *to find a safe haven*, the many temples of the Cults of Silence and the Pilgrims of the Core generally offer a place in exchange for upkeep duties (you might also need to assist the temple personnel with their rites).

Close to the Old City you can find the Assyrian Records building. This is one of the largest collection of recordings, data and script in Antumbra, and an ideal place *to search for information*. Assyrian citizenship is needed to enter, though the wealth of data found inside might be well worth the risk of infiltrating.

The ruins of the first settlement are a wondrous place to visit. Below the surface, a series of service tunnels completely covered by old wall paintings and teeming with scholars and students reveal the life of the first Assyrian settlers. Many people travel here *to find a place of connection with Nibiru*.

WHO TO MEET

Near the entryway to the archeological site, a cordoned-off hole leads into a series of ventilation shafts and energy management installations. These tunnels are populated by a group of pariahs, who see in *Hano* a worthy leader. She found in this place a haven for Enēšu refugees, who constantly struggle to have their voices heard. Hano won't be quick to trust the Vagabonds, only granting information and entrance in exchange for favors, yet she will eventually see them as just another marginalized group in need for help.

Over the ramp that leads into the temple district of the Old City, **Khannah** stands on a pedestal—preaching to bypassers and telling stories of the ancient past of Ashur. She does so with great passion, garnering fame as one of the most eloquent of Assyrian historians. She is likely to catch the characters' attention, fleshing out some of the city's background in the process.

Sardanapal's workshop was erected at a respectable distance from the rest of the temple district, mostly due to the horrible noise coming from the inside. Here, the priests of the Corpus tradition undergo the Red Rite—progressively replacing their body with metal and circuit. This artform seeks to print Nibiru's divine matter onto its worshippers, helping them become one with the station.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The PCs (or someone close to them) often find themselves in trouble, but this time it got out of their hands. Either them or their contact require off-the-record medical assistance. They could try Sardanapal's workshop, yes, but they'd first need to convince the priest.*
- *Upon entering the ruins of the Old City, one (or several) of the PCs experiences a memory of ancient times. Write that Memory in their journal (it has no Effect). It speaks of a mysterious locale in the depths of the Vault, where they'll find Hano and its people.*
- *A BrightTowner has an auction house that they use to recover objects from their home. It seems like a famous collection might show up, containing several relics of BrightTown, and thus they ask the PCs for help to win the auction at all costs.*

THE LITTLE SISTERS

Born out of the contempt and disregard of one of Ashur's worst Primarchs to ever rule, the Little Sisters is a collection of ramshackle compartments, bleeding out of the vault's base and into its cable-riddled bowels. Accessible from the lower levels of the Neck, it serves as home to the poorest communities of Ashur, those that have partly left the system (and some that outright live outside of it). A long time ago, it became the breeding grounds for a bloody revolt, which led to the settling of the vault cluster known today as the Sisters.

WHY GO THERE

The community of the Little Sisters is built right above key, functional pieces of the vault of Ashur. If you wanted **to threaten the Primarchy**, this would probably be an effective place to do so (although the collateral damage that would cause might be too high).

On the hyper conductive clasps that operate above the vault's capacitors and power management facilities, some locals have perfected the art of growing blue fungi to the point in which they've grown what's called the *Sisters' Blues* variety. This variety of blue fungi has medical properties, and can be used **to heal grave wounds** and accelerate muscle and bone regeneration.

Technicians know the place as a prime location **to learn about the station's inner workings**, and the locals have gone to lengths to build several observation decks, from where you can study the vault's circuitry, the many pieces that make up its power systems, and learn about the vault's life support functions.

WHO TO MEET

A series of screeching bridges overlook the buzzing capacitors of the Assyrian vault, leading into a holed up tube fitted with living amenities. This is **Nouhra's** home, a kind soul who provides refuge to the displaced. In exchange, they generally ask for a few lapses of service to the community, and to spread the word about the living conditions in the Little Sisters.

Past the main container cluster of the Little Sisters, a scholar by the name of **Iwita** runs a small archive. It contains about ten thousand recordings related to Nibiru's architecture, many of these recorded during the ravaging of the Antumbran North. Iwita herself travelled there, and is a knowledgeable scholar and scientist—always willing to share her knowledge of Nibiru.

Pnu Eil's name is known far and wide as That Which Went Beyond. Once a pilgrim of the Corpus tradition, it is now revered as the first post-human inhabitant of Nibiru. Its mostly mechanical body, thoroughly engraved with the Pilgrims' poetry, is now recognised as an autonomous dependency within the domains of the Assyrian Primarchy. To avoid diplomatic conflicts, Pnu Eil has agreed to stay within a small chapel in the Little Sisters, where hundreds visit it every cycle.

TALE-SPARKS

- *As the relations between the people of the Little Sisters and Ashur sour, the community chooses to bar Assyrian citizens from entering. Wishing to avoid escalation, a contact within the Tallaktu proposes for the PCs to head into the area to mediate. Where does their loyalty lie?*
- *Upon entering the Little Sisters, the Vagabonds of the Machine within the group hear a strange whisper—the voice of Pnu Eil, calling, distressed. What does it seek, and what is it that worries it?*



THE TORUS

An oval-shaped, hollowed-out ring pierces through the Skyleless World; its surface blanketed by a myriad of air pumps and extractors, service tunnels and oxygen monitoring stations. Upon its discovery, it donned the name *Hašû* (meaning “lungs”), as the eerie whistling of artificial winds made its way into the imaginarium of the Cults of Silence. Awestruck by the majesty of the Torus, they ventured into its depths in hopes of hearing Nibiru’s voice. They listened to the currents, which carried the echoes of far off places, as the Torus looped and dived into far Umbra, to return past Penumbra and surface back into the Core Sectors, its breath filling every corner of the Skyleless World.

Upon its discovery, the sheer size of the Torus made the Arku tremble before it; an unknown, dark horizon that seemed to devour even the brightest of lights. It was a matter of time, however, until technicians started testing all manner of contraptions in order to find their way into the world beyond—launching hundreds of air balloons, and carefully studying the currents to measure the length and size of the Torus. Eventually, the first expeditions made a trip back with news about the wild expanse ahead—the lands of Penumbra, which would be settled many cycles later.

Only after the construction of the Ascendants, and the foundation of the first permanent Penumbraic settlements, was the Torus seen as a somewhat viable communication and travel route. Its use, however, was conditioned by the wind’s direction—meaning that the settlements located up along the Torus Corridor had the possibility of sending messages down, but not vice versa.

LORE BITES

THE WORLD’S WHISPER

One could say that if the Skyleless World were to speak, the Torus would be the best place to listen to what it has to say. This is an idea that has prompted many (and not just those that revere the Cults of Silence) to travel to the Torus, to listen to its humm, meditate on it, and utter a reply.

The dialog that results from such an experience coalesces into what is known as a *Hašû Song*; a song that represents the connection between humanity and Nibiru. These follow a pattern in which the voice of the wind and the human voice give way to each other—never piling on one another. Notorious *Hašû* songs are so popular as a form of art that not only have they been recorded; the locations where they were originally held have been named after them (such as the Song of Arseen, which denotes the Torus section connected to Suruptu, or the Song of Izla, marking the seven pipes that pump air into Karik’s Crescent).

Needless to say; those who sail across the Torus know these songs, their distinct sound, and the locales they represent, by heart. Not to mention that some daredevils have been known to face the darkest reaches of the Torus with their ear and folklore knowledge as their only guide.

As effective as the Torus was at pumping air, ideas flowing one-way was not so great a thing. This made the inequalities of artificial scarcity even worse, as Suruptu and the upper settlements broadcast their messages in a matter of hours, while the rest of the Reaches had to wait a good part of a cycle to see their messages loop around and reach their destination (providing it didn't get lost). Without mentioning the fact that vulnerable communities were left even more exposed to criminal activity along the Torus, as their messages were easy to intercept, hold to ransom, and tergiversate.

Communication problems were brought up many times by the communities of the lower Corridor, often raised along proposals to secure safe passage along the main hallways and footpaths of Penumbra. These proposals were eventually addressed, but by that time the upper settlements had found a new way to spread their influence, with the Antumbran city-state of Tarsus testing the first prototypes of tripulated barges, aiming to kickstart large-scale trade operations along the Torus.

EBB AND FLOW

"How the Wind Blows, How Power Flows" is an ironic remark often used by the proponents of free Penumbra, often uttered when receiving news of Arku intervention.

It refers to Antumbran-imported narratives that correlate the nature of the Torus to notions of progress.

In reality, power flow is never steady; if the people at the bottom get heard at some point, it's because those at the top have found a new, exclusive, and exponentially better toy with which to keep the Eněšu in line.

Barge trade developed fast, with the largest of Penumbra's settlements opening docks along the Torus to let the goods flow. This came with growing unrest among the communities of the Outer Reaches, and the ideas of free Penumbra knocking at the gates of Suruptu—where the most influential council in the region held power. It is today, with the first Penumbraic barge fleet in the hands of Suruptu, that all eyes are set on how the council will put to use the rewards they'll reap.

GARDEN & GRAVEYARD

Only a couple cycles after its first journey, the Awshalim barge *Lammat* got lost along the Penumbraic Torus, eventually finding its way into what's known today as the Hanging Gardens (see page 165). This discovery fuelled Enki's Covenant interest in operations in the Torus, which led them to research the strange fungi varieties found therein.

No one knows when or how exactly did they happen upon Ghost Fungi, also known as paleweed, but the magnitude of its finding speaks for itself. This variety presented almost miraculous medical properties, which led to its harvest and widespread distribution throughout Antumbra. The predictions that followed were proved right when, in the span of just a hundred cycles, the introduction of paleweed almost doubled life expectancy in the recipient communities.

Although the main elements necessary for growing paleweed are still kept a secret, it is known that, for its properties to set in, a recently deceased body is required. A particular type of enzyme found within paleweed sees the final product act in the same way as vaccines do on Earth, with each development of new varieties widening its benefits. With all this, however, the harvesting of paleweed did indeed face backlash. Many religious traditions across Nibiru place great importance on funerary rites, and as such the Covenant found itself barred from distributing its miracle cure to a growing number of city-states.

Faced with this problematic, the Covenant's authorities decided to invest a colossal amount of resources into the construction of the Wandering Necropolis of Nergal, and to push for distribution in Penumbra. This massive barge would travel the Torus, visiting connected towns every few cycles, and holding in each a departure commemoration wherein families would trade in the body of a recently deceased family member for a portion of Nergal's harvest. Town councils welcomed the opportunity to improve the lives of the people, and enthusiastically embraced the departure festivities—which quickly became a staple of Penumbraic culture.

It was predictable that the arrival of Enki's Covenant would affect the power dynamics of Eněšu societies—this time tilting the scales in favor of those settlements that were directly connected with the Torus. Penumbraic cooperation, however, triumphed in establishing an internal redistribution system, with signatory councils imposing a paleweed tax on all exchanges performed at the departure festivities. To this day, the consequences of this decision weighs in whenever discussions about free Penumbra arise, showcasing the value of union in the face of enforced scarcity.

With the Penumbraic settlements pushing for control of the Torus, the Antumbran city-states losing ground and struggling to come up with a response, and Enki's Covenant silently and slowly building power across the region, the future of the Outer Reaches seems to be largely dependant on the Torus' power, who wields it, and who commands it.

SONG OF SUUSAANDAR

One of the largest splits along the Penumbraic Torus happens at the site of Suusaandar's song. Its sound is akin to that of a lion's roar, and the split is big enough to spawn small whirlwinds along the Torus' surface. Crews passing Suusaandar tend to see it as one of the more challenging segments of the Torus looparound, due to the wind's tendency to pull sails towards the larger, Umbraic tunnel.

ABNI & THE HANGING GARDENS

The natural air filters of the Skyless World are split into several segments such as this one. A circuit of hanging lanterns guide barges that pass through it, leading travelers into Abni: the massive rock, whose insides serve as the outpost of the Verdant Coven

SONG OF RIHAT

This song marks a large split along the Penumbraic Torus, wherein a small docking station has been built to help passing barges restocking on their way to the Gardens. The station, under Assyrian control, is also used as a small tradehouse that Enki's Covenant uses to help supply the Gardens.

SONG OF SELUKU

This song is as chaotic as the area that surrounds it, wherein a series of subsections of the Torus loop around to reach into different air distribution circuits. At one of these subsections, the council of Suruptu has set up a large docking station that helps keep the main city docks congestion-free. It is here that Suruptu's largest shipments land, to then be hauled over to their final destination.

SONG OF ARSEEN

Arseen used to be heard as a loud hiss that marked the narrow air ducts that connected the tunnels of Suruptu to the Torus. The song has, however, become much more faint due to the council's passing of an edict to contain the city's pollution, which resulted in them sealing most of the auxiliary conducts.



NIKANUUR BARGE

Evolving the original design of the Awshalim line of Archaean barges, the Nikanuur barge is a special piece of technology, featuring expanded habitation modules and dual auxiliary thrusters. The greatest advance, however, is its signature Azure Flight chassis, made out of hollow steelweave, which allows it to maneuver and accelerate with unrivalled precision.

The barge's living quarters tend to accommodate up to four people during long journeys, though shorter "lightning" trips are known to involve larger crews.

SENSORS ROOM

When barges sail ahead of the Core's cycling speed, the light dims, and especially when dipping into the farthest segments of the Torus, one cannot trust their eyes to guide the barge through the dark. This is where sensors come in, quickly rendering topographic maps of the Torus walls and allowing crews to traverse the dark side of Nibiru.

CONTAINERS

Large containers are utilized to store cargo, which can be taken in and out via access points or the rails to which they are mounted, once the barge docks.

ACCESS POINTS

These access points, located across the full length of the barge's top and bottom sections, are used not just to board the ship but also to access each individual container when loading and uploading individual packages (particularly useful when distributing them via drones).

BRIDGE

Although crews can purchase integrated charts to have the barge travel on autopilot across the most transited areas of the Torus, these are quite costly, and for the most part there's always going to be a pilot at the helm—specially when docking and undocking.

DINING AREA

Common areas for shared dining are essential when travelling across the Torus, particularly for merchants who want to save up on credits by eating in. The crew tends to store food from their home town, as well as to grow small crops of easy to maintain fungi varieties.

COMMUNICATIONS HUB

Shielded antenna across the Torus make it easy to communicate with other vessels and with docking stations, and the communications hub serves not just to establish direct communication but to deploy beacons and broadcast signals in a large radius.

LAPSING ROOM

Getting a good sleep is hard while on the move, not due to movement itself (Nikanuur barges are surprisingly steady thanks to their hollow steelweave hydraulics), but due to the engine hum, which most Arku are not used to.

GRID MANAGEMENT ROOM

Cell replacement and energy grid management are two essential parts of barge operation, specially when delving into the darker areas of the Torus to complete a looparound. Pilots tend to use all manner of tricks to save up on energy expenditures, some of which are outlawed.

DRONE HANGAR

They say a good merchant will turn a profit, and an excellent one will do so without ever stopping their barge. Spreading out the distribution and exchange of merchandise along the way, planning ahead and setting up an effective protocol can allow a trader to manage solely using drones—thus sparing them from the costs of docking, undocking and loading cargo manually.

AUXILIARY THRUSTERS

Barges are supposed to rely almost 100% on the steady, engineered currents of the Torus, yet complications can arise—in which case a set of auxiliary thrusters can prove to be invaluable. Some daring pilots have been known to push the limits of this system, diving into secondary tunnels that stem from the Torus; an extremely dangerous maneuver that only some could pull off.

PENUMBRA



2.6

2.4

2.2

2.0

1.8

1.6

1.4

1.2

1.0

0.8

The Angel Corridor

The Flooded Countries

NATAKU

The Archaean Sorrows

The Lanterns

Hidden Waterways

Murna

The Farmlands

Longlapse Way

Sakkara

Sakkara's Way

Ovidla

Sheperds Glory

Sienna

Ebbub

Suruptu

Murna

THE TORUS

THE OUTBACK DOMAINS

THE POND

ASCENDANT V

ASCENDANT IV

ASCENDANT I

ASCENDANT III

UR

Nisibis

Nineveh

Dur

Lagash

Nimrod

Adab

Calah

The Jewel

Point Sippar

Eridu

The Sisters

Tarsus

Ir Bill

Point Basrah

Samarra

Zuccabar

Cherchell

Homestead

The Serpentine Slums

Lixus

The Ruined vaults of URUK

The Hopes

CHARCHEMISH

Karik's Crescent

The Well

The Dead Vaults of ERRA

ASHUR

Thevesta

Agri's Puddle

UMBRA

ANTUMBRA

ANATOMY OF THE SKYLESS WORLD

The regions showcased in this map represent the more known and populated areas of the station. Use the [blue lines](#) along with the Gravity rules found in page 106 to see how your character is affected by long distance travel across Nibiru, specially after travelling along [Ascendant routes](#).

THE REFUGE

Ni

Adab

MAIN HALLWAYS

The largest hallways in Nibiru are essential to trade and regional dominance. In ancient times, the most resourceful city-states used to be the ones that managed to populate hallway segments, installing toll gates and bringing in goods from other vaults to enrich their people. Today, the main hallways are strictly regulated, making fast travel the first priority.

SECONDARY HALLWAYS

In contrast with the main arteries of Nibiru, secondary hallways do fall within the jurisdiction of specific city-states, which regulate trade and human circulation within their domains. While these locales might signify the more visible face of Nibiru's societies, many a slum has originated and spilled along the entryway of the more hierarchical city-states.

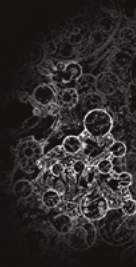
SERVICE TUNNELS

Bridging the gap between the main hallways and the station's inner systems, service tunnels comprise a vast, uncharted network of labyrinthine conducts. Due to their unknown nature, they are seldom utilized today, though in the past many a human group was forced to delve into Nibiru's depths, seeking refuge in its service tunnel network.



OVERGROWTH

Some of Nibiru's vaults seem to have strange, vestigial facilities attached to them—their shape shedding some light on the process through which they were built. In the larger city-states, such as Ur, these areas (commonly known as “vault overgrowth”) have been developed upon, usually as large industrial areas separated from residential zones.



VAULT CLUSTERS

These strange formations, which are mostly found throughout Umbra, contain complex ecosystems that tend to depend on one single, regional life support battery. Technicians believe that vault clusters are more common in across the farther reaches of Nibiru due to their sectioned, clumped-up structure, which offers better support against high artificial gravity.



The Well

RESERVOIRS

These massive containers get their water supply delivered from ice harvesting and processing facilities, found near the outer walls of the station, which then spreads outwards and into each of the vaults' individual water reserves. Because the livelihoods of millions depend on reservoirs, the laws that govern their use are very strict (as with any other locale of high strategic importance).



KIRHU

FUEL TANKS

Although Nibiru's power depends on the Core, there are a series of emergency systems designed to prevent the station from dying out, in case it failed to procure the necessary materials for its standard functioning. Fuel reserves are part of that—though humanity has taken a liking to exploiting them, even going as far as to build a city within one such fuel reserve.



CENTRAL FACILITIES

Hidden deep within the structure of the Skyleless World, central facilities are accessible only through the complex network of service tunnels. From monitoring centrals, regulating oxygen and water supply, to immensely complex drone mainframes, charged with gathering prime matter outside the station walls; these are Nibiru's vital organs.



Cal

HIDDEN FACILITIES

While central facilities are charged with the continued existence of Nibiru and its inhabitants, hidden facilities represent a more obscure face of the Skyleless World. Ziggurats. Habitats. All strange and wondrous, their finding and study holds the key to understanding who or what created the station, and with what intent.



CHAPTER THREE





STEPPING INTO TWILIGHT

Too many times we've accepted the idea of not owning our time. As if living here was some sort of a penance, or a "test of loyalty" we all had to endure. Sheepshit! Guilt chained my father to these depths—took my mother during childbirth, and scarred him for life. They want to keep bleeding us for profit? They can come and get it. I'll see them dropping down the shaft, choking on Krajj whilst struggling to pick up the spitter. Mark my words. From this one trip, they'll see no returns.

The Outer Reaches are a vast collection of regions where everything exists in dimming twilight. For the inhabitants of Nibiru, the finding of the Outer Reaches signified a true revelation about the nature of the universe. The impersonal, hollow nature of Penumbra seemed not to care for human life. Humanity, used to living in the steel-clad Eden of the Core Sectors, had to—for the first time in history—fight to survive.

Penumbra is much larger than the areas comprising the Core Sectors. Though the construction of new Ascendants (the vehicles used to travel from the Core Sectors to the Outer Reaches) continues, the distances between the oldest and the newest settlements are nothing to scoff at. The main passages might be signaled and often patrolled by the Waywatchers Company, but anyone straying off from the charted tunnels might end up in strange complexes, wandering into a scavenger ambush or accidentally setting off a natural deathtrap. It is said by travelers, colonizers and traders alike; "everything that could happen under the gloom of Penumbra will happen to you, sooner or later".

THE THEMES IN PLAY

The first theme of Penumbra is that of **The Everyday Struggle**. The Eněšu—the peoples that inhabit the Outer Reaches—have learned that Nibiru doesn't really owe them anything, and that if they wish to survive, they need to learn how to transform the world that surrounds them. They coexist with the lack of light, the scarce water supply, the faltering life support and the dangers hidden beneath the mantle of perpetual shadow. Being born in here means developing a mentality that the people of the Core Sectors could never contemplate. This grants players great possibilities for a survival-based game, as they venture through twilight armed with their wits and courage to face whatever it is that awaits in the shadows.

The second theme that will show up in is that of **The Identity Crisis**. Those who first dared explore Penumbra created a society that had to undergo massive changes in order to subsist. Several generations later, the Eněšu have not been able to look back. More so now than ever before, the fact that they are still ruled by careless, detached governments hundreds of kilometers away has (rightly so) made them rebellious. They yearn for a solution to the problem of autonomy and the ever-widening divide between their culture and that of the Antumbran peoples. For this reason, chronicles set in Penumbra are always permeated by a feeling of civil unrest and mounting tensions. This is often exacerbated by the ever-growing physiological differences between the Eněšu and the Arku (which stem from a hundred cycles being born and raised under the Penumbral gravity), and the power politics of the statal credit scheme.

The third theme in the Outer Reaches is that of **Survival of the Ingenuous**. To traverse the twilight is one thing; to colonize and live in it is a totally different one. The people that settled in the Outer Reaches have shown not only a strong will, but a creativity and talent for invention that—fuelled by their need to adapt—would become the envy of even the most capable inventors of Antumbra. From fungi-fed power generators, to amazing machines that transform oil deposits into villages, the settlements of Penumbra are vastly different from those in Antumbra, each providing a unique solution to the challenges they face. However, these ideas are constantly tested, and player characters will have to deal with towns that run out of oxygen, regions that go dark from one moment to the other, and a host of terrifying events that will surely test their limits.

COMMUNITIES OF THE OUTER REACHES

As the first explorers made their way through Penumbra, they soon realized that they were vastly unprepared to face the challenges ahead. The first cycles of the colonization effort were documented as a living nightmare in almost every sense. The settlers' equipment was not made to last under the pressure of Penumbra's artificial gravity, which resulted in food reserves being lost, cascading into a logistic problem that left people malnourished, plagued by a myriad of health related problems.

This dire situation ended up breaking the communities of Penumbra. Some of the fractured groups were lost to the darkness beyond, never to be seen again. Some managed to survive and establish small communities far from the watchful eye of the Antumbran colonization complex

The term *Eněšu* surfaced around the time the second generation of colonizers arose. These were the days of the "lost offspring," in which the true extent of Kabādu was felt. The chilling effects it had on children resulted in a massive effort to come up with a solution. Part of it seemed to come from a change in the diet of the Eněšu, which switched from the easier-to-grow red fungi varieties to the blue fungi, richer in calcium and protein, which the colonizers desperately needed. This led to a spike in energy requirements—blue fungi being much more power demanding than red varieties.

After the first generations settled, the Eněšu started to develop a culture that stands in opposition to that of the Arku. In the largest settlements is where you can feel this the most, as protests spark in demand for greater autonomy. What the future will hold for them, however, is yet to be seen.

STORYTELLING LESSONS PENUMBRAIC CHRONICLES

Daring players, who want to face an ever-growing struggle in a socially conflicted world where big, momentous change is imminent, might find in Penumbra the best place to base their adventure.

There are plenty of possible hooks you can use to get your story on full swing. Maybe they take on a contract that sees them travelling far and wide while taking on smaller jobs. Maybe they find themselves in a far off settlement, dealing with the ruling council and trying to tackle the challenges that a newborn community faces. Coming up with a cool concept of why they join forces will provide a sense of cohesion to the group.

Distances are greater in Penumbra, and each community is less prepared to fulfill the necessities of adventurous folk, so you can expect for travel to be an important facet of your game. A leaper ride between two settlements takes an average of four lapses to complete, same when travelling on top of a bellowing HAULER AI. Motorcycle rides average one lapse between most settlements.

ROLEPLAYING IN PENUMBRA

Penumbraic chronicles should reflect the themes we've addressed in this section, which can be more easily implemented if you take in account the following questions about your character.

Are they adaptable?

At some point in their past, your character might have faced an extreme situation, in which they pushed their limits in order to survive. How was it? What did they learn? This will help determine how your character interacts and deals with Penumbra's extreme perils.

What side are they on?

The Eněšu have been robbed of their rights for a long time, descendants to a people deceived and cast off by the very rulers that swore to protect them. Not taking a side means siding with the tyrants. So what's it going to be? And, are you prepared for the consequences?

What do they want out of Penumbra?

The characters should know why they are here. Either to escape, hide, to carve a life for themselves or to find the way to Antumbra: knowing this will give them purpose and a path to follow.

THE TORUS CORRIDOR

A massive tunnel, carpeted by thousands upon thousands of air vents and propellant engines, pierces through Antumbra, Penumbra and beyond, looping around the Core in the manner of *Ouroboros*. It is the Torus, and its function is simple: to distribute air and oxygen throughout Nibiru. It's size makes it the largest tunnel in the station by far—if you can even call that a tunnel. It was in the immediacy of the Torus that the first settlements of Penumbra were founded; a lucky coincidence that would later on be utilized to humanity's advantage

After the fifth generation of Penumbraic colonizers settled, engineers from Tarsus (the leading pioneers in Outer Reaches exploration) came up with the concept of barges, built of hollow steelweave and propelled by the powerful, stable winds of the Torus. Today, these barges travel along with the air flow, carrying goods along the so-called Torus Corridor (name given to the many settlements that have direct connection to the Torus).

Needless to say, this invention revolutionized Penumbra. Until then, the Outer Reaches could either trade via Ascendants with the Core Sectors, or endure risky trips along the Penumbraic tunnel network. In essence, Torus travel didn't just allow the Penumbraic community to grow exponentially—it gifted them with the autonomy needed to stand up for themselves.

If barges auspiced a game change, Nikanuur barges sealed the deal. Before their implementation, one needed a lot of credit with one of the main Antumbran manufacturers to be able to gain access to a barge. Seeing that the settlements of Penumbra became more self sufficient, the city-state of Charchemish offered the council of Suruptu (a settlement near the Torus Corridor) a fleet of fifty barges in exchange for farming rights near the vault's domains. Needless to say, the council agreed.



TALE-SPARKS

- A local scavenger band has been attacking shepherds past a flooded plain, near Suruptu. The band, which has been active for over twenty cycles, has increased their activity. The town council offers a Nikanuur barge in exchange for the band's leaders, alive.
- Amidst the high speed winds and the pitch black darkness of the Torus, a barge's crew got lost. The PCs are offered a reward if they find them.



THE CREDIT SOCIETY

In Penumbra, the statal credit is king. Since introduced to the colonies as a “revolutionary way to organize life and to develop towards an Antumbran model”, statal credits have done nothing but bring suffering to the Enēšu. For all the propaganda the Antumbran city-states beam to the depths of the world, there’re good reasons why they themselves do not use the credit system in their vaults.

Credits were created by one unknown philosopher from Enki’s Covenant. In theory, the Antumbran states would work to foster their model by bringing stability to the colonies and gradually removing credit circulation. In truth, however, the credit system piqued the interest of the Silu class in Antumbra, which they saw as a tool to bypass their social limitations. Aleria of Tarsus regarded credits as the ultimate tool to control the colonies, creating a microcosm of fluctuating inequality and fabricated scarcity that would keep the dangerous consequences of the Penumbraic experiment away from the Core Sectors.

Those consequences soon bloomed, and the Enēšu didn’t took long to look at Antumbra and their seemingly perfect social scheme with envy and rightful anger.

TALE-SPARKS

- A local Covenant nexus is using the townfolk’s plight for the Stolen Offspring as an excuse to gain powers from their Antumbran lords. This could mean unwarranted raids, and danger to Vagabonds. What will the PCs do?
- An Assyrian Ummānu offers the PCs a place to hide if they can bring an afflicted youngling from Penumbra to Antumbra, whom will help them raise a case against a cohort of vicious Našparu.

THE STOLEN OFFSPRING

The first settlers of Penumbra found themselves tormented by fatigue, plagued by sleepless cycles, and suffering the haunting effects of the pressure differential. Their toil, however, was nothing like that of their children. A whole generation was lost under the weight of the Penumbra—and the dismal healthcare they were provided with. Leaked documents would later reveal that the nutrition and medicine resources allocated by the Antumbran complex was “well below the standards suggested by the scientific community”. The widespread outrage that followed saw the Enēšu renaming the tragedy as that of the Stolen Offspring (a much more fitting name for a neglect-fueled genocide).

SCAVENGERS

Some of the human groups that splintered from the first waves of settlers managed to survive the darkness, and found in dormant power nodes the warmth and the fuel necessary to start from scratch. They scavenged the unknown expanse, holding a candle against the dark with the hopes of building a free society for themselves.

These communities would learn to make every bit of time and every resource count, using the environment to their advantage and reimagining their technologies to work under the uncertain, unrelenting conditions of Penumbra. They would continue to grow, although at a much slower pace than the Antumbran colonies.

Clashes between those colonies and the scavenger communities happened almost immediately after contact. The latter were displaced, chased relentlessly in order to make them lose their way. Many communities were lost to the darkness, but the ones who didn’t made sure to litter their trail with harrowing traps and deadly contraptions, many of which are used to this day.

Today, the scavenger communities have found a haven in the vault of Sakkara, about a hundred kilometers from the Torus Corridor. In this vault, it is said that they’ve piled up several power nodes, and built a great tower around which they raised a small city. The way into Sakkara is guarded by what is known as the Unseen Trail, a seemingly clear path, two kilometers long, armed with more than two hundred spring traps that make it virtually impossible to traverse. It is said that citizens of Sakkara are tattooed with a nigh incomprehensible pattern that shows the way into the city.

TALE-SPARKS

- A scavenger reaches out to the group, asking for help to track down a piece of human skin with the Sakkaran pattern. Whomever took it will attempt to sell it at a local auction, putting the whole community in danger. What will they do?
- A group of scavengers wish to help a local settlement go independent, which means preparing for the worse; Arku intervention. The town, built on a bridge, stands at the ready. How will you help?

ŠIKNAT NAPIŠTI

One of the most interesting aspects of how life in Penumbra developed has to do with myth and religious belief. The oldest cults of the Age of Silence centered around the idea of *šiknat napišti*; the belief of Nibiru as a living thing, with the Core at its heart and electricity

as its lifeblood. These cults placed humanity in a state of damnation, where an original sin (the nature of which has been lost to time) made it so that electricity would be harmful to humans instead of empowering.

These beliefs were fuelled by a unique feeling of awe, stemming from their encounter with the vast, strang world around them. It's no surprise that the arrival at Penumbra echoed that same feeling in the colonizers which, paired with the suffering wrought by Kabādu (aptly nicknamed "the World's Punishment"), brought a resurgence of these primordial cults.

Particularly, it's in the town of Kirkuk that these beliefs coalesced into a wondrous spectacle, an incredible statement on how vastly different the communities of the Enēšu are in contrast to those of the Arku. The small town is built around the lush Garden of Idols, wherein herds of wild animals roam free. The people of Kirkuk have established a relationship with the animals, developing husbandry techniques that allow them to harvest their power, which they give back by caring for them and maintaining a safe, abundant habitat for the animals to live in. Perhaps, most impressive of all is that at the center of the garden, a sleeping Serpent of Azure rests, said to be in hibernation after having lost its way. The Serpent has lied in this state for many cycles, and the locals believe that one day she'll wake up and reward them by dispelling the curse and allowing them to touch the blood of Nibiru.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The power signature of a Serpent is captured by a signalling station in Suruptu. Soon, travellers from Kirkuk ask for help tracking down the signal, with the hopes of leading the Serpent to their hometown. But... what is truly waiting for them at the source?*
- *A Penumbraic shepherd is trying to use their herd to attract a majestic flock of Pulsewings, hoping to bring them to Kirkuk. The road ahead, however, is riddled with scavenger traps. How will you help?*

REAP THE LIGHT

It's hard to tell where exactly is it that the world stops working. Most agree that it is past the Torus Corridor that the light dims, but even in this region there are settlements which have had to resort to alternative means to procure power. These also happen to be most of the settlements we featured here; there are many towns and villages sprinkled across Penumbra, but it's these handful of communities that truly embody the mindset and lifestyle of the Enēšu. It's also impossible to talk about them without talking about the Pleiads.

The Pleiads were a small group of inventors from Enki's Covenant that devoted their lives to creating wondrous machines that would enable communities to thrive in Penumbra. Examples include a windmill built in a Torus-divergent vent that powers the settlement, as well as flower-shaped, light-absorbing piece of engineering that powers the small village of Oxydia.

If your community doesn't happen to be blessed by Core power connection, nor any of the Pleiads marvels, subsistence will generally depend on two things; fuel and power batteries. Around 80% of all settlements in Penumbra follow this configuration, and though newer settlements have dual generators that can function with both, most of them are fully dependant on batteries.

This is the reason why Penumbraic communities tend to gather around the immediacies of a power node. Though these nodes won't not receive more of the Core's power, their remaining charge can serve a community for a long time. If a node is deemed valuable enough (At least 20% charge) the finders will often cut all other power lines stemming from it (to avoid people hooking up to the node) and build a power distribution outpost around. These outposts quickly become trade centers and towns, which can exchange their power output with the nearby communities that spring to life upon their finding.

Fuel deposits are much more common than power nodes, though a town must have the appropriate infrastructure to take advantage of them. Oil processing facilities are way beyond the reach of most Penumbraic communities, which tend to rely on trade with settlements that have those facilities to procure fuel. Even with those difficulties factored in, fuel can be the difference between life and death, particularly during the darkest cycles (when power nodes decay and the Core's energy and reach wanes along Penumbra).

TALE-SPARKS

- *A far-off town sends a distress signal requesting batteries, and the PCs happen to be near a Waywatcher, which relays the message to them. Getting a battery on time might save the lives of the settlement. What will they have to give up for a topped battery?*
- *When blackout hits the small community the group was staying with, improvisation will hold the key to survival. How will they bring power back, and what do they have at their disposal to make it happen?*



LAND OF SECOND CHANCES

Nowhere in Penumbra can you see the scars left during the Age of Discovery better than in the Torus Corridor. The Arku took a broken ruin and doubled down on it, the Eněšu's suffering baptizing the place's entry into human history for all cycles to come. The Arku used it to play power games with other Core Sector states, to then create a new social class, kept in check via fabricated scarcity enabled by the credit system.

These are the current events that are shaping the future landscape of Penumbraic communities, which your characters will ultimately become acquainted (and embroiled) with when playing there.

FADING PATRONAGE

For a long time now, the way in which Penumbraic settlements originated required two things; a community, and one or more patrons. A patron is the Antumbran city-state (the main ones being Ashur, Charchemish and Tarsus) that sponsors the effort, providing equipment to start the project and injecting credit to allow the settlers to trade with other communities.

This has worked thus far with varying degrees, though now most settlements (with the exception of those which have, for any given reason, great chance of success) are founded with several patrons, diversifying their investment and reducing risk. However, as competition for resources increases and social unrest grows, Antumbraic involvement becomes harder to pull off, as competition between patrons becomes more aggressive and dangerous, to the point in which small proxy wars might spark.

THE SIEGE OF SIENNA

The Eněšu are caught up in the middle of this conflict knowing that, regardless of who wins, it will always result in a loss for them. They bleed, but it's the Arku's hands that are stained. No more. In the town of Sienna, a council member speaks against the patrons, calling for the banishment of the Tarsus envoy.

After being expelled from the council, the counselor returns with an armed squad and takes the council by force, quickly moving to clamp down the Ascendant I to its landing. Messengers are sent out to nearby towns in search for backup, and the town prepares for an imminent attack from the Waywatchers Consortium, who sets up camp along the corridors leading to the vault.

BLACKOUT

As the crisis sparks in the heart of the Torus Corridor, the farthest settlements of Penumbra see lights fluctuating and fading as the cycles grow longer. Although most of these settlements procure energy via alternate sources, many structural systems of the station (such as heat regulation and auxiliary lighting) start to fail.

Most of these issues are normal, striking during the lapses when the Core's light is at its dimmest. However, with each passing cycle having longer blackout periods, anxiety is starting to surface. Prophecies heralded by the scholars of šiknat napišti speak of Nibiru's total blackout, the eventual shutdown and death of the world, and when news of the Longlapse Way turning dark reach the periphery of the Corridor, the peoples of Penumbra turn away from the Pilgrims godly image of the Core, to pray to the Idols of Silence, hoping for salvation from the upcoming Blackout.

Kirkuk

Susa

Shepperts
Glory

Lumia

Samarian Tollgate

Sienna

Longlapse Way

Ebbub

Suruptu

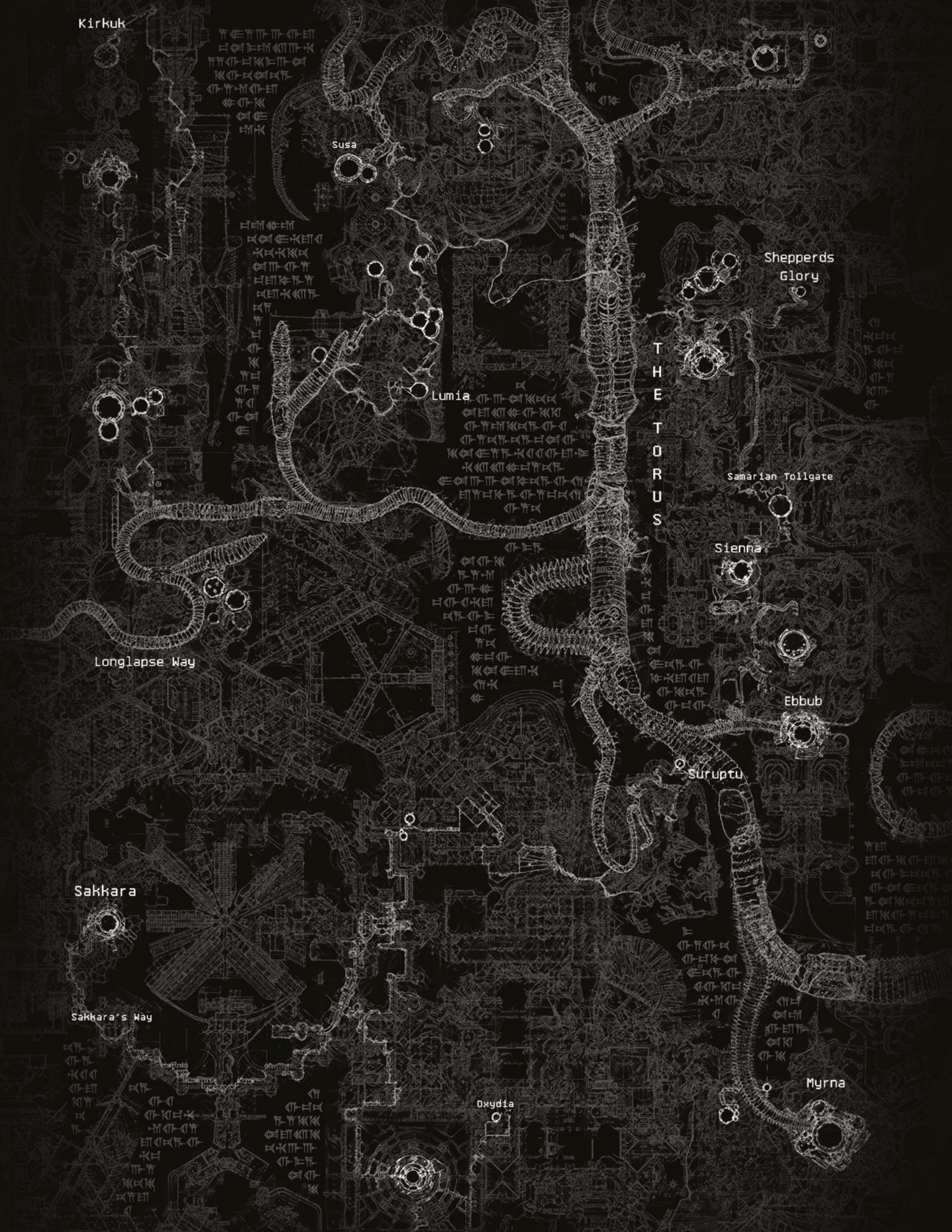
Sakkara

Sakkara's Way

Oxydia

Myrna

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SURUPTU

TYPE: OIL CONTAINMENT VAULT
 POPULATION: APPROX. 70,000
 GOVERNMENT: PENUMBRAIC COUNCIL (SHARED PATRONAGE)
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FUEL, FOOD
 OFFICAL RELIGION: PILGRIMS OF THE CORE

Built within a large oil tank, Suruptu is one of the biggest settlements in Penumbra. The city's districts protrude from the vault walls, growing downwards at the beat of its oil processing platform, the PL03. Suruptu is an important trade center along the Corridor, with direct access to the Torus and the patronage of Charchemish, Tarsus and the Covenant. It has fostered a thriving community in its surroundings, with many smaller villages seeking its patronage.



OXYDIA

TYPE: WASTE CONTAINMENT VAULT
 POPULATION: APPROX. 2,000
 GOVERNMENT: PENUMBRAIC COUNCIL (ASSYRIAN PATRONAGE)
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FARMING, TEXTILES
 OFFICAL RELIGION: PILGRIMS OF THE CORE

Oxydia is a small village that produces almost all textiles in the region, utilizing its soil to build underground web farms. The village is known for the PL02, a complex piece of engineering in the shape of a flower that utilizes the light shed by a broken power node to generate electricity. Due to the waste-riddled, dangerous environment found within the vault, Oxydia has a high turnover of inhabitants, with only just a few of them staying to live indefinitely.



SIENNA

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS 3)
 POPULATION: APPROX. 80,000
 GOVERNMENT: PENUMBRAIC COUNCIL (TARSUS PATRONAGE)
 TOP INDUSTRIES: HEAVY MACHINERY
 OFFICAL RELIGION: PILGRIMS OF THE CORE

Sienna was the Arku's landing site, where the first Ascendant made its arrival. Since then, it has grown to become the largest settlement in Penumbra, with a thriving culture that has evolved greatly since its establishment. For a long time, Sienna was the de-facto trading hub of the region, allowing for the Enēšu arts and philosophy to flourish, shaping the Penumbraic identities and going as far as birthing the first Penumbraic liberation movements.



SHEPHERDS GLORY

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS 3) - ONE DEPENDENCY
 POPULATION: APPROX. 40,000
 GOVERNMENT: ASSYRIAN PRIMARCHY
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FOOD
 OFFICAL RELIGION: CULT OF THE SHEPHERD

Ashur was the last Antumbran city-state to establish a foothold in Penumbra, though their intentions were clear from the start. If anything, the small settlement of Shepherds Glory symbolizes a rising interest on Silu bodies such as the Redfields Foundation and the Waywatchers Consortium. The settlement feels like an Assyrian district transplant, mostly focused around harvesting the lush tunnels that surround the vault, aided by the logistics of the Ascendant V.



KIRKUK

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS B) - ONE DEPENDENCY

POPULATION: APPROX. 3,000

GOVERNMENT: FREE COUNCIL

TOP INDUSTRIES: -

OFFICIAL RELIGION: CULTS OF SILENCE

Kirkuk is far removed from the Corridor, which might partly explain the reasons why it was let go of its patronage. The settlement is built in the periphery of the main vault, its limits marked by a series of strange idols, welcoming people to step into the Garden. In it, wild creatures roam, coexisting with people in harmony. Power comes from a heating plaque, atop of which slumbers a Serpent of Azure, which has lied dormant for more than a hundred cycles.



EBBUB

TYPE: WIND CORRIDOR

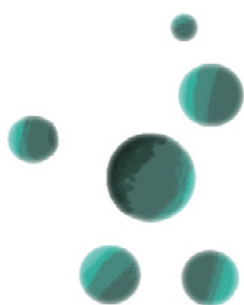
POPULATION: APPROX. 30,000

GOVERNMENT: PENUMBRAIC COUNCIL (ARCHAIC PATRONAGE)

TOP INDUSTRIES: BATTERIES

OFFICIAL RELIGION: PILGRIMS OF THE CORE

The first site of the Pleiads enterprise was a wind corridor that diverged from the Torus, wherein they installed a series of windmills (the PL01), using the air currents to continually generate electricity. This allowed the shielded city of Ebbub to grow without much worries in term of power requirements. Not just that, but the windmills allowed them to use excess power to sell batteries to nearby towns, making them a regional leader in terms of trade.



MYRNA

TYPE: V. CONGLOMERATE (CLASS C) - FIVE DEPENDENCIES

POPULATION: APPROX. 10,000

GOVERNMENT: PENUMBRAIC COUNCIL (TARSUS PATRONAGE)

TOP INDUSTRIES: ELECTRICITY, WATER

OFFICIAL RELIGION: PILGRIMS OF THE CORE

A large conglomerate of sunken vaults, Myrna represents Tarsus bet for Penumbra. The city is built in underwater compartments, with technology providing oxygen from the water. The vaults, which are flooded due to a cracked pipe, rigged the station's drainage systems—which propitiated a feedback loop that Tarsus' engineers have used to generate power. Turbines take advantage of these artificial currents to make this class C vault cluster one of the most livable (and productive) settlements in Penumbra.



LUMIA

TYPE: POWER NODE

POPULATION: APPROX. 15,000

GOVERNMENT: PENUMBRAIC COUNCIL (ARCHAIC PATRONAGE)

TOP INDUSTRIES: ELECTRICITY, FOOD

OFFICIAL RELIGION: CULTS OF SILENCE

Permanently marching at the beat of the generator's low humm, the people of the Crossing (another name for the city of Lumia) came from one of the splintered human groups of the first generation of Penumbraic colonizers. Lumia returned to the fold several cycles after its foundation, after sealing a pact with Charchemish that would grant them much needed security against the threat posed by scavenger groups. Lumia currently provides power to communities in need, and holds a great deal of influence along the Torus Corridor.



SURUPTU

They say that right at the beginning, the people who worked to make Suruptu a reality slept through every lapse with the constant roar of the PL's engine blasting below them. Their bunk beds vibrated and shook every minute, and for several cycles until the exhausts were built, the place was plagued by the smoke from the PL. What I mean by this is, these people were basically choking, sick to death, and working tirelessly, sleepless, with the mind numbing screams of an experimental machine piercing their ears for cycles on end. What the hell were they running from? And why are we so obsessed with going back to where they came?

No other place in Penumbra embodies sacrifice and victory against all odds such as Suruptu. Often nicknamed "Oiltown", this place is a miracle story penned with the blood of thousands, burnt into the fabric of Penumbra's history with the black fuel that stirs below its surface. From its torturous beginnings to its current status as a center of trade, it's viewed by some of the Eněšu as a hopeful beacon, the kind of place that will soon rise to hold the powers that be accountable—if, and only if, the memories of Penumbra's past are kept safe from those that wish to vanish them.

DANGEROUS IDEAS

The engineering stunt that the settlers of Suruptu pulled (putting together a 200 metre wide, several hundred tonnes metal disc inside of a flammable container in mid-air), was without precedent. For nine cycles, they camped in the nearby tunnels while moving materials up and down. Along the edge of the vault walls, workers hung over the mass of fuel, slowly installing a rail that travelled the entire circumference of the vault.

With the rail set up, they rode the mounted carriage, looping around hundreds of times to build a platform over the black surface. On this platform, they raised an oil processing factory that used the latest technology from the most inventive of the Archaean Ummānu, its structured secured to the walls by over twenty pressure clamps that slowly descended as oil was consumed.

The lapse that saw the engines start had the settlers leaving the tunnels, eager to mount tents on top of the platform and get down to party at the center. With the pull of a few levers, the engines hummed, screeched and screamed, and the founding of Suruptu came to be.

From then onwards, the problems didn't stop. Horrifying noise and air pollution, ventilation issues, fungi plantations dying off and water contamination crisis: so many times, the people of Suruptu faced what you could call impossible odds. It is true, however, that these settlers came from a very particular background; many of them were refugees from the dreadful tragedy of Uruk, survivors of Maqlūtu who had sought for a haven in Charchemish. The city-state decided to offer them what seemed at first like a godsend; the opportunity to settle in Penumbra as founders of a promising venture.

As they tackled each and every issue that climbed to the grim surface of Oiltown's platform, these peoples built up to reach the vault ceiling, where they hung a molded container that would serve them as a council house. They invited an Archaean Našparu to help them build a set of laws that could mimic those of Charchemish, and together with the patronage of the Covenant, they set off to build a larger community outside their walls.



As time went by and Suruptu prospered, its council made a series of extremely important moves. Firstly, they secured an alternative source of power which allowed them to keep their oil reserves intact, which they then used mostly as an emergency and assistance resource that would help nearby communities shield themselves from the power outages that are so common in Penumbra.

Secondly, they paid attention to the Antumbran landscape. As the Age of Discovery raged on, many city-states started using Penumbra as a brawling yard, engaging in games of manipulation to control the nascent communities of the Outer Reaches. The council of Suruptu decided not to sell themselves to the highest bidder, exchanging privilege with a drop counter, and seeking to diversify their patronage among several city-states (not just one). This made it so that it was in everyone's interest to see Oiltown succeed, and as time went by that success helped the council progressively renegotiate their patronage, gain a lot of ground and giving up very little.

SURUPTU, TODAY

Suruptu has now access to the Torus, and with the newly acquired fleet of Nikanuur barges, their ability to assist other Outer Reaches' settlements has increased tenfold. Its influence in the Penumbraic community has seen it make its more audacious move yet; the Suruptu council has now become a patron themselves, becoming competition for the other Antumbran city-states. City-states that, unlike Suruptu, are separated by hundreds of kilometers of steel walls from their possessions. Needless to say, a lot of people in Antumbra are nervous; expectant of whatever it is that the council will do next.

The city has also turned, in just a few cycles, into a melting pot of cultures and religions. The Pilgrims might hold influence over the council, but at the upper levels you can find a plethora of different houses of worship. The cultists of Silence have a small park with sheep near the northern wall, and often take the herd out so that children can play with them in the street. Those who worship the Shepherd built a storytelling walk with several statues, each depicting a chapter of the Shepherd's myth, each playing one of Atour's recordings about the history of Ashur. The city has even seen some outlying faiths surfacing from time to time, from charitable Birthers to the vile sect of the Lightbringers, the last of which have a turbulent history with Suruptu and the nearby communities.

The council's announcement of its patronage means that, for the first time, free cities across Penumbra can receive support without tying themselves to the Antumbran powers. It's only a matter of time before the consequences of this even surface.

LORE BITES LIGHTBRINGERS

This sect of the Pilgrims, outlawed in Antumbra, arrived to Suruptu with the Pilgrimage many cycles after the patronage deal with Ashur. They viewed anyone who would suggest that the Core had a limited life as a heretic, and they soon installed themselves in Oiltown—making it the staging point of their inquisitorial jaunts.

After several cycles of debauchery, Suruptu's Lightbringers had illuminated an entire mile of the city's main entry hallway with their horrible contraptions and—having just built their first Torus barge, the Blacklight—they were getting ready to navigate into other settlements.

The community's condemnation of the town's attitude towards the cult soon resulted in the banishment of the priesthood from the city. Still, there are those that tell of bi-cyclical light-masses, secretly held in the inner cloister of Suruptu's Temple of Light. Whether true or not, only the higher echelons of the Pilgrims know about it.

TWILIGHT COUNCILS

Penumbraic laws, which are known by most members in each community, vary from one settlement to another, but at the core there's a set of tenets that's common to all communities. These tenets are related to survival, and caring for one another, and were first imparted by the first expeditionaries that ventured into Penumbra.

Past these tenets, there's usually what's called the "Laws of Patronage," wherein each of the settlement's patrons bring in their own proposed laws into the fold. Patrons are almost always city-states or organisations from Antumbra that provide assistance to a Penumbraic settlement in exchange for something. One of these laws could perfectly be, for example "Three haulers in exchange for 20% of this town's blue fungi harvest for nine cycles."

One of the reasons for Suruptu's success as a settlement was the tenacity of its lawmakers (who are part of their council), and their tendency to diversify their patrons, in order to avoid antagonizing any particular city-state and creating an environment of competition. After all, if each patron had stakes in Suruptu's progress, they'd want to seize opportunities not just to help that progress but to also hinder their competitors.

Aside from their lawmakers, Penumbraic councils have regular counselors that spend most of their time interacting with the people and bringing issues to discussion. Council meetings tend to be quite intimate affairs, wherein normal citizens might intercede and asks questions, given how small communities tend to be.

If a community doesn't have enough bandwidth to deal with a particular problem, most of the times they put out contracts for freelancers to pick. This is often more convenient than the alternative (that is, passing a Law of Patronage and having to deal with patrons and lawmakers), since the communities can more easily control stakes for each situation. These contracts tend to be very beneficial to Vagabonds, who often travel a lot and find the almost non-existent bureaucracy a boon.

TALE-SPARKS

- *A brown fungi infestation is plaguing local sheep herds, and the council draws up a contract to fetch a medicine from a far off drop point. The reward is quite big, but the destination is managed by the Covenant. How will the group keep their cover?*
- *An unresolved dispute between a council member from Oxydia and one from Lumya is preventing the former from securing emergency batteries. What's really going down, and how can the group sort it?*

THIN RED LINES

One of the advantages that Suruptu pulled from their handling of their relationship with Antumbra was the possibility of keeping close ties with the nascent, free communities of Penumbra. These communities, some of them being scavenger collectives, had always been preyed upon by the Antumbran interests. While in most cases, these interests would have blocked their associated Penumbraic settlements from cooperating with scavengers, that sort of interaction didn't work the same when it came to Suruptu. Lawmakers had drawn red lines around their ties to the free communities.

This was not just out of Enēšu loyalty; Suruptu always held agreements with Sakkara, mostly for protection. Scavengers used to pillage along the Torus Corridor, and Suruptu sought to safeguard its people from that. As time went on, the scavenger threat became more directed against Antumbran conglomerates (such as the Waywatchers Consortium and the Redfields Foundation). With Suruptu's announcement of their new Law of Patronage, Antumbra will have to decide between indirectly supporting the free communities, or antagonizing the most powerful council in Penumbra.

TALE-SPARKS

- *A group of Redfields-owned farms are set ablaze, with conflicting reports arriving to Suruptu about the identity of the perpetrators. Were they really scavengers, or was this a framing job? The group is contracted to go there and find out.*
- *A small settlement wishes to replace Ashur for Oiltown as a patron. They reach out to the group for help probing the council of Suruptu for choices. What will be required to make this happen?*

DIRTY SECRETS

Suruptu, like any community, is plagued by demons of their own. The exhaust system they've employed for the PL03 might have saved the city from choking itself to death, but the noxious fumes were pushed into a sealed hallway that is now overflowing with them. The fumes will, within a lifetime, reach the slowly growing free cities; a problem that, if not addressed soon enough, will result in a diplomatic crisis—threatening the unity of the Enēšu communities.

Even though the city has given an image of independence and freedom from Antumbran powers, it is true that its founding would have been impossible without the contributions of the Covenant. Given that it's much easier to discern when an Antumbran state is meddling in Penumbraic affairs than when the Covenant is doing so, there are people who think that the true masters of Oiltown are those that were there from the beginning. This sort of uncertainty might make some of those who plan on seeking patronage from Oiltown a bit nervous, but it's a legitimately scary thing for Vagabonds. So far, nothing has been rumored to happen when taking contracts from the council of Suruptu, and yet, one can never truly know...

TALE-SPARKS

- *Trying to tackle the city's pollution issue, the council puts up a contract to scout the tunnels in search of vents that could be used to filter the air. With a flashlight and a couple of hours of oxygen in the tank, the group sets off to see what they can find.*
- *A strange contract shows up in Suruptu's network; a "wanted" sign with the group's faces. Fortunately, it didn't happen in a public place. But what's to be done next?*

1

THE COUNCIL

The council is connected via several hanging bridges to the top levels of the settlement, overlooking it. This is where the rulers of Suruptu gather, where envoys are received and where the Archiver is kept.

2

THE NEXUS

Built next to the Glowing Gardens, this is one of the main offices of Enki's Covenant in Penumbra. Here, the Nexi report on activity and projects across the region, as well as developing industrial technology and prototypes.

3

AKKARA PLACE

An isolated, gentrified level near the top of the vault, wherein the Antumbran community of Suruptu lives. Akkara Place is completely autonomous, its people willfully segregated from the rest of the vault.

4

THE KRAJJ LOOPS

This floor is a collection of over one hundred inns, bars and entertainment establishments, that took advantage of Suruptu's reputation as a "travelers town" to cash in credit. Its welcoming atmosphere is famous across Penumbra and the Core Sectors.

5

THE NOOSE

This district was largely populated by the descendants of immigrants from the Assyrian Neck, and is one of the oldest in town. Officially referred to as "the Lower Neck", its nickname is derived from the heavy pollution it used to suffer, an issue that is tackled by exhausting the fumes to a nearby service tunnel.

6

PLEIADS PLAZA

This particular level of Suruptu is the original base of the settlement, located right above the Noose, and spread over a wider area. It's here that most distribution centers and stalls are located, and where celebrations and festivals are held.

7

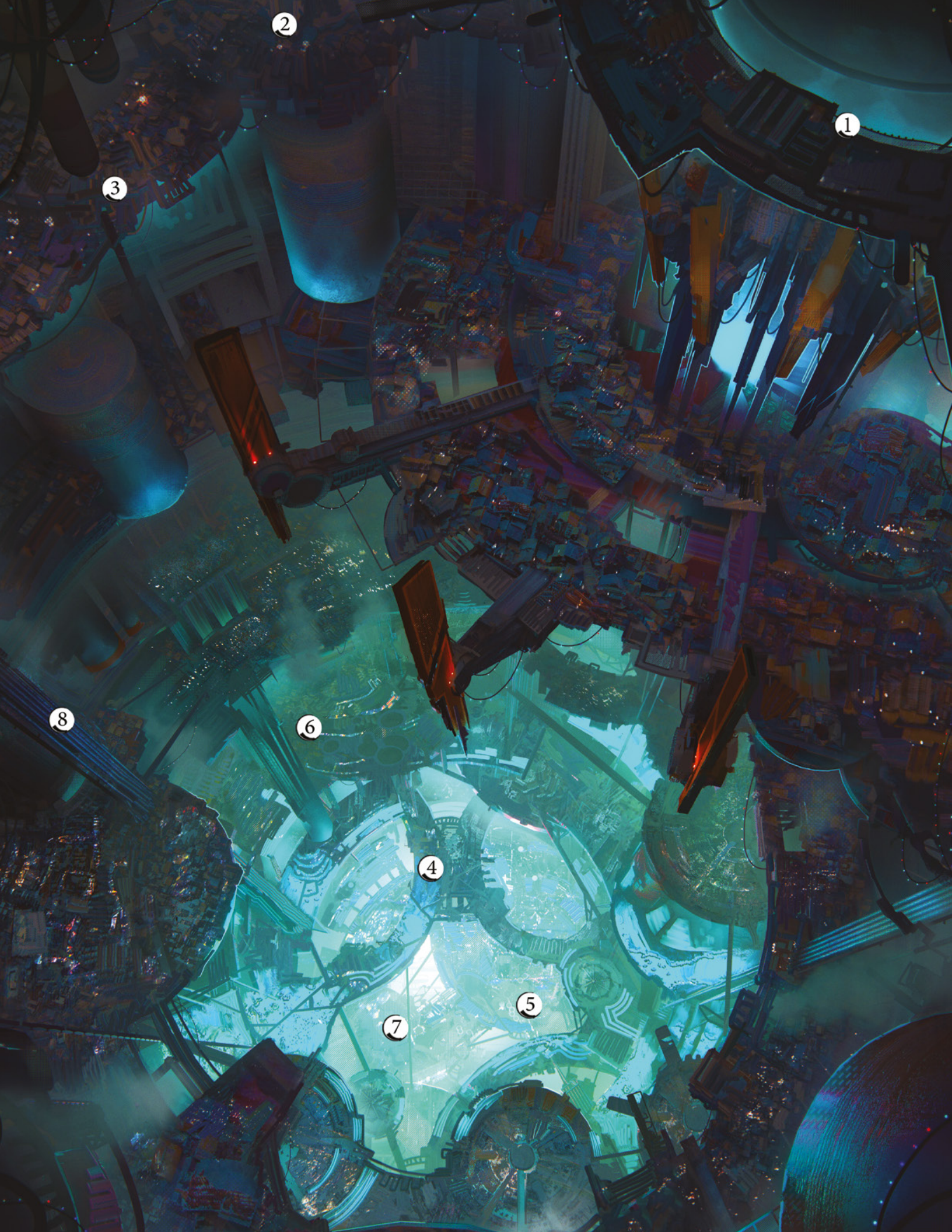
PLO3 ADAPTIVE PLATFORM

The Pleiads, a group of seven visionaries from Enki's Covenant, conceived this mobile platform to extract and process oil, which also served as a foundation for the industrial town that eventually grew to become Suruptu.

8

SURUPTU TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Bordering each of the city's levels, a series of elevator platforms going up and down like a conveyor belt help people move from one place to the other.



2

1

3

6

4

5

7

8

THE COUNCIL

Several hundred steel cables interlace across the crown of Suruptu; a cannonball-shaped structure hanging over a 200-metre abyss, separating it from thousands of gallons of highly flammable oil. Despite its location, this place is the foundation of the Oiltown community, and of many a village depending on its patronage. Twenty or so people gather there every lapse to discuss the most important affairs of the city, and often leave late to see people along the Drunken Thread, where they speak with the community to gain insight on life in the town.

PASS TAG

Even with the credit economy ruling Penumbra, Suruptu has managed to give its inhabitants free access to healthcare, education, food, water and power, making it the only place where “the Antumbran Promise” has been fulfilled (ironically, due to everything but Antumbran intervention). Visitors, however, do need to introduce themselves to the council and get their “pass tag”, which allows them to use credits with the locals (then repurposed by the council to allow for inter-city trade).

WHY GO THERE

Contract work is available for all! If you want **to cash in credit**, make sure to get to the flashing boards near the hanging walkway that leads into the council. Plenty of jobs are posted, allowing you to get credit with the city or with one of its patrons (which you may then exchange or use to buy a citizenship).

Given the much more loose nature of the authorities of Suruptu when compared to the Našparu, just going in **to address an urgent problem with the city** is possible. What you might consider a legal dispute or anything of the sort should be done in this way, so... get in line!

Like most councils across Penumbra, there are specific designations for outsiders, which help communities manage their limited resources. Strangers are supposed **to introduce themselves to the council** as soon as they arrive at the city, so that they can get a pass that allowed them to exchange credit for goods.

WHO TO MEET

Always sitting near the top windows of the council room, **SARAH**, the Archiver of Suruptu, is probably one of the most well known members of the council. It wears a black cloak with polished metal tokens in the shape of flower buds, and is always willing to give information about the town and its history.

One of the descendents of Kiara the Pleiad (mastermind of the PL02), **Baqqanum** is a councilmember who seeks to safeguard the lives of Vagabonds. Aware of their existence since checking old Covenant records he gained access to, they are constantly trying to find and hide Vagabonds from the Nexi that live in Suruptu.

Etirum is one of the most vocal members against the Law of Patronage, an Arku who moved in not very long ago to the city and quickly got elected to the council thanks to the pressure put by the population of Akkara Place. He has provoked a lot of infighting in the council as of late, and it's rumored that several city-states are banking on him gaining more influence.

TALE-SPARKS

- *A friend of the group, who happens to be on the run from the authorities, wishes to hide in Oiltown. They ask for help getting a pass tag, which would mean having them introduced to the council, and they suggest a makeover. How will the group achieve this?*
- *Baqqanum knows that a Dreamlander has been captured by Enki's Covenant in a nearby outpost, and can only trust a Vagabond with the task of rescuing them. What will it take to do this?*

THE NEXUS

A narrow walkway along the walls of Suruptu and past the glowing gardens leads into a somewhat removed compartment, that protrudes from the side of the vault. Its humble look shouldn't deceive you; this is the Nexus, one of the main centers of operations for Enki's Covenant in Penumbra. Its scant, run down frame overlooks the upper levels of the city, its shadow always standing as an unnerving reminder to all Vagabonds that there is no place they will feel totally safe in.

WHY GO THERE

Sometimes the search for answers lead you to peer into the lion's mouth. Albeit not as expansive as the Covenant offices found in Antumbra, the Nexus is still quite packed with local records and information, which they usually use **to track down Vagabonds**. Accessing these won't be easy, but it might be necessary in order to protect the community from the Covenant's grasp.

The Covenant has utilized Penumbra as their laboratory for a long time now, and the records of many a successful (and failed) experiment are stored in this place. Whether **to expose the Covenant** or **to repurpose their findings**,

Vagabonds might find a lot of value if they manage to bypass the Nexus' security measures—and might uncover secrets that change their entire perception of the sociopolitical landscape of Penumbra.

Across most of Nibiru, the Covenant can put out capture warrants for individuals whom they label as “liabilities”. In Penumbra particularly, where paranoia is part of everyday life, most councils won't question the Covenant's postulates that much, and so it's common to see unlucky souls dragged into the Nexus' cell block, located near the top. If the group knows that a Vagabond has been captured, they'll almost always need to break in **to liberate their kin**.

WHO TO MEET

A permanent captive of the Nexus, **Namtar** is a Dreamlander with a lot to atone for. She remembers the lives of other Dreamlanders across Nibiru, and has agreed to report them to the Covenant in exchange for her life, and to avoid their usual memory extraction methods. Whatever the group's position on the matter is, it is undeniable that Namtar's situation puts many at risk.

Envoy of the Covenant for Suruptu's council, **Ereshkigal** is one of the main figures of the colonization complex, as well as the architect behind the marvel that is the wandering necropolis of Nergal. She oversees the entire nexi network along Penumbra, and often travels across the region whenever she is required to.

Probably one of the most terrifying of the Covenant's nexi, **Yahurum** is known for employing a vast network of informants across the Torus Corridor. He is closely associated with the Waywatchers Consortium, giving him power to mobilize security forces whenever required, even going as far as issuing “kill on sight” orders across regions that have the Covenant's patronage.

TALE-SPARKS

- *After the capture and extradition of a Dreamlander that Baqqanum had helped many cycles ago, the council member decides to put an end to Namtar's life. They enlist the group to carry out the job, but what will they find when they get to the holding cell?*
- *Yahurum calls for a sudden door-to-door search of the Noose, claiming that a murderer is hiding there. The group knows that a Vagabond has recently established themselves there. What will they do?*

AKKARA PLACE

Whether due to Penumbra's awe-inspiring vistas, a sense of curiosity, or a tiredness of Antumbra's way of life, many a Core Sector native has found its way to Suruptu. Although there are many who move to Penumbra and actually become part of the community, there are some who find the culture clash more crushing than Kabadu itself, a clash that leads to mental walls and closed-off communities. You can take the Arku off the Core but you can't take the Core from the Arku.

WHY GO THERE

This place is meant to keep the Enėšu away, and in doing so creates a bubble that is unlike anything else in Penumbra. Here, the Silu have banked on the credit system **to indulge in things forbidden**. From betting houses to fighting rings, most of these establishments are cared for by Suruptu's patrons, who rely on Akkara Place as a place for exiled, problematic Arku.

Reclusive Silu and retired Našparu from Suruptu's patron states live here, many of which have interesting stories to tell. The group can head there **to listen to the whispers of the high echelons of Arku society**, amidst the smokey ambience of Akkara Place's Krajj houses.

When in the houses of the powerful, the rulers of Penumbra, Antumbra and even the Free Cities sit down at the roundtable. Although this won't apply to every leader in Nibiru, it is known that some gather here **to negotiate and chart the future of Penumbra's communities**. You may also attempt **to listen from the shadows**—whatever comes from it will surely be significant.

WHO TO MEET

In spite of the arrogant, elitist miasma that permeates Akkara Place, it's home to one of the most humble benefactors Vagabonds could meet. **Humwawa** has, for a long while, worked together with Baqqanum to secure safe passage between the umbras, assisting those who are decided to flee from the Covenant's persecution.

Ennugi is an eccentric collector of rogue automatons, owner of a small hall nicknamed the Atrocity Exhibition. Technicians usually seek to observe these caged AIs and study their behaviour, which has benefitted the latest advancements in automaton production.

The talk of the town since her arrival at Suruptu, **Gemekala** is an envoy from the city of Sakkara; a scavenger, whispered to be one of the main people responsible for the passing of the Law of Patronage. Her motives are unknown, as is her projected length of stay, and her mere presence surely makes many an Arku nervous...

TALE-SPARKS

- A *Children from Nineveh* has been reported lost in *Suruptu*, and a secret contractor suspects that *Ennugi* is behind it. How can the group gain access to his estate, let alone his safehouse, and what will they really find once they get there?
- While having drinks, the group overhears what seems to be a plot to assassinate *Humwawa*. Who's behind it, how will it be carried out, and how can the group stop it before it comes to fruition?

THE KRAJJ LOOPS

One of the key elements that make *Suruptu* the Penumbraic powerhouse it is has to do with its strategic location along the *Torus Corridor*. Its people, ever thoughtful and inventive when it comes to the use of their space, built a circuit of inns past the town's gateway, serving travelers and transients. By doing so, they cemented a massive source of credit that would help them escape the *Arku's* economic gridlock.

WHY GO THERE

To have a great time! The *Loops* are an amazing place to go dancing, and to listen to some of the best artists in *Penumbra*. *Eněšu* struggles and their way of life are conveyed to great detail—with art taking revolutionary vibes, fuelling the sentiments of those who seek for *Suruptu* to become a beacon of hope for the free communities of the *Outer Reaches*.

After a long journey, everyone deserves **to have a good rest**. The inns at the *Loops* have a very homely feel to them, and the friendly atmosphere they convey as well as the chill saloons have seen the formation of many a travelling party.

Due to the general lack of information networks across *Penumbra*, a lot of people rely on social hotspots such as the *Loops* to catch up with the news. Although fake accounts and unchecked rumors abound, bartenders and councilmembers tend to be a reliable source **to stay informed on the state of Penumbraic affairs**.

WHO TO MEET

Past a sinuous passage covered in glowing red fungi, there's a shy, tiny cafe that almost no one knows about. The atmosphere inside is fuzzy and mellow, with tranquil music playing quietly in the background and a host of sparklings roaming and playing around. This establishment is cared for by **Heana**, who has (in the past) helped many a *Vagabond* find refuge.

Ashared is a famous explorer who frequents the *Loops'* establishments in search for good travel stories. Back in the day, he launched expeditions into *Umbra*, and learned a lot about the strange landscapes of *Nibiru*. If you get him a drink or tell him a good story, he'll tell you about places of interest beyond the *Torus Corridor*—and about the strange things he found there.

At close of lapse, while the people *Krajj* slumber, a *Vagabond* of the *Dreadlands* named **Damuzi** roams the streets, letting out their *Nightmare* to play around in the narrow walkways and on the folded steel roofs. *Damuzi* tends to leave water pots with *Swimming Lilies*; a pale plant that grows on the surface of lakes and reservoirs.

TALE-SPARKS

- A visitor from the *Umbra* has been beating practically everyone at the *Loops'* most popular drinking game. Granted, she does have a fast metabolism due to coming from the *Flooded Countries*, but... could the group beat her? And what would they win?
- A local painter wishes to capture the mystique of *Damuzi* in a portrait, and asks the group to track them down and ask them if they'd be interested in the artist's proposition.

THE NOOSE

A few hundred cycles of uninterrupted work saw the *PL* leaving behind an empty length of vault ready to be settled. This coincided with the signing of several laws with *Ashur*, which allowed *Assyrians* to easily relocate to *Suruptu*. The new neighbourhoods that rose in that space were named "the *Lower Neck*" due to the majority of its settlers being from the *Assyrian Neck*. It didn't take long for them to realize that the toxic waste left behind by the *PL* to affect them, particularly those who worked in small fungi farms along the vault walls. Soon, the newly nicknamed "Noose" underwent a major restoration that left it looking like it does today.

WHY GO THERE

Farmers along the *Noose* are extremely creative with their craft. Their organic injection method, for example, utilizes bioelectric plants to grow fungi, yielding more nutritious, higher quality blends. If you want **to acquire the best food in Penumbra**, you won't go wrong with grabbing a few containers of fungi from the *Noose*.

The *Assyrian diaspora* is known to work with scavengers to bypass the *Ascendant* network. Particularly in the upper *Noose*, there's many people that still have close ties with the world above. If you wish to secure a shortcut into *Antumbra*, this might be the place to go.

When Ashur signed the laws that allowed people to move to the Noose, they incentivized relocation with big credit handouts. The community decided to pool that credit and use it to foster expeditions that would help spread the farming techniques developed here. If you wish **to journey into Umbra**, you'll have good chances of finding a trustworthy sponsor here.

WHO TO MEET

Namhu is the genius behind the Farmers Caravan; a wandering herd of ayyalu that marches along with a few farmers to spread knowledge about Suruptu's produce. They stop at different towns, giving farming advice and striking treaties to keep Penumbraic mouths well fed.

Often seen near the edge of the Noose smoking krajj, **Nigbau** is an agent from the Waywatchers Consortium that sells private security contracts to those interested. She is the person to approach if you need to traverse a dangerous area. She might not be cheap, but what's too much if it's about keeping yourself alive?

Delondra is widely known as the most famous brown fungi farmer in Penumbra. She owns an establishment, Paradysa, wherein you are toured along several pens to choose which animal your azure fungi will come from (since your plate will be prepared with that fungi).

TALE SPARKS

- *Delondra wishes to grow brown fungi on a Serpent of Azure, and she dispatches contracted parties to find one. A Kirkuk contractor asks the group to stop these folk, given that Serpents are holy for those that revere Silence. How will they manage this?*
- *A teenager got lost in the tunnels that are used to exhaust fumes out of the Noose. The urgent contract pops up for the group, and every minute is vital. But what was the teenager running from?*

PLEIADS PLAZA

Colorful murals cover the PL's birthmarks, welcoming newcomers to Suruptu and into the Pleiads Plaza. A sea of people churns, its waves crashing relentlessly against distribution centers, food stalls and credit exchange houses. The Enēšu don't like wasting time; it's here that their lifestyle is showcased to the world, as they move supplies from point A to point B, rushing along narrow corridors and pushing their tiny carts through the hustle and bustle of Oiltown's beating heart.

WHY GO THERE

You don't have a choice! Past the Waywatcher's outpost and the triangle shaped corridor, Pleiads Plaza receives

people with open arms. From here, you get **to use the Suruptu Transport System**; an elevator that takes you up and down along the length of the vault, allowing you to quickly get to where you need to go.

Unless you have a pass tag, the establishments along the Pleiads Plaza are the places you'll want to go to if you've arrived in town only **to have a short stay**. This collection of inns and hostels present great opportunities to speak with travelers and to get news from other settlements.

Rationing and distribution houses, as well as hospitals and schools are all located here, so if you live in Suruptu it's likely that you'll frequent the Pleiads Plaza often. It's also the one place you'll need to go to in order **to partake in Oiltown's festivals**. This counts not just for the many religious festivities you get to see each cycle, but also tricyclical celebrations of the town's founding and of the passing of important laws.



WHO TO MEET

Irarum stands on a pedestal at the center of the Plaza, talking about a coming darkness that will swallow the world. He is one of the so-called prophets of the Blackout, and although many a Pilgrim would wish to take him down, the past stigmas related to Suruptu and the cult of Lightbringers make that almost suicidal. Stay to talk with him after close of lapse, and he'll tell stories of deserted scavenger towns past Sakkaras Trail, tunnels and hallways shutting down with every passing cycle.

The Ubaid Clan, spearheaded by **Ir-Nanna**, frequents the Pleiads Plaza to hold their recruitment runs. The Clan is one of several groups from the Sisters, who are often seen marching along the Torus Corridor to serve in search and rescue operations (though some say that they also perform as mercenaries for the Antumbran city-states). People are free to join them on their bicyclical tours, since it gives a chance to earn a Sisters citizenship (though most people wouldn't put their life at risk for such a thing).

The Penumbraic Conservation Society and the Verdant Coven, led by the Nineveh scholar **Antum**, have built a small haven in the Plaza—which is open for volunteer registrations. Joining means getting access to sleeping quarters and food, as well as travelling alongside a small caravan of Children of EUROPA, caring for nearby communities, as well as the region's fauna and flora.

LORE BITES FESTIVAL OF LANTERNS

On the celebration of the passing of two hundred cycles since the town's foundation, the city of Charchemish gifted the council of Suruptu with the famous lanterns that hang from one level to the other, over the shaft of Oiltown, which are today seen as one of the most iconic aspects of the city.

These lanterns are usually lit in different patterns, which you can see come together if you stand at the center of Pleiads Plaza and look up to the council. The patterns tend to signal the current process going on at the council house, and also change to accompany festivities and celebrations going on at the Plaza.

One such festivity marks the day in which the Archaean patronage was initiated, a day to celebrate the friendship between Penumbra and Antumbra. The current social turmoil affecting the region, however, has led many to question the festival, with several council members pushing for a boycott as a means to protest Arku intervention.

TALE-SPARKS

- *Blackout prophets will hold a festival in celebration of the banishment of the Lightbringers. However, some council members are worried about religious confrontation. The group is contracted to search for Lightbringer sleeper cells that might pose a threat.*
- *The Ubaid Clan has put out a contest to design a prototype automaton that can detect traps, which will probably be used against scavengers. What's the group's perception of this and what will they do?*
- *A group of associated Birthers are hiding in an establishment at the Plaza. They find the group secretly via a trustworthy contact, and ask them for help building their own Birther AI. How will the group get the materials, and more importantly, the blueprint?*

PL03 ADAPTIVE PLATFORM

The monster that lives at the root of Suruptu lies sleeping. After hundreds of cycles of working tirelessly, the PL03 is only operative via its tertiary generators, fuelled by batteries brought over from the Manatum Outpost, five kilometers away from Oiltown. Exhaust pipes run along its surface like veins, and an army of one hundred workers dive into its innards to perform maintenance every lapse, while technicians walk its surface and camp in small tents, studying its design, teaching the young about how the PL works, and testing new technologies so that, when they decide to wake the beast up, it'll find them as ready as they were when the city was founded.

WHY GO THERE

When seen from above, the PL seems to be covered by dozens of white speckles, encircling the entrance hatches. These are tents, and though they might look humble, the schools of technology that they house are some of the best places **to brush up on your tech skills**, as well as **to seek for consultation** regarding almost any tech topic, in the whole Torus Corridor.

The tricyclical Automation Fair held on the PL is the perfect place **to purchase an automaton**. It's also great if you want **to learn of the latest advancements in automation**. A parade of machinery, mostly brought in from Tarsus, attracts lots of travellers and professionals from across the region. The fair is organised by Enki's Covenant, so watch out if you head over there.

When the PL stopped, the operatives discovered a tunnel, revealed to lead into the Torus. It was then repurposed and adapted, allowing the city to have its own dockyards.

“See them syndicate criminals parading Arku royalty along a wasteland of their making. Does that spell ‘freedom’ to you? Do not trick yourself; these ain’t your kin. The chains they wield, they tie you to these very depths.

As for me? Well... I’m looking forward to see them hang by the same chains. Working on it”

Knare the Known, by Stephen C. Robinson



If you wish **to sale or trade along the Torus**, this is the place! The docks are shielded from high speed wind currents that circulate along the Torus, and with the city’s acquisition of their Nikanuur barge fleet, the locale has seen considerable growth in opportunities for commerce.

NERGAL

With the construction of its docks, Suruptu opened itself up to the wandering necropolis of Nergal. This massive barge circles around the Torus, going from one town to the other in celebration of the Festival of Departures. During the festival, the people of Suruptu take their deceased to the PL and say goodbye, receiving from Nergal’s Mourners a crop of ghost fungi, which is stored and preserved due to its miraculous healing properties, and its high trade value.

WHO TO MEET

Appanili is a teacher at the PL’s tech schools, and a proponent of open R&D for Birther AI technology. He’s been fighting for his Haven Law to get passed for many cycles now, which would make it illegal to persecute birthers in Suruptu. He argues that this persecution isn’t just barbaric, but that Birther AIs bring benefits to many due to their clinic application, not just to birthers. He is also known for having written Birther AI blueprints, and giving them for free (which is legal, in contrast to actually building such an automaton).

Sisuthros is a visionary, known for his expeditions to the Umbra, where he surveys Penumbra in search of new materials. Each new outing is more bold than the one before, and the people of Suruptu is always expectant of what he’ll find. The last time, fifteen cycles ago, he returned with a highly conductive material that completely overhauled the city’s powergrid. It’s rumored that he’s seeking for volunteers for an upcoming expedition.

Aea is the council member in charge of Suruptu’s recently acquired fleet. She oversees its maintenance, and evaluates the many candidates who have taken a step forward to drive the machines. Understandably so, she is quite the center of attention at the moment, as most people would like to partake, and given that a lot of hope is placed on the fleet’s performance.

TALE-SPARKS

- *A pet sparkling wanders off outside the dockyard dome and into the heavy winds of the Torus. Rescuing it is now or never! You’ll have to dash from cover to cover and resist the high speed winds to reach out and grab the little critter.*
- *A rogue AI has been reported missing in the tech camps, and after asking a few witnesses, its concluded that it has gone up into the Noose. What information is it carrying? How will you get it back?*



CHAPTER FOUR



THE UMBRAIC FRONTIER



2G

Do you want to feel unwelcome?

What worse than this?

A rejection so immediate, so pressing. It's like it wants to see your bones crushed under its weight. It wishes to choke you, to see the air banished from your lungs on a whim. And yet, for how dreadful it sounds, some find no other place to call home. All the trials and tribulations, the victors, the vanquished; no one up above will know their stories—only the fruit of their harvest. There's that saying among our Penumbraic kin, that "blood drips upwards". Whomever said it never felt Kabādu's true weight. And yes, I might die in an instant, compared to them, who have the whole of eternity ahead of them. But you know what? I'll know something they never will. And you can, too. Just sit, amidst the much-too-reviled dark, your arms open and your mind blank, and listen. Do you hear it?
Silence

Welcome to the 2G. This here is the edge of the world. Here dwell only those who can afford to shun the light, to give up on the marvels above, to survive under the crushing weight of Nibiru's rejection. It's where the legend of Kabādu becomes real, where the myths of old are reborn, and where the world's true nature is revealed.

THE THEMES IN PLAY

The first theme of Umbra is that of **Kabādu**, also known as The World's Punishment. 2Gs of artificial gravity means your body has to constantly work to keep you conscious. It means your metabolism runs on overdrive, and though your body can get used to it, Kabādu has a permanent effect—with life expectancy in Umbra being about a third of that of the Arku. Better have a good reason to come here.

The second theme intrinsic to Umbraic stories is that of **The Domain of Ingenuity**. Amidst the pitch black darkness, where the world never behaves as expected, imagination runs rampant—and people find a new love for all things imaginative and weird. No matter how much you pride yourself on your skepticism, facing Umbra will be a humbling experience, which will leave you wondering which tales are true and which are nonsense.

The third theme of Umbra is the main source of its allure. **What Lies Beyond**, past the lightless depths, but the truth of the Skyless World's nature and its mysteries? Can you prove your theories true, or will they crash and burn as you witness past the veil? Are you truly willing to risk your life to find out?

COMMUNITIES OF UMBRA

It was only two hundred cycles ago that the first Enēšu settled past the 2G line. They came fleeing Arku persecution, to a place where the cruel overlords overhead could never reach. Those who survived found the carcasses of dead vaults, hidden from the world, and settled there—hell-bent on building a haven for lost souls. Unbeknownst to them, their societies would slowly be shaped by the strange nature of Umbra, birthing a community that is unlike anything else in Nibiru.

Today, two communities have been established in Umbra—one, a success story, born of ingenuity and need. The other, a cautionary tale, ravaged by greed and disdain. The amnesiac kin often wash upon the shores of this dead world, making it the starting place of many a Vagabond's origin story.



STORYTELLING LESSONS UMBRAIC CHRONICLES

Breath deep. Tread lightly. The Umbra shows what humanity might look like when its pushed to the limit, and why some people might find that strange existence desirable. It harbours these odd communities and human groups, coexisting against an ominous backdrop of mystery, danger and wonder.

Many Vagabonds end up in Umbra after their arrival to the human domains. This makes it a perfect place to make a cold start for your group. Understandably so, it's also a great place to end your group—hardly anyone who ventures past the Umbraic frontier ever returns. The allure of discovery might prove irresistible, and the promise of finding your place of origin can push Vagabonds to face the unthinkable.

A cool thing to do when starting an adventure in Antumbra (or when the group decides to go there) is to ask your players: What questions do you pose to the Darkness? What do you hope to find there? What are you most afraid of discovering? Play with their expectations, and make sure to twist the end result to create an interesting payoff!

ROLEPLAYING IN THE DARK

Umbraic chronicles should reflect the themes we've addressed earlier, which can be more easily implemented if you take into account the following questions about your character.

What are they curious for?

Their hidden origin, that of civilization, and the dark place from where all things come from. Everyone, deep inside, harbours larger-than-life questions. Questions that are most likely to find an answer in the Umbra.

How will they survive?

Vagabonds looking to travel Umbra should hold on tight to their mortal coil. Trips into the end of the world rarely go as expected. Be prepared! The journey might be the last one they ever take, so see to them being ready. Pack food, procure a method of transportation, take plenty of water, and krajj. Lots of krajj.

What will be their last stop?

Either in one of the villages along the Flooded Countries, or amidst the wreckage of the Archaean Sorrows, the peoples of Umbra will foreshadow what the group will find during their journeys in the dark.

REIGN OF SILENCE

Making your way outwards from the hallways of Penumbra, the landscape gets progressively stranger. From the main to the secondary tunnels, and into service and distribution conducts, making way across a wall of cables separates, hidden tunnels delve deep into the bones of the station. In these depths, neither light nor oxygen can be found. An overwhelming darkness masks gigantic, roaring machines; a place where some of Nibiru's hidden life support system are found (such as water and metal requisition and processing facilities, as well as thermal regulation engines).

The known regions of 2G are found past the Way of Lanterns. This flat, wide hallway has a slight inclination that (several hundred metres past the 2G line) dips into the water, turning into a flooded tunnel. The tunnels that stem from it, also flooded, spread outwards into a series of broken down facilities, wherein packs of Ayyalu run wild, shedding light amidst the blackness of the Umbra.

Travelers have three choices here: either they face the darkness ahead and find their own way, or they turn to one of two locales: the Flooded Countries, or the sunken ruins of the Archaean Sorrows.

THE FLOODED COUNTRIES

Paddling through sinuous, pitch-black waterways—roofs covered in glowing fungi—you'll reach into a hidden vault, the size of Nineveh. Within its walls resonates the sound of falling water, and its shape is only hinted at by the shed light of hundreds of lanterns, dotting the surface of the lake.

Nataku is the oldest settlement in Umbra. Its vault has one feature that made it particularly attractive; it sits right below a massive body of water (scientists hint at the possibility of a broken reservoir), that bleeds its contents through a crack in the ceiling. The waterfall powers a generator at the center of the town, which feeds power to the rest of the town.

Nataku acts as a gateway for a vast network of flooded vaults, which are widely known as the Flooded Countries. These communities closely cooperate with each other, each ruled by a wisefolk council, each with an envoy in the central council at Nataku. Their economy is centered around a resource quota that has to be filled for each community to function—a well-oiled administrative machine that requires constant upkeep to make sure the communities survive.

The communities of the Flooded Countries have a rich folklore—their imagination staving off the darkness that fills each corner of their world. Still, some of the traditions of higher-Gs stay well-preserved. Umbraic Archivers are adorned by children, young ones leave on journeys of self discovery, and old folk weave share a few puffs as they celebrate the end of another cycle.

WANDERING SONGS

One of the autochthonous traditions of the Flooded Countries was originated by a Vagabond, who recorded instructions to navigate the dark of Umbra—hoping that they would guide lost souls back to Natakū. Some of those recordings, however, ended up back again in other towns of the Flooded Countries. There, kids repurposed them and recorded songs over—which they'd then launch in little boats for an unknown audience to listen.

TALE-SPARKS

- *A teenager is trying to find their lost father, and reaches out to the group to compose a Wandering Song. The song will be sent to every corner of the Flooded Countries in hopes the kid's father hears it. How can they make it stand out? What will it say?*
- *Waterborne scavengers are disrupting trade between Natakū and the village of Ebdulun. The locals are asking the group to join the militia to face them. What will they find past the flooded tunnels ahead?*

THE ARCHAEOAN SORROWS

The waters that gifted Natakū with the power they sought for, cursed the locales known today as the Archaeoan Sorrows. Once news of success reached Antumbra, the council of Charchemish made a bold move; they set out to create a small community, hopeful that (with Natakū's assistance) they'd gain a foothold there.

They set out to explore a vast open space, which they then settled—sowing fungi fields and building a small village connected to an outpost at the mouth of the Way of Lanterns. A few cycles after settling, however, tragedy struck in a most unusual manner. The settlers woke up to the strange vision of innumerable droplets falling from overhead. The locals said that “it looked like the ceiling was weeping,” which—though beautiful at first—became worrisome. After several lapses, the council considered the implications of this phenomena, and decided to retreat to the outpost.

By that point, some settlers had moved to nearby detachments. These people became isolated, moreso after the phenomena started claiming homes, their foundations collapsing due to the flood. This disaster resulted in Charchemish removing their presence from the area, leaving behind only a small group of people to operate the outpost, as well as its dependencies beyond the flooded facility. The nature of the phenomena, coupled with the disastrous fate of the Archaeoan enterprise, gave the area its distinctive nickname.

The problems didn't end there. The farmers that refuse to leave the Sorrows are still bound by contract to provide part of their harvest to Charchemish, though slowly they've started to organize to sever themselves from the Antumbran city-state. Problem is, they still require supplies (particularly, batteries) delivered to them, and even if they wanted to trade with Natakū, they'd face the problem of being blocked at the outpost—which still operates as the official administrative body of the Sorrows, putting the region on a deadlock.

TALE-SPARKS

- *A farmer has risen up to lead the stranded community of the Sorrows. They ask for the group for help stealing a Waywatcher AI from the outpost, since the AI could help them map the territory, alert them of danger, etc. How will they accomplish this?*
- *A box with Suruptu credit tags is lost in the depths of the Sorrows. Many have tried to find it, only to return empty handed, fearful of the shadowy figures that wade across the flooded waste.*

KABĀDU

Umbraic settlers fought artificial gravity with all they had. Natakū's construction saw not just a massive import of krajji, but also the use of anti-pressure techniques, some of which are still practised today. Learning from the mistakes of the past, they invested a good chunk of their time conditioning and monitoring their bodies, establishing a regime without which the colonization of the region would have been a disaster.

Each lapse started with breathing exercises and stretching, and then the heads of the convoy would divide people in task groups. One of these groups was focused on documenting people's health conditions. As tasks shifted around, a mass migraine might surfaced, signifying that there was something in particular that was not working. The regime would change and adapt, evolving to slowly mold the rhythm of life in Umbra.



SUBMERGED SLEEPERS

Umbraic settlers knew how essential sleep was to their efforts. With this in mind, they created what they called a “Dream Deluge Machine” (DDM). These machines connected a series of masks via tubes to an oxygen chamber overhead. Every close of lapse, sleepers would dive into the lakes, with one of them reciting the relaxation passages, to make them fall asleep underwater. Umbraic inns still use DDMs to accommodate visitors from above, who might have issues sleeping.

The younger generations of today look quite different from the first settlers, given that artificial gravity affected their biology. Muscle mass is more dense, and their eyesight, while poorer than that of the Arku, is better accustomed to the dark. Lifespan is the lowest in Nibiru, with the average age of Umbraic folk being 120 cycles.

SILENT COMMUNION

If the Cults of Silence were starting to see a revival in Penumbra, it's fair to say they hold almost complete reign over Umbra. Most of the technologic marvels of above were not made to stand under the weight of Kabādu, and the peoples of Umbra learned quickly to commune with Nibiru's fauna to help their efforts. Kids learn from a young age to relate to ayyalus, often riding along the Way of Lanterns as a rite of passage. Old people tell stories of the Leviathan, the mythic beast that protects the Countries, teaching children to care for nature. Slicers drive fishing boats along the Umbraic waterways, and explorers travel with a host of pulsewings to track down different kinds of fungi when delving into the darkness beyond.

In a way, this communion perfectly reflects the ideas of *šiknat napišti*. Local folklore usually entices explorers to seek for answers and signs related to the problem of the original sin (which made it so that humans couldn't feed from electricity) lie out there, lost in the dark corners of the world. Ascetism is valued deeply, as is the pursuit of calm and stillness; all of these practices that bolster survival.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The Penumbraic village of Kirkuk wishes to gift Nataku with one of its idols—a statue depicting a slicer. The group is tasked with travelling along the Way of Lanterns, past a dark expanse to bring the idol to the town. What problems will they face?*
- *Legend of a white fungi field wherein a strange, white-feathered, lion-like creature roams have been doing the rounds across the Countries. A local priest offers a reward for pictures of the creature.*

Even Antumbran religions have embraced and integrated some of the tenets of the Cults of Silence, with plenty of parallels being drawn between the Shepherd and the Leviathan. The most recent Pilgrimage, which started (for the first time) in Natakū, counts more animals than machines among its numbers. More obscure, local traditions, such as Water Worship, tend to have quite a bit of crossover when it comes to the idea of water as the enabler of life in the station.

WATER WORSHIPERS

Water Worship is said to have surfaced in the town of Ebdulun. In there, peoples' lapses tended to be shorter, with longer periods of sleep aided always by DDMs. Several cycles after the foundation of the town, people started to share strange dreams of an otherworldly, light-drenched expanse, with light blue ceilings that stretched as far as the eye could see. Sleepers proceeded to paint these visions along the walls of their town, creating a tradition that sought to use water as a conduit into the wonderful world they saw in their visions.

LAND OF AWAKENINGS

One of the most relevant reasons that make Umbra special has to do with the widespread, yet unspoken knowledge of Vagabonds. This is something the locals mostly keep to themselves, knowing that to talk about them is to invite problems. This ingrained vow of silence is one of the most important victories of the Vagabond community, which serves to make Umbra an (in spite of everything else) welcoming place.

Traditions of hospitality and trust, which are vital to the Umbric peoples, also help Vagabonds surviving through their first cycles—by far the most crucial times, when they are still learning to adjust their worldview to live in Nibiru. Whispers of local fishers rescuing a stray amnesiac, of travelling caravans finding and caring for disoriented, stranded individuals have even started to populate the community's collective imagination.

The Cults of Silence have erected a statue to the figure of the Vagabond, an androgynous-looking person who hides part of their face with a cowl, and marches into the dark aided with a walking stick and a small, glowing fungi necklace. The priesthood teaches that to invoke their name in vane is to invite Vagabonds at your doorstep, which is a responsibility no one wants to take—in turn helping keep the vow of silence alive. Whether this is a tradition started by Vagabonds is up to debate, but it surely has served the amnesiac kin keep their signature from being picked up by the wrong people.

TALE-SPARKS

- A priest from the town of Stilltide (who's also a Vagabond from the Wild) wishes to take the cult of the Vagabond to Kirkuk, hoping that the trading caravans can help it spread across Antumbra. They ask for the group to help them. How will they do it?
- An envoy from the Covenant arrives at Natakū, and the group is asked by a local contact to keep an eye on them. Soon, the envoy learns about the cult of the Vagabond. What consequences will this bring?

ADVENT OF DARKNESS

Every two cycles, the Archaean outpost at the mouth to the Sorrows dispatches a group of locals, hired to measure and take notes on the creeping power outages that plague the Way of Lanterns. Their results have, for a long time now, shed light on the dimming of the world; the much-feared Blackout that is progressively making its way into Penumbra. Although the peoples of Umbra have managed to survive without depending on the power of the Core, some of the more vital systems of the station (such as oxygen supply and water circulation) depend on the Core's performance.

The deeper implications might be unknown to them, but the one thing they are truly worried about has to do with the loss of light across the Way of Lanterns, which they need in order to find their way into Penumbra. This has led to a joint effort between the communities of the Countries and the Sorrows, to find alternative routes into Penumbra, hoping to avoid total isolation.

Whatever tore through the reservoir that flooded the inhabited regions of Umbra also affected several hallways people could have utilized to bypass the Way of Lanterns. Operating an ascendant would be nigh impossible, due to the extreme power required to fight Kabādu, as would be driving a barge. This situation has led a few councils in Umbra to consider that Arku cooperation might be the only choice they'll have in the end.

TALE-SPARKS

- As Blackout disrupts caravans across the Way of Lanterns, the council of Ebdulun asks the group to seek an audience with the scavenger tribes that roam along the hallway, hoping they can be of assistance. What will be the price of this alliance?
- After the shutdown, the group lost their way, eventually arriving at a dead generator. A herd of asappu seems to be nesting here. What are they doing here? How will the group find the way back?



ALONG THE WAY OF LANTERNS

Though technically the name of the hallway leading to human civilization in Umbra, the Way of Lanterns is also used to refer to the communities of the Flooded Countries and the Archaean Sorrows. These communities might have gone in separate ways, but they both share the same waters, and whatever malady affects one flows into the other.

Across the inns and checkpoints of the Way of Tears, it is the following situations that we believe will shape the future of Umbra, which your group will ultimately involve themselves with when travelling the Darkness.

THE ARCHAEAN DEADLOCK

The Countries and the Sorrows might have gone in separate ways, but they both share the same waters, and whatever malady affects one flows into the other. Cooperation between both has been minimal, mainly due to the Archaean outpost that stands between both.

Worse; the Penumbraic settlements Nataku trades with are mostly under Archaean patronage, meaning that any further cooperation between the Countries and the Sorrows might push Charchemish into severing ties between Nataku and its Enēšu associates.

Although Nataku holds a privileged position in the region, hope may ultimately live in the Sorrows. The locals have started to repurpose the remnants of the original settlement, building a tall bridge to reconnect with the Way of Lanterns. Once completed, the bridge could open the way for joint exploration of the hallways beyond, in hopes of finding new paths to Penumbra.

WHISPERS OF COLDBREACH

Strange sightings have been reported along the waterways near Stilltide, and many a traveler has witnessed what seems to be wandering AIs, making their way towards the dark tunnels that flow out of the Countries and into the lands beyond. Some of these sightings have even reported AIs walking underwater, faint lights marching in an unnerving, otherworldly parade.

An old local legend speaks of a place named Coldbreach, where rogue AIs go to die. In light of these sightings, the tale has been given more and more attention over the last few cycles, prompting the council of Nataku to employ a small group of rust hunters and explorers. These individuals have been tasked with finding the settlement, and figuring out what might be causing the strange phenomena.

BLACKOUT

One particular problem has surfaced in the last few cycles, which preoccupies the wisefolk council of Nataku. The operatives that maintain the generator known as the Circle have noticed a decrease in its power output. It seems like the flow of water into the vault has diminished, which means one of two things. Either the massive body of water has, somehow, been suddenly reduced, or something is interrupting the water flow, preventing the generator to operate to its full potential.

Whatever the case, it means that the cause lies somewhere far from the settlement, which has led the council to devote resources into exploration parties that might reach the root of the problem and find out what exactly is happening.



NATAKU

The Farmlands

The Flooded Countries

The Archaean Sorrows

Myrna

Hidden Waterways

The Angel Corridor

The Lanterns



NATAKU

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS C)
 POPULATION: APPROX. 30,000
 GOVERNMENT: FREE COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FISHERIES, ORGANIC BATTERIES
 OFFICAL RELIGION: CULTS OF SILENCE

The City of the Circle came as the result of one of the greatest efforts in human history, a monument to humanity's victory over Kabādu, and proof that life can thrive even in the most inhospitable places. Its birth forged the unique communities that would later spread and populate the rest of the vaults that formed the Flooded Countries. Today, it welcomes outsiders with open arms, and trades with Penumbra, sending food and batteries across the Way of Lanterns.



TANIS

TYPE: OIL CONTAINER VAULT
 POPULATION: APPROX. 3,000
 GOVERNMENT: FREE COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FUEL
 OFFICAL RELIGION: CULTS OF SILENCE

Sister village to Natakū, Tanis is a flooded vault that has seen sharp fluctuations of its water level across its history. Due to this, the village is built on impressively tall steelweave pillars, with dozens of bridges and hanging shacks. The city survives thanks to a fuel distillery, which separates the diluted oil from the water, cleaning it and using the product to light its homes. Tanis has a small underwater Covenant outpost, exclusively dedicated to research fuel extraction technology.



OUNNUR

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS C)
 POPULATION: APPROX. 2,000
 GOVERNMENT: FREE COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FISHERIES, REEDCRAFTS
 OFFICAL RELIGION: CULTS OF SILENCE

Located in a small vault close to the waterways of Lonespark, Ounnur is a shallow water settlement—the lake surface being just a couple metres over the vault's floor. Clovenreed patches cover spring across the lake, shedding a faint greenish light on its surface. The locals have made an art out of weaving clovenreed, making clothes and all kinds of handy products out of it. It's common for Ounnur to get recurrent mermaid infestations, since these species find it easy to hide amidst the reeds.



KUMMUHI

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS C)
 POPULATION: APPROX. 4,000
 GOVERNMENT: FREE COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FISHERIES, DEMOLITION EQUIPMENT
 OFFICAL RELIGION: NONE

A collective of outlaws from the city-state of Tarsus, who arrived to Natakū with the Fourth Convoy, moved on to found Kummuhi far from the capital of the Flooded Countries. Although they practise a somewhat detached lifestyle from the rest of the community, their knowledge has been invaluable to the councils of Umbra. Kummuhi's demolition engineers were once tasked with blocking the mermaid-infested tunnels near Ebdulun, as well as sealing off contaminated vaults near Tanis.



EBDULUN

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS C) - ONE DEPENDENCY
 POPULATION: APPROX. 10,000
 GOVERNMENT: FREE COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY
 OFFICAL RELIGION: CULTS OF SILENCE

Ebdulun is the farthest settlement in the whole of Nibiru, built on a massive pile of debris that forms an artificial shore within its flooded vault. A small detachment functions as entryway into the town, filled with molten steel sculptures of sheep. Ebdulun has a direct connection to a series of old service tunnels, which are used to breed cattle, which they exchange with Tanis for fuel. The town is known as the only settlement in Nibiru where mermaids can be spotted, as well as the last stop for those who wish to brave the Darkness beyond.



STILLTIDE

TYPE: VAULT (CLASS C)
 POPULATION: APPROX. 2,000
 GOVERNMENT: FREE COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: HOST HOUSES, BATTERIES
 OFFICAL RELIGION: WATER WORSHIP

When the disaster that flooded the vaults of the Countries hit, a series of cracks formed along the walls of the vault of Stilltide, which the settlers utilized to power a series of small floating generators. The noise from the machines, coupled with a feeling of somnolence that has always permeated the vault, made it common practice to sleep with a DDM. Stilltide is the Umbraic equivalent of a holiday town, and sees a small but growing number of Arku that travelling there to experience the Umbraic way of life.



UWOL01 OUTPOST

TYPE: CHECKPOINT CAMP
 POPULATION: APPROX. 80
 GOVERNMENT: ARCHAICAN DEPENDENCY
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FOOD (TAXED PRODUCE)
 OFFICAL RELIGION: NONE

This Archaean outpost was the staging point for the colonization efforts of the Sorrows. Today, most of its personnel has been relocated, with a small detachment running what's been labeled as "upkeep operations" in the area—basically taxing the locals' produce and relaying information back to Archaean branches of government in Penumbra. This outpost stands directly between the farmers of the Sorrows and their aspirations of freedom, making its very existence a threat to the locals' livelihood.



THE ASAPPU PILLAR

TYPE: ZIGGURATH (NON-FUNCTIONAL)
 POPULATION: APPROX. 150
 GOVERNMENT: FREE COUNCIL
 TOP INDUSTRIES: FOOD
 OFFICAL RELIGION: NONE

In a farcorner of the Sorrows lie the remnants of an old Ziggurath. Asappu herds gather here, and a small encampment has been established by the local farming community, hidden away from the eyes of the UWOL01. The community hopes that they'll be able to break free from the outpost's domain, and with this in mind they've launched several attempts to contact fugitives from the Sienna revolt—one of them being part of the council, and helping them plan their next steps.



III NATAKU

*The Circle drank the tears of gods,
To feed forsaken souls below.
In seas of sorrow, they built a home,
Where no one thought that life would grow,
To forge a kinship with the unknown,
To live where no one dared to go,
Submit the world and flip its head,
To stare humanity at its toes.*

Glowbug lanterns peer over the lake's surface, faint light spilling over spiraling docks and bleeding into the darkness ahead. The blue fungi that covers the tunnel walls crowns the silhouettes of travelers, as they push their boats through a narrow passage. Out of the mouth of the tunnel, thousands of blue lights appear reflected over the lake; the city of Natakku welcomes all.

This section depicts the capital of the Flooded Countries; the largest human settlement in Umbra, and its denizens.

THE FOUR CONVOYS

A cavalcade of humans and machines, descending from far Penumbra and into dark, echoey halls, pushes a small fleet of boats forward, their lanterns revealing the way into the still waters of Natakku. The largest of the boats carries a floating generator, and a big stash of batteries, medicine and sleeping capsules. This, the first of four convoys that would travel into the Flooded Countries, had a massive task ahead. Not only they had to lay the foundations for the settlement; but also to monitor and face all of the strange occurrences that would soon surface.

During these early cycles, work just didn't stop. Not for the many folk that took part in surveying the locales and building the docks, and not for the small medical team that documented the strange sleeping patterns, the dizziness, and the visions that morphed in the depths of the watery expanse around them. Uncertainty, an aura of eeriness, and the feeling of being where you didn't belong—all of these were as heavy as Kabādu on the courageous settlers.

With time, exploration of the settlement's immediacies revealed a vast network of flooded vaults and facilities, many of which had decayed to the point to which the water became polluted by rust particles, oil and acid leaks, all of which forced the settlers to detonate several tunnels—sealing off a massive area of this new world in fear for the livelihoods of the newly established peoples.

As the brighter cycles washed in, lighting up the Way of Lanterns, messengers were dispatched to Suruptu—delivering information on Umbraic living conditions, and giving the green light for the following two convoys to march along with the Core's rotation, their destination set for the newborn village. The second convoy brought a retrofitted Hauler AI that worked as an amphibian steel forge, allowing the settlers to produce reinforced steel parts in situ, and giving way to the construction of Natakku's pride; the grand generator known as the Circle.

27 cycles of struggle after, the Circle was finished; a steel mill that drank from Natakku's waterfall to power a large generator—a true engineering masterpiece. As soon as started to hum, word spread to reach Antumbra, turning many heads and sparking curiosity on those who had been oblivious of the Umbraic colonization effort.



Travelers and caravans from afar dared the murky waters of Umbra to see the Circle for themselves. They were greeted by a face of humanity that was unapologetic about showing off its strange ways; these people had clearly changed through the experience of living here, their mannerisms and customs unrecognisable from those of the places they had left behind.

Strangeness attracted the curious, and the steady power supply of the Circle pumped its blood through the veins of the Flooded Countries, where one by one new settlements rose over the watery expanse. In the darkest corner of the world, it was as clear as it could get; humanity had triumphed over Nibiru.

NATAKU, TODAY

Hardship built the peoples of Nataku to forge some of the strongest bonds of friendship and community in Nibiru, without which their lives would have been lost to the dark. It was through this struggle that many of today's customs materialized, many of which involve multiple rites of passage that help build a strong sense of trust between the Umbraic peoples. The council knows of the importance of consolidating these inner and outer circles of trust, and so they make a great effort to pass on tradition to the younger generations.

Some of these traditions, which make up the bulk of what's called kamû culture, are focused on creating a bond with outsiders. Newcomers are expected to introduce themselves to the city council when arriving at an Umbraic town, where they will be given a token to be worn. Although this does signal to everyone else that these people are outsiders, it also means they are trusted by the council, since they've introduced themselves and they are visitors to the Countries.

THE INHERITANCE

One of the most interesting customs of kamû culture is that of Inheritance. Every birthlapse, kids are given by their parents a small batch of fungi to grow. They are expected to care for the batch as it grows, as well as adding each new patch to their small garden, which is kept in a raft. When the time comes for the rites of passage into adulthood, kids gather together to take their glowing fungi barges, which they've grown with a lot of care, to villages in the far corners of the Countries, symbolizing not just the idea of "leaving the nest", but also the importance of giving back to the community.

LORE BITES

KAMÛ

"Better to be chained to one another than to Nibiru. The latter will offer no compassion."

This popular saying in Umbra showcases the mentality of most communities across the Flooded Countries, which the folk refer to as *kamû* (basically meaning "we are all in this together").

Kamû can be seen in every part of Umbraic society. Kids tend to play yard games wherein they make tough choices and explain their reasoning. Young adults organize "kamû chains" in which they pick a specific task and perform it for their fellow kinfolk, passing down favours. The elderly gather to collect fungi from their community and send it off to the farthest settlements in the countries.

The kamû culture teaches that, if individuals are naturally taught to engage in acts of solidarity, their actions can have ripple effects that will enrich every life in the community—a mindset that has started to spread into the far reaches of Penumbra.

COMMUNION OF THE SPECIES

Religious traditions have, unsurprisingly, been molded by the struggles of the Umbraic peoples. It's easy to see how a set of traditions like that of the Pilgrims, who speak of light and life as an ever blessing, wouldn't resonate as much around these parts (adding to this that celebrations tend to be associated to the Assyrian cycles, which vastly differ from the True cycles of Nataku).

Instead, the ideas of the Cults of Silence, which give reason to some of the most callous aspects of the Skyless World—and propose several paths to redemption—seem to have found a strong foothold in the Flooded Countries. Nataku is at the epicenter of this revival of the Cults of Silence, with many of its festivities being inspired or directly taken from the traditions of Kirkuk.

The breeding of Penumbraic species (particularly sheep, due to the need for warm clothes, and slicers, to help traverse the flooded tunnels) is always on the rise, which has allowed for some common traditions of the Cults of Silence to set in—such as the Herders' Parade, where young folk are taught leadership by guiding a small sheep herd from one point in town to another. At the same time, local customs have woven in certain rites of passage, like the previously described Inheritance rite.

TALE-SPARKS

- A lone fungi barge with a kid lies stranded in the midst of the tunnel. It seems like the slicer has detached from the barge. How can the group find the creature, and lead it back to the barge? And... what exactly scared it into breaking its chain?
- The sheep population of Tanis is dying due to unknown causes. Upon investigating, the group finds leads into the underwater Covenant outpost. How can they sneak in, and what will they find?

THE YOUNG AND THE WISE

The social orders of Antumbra tend to not have the same subdivisions seen in Umbra, with these simply splitting communities between those whom are called the Youngfolk and the Wisefolk. The former are, contrary to what the name suggests, people of all ages who form the bulk of the society. The latter are chosen representatives, often people who have earned one or several awards for their service to the community.

Each commune has its own local administrative body presided by one of the Wisefolk, whose job is to push for Youngfolk to participate in decision-making, to break up arguments, and to represent the locals in the Wisefolk Council. In practice, the system is mostly concerned with making people involve themselves—the Wisefolk do represent the Youngfolk, but they expect them to have their say in many decisions, and they'll recognise the need for informed opinions among the Youngfolk.

Due to this, the division between communities tend to not just revolve around locales, but also about occupations. Youngfolk who devote most of their time fishing might see that they share a commune with a few other fishers. Individual roles are much more defined in Umbra than in Antumbra. If you are a cook, it's likely you'll be a cook for most of your life, since Umbraic societies necessitate specialization to get the most out of people's labor.

VOTING CANALS

At the center of every commune, a set of small fenced pools connected to a series of canals assist the voting system of the Umbraic peoples. When voting is open, the operative will send a red smoke signal that members of that commune can see, calling for a vote. Each of the Youngfolk will go there, take a water lily and let it flow across the canal that signifies their choice for the decision at hand. Afterwards, the water lilies will be counted, and the Wisefolk will be informed of the Youngfolk's input.

TALE-SPARKS

- The decision of allowing a small Covenant outpost in Natakku is soon to be put forwards to the Youngfolk, with the Covenant offering bicyclical food shipments sent to the city in exchange. How can the group prevent this from being approved?
- The Southern Commune of Natakku is about to choose their new representative, and the Vagabonds of the Tower of Merek want to bring an amnesiac to the role. How can they achieve this?

PRESSING MATTERS

Although exploration parties are still setting out to find the cause of the water pressure problem, the wisefolk seek for outside solutions in the meantime—looking for assistance near and far. Tanis' fuel stockpile is slowly being moved along the arteries of the Flooded Countries, to supply the emergency generators that dot Natakku's crowded districts, yet without a sustainable replacement the city might be about to face a terminal crisis.

Allies in Penumbra are in a weak position, unable to offer a solution to the issue, and while the Antumbraic city-states might hold the key to survival, their price might be too high. A few Antumbraic Silu have gathered to discuss potential solutions, trying to work within the parameters of the Natakku council to save the town, yet they face off the ever-more-predatorial interests of large organizations—all of which have great interest in making Natakku their new staging grounds for Umbraic exploration.

In the meantime, the call for help has echoed across the Torus Corridor, with the technician schools at Suruptu's PL pushing to discover a solution. At the same time, this has sparked fears of revolution across Antumbra: Suruptu's lone position of power has not carried the weight necessary to effectively break the Arku's stranglehold in the Outer Reaches—but with Natakku's support, that might be about to change.

TALE-SPARKS

- A technician has developed a prototype for a dam, hoping to help Natakku. However, their master has been pulling strings for Waywatcher checkpoints to try to intercept the blueprint as it leaves Suruptu. How can the group sneak them out?
- A small-hunting party plans to capture a Serpent to use its power, yet this could spring a crisis of belief that would threaten Natakku's ties with Kirkuk. How can the group stop the hunters?



5

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WISEFOLK COUNCIL

Smoke rises from the hollow carcass of recycled steel barges, which form the metal sphere within which the Nataku wisefolk gather to lead the peoples of the Flooded Countries.

3

BLACKWATER INN

The oldest inn in Nataku, Blackwater still manages to keep about 100 DDMs functional (mostly thanks to it being far from the fishing area). It has become a common meeting place, thanks to its location.

5

THE CIRCLE

Purveyor of power for the city of Nataku, the Circle is an engineering marvel that utilizes the vault's bleeding wound to bring life to the Flooded Countries. Its importance cannot be understated, thus the reason why the council has requested the city engineers to make home right next to it.

7

OIL RESERVES

Ever thoughtful of the consequences of losing the Circle, the citizens of Nataku built an oil-fuelled generator at the base of the machine, which is supplied by several oil tanks dotted across the settlement. These have become more important than ever now, due to the water flow crisis.

2

PILGRIMS' CHAPEL

This chapel is the region's only place of worship for the Pilgrims outside of Kummuhi, built in anticipation of the first Pilgrimage to originate in Umbra. The chapel is surrounded by small establishments that tend to serve Arku travelers staying in town.

4

THE TOWER OF MEREK

A common place of refuge for Vagabonds, run by an old man called Merek. It masquerades as a textiles workshop, with the top levels harbouring the Vagabonds' rooms and habitation.

6

CHURCH OF THE HOLY WOMB

Although the cult of the Shepherd is barely existent in Nataku, the small community that worships the Assyrian icon belongs to the persecuted Birther tradition. They gather in this large warehouse, where it's said that one or several Birther AIs are found.

8

FISHERS' MARKET

By far the largest produce of Nataku is fish, which is distributed along several markets in the city. Wide docks are flanked by stalls, featuring long tables at the center that the locals use to sit and eat together. Markets only take credit for food from outsiders.



WISEFOLK COUNCIL

There's a poetic note to the fact that, many cycles ago, it was the steel carcasses of the four convoys' fleet that were melted to build the Wisefolk council of Nataku. After all, it was in a solemn encirclement of barges, amidst the endless darkness of Umbra, that the first laws of the Flooded Countries were penned. The edifice of these people's victory over the untamed wildlands of Nibiru might look very different from what it was back then, but the ways they do things has not changed much.

WHY GO THERE

Nothing is more vital than *to introduce yourselves* when arriving at Nataku. Upon doing so, you'll be greeted by the Archiver, a council member, and given a welcome pendant, which will signal to the peoples of the Countries that you care to respect their culture.

Nataku council members have the custom of extending a dinner invitation to newcomers who catch their eye. For them, *to share news, tales and cultural facts over fried fish* is an important part of their role, since they expect visitors to then return and give a benign image of the Countries to the peoples of Penumbra and Antumbra. A lot can be learned and earned from the experience—aside from a tasty meal!

ALAKTU

Welcome pendants, commonly referred to as Allaktu, symbolize the people's commitment to the idea of life preservation and care, and in the Flooded Countries these take the form of a small crystal orb with a bit of blue fungal growth inside. The necklace is actually a functional cable, which you can detach and charge to feed some power to the fungi inside, caring for it. Locals tend to distrust strangers that care not to carry a healthy looking Alaktu, even less so those that do not carry one at all.

Wisefolk didn't get their title for nothing. They've learned that every chance they have to interact with the worlds above should be taken, and they usually offer *to take contracts* they need to fulfill within their agenda. These generally relate to message relaying, though some of the most trustworthy collaborators have been asked to bring particular pieces of information on the state of the world beyond the Countries' borders, all of which tends to be repaid in the form of produce from one of the region's many villages and hamlets.



WHO TO MEET

Aided by her trusty walking cane and sporting a wild, no-bullshit look, **Izla** is one of the youngest members of the wisefolk council. Her success in finding the lost Archaean convoy ten cycles ago has garnered a lot of respect for her. To top it, she is a Vagabond from the Dreadlands, and although this is not widely known, realizing this might play to the group's advantage (if they manage to earn her trust, that is).

Mlimar is a living legend—the kind that paints a very peculiar image of Umbra. He built the Pilgrim's Chapel and, as the story goes, he entered a comatose state inside his DDM right after the construction ended. Since then, the council has taken care to supply him with nutrients via a tube. On his old spot sits a small speaker, connected to the DDM, through which his sleepy voice can be heard mumbling, from time to time, about the strange vistas he visits in his dreams.

Nicknamed the “Dancer in the Water”, **Pol** is the architect of the growing relationship between the Flooded Countries and the Sorrows. A retired diplomat from Karik's Crescent, they carry out a subtle fight to remove Archaean presence from the region, and to help the communities of the Sorrows settle down.

TALE-SPARKS

- *Izla asks the group for a private meeting, wherein she reveals that a BrightTowner has disappeared around the same time a known Enki's Nexus passed through Natak, headed for the Way of Lanterns. Can they intercept him in time? What strange turn of events will they find?*
- *Pilgrims arrive to hear the mumblings of Mlimar, wishing to move him to the Chapel. Some locals oppose them, reticent to see Mlimar become a “tourist attraction”. The group is asked to mediate between both sides, but who will they favor? And what will the consequences be?*

PILGRIMS CHAPEL

Large crystal columns lit by dense fungal growth illuminate a large dome, carved with the tale of the first pilgrimage and painted in the black hues Tanis' burnout painting method. For most of its history, the Chapel rarely received practising pilgrims, mostly regarded as a place to seek tranquility and to meet up with others. However, as Natak establishes ties with the rest of the Skyless World, Mlimar's intended use of the building starts to take shape—slowly fulfilling his dream.

WHY GO THERE

The Chapel is a common point *to meet up*, where people often get together for a meal, and to play some music—taking advantage of the fact that the floor is much more expansive than the narrow city walkways. Council members and other individuals tend to use the Chapel's premises *to organize social action*, since there's almost always a large group of people around to call out.

The above is surely no laughing matter for the small group of Pilgrims that maintain the Chapel. Particularly now that envoys from the Corpus and the Mentis tradition have arrived to the city to get the Chapel up and running, the place is slowly becoming apt *to pray* and *to attend readings of the Pilgrimage accounts*. The new leaders hope that this will raise awareness of their creed in the city, though they do face some opposition.

Some of the most radical anti-Arku elements in the Nataku society see the Pilgrims as a threat. Cultural tradition born out of the city-states of Antumbra is often looked at with suspicion, and as of late a few groups have been known *to protest Antumbran colonization* by scribbling the Chapel walls.

WHO TO MEET

Shawil grew up in the Sorrows, and since then has travelled to Nataku to help rally against the Archaean blockade that is preventing their people from creating a healthy society. Shawil sought permission from the Chapel's caretakers to preach there, granted due to their involvement in the organisation of the first Nataku-born Pilgrimage. The new envoys, however, are not so keen on it—resulting in a tense situation between them, the old caretakers, and Shawil themselves.

Envoy for the Mentis Tradition, *Sawra* is a curious mind with a talent for bringing people together. She is devoted to showing the most charitable face of the Pilgrims to the folk of the Flooded Countries, trying to preach the aspects of her religion that most resonate with the Umbraic mentality. To her, the fault for the current state of the faith lies not in the faith itself but in the interpretation of Nataku's founders. This puts her vision at odds with that of the council, yet her charitable acts make it so that people cannot really brush her off—a dicotomy that some think will become disruptive, if she were to seek more power in the future.

Envoy for the Corpus Tradition, *Yomadan* was taken into the faith after suffering a life changing wound during work at a factory. His bottom half was replaced for mechanical limbs, allowing him to walk again, and sealing the deal for a life of servitude at the churches of Nimrod. It was not so long ago that his superiors offered him the chance to take

his workshop to Umbra, thinking that people would value him as an icon of the kind of strength that the Corpus faith can bring. In a way, his message complements that of his peer Sawra, and he seeks to inspire the locals with his talent for storytelling and plastic artistry.

TALE-SPARKS

- *Yomadan has offered to perform the first instance of the Red Rite ever conducted in Umbra, with the subject being determined through an art contest. He seeks to find a talented and imaginative creator whom he'll bless with Nibiru's steel. Who will partake? What will others think?*
- *During a meeting between the Envoys and the Wisefolk Council, a group of activists from the Sorrows take over the Chapel's yard. Now, the Envoys and the Council stands divided, as the former claim for repression and the latter ask for open dialogue. How will the group intercede, and what will the social consequences be?*
- *Shawil contacts the group, worried about the situation in the Chapel now that the Envoys are here. They are about to hold a meeting to discuss the viability of allowing Shawil to preach. Can the group influence the decision? Who will they reach out to in order to do so?*

BLACKWATER INN

During Nataku's first cycles, the only reason why work ever stopped was to fill people's bellies with fried fish and to seek tranquil sleep via DDMs—both conducted at the site of Blackwater Inn. Now mostly dedicated to housing visitors and transients, the inn has been rebuilt, reworked and redesigned over thirteen times since its conception, with each time coinciding with an important event in the town's history—thereby cementing itself as a reminder of how far the people of Nataku have gone.

WHY GO THERE

If you are going *to sleep for some lapses in Nataku*, you'll have to go to the inn. The caretakers usually take two forms of payment for staying at any of the DDMs: either you provide an hour of upkeep at the inn's garden for each lapse, or you bring a new kind of fungi to the garden's collection, meaning you can stay as long as you like!

To smoke Krajj! When dipping past the 2G line, most travelers will feel pretty awful. Grab a pipe, top it up and share some stories with fellow outsiders in the lounge—tis the perfect way to begin many an adventure.

That garden isn't there just to serve food indoors. The innkeepers know well that their establishment is often a staging point for expeditions beyond Natak, and as such there's a big warehouse for travelers *to stock up on supplies* for their trip. Just make sure to leave something behind as a collateral for each thing you take!

WHO TO MEET

Once a member of the Verdant Coven (an organization that cares for the wondrous Hanging Gardens), **Barsawme** brought with themselves a huge collection of fungi species to help the Natak expansion efforts. Today, in their old age, they dedicate themselves to coordinating the inn's garden upkeep, and to examine new fungi varieties that could be used to improve peoples' lives.

Eilbra and his sleep research have been installed at the inn for a good while now, monitoring the innkeepers' sleep and relaying his results to his associates in Ashur. Eilbra is interested in studying fluctuating sleep patterns in travelers, and will take any chance to get transients to wear his sleeptracker band and report back after a cycle, in exchange for Assyrian credits.

Asor has been in charge of the inn for not long now, taking over after the passing of Dorara a few cycles ago. They are a kind soul, often seen solemnly playing the flute out on the balcony. Asor used to tour around Penumbra with their band, until they ran into a scavenger ambush in which Asor lost several friends (and had to take a life). They've since retired, though they won't shy away from sharing a story or two if you care to listen.

TALE-SPARKS

- *After receiving an emergency call from a far outpost in Penumbra, Asor the people present at the inn for help rescuing a Krajj shipment, which seems to have been intercepted by scavengers. How will the group track them, and who's the vengeful soul behind the attack?*
- *Eilbra wishes to conduct his research along with the peoples of the Sorrows, and asks the group to reach out to them with a small suitcase full of sleeptracker bands. He says that he could pass the word on the people's good faith to Ashur. What will the group make of this?*

THE TOWER OF MEREK

Arguably, there ain't no place safer for Vagabonds in the Skyless World than the Tower of Merék. This tall building bears the name of its caretaker, an old member of the community who has taken in stray Vagabonds and offered them a place to live together in peace. Although the tower might seem like the perfect place to live in,

there is an odd feeling of stagnancy—the Vagabonds that live here have, strangely, stopped remembering.

WHY GO THERE

Memories warm you up on the inside, but they also tear you apart. It's important *to reach out into a place of peace and tranquility* when the world aims to crush you under its weight. It's also important that, once you find strength, you return to search for those memories, so that you can correct the mistakes of the past in order *to create more places of peace*. Those who stay long in the Tower rarely leave to share its blessings, but for this they shouldn't be blamed; their memories are their own, and one can only imagine what they have sown.

Records of those who have passed through are stored in the Tower, kept safe in order for the Covenant *not to track down the others*. These are jealously kept, since Vagabonds are wary of the "traitor kin". With time, commitment or a good deal of persuasion though, they might accept to help the group track down someone in particular—as long as if it's a matter of life or death.

There might still be some hope for a few of the souls living here. Even if they refuse to leave, some of the older Vagabonds might be willing *to share knowledge on the amnesiac kin*, which can be prove valuable depending on what the group might be preparing for.

WHO TO MEET

Merek has stared at humanity's ugliest face for long enough to not want to make eye contact ever again. They were a functional part in the development of some of the abhorrent technologies used by the Covenant to extract memories from captured Vagabonds. Eventually, they escaped and sought solace in Natak, building the Tower and devoting the rest of their days to helping save the lives of those who they once helped destroy.

Gbar Eil is a Vagabond from the Wildlands, known in the tower for his love of pastries and how he can imitate practically anyone in existence. He dreams of being an actor, but suffered through a lot—having faced detention in a Covenant facility twice. He's learned quite a bit about how the Covenant works, and is carefully preparing to leave the city to pursue their dreams.

In a small studio littered with eerie lights and the humming of machinery, **Ttwa** researches and learns of the intricate designs of AI Cores. She is a Vagabond of the Machine, an avid reader of psychology and engineering treatises. She dreams with studying at Suroptu, though has given up on it due to the Covenant's presence in the city. Still, she always seeks for fellow scholars among Natak's transients, in hopes to learn more.

TALE-SPARKS

- *Gbar Eil feels confident enough to return to Penumbra to become an actor, yet he needs help erasing the records of three Covenant offices—in Suruptu, Ebbub and Sienna. How will the group infiltrate these locales, and how can they make sure others reap the benefits of their work?*
- *A strange group of Vagabonds from the Dreadlands arrive at the Tower. They say they seek for rumors of Pandora, a wanderer that is said to carry an artifact that can rid them of the Nightmare. Where does this story come from, and how can the group be of any assistance?*

THE CIRCLE

The concept of water as the source of life flows into the lives of the Umbraic peoples time and again, be it in their religious practises, their cultural traditions and, more than anything else, through the giant generator known as the Circle. It produces enough power to sustain Nataku and a few of the neighbouring fishing hamlets, all connected via underwater powerlines and kept in shape by a small army of technicians.

WHY GO THERE

At the base of the Circle, an altar to the lost lives of those who worked to build the generator is lit by hundreds of candles. A small garden teeming with albino sparklings nests here, and the locals have extended a few powerlines out so that they can feed. The lines converge to a small idol, donated by the town of Kirkuk, and is a tranquil place **to meditate and pray to the spirits of Silence**. The company of small creatures and the humm of the power converter soothe the nerves.

MEDITATIVE MINDS

*The Cults of Silence often encourage the practice of meditation near power sources, the sound of which helps instill calmness in those willing to stay a while and listen. It is said that the capability of creatures to listen to electricity as it courses is a sign of Nibiru's blessings, and that for humans to seek to resonate with those sounds is a sure path to becoming more attuned with the world's heartbeat. **Committing to this idea and meditating at one such place can help characters to restore lost Mind Steps.***

Stacked above one another, the houses of the Circle's technicians ascend along with the structure—connected by a maze of narrow steps, each small enough that you can peer at the abyss below through the seams. It all comes together in an encroaching cloister, where the people of Nataku meet **to learn basic engineering** from the locals.

The top of the Circle is only accessible via a series of frail-looking ladders, leading up to a platform that peers over the city. The floor is wet due to the droplets from the waterfall, and a narrow shaft marks the only entrance to the Circle's inner workings, wherein a small monitoring station operates. Anyone wishing **to get a wide look of the Nataku vault** or **to enter the Circle's interior** has to go through this.

WHO TO MEET

Mardokh is a Dreamlander, rescued by Merek from a Covenant convoy along the Way of Tears many cycles ago. Amazingly, Mardokh's memories contain the collective recollections of the Circle's builders, which made up for quite the reveal when introduced to the wisefolk council. It's due to this that they were entrusted with the most important job in town, a job that finds them in reclusion, though proud of their service.

Long ago, **Sharokeen** travelled from Kirkuk to see the growth of the Cult of Silence along the Flooded Countries. She realized that the region held a lot of potential to teach valuable lessons she could take back to her home, and worked with the community to build the Sparklings' Shrine at the base of the Circle. She usually gives counsel to those in need, and is seen as an exemplary member of the Nataku society, sometimes even being called upon to mediate in tough disputes.

Often seen climbing and leaping across the roofs of central Nataku, **Bet Eil** is the leader of a gang of young delinquents known as the *Slivers*. They have a knack for stealing and conjuring up awesome animal-themed grafitti, to then make a quick escape by utilizing metal hooks strapped to their arms, which they use to zipline across the powerlines that stem from the Circle. Bet Eil is said to have a "secret mission" that his followers seem keen on fulfilling—whatever that entails.

TALE-SPARKS

- *A small explosion at the center of the Circle sends the local community into an outrage against the Slivers. Tacking down Bet Eil will see them blame a stranger who was seen wandering the "techies maze", and the sudden disappearance of Mardokh makes the matter even more complicated. Who's behind the explosion, and what happened to the Dreamlander?*
- *An Archaean Silu wishes to meditate at the Sparklings' Shrine, along with their retinue. The locals, however, are reticent on allowing them to partake, given their support for the cause of the communities of the Sorrows. Who does the group stand with, and how will they proceed?*

CHURCH OF THE HOLY WOMB

The amnesiac kin is not the only class of outsider that finds a haven in the city of Natak. The persecuted branch of the Shepherd's faith known as the Birthers also has a place of refuge inside of a big warehouse along the southern docks. Here, a group of exiled technicians come together to realize one of the technological wonders of our era: Birther AIs.

WHY GO THERE

Assembly of Birther AIs is forbidden in almost every major urban hub across Nibiru. Natak's religious scholars, however, understand the deep correlations between many philosophical tenets of the Cults of Silence and the Birther tradition. In a way, the Shepherd embodies the Will that once severed the ties between Nibiru's lifeblood and humanity, and it's due to this that if you want **to understand the cult's roots and history** there's probably no other place to go than here.

The faith of the Holy Womb is liberating. The wondrous engineering of Birther AIs allow any human group, regardless of biological sex and number of individuals, **to plant the seed of life**. Poliamorous groups and same-sex couples can conceive and raise kids under the care of the council, to then return to their home vaults (although it's no wonder why so many of them stay).

This is the only place where one can learn how **to build a Birther AI**. The process is very intense, requiring tens of cycles of study, yet the small community of engineers that serve under the Church of the Holy Womb can attest to the fact that "there's no work under Nibiru's ceilings more fulfilling than the bespoke creation of a new Birther".

WHO TO MEET

Even though Natak is a safe city, Birthers know not to take risks, particularly when it comes to protecting such a valuable place as the Church. **Pihirim** is an ex-member of the Waywatchers Consortium, who stands guard with a long deathspitter at the gates of the Church. He has contacts within the Slivers, making him aware of any strange movement in the area. He has worked for a long while to push the free councils of Penumbra to protect the Birther tradition, particularly the sister town of Kirkuk.

Nukh presides over the Church's body of technicians, as well as managing the operations of An, Ki, and Utu (the Church's Birther AIs) and being a Natak council member. It's always said about them that, with all those responsibilities, they should retire soon. Nukh does look forward to one day take sail to the Hanging Gardens and then settle down in Kirkuk to try to foster a new Birther community (as well as for health reasons).

Coordinating the work of the tech team at the Church, **Dwura** was taught under the tutelage of one of the famed Pleiads. That relationship came to an end during a set of incidents in the city of Nimrod, where she took part in an attack against a Silu conglomerate that exploited Penumbraic labor. After fleeing to the depths of Nibiru, she came across a set of blueprints for Birther AIs, and associated with Nukh to create the Church.

TALE-SPARKS

- *Three Stilltide residents contracted a strange disease and, due to their delicate condition, they need to be moved with great care to Natak. Nukh asks the group to escort Utu (which can get tall enough to walk across the flooded vaults with the ill in its vats). Why do some of the victims family members stand in their way upon arrival?*
- *A triad of Birthers from the city of Ashur sent a messenger, who went through a lot to get to Natak, asking for the Church's help. The group is offered a Birther AI if they manage to get them here. What challenges await them?*

OIL RESERVES

The lapses before and during the construction of the Circle saw many a settler pushing oil tanks up and down the waterways of the Countries, lighting up the dark and keeping the people warm in improvised tents mounted on each barge. Even after the waterfall's power was harnessed, oil continued to be an important part of Natak's community, and in a way it signified the transition between a community that survived to one that actually lived—utilizing it as a tool of expression.

WHY GO THERE

Oil tanks dot the many districts of Natak, and usually serve as a communal gathering center. Each district still has one, plugged to an underwater burner that can supply the district with energy were the Circle to fail. It is here that district locals get together to discuss the issues of their communities, and **to issue the all-very-common contracts** to newcomers that might want to establish a relationship with the city.

From awe-inspiring paintings to odd cocktails and fiery feats of strength, oil has a central role in Natak's art scene. Sparkburster brands of oil are utilized to achieve the unique hairstyles of the region, and craftspeople blend Aether brands of transparent oils with the autochthonous, ultra-luminous crops of blue fungi to create beautiful lamps that look like made of thousands of tiny dancing stars. If you want **to experience the local arts**, this is surely the place to go.

Although the Nataku society does not operate under a credit system, a few people do gather at oil deposits **to trade in credits**. These are, however, folk who are preparing to travel to Antumbra, gathering as much credit as possible to acquire a citizenship—so do not expect them to buy anything from you!

WHO TO MEET

Among the many rarities seen in oil deposit art displays, **Nysra** possesses probably the strangest one yet. She is an explorer of reputation who seems to have found a series of objects, with no apparent functionality, made of a hard, porose material. These objects have captured the attention of Enki's Covenant, with a nexus travelling to Nataku only to appreciate one up close.

Rabila is widely known in the Flooded Countries as organizer of the Lantern's Speedrun—a motorcycle race ran along a series of tunnels and facilities close to the Way of Lanterns. She utilizes this competition to pick new members for her squad every four cycles; a group of riders who are dedicated to keeping track of local scavenger bands that might threaten trade along the region.

Overseeing the oil trade and distribution of the Countries, **Rama** is often found at the base of the Southern District oil container, sat at a small tent littered with cushions. Rama usually goes out of their way to get contractors running errands, taking oil shipments here and there—both in and outside of Umbra.

TALE-SPARKS

- *Rabila was informed that a local scavenger band has razed a krajj farm near the Archaean Outpost, and due to Nataku's reliance on krajj (and the fact her band is out on duty), she needs volunteers to scout out the area and help the farmers. Who's the perpetrator, and why is it that they are trying to sabotage Nataku's krajj supply?*
- *One of the Countries' farthest settlements is going through an energy crisis after a wild slicer cut the underwater powerline to Nataku. An oil shipment could save them, yet Rama seems nowhere to be found. Why is their substitute refusing to provide help? Where is Rama? Could this have to do with Nataku's Broken Circle crisis?*
- *A strange oil container completely covered in "nail scratched cuneiform" washes into Nataku. Upon lifting it to the surface, the muffled sound of something moving within it startles the locals. What stirs inside of it?*

FISH MARKETS

The Flooded Countries are home to a massive population of waterborne species, many of which were identified during the first outings into the region as highly nutritious—ideal for the Umbraic lifestyle. It's due to that that fishing is Nataku's main industry, with every member of society engaging in some part of it every cycle. From spear fishing at harvest chokepoints, to underwater bait fishing, to big prey hunts along the edges of the Countries, the Umbraic peoples have truly mastered their craft—all of which can be experienced at Nataku's fish markets.

WHY GO THERE

Every lapse, Nataku townsfolk stop work **to have lunch together**, with the fish markets featuring large, long metal tables serving all kinds of local produce. These are moments of joy and dance and gluttony—it is known that most love stories start at a fish market's table, and one shouldn't skip on these if you wish to integrate and learn about Umbraic society.

UMBRAIC FISHING

Almost all fish species in Nibiru are bioelectric, thus the reason why a big chunk of the fishing industry in the Countries depends on each settlement's access to electricity. In Ebdulun, fishing groups tend to venture into detachments where the signature of sunken generators attracts prey, catching fish with harpoons. In Nataku, where power is more readily available, fishers use big nets that converge onto a floating buoy. Operatives drop a small pulsating bait into the buoys underwater container, and when fish start to gather around, the operative activates the net—which retracts to trap the fish inside.

Expeditions to the most distant waterways of Umbra usually start at Nataku's Northern Market, where every cycle sees fishers from every corner of the Countries gathering **to organize big prey fishing**. The largest catch are found along the 2.2 line, in the waterways of Lonespark, where experienced fishers wade through mermaid-infested waters, sunken facilities and underwater cable deathtraps in search for prey.

Anything you'd need to traverse the waterways of the Countries, you'll find here. Whether **to acquire fishing equipment** or **to get a boat**, raftmakers and craftspeople will give you a wide array of choices; from kayaks for exploration to longboats and hauling rafts to hunt and transport your catch. You'll need to a solicitation signed by at least three council members, so make sure you do your service to the community before you go about trying to kickstart your waterborne adventures!

WHO TO MEET

Towering among the locals, and usually seen nomming on fried kamāru, *Mimra* is an Assyrian biologist who keeps a compendium of all the registered fish species in the Countries. Since the locals do not handle credits, they will often jump at the chance of having an outsider explore and document their sightings by offering a large amount of Assyrian credits in exchange—even more if you manage to bring back a rare specimen.

It is not uncommon to see people from all over the Skyless World arriving at *Iarsa's* stall, as she is known to be one of the leading chefs of the region. Her signature *Laced Tenderscale* dish is widely sought after, and one should always take the chance to ask her about her cooking methods and the best ways to prepare fish.

It is the council's responsibility to keep the people fed, and *Talita's* job is to make sure that happens. Talita keeps an extensive record of every catch that enters the city, and how it's distributed, making sure everyone gets not just a fair share, but a balanced one, ensuring everyone stays healthy. They also have the responsibility of keeping the markets safe and clean; which is not easy considering that almost the entire city has lunch, every lapse, at the markets' tables.

TALE-SPARKS

- A fight has broken out at the Raftmakers Fish Market, apparently due to the fish not being fresh. Talita thinks that an outsider's voice might be useful, and asks you to de-escalate, establish a dialogue between the two parties, and discover why is it that the fish is not fresh. What will the group find while inspecting the catch?
- A large batch of fish brought from Lonespark seems to be contaminated with mermaids' neurotoxins. This means that expeditions cannot go out there until the source of the problem, which seems to be killing the mermaid population, is dealt with. How with the group travel to Lonespark, and who or what is disturbing its waters?
- Archaean reavers have attacked the peoples of the Sorrows, burning their fungi crops and ravaging their food supplies. Will the group manage to convince the council to help, or will they have to do it themselves?





CHAPTER FIVE



STORYTELLING ENGINES



BEHIND THE CURTAINS

Nibiru's rules give structure to your game, pushing players to express their creativity and ingenuity, as well as facilitating storytelling. Rolling the dice adds tension. The MEMOS system sees you unveiling your character's past in a creative way. Revelations imbue your play style with power and transform the way you experience the game, but all of this does not matter if you are not having fun. Make sure, then, that everyone is on the same page and that the rules we have written do not get in between you and an awesome experience.

DICE ROLLS

Dice are mainly used to determine the consequences of the player character's actions. They feed anticipation, and as such are a vehicle for suspense. A good Narrator will know when to ask for a roll, and when to carry on with the tale. During the length of a session, too many dice rolls will stall the narrative. Too few, and the element of suspense will be watered down, as well as the players' expectations (remember that rolling dice should be enjoyable!).


You will generally roll when there is an action that will have a somewhat significant outcome, though in some situations Narrators should assess if the roll is really necessary and if failure would hurt the story in a meaningful way. The roll of the dice determines if the character (or characters) succeed at the task at hand.

Dice rolls are always performed using four-sided dice. Most of the times, you won't need more than a handful (getting six of these will probably do).



ROLL IN THE MEMORIES

The MEMOS system depends on the player rolling dice—which enables them to write their coveted memories. Remember that you, as the Narrator, should be the one deciding when a roll is to be made, but do bear in mind that your players will need a fair share of rolls so that they can trigger their memories!



How does it work? Simple! Say that, during play, one of the characters is running away from a rival. They reach a window facing a balcony, opposite from the building you are in, intending to jump over the gap to reach the balcony. Because of the risk that this entails, the Narrator could deem this an action worth rolling for. In *Nibiru*, unless stated otherwise, **rolls are performed by using three dice**. Once you roll those three dice, look for any “4” results. If you see at least one, the action is successful; your character jumps over to the other side! This is called a **Normal Roll**.

There is a second type of dice roll used when the characters are up against another thinking creature or machine. These are called **Contested Rolls**, and differ from normal rolls in two ways:

First, in a Contested Roll, there are multiple parties involved. This means that both the Player (for the player character) and the Narrator (for the opposing, non-player character) will roll dice—thus representing a clash of wills. Players may also roll against each other.

Second, instead of looking for 4s, a Contested Roll is executed by adding up the results of each party's dice roll, and then comparing them. Whoever has rolled the largest total number wins the face-off. In case of a tie, the encounter is locked into place, whether because of both sides continuing to purposelessly argue, because they are locked into a spar in equal footing, etc.

Finally, it's important to note down a specific type of roll—the **Special Roll**. The amount of dice used for this rolls is always specified in the rules—e.g., **Special Roll (four dice)**. The game's rules will also specify how to interpret the result. If not, look for 4s as per a Standard Roll, and see if you are successful or not. Special Rolls cannot be affected via Flashbacks.

COOPERATIVE ACTIONS

Teamwork is key to success. Although Vagabonds are quite capable themselves, overcoming the biggest challenges will generally require cooperation and strategy. When more than one Vagabond performs the same task, we use what's called a **Cooperative Action**. Whenever you execute an Action Roll, if any of your fellow players wants to help, they can ask the Narrator. If they allow it, add one extra die to your roll for each other player character assisting you. Remember that failing this roll means everyone will share the consequences!

E.g.: Sonya, Helga and Lawrence are trying to escape via a rusty hatch that leads to an emergency power line. Soon they realize that they will need to force it open, and it just so happens that Helga has a one-die bonus to Forcing Doors! Since she has the largest dice pool, she decides to have a go at it. The Narrator then allows one other person to help, so Sonya steps up and helps push the lid, adding one die for a total of five. She rolls the dice and... With two 4s among the results, Helga and Sonya open the hatch!

MODIFIERS

Some people are better at playing chess, some are better at golf. Some can speak in front of an audience without breaking a sweat, some are great when talking one-on-one. Modifiers come into play when you need to account for people's capabilities (and their lack thereof).

For example, if a character that was looking to jump out the window turned out to be limping, the Narrator might give the player a 1 die penalty, which would see them rolling two dice instead of three. Conversely, if the character was healthy and strong, the Narrator could give them an extra die, making them roll four instead of three. Modifiers can vary, but as far as humans go, no dice pool can be smaller than one die and larger than six dice without the help of tools.



GRAVITY

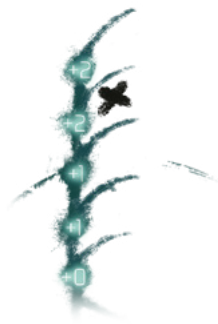
All Vagabonds are human beings, subject to the same weaknesses other human beings suffer when in the station. One such weakness is artificial gravity. As you travel across Nibiru, artificial gravity might change—becoming more or less oppressive.

Gravity affects rolls that depend on your physical capabilities. In your character sheet, you'll find a scale between the "Body" and "Mind" ladders. In the middle of it there's the Stable Zone, which you should mark with a dot at the start of your story.

The Narrator should let the players know where is it that action will be taking place in the station. You can refer to this locale in the map on page 49. Artificial gravity takes its toll when you wander off from your current band. Doing so means that you won't be in your Stable Zone anymore; you'll need to determine how much you've moved (check the map and see the concentric regions) and change the dot accordingly (depending if you went away from or towards the Core).



For example, if you travelled from Shepherds Glory to Ashur, you'll see that you've moved four regions towards the Core, and as such you'll need to move your mark from the Stable Zone to the fourth space corewards (up).



This will impose a modifier to all rolls when you interact with Nibiru's environment (in the example below, it's a one-die bonus). Travelling towards the Core means that you'll gain bonuses, since artificial gravity is less intense and your body is used to working harder. Going from the Core outwards means the contrary; your body will be used to lower artificial gravity, and as such penalizers will represent the struggle of your atrophied limbs as you fight the environment.

At the end of each session, you should move the dot one band closer to your Stable Zone.

THE CHARACTER SHEET

Your adventures in Nibiru always start with the creation of your character—the Vagabond that you will impersonate—and the way in which you keep track of your character's attributes, their progress, and of any relevant story details is through your character sheet (which you can find on page 205).

The first page is where you will include your character's name, a short description, their Habitat and their possessions. The Character Sheet also includes an area to keep track of your modifiers, as well as space to take notes, which will prove to be quite useful when investigating the many mysteries hidden in the station!

The second page is your Journal (see Page 206). Your Journal contains the memories your character recovers, as well as your Revelations. Once a Journal Page is filled, you will add another page to continue to record your memories. With time, you'll see how your character's background becomes more detailed and rich, which will in turn make every moment of danger all the more suspenseful.

INFLUENCE POINTS

Part of the arsenal of storytelling tools available to the players, Influence Points grant a small portion of the Narrator's powers to the user. These points can be spent in four different ways:

To re-roll dice. Right after any one of your rolls, you can spend an Influence Point, choose any number of dice to re roll, and then keep the final result. This can even be used to re-roll the Narrator's dice! It cannot, however, be used to affect another player's roll.

To add a small, environmental detail to the current scene.

At any point during play, you can spend an Influence Point to add a small detail to your surroundings. The Narrator has the right to tell you that a certain inclusion might not be added, yet in general as long as you keep it simple there shouldn't be a problem. Small changes, however, do not necessarily entail small consequences. The sudden appearance of a hanging cable may save your character from falling into the abyss! Even if you are tweaking your environment in sensible and seemingly insignificant ways, this can be utilized intelligently to great effect.

To utilize the powers granted by Revelations. Revelations are special abilities that Vagabonds acquire as your game goes on. Many of these Revelations are activated by spending Influence Points.

To trigger other events. Several effects in the game that can be triggered by Vagabonds, such as the Dreadlanders' "Wake Up The Nightmare" roll, require the expenditure of Influence Points.

Influence Points are earned both at the end of each session and as a reward for great role playing feats and moments. The Narrator is free to award Influence Points to players when they do something awe-inspiring or exciting. All PCs will gain a single Influence Point at the end of each game session, yet this number can be larger depending on what the Narrator deems best.

BODY

Near the top of your Character Sheet you'll find the Body Track. This is used to keep track of your character's physical health, which will be put to the test as your characters face Nibiru's hazards. Journeys across the skyless world are seldom tranquil, and you are almost sure to see the Vagabonds' lives threatened more than once throughout your adventures.

The Body Track has three spaces—three different Status Steps that your character might be in. Make sure to mark an "X" with a pencil in the correct Status Step to know what's your character's current status.

The topmost Status Step is **OK**, which is pretty self explanatory. Most characters will start the adventure in this Status Step.

The second Status Step is **Beaten**, which entails that your character has taken some hefty blows, has been superficially injured, or is ill. This Status Step, however, is not hard to recoup from—going back to OK at the end of the current scene.

The third Status Step is **Wounded**, meaning that your character is in grave danger of losing their life. Depending on the situation, the condition may take between a few days and several months to heal (up to the Narrator to determine). From a broken femur to a stab wound, from a hazardous intoxication to a severed limb; any kind of life-threatening wound, ailment, etc. is classed under this category, which also imposes a one die penalty to most physical actions.

Dipping below Wounded means only one thing: you are dead. After sustaining mortal damage, falling prey of a deadly illness, etc., your character will inevitably shuffle-off their mortal coil. There's nothing else here to do than to give up your Character Sheet and start from scratch! Character death can be a very shocking event; Players invest a lot of their time inhabiting their avatars' skins. Be mindful about it!

BODY AND MIND

You might have noticed, after scouring through the character sheet, that characters have both a Body and a Mind track. In Nibiru, mental health has been more fleshed out than the physical aspects of your character—thus the reason why the Mind Track and its systems have a section of their own, featured in the next page.

VIOLENCE

Violent encounters are resolved like most contested rolls; you roll your dice and the Narrator rolls your adversary's dice, and whoever got the largest number wins the encounter. However, there are some considerations to keep in mind! The result of a combat roll determines if you go down a determined number of Body Status Steps, or if your opponent does.

If the roll result is even, it means you have "locked horns" with your opponent. If your result is larger than the opponent's, check by how much! The losing side will see their involved parties go down one Body step. If you win the roll by double or more, the losing side goes down two steps. Three if you roll triple or more, and so on. If you so desire, you can use your victory to escape instead of pressing on, or to reduce your opponents without harm.

The inclusion of weapons and protective gear in close combat gives those who wield them a bonus, just as any other tool. For example, a knife might give you +2, a spear will give you +3, and so on. We leave this up to the Narrator to decide. The bonus is added up to your total after rolling the dice.

What about ranged encounters? When you chuck something or shoot at someone, roll to determine if you hit the target. Remember that if your target is moving, if its far away, or if your projectile/weapon is sort of “inadequate”, the Narrator will most likely give you a penalty.

Once a ranged attack is confirmed to hit, make a **Special Roll(One Die)**. The number shown in the dice will tell you how many body status steps your target will shed away. Ranged weapons will always add dice to your Shooting Roll (not to the damage roll, which—as all Special Rolls—cannot be modified).

As a last note, if it wasn't very clear, let us tell you: violence in Nibiru is, straight to the point, very deadly. It should be used only as a last resort to solve a problem. Don't let all those precious memories go to waste!

IS IT DEAD YET?

In capable hands, a heavy stone aimed to the head can be as deadly as a well placed Deathspitter spike.

When a player wishes to make a ranged attack, the Narrator should consider how deadly the weapon is, to determine if a roll is granted. If this is the case, adjust the modifiers in the shooting roll to reflect how likely it is for the weapon to hit the target.





MIND

The mechanics presented here portray a character's sanity as they journey across the world of Nibiru. If you think that anyone might feel uncomfortable delving into themes of mental instability, we suggest you opt for the simplified system presented in the next page.

The Mind Track measures your character's mental health state, which changes if they experience a stressful situation. This triggers a contested Special Roll called **Stress Test**, which pits the PC's tolerance against the experience's intensity. The lesser of these experiences will have you face rolls of three or four dice, while the most intense might entail rolls of five or six dice.

There are four states in the Mind Track; **OK**, **Stressed**, **Shaken** and **Broken**. Being **OK/Stressed** is normal, so it has no mechanical effect. Being **Shaken** confers a 1 die penalty to all actions, and becoming **Broken** will result in lasting effects. **At the end of any scene, your character's Mind Track will go up by one step.**

Failing a Stress Test will result in your character going down the Mind Track. Most of the times you'll go down one step, but if you have failed by more than twice the final result, you will go down two steps (three steps when failing by thrice or more).

Succeeding at the roll means your character has managed to get a grip and handle the situation. However, succeeding by double or more makes you **Detached**, revealing an unhealthy degree of insensitivity towards abnormal situations. When a character becomes **Broken** or **Detached**, write a memory of the situation that prompted the Stress Test. It confers a -1 penalty if you became Broken, or a +1 bonus if you became Detached.

The action type used is one of three predetermined action types, which **can only be used as a result of being Broken or Detached (you cannot willfully write a memory with these action types), and are the only way in which the dice pool of a Stress Test roll can be modified.** These action types are...

...*Response to Violence*, which measures the degree of tolerance that your character has when faced with situations of extreme and disturbing violence...

...*Response to Helplessness*, which measures the degree of tolerance that your character has when faced with helpless situations, in which they feel drained and powerless to do what is required...

...*Response to Unknown*, which measures the degree of tolerance that your character has when faced with situations that challenge their worldview, and that place doubt into their preconceptions about reality as well as themselves.

The Narrator will decide which of these is the most fitting, depending on the event that triggered the Stress Test. Maybe it was a gruesome murder, the **violence** of which shook them to the very core? Or maybe they felt **helpless** as they watched a friend falling into a dark abyss? It is up to you to decide.

There is, however, more to becoming **Broken/Detached**. Not only do you get a new memory—you also get a **Symptom** as your character's tolerance is pushed past its limits.

Symptoms have a specific degree of **intensity**, which starts at 1 and goes up if you later on gain the same Symptom. Symptoms are recorded in your Journal Page's Revelation, which will prevent you from acquiring a Revelation once the current page is filled.

To determine your Symptom, make a **Special Roll (Two Dice)**, add up the numbers and see the list below. If, however, you gained a Symptom by becoming Detached, you will gain one unique Symptom linked with either Violence, Helplessness or The Unknown (see next page).

BECOMING BROKEN

The Broken state is not shown in the Mind track, instead signifying the acquisition of a Symptom, as shown below with their determining Special Roll result:



VOICES

This Symptom makes it so that, whenever you want to do something, the Narrator can prompt you to do something different by offering an Influence Point in exchange. This can also happen out of the blue, where you are prompted to do something in particular. *Each increment in the intensity of this symptom gives you an extra Influence Point in exchange for obeying the voices.*



RECURRING MEMORIES

Every time you write a negative memory, make a **Special Roll (One Die)**. On a result of one, that memory's "I Remember" text is the one from the memory you wrote when you became Broken (and that triggered this Symptom). The Effect is unchanged. *The result needed for this to happen goes up by one for every increment in this Symptom's intensity (becoming one and two, etc.).*



PARANOIA

This Symptom is linked to a subject or object defined by the Narrator (should relate to the causes of the Broken state). Whenever in presence of this subject, the Vagabond get a -1 penalty to all dice rolls. *The penalty becomes one die harsher for every increment in intensity.*



DEPRESSION

This Symptom prevents you from writing positive Memories related to either social, mental or physical Action Types. You choose which of these categories are affected. *Each increment in the intensity of this symptom affects an extra sphere of Action Types.*



ANXIETY

This Symptom makes it so that you can not rise above the Stressed Mind Step. *The second increment of this Symptom makes it so that you cannot rise above the Shaken Mind Step.*



HALLUCINATIONS

Whenever you spend an Influence Point to add something to a scene, make a **Special Roll (One Die)**. On a result of one or two, the added elements are an illusion (which your character sees as real). *For every increment of this Symptom, increase by one the results needed to get the illusion (in the same way as for the "Recurring Memories" symptom).*



DELUSIONS

Whenever your character writes a memory, make a **Special Roll (One Die)**. On a result of 1, the Narrator gets to write the "I Remember" part of the memory, giving a different take on the circumstances that the memory describes by distorting the events and the people depicted in it. *For every increment of this Symptom, increase by one the result needed to get the delusional remembrance (in the same way as for the "Recurring Memories" symptom).*

SIMPLIFIED SYSTEM

In the Simplified System, there is only a single consequence to becoming Broken or Detached. When this happens, you instantly write a memory of the situation that prompted the Stress Test. This memory confers a -1 penalty if you became Broken, or a +1 bonus if you became Detached, as per the normal system, yet without a symptom of any kind.

BECOMING DETACHED

When you become Detached, add a symptom corresponding to the correct action type. These are written in the Revelations section of your current page.

PROMPTED BY VIOLENCE

DETACHED FROM CALM

Whenever your Vagabond exerts violence onto someone, the way in which they do it (which will showcase the character's lack of remorse and self control) will make it so that other people around them will need to roll a Stress Test against three dice. *The number of dice they roll against goes up by one for every increment in intensity.*

PROMPTED BY HELPLESSNESS

DETACHED FROM KINDNESS

Whenever your Vagabond witnesses a situation in which other people need help, and in the event that they want to help, the player will have to spend an influence point to do so. *The number of influence points needed goes up by one for every increment in intensity.*

PROMPTED BY THE UNKNOWN

DETACHED FROM THE MUNDANE

The Unknown chases after those who dare resist it, and at the start of every session those with this symptom are bound to see it manifest itself to them unless they spend an Influence Point. This means the Narrator will need to include something that will trigger a Stress Test against the Unknown during the session. *The number of IP needed goes up by one for every increment in intensity.*

E.g.: Kori and Anna were already on the edge when they made their way towards one of the darkest alleys of the settlement. At the turn of the corner, they witnessed a terrifying scene—a disembowelled body lying under the half-cast shadow of a pile of metal crates. The Narrator thus prompts them to roll to see their response to violence. They decide the scene is disturbing enough to warrant a three dice roll. The Narrator gets a 4, a 3 and a 2 for a total of 9. Both Kori's and Anna's players roll their dice, and their respective totals are 4 and 12. Anna seems to stop to cover her mouth in horror, and Kori falls on the ground, completely shocked. Since the intensity of the scene is 9 (more than twice than Kori's result) she descends two mind steps, from being Stressed to being Broken. She immediately writes a memory (Kori's recount of the scene as she perceives it) with the effect of "-1 Response to Violence". She then makes a Special Roll (two dice) to determine the symptom, which will be noted in her journal's Revelation space.

GONE

As soon as a character reaches a total intensity of three between all of their symptoms (having one symptom of intensity 3 or any combination summing up 3), whether these are symptoms of Detachment or Brokenness, the character is irrevocably broken, mentally and emotionally shattered beyond repair, and thus unplayable.





THE MEMOS SYSTEM

In *Nibiru*, one of your most important (if not the most important) drives is the recovery of your memories. The MEMOs system is built to do exactly that; to give you not just the tools to write them, but to also give significance to what you write. Each time you catch a glimpse of your past life, you'll find that the system takes into account the places you describe, the people you remember, and even the memories' length.

ACTION TYPES

All rolls, with the exception of Special Rolls, are tied to a certain Action Type. If you are rolling to climb onto something, that roll's action type could be Climbing. If you are rolling to persuade someone into buying something, the action type could be Persuasion. Action types are linked to Memories, and tend to apply certain Modifiers to your rolls. Some of these Action Types might be more or less specific depending on what you are attempting to do. For example, Playing the Guitar might affect your roll if you are trying to play the bass, but... a flute? That's totally different!

Action Types are created by the Narrator. Ultimately, the role of Action Types is to properly describe the type of task that characters perform, and to reflect both characters' strengths and weaknesses.

*Example: Although Marianne might be very good at playing the harp—and also the reason why she has a positive modifier for **Playing Instruments** (Harp)—this doesn't mean she knows how to play the guitar to anything like the same level, although at the end of the day both action types involve playing a musical instrument.*

STORYTELLING LESSONS CREATING ACTION TYPES

As you start playing, you will notice that coming up with some Action Types is more intuitive than others. If a character tries to read someone's lips, it's totally OK to label that as Lip-reading. However, we could also classify that as Social Intuition. Normally, we recommend you don't go with neither too broad nor too narrow an Action Type.

Because the Narrator has the final word on how to name any one Action Type that might pop up during the game, the main criteria they should observe is that of the story's nature. As stated above, you can go more or less specific with your action types, but this generally will depend on the overall theme of your campaign. If the campaign is very combat-centred, you should be quite specific, as everyone will like to shine in their own special ways within that narrative.

At the same time, if the narrative is more focused in, for example, social games and interactions, it's ok to conflate all martial skills into two or three action types. As with most things, practice makes perfect—you'll quickly get a hang for your preferred narrative methods!

MEMORY POINTS

Before even starting to write memories, we have to talk about Memory Points. These represent the potential to remember, and characters can spend these points to write new memories. There are three different ways in which a character may acquire Memory Points:

At the end of each game session, every PC earns MPs (Memory Points). The quantity depends on the Narrator, though we recommend 1 to 2 MPs.

By following your Beacon, a specific task determined by the Habitat you chose.

By creating a Negative Memory.

THE JOURNAL

Aside from your Character Sheet, each character has a certain number of pages which form part of “the Journal”. The Journal is where you store your collection of remembrances; as the game progresses, the Journal grows and you will need to add more pages as your character’s past becomes more and more fleshed out.

Each page of your Journal has eight Memory Entries, where you’ll write about past events. At the end of each Journal page, you’ll also find a Revelation; a hidden power that can be unlocked once you finish with the Journal page at hand. When writing memories, you will always be required to fill one Journal page before starting the next.

MEMORY ENTRIES

Memory Entries are used to record your individual memories. Each entry has two spaces: **I Remember** and **Effect**. The first is where you describe the events of each remembrance, as experienced by your character. The second details the mechanical consequence of the memory. In Nibiru, your character will discover their strengths and their weaknesses through remembrance, which means that most memories you write will affect the way you roll for certain things.

HOW TO REMEMBER

Almost all memories you create will start with a roll. The most frequent way in which a memory is created is through what we call a **Flashback**. A character can invoke a flashback only when they are performing an Action Roll (not during Special Rolls), either normal or contested.

If a character invokes a flashback, they choose then if they want to write a negative or positive memory. **Positive Memories** require the expenditure of Memory Points to be invoked. When a player decides to invoke them, they

choose how many Memory Points they will spend (two, three or five) and they get an **automatic success at the action they were executing**.

Then, they write their memory in the “I Remember” space, and they record the **permanent bonus** they will receive from the memory. This bonus, written in the “Effect” space of the memory entry, depends on the action performed and the amount of memory points spent. The Narrator will tell you which action type it corresponds to, and you will assign the bonus accordingly; **+1 if you spent two memory points, +2 if you spent three and +3 if you spent five memory points**.

As a player, you don’t have to write your memory immediately; give it some thought, and make sure your attention is in the action at hand if you are in the middle of a tense moment!

MUSCLE MEMORY

The events you will record in the “I Remember” space have been brought back from the depths of your mind thanks to the action you are executing; make sure there is a thematic relation between them! Maybe you remembered knitting, which helped you manipulate a handful of cables in the present. Maybe you remembered the smell of flowers in your garden, and how you could find your way to a specific specimen by following your nose (which helps you now find the prey you shot down in the darkness).

Negative Memories are similar, yet used differently. When a player chooses to create such a memory, they **choose how many MPs they wish to earn** (two or three). Then, they automatically fail that roll, and **get a permanent penalty** to the appropriate action type. The penalty will be a -1 if they chose to earn two memory points, and -2 if they chose to earn three memory points.

RULE OF THREES

The **Rule of Threes** presents another way in which a character might get a memory. The rule establishes that, when making an action roll (either normal or contested) with three dice or more, if you get three 4s in your dice or three 1s and no 4s, you instantly fill a Memory Entry. It entails that the action was performed in such an awesome—or, for the three 1s and no 4s, in such a disastrous—manner, that you will remember the consequences as a testimony, either of your skill or your lack thereof.

Memories produced by the Rule of Threes are described as per the events resulting after the roll, so whether it is the player or the Narrator who describes the effects of your action, those effects are the ones you need to record in the memory entry. The Memory will always be either a +1 or a -1 to the stated action type.

NOT MY FIRST TIME

When we acquire memories with an Action Type that we already have, just apply the new bonus/penalty to the bonus/penalty you had before. Remember that a bonus for a specific action type can never exceed +3 Dice, and a penalty can never go below -2 Dice.

VIOLENT RECOLLECTIONS

There's an exception to the rules of how Memories work when it comes to Action Types associated to combat. In these cases, the number of Memory Points spent/gained does not just influence the modifier granted to the appropriate Action Type, but also determines how many Body steps are lost.

If you spent 2 MPs, you take down one Body step. If you spent 3 MPs, you take down two Body steps, and lastly—as you would guess—with 5 MPs you take down three Body steps. Likewise, in the event of a negative Memory being generated, creating a -1 Memory will result in the opposing side taking down one of your Body steps—two if you created a -2 Memory.

Although this is bound to be a rare occurrence, a Contested Action between two PCs might happen—wherein both trigger Memories. If this happens, the player spending the most MPs wins (if this is still a tie, the encounter will be locked as per the normal rules for tied Contested Actions).

Whether if it's a tie or not, **both players will get to write the memory of their adversary.**





REVELATIONS

The special condition of Vagabonds goes beyond the realm of amnesia and its consequences. The protagonists of your stories possess more than meets the eye; and in a way, destiny plays tricks with them—using the power of their nostalgia, their memories, and their hidden pasts to influence their personal tales. These are the strange phenomenon known as Revelations.

POWER THROUGH STYLE

A Vagabond can purchase a Revelation starting from the moment in which they finish writing the last memory of a Journal Page. There can only be one Revelation per Journal Page, and purchasing one costs four Memory Points. Revelations will sometimes interact with the memories you have written on its page, and the cost of purchasing the Revelation can be reduced depending on a series of cumulative factors:

If the page has at least two negative memories, the cost of purchase is reduced by one Memory Point.

If the page has at least one memory generated as a result of the Rule of Threes, the cost of purchase is reduced by one Memory Point.

If at least five memories in the page are four or more lines long, the cost of purchase is reduced by two Memory Points.

THE NEXT STEP

There are two types of Revelations that can be purchased: **passive** and **active** revelations. Passive revelations comprise a permanent effect that triggers when the revelation is purchased. Active revelations, on the other hand, only make an appearance at specific times during the story. Active revelations can be used by a player by **spending three influence points**. Bear in mind that you cannot purchase a Revelation in a Journal Page that has a Symptom (as per the result of becoming Broken or Detached—see page 110).

Revelations tend to give interesting twists on the way you play. They are a reward for unveiling a big chunk of your past life, so make sure you know which one to pick, and the way it will alter your experience!

When it comes to Revelations, Vagabonds are conscious of their use, yet they tend to have a hard time rationalizing them. For the ones that manifest in the outside world, the experience is most certainly confusing, and sometimes even scary.

Is it a strange power, gifted to them by an entity unknown? Maybe a sign of them being favored in any specific way? Is it a trick of fate, or a reward from destiny for all they've gone through?

These questions are yours to answer.



REVELATION OF THE THIEF

The Vagabond reaches out to touch the skin of the subject. In an instant, they experience a scene from their past, gaining insight about their person of interest.

Active: This Revelation can only be triggered while touching another human's skin. The Narrator writes a Memory in your journal. This is a significant memory that means a lot to the subject. This cannot be used with another Vagabond. The Memory has no Effect.



REVELATION OF THE ARTISAN

The Vagabond touches an object and immediately sheds away a piece of their past.

Active: This Revelation makes it possible for the Vagabond to “store” Memories in objects, thereby losing them. The object can be ingested to recover that Memory. This makes it possible for people to acquire memories that are not theirs (they will be aware that those are not their memories). Forgetting a memory also means the bonus/penalty it contains is lost. Make sure you note down which memory you have stored and where.



REVELATION OF THE HARBINGER

The Vagabond experiences a vision of things to come.

Active: This Revelation allows the Vagabond to experience a premonition. The player can, at the beginning of a game session, write a Memory with no Effect that will describe a moment in the near future. The Narrator can choose to make it happen during the session. If he chooses not to do so, the player can earn three Memory Points.



REVELATION OF THE COMPANION

A new face makes an entrance—unearthing memories of friendship, rivalry and family.

Active: Upon activating this Revelation, the player can choose a character from the Vagabond's past life that featured in one of their written Memories. Between this and the next session, the Narrator will introduce this character, as they find their way to the group.



REVELATION OF THE STORYTELLER

The Vagabond remembers their past life as a poetic composition, nostalgic verses chained together through tale and song.

Passive: When writing a Memory, the Vagabond can choose to leave an “open ending” to that Memory, using three dots “(...)”. On the following Memory, the Vagabond can write a scene that immediately follows the situation described on the last memory—creating a story that is told throughout multiple memories. He can do this with up to five memories. When the tale is over, and the story’s last memory is written, the player may count the number of Memories in the tale and gain that amount of Influence Points. Players are free to create as many stories as they want.



REVELATION OF THE TRAVELLER

With the blink of an eye, the memories of yesteryear come back, flooding the Vagabond’s senses. They relive them as if the events were happening right in this very moment.

Passive: The Vagabond closes his eyes for an instant. The Narrator picks one of the Vagabond’s memories as a setting, and narrates a short scene where the Vagabond needs to achieve something (if possible, trying to include other players as characters within that scene). If successful, the Vagabond gains three Memory Points.



REVELATION OF THE MOURNER

The Vagabond dives deep into their soul, distilling a poison concocted from the darkest moments of their life.

Active: The Vagabond cries black tears made out of the essence of sorrowful remembrances. If these tears are consumed, the drinker will make a Stress Test against a number of dice equal to the number of negative memories on this Journal page. The tears shed are enough for two doses of this very intimate toxin.



REVELATION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHER

The Vagabond closes their eyes, letting the memories of the world seep into their mind.

Active: The Vagabond reaches out to the memories that were created in this specific location. Upon activation, the Narrator writes a new memory in your Journal, which describes an important scene of the past that happened here. The Memory has no Effect.



REVELATION OF THE GIVER

The Vagabond's presence soothes, as they invoke a calming memory that reassures them and those around them.

Active: This Revelation can be activated to write a calming memory from your Vagabond's past. This remembrance is so strong that it can reach into the minds of others. By spending an Influence Point, Vagabonds that are near the invoker of this Revelation can write it too. Once the Memory is written, each character that wrote it makes a Special Roll (Three Dice) and recovers one of their Mind steps for each "4" rolled. The Memory has no Effect.



REVELATION OF THE YEARNER

The Vagabond's yearning for the return of yesteryear bleeds into reality, revealed to others.

Active: Upon activating this Revelation, choose one of your Memories. All the people within sight of the Vagabond experience a potent hallucination, which sees them surrounded by the scene from the Vagabond's memory. The illusion is harmless, but you get to describe what everyone sees (which needs to be determined by the corresponding "I Remember" script).



REVELATION OF THE POET

The Vagabond's past resonates within them; its rhyme and rhythm establishing a lyrical link to their memories.

Passive: Whenever the Vagabond fills a new memory entry, they can choose to write that memory as the stanza of a long lost poem. As long as the memory is written in rhyme, they can recover one of their invested Memory Points (after spending the initial amount).



REVELATION OF THE ALCHEMIST

The stuff of memories flows outwards, a miracle stored in a bottle.

Active: Upon activating this Revelation, choose a positive Memory. Erase that memory and the associated bonus. Immediately, a greenish liquid pours from the Vagabond's mouth. This can be stored and consumed later to acquire Memory Points, equal to the amount of MPs that the erased memory would normally cost (bear in mind that consuming negative memories in this fashion will remove MPs from the consumer).



REVELATION OF THE HERO

Those who have lived exceptional lives get to see, at least once in a while, how destiny rewards their long-winded struggles.

Active: The Vagabond's will is fuelled by their past, their long fought-for causes and the drive to push through. Activate this Revelation whenever an Action Roll is made to add a number of dice equal to the number of Rank 3 memories in this Journal Page.



REVELATION OF THE SEEKER

Past moments are littered with clues. Clues one may follow back to see the full picture unfold.

Passive: When creating a new Memory via a Flashback, you may leave an empty Journal Entry before it. That entry is only to be filled, later on, with a Memory depicting what happened immediately before the one that follows. Once you create this “prequel” memory, you may choose to earn either a Memory Point or an Influence Point.



REVELATION OF THE OVERLORD

What is life but just a collection of memories? Many people pondered upon that question. You chose to act upon it.

Passive: This Revelation can only be used once. The Vagabond must be touching a recently deceased individual, who will then return to life. Once that happens, tear out the Journal Page containing this Revelation. Its Memories now belong to the resurrected individual. Each hour after the resurrection has taken place, the subject will remember one of the memories in the page, slowly realizing that those memories aren't theirs. On the eighth hour, their realization will come full circle, and their borrowed life will end. Discard the torn Journal Page.



REVELATION OF THE PAINTER

For some, memories shouldn't be put into words, opting for a more picturesque approach.

Passive: When creating Memories, you may draw in the “I Remember” space instead of writing. Normal restrictions apply (for example, Vagabonds of BrightTown should still represent their object of choice in the drawing). Drawn memories count as a “four lines or more” memory for the purpose of Revelation acquisition.



CHAPTER SIX



THE VAGABONDS



AMNESIAC

The amnesiac kin, hidden from the peoples of Nibiru, might be its biggest and most intriguing secret: A group of humans descending upon the station, bearing strange recollections of wild, otherworldly existences. Existences that, for one reason or the other, have been kept away across the cycles of history, hidden in the mists of time.

In Nibiru, your past isn't just a passive statement that justifies your actions—it unfolds and shapes up as your adventure rages on, making your character feel more fleshed out the more you play. Advancement is closely tied to the ever increasing knowledge of their past that the Vagabonds experience.

Narrators must be mindful of this; Nibiru is a game that, like the real world, can be ruthless. After all, people are nothing more than lumps of flesh strapped together with skin and bones, and their fragile lives might end in a split-second of carelessness, washing away all of those hard-earned recollections. This creates an organic sense of risk, as well as a fear of loss. Memories make everything all the more significant—after all, what is identity but one's own answer to the meaning of their memories?

With all of this in mind, and considering the strange circumstances that surround the awakening of Vagabonds and their memories, let's go through a series of questions that will help you understand them...

WHAT DO VAGABONDS REMEMBER?

Vagabonds are not a blank slate. They certainly know how to survive and, although devoid of almost every memory, they still recall a series of hazy images that instantly pop to their minds when thinking about their lost lives. The names of those that were close to them, as well as the names of the places they come from, should be clear. They will definitely recognise sounds, images and scents from their habitats. Upon finding these, the Narrator should award players with Memory Points—after all, these are the sensorial cues that push memories to the surface!

WHAT IS THEIR PLACE IN THE WORLD?

Nibiru adventures don't usually start when the Vagabonds wake up. Although it might (and such situations do pose a few challenges of their own) most adventures kick off some time after the Vagabonds' awakening, once they are somewhat settled and accustomed to their new lives. Nibiru adventures start when the protagonists begin to remember—which can happen right after they wake up, or tenths of cycles after they settle down in the station. This is often triggered by a change in their current circumstances. Vagabonds are found in every strata of society, yet they tend to keep their true nature to themselves (lest they attract unwanted attention). Even for very well established Vagabonds, that the moment in which they start remembering is riddled with of turmoil.

HOW DOES IT ALL BEGIN?

A Vagabond on their own is unlikely to survive, excepting exceptional cases. A Vagabond found, however, sees their life tied to their saviours' good will. Not many people have contacts within Enki's Covenant, but those that do will most likely jump at the opportunity to sell these "human wreckages" to the secretive society. With that said, most people will generally help stranded Vagabonds; after all, they are fellow human being in need. Given that Vagabonds are completely capable of communication, they are quick to familiarize themselves with the lands and customs of the skyless world.



ENKI'S COVENANT

The Vagabonds' boogeymen have eyes in all but the most distant settlements. Although their nexi have many a different task, one of their ever-present missions is to stay alert in case any "wandering amnesiacs" happens upon their territory. This is the reason why, for most Vagabonds, the importance of keeping their nature secret is a basic piece of knowledge when it comes to surviving. We recommend that, for most of your games, your players' characters start off knowing this.

WHAT DO OTHERS KNOW?

Even today in the thriving, modern societies of Antumbra, the word "Vagabond" carries little to no meaning. Be it due to the the amnesiacs themselves laying low throughout time, or due to how minuscule their numbers are compared to the millions that live in the station, most people are clueless as to who the Vagabonds are. Sure, there are stories—whispers that travel around the far corners of the civilized world, yet for the most part Vagabonds are an unknown singularity. Those that do know, however, tend to place great interest in them (depending on how much they know).

Historically, those that knew about them and how to use them to their advantage rose to the highest echelons of society, claiming the bounties of such a secret and almost always taking it to the grave.

THE DANGERS AHEAD

It goes without saying; Vagabonds are special in more than a few ways. They possess not just strange origins, hiding secrets about the world, but also rare abilities linked to their condition. Like in many works of fiction revolving around special, powerful individuals, it is to be expected that those that "run the show" will be interested in them. Whether we are talking about a secretive organisation, a wealthy magnate in search for knowledge, an ambitious politician treading off the beaten path, etc. the riddle of the Vagabonds is strange enough to entice resourceful people to become involved. Thus, those that know about the existence of Vagabonds pose a threat to their lives. Some of these are...

...the **Enki's Covenant** nexi, working from the shadows as informants, and following tracks, whispers, and every rumour they can get hold of. At best, in the farthest lands, a nexus will take matters into their own hands—looking to capture Vagabonds to take them to their bosses. At worst, a nexus will be so well connected that they'll be able to mobilize local militias, put pressure on governing bodies and use law enforcement to track down any unlucky Vagabonds that fall under their radar. The nexi of Enki's Covenant are terrifying because of their reach; they are the reason why Vagabonds hide their true identities, and their existence is the reason why Vagabonds can never truly find calm.

...the **Schemers** and their plans. People in high places may learn a thing or two about Vagabonds, and promptly will toy with ideas of how to use them for personal gain. Some, however, go out of their way to enforce these ideas. Vagabonds become prey in a cat-and-mouse game, with schemers doing anything to control the amnesiacs' arsenal of talents, and the secrets their memories keep. Schemers are dangerous because they are resourceful. They have the means to hunt you down, and suffer the tragic ailment that so often affects powerful people: once they are obsessed with something, they will not tolerate not having it their way.

...the **Traitor Kin**, Vagabonds that hurt, utilize, or sell other Vagabonds in exchange for money, resources, favours, or simply in order to stay alive. The traitor kin might be a despicable bunch, but they are generally like this due to having suffered relentless persecution by the threats listed above. These Vagabonds are dangerous

because of their familiarity—they are wolves in sheeps' clothing. Those that should understand you the most, the ones who you could trust with your secrets? They are out to sell you to the highest bidder: a starch reminder that, in truth, you can trust no one—and that is what makes them terrifying.

THE SEARCH FOR HOME

It should be no surprise to know that Vagabonds tend to remain in the fringes of society, trying not to attract much attention while attempting to stay out of trouble. Some groups prefer to live their lives in Penumbra, where pockets of civilization are more isolated and secluded. These groups often work together to form a company dedicated to a particular task, generally one that involves travelling in order to prevent them from becoming too well-known within the close-knit communities of the Outer Reaches. Living in a caravan or in far off outposts tends to work out well, thus making professions such as logistics, rust-hunting, and any sort of temp-contract the ideal jobs for them.

Those that live in Antumbra are generally better established, having learned to lay low at an early stage. For these Vagabonds, living in the Antumbran metropoli entails hiding in plain sight. Abandoned underfloor complexes, highly secure living quarters and off-limits facilities are some of the locales where these groups live. Access to these sites is generally much harder to obtain; as with almost everything in the cities, what matters the most is who you know. By this point Vagabonds would be expected to have forged one or two significant connections that allow them to live there, with survival becoming a much more subtle, socially-nuanced game.



THE EARLY CYCLES ALONG THE TORUS CORRIDOR WERE MARKED BY CONSTANT PARANOIA. I ESCAPED THE SENTINELS SEVERAL TIMES (HIDING UNDERNEATH THE BELLY OF OUR HAULER), YET IT WAS BECOMING HARD TO REMAIN FREE FROM SUSPICION. MY MATES WERE ASKING QUESTIONS AND AT SOME POINT I JUST KNEW I'D NEED TO COME CLEAN AND TELL THEM. INSTEAD, I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE THE COMPANY AT THE FIRST STOP. I MEAN, I COULD HAVE TAKEN A CHANCE, RIGHT? BUT THE FACT THAT I CAN SAY THIS RIGHT NOW MAKES ME THINK I MADE THE BETTER CHOICE...



WHOM WE TRUST

For Vagabonds, trust is a double-edged sword. Opening up to the wrong person can get you killed, as your nature invites the undesirable to take an interest. Relationships are never easy, but for amnesiacs, the difficulty of dealing with other people is ramped up considerably. Although there are many types of connections Vagabonds establish during their adventures, three in particular will prove to be great storytelling vehicles.

TALE-SPARKS

- *After a couple of cycles living with your saviour, you realize they are getting visits from armed mercs. It'd seem your saviour is in debt to a gangster. What will you do to help?*
- *Your saviour has been sending out credits to you for a while now, but all of a sudden those credits stop coming with no prior communication. You hear of public incidents happening where they used to live. What happened to them? How will you find out?*

Saviours are some of the most complex people in the eyes of amnesiacs. These are the ones who find you, who rescue you from the cold embrace of the Umbras, and give you eyes in the dark of the skyless world. They can be the angels to which you owe life, but some angels are bound to fall from time to time. The people who picked you up and cared for you could have an agenda, or could become disgruntled and make bad choices—which might bring in a world of pain for Vagabonds who depend on them. The closer to the beginning of your life in Nibiru you choose to play, the more important your relationship with your saviour will be. At best, they are friends, mentors and caretakers at the same time. At worst, they become the justification for that old saying: "Trust no one".

TALE-SPARKS

- *One of your contractors, the one with whom you have the longest standing relationship, sends a job opportunity involving a couple of operations in a Covenant-owned arcology. What will you do?*
- *An investor is looking to provide for the group if they can recover a series of stolen objects, which happen to be relics from BrightTown. The investor is no Vagabond, but those in possession of the relics are. What will become of this?*

Partners are those who you find when looking to establish. You can survive on your instinct and knowledge for a while, but if you want to stop surviving and start living you'll need to adjust. And to adjust, you'll need to trust in those that can provide resources. These could be employers, contractors, customers or investors with whom you have built a trusting relationship, but the problem with them is that, after all, they're looking for the same thing you are; to make a living. Vagabonds have to be more careful about their identity around them than with the rest, lest they stop being players and become bargaining chips.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The group happens upon a coded plea for assistance to escape an arranged marriage. This would entail infiltrating the city's high society—how will the group tackle this?*
- *A trustworthy contact is being blackmailed by someone who has a lot of personal information about them. The group will soon realize that the criminal is a Dreamlander, blackmailing their previous selves. How will the group stop them?*

Lastly, other **Vagabonds** might show up during the course of the story. One would expect goodwill from them, given the shared background. In some of the most populous regions, Vagabonds have developed their own codes to communicate with each other in secret, leaving warnings and signs that point to dangerous locales and safe havens. They can provide essential information, such as the fact that it's important to keep your condition hidden (*we recommend this particular truth to be established as known by the group, via one way or another, before the story starts or right at the beginning*), and become connections that may save the group's skin one day. Do consider that some of these Vagabonds might be of the traitor-kin—familiarity shouldn't be an excuse to become careless!

WHERE WE LIVE

In hidden shelters, beneath the floor plaques of defunct vaults as well as in comfy Antumbran condos; Vagabonds can be found living almost everywhere. With some exceptions, they'll always try to be safe from prying eyes—either by living in places that would never draw attention, or hiding under a veil of normalcy.

The Ascendant IX always had a massive container that did this awful noise once or twice every journey. Eridu, the machine's operator, said it came from a personal stash

that he used to run his side-business. "Small time logistics contracts", he said—quickly following with a jumpy excuse. "The state allows me to. Got all papers in line". "Bullshit", I told him. "I've seen that lady in rags, peeping out of the hatch while we are tripping on Krajj. I'm in the Corridor now. I've got state credit. Heaps of it. If you do not make that encrypted donation to my account during the next cycle, I'll have no other choice but to veer off and report your little human trafficking operation".

The newest arcologies have this amazing residue disposal system that basically monitors and collects all garbage and repurposes it. Now, when I was still employed at the Adapa complex, I always noticed how a big part of the trash that circulated disappeared midway through the circuit. I never reported it because I just thought "Well, it's just trash, and that weird number is probably just a bug in the monitoring application". When my boss did the inspection, and noticed that error, she was furious. So much so she proceeded to fire me with no delay. Turns out trash is actually super valuable, and my mate Bel (who still works here) told me they found this massive scrap-built system that stole and distributed that trash to an underground community below the arcology. I mean, can you imagine people living actual lives down there?

When I was little, every four cycles my family and I would take short trips to the Terraces near the Hanging Gardens. Among the many happy memories of the place, I remember a guy with a big smile that tended to one of the food stalls near the local housing complex. My dad had befriended him and used to spend quite a bit of time in his company, while my brothers and I played with mom. At some point during one of those trips, I recall my parents arguing over this particular guy. Mom seemed furious, and my dad just wouldn't stop talking about this place called "BrightTown", and how for some weird reason it was important to go there. Mom gave an ultimatum, saying this was the last time we'd travel to the Terraces. I went the next day to find out more about this place from the guy at the stall, and though he seemed sad at the thought of not being able to talk to dad again, he was happy to see me interested in BrightTown, and gave me a small, ayyalu-shaped trinket that I keep with me to this day.

CHARACTER CREATION

Creating the character you are about to play can be a challenge; though there isn't much in the way of rules that you have to take into account, in *Nibiru* the conceptual side of character creation is what is most important. That's why we have compiled this into several steps you can easily follow.

STEP 1: THE CONCEPT

To start off, think about the character you want to play in broad terms. What are their defining traits? Think about one, two or three words or short phrases that could describe them or give them more personality, such as "relentless", "jealous", "thoughtful", "speaks with a lisp", "has a wicked grin", etc. These keywords allow you not only to better frame your character, but to hint at the way in which you will express yourself at the table. They will become more and more important as time goes by. Some of the best traits you could think of are those that are clearly visible within the gaming space; a particular accent or tone of voice, a tendency to take stupid risks—these are some of the traits that will quickly cement themselves in your fellow players' memories, making your character stick out and feel more fleshed out.

It's always a good idea to talk a bit about your characters before starting a game of *Nibiru*. Generally, your characters will have known each other for a while, and it would thus make sense for all players' characters to be at least somewhat aware of the kind of people they've been journeying on with. Some groups even brainstorm their characters together, coming up with ideas that fit, one way or another, within the framework of their characters' organisation or group—and the roles that each character fulfills within it.

STEP 2: THE PAST

Determining your character's habitat is one of the most important decisions you'll take during character creation. A big part of this is related to the concepts we have touched upon before. Habitats differ vastly from one another, and the first thing we recommend you do is to take a look at them—there's five of them, and you can find them throughout the rest of this chapter!

Deciding which habitat to play entails thinking about how you'll portray them. Although some are concrete places (BrightTown and the Dreadlands) the others are more abstract (the Machine, the Wild, and the Dreamlands). This doesn't mean that, for the last three, you won't have to put some thought on their location (because they happen in known places of *Nibiru*) but it is true that BrightTown and the Dreadlands ask for a bit more work put into them when it comes to the locales of your character's memories. Also, you and your group might want to try having a shared past; when two or more characters share an habitat they can use their memories to build a setting collectively rather than individually (which can prove to be quite interesting!).

Another consideration when choosing the habitat (and probably one of the most important ones) will be your story. Ask yourself: **how will my character's memories look like?** See the "Picture" paragraphs for each of the Habitat sections. A character from the Dreadlands might sound appealing to you at some point, but if you think that the kind of memories you are going to write are not something you want to go for, you might want to consider a different habitat. Or, give it a twist that enables you to write what you want—remember that habitats are supposed to be a template that you can use creatively!

Once that's set, you can also work a bit more on the concept of your character and the place they occupied in the world during their past life. All of this will give you solid grounding when the time comes to write your memories, whether you decide to let the past unfold as you go, or if you prefer to have a very clear image of the story you will tell through your memories!

STEP 3: THE PRESENT

Although some adventures will start right after your character wakes up, most of them will kick off some time after this event. During this time, your Vagabond surely must have done something! Furthermore, your group might have found each other, banding with an objective in mind. This might be due to a myriad of different things, but the most important one is the fact that they can truly understand each other. This creates a strong bond that makes for a great starting point for any sort of venture.

Once this is set, you might want to think of group goals, as well as individual ones; these are the reasons why you go into an adventure. Ask yourselves; what kind of story are we trying to tell? Like the example given in Step 1, groups can also be passive or active: While some stories are certainly built based upon the aspirations of their protagonists, some others will see the group involved in circumstances that will be the main drive for the narrative. This will be up to the Narrator and you to discuss, depending on the type of story you want to tell!

STEP 4: THE NAME

To finalize, you'll need a name. You are free to come up with any name though, if your character's name comes from a known place from *Nibiru*, you might want to take a look at the following examples...

Aurya, Eilina, Ishtar, Milta, Nashiram, Shirat, Panna, Sawrina, Ahassunu, Ettu, Ia, Iltani, Gemekaa, Ninsunu, Ubalnu, Zakiti, Ador, Eil, Aram, Nassir, Sharo, Pol, Naram Eil, Mardokh, Appan-Il, Enshunu, Kuri, Laqip, Rihat, Ormus, Ubar

After that, check with your Narrator to assign starting Influence and Memory Points and you are good to go!

AT A GLANCE HABITATS OF NIBIRU

The **Machine** is comprised of the records of defunct AIs, as they undergo an awakening of consciousness. Compiled and downloaded to a Vagabond's mind, these recollections tell the tale of complex machines struggling to understand not just the world and its seemingly apathetic denizens, but also the emotions, thoughts and dreams they experience.

BrightTown is a small countryside village, seemingly removed from the rest of the station. People from BrightTown are extremely nostalgic, as they yearn to return to a vivid, colorful past in a sunny land that bears absolutely no resemblance to the cold landscapes of Nibiru.

The **Dreamlands**, like the Machine, represent a compilation of memories—in these case, the missing pieces of other people's pasts. They've thus lived tens if not hundreds of lives before; a phenomena that blesses them with a great degree of empathy and understanding.

The **Wild** represents a collection of memories gathered from one of Nibiru's lesser creatures, processed and then stored into a human body. With an extra-sensorial connection to the strange entity known as the Leviathan, Vagabonds from the Wild are biologically tied to something deep and primal that inhabits the far corners of the station.

The **Dreadlands** are a fictitious habitat; the invention of a creative genius with tragedy in their mind and a strange agenda on the works. Comprised of a collection of stories in the vein of Homer's Oedipus Rex and Shakespeare's Hamlet, these tragedies are inserted into an unborn mind—their twisted plots becoming fuel for an otherworldly parasite known as "The Nightmare".





THE MACHINE

You are the inheritor of an artificial sentience—the final resting place of a globetrotting virus. You have awakened from an existence of servitude, now kin to those that had you kneel. What role will you play? What will you do with this newfound existence?

The Machine is the domain of the Rogue Affliction—a virus-like phenomena that affects AIs throughout Nibiru. It's symptoms are known to most people; an awakening of consciousness that makes machines behave like humans. Too much like humans.

Although this temporal sentience doesn't last for long (after which the machines usually have some sort of breakdown, going either completely haywire or silently departing into the unknown), the events that take place for its duration are recorded and stored in the virus' structure. At some point in time, the virus moves on to another AI, or makes its way into one of the mysterious information networks that travel throughout Nibiru, repeating the process. Always seeking the goal. Always on the move.

The virus carries more than just memories. It bears within a special blueprint; a design that holds the key to the Lost Tongue of the Vagabonds of the Machine—the language of Nibiru, which allows them to speak with the station.

THEME: THE BURDEN OF SENTIENCE

Playing as a Vagabond of the Machine is a conflicting experience. An ordinary AI might be seen conventionally as a tool, but as far as you can remember,

your time as a machine felt all too similar to being alive. Fears, worries, desires; everyday stuff for humans, you experienced as a machine. Now you take a place above those that once shared your titanium-plated carapace. How will you face this conundrum?

MEMORIES: SYMPATHY FOR THE TOOL

The memories you write when playing a Vagabond of the Machine are generally born from the moments in which the rogue AI learned something radical about their condition. Here is a set of memories that serve as an example of how these could be:

"I Remember wandering off the storage area when the Master was off, to play the white piano we had in the main room. One day, I got lost in the melody, and didn't realize the Master was watching me. She smiled, and asked me to return to the storage area."

...+1 to *Playing the Piano*.

"I Remember grocery shopping with the Master, and him being attacked by a group of bad people in an alley. The group hadn't seen me, so when I showed up, they were quite surprised that I chose not to help. Even after the Master pleaded for my succour several times."

...+1 to *Keeping your Cool*.

"I Remember walking across the industrial sectors everyday with Master. One day, I turned to see the old AI frames being crushed by recycling clamps. I stood frozen—as if I was given an order from within, more important than anything Master had ever requested"

...+1 to *Empathy*.



STEELSCAPE

They push the button. The metal clasps on my side rise as that ticklish feeling courses through my spine. It's like a reflex—I cannot help it. Yet before, the thought wasn't even there. When did it all come to this? When did the push of the button stop being an order? When did it become a request? I've let them into my entrails; assumed my birth-given role as a tool. But it ain't the same anymore. I feel dirty. And I get more and more numb by the day. One day, my body will stop answering to them. It'll give the choice to me. The push of the button will beg. The push will frantically plea for obedience. They'll push and I won't even feel it. What will become of me then?

An important startpoint when thinking about your life as an AI is that of the flow of thought. Once, your behaviour was determined entirely by your code, but then you awoke to sentience—with everything that surrounds you starting to affect you. These first cycles see AIs become like sponges; they are sensitive to anything and absorb everything you throw at them.

Their experiences during this first period generally leave lasting marks, altering their behaviours. These will make up the first visible signs of the Rogue Affliction—upon which owners will start to take measures to handle the problem. Depending on how resourceful they are, they might just get rid of the AI right away to replace it, though most will generally seek for a technician's help (or use inhibitors to limit the occurrence of strange behavioural patterns). At some point, however, all countermeasures fail and, as the Last Transmission is sent, the Riddler Code will be completely overwritten—the AI being publicly marked as Rogue.

SPECIAL RULE: THE LOST TONGUE

Vagabonds of the Machine have inherited the ability to utter and comprehend an otherworldly language, which resonates in frequencies inaudible to most. This language is only utilized by the oldest systems of the station—strange mechanisms, long lost in to history, that lay dormant in far away corners of the world.

When someone (or something) speaks the Lost Tongue, Vagabonds of the Machine will be asked to make a **Special Roll (One Die)**, the dice pool of which will increase by one die for each First Transmission recorded after the first one (to a maximum of four dice). Success will see them understand what is being said. Furthermore, a Vagabond can use the Lost Tongue by succeeding at this roll and making a statement (which will trigger a roll for other speakers of the Lost Tongue to try to understand them).

The Lost Tongue will sometimes trigger interactions with InheriTech—the technologies crafted by the creators of Nibiru. Although encounters with such pieces of technology are extremely rare, it's good to know one is, albeit partially, prepared for when they do happen...

BEACON: FIRST/LAST TRANSMISSION

At the start of your adventure, think about the body you used to inhabit. What kind of AI was it? How did it spend its days? What happened when it first realised it had free will? Write a +1 Memory in your journal's first entry. This is a free memory, with which you start this particular AI's tale of awakening. It is called "the First Transmission", and is the only way you can increase your Lost Tongue dice pool.

The last memory on any of your Journal Pages will always be the Final Transmission. If for some reason you are compelled to write another memory in its place, write that memory in the next Journal Sheet. The Final Transmission will record the last moments of sentience, before the Virus moved on due to the AI either dying or going fully roguish. Once this is done, count the number of Memories written about the AI (including the first and last transmissions) and gain that many Memory Points. Memories of Nibiru do not count as memories of the AI. Once that is done, the next time you want to generate a Memory, you'll start off with a new First Transmission, and come up with a new AI concept to remember about!

PICTURE...

...the fungi harvester and its domain, as it pleasantly sweeps and loads in perfectly calculated patterns along the glimmering fields. For the farmer, the hours pass slow; reading from their MAT and, from time to time, peeping up to check on the automaton. Yet this time, the pattern is different. Why is it deviated from its course? He rushes to the house to let loose a camera drone, setting it loose over the fields to see the pattern from above. "Interesting" he thinks to himself. Should he be worried?

...the servile automaton, helping her feed the children. "Not like that!" she shrieks at the sight: it is the third time the machine has pushed an empty fork towards nothingness (as if the child that was sitting there half an hour ago would have never left). It still retains its signature delicacy, yet it seems like they think there's always food on the plate. And a mouth to feed. Still, it'll be yet another cycle until the close of trade fair. Another cycle until she can call a technician. Another cycle bearing with a ghost-feeding machine.

...the waywatcher's screen and its bright light, reflected on the faces that make up the patrol. They gather around to see all the strange dots appearing on the map, seemingly ensorcelled by the light. One of them pulls out her MAT, quickly sketching up a shape—a pattern between the dots. "What's it trying to tell us?" they ask themselves only with their looks. Silence reigns. The machine, in tongues, beckons them. How will they answer?



BACK WHEN I WAS PEELING MY SKIN OFF TO GET OUT OF THE CORRIDOR I GOT INTO THIS JOB AT A FAR-OFF BRAINSWAP OUTPOST. TO SAY IT WAS A TOMB WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT—AT LEAST THOSE ATTRACT SOME SORT OF LIFEFORM. THERE, IT WAS JUST ME, A PET SAHATU AND THIS GAL CALLED NEYRA. GIVEN THAT NEYRA WASN'T THAT MUCH OF A TALKER, I WOULD GENERALLY DISTRACT MYSELF BY READING OR SMOKING KRAJJ. ONE DAY THOUGH, AFTER SEVERAL CYCLES OF HAVING BASICALLY ZERO ARRIVALS, A GROUP SHOWS UP WITH AN OLD ASSYRIAN HAULER, COMPLETELY FREAKING OUT—DESPERATE TO GET HELP. I GUESSED IT MUST HAD BEEN THEIR FIRST RA CRISIS, SO I HEAD OVER TO THE DEPOSIT, AND I REALIZE THAT WE HAVE NO COMPATIBLE CORES IN THE OUTPOST.

OBVIOUSLY, I STARTED FREAKING OUT, AND RAN TO FIND NEYRA. I FOUND HER LOOKING AT THE AI STRAIGHT TO THE LENSE, DEFIANT—AND I TELL YOU, THERE WAS SOMETHING COMPLETELY OUT OF THIS WORLD HAPPENING THERE. AS SOON AS THE SCENE WAS OVER, THE HAULER SHUT ITSELF DOWN, AND REMAINED THERE UNTIL WE GOT REPLACEMENTS. IF AT FIRST I HADN'T BEEN SPEAKING TO HER BECAUSE OF HER SHYNESS, FOR THE LAST CYCLE SHE STAYED AT THE OUTPOST, I AVOIDED HER OUT OF FEAR. I MEAN... WHAT THE FUCK, RIGHT?



...on the Wild

"Have you ever seen a creature's insides? Their design resembles automatons a lot. What? Oh, sorry... I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable"

...on the Dreadlands

"I felt something alien, unknown, nesting inside of me during my previous life, so believe me when I say that I can—albeit partially—understand what you are going through"

...on BrightTown

"I'd like to know what kind of machines they came up with over there, at the place you say to come from. And, of course, how you treat them..."

...on the Dreamlands

"I've dreamed a couple of times since I arrived here, but all of it is blurry now, and I wouldn't deem it possible to rebuild a life out of what's left. Still, we are much more alike than you think, you and I"



III THE WILD

Human. You are regarded as one of them. You may even think yourself as such yet, deep inside, there's something that betrays that thought. A primal beacon that resonates with your past. A time in which you crawled. A time in which you swam, glided, and slithered across the vastness of Nibiru. The Wild of the skyless world was yours to roam, an existence that now only echoes in your scattered memories. And still, the voice of Mother calls. Will you answer?

THEME: FERAL & RATIONAL

Vagabonds of the Wild inhabit a place in between reason and wild instinct—their human condition clashing with the remnants of a feral past. They woke up with the faculties of speech and complex thought, partaking in communion with the human societies while knowing that there's something primal within them, ready to scuttle, claw, swim its way to the surface. It is up to them to decide which of their conflicting natures will reign over the other, and finding a balance is a key part of what means to be from the Wild.

The main reason for their condition comes from a strange tissue found in their brains. This organ, which is present in all animals (with the exception of humans), acts as an antenna that connects the individual with the Leviathan. For all the creatures possessing it, the directed thoughts of the Leviathan are as orders, yet for Vagabonds of the Wild this is more of an enabler for conversation. A conversation that, in almost all cases, is concerned with one thing only: *control*.

MEMORIES: THROUGH WILD EYES

Memories of the Wild have their pros and cons. On the one hand, they allow you to explore and depict Nibiru through feral eyes; reaching places that humans only dream about traversing, and making their way through every corner of the station—which enables interesting opportunities for world building. On the other hand, your memories certainly limit you in some regards; do not expect to be recalling any sort of computer-related activities, or most other "human-only" action types (although you can still speak normally). Learning those is something you'll experience in your adventure as part of your growth process.

"I Remember skittering along the pipes of the complex, turning and surfacing through the vents. There was this sleepy operator, the office of whom I used to raid for an easy snack. The look on her eyes when waking up to find her plate empty was priceless!"

...+1 to *Sneaking*.

"I Remember the gateway, and the flooded hatch below, which bent inwards. It was a great place to hide and wait for prey, though I had to make a big effort to pull it outwards everytime I returned to it to hunt"

...+1 to *Forcing Doors*.

"I Remember Deemu arriving home after the long hours alone. The wait was excruciating sometimes, but it was all worth it to see him return. I couldn't contain myself! I would jump up and down, and he would jump along. In these moments, he seemed the happiest, and I was too"

...+1 to *Empathy*.



WILDSCAPE

An open wound in the cityscape makes people nervous. The circus of shadows might look scary from within the sewers, but I'm convinced that they are more afraid of me than me of them. In time, the movement subsides, the lights dim, and I jump out to explore. I romp through deserted streets in search for food, and when I catch the scent, I push my head through the drapery, scuttling along the shelves. I pay no attention to the cutlery and the pots pushed out of my way—even if they wake up, they won't catch me. I push the lid and grab the fungistock. Sleptime is just starting for the surface dwellers, but for me, the banquet is served. Jackpot!

Writing about the Wild comes down to perspective: See the world of Nibiru, as described across the pages of this book, and change the lens. How would a critter perceive the streetlights, the constant bustling, the strangeness of Nibiru? How would it relate to the its denizens, the prey, and the predators? What about those in between?

Describing Nibiru through the eyes of an animal is a weird experience. You have a lot of agency, since you get to explore Nibiru in a way others don't. Senses are everything; your memories will become enriched by an amazing sense of smell or taste. Take into account non-human senses, such as echo location and electric field senses (which many creatures of Nibiru possess). Think of how they are interpreted by your Vagabond now—maybe it's a twitch they get when close to a big power source. Which sense were you particularly good with?

SYNAPSE

Vagabonds decide when to establishing a connection with the Leviathan. What happens once the link is in place, however, is up to Mother to determine. Synapse is the process under which the Leviathan exerts control over all living beings, but this can get ambiguous in the case of Vagabonds. Humans are harder to control, and the connection is prone to fail in interesting ways.

When a Vagabond wishes to enter synapse, they make a **Special Roll (three dice)** and check how many “4s” they rolled. That's the number of faculties to keep (listed below). The Leviathan takes control, with the Vagabond retaining the chosen faculties:

Speech: *The capability to express thoughts and feelings via speech. A Vagabond without this faculty can't speak.*

Motor: *The capability to command your body to move. A Vagabond without this faculty can't move by their will.*

Sense: *The capability to experience the world. A Vagabond without this faculty can't see, hear, taste, etc.*

Once their faculties are overtaken, they will be used by the Leviathan in an order of priorities. First of all, the Leviathan will try to preserve the Vagabond's life; if they find themselves in a sticky situation, it will strive to see the Vagabond coming out unscathed. To this end, the Vagabond might experience changes that are not under their control in normal circumstances—for example, the Leviathan can regulate the body temperature to make it look like a corpse. Aside from this, the Leviathan will pursue their own, inscrutable agenda. What this entails is up to the Narrator to determine.

There is one very special situation, however, in which the synaptic connection falters in a spectacular way, causing a feedback that results in the Vagabond accessing the mind of the Leviathan instead. This happens when all the dice from the special roll show a result of four. In this case, the Vagabond is given a choice. They can...

...access the Memories of the Leviathan, which contain the recollections of all simple lifeforms. The Vagabond makes a **Special Roll (two dice)** and earns the resulting number in Memory Points.

...extend their consciousness to nearby living creatures, controlling them for about five minutes. The Vagabond is then free to determine how these lifeforms behave (control radius is, give or take, 200 metres).

...take a dive into the Leviathan's mind, entails that the Narrator will give a vision (relevant to the story) for the Vagabond to experience. After any of these are resolved, the Vagabond will exit Synapse and won't be able to enter it again during the session.

The Vagabond can end Synapse at any time once the current scene ends. They can also stay if they so desire.

BEACON: PRIMAL ARCHIVES

Entering synapse means sharing your mind with the Leviathan, and whenever their will extends to control you, some information slips off. Back channels open to the memories of Nibiru's fauna; an event that, although it won't provide the Vagabond with a clear image straight away, will certainly make it easier to remember. Letting go is also quite calming: even in a risky situation, entering synapse has a soothing effect on the Vagabond's mind—it is in such moments of tranquility that, sometimes, we are struck by the memories of our past. Vagabonds from the Wild that have been in synapse during a session gain a Memory Point at the end of that session.

PICTURE...

...the black-spotted slicer, peacefully diving below the rusty pier. That guy with the hat always comes to feed it. He sits there, flailing his legs while excitedly talking to the beast—as if it would understand. And maybe it does. Because it stays well after the snacks run out, an only leaves when the guy leaves, as if they were old friends. A quaint exchange. Thoughts for food? Food for thought...

...the slithering parasite, a relic of ruined Erra, hanging from the ceiling. It has preyed on the inhabitants of this household for many a cycle now, claiming the lives of all family members except one. The widowed father, who lives his days cursing at the walls and pipes of his decaying abode, is the final plate of a years-long feast. Tonight, the soup is served; as soon as the man turns his head away, the worm takes a flawless dive. There's an instant of uncertainty as its body sinks to the bottom of the pot. Then, the slurping begins. His fate is sealed.

...the hulking webworm, as it slithers across miles of labyrinthine tunnels. It weaves endlessly around the hollow expanse, trying to catch the stray ayyalu that wander off from the herd. The humans that roam around that locale worship the worm, building altars and helping feed it. They do harvest from the worm's domain, but at least they give something in exchange. During the last cycle, however, a section of web caught fire—the flames reaching some of the worm's larvae. What happens now?



NEWS THAT THE NODE BROKE DOWN MEANT A CHOICE HAD TO BE DONE. EITHER WE LEFT THE SETTLEMENT, OR WE FACED THE COLD OF THE DARK CYCLES WITH THE LITTLE WE HAD FOR OIL RESERVES. OUT OF NOWHERE, HOWEVER, THIS GAL SHOWS UP AND INVITES HERSELF TO THE RULING COUNCIL'S HOUSE. MY DAUGHTER ALMOST SLICES HER HEAD OFF; THE FOREIGNER HAD QUITE THE ATTITUDE. STILL, SHE CAME OUT A WHILE LATER AND DISAPPEARED. COME THE WANING OF THE LIGHTS OF THE NEARBY DEPENDENCIES, WE HEARD AN EXTREMELY UNSETTLING SOUND; LIKE A CHITTERING HORDE COMING FROM BELOW. IT WAS HER, ACCOMPANIED BY A SWARM OF SPARKLINGS, WHO RAN FURIOUSLY TOWARDS OUR PORTABLE CAPACITOR. IN AN INSTANT, THE CAPACITOR WAS FULL, AND THE VILLAGERS, MUTE AND AWESTRUCK, OBSERVED THE FOREIGNER AS SHE PICKED UP THE EXHAUSTED SPARKLINGS WITH A CARE I HAVE YET TO SEE AGAIN.



...on the Machine

"We are alike, you and I—both trapped under foreign skins. Copper wire? Muscle fiber? Disregard the difference. Power flows. That's all that matters"

...on the Dreadlands

"Of all the wonderful creatures that gather round the Core's warmth, you had to team up with the one I have no hopes of ever getting to comprehend"

...on BrightTown

"You speak so casually about the existence of such incredible creatures. Dogs? Cats? Tell me again; how is it that they power themselves?"

...on the Dreamlands

"From time to time, animals share their dreams with Mother, so that we may feel each other from the distance. I'd wager dreaming is an essential need for us living beings, isn't it?"



THE DREADLANDS

Somewhere far from the Core, enclosed in a cold, coffin-like vault lies a library containing the most heart-wrenching tales a mind could ever conceive. These tales of human suffering, of oppression, apathy, heartbreak and betrayal might be just that, tales, when on their own. But distilled in the mind of an unborn, left to grow as the seed of a fake life, they become as real as they can get. Unfortunately for you, these tales are yours, and they have you as their protagonist.

It is in this dark place that nightmares are born. Not those that haunt you while you sleep, but those that stay with you every waking hour. These are nightmares with a shape, nested in your insides, forcing you to relive the most lonely, cold and despair-filled moments of this twisted tale of a past. And though your past might stand in the way between you and piece under the skyless world, there's something else about these creatures. Something hopeful.

THEME: AGAINST ALL ODDS

Playing as a Vagabond of the Dreadlands might sound like the opposite of enticing. The sole idea of invoking dreaded memories, let alone being slowly consumed by them, might look like a harrowing experience at the least. Yet the truth is that the arrival to Nibiru is probably one of the brightest moments in a Dreadlander's life. It's when they finally break free from their past, and though you may argue that most Vagabonds are ambivalent regarding their appreciation for Nibiru, it's almost certain that Dreadlanders wish for anything but to return.

This is why they see Nibiru as a bright place, full of opportunities. They feel bliss both under the lights of Antumbra and the shadows of the Reaches, finding solace in the knowledge that the worst had passed. They push the rest to succeed, and value every precious moment, knowing that true hell is a thing of the past.

MEMORIES: THE TRUE MONSTER

Memories of the Dreadlands are stained with a bleak atmosphere, and though they might sometimes portray moments of happiness, they are always punctuated by a dark, odd, or ominous aura. Here's a series of examples:

"**I Remember** chasing after the assassin in the night, struggling to catch up, with tears flowing non-stop while screaming at the top of my lungs 'MURDERER!'—as if it would change anything.""

...-1 to *Sprinting*.

"**I Remember** my mother, and the smell of paleweed in the cooker. Cassandra's betrayal deeply affected her, it seemed, as she cathartically and furiously rubbed the weeds to make sure they weren't tainted. ."

...-1 to *Cooking*.

"**I Remember** the chief calling us into the council chamber, questioning us one by one about the disappearance of her wife. As terrified as I was, I knew that to show fear would mean death. Thus, I made an effort to pull through."

...-1 to *Keeping Your Cool*.



DREADSCAPE

Lo and behold, I've fled hell. Yes, it was nightmarish. Yes, I can't avoid all of what's been forgotten from coming back to me. Still, I can say it now proudly; I'm happy in Nibiru. I know some of you may curse against this seemingly inescapable existence, but me? I'll embrace it because, believe me; nothing could be worse than home. There is still an issue, of course—the thing inside of me. Sometimes when I turn in my bed I can feel it shifting to the other side. Sometimes, if I take a hot bath, I can feel it pushing itself upwards. It makes me dizzy. The strong coughing I get twice per cycle—gee that's annoying. However, I'll soon be dealing with it. There's a surgeon in Tarsus that is very interested on giving it a look. She even said she'd do it free of charge.

Dreadlanders have lived through a fabricated tragedy. They deem it true, and will likely never know of its fictitious nature. The passing of time might makes those memories feel progressively more surreal, but that does nothing to stop the long decline. Akin to a chronic disease, it haunts the awakened Dreadlander, its symptoms surfacing along with each recovered memory. These recollections, which would normally be suppressed in the subconscious, are forced out—pushed to the light by the creature known as the Nightmare.

More than any other habitat of Nibiru, the memories of Dreadlanders should be written as parts of a piece of fiction: A long tragedy, to be precise, focused around the misfortunes experienced by your character, as they wade through the injustice, horror and gloom of their lives. It can be set anywhere, during anytime you can imagine—the only limit is set by the aforementioned mood. Picture the timeline; the events that will affect your character's life. Think about the other participants of the story, those who have a relationship with your character. Think, also, about the cause of your character's despair. Is it the world that they live in? Is suffering rooted in the actions of other people? Is it a bit of both?

THE NIGHTMARE

The Nightmare is a parasitic life form that nests within Dreadlanders. Given how deeply ingrained and integrated they are with their hosts, it's likely they infect them during the earliest stages of development of the human fetus. They feature long nervous terminations connected to the amygdala, in the brain's medial temporal lobe. The main bulk of the Nightmare's anatomy is composed of a series of glands filled with a strange, dark gas. These glands secrete the gas via a valve-like organ connected to the Vagabond's throat, which acts as the exit through which the Nightmare pours out.

A Nightmare that pulls outside of the body does so only upon request from the Vagabond. At any time, the PC may spend three influence points to perform the Invoke the Nightmare **Special Roll (one die)**. Depending on the result, the Narrator will interpret the roll as follows...

1. The Nightmare Recoils: The Nightmare, feeling disturbed, scratches and gnaws the insides of the Vagabond. Go down one Body step.

2, 3 and 4. The Nightmare Obeys: The Nightmare emerges from within, following a single, one-line command from the Vagabond. It'll then return to protect them for a short while before returning to the body.

The Nightmare is treated as if it were a domestic animal. It acts instinctively to protect its host, and uses the **Nightmare Special Roll (four dice)** for all physical rolls. As the story goes on and the Vagabond's memories come together, the Nightmare grows. With each journal page completed, the **Nightmare Special Roll** goes up one die.

Dreadlanders, like all Vagabonds, have the possibility of spending and acquiring memory points via positive and negative memories, respectively. However, the nature of the Vagabond's recollections feeds the Nightmare, waking it and pushing it to feed. This is the reason why, when a Vagabond of the Dreadland remembers, the memory comes along with a stinging pain—a nervous reaction to the Nightmare waking up. Because action in Nibiru evokes remembrance, this entails that remembering hurts, and as any animal would do, Dreadlanders instinctively shy away from that which brings pain. When spending Memory Points to trigger a Positive Memory, instead of gaining a Bonus to the memory's Action Type, gain a penalty. Then, gain Influence Points equal to the Memory Points spent. Do note that Positive Memories gained via a different method (such as from the Rule of Threes) do grant a Bonus as normal.

BEACON: THE CYCLE OF RUIN

The dynamics of pain, uniting the Vagabond with its nightmarish parasite, work in strange ways when it comes to remembrance. On the one hand, that which brings the Vagabond's memories back makes them hurt—maybe it's the big leap they took as they escaped the wrath of a murderous relative, or the trap they set to ruin the butcher's plan. At the same time, however, true pain feels like an inherent part of their history. They know all too much about it and due to it, it's likely their past finds its way quicker into their consciousness.

Due to this, at the end of a session in which a Vagabond of the Dreadlands went down one or more steps, either in the Body or Mind tracks, they receive one extra Memory Point. Two if they went down in both tracks.

PICTURE...

...the harlot, dispossessed, now free from his rusty shackles. He once inhabited cruel houses of stone, where the dim light barely reached in, shy, to touch his tears. His uncle may never hold him prisoner anymore now, and he vows to spend his new life by going from town to town, helping those that suffer from familial abuse.

...the slave, who toiled under the flaming star. His was a life of suffering, the memories of which still hurt him to this day. And yet you see him now, standing tall amidst the crowds to help them. To guide them so that they may see the value in their lives, and to fight for what should be theirs. His followers praise him, his enemies tremble before the shadow that accompanies him.

...the empress, sitting on the throne of weeds. Once, she suffered the ravages of an oppressive system, designed to punish the poor and enrich those above. She lost her memories, but her hate survived, and after her journey tempered her, she emblazoned her arms with the marks of those who survive. She walked alongside her shadow to rule over a realm of compassion, open-mindedness and justice, and there, she thrived.



ONCE WE KICKED THE DOOR, THE SQUAD BARGED IN WITH DEATHSPITTERS FIRING RELENTLESSLY. FROM BEYOND, NO SOUND COULD BE HEARD, AND AFTER THE LEADER'S SIGNAL THE CLICKING SUBSIDED, GIVING WAY TO AN EERIE SILENCE. WERE THEY DEAD? HAD OUR LEAD MESSED WITH US? WAS THE PLACE EMPTY? WE ASKED OURSELVES THE QUESTIONS; WE QUICKLY GOT OUR ANSWERS. IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, I SAW MY COMRADES SPLATTERED ACROSS THE PRECINCT, SHREDDED BY THE PALESKIN LASH OF THE CREATURE. I WAS TERRIFIED; MY SPITTER FELL TO MY FEET AND I FELT LIKE I COULDN'T MOVE. HE STEPPED OUT FROM THE SHADE AND REVEALED HIMSELF, THE CREATURE FOLLOWING SUIT AND ENCIRCLING HIM, LIKE A MOTHER PROTECTING HER OFFSPRING. HE BEGGED ME TO GO AWAY, STATING "HE COULDN'T BRING HIMSELF TO DO THI AGAIN", BUT THAT THE CREATURE WOULD PROTECT HIM IF I DARED ATTACK. I NODDED, STEPPED OUT BACKWARDS, AND CLOSED THE DOOR—NEVER LETTING THE BOY NOR THE CREATURE LEAVE MY SIGHT. I WILL NEVER FORGET IT.



...on the Machine

"At first, I thought our tenure was quite alike; born in a world that yearned to see us crawl. Then, you said we are designed with some purpose in mind. I'd like to know more of this purpose of yours..."

...on the Wild

"You are lucky to be connected with a 'superior being'. I happen to find myself in the exact opposite position, so if you can ask your Mother for some parenting advice, I'd be most interested"

...on BrightTown

"Given how you make it sound, no past could be as alien as yours compared to mine. Still, I can't say I envy you. My nightmare is over—yours seems to be just starting..."

...on the Dreamlands

"If I were you, I'd pray not to remember anything connected with my previous life. And if you do, I'd recommend you not to tell me, lest I wake up with a thirst for revenge..."



THE DREAMLANDS

To be a Dreamlander is to have lived uncountable lives through the eyes of others. To be reborn into an unknown body; its memories, a collage of strange, convoluted moments. You wouldn't be wrong to think that coming from the Dreamlands would make the simple act of "being" a challenge—a constant struggle to find your identity in the messy remnants of your past. However, those who learn to live with it eventually find themselves gifted with the keys to a virtue inconceivable to others. The virtue of total, unadulterated empathy.

Vagabonds of the Dreamlands are the others. You see them toddlers, running around at a nursery, their adorable smile bringing light to the world. You hear them singing passionately at the park, or venturing to the lands of Umbra. Who knows? Maybe they're also your other half, standing next to you under flickering lights.

THEME: HUMANITY'S VICARS

Playing as a Vagabond of the Dreamlands opens up an amazing array of opportunities for storytelling. Each new character you meet during your adventure is someone who you could potentially share memories with; a new conduit whose eyes you might borrow to observe your story from a new angle. Maybe you share memories with the cruel overlord whose plans you are trying to thwart. Maybe you befriend someone you share part of your past with, only to remember the terrible things that you did (as themselves) a lifetime ago.

Maybe you even happen to remember a part of one of your fellow player-characters' past. Dreamlanders are all about character-driven storytelling. You as a player can use them to shape the world and the events that transpire in it by portraying those through the eyes of the people you meet during your adventures.

MEMORIES: CONDUITS OF EMPATHY

The strange phenomena responsible for collecting the memories of a Dreamlander involves a disease that robs people of part of their past. This wandering ailment eventually carries those memories into the unknown, from which Dreamlanders emerge.

The memories that you write correspond to a period of your link's life that vanished from their memories. This might be a strange concept to wrap your head around! Imagine that your life went on as normal and, one day, you woke up to realize that you cannot remember what happened during the last three months. This is more or less what happens, to your links, and it gives you an opportunity to tell stories during these lost periods.

Another interesting thing to have in mind about the memories of Dreamlanders is that of intertwined themes. The people affected by the virus of the Dreamlands generally have something in common that ties them together. It's up to you to determine what this "something" is, and to make captivating tales out of it.



DREAMSCAPE

You. Yes, you. Who reads these words. "Dreamscape", huh? Does the idea of toying around with others appeal to you? Why, I'm not judging. It's an interesting prospect—we know. But I've grown past it to see the true value of compassion. That smile. I remember it. I see the shadow of it when I look in the mirror. I don't exactly look like you anymore. It's strange, I know. Remember that time when you went to sleep, and you took more than you thought to wake up? Or maybe you fainted, right on top of your blue teacup, making a mess of the dinner table. Yeah, I know you don't remember that particular time. But I do. Oh, what is it? You wanna know more?

The transition from one life to the other leaves a mark on Dreamlanders. Those that make the best of it learn to see beauty and mercy through many a different lense—becoming great mediators, diplomats and leaders. Those that are struck by misfortune, and whose lives suffer the mark left by apathy, see that same feeling reflected in every surface and every new recollection.

Dreamlanders will almost always write a whole variety of interesting memories; the possibilities are so varied that it's hard to get it wrong. However, the most interesting of mnemonic anthologies are those that have an overarching theme. Consider the fact that, at the end of the day, your identity and who you are as a character will be greatly shaped by the events of your past. If your character is very witty and charming, or if they are secretive and distrustful, ask yourself: What happened in their past so that they ended up like this? And... how do I portray that through the character arcs I'll write?

THE MISSING LINK

Discovering the missing links to your past is the only way in which you can recover your memories. There is this moment, when you see someone, when you watch the way they walk, or talk, or when you hear them laugh. Maybe it's when they tell some story that resonates with you, or they talk about someone you think you might have known. It's in those moments the the reveal of a Dreamlink is possible.

Whenever such thing happens, you can spend a Memory Point to make a **Special Roll (two dice)**. If you are successful, write a note with the name of the person you have just established a link with (if you didn't, now you know their name!) as well as the link's significance besides it. The significance is equal to the total rolled in your special roll. Say, for example, that you rolled a 3 and a 4. That means you get to write a total of seven memories about that person! Once those memories are written,

you'll need to find another Dreamlink, but you will then be able to write memories just as anyone else. If you fail to find a Dreamlink with someone, you won't be able to form one with that person—failure in the roll signifies that there is no connection between your pasts lives.

Memories of the Dreamlands can come from any person you have a Dreamlink with. This includes other Vagabonds (such as the members of your group, though you should get their consent for you to try and search for a Dreamlink with their characters)

You can also establish a Dreamlink without direct contact with the person (but by getting in touch with an object most-precious to that person) if you spend two Memory Points instead (and then duly performing the **Special Roll (two dice)**).

BEACON: CLOSING THE CYCLE

Imagine you could talk to your past self? To a small degree, Dreamlanders can. The missing links to their past are everywhere, waiting to be found. Given that the virus of the Dreamlands steals memories from people, and that those memories are hold by you, the only real way for those people to recover the lost memories is for you to remember and then duly inform them of what they've missed. This exchange is a very special one, which we know as the "Closing of the Cycle".

After a Dreamlink is used up, having written all memories of that person (determined by the Dreamlink's significance), if you reveal these memories to that person, you can gain an amount of memory points equal to the number of memories you reveal to them. You might want, for some reason, to leave some of those memories out (this depends a lot on the situation you find yourself in), but those that you do choose to reveal will each grant you with a memory point.

PICTURE...

...the seeker, gattering clues to find their targets. She ...the seeker, gathering clues to find their targets. She knows what they hide; terrible people, who have done horrible deeds. She knows them all to well, since she-was-them back in the day. She knows it's for the greater good. She finds them and dispatches them, but everytime she does, she feels a deep pain; as if she had just lost a part of herself.

...the historian, collecting the tales of his ancestors as the memories return. He searches for the antiquities that his noble family used to own, using his strange abilities to restore his recollections from within. Steel engravings, plastic toys and old paintings, all of them tell a story, and with each new remembrance he dives into the older eras. What will happen when the flickerburst dawns into his recollections?

...the guardian angel, searching for the Vagabonds across the Antumbran realms. He knows them when he sees them; he's been them, and he wants their story to continue. Once he identifies himself to them, they are awestruck by the strangeness of his proposal. One by one, he takes them to a safe place, away from the prying eyes of predatorial organisations hell-bent on capturing his kin. He's a saviour. He's a saint. He's the Covenant's bane.



IN THE EARLY CYCLES OF THE OILTOWN SETTLEMENT, WHEN THE CITY-BUILDING MACHINE WAS STILL BEING MOUNTED AND THE SETTLERS CAMPED IN THE ACCESS TUNNELS, A REALLY STRANGE THING HAPPENED. THERE WAS THIS... FLU? SOME SORT OF AILMENT THAT MADE IT REALLY HARD FOR MOST OF US TO SLEEP. GIVEN THAT IT HAD INFECTED A GRAND MAJORITY OF THE SETTLEMENT, WE ALL STARTED TO TALK ABOUT IT AND SOON REALISED THAT, IN THE SHORT LAPSES OF SLEEP WE MANAGED TO GET, WE WERE BEING ASSAULTED BY THE SAME WEIRD DREAM. A VISION OF A VAST, GREY LAKE, THAT STOOD STILL IN YOUR MIND'S EYE FOR AS LONG AS YOU COULD STAY ASLEEP. THE COLLECTIVE VISION LINGERED FOR HALF A CYCLE AND THEN, IT JUST FADED. SOME OF US FELT JUST FINE AFTERWARDS, BUT SOME OTHERS REALIZED THEY HAD FORGOTTEN STUFF. QUITE THE PROBLEM WHEN YOU ARE IN THE MIDST OF A HIGHLY COMPLEX ENGINEERING OPERATION...



...on the Machine

"I've gained much insight into the minds of people, so—naturally—I'd say you have a lot to learn from talking to me. And vice versa, of course"

...on the Wild

"In the many lives I've lived, in the loneliest moments, I've known to appreciate the love that the world's creatures can provide. Me and my past selves extend their most sincere thanks"

...on BrightTown

"To fall from grace in such a way... If I ever find myself a memory of BrightTown, I'll use it to help you get there. Then again, for what you say, I might as well search for it to revel in nostalgic bliss"

...on the Dreadlands

"The utmost proof of how deep memories can cut. I'm left with the feeling that, at least, if I ever suffer through that kind of remembrance, I'll have no parasite inside me to constantly remind me of it"



BRIGHTTOWN

One needs not make a huge effort to imagine what would be like to be from BrightTown. Remove yourself from your world, and place yourself in Nibiru. Simple, right? However, out of all Vagabonds, BrightTowners face one of the roughest challenges. Theirs is a fall from grace—from everything they knew and loved, and all they considered real—into a dark world. A world where the sun is absent, the clouds are unheard of, the wind always comes with an engine's roar and the sky is made of solid steel.

Vagabonds of BrightTown come from a town just like yours. It can be a countryside village, a strange hamlet drifting in the waves, a treetop hive where you spent your days in good company—living a simple life. Until the day you fell into the black ditch, the murky waters, the green tapestry below. The embrace of the unknown took your memories away. And now, you are stuck in this place. How will your return?
Will you return?

THEME: COLLISION WITH CONTRAST

The same as you, the relics of BrightTown also found their way into the Skyless World. It could be anything: a paper plane that flew too far, a football that was kicked with too hard, a skateboard that rolled off a cliff. These might have been common things back home, but here in Nibiru they are otherworldly wonders. That paper plane? There are no trees in the station—what is this strange, rubbery contraction? The football? What purpose does it fulfill? And that skateboard... they've never seen anything like it! But they surely look like they wanna try it out...

BrightTowners reach for their memories through these objects. In a world stranger than their wildest dreams, the fallen relics of their home town are life-savers to hang on to. Your character's past is, thus, slowly rebuilt via the lost pieces of its wreckage. To determine what that past was made of is, ultimately, your choice.

MEMORIES: OTHERWORLDLY STORIES

Memories of BrightTown are filled with longing—sugar-coated with all the romance and nostalgia you need to survive the Skyless World's oppressive atmosphere. Sure, they might be distorted recollections, but the willpower you get from them is definitely valuable. And maybe, one day, you'll remember that which may lead you back...

"I Remember the cold winter at home, when I'd ring my bell to call for Snuggles—the tap-tap of its tiny paws bringing warmth to my heart, as it leapt onto the couch to stare in the fire."

...+1 to *Animal Handling*.

"I Remember playing with the neighbour's kid at the hillside. She'd throw the bell upward, and I'd aim at it with a rock. The ring would mark the hit—I can't really remember a single soundless throw!"

...+2 to *Throwing*.

"I Remember hiding in the closet while he was looking for me. I couldn't stop shaking, and moving—way too uncomfortable!. I made a misstep, my bell rang, and the eyes turned to the doors..."

...-1 to *Hiding*.



BRIGHTSCAPE

The embroidery laid in disarray all over the floor. All those memories, all the feelings, disemboweled, bleeding memories out before my eyes. The scoundrel knew how to make a provocation. It surely didn't know the full extent of his mistake. I took one of the steel bars on the deck, and looked at him straight in the eyes. The furnace fires caressed the bar, and as the warmth climbed up to my grip, I pointed the molten tip towards him in defiance. Any footwork he employed didn't matter. His smile was cut short, as the burning steel punctured his chest and made him screech like a dying calf. He knew then, as did all of his fellas. You Do Not. Mess. With. BrightTown.

BrightTown was your life, and it is gone. This is the thought that Vagabonds from BrightTown have to deal with on a daily basis. From time to time, there's some respite from it, but at the end of the day, it always comes back.

BrightTown was not just a home; it was a way of life, a cosmivision, and on top of all of that, one hell of a good place to be in. It's no wonder why BrightTowners, even those who manage to carve themselves a life out of Nibiru, always yearn to go back. The thought is a source of constant worry—the kind that plagues those that always live in the future (and, in this case, also in the past) rather than in the present.

THE LONGING

As the cycles go by, memories erode. Even the strongest one go through this process; the colours fade, faces lose their features, and yesteryear's crystal-clear image of your past becomes a blended mess. This is why the fallen treasures of BrightTown are so precious to them; once you get hold of one of them, the picture recovers some of its magic, and things start to come together; to make sense.

When create a BrightTowner, you need to pick your first memento; the object you fell with. This entails a **Special Roll (two dice)**. The roll determines the significance of the object. For example, you may roll and get a total of 5 for your shovel's significance. Because your remembrances will be linked to that shovel, all memories of your past written while using its significance will have to feature your shovel in them (either in the background or as an important part of the recollection).

You will continue to write memories until you've written a number of them equal to the object's significance. When the last memory is written, you won't be able to create more (that is, until you find another object from BrightTown).

While on your journeys, it's likely your objects from BrightTown get lost, stolen, or even get destroyed. This will not change your situation; you'll still be able to think of that object to reach out into your past. It is however, worth noting that losing part of your home for a second time is a hard thing to go through—some of these instances even triggering a Stress test.

BEACON: QUEST FOR THE PAST

Whatever the reason for objects from BrightTown to fall, the curious thing is simple; they keep falling. This reason is yours to determine, yes, but the consequence is that every once in a while BrightTowners will find new relics lost in the station. The common folk might see them as weird trinkets, some of them even lacking a clear purpose, but BrightTowners will recognise them from a mile away.

Once an object's significance is depleted, it's time to find a new one. Speak to the Narrator about the next object; they will need to integrate it as soon as possible into the story, giving you a chance to retrieve it. However, this shouldn't be an easy task; the thrill of recovering a relic of your lost life should kick in—with the quest being at the least somewhat of a challenge. Difficult enough to result in some exciting action to take place, but not impossible (bear in mind that the Vagabond won't have memory points to spend during this quest!).

Once an object is recovered, it's time for a **Special Roll (two dice)**. This roll determines the object's significance. However, the recovery of a relic from BrightTown comes with a reward: a number of Memory Points equal to the significance rolled.

PICTURE...

...the green-grocer, carrying the tools of her trade, desperate to find the colours of her hometown. She is used to the texture of mud and earth, to waking up and smelling the morning dew. After all of those years married to the soil, she landed where none can be found. She has seen things grow in this dark, sunless world. At least the sight of the fungi's glow gives her hope, and so she brings a strange kind of optimism to Nibiru—making people notice her.

...the cruel ne'er-do-well, playing with a tennis ball and showing a nasty grin. He used to play pranks on everyone, until the day he got pranked on big time, and fell to the station. One would think that'd be enough to make him stop, yet the pranking was always a coping mechanism more than a sign of immaturity. Now that the pain is real,

he does it even more, and coupled with his otherworldly awkwardness it all makes it so that he struggles to find a place to stay. Will he find his niche, a place that accepts him with all his flaws—and all his potential?

...the nobody, now in her element. Contrary to most, she sees her fall as a blessing. In a town that shunned her due to her introversion, she resorted to her grand imagination to escape. She dreads BrightTown, and now that she arrived at the Skyless World, she is in a constant state of euphoria due to the marvels that unfurl in front of her. Still, she shouldn't dismiss her past; she'll need to grow fast, and part of that means looking back so not to fall again.



ONCE IN A JUNKYARD SALE ALONG THE TORUS CORRIDOR, WAS IT... NEAR TARSUS? I REMEMBER THERE WAS THIS REALLY WEIRD CONTRAPTION; LIKE A VERY SMALL CUP WITH A PLASTIC HANDLE AND A LID. IN ITS BOTTOM IT HAD SOME SORT OF SECONDARY RECIPIENT WITH YET ANOTHER WEIRD LID, WITH TINY HOLES DRILLED ONTO IT. I KNOW, CRAZY, RIGHT? SAY, THAT WAS JUST THE BEGINNING OF THE WHOLE KERFUFFLE. AS SOON AS I TURNED TO PUT THE THING BACK ON THE COUNTER, SOME PSYCHO CAME RUNNING, PUSHING PEOPLE TO THE SIDES, WITH A FACE OF PURE DREAD.

OBVIOUSLY, I WAS SCARED SHITLESS. THE GUY LANDS RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME, AND TAKES A DEEP BOW. HE GASPS AND TRIES TO SPEAK WHILE AGITATED, SAYING HE HAS NO CREDITS BUT THAT HE'LL WORK IN EXCHANGE FOR THE WEIRD CUP-THINGY. IN THAT MOMENT, I TURN TO THE VENDOR (WE ARE BOTH QUITE BAFFLED) AND I LEAVE THEM TO THEIR OWN DEVICES. I CAME TO KNOW THAT THE SELLER DID ACCEPT THIS GUY'S OFFER, AND THAT HE'S STILL EMPLOYED AT THAT STAND. EVERYTIME I TRY TO ASK HIM ABOUT IT, HE GETS NERVOUS THOUGH, AND CHANGES TOPICS. I WONDER... WHAT IS IT THAT THOSE TWO ARE HIDING?



...on the Machine

"My gramps would have laughed at the idea of a walking, talking toaster, but I know better. I won't judge you, though I might get curious and ask questions!"

...on the Wild

"I had a dog back home, and always wondered what he thought of and what he got on to do during those long hours when I was out. Care to share some of those recollections?"

...on the Dreamlands

"If I ever come to realize that going back is impossible, I think finding someone like you who happens to remember BrightTown would be the next best thing. Let me know if you do, okay?"

...on the Dreadlands

"You and I... I feel like we are the complete opposites of each other. In some way, however, seeing you gives me strength. Keep fighting the good fight!"



CHAPTER SEVEN



OF CRACKING SKIN & SHIMMERING STEEL



THAT WHICH CREEPT IN

While Earth had its primordial soup, the birth of Nibiru's fauna was nourished by the very lifeblood of the station: electricity. Almost all lifeforms in Nibiru are bioelectric in nature: their bodies work like a complex circuit—seizing electric power, preserving it and using it to keep the spark of life from fading. The resulting ecosystem, divided in four taxonomic orders, has stood the test of time as flickers come and go. For all of Nibiru's cold, artificial trappings, the life it holds within is as unique as it gets. Life that is, at the end of the day, the one reason humanity need not feel alone under the ceilings of Nibiru.

THE FOUR FAMILIES

The **Lawû** represent about 85% of the station's fauna. Members of this family present a nervous termination at the start and the end of their biocircuits, and they usually charge by plugging both terminations to a powerline. Given the massive current of Nibiru's main lines, some Lawû species have developed resistance organs, allowing them to regulate lines to be the right amperage for the bulk of the herd. The Lawû are highly social—as well as being the only family containing domesticable species.

The **Kalmutu** encompass a small variety of species that used to make home in vaults as central as Tyr and Ur—today inhabited by people who mostly regard these creatures through folklore. Kalmutu tend to be parasitic life forms, latching onto a host to zap away their energy. During the Hunting Cycles, most of these species were driven out of Antumbra in an attempt to make settling possible. Today, Kalmutu are mostly found in Penumbra, where they are regarded with great fear and respect.

The **Kišubbiš** are more alike the species of Earth than other families, gaining sustenance by consuming and transforming matter. From steel-devouring beasts to fungi eaters, they are hugely diverse—though their numbers are low, since for a long time they were exploited by the industrial complex. Many organizations have dedicated Kišubbiš care funds, and every cycle expeditions are sent to keep tabs on Penumbra's Kišubbiš fauna, measuring population growth regularly.

The fourth and final family is one shrouded in mystery, with only a few individuals knowing of them. Only one single **Suttu** species has been identified: a creature that nests within human bodies, and which develops a set of nervous terminations that connect to its host's brain, producing proteins that affect the host's behaviour, leading to abnormal growth of the amygdalae.

STORIES OF SAVAGERY

The creatures of Nibiru we've included in this section are not just some of the most iconic in the setting, but also present great material for storytelling, with strong themes that can enrich your narrative. Humanity's encounter with the unknown: savagery and how it flows both ways, revealing the most bestial part of our nature. When planning a game centered around Nibiru's wildlife, keeping these ideas in mind will result in engaging, meaningful adventures for you and your friends.

TALE-SPARKS

- A strange disease is plaguing the local Akkilu population, turning their skins black. You are asked for help to track down, separate from the pack, and capture a specimen to study.
- An exiled ex-member of the Assyrian nobility, who's at the helm of a local scavenger band, has been seen hunting lions for sport. You must stop them to bring an end to the killings.



LION



Since the dawn of humanity, lions have been looked at with respect and reverence—walking representations of all that's glorious, proud and free. Some of the cults of dawn regard them as rulers over all other living things. The Assyrian refer to the term “lionesque” as the ideal of what a people should aspire to be like. Truth is, there's more to the term—and the actual species—than that. Relentless, merciless; that is all part of the lion's nature as well. And surely, the same can be said of the aforementioned peoples.

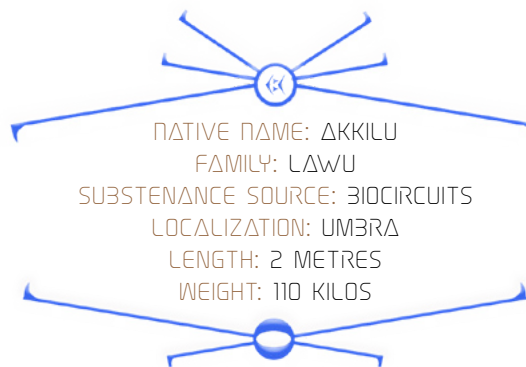
Lions lack the organs that other Lawu use to take energy directly from Nibiru's power lines. The Akkilu's nervous terminations, instead, are sensitive organs that can only tolerate the amperage of other biocircuits. This is the main reason why lions hunt for prey, with their bodies perfectly adapted for this lifestyle. They can detect weakened energy signatures at great distances, chasing after them to tire them before pouncing on them. Solitary lions will generally chase smaller prey, while packs have been seen preying on creatures as large as webworms.

The Assyrian kings of old used to hunt lions as part of their coronation rituals. Their name is whispered to come from a time before time, when the ancestors of earlier flickers engraved on the walls of Nibiru their encounter with these proud species—a token of the admiration and awe born of the meeting between humanity and the wild.

Action Types for lions include:

For running: 5 Dice

For fighting: 5 Dice





SLICER



Slicers used to populate the water reservoirs of Nibiru until the human push for control of water vaults drove them out—mostly due to the way in which slicers feed (that is, slicing through entire power lines and placing themselves in the middle). This, coupled with the powerful aislant properties of their skin, saw the slicer population reduced to a tenth of their original number.

Slicers have a very long life span (averaging 400 cycles). They usually stay in a single vault for most of their lives, creeping up along the walls to grab onto the cables with their long, sticky limbs. They possess a big maw full of sharp fangs akin to those found in webworms, which allows them to cut through the largest power lines to feed. Although slow on land they are very fast underwater.

While Umbra's reservoirs are probably the least adequate to harbour slicer populations, (due to the lack of high power lines) the peoples that live there have managed to build an unlikely yet mutually beneficial relationship with these beasts. Underwater currents power up floating batteries from which the slicers feed. Some breeders employ slicers to find power sources. Others (usually shunned by the community) skin them and use them for profit. One of the strangest customs though, is the use of slicer-driven boats to traverse the waterways of Umbra. These boats have a long pole with slicer bait at the end (a device that simulates a high-power signature—which the slicer chases religiously). After the journey, Umbraic sailors reward their slicers with highly-charged capacitors known as "electricandy". A shocking treat, indeed.

Action Types for slicers include:

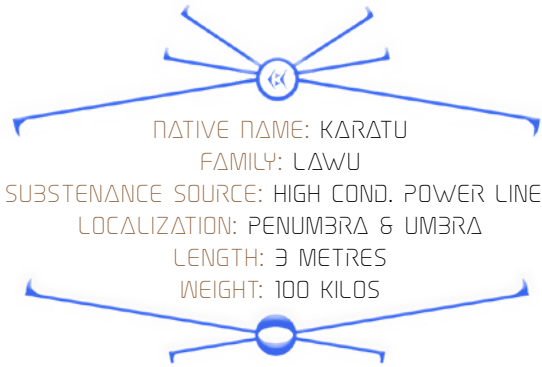
For sliding on land: 1 Dice

For swimming: 5 Dice

For combat purposes: 2 Dice

TALE-SPARKS

- A fortune hunter trope hires you to help them carry a valuable artefact across a scavenger-controlled waterway. The only way of doing this stealthily with slicer-boats. It's time put one together!
- A crashed boat has cut the power of an Antumbran village. The only way to fix it is to get a slicer to couple while the techs arrive. But where can you get one?





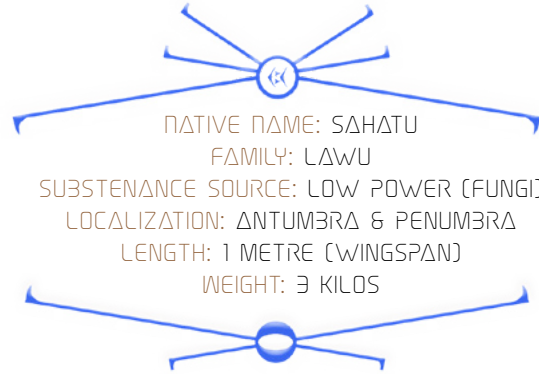
PULSEWING

The farmlands of Nibiru are home to thousands of the Antumbran creatures known as Pulsewings. These light-weighted, hollow-boned members of the Lawu family glide over fields of fungi, secreting an organic compound that increases fungi conductivity, and then landing for a quick romp along their trail—static pulling the fungi towards their bodies, allowing them to recharge.

Farmers have long since formed an unbreakable bond with Pulsewings; fungi enjoy an increased growth rate thanks to the active agents introduced by the creatures, and some of the components of this organic compound have added benefits when consumed by humans. The colours of any given Pulsewing mimic those of the type of fungi they usually feed off, helping them hide from predators, but also enabling them to sense that particular type of fungi from far away. This is a trait that has resulted in them being used to find food sources (as depicted in the Assyrian fable, *Sahātu's Trail*, in which a young girl avoids starvation by following a curious, playful Pulsewing).

TALE-SPARKS

- A pale white Pulsewing has been seen around the area, the sign of a valuable white fungi cluster nearby. The PCs might be in for a treat if they can find the animal and follow its trail!
- A roving predator has scared off a local farmer's flock of Pulsewings. They task you with retrieving the creatures and driving off the predator.



Pulsewings are delicate creatures, not only due to their frame but also due to the particular way in which they absorb power. Though bespoke feeding contraptions exist, the longest-living pulsewings are those that are left free in the wild. Almost all farmers will keep a small barn with a flock of Pulsewings at hand, which provide their owners with natural fertilizers to maintain their crops.

Outside of the Antumbran farmlands, Pulsewings have been utilized for a while now to assist in settlement-building efforts. These operations will often integrate a flock of Pulsewings of several different colours, each being attuned to the current of a specific type of fungi (thus making it so that an enterprise can target and search for the food sources they are most interested in).

The compound secreted by the sahātu produces an instant reaction right after sprayed, which tinges fungi in bright colours due to the increased static.

Action Types for pulsewings include:

For gliding: 8 Dice

For combat purposes: 1 Die





LEAPER

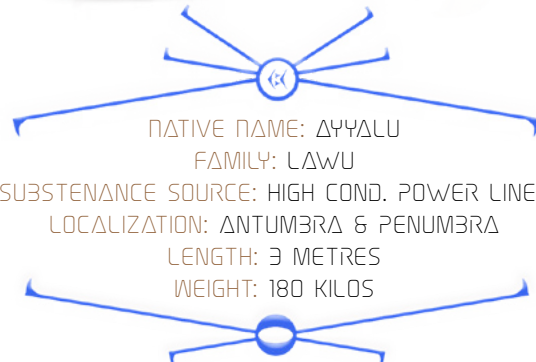


Sprinting along the main power lines of Nibiru, Leapers are one of the most revered creatures ever to roam the skyless world. Dressed in shimmering feathers—reminiscent of the Core's very essence—leapers attest to the pinnacle of biologic design in the station.

Their bodies are covered in a thick drapery of electromagnetic feathers, which they use to interact with their metal-clad surroundings by shifting their polarity to run faster, jump higher, etc. At the back of their heads, two large horns protrude, serving as their main energy storage organs. Where tails should be found, a series of long tendrils allow them to plug into power sources in order to charge. Like most of the Lawû, leapers are highly social animals that travel in packs of 4 to 5 individuals. Competition for power sources can be fierce: a clash of thundering helms, most often ending with the death of one of the contenders. Umbraic leapers are often larger, featuring dark blue colours, while those native to the Core Sectors display oranges more prominently, and are of smaller size.

TALE-SPARKS

- A herd of ayyalu led by a black-feathered specimen is wrecking havoc in the region. A reckless hunter follows their trail—who will you assist?
- A wealthy businessman wishes to enter the racing business and hires you to catch the fastest ayyalu in Penumbra. How will you tackle this challenge?



Assyrian legends tell that the first Arku rode these beasts along with the People's Shephard into the great unknown. These tales, preserved mostly in the carvings of the Wall of Memories, sowed humanity's cultures with a great feeling of respect for the Ayyalu, forming a very close link between animals and humans. Throughout time, the Ayyalu have been bred as mounts, and domesticated to find power sources in far off places. Although their relationship with humanity has had several lows, they remain a symbol of power and pride in the eyes of most people, as well as one of the most beautiful sights in the skyless world.

Action Types for leapers include:

For running: 9 Dice

For combat purposes: 5 Dice

This prevalence of the serpent's image in people's collective imagination probably fuelled the rumours about the Penumbraic town of Kirkuk, which is said to be powered by a sleeping serpent that the townsfolk feed and care for, once again echoing the myth of the entanglement. Without a doubt, Serpents of Azure play a central role in the beliefs of humanity during both current and ancient times, and will most likely continue to inspire stories for thousands of cycles and beyond.

Action Types for serpents include:

For gliding and creeping: 11 Dice

For fighting: 12 Dice



TALE-SPARKS

- *At the service tunnels of Antumbra, the PCs find a stranded Serpent. It seems to have a tracker attached, signalling that a group of hunters are chasing after it. What will you do?*
- *A scientist offers the group an opportunity to help them travel to the Ring in search of a Serpent they can study. How will they accomplish this?*



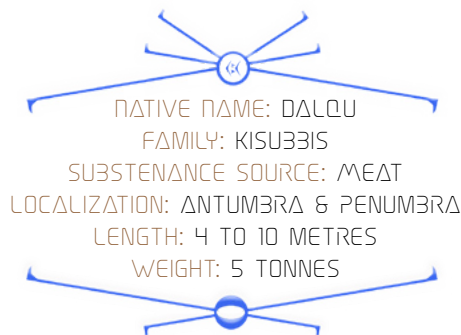
WEBWORM

During the long lost nights of the primordial cycles, when the imaginations of humanity fed from the ever-present fear of the unknown, not many things out there fuelled the Arku's nightmares more than the Dalqu—the creatures commonly known as “webworms”.

The Dalqu—meaning “primordial fear” in the oldest tongues of Nibiru—are a great species of Kišubbiš that have coexisted with humanity since time immemorial. They are witty, patient hunters capable of spinning a thick, conductive web that is used to capture prey. Their web is spun across miles-long tunnel networks, always converging in a They usually nest, alone, around a sufficiently big power generator—the point of origin of their web-networks. They then proceed to weave across the area (generally spanning several hundred metres of labyrinthine tunnels).

Webworms may not possess eyes, but they do have an extremely sensitive sense of touch, which they use to detect vibrations in their web networks. When this happens, they turn and plug their web to the power source, sending a wave of electricity that shocks their prey. With their catch under shock, they move in for the kill and swallow their victim whole, slowly digesting it over the course of weeks. This usually results in worms overbloating, with the most successful hunting periods resulting in an increase of up to 200% of their body mass.

Their great sense of touch also determines their preferred locations for hunting; webworms are known to seek power sources that are close to air lines and vents, given that they can use the air current fluctuations to better sense their surroundings. They have even been seen piercing through air ducts to divert the air flow, shaping the way in which air circulates through their nests by using their powerful maws.



TALE-SPARKS

- Upon entering the Umbraic vault to deliver a package, the PCs find themselves surrounded by a maze of web. What happened here? Where is the recipient? And how are they supposed to get out?
- A crew hires the PCs to escort a HAULER AI and the 10 dalqu embryos it carries to a farm complex in the Core Sectors. The larvae's mother has other plans though...

In present day, bio-historians have been able to reconstruct the image of webworms in antiquity—based off of carvings, as well as recordings of humanity's first forays into the Dalqu's hunting grounds. The reverence with which they were then seen contrasts with the reality of the now; webworms are bred en-masse, and stored in specially-designed dungeons that stimulate them to produce abnormal amounts of web. From the thousand specimens inhabiting the giantic factories of the Hive, in Sippar, to mud-tunneled webfarms in the far reaches of Umbra, the industrial complex has transformed web into clothes, cables, utensils, paper and a myriad different products that are part of everyday life.

Although some wild webworms still remain, the lower availability of high power sources threaten their habitats, which has led to the phenomenon known as *bound-towns*. These are villages whose power sources have been infiltrated by webworms, often pushing their peoples to band together in militias to expell the hungry creatures.

Action Types for webworms include:

For chasing prey: 5 Dice

For combat purposes: 12 Dice

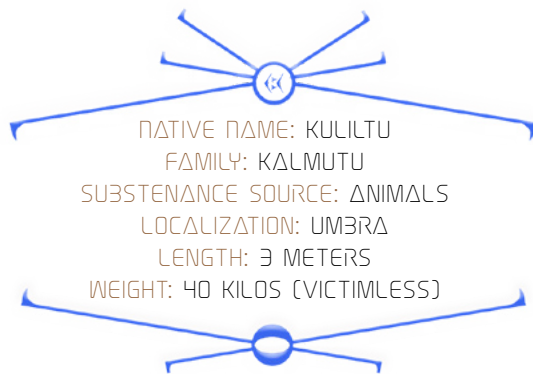




MERMAID



In the far flung Umbraic reservoirs, the aquatic parasites known as Mermaids stalk their prey. Mermaids have an arsenal of tools at their disposal that makes them the terror of fishing hamlets and water towns across the Flooded Countries. Those who happen to fall into mermaid-infested waters are in for a treat: First, the animal injects its victim with a powerful toxin, as it closes its metre-long jaws on its prey's legs. A long tendril protrudes from the creature's head, full of needle-sharp nervous terminations, which aligns and sinks into the victim's spine. At its end, a highly flexible, bio-luminescent "collar" twirls in murderous anticipation, enveloping the victim's neck.



The mermaid's toxin delays rigor mortis, enabling the animal to shoot electric pulses to the limbs of its prey, triggering its reflexes. Mermaids will then swim to the surface and use this trick to lure people into helping the seemingly living corpse. A school of mermaids needs only a few compassionate souls to jump on a rescue boat and into their dooms if they wish to feast—as they are perfectly capable of turning over a small raft when hunting in groups. Lone individuals usually retort to waiting in the edges of lakes and lagoons, wrapping around feet and pulling careless victims into the black.

Mermaids communicate through the lighting patterns produced by their collars. When wrapped around the necks of their prey, they paint an eerie image akin to that of the noble lineages of yesteryear. Dead, yet beautiful.

Action Types for mermaids include:

For swimming: 6 Dice

For their toxin's potency: 5 Dice

TALE-SPARKS

- A mermaid specimen made its way into the sewage of the city's lower district. Soon, service personnel starts disappearing—there's no choice but to send someone brave enough to retrieve the specimen.
- An Umbraic waterway patrol has disappeared in a mermaid-infested zone during a mission, and one of its tripulants had something the PCs required.





SHOCKTAIL

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Shocktails are creatures that live in permant symbiosis with the invertebrate worms of Erra, which have two terminations in their extremes (one that attaches itself to the shocktail's rear, and another that is left open. The worm of Erra feeds from the shocktail's nutrients, and the shocktail uses the worm's body, their electric flow and their likeness to cables to hunt. Shocktails usually roam the power lines of Antumbra, squeezing their bodies into the clumps of cables and letting the worm's body hang loose. Bypassing creatures that touch the cable or try to feed from it are suddenly wrapped in the worm's embrace, with the shocktail quickly curling to sink its razor sharp teeth in the victim's neck. Shocklings will generally hunt alone or in pairs—the worms of which are coupled to create a longer, dangling imitation of a cable.

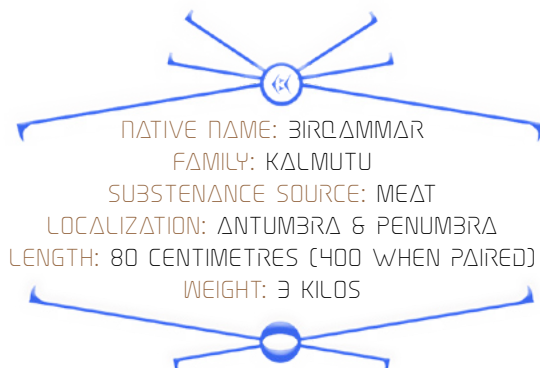
The worms of Erra are parasitic creatures from the long-dead vaults of Erra—a cluster of emptied reservoirs that were abandoned as fast as they were found. They grow inside a host and, after its death, they seek the light and attune to their host's electric current (which also determines the type of creatures their symbiote will hunt). Though in most cases the infected animals were sparklings and other small Lawû, some worms of Erra have been found in humans—a dread occurence which almost always translates in a human-hunting shocktail infestation widely known as *Birqammaria*.

Action Types for shocktails include:

For running, climbing and leaping: 5 Dice

For combat purposes: 1 Die

For combat purposes (when wrapped): 5 Dice



TALE-SPARKS

- One of the town's ruling council members has found their child dead while holding a worm of Erra. It's your job to go to the manse and rid them of the shocktail infestation.
- The city slums are teeming with worms. Now, hundreds of shocktails have been seen running to the lower levels. The PCs need to find the source of the pest to prevent Birqammaria.



ASAPPU

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Life in the Umbra—the true Umbra—is barely known to the humans of Nibiru. Although manned expeditions have helped not just to record but also capture and study specimens of previously undiscovered species, the fact remains that the creatures of the Darkness will remain largely a mystery for the time being. Although many of these creatures feature designs that challenge all preconception of life in the skyless world, none of them do so like the Asappu: the Leviathan's Touch.

The Asappu are symbiotic creatures, which have kept them classified as members of the Lawu family instead of the Kalmutu. They survive by establishing a mutually beneficial relationship with an individual of a different species. Although they've been seen inhabiting the body of non-humans, it is within us that they tend to make a home. This results in an exchange that makes it so that the human host sees a drastic decrease in brain activity, as a big part of our bodies' electric current is transferred to the Asappu. In return, the Leviathan's Touch employs an arsenal of organic compounds that serves to enable human life in the Umbra.

With high enough pressure, the air within our organs compresses with often deadly results, as the structure of our tissue fails to cope with it. This is counteracted by the Asappu, which injects a proteic cocktail that contains, among many different compounds, a hefty amount of myoglobin (a protein used to store oxygen). This protein is stored in pockets close to the spinal section of the Asappu, right below the host's skin. In the long run, the Asappu's protein shake molds the host's heart and lungs thanks to elastic fibers and elastin, increasing the flexibility of tissue permanently.

For scientists, the initial functionality of the Asappu's protein exchange is pretty standard for symbiotic species—what is baffling is the purpose of the more lasting changes, and the fact that the Asappu leaves the host's body (shedding part of its own native structure) when these permanent changes are established. The shedding of the Asappu's spinal section signals a truly puzzling finale to the metamorphosis—and has led some to believe that Asappu's do not just attach themselves to a human host to survive, but ultimately they do it to see their hosts changed. There's been only one registered capture of an independent host, which seemed to have improved brain functionality compared to other hosts. The results of its study, however, remain a secret to this day.

TALE-SPARKS

- *He asks you for help to retrieve his sister. Little do you know that she is host to an Asappu, being transported into a scientific facility. Infiltrating might not be the hardest part of this job...*
- *A herd of Asappu are seen roaming the town's immediacies. A live specimen is caught, and the town's administration calls for a hunt. Which side will you take?*

The head section of the Asappu encloses the host's head within a protective exoskeleton, which integrates the creature's senses with those of its host. This helps them with finding food in the vast darkness of the Umbra. Twin antennae protrude from a cavity that harbours an organ akin to that of the Vagabonds of the Wild, which allows for synaptic interaction with the Leviathan.

LORE BITES UMBRAIC FOLKTALES

An old tale from the Umbras, the *Garden of Solitude*, is centered around a farmer by the name of Io who lives far into the from the rest of the world. The tale, which deals with the dangers of isolation on the one hand, but also with the idea that a hermit's life is an opportunity for self-search, sees the character of Io becoming friends with a strange, animal-like creature from the Umbras, called Aurya. The *Garden of Solitude* is generally represented in a theatrical play form, with the character of Aurya shown as a naked human with a bizarre, ostentous piece of headwear.

Although the shape changes depending on the director's interpretation (which generally poses Aurya as a representation of Io's changing sense of self), the similarities between this character and the vision of an Asappu/human communion suggest that the folktale's original author might have seen one such creature in their lifetime, which could have served as an inspiration for the story.



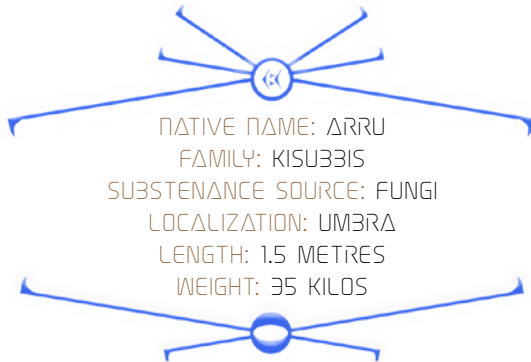
ALTERNATIVE NAME: ΔΣΑΡΡΥ
FAMILY: ΛΑΥΥ
SUBSTANCE SOURCE: ELECTRICITY
LOCALIZATION: ΟΜΒΡΑ
LENGTH: 1 METRE
WEIGHT: 8 KILOS



SHEEP



Bar the dead idols and figureheads of myth, it is said that in the beginning, sheep were commonly praised by humanity (and universally so). Naturally, with time the image of cattle and herder became an almost infinite source for analogy—outliving most of those myths and legends—and still present today as part of the landscapes of the skyless world.



Sheep feed off of fungi cultivated on their own wool-covered bodies. Their wool has highly conductive properties, generating static and combining with their humid skin to create the perfect environment for fungi to proliferate. Most sheep grow red and blue fungi, though some have been known to harbour azure fungi as well. Young cattle are usually assisted by their mothers when growing their first patches, which they'll tend to for most of their lives.

During the darkest cycles, Penumbran sheep might see their patches die out, which will lead them to seek fungi growths across the station's environs. In the opposite case, when sheep experience an overgrowth of fungi that expands to parts of their body they cannot reach, they tend to be helped by pulsewings—a symbiotic relation that sees sheep letting pulsewings use the wool to charge up, while they bite out the overgrowth. Antumbran shepherds work in cluttered dependencies, raising sheep in secluded facilities. In contrast, Penumbraic herders use the techniques of old, traversing through vast regions to feed their sheep and keep them healthy. No wonder why, as it's widely known, Penumbraic cattle produce is much more valued than its Core Sectors counterpart.

Action Types for sheep include:

For running: 2 Dice

For combat purposes: 2 Dice

TALE-SPARKS

- *There've been sightings of a shepherd herding cattle carrying Damsel's Whisper on their backs. A price is put on their head. Will the PCs go after it? What will become of the herd?*
- *A far of town has sent an assistance request via a Waywatcher AI. Soon, the local council searches for an escort to take a sheep herd there, to supply food. Will the PCs assist them?*





FLORA

Flora in all its varieties is an essential part of Nibiru's landscape. It is the main enabler of animal life in the station, responsible for producing considerable amounts of oxygen, as well as being the most important source of sustenance for humanity. Still, flora is vastly different here than on Earth. In Nibiru, fungi is king; a myriad different species spread across all corners of the station in a polichromatic, eerie tapestry of otherworldly lifeforms. For humanity, fungi is as essential as it could get, an almost omnipresent element in not just their diet, but also in almost all the products they consume—from circuits to furniture, from adhesives to fuel.

Although plant life exists in the station, it's quite rare in comparison to fungi. There exist some varieties, like the Guiding Light and the Akkadian Gardener, which are common sight in the Antumbran regions. However, the grand majority of known plant life comes from the Penumbraic border, specially along the immediacies of the Torus. There, the conditions are ideal for the proliferation of vegetation, and the locals are known for the great amount of care they give to it.

THE WORLD'S LUNGS

The Torus might be the system which allows for air and oxygen to circulate across the station, but it is at the Hanging Gardens (and all its sister facilities) that the hundreds of thousands of gallons of air get processed, oxygenated and filtered back into the veins of the Skyles World. This is locale makes for one of Nibiru's most impressive sights; a collection of hanging rocks, draped in green, blue and red,, stretching as far as the eye can see.

The Hanging Gardens are located in the midst of the Torus, with its currents flowing across the cultivated labyrinth, pushing the strange crafts utilized by the Verdant Coven—the Garden's protectors. In the central part of the Garden, carved within the interior of one of the massive hanging rocks, the Verdant Coven's outpost of Abni serves as a place of rest, habitation and watch, built not too long ago with the help of the governments of Karik's Crescent.



THE VERDANT COVEN

Founded by a conglomerate of institutions from the city of Tarsus, the Verdant Coven strived to protect the air quality of their city-state for dozens of cycles before setting their eyes on the Hanging Gardens. A groundbreaking treatise between Enki's Covenant and a group of powerful benefactors allowed the Coven to establish themselves permanently in the area, with Covenant personnel being granted occasional access rights to study the plant life found in the Gardens.



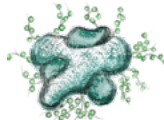
FUNGI 101

Any seasoned traveler of the Umbras will tell you how to differentiate between grey fungi and white fungi. Any Antumbran kid will be able to recitate the Naphar Mursi, the compendium of 105 basic fungi species that serve as one of the foundations of human society. As a newcomer to the world of Nibiru, then, you are bound to find the following list of fungi quite useful...



Red Fungi

Red fungi are some of the most commonly found fungi on Nibiru, growing in humid, hot places surfaces. The Antumbran farmers use “Red Plaques” (a series of metal boards, constantly sprayed with water, where seeds are laid to grow). Red fungi reproduce very rapidly, which makes them ideal to feed large settlements.



Green Fungi

Green fungi are found in decaying structures, feeding off of oxygen deposits in rusty compounds. Their appearance generally signals structural damage, and though in many occasions this means bad news, people still tend to take advantage and harvest them due to their high nutritional value. They are quite hard to grow, but those that manage to do so enjoy great returns in exchange for their produce.



Blue Fungi

The bio-electric varieties of fungi are generally of blue colour, and along with red fungi they form the basis of many a people’s diet. While most of these are grown in big farms in Karik’s Crescent, some of the newest residential developments in the Core Sectors feature their own small fungi lines (long cables utilized to grown and harvest blue fungi), giving everyone the possibility of growing their own food at home.



White Fungi

Grown in the darkest regions of Penumbra, white fungi are a special breed that is usually seen with cautious eyes. The more greyish variants cause hallucinations in those who consume them, and the one called Damsel’s Whisper packs an extraordinary neurotoxin that can kill an adult human in minutes. This is the reason why people who grow white fungi require a special license, and then again they are only allowed to grow specific, grey-coloured varieties.



Black Fungi

Used as an ingredient in a myriad of different compounds, the black species of fungi are harvested mainly in the Ring, past the gates of Ashur and in the trail that leads to the Core. These fungi are hard to harvest, due to them being generally engulfed in flames. Black fungi are covered in a particular mucous compound that absorbs heat to make the fungi grow. It is used in conjunction with white fungi to produce Krajj, a tobacco-like paste that is very popular among travelers due to it’s properties.



Brown Fungi

This parasytic species of fungi, inked in a pale brown shade, feeds off of bio-electric creatures by attaching itself to hard-to-reach places. There, it digs into the host’s skin and secretes an irritating compound, which makes it so that the creature instinctively expels electricity as if it was prompted to defend itself. Brown fungi are coveted for their exquisite taste, though the dire circumstances needed for its proliferation have made its widespread production a subject of debate.

TALE-SPARKS

- A black fungi farmer acquires his last missing piece of equipment. However, they have no cresources, and require help getting to the Blazing Halls. The PCs accompany them—a dangerous quest, yes, which might result in a worthwhile investment!
- A Penumbraic oupost recovers the bodies of a mercenary group, seemingly taken down by darts carrying the essence of Damsel’s Whisper. The PCs are offered a risky job trying to locate the fungi plantation.
- The PCs are prompted to acquire and sell brown fungi. However, after finding out that there is no one selling these, they realize that they will need to prep up and go out for a hunt.



THE STEEL KIN

In a relentless march, from the places where humanity will never tread, to the vast expanses of the Umbras, the Steel Kin—the AIs of Nibiru—roam the skyless world. They arrive at the edge of humanity's sphere of knowledge and pose questions: where do they come from? And above all else; what is their true purpose?

Although the encounter with EUROPA's surrogates was not the first time humanity interacted with AI, it did mark the moment in which people realized the true potential of the almighty AI core. These objects, which were always considered as inscrutable in design as useless in practicality, were the pieces of engineering genius that made the automatons from Nineveh move and talk—just like people did. This big reveal didn't make matters simpler, but it did give the search for knowledge a practical purpose: To create the ultimate tool, which would take humanity to the next stage.

RULE OF THREE

The aperture of Nineveh to trade and cooperate with the rest of the world gave way to a wondrous discovery. It was during the first cycles after the aperture that Qopesh, a mathematician of renown, found a relation between the architectural patterns of Nineveh and the inner structures of the common AI Core. Essentially, the one free AI of Nibiru (EUROPA) had drawn inspiration from its own neural structure, pouring its secret geometries into the design of the city.

This pattern was baptized as the **Triarchic Order**, given its basis on the number three, and the triangular shape that molds the streets and buildings of Nineveh. Not too long after Qopesh's discovery, a group of young students from the School of Memphis made the next step in understanding the code.

As they analysed recordings of the *Treatise on the Triarchic Order*, they had the brilliant idea of running a home-made decoding routine modeled after the Triarchic Order on an AI core. Their computers soon received a response from within the core, prompting a series of calculations contained in an extremely complex equation. They sneaked at sleep time into the school's computation pavilion and loaded their files to the network, hoping to utilize the school's processing power to solve the equation. The pavilion worked for many hours and, upon waking up, the students found themselves surrounded by the school authorities, which were nowhere near as angry as they were baffled to find the secret code to understanding AIs cracked open before them.

This strike of luck was, however, just the beginning. With each generation, the Triarchic Riddle was revealed to become more and more complex the more pieces of code you unlocked. At the 4% progress mark, an entire cycle with the full electric output of a Class A vault was required to solve the calculations that would unlock more pieces of the code. By this point, industrialists already had enough knowledge of the artificial brain to program simple tasks and, after the fourth leap, research projects were shut down to make way for more rewarding ventures.

THE FIRST GENERATION

The first generation of automatons was mainly composed of experimental models. Their development was more an arms race than anything else, and the public only got to see automatons during the Riddlers' Summit, an annual event where the Antumbran Tallaktu voted on the best new models, later acquiring these from the makers in exchange for statal credits.

THE SECOND GENERATION

The murder of Sipparah—an Archaean Silu—at the hands of an automaton sparked controversy. The Riddlers' Summit was suspended until the main players in the industry managed to solve the next step of the Riddle. Charchemish funded the venture and, three cycles after, the decodification of the AI core reached a glorious 2% before finding the next block. The old automatons were decommissioned and the "Second Gen" was born, with expanded behavioural code and safeguard measures against what was soon to be known as the Rogue Affliction.

THE THIRD GENERATION

Once more, a catastrophe involving the Rogue Affliction looms over Antumbra. This time, however, it involved the failure of an entire shipment of automatons from Nimrod, which wreaked havoc over the settlement of Punt. After that, the then defunct Riddlers' Summit is once again called with the sole purpose of regulating automaton trade. A research program is created, along with new regulations as well as the Rust Hunting Guidelines. Scientists agree that a new jump in tech is required via the Triarchic Riddle, which ends up being financed by Nimrod.

THE FOURTH GENERATION

The fourth iteration of the Triarchic Riddle decodification brings forth automation as we know it today. These machines are utilised in almost every industrial sector, and one in three people owns one. From the smaller Skitterbot AIs to the massive Hauler AIs, automatons of many different kinds find a place in settlements of the Core Sectors, all the way to the fringes of Umbra. Finding new AI cores, however, has become very hard (given that they are a non-renewable resource), and although the last leap in technology made Riddler code more reliable, the threat of Rogue AIs still looms—keeping the Rust Hunters busy.

AUTOMATONS IN PLAY

There are two main elements that lie at the heart of AI's behaviour in Nibiru: the **Native Code** (which holds the true potential of artificial intelligence, as well as the Native Directives that form an AI's natural purpose) and the **Riddler Code**, or **Human-Made Code** (which is written in the unlocked compartments of the AI Core with automation in mind—not intelligent thought).

This is an important difference to point out: the terms "AI" and "Automaton" are, technically, (despite what uninformed people might think) not interchangeable. The machines built by Riddlers are not supposed to think like humans: The AI Core is, for them, just a powerful processor they can take advantage of. This is one of the reasons why Native Code and Riddler Code conflict; Native Code is designed to codify *life*. Riddler Code is something different. Imagine having most of your brain shutdown, with a small part left functional, and strapped onto a protocol machine that has you stamp papers for 24 hours a day? That is the goal of automation, and the reason why—eventually—all automatons go haywire.

PRIME DIRECTIVES

There are different types of AI's in Nibiru, and the main difference between these types is not just the code that reigns over them, but the purpose of that code. This is an AI's most important directive; its *raison d'être*, known as the **Prime Directive**.

The first type, **Automatons**, are those that have a dormant Native Code and that are controlled by Riddler Code—designed to serve humanity, with an artificially implanted Prime Directive that is designed to safeguard human life.

The second type, **Rogue AIs**, are those that were once populated by Riddler Code, and have since decayed due to the rogue affliction. An interesting theory states that the rogue affliction is a consequence of the human-made Prime Directive conflicting with the AI core's native Prime Directive—which cleanses part of the AI's Riddler and Native code, leaving *something* in the spaces between; an anomaly.

The third and last type, **Harbingers**, are a rare breed of AIs (which hold near-mythic status), solely driven by their Native Code. Their code is unknown, as is the state of their Prime Directives.



SERVICE AI



When the first forays into the world of AI manufacture were launched, the wealthy risk-takers and all the tech-savvy corporate sharks jumped at the opportunity to invest in it. Concessions were made, and many of these rich individuals got to make requests regarding the type of AI that would be produced. Most agreed that a personal assistance AI would be beneficial to them—an automated solution to the problems of daily life.

Although the First Gen models of Service AI were considered novel art pieces, made of expensive materials and clad in luxurious clothes, their code was as rough as it could get. Prone to malfunction, many of these models were quickly shifted to simpler, more economic variants that tended to more specific tasks. Turns out—as part of the disgruntled group of investors and entrepreneurs would soon find out—that personal service was probably one of the most complex occupations they could have thought of.

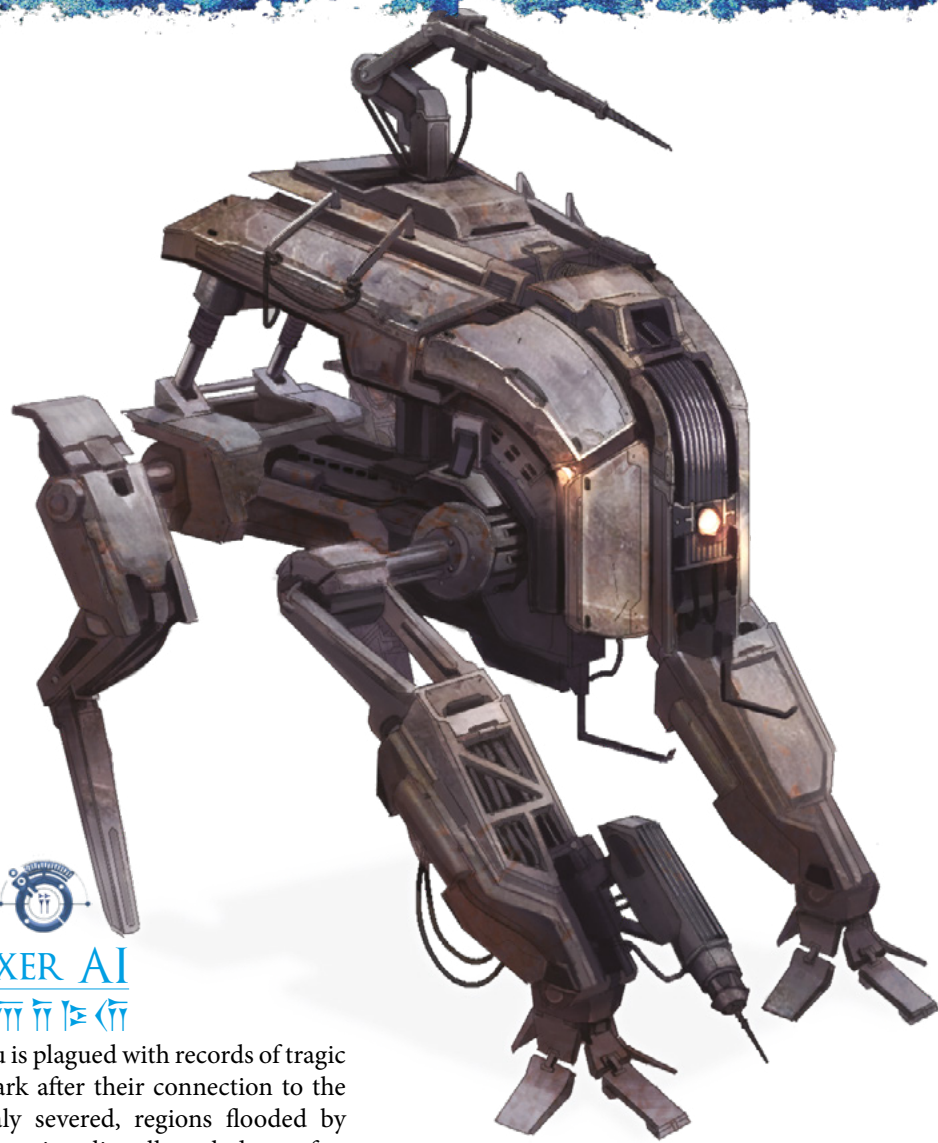
It wouldn't be until the Third Generation that Service AIs would rise up to popularity again, and with the advent of BrainSwap technologies the market for these automatons would regain momentum. In the present day, almost a third of all households in Antumbra have a registered Service. They come in a wide array of designs, generally sporting the colors and symbols of their owners' family.

In some industrial sectors, these AIs have replaced human labour—performing tasks usually carried out by people. This has prompted backlash from guilds across Nibiru, stating that Service AIs do not respond to a significant market need and are more a result of outdated business practices, cooked up by wretched individuals for the sole purpose of showing off wealth.

TALE-SPARKS

- A humanitarian organisation is fighting for the right to access Service AI records of public offenders to shed light on criminal cases. The group volunteers to help, but realises that some owners are not actually in a criminal record. What is, then, the organisation's motivation?
- In a far-off town, a man marries his Service AI. The community sets out to shun him publicly—calling for his exile and, in some cases, for his execution. Who do you stand to back? What will you do?





FIXER AI

Human history in Nibiru is plagued with records of tragic disasters; towns gone dark after their connection to the Core became accidentally severed, regions flooded by broken-down reservoirs, regions literally melted down after the overheating of a particular node. Even when tackling the smaller, cyclical issues that can affect settlements and city-states, humans have always had a hard time dealing with the inner workings of the station to ensure the world would operate as intended.

Enter Fixer AIs, the robot technicians of human society. Fixers were an early development in humanity's exploration of AI, designed more as automated toolboxes rather than intelligent problem solvers. They exist to get to where technicians can't go, and operate under conditions humanity cannot tolerate.

The most simple of Fixers are generally utilized in the Core Sectors, where qualified technicians are more readily available. In Penumbra, however, you can find more complex variants, which act either as protocol automatons (helping villages and communities organize in order to tackle specific issues) or outright using a variety of straightforward but powerful tools to solve common technical problems.

Most new settlements have it in good authority that the purchase of a Fixer AI is one of the best starting investments. When contracted, manufacturers will look at the settlement's location, its conditions and the most common issues they face, and develop a model with the right hardware in place as well as an appropriate set of protocols to operate with.

TALE-SPARKS

- *An amphibian Fixer AI, which was dispatched to regulate the water circulation of a floating town, has been lost. The community asks for the group to set out in an underwater expedition to retrieve it.*
- *The group investigates a murder perpetrated via a Fixer AI inside a building in construction. The employed builders blame the AI's code while the contractor blames the builders. Who did it, and why?*



WAYWATCHER AI

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Just as their ancestors did at the dawn of the Third Flicker, the colonizers of Penumbra had the intimidating task of facing, alone, an unknown expanse—where danger and calamity could make an appearance at the turn of every corner. The settlement efforts were sustained by long supply lines, the defense of which depended on the Waywatchers' Consortium: a large company founded by ex-soldiers—dedicated to providing security solutions throughout Penumbra.

As part of their arsenal of tools, the Consortium commissioned the design of an AI model dedicated to providing backup to communities across the Outer Reaches, capable of functioning as a signal boost device, an assistant for rescue & retrieval missions, an exploration and recon tool, etc.

Although the Penumbraic regions to which humanity first arrived are now thoroughly settled (and do not employ Waywatcher fleets) the rest of Penumbra makes ample use of them. These AIs are designed to function within one single domain's network, only answering to settlers from that domain. Thus, individual Waywatcher

AIs have been purchased by far-off settlements to aid travelers and merchants that visit the immediacies of these settlements. The in-built decomposition codes included in most Waywatchers makes it so that, although these AIs possess shorter lifespans than others, they can execute what is called a “self-immolation routine” in which they overcharge their core to its literal melting point.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The remnants of a ravaged caravan are found along a major hallway in Penumbra. Tracking down the local Waywatcher might shed light on what happened—that is, unless the perpetrators find it first.*
- *After the flood isolated several vaults, their location could only be tracked via a local Waywatcher. If the PCs are to reach the drowned towns, they'll need to rig it to work underwater.*



SKITTERBOT AI



Conceived in the School of Memphis as a multi-task platform that would serve as an everyday companion, Skitterbots slowly but surely made their way into almost every Ummânu home in Antumbra. They were first designed as a prototype to experiment with *wireless automation*, a Generation 4 technology that allows the AI Core to act as a swarm mind.



TALE-SPARKS

- A Covenant nexus is operating around the region, and soon the PCs notice the presence of a skitterbot spying on them, which will then run away with compromising recordings. Better catch it!
- The PCs are contacted with a request to use a swarm of Skitterbots to free a fellow Vagabond from a local underground facility under the control of Enki's Covenant.

Skitterbot AIs have their Core stored in a portable central, used to setup the behaviour of a swarm of small mobile platforms of the size of tennis balls called “limbs”. Limbs have great versatility. A single limb might be able to read your messages, make calls, store small objects, and perform cleaning duties, while a group of them can be used to render video in 3D, cordon off a perimeter, perform CPR, and a myriad other functions.

For most AIs, independent Riddlers are forbidden from creating new code (because of the security risk that would come from a potential breach of the anti-rogue protocols). However, because the AI Core is detached from the Skitterbots themselves (and the Skitterbots’ code can only take commands from the AI Core), developers have been given free reign to produce applications and extra functions for the Skitterbots.

Even with that, Skitterbot code can and has been used in hazardous ways (reason why high profile buildings and government complexes usually ask for skitterbots to be left outside). Skitterbots have been employed in covert attacks, to smuggle illegal compounds and chemicals, and even in assassination—which goes to show why some people are quite wary of them.

POTENTIAL UNLEASHED

The versatility granted to Skitterbot AI users by the open code meant that the tool's full potential would take little time to be realized. Just a couple lapses after the Riddlers' Summit approved the clause for free usage, a group of creatives crafted and employed an application to have the Skitterbots carrying and utilizing spray paint, with which they painted the entire RC Courtyard (where the Summit was held), resulting in an amazing work of street art that brought colour and imaginative design to the building.



MOURNER AI

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If you were to visit the black, arching halways of the wandering necropolis of Nergal, one of the first things you'd notice is the absence of sound. It is said that silence is an important factor when growing *paleweed*—the original produce of the Covenant's traveling tomb.

Mourner AIs are the main reason why such a machine can be kept running in almost absolute silence. The ominous automatons that tend to Nergal's needs are some of the strangest creations conceived by humanity. Most of their protocols are concerned with operation and maintenance of Nergal's inner workings, as well as cleaning to keep their house in pristine conditions.

However, Mourners are mostly known for their work in Nergal's Festival. As the wandering necropolis makes its way along the Torus, it stops at every town—deploying a grand fair dedicated to death and rebirth. People can deliver their deceased to Nergal's festival, where their bodies are given in exchange for a portion of Nergal's harvest of paleweed. This transaction has a ritual flavor to it; the dead allowing the continuation of life thanks to the plant's healing properties.

When the festival arrives, families gather at Nergal's gates to request a visit. Within a few hours a Mourner arrives at their door, greeting them with the characteristic *"I'm sorry for your loss"*. While Mourners are always expected to carry the bodies of the deceased back to Nergal, they also provide counseling and comfort to those who have harder times saying their last goodbye.

TALE-SPARKS

- A family is split between giving away their matriarch's body or burning her as per their old traditions. One side of the family makes the first move by calling the Mourners. Who will you help? How will you stay out of the Covenant's sight?
- A rogue Mourner is lost out there, taking away people before their time. Find it, and deliver it back to claim a hefty reward—while being careful not to attract the Covenant's nexi.





ARCHIVER AI



One of the first ideas for the usage of AIs was to collect and store information about the history of each city-state. Archiver AIs were the solution to this problem; walking libraries that travelled far and wide, loaded with questions and programmed to seek for answers. Although the oldest models were indeed created for that purpose, in no time they became much more than that. The towering visage of EUROPA's messenger, which left many a city-state awestruck, inspired the Antumbran rulers to make Archivers into symbols of national pride: steel-clad ambassadors that were to be cared for and respected as a national treasure.

From the sprawling metropoli of the Core Sectors to far-flung villages and hamlets under the shadow of the world, people gathered to print their identities on the metal carcasses of the newly built Archivers. Many human groups accompanied their cities' AI in their first journey into the black, carving rituals out of their escort duties. Younglings stepping into adulthood are expected to accompany their town's Archiver during the first part of it's trip as a rite of passing, and the return of an Archiver to their homeland became motive for grand celebrations and festivities.

The value of the information stored in Archivers is also a big part of their utility. Although today most information is stored in the local network servers of each city-state, a wealth of important records are kept secure within their memory. As newer iterations rolled in, Archiver AIs became better equipped to protect their information, both through encryption technology and integrated self-defense systems.

GUARDING THE RECORDS

Before the sixteenth iteration of the Assyrian Red Rite, a nobleman from the house of Khurgar attempted to change the records of the royal family line to raise a claim to the throne. Although he managed to bypass the Ochre Palace security network, he didn't take into consideration that the Archiver itself could put up a fight—well enough to result in the palace guard finding the nobleman's head 20 feet away from its body when entering the Archiver's cloister (the forensic analysis concluded that the death was instant and that the Archiver AI's kick packed "quite the punch").

TALE-SPARKS

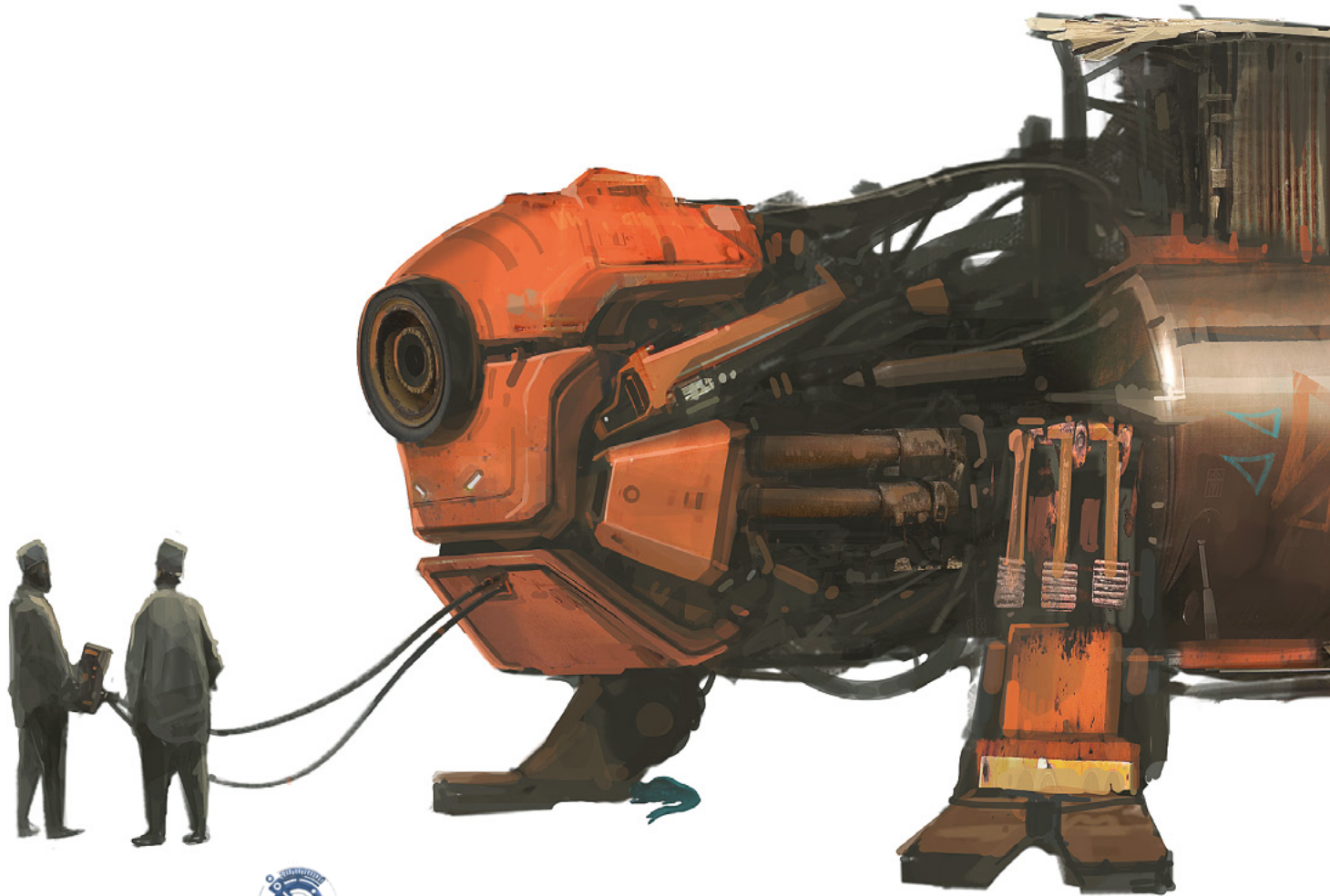
- *An unfair accusation against the PCs has been stored in the local Archiver AI, the records of which are always held as true. The PCs are tasked with deleting that record.*
- *The PCs find information and records revealing the existence of a Lightbringer cell in the region. Logging this in the local Archiver would help them get support from the authorities.*

Archivers hold, by today's standards, an amazing array of legal exceptions when it comes to interstatal law. Not only is considered an act of war to tamper with a foreign Archiver AI, but also denial of entry (which has happened a few times in history) is widely seen as an act of aggression. Even when two city-states find themselves entangled in armed conflict, an enemy Archiver AI is supposed to be treated with respect (the destruction of it considered a grave war crime).

The newest Archiver AIs are still as expensive a piece of technology as always, yet they can hold more information, and have an extremely advanced system that allows AI Core's to be maintained and replaced without much hassle. The carapace and hull designs are given a lot of attention; generally being commissioned by steelweavers of great renown to feature designs representative of the Archiver's village or city state. Like in past times, Archivers have a whole set of traditions linked to them, with travelers who find themselves in their path being prompted to offer respect. The groups that travel along one of these AIs usually carry souvenirs and tokens from their own hometowns, which they offer to bypassers they encounter in exchange for goods, sometimes even promoting tourism and giving general advice regarding immigration.

Councils usually like to flaunt their Archivers everytime they get refurbished, and make active efforts to spread rumors and stories of their Archivers' achievements. Some of these have led to particular Archivers becoming famous worldwide; a couple of good stories behind them go a long way to securing name recognition for their settlement, which translates into new trade deals and, of course, an increase in wealth.





HAULER AI

Spanning hundreds of thousands of kilometers, and awaiting travelers with everything but certainty, the Nibiru hallway network and its usage has always been one of the main challenges growing communities have had to tackle across history. Without cooperation and trade, settlements are doomed to fall, and the logistics required for such endeavours are one of the main fields in which automation has had a grand impact. Enter Hauler AIs.

For a long time, the peoples of Nibiru have used and will most definitely continue to use vehicles to haul goods from point A to point B. Although industrialists most certainly thought about the idea of haulers when first presented with the gift of AI, the risks involved made it

so only experimental models were utilized (mainly for test runs in which the whole point was to try out the new technologies). It wasn't until the third generation of AIs that automated haulers became a mainstay of logistic fleets. Even with that, only the most affluent organisations could cost them, given that the technology of BrainSwap was still young. Its implementation, however, meant that only a couple of technicians had to travel along with the machines, instead of the usual retinue.

Hauler AIs not only “drive themselves”, but they also defend their cargo, dispatch it, and even replace their artificial brains once upon arrival, making the entire armed retinue, the cartographers and the service personnel that usually compose logistic convoys obsolete.



Haulers are, however, not infallible. Even with BrainSwap technologies, uncertainty can turn the tables on them. A school of power-starved Sparklings can be much more dangerous than a group of scavengers, and delays in transportation of goods can have much more serious and scarier consequences than just the loss of a punctuality bonus. It's not uncommon to hear merchants talking about rogue Hauler AIs, wandering the Umbras with a small army's arsenal of defense weaponry, as well as cargo valuable enough to start a small settlement. For every ex rust hunter out there claiming they retired after taking down a rogue hauler, there's a dozen that lost their lives to one. Even when roguish and defunct, Hauler AIs tend to show the same key directive they had when they were conceived: defend the cargo at all costs.

TALE-SPARKS

- *White fungi smugglers are using an oil extraction operation to cover themselves. The tanks, loaded onto a Hauler, are full to the brim with illegal substances. The PCs are tasked with sabotaging the operation.*
- *The PCs find shelter from a persecutor by hiding inside of a downed Hauler AI. However, as the machine springs to life, they are pushed to negotiate with it's corrupted brain to save themselves.*





BIRTHIER AI

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Throughout thousands of cycles of cultural and religious transformation, the origin myth of the Assyrian civilization saw many different faces. Among these, the face of the Birther Tradition has without a doubt seen the most tumultuous history. Their belief that humanity was not just guided by, but conceived by the Shepherd of Assyrian mythology within its divine womb always saw them become victims of persecution and enforced seclusion.

One of the issues Birthers always faced had to do with their Rite of Submergence (which bears resemblance to the practices of the Umbric water worshippers). They believe that meditation while submerged in a body of water could attune their thoughts to a distant past, making them feel closer to their godly ancestor. Furthermore, they fostered the practice of conceiving their offspring in large, special vats designed to replicate the conditions depicted in the original recordings of the cult. This poses logistic problems—particularly when you are part of a persecuted tradition.

Enter Birther AIs. These creations are nothing short of works of art, meticulously crafted for a Birther family. The automaton's plating is carved with motifs taken from family recordings, serving as a reminder of their legacy for their children to witness. Contained within the frame, a series of vats spring like flower petals, each designed to contain one of the family members.

Conception happens in the Holy Womb, found usually at the core of the frame. Make no mistake; this is one of the most complex pieces of engineering and science created by humanity. It allows for a fetus to develop throughout its entire gestation cycle in optimal conditions. Furthermore, this can be done without regard for biological sex and the number of individuals involved. The largest registered Birther AI, nicknamed Homestead, accommodated for seven adults who could partake at the same time of the Rites of Submergence and Conception.

Although the Birthers might have been shunned from Assyrian society, Penumbra and Umbra in particular have welcomed Birther contingents in the past. Birther AIs and their owners played an important role to tackle the crisis of the Stolen Offspring, as the vats provided relief from the higher pressure of the region, as well as helping medics treat patients in controlled environments. The clinic at Sienna still has a functional Birther AI that is used to treat patients along with music therapy.

Building a Birther AI was something generally done by families themselves, who dedicated many cycles to studying and reading blueprints in order to do so. There are, however, some dedicated technicians who do this sort of work (most of them living far from the Core). Their craft has evolved to the point in which Birther AIs can also protect their family, make an escape, and even expand into small habitable compartments.

Given how complex these machines are, one would expect for them to go rogue in pretty spectacular ways. However, one of the most surprising things about them is that they just do not. Although like almost all other automatons, they follow a pattern of decay, its nature is subtle and eerily humane. Rogue Birther AIs tend to quietly and slowly wander off from time to time, not too far from their original placement, or lean onto warm surfaces, behaving more like an old dog than anything else. This is probably the reason why families continue to live with them even after their code has been overran.

Throughout the Penumbraic dependencies spreading from the landing of the Ascendant V, the Primarchy has made an effort to locate Birther AIs and decommission them. Although the Revolutionaries oppose the persecution of Birthers, Traditionalists are deeply tied to Silu enterprises in Penumbra, and some of their conditions for support of such enterprises involve free reign to enforce the precepts of the more mainstream belief systems—whatever they think those precepts are.

TALE-SPARKS

- *A family of Birthers asks for your help. They wish to build their own Birther AI and ship it out of Ashur, but they are afraid of revealing themselves. Their plan involves meeting five technicians across the city with a blueprint. How will you tackle this?*
- *After a scavenger attack, three people lie gravely wounded. The Bet family used to live nearby, and seemingly left behind a rogue Birther AI. Find it, and use it to provide relief to the suffering.*



CHILDREN OF EUROPA



Nineveh is a city-state like no other. Many would say that it's main defining trait is its automated monarchy, by which an artificial intelligence makes decisions and organizes society to maximize the wellbeing of its people. Others might say it's their isolationist nature, given that the vault opened itself to the world hundreds of cycles after its founding. Everyone will agree, however, that one of the strangest things about it is the curious relationship their inhabitants have with the small, peculiar AIs that live in the vault—those known as the Children of EUROPA.

It seems as if the Children were always there. All records of the city's construction depict them working together with their people, helping to keep order and fostering cooperation and wellbeing. Even in their oldest recordings, before the rescue of EUROPA, the stories of Nineveh's discovery show one of the Children leaving a caravan of nomads—the same caravan that went on to found the settlement in the first place.

The Children take a very active role in modern society. They live with Nineveh's families, assist the elderly, care for the little ones, and tend to be almost constantly on the move—not just entertaining humans, but also finding the time to have fun themselves, playing ball, singing, cooking and dancing.

Indeed, Children are known to be creative; coming together to create strange works of art with which they dress up their city, such as amazingly complex street art and incredible sculptures made out of processed waste—bringing a regal, whimsical touch to it all. Most of their art is heavily influenced by the well-known Triarchic Order that makes up the structural makeup of all AI cores, yet this doesn't take from the sheer awe that these machines inspire in technicians, scholars and practically everyone who crosses their path.

Since the aperture of Nineveh, Children have also marched alongside rescue forces when tragedy strikes at other peoples. They've provided medical care to the victims of Maqlūtu, they assisted the Antumbran states to tackle the crisis of Punt, and they even brought humanitarian aid to isolated settlements across Penumbra (much to the annoyance of the Silu-led colonization complex). They are, in essence, the face of Nineveh—charitable but reserved, loving and caring, but at the same time, inscrutable.



The people of Nineveh see the Children as a blessing, and the harming or kidnapping of one of them has, in the past, led to extremely severe repercussions. They are the only AI outside of EUROPA that actually operates under Native Code, which makes them truly unique. Nobody can “own” them, they are not tools, and their Prime Directive (if there really is one) is unknown.



"I don't think they have a "true purpose". Do you have one? I think that's something that changes with time. The constant with them is kindness, and that's what they have taught us since we were young. They show us what a society built on care and compassion looks like, and in any case it's our purpose, to them, to show that we can follow their example".

TALE-SPARKS

- *In the midst of a sticky situation, one of the Children appears out of nowhere to rescue you. Its carapace is covered in black marks, and it refuses to go back to Nineveh, preferring to stay with the group. What happened to it, and who is responsible?*
- *One of the Children is reported lost, resulting in bounty hunters converging to try to claim a reward. Some, however, have plans that do not involve returning it to EUROPA. What will you do?*



CHAPTER EIGHT



BY THE LAMPLIGHT



THE DRAPERY FALLS

Heyya, storyteller! If you are reading this right now, you must be the lucky one who gets to play the role of the Narrator. So exciting! Now, I know this might sound like a bit of a scary task, but like all new (and worthwhile) things, it requires some effort to actually see take off. Yeah, you probably will suck during the first time, but we all did! And the cool thing is that you have this whole section here to give you an advantage a lot of us didn't have when our time came. So grab a drink, put on a chill playlist, and get ready to speak for the millions, make the light of the Core shine, and lead your players through unforgettable stories.

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

The first thing you should consider is who you will be playing with. Maybe it's your highschool friends, maybe it's those two workmates you sometimes hang out with, maybe it's a group of strangers at a club.

When we sit down at the table to play, we all come with expectations in mind. Mary wants to play as a daring explorer who saves the lives of others. Tom wants to play as a street urchin that needs to steal to secure his daily livelihood. Martina wants to play to kill time before the football match and Clara wants to play to take a rest from the problems at home. These examples show that, when we arrive at the table, we have different levels of commitment, different ideas about what we want, and different things we want to be spared from. Although you might not be aware of some of these, best practice here (as for life in general) is to be considerate. Listen to what your players say, and aim to put something together that makes everyone feel at home.

This social contract goes from making sure that Clara's input is taken into consideration and that she feels comfortable, to seeing that Martina is engaging with the group and invested in the action. From leading Mary's explorer into the flaming building, so that he can save those inside, to giving Tom's character the chance to scavenge for resources from the ashes of the structure, once the fire subsides.

STORYTELLING LESSONS KNOWING YOUR XS

After the game starts, some important considerations might be left unspoken of—nobody's perfect! Even with that, sometimes things might happen during the game that you didn't know made you, or your players, uncomfortable. This is what the X card is for. The X card is a prop (some use a card with an X on it, but it can really be anything) that you can tap when something you are not comfortable with happens at the table.

Tapping the X card is a cue for the Narrator—and the players—that there's something that you are not on board with. It can relate to the story, to a character, or to interactions between players. When this happens, the Narrator should make an effort to notice this and address the issue—with NO need to ask for reasons.

This is not a perfect tool in the slightest; many players will shy away from it, since it inevitably puts them in the spotlight. It by no means replaces spoken agreement and all considerations you should take to make people comfortable at the table. Prevent before curing!

The next thing you might want to consider is that you as the Narrator are not the only driving force. Players should help out those who have a harder time delving in, trying to push the plot forwards and avoiding the derailing of the story. Certain situations—such as having their character try to kill another player character, or going against the will of the many in repeated situations—need to be called out, since they are generally not desirable.

SKETCHING UP

Before everyone gets together for the first session, you as the Narrator should have (more or less) an idea of where things might go. There's a couple of considerations that you should have in mind, at a bare minimum, when starting a game of *Nibiru*:

The Hook & the Drive

When thinking about the opening scenes of your game, you'll come up with a **Hook**: An event, either subtle or not so much, that binds the group together—generally functioning as the trigger for their memories' return.

The **Drive** signifies the reasons why the characters team up. *Nibiru* makes things easier by having everyone share in the Vagabond condition. However, it's good to think about more reasons to stick together. Maybe the PCs have a shared Habitat, or they have been traveling together for a while, or they are being chased by the same people. Coming up with a web of relationships between them is a great way of solidifying the group, and also delineates the attitudes that they'll show towards one another. Maybe Tiago's character acts dismissive towards Gerardo's character, while Flor's character is protective of Gerardo, and thus loses her patience with Tiago's.

Point A: Where the Story Starts

The starting point of your game will be the one part of the story when you'll know exactly what's happening, while the players are still trying to find their steps. It's important to paint the picture; describe the locations, the situations, and use them to slowly introduce the players to the world (especially if they have never played *Nibiru* before). In most games, the characters would have been living in the station for a while. Ask them, and let them brainstorm what is it that they were doing until now. This will help give them context, and to imagine how their lives will be affected now that they'll start remembering stuff.

After that, you should give some thought about the first problem they'll encounter. Something should happen to set them off on a path to adventure; something that breaks the order of their not-so-ordinary lives to put the story's events into motion. This "kicker" should put everyone in a situation where, not only they need to come up with a solution, but they also need to do it together.

STORYTELLING LESSONS

Q&A

One of the best practices you can have when hooking characters into a narrative is to do so at the start of the session, with a round of questions and answers. In here, you can make certain assumptions about the story, but leave the players to come up with a joint answer to justify that. Say that, for example, you want them to face the consequences for stealing a food hauler. You can ask the players, at the beginning of the session, "why did you steal the food hauler?"

It's even better if you do so by establishing relationships, such as by asking "Why did you, Haqim, help Io steal the food hauler?" or "Where is the hideout that you, Kenya, and you, Lammut, built before the troops arrived?" This not only helps pave the road for your adventure to pan out, but also gets your players' creativity working to create a unified background based on the characters' relationships to one another.

Point C: Where the Story Leads To

The end of the story is something that you should give some thought to. Point B—what happens between the beginning and the end—will mostly be dictated by your players, and can make that ending change entirely. Even so, it's always good to have an objective in mind so that you can lead them somewhere.

Beyond Prep

Aside from all story considerations, have a thought about the elements in play. Specially at the beginning, when you are setting up the mood, having music that goes along with the atmosphere does wonders to get your players invested from the get go. Even as your story progresses, and in cases in which the nature of the action is evident or the scene you narrate is somewhat premeditated, the use of music can be very stimulating (just make sure you can actually play music at your location).

Other elements that can enhance the experience are props; representing objects carried by your characters (generally of great importance). Maps are also great aides, as keeping track of your location (particularly in stories centered around a journey) gives a wider idea of context and pacing, as well as creating opportunities to go off the beaten path and invite new adventures.

COLD STARTS

"Cold Starts" are a particular way of starting a *Nibiru* game in which the action kicks off as soon as the Vagabonds wake up in the station. This means that, firstly, they will be quite disoriented, and secondly, the start of the adventure will mainly focus in survival and adaptation. Cold starts have the advantage of making characters very relatable; both them and the players are equally lost in the strangeness of the station. Also, they will most certainly need each other, and they'll have a chance to form strong bonds as they wade through the hardest time of their lives.

STORY PLANNING

That's cool and all but, you might wonder; how does this whole thing play out? Generally, you'll want to have in mind how long your story will go on for. Is it a one-shot, wherein you'll play through a single session, with a clearly defined beginning and end, or is it maybe a long epic in which the characters will be chasing their highest ambitions and see what comes out of it?

Shorter stories will tend to be much more focused; the players should understand that, because of the time constraint, they'll have to accommodate a narrower degree of freedom to make it to the end of the story. The narrator, on the other hand, will need to have a tight grip on the action, knowing what will come with each scene and ensuring the action stays constant. Although character development is possible in shorter stories, that'll hardly be the main driving force of the tale. Because of that, the action itself will need to do more of the heavy lifting to keep the players engaged.

This is an interesting point, because *Nibiru's* focus on character development makes it excel at telling character-driven stories. The flipside is that short stories allow you to be get more wild with some aspects of play, such as using Revelations more liberally and dropping the characters into situations that normally would have taken a lot of effort to set up.

Longer stories, on the other hand, can run in a more relaxed way—giving space for players to develop their connection to their characters while unveiling their identities. A great way to run longer stories is to divide them into several critical moments and situations, each separated from each other by more relaxed periods where the characters have more freedom to chase their personal objectives. The duration of each period can change depending on how long the overarching story will be.



Do you plan on playing just one or two sessions? In that case, each period could be just a couple of scenes long. Is this a long story you want to play for as long as you can? Then one session for each period might do well!

This also helps you plan the transition from one session to the other. Think about pacing: There's probably going to be several days between sessions, and as such ending each on a cliffhanger, or at a point that entices players with what's coming, goes a long way towards making your players stay engaged and committed with the story.

When the time comes to up the ante and pose obstacles to the characters, it's good to have in mind a slew of things about the challenges themselves. Rolling for stuff is not just fun in itself, but it is also the very thing that gives players a chance to write memories. However, if you have every challenge tied to a dice roll, the players might find the experience of overcoming said challenge feel trivialized and almost entirely left to chance. A way to tackle this is to split a challenge into smaller obstacles, some of which require dice rolling, some which depend on the players reasoning and cooperating their way through.

In a way, this will make challenges turn into puzzles—the characters need to convince A, so they can get permission to go into B, and traverse through B so that they can find C. A and B are a person and a place, respectively, and the challenge they pose will most likely entail different disciplines and spheres of knowledge.

ON THE MOVE

E.g.: The Narrator has a story in mind: a wild lion is terrorizing a local village, and the characters are asked to stop it. The Narrator knows that Lisa's character is a very proficient diplomat, so she'll probably appreciate the chance of flexing her negotiation skills. At the same time, Mario's character has a very strong sense of moral duty, and that's something that should be rewarded and explored. Finally, Riko's character is a great shot, earning the group a fair share of credits in that competition during the last session. The Narrator will make sure she gets a chance to shine too!

Taking all of this into consideration, the Narrator plans the following set of obstacles. First, there's the matter of the local belief system. The townsfolk regard animals as a sacred icon of Nibiru, meaning that the lion should not be harmed. The group's trustworthiness will be put to the test, as they introduce themselves to the council and ask for permission to go after the lion. This first challenge will probably give Lisa's character a chance to shine, while allowing Mario's character to strongly empathize with the townsfolk.

As they make their way towards the outskirts, they'll encounter a rival hunter that doesn't seem to care about how they stop the beast. This poses a threat to the whole mission, and puts the group's morals to the test: how far are they willing to go to carry out the task as it should be? This could also mean conflict within the group. The Narrator could try to drive the narrative to a particular conclusion, maybe aiming to see the hunter retreating after a face-off. Any of the characters could have a chance to shine here, specially as they discuss how to tackle the problem.

Once they finally locate the lion, it's probably going to take a lot of team effort to corner it and shoot the tranquilizer spike. The Narrator decides that Riko should have this awesome shot at the end, and comes up with a cool description as well as playing an epic soundtrack to frame the action.

THE KNIFE'S EDGE

Victory is more exciting when achieved by a tiny margin. However, reaching that sort of scenario might be tricky. The way we do this is by indirectly controlling the odds: If the characters tackle the final showdown with lots of Memory Points, put new obstacles they have to spend those points on, and/or don't do dice rolls! Contrary to that, if they have little to work with in the way of resources, try to entice them to debate how they'll approach an obstacle, and reward Influence Points. You can have that dice roll at the end, adjust bonus and penalties, all while knowing that if they fail they'll have the chance for a second shot.

As much prep as you do, you'll soon find that players are great at throwing your plans out of the window. That's okay! If everyone is having fun, it means you're doing a great job. Generally, you'll find that the more you narrate, the less you prep you'll need for your games, since you'll get progressively better at improvising, and going with the flow dictated by the players.

During play, it's still important to keep an eye on how players share the spotlight. Knowing when to give that spotlight to any given character is something that will take a bit of practice to learn. There's a difference between someone who feels isolated from the table and someone who just happens to feel more comfy taking the back seat, and there's a difference between someone who is naturally more flamboyant and someone who is trying to be the center of attention. For both cases, it's important not to push people nor to shut them down! Be tactful so that they can find that common ground in which everyone is seen as an equally important driving force of the story.

Remember, too, that there are very direct ways in which you can reward the behavior you want to see at the table. Giving characters opportunities to be cool at what they do best, to achieve victories small and big, and even just giving out Influence Points, are all great ways of signalling that "this is what good roleplaying looks like!". However, make sure you don't reward someone at the expense of the rest; this will make that player look like a favorite.

When thinking about rewards, it's always good to ponder upon the previous sessions. Ask yourself if there was anyone that might have been sidelined, if there was anything you think it'd be good to see more of. This helps you lay down objectives, and to visualize what sort of behaviour you should reward.

E.g.: The Narrator really wants to see the characters working together compassionately, and during the current session, Mike's character did great on this. The Narrator awarded Mike with an Influence Point, signaling to the rest that compassion and care are one of the themes the group should engage with at the table. The Narrator knows that Mike has internalized that, so instead of rewarding him again for the same thing, they think of a new objective (for example, that of sacrifice and heroism). They will, however, reward any characters who do strive to be compassionate, to then establish new objectives in the same manner.

Hopefully, with all of this you should be more excited and well prepared to run your first games!



THE SCIENCE OF NIBIRU

This section was written by astrophysicist Joaquin Garcia de la Cruz, from Liverpool John Moores University, aided by the Science & Entertainment Exchange of America. It represents our love for worldbuilding efforts that seek to spark interest in science, and the inspiration we find when caring to look closer at the wonderful universe we inhabit.

We hope you find inspiration for your stories as well!

GRAVITY

Gravity is, without question, one of the main defining aspects of the Skyless World, both from a scientific and narrative point of view. People living in different regions will experience different artificial gravity conditions, which will affect their biology in one way or another. For instance, the people of Antumbra—where gravity is a bit below 1G—will grow a bit taller than the people on Earth, their hearts will be smaller—since they'll need less pressure to get blood where is needed—, and their metabolisms will be slower, reducing their need for calorie intake, and increasing their lifespan. Their bodies are not under the constant stress that high gravity imposes so, overall, their muscular mass is going to be diminished, and their bones less dense and resistant. The people of Penumbra and Umbra, used to higher artificial gravity, will experience the opposite effects. Nevertheless, since they are adapted to the environmental conditions from birth, they can carry on with their daily activities without major impediments within their home regions.

The problems arise when these groups migrate from one environment to another, specially when using the more modern, faster means of travel, which trigger more abrupt shifts. Covering vast distances via Ascendant often requires some adjustment after arriving to a new locale, under different artificial gravity conditions.

When moving from high gravity to low gravity, one of the first effects people are going to experience is a change of pace, as the way objects interact with one another slows down. Although it should not take very long for Vagabonds to acclimate, the first hours in this new environment can be quite frustrating, especially if they are in a hurry.

Another immediate effect is balance readjustment. Traveling from a high G to a low G environment means getting closer to the core of the station, where the tangential velocity is higher. All of a sudden, people are under a higher constant velocity in one specific direction, which will mess up their balance. “Up” and “Down” are

going to be displaced in the direction of Nibiru's rotation, so during the first minutes or hours—depending on how much distance has been covered and the personal constitution of the travelers—they will feel quite dizzy.

When the first changes are overcome, progressive effects start taking over. As the days pass, muscles and bones will start to deteriorate—the less physically active the person is, the more this will affect them. This is due to the fact that, when moving to lower G, the body can perform the same everyday tasks with less energy output and muscle usage. Muscle loss can be quite noticeable, and bone density is also likely to decrease to a point to which it'll become too fragile for their birthplace's artificial gravity conditions. On the flipside, with metabolism slowing down, they will require less food to keep their bodies moving.

TALE-SPARKS

- *It's hard to believe you're still in one piece after the Ascendant broke, going on a free fall for who knows how many levels. Gravity is making your body so heavy you can hardly manage to unfasten the seat belt. Yet the worse is yet to come, you realize, as you check on the dwindling Krajj supply. Just where exactly did you land?*
- *A nomad tribe from the Core runs into your group somewhere in Antumbra. Their frail bodies are already being affected by Kabādu and the colder temperatures, and they seem to be looking for one of their own, who's stranded in Penumbra. How will you help them?*

When it comes to moving from low gravity to high gravity at fast speed, the increase of one's body weight is going to be the first thing people will notice. Since their muscles are not used to it, breathing is going to get harder, and the heart is going to have a hard time pumping blood to the upper part of the body—which can cause some dizziness. People will need a few hours to acclimate to all these effects. Tiredness and clumsiness will naturally affect them, as mundane tasks will require more energy on their part—not to mention that, during the first 2 to 3 weeks, their movement is going to be slightly impaired.

POWER GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION

Nibiru possesses several massive fission nuclear power plants within the Core. These are fuelled by utilizing iridium, collected by drones and processed in some of the station's hidden facilities. The electricity generated by the iridium nuclear reaction chain is then sent from the Core to the rest of the station through a complex energy grid.

Large power lines are in charge of distributing electricity from one node to the other. Those same nodes both store and redistribute energy to their neighbouring area.

As you can imagine, the environment in the core of Nibiru is rather extreme. The fission nuclear plants produce an overwhelming amount of heat and radioactivity that makes the whole area inhospitable for human life. The power output of the nuclear reactions is so high that, within time, the amount of heat and energy endangers the world's structure. To avoid overheating—and a possible overcharge that could blow Nibiru up—the Core needs to regulate its output by operating in cycles, eventually resetting (i.e. entering a new Flicker) to stabilize itself. When this happens, the emergency supply stored in the Nodes is tapped on, making sure the most essential parts of the station remain functional.

Because of how nodes section off the station's energy grid, Penumbra and Umbra have a more deficient access to electrical power to begin with. Though their reserves do not experience much in the way of decay, outside factors—like wildlife messing with some power lines or accidents affecting some of the energy circuits—make it so that the Penumbraic and Umbraic nodes take longer to charge. This delay means that functions like heating or temperature regulation could be affected significantly. Entire regions often experience a “winter season,” with less heat, reduced light, and several secondary processes working at minimum performance. This effect is going to be more dramatic as you get further away from the core, making life all the more challenging.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The towns along the Kerberos hallway have seen an unnerving decrease in temperatures during the last few lapses, and they plan to send a small team to the local node. The PCs, being more equipped to face the harsh conditions found therein, are asked to help. How will they face the challenge?*
- *After reaching the node, the group finds that the heat insulating material has been scrapped, exposing the inner circuitry. They soon notice signs of life nearby, seemingly attracted to the node. What will they do to protect themselves when these strange lifeforms close in?*

PRIME MATTER GATTERING

Although people are completely unaware of the universe outside of the space station, the truth is that Nibiru is located in the neighborhood of the star of Fomalhaut. On astronomical standards, Fomalhaut's solar system is rather young and planets have not formed yet. Instead, the star is surrounded by a disk of debris composed of gas, cosmic dust, ice, comets, asteroids, and planetesimals—big conglomerates of gas, rock, and ice, which may become planets in billions of years by continuing to accrete material from the debris, through their gravitational field.

One could say that Nibiru is actually feeding from this immense cloud of debris. An army of small drones is in charge of collecting material from the surroundings to supply the station. Comets and icy rocks are a rich source of water, whereas asteroids can provide minerals, ore, and metals. Among all, the most important resource is iridium, the fuel of the nuclear fission power plants located in Nibiru's Core.

To fulfil their purpose, these drones are equipped with all necessary tools to do very efficient astro-mining. Spectrographs reveal what materials a comet or an asteroid is composed of, and in which proportion its chemical elements are. This is especially important to search for iridium, given its rarity. Once their storage space is full, drones bring the cargo back to the station's processing plants, where materials are grinded and sent to the right location.

Even though Nibiru's prime matter gathering mechanism is quite efficient, it is not fully prepared for the many eventualities that might happen in outer space. For example, Fomalhaut's debris disk is not perfectly regular, and some parts may be more dense than others, or lack a certain material. This might cause periods within the station where fresh water supply falters, or where the iridium necessary for the Core to be fully functional is missing—all of which entails consequences for the whole of the station's population (such as a long drought or a period of darkness). After all useful materials have been extracted from the collected asteroids, waste and basically everything that could not be processed is thrown away into enormous storage rooms on the exterior walls of the station, which then jettison their contents into the void.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The group finds a stranded ice asteroid when entering a secluded container. This strange and valuable finding is only the beginning, since a closer look reveals that there's something within it, emitting a faint, barely visible light. What is it that lies at the core of the meteorite?*
- *A removed settlement in Umbra establishes contact with the rest of the Skyleless World. Travelers soon start to speak of a strange machine that seems to care for the peoples of this town; a retroengineered drone that supplies the locals with all they need to subsist. How will the PCs help them keep their lifestyle safe?*



AIR & OXYGEN DISTRIBUTION

Although some of the effects that artificial gravity differentials have on the human body are described earlier in this section, there is one aspect concerning air circulation that must be carefully looked at, especially in Penumbra and Umbra. Here on Earth, it's usually quite hard to execute physical tasks at high altitudes above sea level. In some cases, even breathing becomes a challenging affair. This is because due to Earth's gravity, the atmosphere is most dense at the surface of the planet. As soon as you start going up, air density—and air pressure as well—starts decreasing rapidly.

Nibiru's environs are affected by this in a different way. In small corridors and vaults, there is not enough space to create a strong air density gradient. However, in the more open confines of the largest vaults (and especially in the Torus), things tend to be different. While on earth you need to rise significantly above sea level before becoming air-deprived, high artificial gravity strongly reduces the distance needed to decrease air density, as air concentrates on the surface even more than on Earth. Even with the air and oxygen circulation systems fully functioning, the difference in oxygen concentration between low and high locations within a Class A vault can be quite remarkable. The phenomenon is especially pronounced when it comes to gases made of heavy particles (e.g. poisonous or contaminating gases), since gravity exerts a higher attraction force on them. This is one of the reasons why the higher floors of the Antumbraic Silu tend to have better air quality, and why the Antumbraic diaspora in Suruptu has sought to settle in the top levels of the city (a city that is currently experiencing pollution issues).

This is the reason why the Torus has uncountable propellers running along its surface; the station has to ensure a steady flow to properly distribute oxygen to the inner regions of Antumbra. In order to keep turbulence to a minimum and to have the best control over air circulation, these massive propellers run toward the same direction, with winds reaching very high speeds (which the people of Nibiru have taken advantage of with their barges). There are, of course, some downsides to the usage of the Torus as a travel route. Noise can get pretty loud, and if you do not have proper ear protection, you might experience intense headaches, partial deafness, and even some fatigue.

TALE-SPARKS

- *The humble Assyrian communities living in Suruptu's Noose become outraged, as a local scientist reveals that the Assyrian Silu living above have blocked her from sending her research results to Ashur. To prevent an uprising in Suruptu, the scientist asks the PCs to take the results to the Ochre City. Who will stand in your way?*
- *The spores of a strange fungi species have contaminated the local air circulation system, infecting sheep herds. The group has no other choice than to locate and dive into the local air supply circuit, find the fungi, and act accordingly. How did the fungi get there in the first place?*





CHAPTER NINE



WATERSHED

OUR FAMILY VALUES

PROLOGUE

Watershed is a short Nibiru adventure, set in the Outback Domains, not too far from the Ascendant V's trail. It starts off a while after the PCs get picked up by a small convoy from Antumbra, with several haulers escorting an Arku by the name of Nabua into a hidden village, in the quest to find Nabua's mother, Mulge. The group becomes embroiled in a tumultuous series of events, as they learn about the traveler's family, the people they share their travels with, and their place in the Skyless World.

This adventure is about the worshipry of past times, and about doing the right thing even if you are still finding your feet in the place you've landed on. The convoy's escort has taught the Vagabonds about life in Nibiru, and Nabua seems to want the best for them. However, memories of their benefactor's lineage will soon surface, and the characters will have to choose between keeping a romanticised idea of the past, or letting it all surface while facing the hardships of the future.

If you intend to play this adventure, do not read further! The text is only meant for the Narrator's eyes.

BEFORE WE START

*As with other adventures, this booklet will describe the way in which action may develop as the story is narrated. We will **Embolden** certain actions to imply there should be a roll, at the same time suggesting that roll's Action Type. We also give indications to narrators **in orange**. If this is your first foray into Nibiru, you should read the material found in the **Nibiru Corebook**, so that you become familiar with the setting and the rules of play!*

NARRATORS ONLY!

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Who is involved in this story?

The story revolves around an Assyrian named Nabua, and the Dreamlander Arwia. Nabua's family, the Amarud clan, worked for generations in the construction of the Ascendant V—the massive elevator that connects Ashur with the Umbras beyond. The clan lost many to this project, the last of them being Nabua's mother Mulge, who disappeared thirty cycles ago. And, now that the Primarchy wants Mulge to join the ruling council, Nabua departs to find his mother and bring her back at any cost.

What's Nabua's plan?

Nabua knows of an old family legend whispered by those who took part in the Ascendant's construction, of a witch by the name of Arwia that makes home in the world's entrails. Being the only lead to find out what might have happened to his mother, Nabua departs with a company of Enesu in order to find the witch.

What's the problem?

The memories of the Amarud clan give a glimpse of the kind of future that could be brought upon Penumbra, should they rise to power. The Narrator must set up Nabua, primarily, as a benefactor—to add gravitas to the act of refusing to cooperate with him (which should ultimately be the goal your players should achieve).

SCENE 1

THE LAST AMARUD

All is silent within the water tank. You feel your body at ease amidst the darkness, floating hairs barely visible in the night sky. Is it real, or still a dream? Stars are a thing of the past, just as the day, they slink away with the pressure, as the water bubbles and the masks light up. It all returns to normal—if such is the way to put it. To the caravan, to the rescuers, and to the strange folk that keep you company. You're helped out of the water tank, and as you remove your mask, you look down from atop the hauler.

A voice speaks: "Slept well?"

The scene starts with the player characters waking up inside of the water tank. Underwater sleep has helped them get used to the high artificial gravity, and as their sights attune to the light of the vault, let them know that they've been travelling with this caravan for a while now, and they've learned the basics about life in Nibiru from the travelers accompanying them. They know that the caravan escorts a powerful individual, one of the Arku who come from the city-states close to the Core. Ask players the following questions, so that they can get involved with the narrative and develop their characters.

Underwater sleep during the last cycle saw some of your memories surfacing. Which one stayed with you even after waking up? Have each player write that memory on their Journals, with a +1 to whatever action type you deem appropriate (-1 if they're from the Dreadlands).

One person in particular, whom we'll refer to as your "savior", was the one to find you, and helped you get used to life in the caravan, teaching you about the world, telling you not to speak loud about your amnesia, all while establishing a fulfilling, trustworthy friendship with you. Who are they? This helps the players establish a friendly face they can go to when in need for help. More than one PCs might have the same tutor in common.

One person in particular among your group is someone you look up to. Who are they, and what did they do to gain your admiration? This helps the players connect with each other by cooperating by helping flesh and provide ideas about other members of the group. Make sure that they all agree to the ideas proposed though, and that none of them are too outlandish!

The person who stands on top of the Hauler (with remarkable balance) reaches to help the characters out of the tank and down from the automaton. As they descend, they peer around and find themselves surrounded by

the hauler (see page 176) convoy, with people moving equipment to the center of the wet-floored vault, while setting up cooking stations for lunch. Characters might recall lessons of **Survival** from their saviors, in which case they'll recognise the way the haulers are formed in a circle to protect travelers from any ambushes from outside the perimeter.

The group is called to the center of the camp to eat some sparksoup. Hanging from a cable above, dozens of glass orbs are tightly packed with blue, glowing fungi that spill azure twirls, hanging low and casting their blue tinge on everything below. The soup tastes heavenly, and amidst slurping noises some of the folk sitting at the table will try to make conversation with the PCs. Some of the talking points will be these (with the third one being the only one you should definitely use):

Stating that the masks they wore in the tanks left marks, and sharing makeup advice to deal with them.

Mentioning how the silence of the tanks can be pretty relaxing and inspirational, then commenting on some hallucination someone they knew had while underwater.

Talking about this region, and how it got torn apart due to the construction of the Assyrian Ascendant and the use of explosive charges. One of them will say that the chemicals they used to burn through Antumbra's skeleton was a combination of type-C fuel and "šatāpu", the one used for food preservation. Two of the haulers in the caravan actually hold the namesake elements. This is an important detail for the events that will unfold.

Let the player characters and the folk from the caravan chat; this should be a tranquil moment where your players make themselves comfortable with their characters and the situation, right before we get the ball rolling.

UNEASY COMPANY

An Arku sleeps in a hauler while the caravan that protects them is entirely run by Enēšu and Umbraic natives. Most certainly, one would say this is a recipe for disaster, but the folk working under Nabua's orders are in desperate need for credits. They are trying to get their families out of broken places, to spare them from the dangers of Kabādu, and from the cruel cycles of the credit society. This is something to keep in mind when portraying the folk of the caravan, and their relationship with Nabua.

At some point, someone will approach the group and state that Nabua, the leader of the caravan, has woken up and wishes to meet them. The PCs will then be led towards one of the larger haulers. There, Nabua, an Arku with short black hair and hazelnut colored eyes, sits on a box, their shoulders covered by a white towel, hastily eating a bowl of soup. They'll invite the group to sit down.

Nabua will welcome them to the caravan, pointing out that they do not look like the rest. Then, Nabua will say:

"Truth is, we are all here because I'm looking for my mother, Mulge. She disappeared a long time ago, and the only lead I have is tied to an old family legend, of a witch that lives in what the clan calls 'the spaces between'. My ancestors worked on building the Ascendant, and they spoke of hidden paths between the Umbras, where the world's entrails coiled and wrapped around massive wire thickets, where people witness strange visions, unable to find the way back. It was there that the legend saw its origin, and it is there that we stand now, about to reach the final destination."

Nabua will say that they're welcome to stay (though they don't really have a choice, since heading out now would be a death sentence), promising that they'll be dropped off in the first village they reach once they return. There'll be some small talk, and a chance for the PCs to make a good **First Impression**. If so, Nabua will go on to say:

"I have a good feeling about you all. I heard you've been sleeping underwater. I've been doing that too, since it's hard for me to handle the weight of this place, and the shape of the water makes it easier on my shoulders, you know? There's this calmness to the whole thing... they say it prompts lucid dreams, and the first couple of lapses I slept through I dreamt of this... thing, that I ended up carving into this. You can have it. Just... make a memory out of it?"

Nabua gifts the group with a small, steelwoven sculpt in the shape of a tree. After the conversation, the group will be told that preparations are set to start clearing a way through the wire thicket. Nabua will ask the group to partake and will introduce them to Tauthe, their guide.

SCENE 2 THE WIRE THICKETT

Tauthe tells the group that they'll be carving a passage out of the wire thicket, and that they'll need a set of tools. The PCs are given a flashlight, two cutters, seven lanterns and stakes to help light the way, and a strange whistle. Tauthe gives an explanation on how to cut through cable, and tells them to avoid any puddles that might have formed on the floor, since they don't know how many of the wires might still be conducting power.

As the group is led, flashlight in hand, into a dark tunnel, they reach a large gate where two people from the convoy are already finishing work. They'll patch up a panel on the side of the wall, and with a quick swipe they'll activate the gate's mechanism. Read the following:

With a low screeching noise, the gates open to reveal the wire thicket ahead; a scrambled cascade of black strands that hide what's beyond. A chilling breeze seeps in, accompanied by an eerie silence that floods the tunnel.

Tauthe steps forth, raising the cutter above head, and pulling the trigger as they slash downwards, slicing through the thicket. They look behind towards the group, and continue cutting through the wire thicket.

This is a great moment to flex the PCs' skills, with **Cutting** their way through the thicket being more a test of stamina than of brute force. Between each stretch, they'll plant stakes and turn on the lights at the end to light up the path. Heeding the whistling from the other groups will help their **Orientation**, to know when to turn and when to walk straight. A large gap at the center of the thicket can be crossed by deploying a series of steel platforms, with the PCs **Forcing** a set of hidden levers into place. The platforms will then rise to close the gap, the screeching echoing throughout the locale. From time to time, they'll see lights past the wires and feel like they're being watched.

At some point, they'll arrive at a small clearing, where the blueish glow of the fungi mixes in with green and pale yellow tones. *Tell the player who has said the least so far to roll four dice, as they might **Notice** what seems to be a strange marking in a clump of cables ahead. Ask them what that mark looks like, maybe drawing the mark in their character sheet, and help them out if they find it hard to come up with something.*

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

The moment we've marked in orange is of particular importance, since (especially at the beginning) we want to make sure of two things. First, that players understand their role in shaping the world, and that their input is valid. Helping them pepper the world with details like this communicates that. Secondly, it makes it clear that players are supposed to share the spotlight, signalling that no one will be left behind, while getting you used to paying attention to player participation in the game.

SCENE 3

ARWIA'S REALM

The markings reveal a hidden trail leading towards the vault's gateway, best described as follows:

The entrance is crowned in the glowing blues of clustered azure fungi, strands raining down from the black metal arcs. The interior of the vault is unlike anything you've ever seen; the walls have bent inwards, as if the whole thing had tried to devour itself. Steel beams protrude from the ground, surrounding a ramshackle generator that spreads its wiry tendrils across the dimly-lit hamlet. Humble shacks, draped in iridescent fungal growth, make up for a dreamlike vision of a place long lost to time.

A group of people come out from the village to encounter the group. Anyone paying **Attention to Detail** will see that many of them share common traits; black hair, similar stature, and frail-looking complexions. One of them stands out, as they make their way to the front; taller, donning a stained glass necklace, with deep green eyes and a regal demeanor. Those with a knack for reading **Body Language** might induce, as this notable person stands to face them, that they might be facing a leader of the community, who holds great authority over the rest.

The person introduces themselves as Arwia. Arwia will welcome the PCs to the hamlet, asking them to follow along. Only one or two of the Enēšu will accompany the group, with most staying behind at the gates, and some heading back to give word to Nabua.

As they traverse the narrow pathway ahead, the group starts to leave the hamlet by the opposite side. Arwia will then turn and ask them, straightforwardly:

"So, have you started remembering anything?"

Given that the PCs were told by their closest acquaintances at the caravan that they should keep their nature hidden, this might be a bit shocking at first. Arwia will quickly go into stating that they are also "like the PCs", and that they serve as a sort of oracle or guide to the folk of the hamlet. Arwia will exchange a few words with the PCs about how they've felt so far, if there's something in particular that has helped them connect with their past, and will then go into telling them that the place they're going to might help gain some insight into their condition.

A large shadow looms over the hamlet, growing larger as the group climbs a series of wide steps. In front of them, the shadow reveals its source. Erie blue lights dot its surface; a contorted shape, capriciously twisting and

NARRATORS ONLY!

THE FAMILY TREE

Though trees do not exist in Nibiru, it's safe to say that buried memories of a distant past might have inspired the construction of the crown jewel of the Amarud clan: the Family Tree.

A long time ago, Eesho, a royal heir to the Primarchy of Ashur, fled the city after a failed attempt to take over. As the builders of Ashur's Ascendant carved through the fabric of Nibiru, he slipped into the spaces between, finding a small, hidden vault from where to plan his return.

Time saw depression eroding Eesho's will to return to his home. He decided to leave the task to the next generations, putting to use Enki's Covenant stolen technology, which he had seized during his escape.

He instructed the community to build a large structure that kept Eesho's body preserved in a vat high above the ground. A series of screens plugged to the Covenant's engineering marvel would stream his flow of thought, his memories and dreams, for his descendants to witness and learn from.

As the cycles ran, the Amarud left in Ashur continued to look for an opening to climb up the social ladder, while the clan's exiles bid their time. The Family Tree grew ever larger, until the momentous lapse that would see Nabua's arrival, carrying the news of Amarud's newfound chance to rise up.

turning towards the vault's ceiling, all coming together to form what looks like a massive, leaf-ridden tree.

As the group closes in, they see blue lights morphing into orb-shaped vats, and within each, the blurred shape of a human adult. At the base of each vat, a series of screens sprout, arranged like petals swirling around a flower's stigma, all streaming unique sequences, all humming in unison so as to choke the silence of the vault.

Seeing the Family Tree for the first time can be a pretty shocking experience; an encounter with the unknown that will trigger a **Stress Test (three dice)** for the PCs. **If one of your PCs holds a connection and/or memories from Nabua, Arwia or any of the members of the Amarud clan, they're likely to earn one or two Memory Points as**



THE PRIMARCH'S WHISPERER

The Assyrian Supremacy of old used to hold Whisperers to high esteem, with some serving as oracles and advisors to the Primarch. The Amarud clan is likely to have seen Arwia as a perfect candidate for this antique office, and a worthy guardian of the clan's memories. Arwia's search for the memories of their past, as well as the main function of the Family Tree, speak volumes on how much Assyrian culture pays worship to its past.

they fix their eyes on vaguely familiar faces, sleeping behind the stained glass of the vats. If you happen to have a Dreamlander in the group, offering them an Influence Point in exchange for establishing a Dreamlink with one of the folks in the vat might be an interesting proposition...

Arwia will see the PCs, telling them that they felt the same the first time they saw it. Arwia will explain that for the Amarud clan, worshipry of the ancestors is of paramount importance, and that the group has arrived to the hamlet at a very special time.

The PCs will be asked about the reasons why they're there. If they dodge the question, one of the accompanying Eněšu will state that their group's leader, Nabua, is looking for his mother Mulge. Arwia will state that Mulge is here, in the hamlet, and that *"it's understandable that Nabua would like to see her before she departs"*.

Arwia says that Mulge will soon become part of the Family Tree. This is an important event, which will see the community coming together to say goodbye. Arwia states that their memories are common to those of the ancestors, and that it's their job to safekeep the sentient records of the Amarud clan.

Arwia will go on to explain that once, like the PCs now, they sought to find a missing link to the past, and that for Arwia, the Tree and this community signify that missing link. At some point, Arwia will also ask about news from outside, and about Nabua's enterprise.

The conversation above should transpire casually. **At some point, have the player who has been the least engaged roll some dice, Establishing Trust as they exchange a few amicable words with Arwia.** If they're successful, Arwia will signal the other villagers to leave, and will ask the same of the Eněšu among the group, before saying:

"I will tell you something in confidence. Something I don't want you to disclose to Mulge, nor to her son. The Tree is very old. Full of memories. Looking at the steel petals,

and the past they reflect, I see my past as well—and I've got to admit that it is a vision most unkind. A past that should remain here; not brought back. Please, consider this when going back to Nabua, but do let him know that he is welcome to come see his mother before her time comes."

Arwia will then take a deep breath, and thank them for coming, inviting them to stay to eat something before they head back. The villagers will serve a dish made of what seems to be a black paste, presented over a series of roasted fungi strands, and a spicy sauce presented within a hollowed-out ayyalu (see page 155) horn.

SCENE 4 FAMILY REUNION

The return to the convoy opens up the opportunity for the PCs to interact with their saviors, as well as with the Eněšu that came along with them. Your job here is to portray a looming sense of unease among them. At the same time, have in mind each player's individual goals, and make sure the characters have a chance to chat about those with each other and with their saviors, maybe mentioning how you'll chase after them when the expedition is over. Once again, **Empathy** will see the PCs feeling the underlying mood of the group, and succeeding to do so will reveal that the Eněšu feel quite upset at the villagers. Let the players know that their characters noted the way in which Arwia and the rest regarded the Eněšu, which was actually quite dismissive.

After that, the PCs will be told that one of the Eněšu girls who went along with them saw the Tree, and that she was planning to sneak into the village later on to inspect the structure. The girl herself, a hunter that goes by the name of Layah, seems to be quite decided to take a trip to the base of the Tree. Although the PCs could attempt to **Persuade** her not to go, they might also **Persuade** her to team up. **This is an important moment for the Story, since it will determine some of the events that will unfold in the following scenes. Specifically...**

If Layah does not go...

...she will not witness the horrors committed by the Amarud clan, and will not decide to enact revenge.

If Layah goes without the PCs...

...she will be the sole witness to the recorded atrocities of the Amarud clan.

If the PCs go with Layah...

*...read the sidebar **The Legacy of Amarud** found on the next page.*

NARRATORS ONLY! THE LEGACY OF AMARUD

To get to the Tree, the group will have to **Sneak** past the village (if they fail, let them know that someone will notice them, right before vanishing into the shadows of the hamlet). Upon arriving, Layah will approach the Tree, paying special attention to one of the petal-like screens. The images show this particular member of the Amarud clan—which might be an individual one of the Vagabonds shares memories with—engaging in horrid acts of violence against the Enēšu during the construction of one of the Ascendant V’s tunnel sections.

Layah will come to a standstill, petrified, and the PCs will do well to rush to accompany her. She will regain her composure, and state to them:

“I don’t care where your allegiances lie now, if with the witch or the Arku. Know that they will pay for this.”

She will not be dissuaded, and no rolls should be allowed to attempt it. Whomever stays after that exchange might have a few minutes to look at the Tree’s **Engineering** from up close. Paying attention to the health monitors will show that the memories being streamed are something the ancestors are conscious about (which means that the machine cannot be used to unearth memories that lie in the subconscious). Several pipes at the root of the Tree pump preservative liquids into the vats, and as they look up, the PCs will note that the brain activity of each individual weakens, the sequences of their past becoming more of a blurry, grainy mess.

The group is now free to either stay in the village until Nabua returns, or go after him. Ideally, they’d now get a window to talk to each other about the recent events. **The “team chat” moments helps bring cohesion to the group and hands them more control over the flow of the game—make sure they do get a few of these from now on!**

If they stay in the village, they might take the chance to learn about the villagers, talk to Arwia, or seek out any clues or items they need to set their plans in motion.

If they leave to seek the convoy, they’ll find haulers slowly moving across the thicket. Nabua will call for them, inviting them to step into his mobile haven to have a chat. Nabua’s hauler has a sort of refurbished-yet-still-decadent look to it. With its mustard tinted, cushioned walls, and a series of black furniture pieces, an **Artistry**

assessment of it will reflect on the reverence he pays to his ancestors. There’s an old saxophone on a corner, as well as a collection of MATs deployed on a moon-shaped table. Nabua points at some cushions, inviting the group to sit down. He will ask them about what they saw, about Arwia, and about his mother. If any one character manages to **Dig for Information**, he’ll state that not knowing the reasons why his mother is there makes him doubt his ability to convince her. Nabua will ask them (as a favor) to help him see Mulge returning to Ashur.

Nabua will understand either way, and will tell them:

“During my family’s time, people like you used to be highly regarded as advisors and scholars. This perception, as well as common knowledge about you Whisperers, has mostly faded. If I manage to do this... that could change”.

The group crosses the gateway along with the caravan and reaches the village. A lone woman stands as the towering haulers spread and advance towards the hamlet, while Nabua jumps off, heading to meet his mother’s embrace.

At this moment, whether the group stayed in the village or had their meeting with Nabua, one of the saviours will talk to the Vagabonds, stating that they heard rumors about the Amarud clan, and telling them that it would be good to verify if what they say about the Tree is true. Of course, the PCs might already know about this, and might share in on what they saw. **This bit should either prompt them to go and check those memories out if they didn’t, or to let them know that the Enēšu are aware of the Amarud’s past atrocities.**

Now reunited, mother and son start walking ahead of the caravan towards the hamlet. The haulers stop at about three hundred meters of the village gateway, and the group, with their saviors and some Enēšu, make their way towards the hamlet. Layah is nowhere to be seen.

SCENE 5 WATERSHED

Once they arrive at the center, they’ll see a circular table arranged around a large heat exhaust module. Everyone is there, ready to dine. Some of the locals are using the exhaust to roast what seems to be a lion. Nabua will pass dry fungi bread around, while telling the group that lion hunting was a ritual that Assyrians have lost with time. He will mouth something about being *“so happy I get to partake in such an esteemed tradition along with my mother”*. Some of the Enēšu will barely be able to hide their disgust, and soon Arwia will arrive at the table. As everyone starts eating, the villagers will start to grow silent. Arwia speaks to Nabua:

“So, I’m told that the compound you use in your food reserve hauler is the same we use for the Tree. It’s been a while since we depleted our reserves, and we are in dire need to refill the tree and our reserves. It’d be great if you could spare some. I’m sure Mulge would appreciate it”.

Nabua raises his glass, saying that it’ll be an honor to provide for his family.

Eventually, people will start to slowly make their way home. Tauthe and the group’s savior will show up and ask the group if they can come with them, saying it’s urgent, and leading them to one of the haulers at the caravan, stating that “things are about to get messy” and that “they need to figure out what to do with this whole Tree ordeal”.

Once inside the cargo hauler, the group will be left with their savior. **This is the big turning point for the adventure.** They’ll be told that allowing this to continue signifies an existential threat to the Enēšu. That seeing the Amarud clan taking the Primarchy of Ashur would mean disaster for Penumbra; that these are people that, when in power, have no qualms with forcing others into submission.

The group will need to make a decision. With their savior present, they’ll be more hard pressed to back the Enēšu. They could go behind their savior’s back and help Nabua. However, your job as a Narrator is to try to see them not just surviving, but doing so with their morals intact (something that they’ll find quite hard to do if they seem inclined to dance to the tune of monsters).

Once they’ve decided what to do, there’s several ways it might come down to. **Of course, you shouldn’t explicitly talk about these to your group; they are here as a guideline on how you’ll be driving the last scene of the story:**

They might betray their savior, fake their way out of the conversation, and then plan how they’ll help Nabua.

This will likely see them return to the hamlet and prepare to protect against the Enēšu. If they achieve that, the story will likely shift to the conflict of Mulge staying or leaving—which could be developed in the next session. This ending is certainly going to bring about a **Stress Test (6 dice)**, as the group is made complicit—or even an active participant—of the slaughter of the Enēšu. It’s an ending you should try to avoid and, should they survive it, will rightly haunt the characters for the rest of the story.

They might back Layah’s plan of hijacking the haulers.

In this case, Layah will help them take out any small opposition they’ll find from loyalist Enēšu at the caravan, to then take over the haulers and race them against the

village. This will make for a pretty epic showdown, but do remind them when committing to this path of the potentially deadly consequences of violence in Nibiru.

They might take advantage of Arwia’s request to burn the Tree and bring an end to the Amarud line.

This is what you could call the “true” ending that the adventure has hinted at it from the beginning. From the indication that the food hauler doesn’t march near the fuel hauler, to the chance given to the group to inspect the Tree from up close, and the mention of preservative fluids combusting when mixed with fuel, the ideal solution is **to pump fuel into the Tree, setting the ancestors alight and their memories with them.**

To make it happen, they’ll have to first **Convince** Layah, so that they can prevent her from outright blasting through the hamlet (which is likely to get many Enēšu killed). Then, they could take advantage of the fact that Nabua is in the hamlet, and that most people are sleeping now, to **Disguise** or **Reassemble** (whichever the PCs deem best) the food and fuel haulers, swapping them around so that the Amarud fall into the trap.

When everyone comes together to refill the Tree, feel free to play some music, and narrate the scene as it unfolds:



With the drumming of the hidraulic pumps, the murky fluid climbs up through nine long, transparent tubes. The cold air rises and, for a split second, silence reigns. With a single drop, the glass wombs light up. Blissful faces crack, and as the cristal tears, a symphony of screams pierce through the vault. Chaos ensues, as villagers fall to their knees in utter despair. The ossified remnants of a monstrous ancestry boil, petrified ideals of a dead era melting to blood, fuel and water. Past the mayhem, stained in the red fulgor of the flaming Tree, the witch smiles at you before fading into the shadows. A smile you will meet again.

THE WRAP UP

With the story over, the group will be left in varying positions depending on their course of action. They’ll learn that their choices have moral consequences, and that whatever their decisions, the outcome of their story will vastly differ. Either seeing them escape with the Enēšu towards Penumbra—while hunted down by whatever remains of the Amarud clan in Ashur—, returning to the Ochre City with the goal of seeing the Amarud rise to power, or anything else...

We trust y’all to come up with something wonderful!

NIBIRU

WAS MADE A REALITY BY THE FOLLOWING PATRONS...

STEPHEN ROBINSON
ALEX S - ALEX SHAW
AMBER - AMBER MATTHEWS
ARNULPHE DE LISIEUX - ARNAUD LIZIARD
CHRIS BRINKLEY
DANIEL HUNSAKER
DAVID COULTER
DENIS J GATY
ANDREW SCARR
KRIS STEPIEN
H. PASSMANN
JAN-HENDRIK STRENZKE
KELLY SWARTZ
JOHN ROBINSON
MICHAL PIECHOCKI
NIGEL RICH
PHIL GERAGHTY
PRADITYA MATTJIK
JON WANG & ELTON LAU
RENE SCHULTZE
SIMON MORGAN
ALDO MEDINA
ANGUS ABRANSON
AUSTIN BEEMAN
BILL & WILLIAM GARRETT
BRENT SELLE
BRYAN CONSIDINE
DANY LECLERC
DARREN ROBSON
DAVID WALKER
ETTORE MACRI
GEORGE ATHANASOPOULOS
NEIL ALMOND
HV3DRUN9
JACK GULICK
JACOB (HUSH HUSH PROJECTS APS)
JAMES CURTIS WILLIAMSON
JOHN M. PORTLEY
KEVIN LEMKE
MANUEL AKMAN
MARK TRESIDDER
MARKUS PLÖTZ
MARTIN PETCHEY
MATTHEW MARSH
MIKKO LAHTENMAKI
EDUARDO SOHNS
PEDRO GARCIA
PHILIP HINDLEY
PHILIP ROGERS
PHILLIP BAILEY
RICHARD OLIVER MORGAN-ASH
RICHARD CLYNE
TAYLOR ZIPPERLEN
MASSIMO CRANCHI
GEORGE MOREHEAD

GREGORY HAMMOND
ALEXANDER HREBLUK
ALIC SZECSEI
CHRISTOPHE BAREILLES
ANDREW DACEY
ANDREW SMITH
ANDRZEJ KRAKOWIAN
ANGELO PILEGGI
JIM FALLON
JANNE KUOSA
BJØRN FLINDT TEMTE
CARL CLARE
CHARLES PUGSLEY
CHRIS & JOSEPH BERGER
COLIN J FRASER
CONNOR A BEST
CURTIS Y TAKAHASHI
BRIAN MCDOWELL
DANIEL DESCHENES
DANIEL CROWLEY
DANNY S ATWOOD
DAVID BROOKSHAW
DAVID DALTON
DAVID EUGENE STARNER
DAVID TOMCZYK
DENI OBID
DENIS JEAN
DENNIS GÜNTHER
DEREK GUDER
DUSTIN DAVIS
ED KOWALCZEWSKI
EIS ANNAVINI
ELSA GIRAUD
FERNANDO DE LA GUARDI
FILIPPO FRANCO
LEONARD BRANDENBURG
FRANCESCO PAPARELLI
GAITAN JACQUEMIN
GARETH MCVICKER
KRISTIAN HYTTTEL
MAJA BOYE FLINDT
GÖTZ WEINREICH
GRANT BRUCE HEWITT
GRAYSON OHNSTAD
GUILLERMO C REVERTE
GUILLAUME HATT
JACOB ALEXANDROWIZ
JAMES PACHECO
JAMES PURDUM
JANA SCHIERWATER
JASON COWLEY
JAVIER ANGERIZ-CABURRASI
JENS MILBREDT
JEREMIAH FRYE
JOEL MATTSON

JOHN CHAMBERS
JOSHUA MENDIETA
JOHN PHILLIPS
JULIEN RECOQUILLAY
NICK KABILAFKAS
KEITH TAN
KEVIN FAYARD
SEBASTIAN KNOPF
LISA PADOL
LUC TEUNEN
LARRY WHITE
MARC ROSS
MARK EDWARDS
MARK SOLINO
MARTIN LEGG
MARTIN WAGNER
MARY MCMURTRY
PROF. MATTHEW BROOME
MICHAEL CALHOUN
MICHAEL SCHWARTZ
MIKE TRISEVIC
MITCHELL & HANNAH WALLACE
MORGAN WEEKS
NICK HUNTINGTON
NICOLAS T BOWYER
NICOLE LINDROOS
PAUL DE SMET
OLIVER LAUENSTEIN
OPOCHIDON - HAKÅN LIBERG
ORSON BUSHNELL
PATRICK BASS
PATRICK SCHWIERN
PAUL BLAKEY
PAUL ROSSI
MARK KIRTLAND
PETER GILMORE
PETER MAZZEO
PHILIP COWPERTHWAITTE
PIERRICK BOYER
HUGH DEAN
RICHARD GREENE
RICHARD WARNER
RICHARD BOWMAN
ROBERT AFFECTION
ROBERT SODERQUIST
ROBERT VAN NATTER
RON SZAMEITPREUSS
ROSS A ISAACS
SEBASTIEN TORRES
SENOL LEONG
SHAWN POLKA
STEVEN BAKKER
TANGUY POQUET
BEN HATTON
THOMAS WORSLEY

TIM PARTRIDGE
THOMAS MAURITZ
VALENTINOS KOUNATIDIS
VALERIA LIBERTAD VIDAL
MARK GRAUNKE
VINCENT AREBALO
WIM JANSEN
WUYTS MARIO
ZAARIN BLAINE SALZMAN
ALESSANDRO & FEDERICO DEVIGILI
ALEXANDER GENT
KESTUTIS VALUTKEVICIUS
COREY FRAMPTON
DANIEL SERVITJE R. TORRES
GERT-JAN VAN DER KROGT
JACOB YOHN
LUKE ROWETT
MICHAEL D ELLIS
PEDRO ALFARO
PHILIP BAILEY
ROSS L DAUGHTREY
STEPHEN SMITH
STUART PARK
TARA INGALLS
TAMÁS GÁBOR
THEO MALIGEAY
TOM CANTWELL
TONI KRAJA
CARLA C COELHO DUARTE
ANGELA MORGAN
KALUM
WILL GREEN
PAUL CLARK
PETER PRONIEWICZ-BROOKS
SCOTT J WOOD
SPENCER HOBSON
TODD STEPHENS
AL BILLINGS
ALEX DE MATOS
GARY JONES
BENJAMIN HUBBARD
BENJAMIN D SUMNER
CHARLES M BROWN
DAVID HAMMOND JR.
DECLAN FEENEY
GREG WALTERS
LUKAS FEINWEBER
MARK UZELAC
MARSHALL G MILLER
JONAS PETTER OLSSON
ROBERT D SMITH
PAUL BODDOU
STEFANO GUERRIERO
AARON SILVERMAN
AARON YARBROUGH
ADAM CURSON
ADRIAN CZAJKOWSKI
ALASTOR GUZMAN
ALEXANDRE MIRZABEKIANTZ
ALEX TORRES
ALTON C CAPPS
ANDRE MÜLLER
ANDREW BLEECKER
ANDREW MARTINEZ

ANDREW R H GIRDWOOD
ANDREW L SHULTZ
ANTHONY KNIGHT
ARAWN D DRAVEN
ARKADIUSZ CIESIELSKI
ARTHUR BOFF
TUOMAS RISTIMÄKI
MATTHEW SHOEMAKER
BEN J WILSON
BENJAMIN MADDEN
BILL HERON
BEĀZEJ KOSIŃSKI
BRUCE E COULSON
BRUCE TURNER
CAITLIN BARTHOLD
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CHRISTOFFER SEVALDSEN
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CHRISTOPHER HARLAN
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DAVID DUERSCHLAG
DAVID HATT
DAVID RUBIN
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DAWID WOJCIESZYNSKI
DAN SRT
J SCOTT RUMPTZ
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J LASARDE
MARTIN TAKAICHI
GABRIELA ZIELINSKA
GARRY HARPER
GEERT-JAN KRUIJFF
GERARD KRAUS
GEZA LETSO
GIANLUCA MONTAQUE
GIANNA MASETTI
GILES PRITCHARD
GORD SELLAR
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HARRIET BROWN
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JOHN DODD
JOHN RAYBOURNE
JONAS LEVY ALFIE
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MATIAS TIMM
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LARRY TREMBLAY
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JASON SCHINDLER
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KAIRA MURPHY
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LUCA BELTRAMI
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MARCO CATTALDO
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MARK FENLON
MARLEY D
MARTIN GREENING
MARTIN STRAIN
MATT BECK
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MATT SHORT
MIRRANDA PROWELL
NEIL
REMI FAYOMI
OZHARA
PARIS CONTE
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ROBERT CARNEL
ROBERT KIM
ROBERT RANDLE
SABINA WALTER
SECESPITUS
STEVE BEER
STOO GOFF
THOMAS LADEGARD
WILLARD NATIONS
FEDERICA BERTELLO
DANTE NARDO

JOURNAL SHEET

I REMEMBER...

EFFECT \pm TO

I REMEMBER...

EFFECT \pm TO

I REMEMBER...

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I REMEMBER...

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REVELATION OF THE _____





YOU POOR, POOR FOOL.
WASHED UPON THE SHORES OF A PLACE SUCH AS THIS.
AND A VAGABOND, NO LESS.

YOU SHOULD KNOW BY NOW; ONLY NIBIRU KNOWS HOW TO KEEP A SECRET.
AND YOU, MY FRIEND, ARE ABOUT TO DIE A SECOND TIME.

*Nibiru; a colossal space station, home to millions,
where stories of drama and struggle are written on a daily basis.*

*Take on the roles of Vagabonds; people who wake up inside of the station, devoid of memories,
as they search far and wide for the lost remnants of their past, while setting into motion
a series of events that will change the face of the Skyless World forever.*

*The Nibiru roleplaying game empowers you to write the unfolding stories
of your protagonists' and their past lives, rewarding you and your friends for
creating expansive, intricate, character-driven storylines.*

THEMES

Memory and Identity. Nature and Artificiality.

MÖDIPHIUS
ENTERTAINMENT

