

NIBIRU

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a dark, heavy coat, stands in a desolate, blue-tinted landscape. She is holding a rifle across her chest. The background features a large, complex mechanical structure, possibly a piece of machinery or a building, with various pipes, cables, and panels. The overall atmosphere is dark and mysterious, with a strong blue color palette.

“FAMILY MATTERS”

Writing
Federico E. Sohns

Cover Art
Alex Chow

Layout
Federico E. Sohns

Proofreading & Editing
Matt Timm

PROLOGUE

Family Matters is a short Nibiru adventure, set in the Umbraic region known as the Archaean Sorrows. It starts off four cycles after the main characters' awakening, in an outpost at the edge of the Umbraic Farmlands. The place is a crumbling, rust-eaten ruin, besieged by the ever-rising waters of the Sorrows. Shalim, the groundskeeper, offers them a chance to stay if they can help him collect a local woman's fungi harvest, which is supposed to pay for the outpost's "security service" and her right to remain in the area.

This adventure deals in themes of colonization, abandonment, and filial discord, and serves to delineate the group's attitudes towards the events that unfold in Umbra. It also delves into some of the weird facets of the local setting.

If you intend to play this adventure, do not read further! The text is only 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 the Karam clan, which consists of Dinah (the mother), Dawid (the father), Zaya (the older daughter), and Ninsun and Isho (the two younger siblings). Dinah is a no-nonsense person who descends from the Sisters (the rulers of the eponymous city-state of Antumbra). Dawid is reserved and, though lacking resolve, he's kind and compassionate. Ninsun and Isho are shy, and they look different from their parents, since they were born and raised in Umbra, and bear the scars of 2G.

What has really happened with the Karam clan?

The clan left for the farmlands after being banished by the Sisters after a family incident. She was, however, told that when her daughter Zaya reached 80 cycles, she would have "grown strong enough" to return to the Sisters, and to have a fighting chance for a seat in the council.

Zaya, however, is now a host to an Asappu (see the Corebook, page 162). She roams the areas close to the vault, and is visited only by her father, who brings her food. The local people feel stalked by her, speaking of "the Shadow of the Farmlands". Dawid thinks that Dinah's dream to see Zaya in the Sisters' council is hopeless, but has chosen not to tell his partner about it.

The story starts at Point Mariya, an outpost at the border of the Archaean Sorrows, where the characters have been staying for a while. Four cycles have passed since they found their way to the outpost, and with time they've learned the basics of life in the Umbric frontier, mostly thanks to Shalim and a host of helpful and friendly passers-by.

While at the outpost, they've found refuge in an empty container owned by Shalim. The man is an envoy of the Archaean colonization complex, working as the groundskeeper and overseer of the local fungi fields. However, the region has been, by and large, deemed as too risky an investment by the Archaean council. Power shortage and meager harvests have also helped seal the deal, putting the whole enterprise on life support.

Shalim's demeanor is a reflection of his situation (he is upset most of the time). Make that evident to the players! Also, take the chance to describe the outpost, how people have been coming and going, and how the frequency of them doing so has decreased. There are no vehicles, since the power shortages mean local folk get more mileage out of beasts of burden to carry the harvest, and have decided to sell their electric vehicles long ago.

SCENE 1 PROTRACTED STAY

At the start of the game, you may narrate the following extract to set the mood of the game:

“Upon lapsebreak, silence reigns. It wasn't like this at the beginning. The Leapers' cry, the families converging to deliver the harvest—you had gotten used to being woken up by a lively crowd. Not anymore. The Sorrows crept upon Point Mariya, stole its promise of abundance, left it in utter abandonment. Even time gave up on this enterprise, as each lapse became ever longer, as darkness and silence stretched every hour, every minute, to the point of exhaustion. The container you have been sleeping in had its own small power line, feeding a tiny plantation of blue fungi that hung from the roof. You spend some time, before getting up, watching the blueish twirls spill their light on the deteriorated ceilings. There never was any rush. Until, one morning, the silence breaks with someone's knocking on the metal door.”

Shalim enters the container as soon as the door is opened, taking a moment to inspect the place, commenting on the fungi and telling the group that

they should take it to the warehouse. The PCs might take note of his demeanor, and **Empathize** with him, to find in his tired eyes that he is deeply worried about the current state of affairs, and that the outpost's days are counted. He will proceed to tell them that he is running out of options for them to stay.

This is an important moment in the adventure, as they look for ways for them to stay. You might want to have your PCs rolling to see if they can convince Shalim. This is mostly a resource to add some gravitas to the situation! Either way, whether they are successful or not, the result will be the same; Shalim will propose that they aid him in retrieving the collection of an outstanding debt.

Shalim will proceed to tell them how they can help:

“In about three lapsebreaks, an envoy from Charchemish will pass Point Mariya to inspect the enterprise. Granted, my warehouse does not have enough stock to pass their check, unless we are able to collect the Karam clan's harvest. They are late in their delivery and it is time I stop showing leniency. Take two or three leapers, go to the Karam's farm, and find out what is happening with my harvest. I'd like to see you returning with some fungi—and then back to bring the rest.”

The Vagabonds should accept this, given that this is the kicker that will embark them in the adventure. If they feel reticent, let them know that being set loose in the Umbra would be suicide—specially now that the power shortage has submerged most of the region under the shadows.

As they get ready, Shalim will give them...

A pair of lanterns: He will state that the whole “power crisis” has seen them resort back to the classic methods. These are fueled by blue fungi sprinkled with sikhi powder, to make them shine brighter.

A written order: The order states, in the metallic sheet, that payment in the form of two tons of fungi is owed, and that the group is in charge of collecting the debt.

Two Leapers: The animals (Corebook, page 155) seem well cared for, and are saddled (as well as having a set of containers in place to load them with fungi). Their feathers emit beautiful patterns of light, and their friendly demeanor makes them easy to ride.

Once everyone is ready, Shalim will give a series of indications, stating it will take an hour and a half of march to get to the farm. He'll warn them that there's a crack in the way, which is pending some bridge-works.

SCENE 2 THE SORROWS

The trip to the farm should be used as a chance to flesh out the Umbric panorama, as well as having them wade through some dangers. When the trip starts, you may read the below:

"The dimly lit encirclement and the outpost are left behind, marking your descent into a tall, narrow tunnel. As the march goes on, the wall's edges widen into a jagged outline, and past the 10 mile line you reach the mouth of the tunnel. The cracked metal plates above open up into a big expanse, partly flooded, where old structures stand in testament to the failed colonization efforts of the Archaean complex. From the blackened ceiling, water droplets fall all around you, creating an eerie, dream-like vision. Forty cycles ago, the bold souls that dreamt of transforming the region into an idyllic farmland saw their hopes drowned by a set of faulty water pipes. Their meddling made matters worse, flooding the levels above and leaking the pipes' contents into the field. The falling drops became a metaphor for the lamentation of the settlers, and so the region was baptised as the Archaean Sorrows."

This is a good time to play some eerie music!

The PCs will need to traverse the flooded plain ahead. Failing to **Tread Carefully** might result in a lantern falling to the water, or someone getting hurt. At some point in the trip, they might **Spot** a series of silhouettes moving atop the ruins of one of the old settlement buildings. If they do, remind them that they've heard the locals talking of a group of people who've moved into the center of the plains, and are starting to build a small settlement out of scraps. At this moment, offer any of them extra information if they spend a Memory Point, and when they do, tell them they remember hearing rumors about a strange creature that was seen roaming around the area.

The creature the Vagabonds have heard of is, in truth, the lost member of the Karam Clan, Zaya. She is living with the symbiotic creature known as Asappu (Corebook, page 162). Zaya cannot speak, and she resorts to gesticulation to communicate. She roams the

Sorrows, sharing a haven with other Asappu. Her father gives her part of the harvest (reason why they haven't paid their part). He has kept this secret, afraid of Dinah's response and potential retribution from the outpost.

After a while, they locate the tunnels that stem from the open plain of the Sorrows. As per Shalim's indications, the left tunnel should take them towards the Karam Clan farm. Before arriving at the mouth of the tunnel, they might **Spot** one of the squatters they saw before, approaching from the right, carrying a pole with several metal containers hanging.

THOSE LEFT BEHIND

Not everyone had a chance to get back to Antumbra after the failed expedition. Those that gave their everything to buy a ticket and a lot in the promised land were hit the hardest by the failure of the enterprise, and so they became homeless, left to die in an orphaned colony. To make matters worse, the commodity they depended on the most (krajj, which the Arku require to face the pressure of Kabādu) happens to be in short supply around these parts. Without it, new arrivals to these human groups will not last another cycle.

The squatters will offer some blue fungi in exchange for krajj. The exchange will seem unfair to the PCs, though they can guess that the squatters are quite desperate to get some of the greyish paste for themselves. After a good round of **Bartering**, they might get some blue fungi in exchange for a couple grams of krajj, as well as for news of what's happening in the outpost.

If the PCs want to help the squatters, suggest that the Karam Clan might have some krajj to give away!

Once they leave the plain behind, they'll traverse one kilometer along the darkened hallway. All along the way, they will feel like they're being watched...

SCENE 3 FURIOUS RECEPTION

The field where the Karam Clan makes their home is located in a small detachment that cuts into the hallways via a small tunnel. The tunnel ascends for about one hundred meters, keeping the interior of the vault out of the flood's reach. The detachment has a rectangular shape, and about two hundred meters in diameter.

Those with a knack for **Botanics** might notice that the pale glow of the fungi field indicates one thing; the harvest isn't ready. Unless the Karam Clan has a warehouse chock-full of fungi in their grounds, the whole trip might have been in vain. In the center of the farm, the towering skeleton of an old power generator stands. Someone with **Engineering** knowledge might be able to discern where the generator came from—it being one of the massive disposable power cells that one of the first Ascendants used (meaning the generator is more than a hundred cycles old!).

You may describe the following:

“The power generator has been stripped of all its covers on one side, and each of the capacitor compartments seems to have been repurposed as habitation modules and living spaces. On the side of the structure that is still intact; a smaller, actually functional generator rumbles, shakes and hums incessantly. From it spread several power lines, each plugged to one section of the plantation—with the glowing patterns of the fungi field revealing those of the generator’s energy distribution, which seems to be utilizing flooded plaques to grow the plantation. It all makes for a strange vision, though at the same time reveals the never-ending ingenuity of the Umbric people.”

Halfway across the field, as the group makes their approach, they hear shouting from within. Then, a woman steps out of the house, shuts the metal door with a bang, and raises a Deathspitter towards the PCs. **This will be a good moment to remind your players that rash actions might result in her firing at them.**

With her face red with rage, the woman shouts:

“I’VE TOLD SHALIM’S MINIONS THAT IF HE WANTS HIS HARVEST, HE CAN GET IT HIMSELF!”

The woman (Dinah, the owner of the farm) will show herself as extremely protective of her harvest. There might be a brief exchange of words (which might turn violent if the group doesn't make an effort to de-escalate, and show themselves as non-threatening) between her and the group, after which she'll state:

“My partner is not here, and I know not where he or my daughter are. There’s nothing here to take. At least, not enough considering what that Archaean vermin usually asks for.”

Dinah’s perspective here is important to understand. She is in a desperate situation, given that her partner has disappeared a while ago along with part of their dwindling harvest. Dawid had told her that he'd be out to locate the other members of the community, as well as their daughter. However, Dinah is growing increasingly worried. She knows, also, that the warehouse doesn't have nowhere enough of what's needed for their debt repayment. Most certainly, she will hide this—her stoicism being a particular family trait—, and will not go down nor surrender her harvest without a fight. She might, however, be open to negotiation.

After this exchange, the PCs will be invited to talk inside. The interior of the house is lit by an agonizing, titillating light. There's a small dining table, a refrigerator unit, and an opening with a ladder that leads to a large storage room. From the opening's threshold, two kids look towards the PCs. A brief glimpse, caught between the instant they are spotted and the moment they fade into the storage room, will reveal that they are quite small in stature, meaning they were likely born in the Umbra.

She invites the PCs to sit down. She explains her situation, stating that she cannot really pay the full extent of the debt without what has been taken away. After some conversation, in which she mentions her daughter's missing, she agrees to help them, and will give them their last harvest if they find Dawid and the missing fungi. She will, in the meantime, stay to care for Ninsun and Isho, and as they leave, she directs a few last words their way:

“If you do not find him, do not bother coming back.”

SCENE 4

ZAYA

Half a ton of blue fungi doesn't just vanish. The PCs could tackle this in a variety of different ways. For example, they could ask Dinah questions about the comings and goings of her partner. She most likely tells them of their daily routine, how she generally goes out to scavenge along the flooded plain below, while Dawid tends to the farm. If the PCs **Inquire** further, Dinah tells them of her partner's sleeping issues, which sprang up during the lapses before leaving, probably due to them running out of krajj reserves half a cycle ago.

If your PCs haven't started doing so, you might want to suggest them **Looking for Clues** in the farm. A failed roll will see them catch a trail of fallen bulbs, which veers off into the main hallway. However, a success will tell them that there was more than one person carrying fungi.

In truth, it's been both Dawid and Zaya whom have been transporting the harvest outside of the farm.

Once in the main hallway they follow the trail towards a service hatch. Before going in, they catch a glimpse of something looking towards them from afar, about a hundred metres into the darkness. The hatch leads into a long drop along an air duct. The PCs need to **Jump** to get to the other side. Failing to do so will see take them one Body step down, though they'll be able to reach the tunnel above via a ladder.

Once on the other side, a tunnel leads them down to a small vault with a metal door on one side and a continuation of the blue fungi trail. Someone with a good sense of **Orientation** will realize that this metal door leads into the main hallway they were at before (as long as you have the keycode). The vault is littered with junk, and if the PCs **Search** it they'll find a few supplies.

The PCs then hear something moving amidst the debris, and a set of eyes light up in the dark.

A strange creature rushes forth from the shadows, then suddenly stops in front of the PCs. The creature could be considered a human by all intents and purposes, except for the fact that its head seems to be disproportionately large, composed of strange protuberances, antennae and a gaping mouth. This is the Asappu that has taken Zaya, the oldest daughter of Dinah and Dawid. She gestures to the PCs, raising both arms slightly and lowering her head, while letting out a low hum to try to convey that she comes in peace. PCs might apply their **Animal Knowledge** to guess that she is trying not to look menacing.

Zaya then tries to communicate by using more complex signs, trying to convey that she is trying to help her father, and that they should follow her. **You as the Narrator can attempt to do this physically and see if the players can understand the message! If they do, award them with an Influence Point.** Otherwise, the players might roll to **Interpret** her instructions. She leads them to a small patch of glowing blue fungi, which dips into an open hatch in the floor.

A short drop will take the group into a larger receptacle, shrouded in darkness. If the PCs do not want to risk jumping, Zaya will push her father's body under the hatch so that they can see for themselves. As soon as the PCs land on the floor below, they raise their eyes and see several silhouettes distorting the darkness that surrounds them, the same sort of eyes they'd seen before.

Zaya then starts to trot around in a circle, standing up and gesticulating to the Asappu that linger in the shadows. She then turns and runs back to the middle with the PCs and with Dawid. She tries, once again, to communicate. The PCs might try to once again **Interpret** her sign language, and with each "4" they roll, they reveal one of the following ideas she's trying to convey...

...Dawid is hurt, and help is needed to take him back.

...The Asappu are hungry and have been stealing from the locals, with one of these incursions resulting in a violent exchange.

...Dawid and Zaya had been giving food to the Asappu to stop them from putting people in danger.



SCENE 5

TIME OF HARVEST

The group makes an effort to take Dawid back with them. At first, the PCs might attempt to **Diagnose** him by taking a closer look. This will reveal that the situation is hopeless—Dawid has been hurt around the lower body by a deathspitter stake, probably fired by one of the locals, and Kabādu has resulted in him losing a lot of blood. He is almost certainly going to perish. As Zaya becomes anxious, she pulls her father closer to the opening of the hatch. Dawid starts to convulse, trembling incessantly, and entering shock. The group might want to attempt First Aid, and only a successful roll will save him.

If the group fails to do so, Zaya will start crying, as she sits by his side. This triggers a **Stress Roll (three dice)** due to the feeling of helplessness that comes along with the experience. Once the dust settles in for everyone in the chamber, **remind the players of Dinah's words**; “**If you do not find him, do not bother coming back**”. Zaya assists them with bringing Dawid back, dead or alive.

Once they reach Dinah's house, she's seen along with a group of people amidst the fungi field. They seem to be having a heated discussion, and as soon as the group approaches, she rushes towards them and breaks down, as she recognizes Zaya as her daughter, who closes in to console her. Upon seeing this, some of the armed folks in the field ahead will lower their weapons. If Dawid has passed, Dinah will be understandably shaken—and she'll be left alone for a little while she tries to collect her thoughts.

Here's where the PCs get to speak with the locals. These are split into several groups, with some believing the Asappu to be a threat that has to be dealt with, and some others believing that the more immediate threat is the outpost. The PCs might choose to try to collect the harvest now, and/or to return to Shalim—which, after the rewards are given, entails a **Stress Test (five dice)** due to the dubious morality of the action—, or they might try to get involved into the current affairs. One thing is certain; they will be questioned by the locals as to what happened, and this should be your cue to get them working with Dinah towards a more noble goal.

If the PCs do stay, they'll speak to Dinah, who will be thankful to them. She will see them in private in her house, and will ask them for one more favor. She wishes them to assist her by **Convincing** everyone that Dawid

was trying to keep everyone safe, and that the Asappu wouldn't be a real threat if it weren't for the fact that the outpost has been taking a massive cut from their crops.

With everyone gathered at the edge of the fields, the PCs explain themselves. **Invite the players to chat and think about what they'll say beforehand, and award a cool in-character speech, even if they struggle with it, by giving them an extra die!**

Failing this roll means the people will take Dinah into custody, to deliver her to Shalim. This will mark the end of the story. However, success will mean the group chooses to march upon the outpost. This will result in everyone—including the Asappu herd—crossing the Sorrows and approaching the outpost at the end of the elevation. Shalim surrenders instantly.

What becomes of him and the fate of the region, well... that's up to you.

SHAKE UP

Whether or not Charchemish retaliates immediately after this attack will have to wait a while; in the meantime, the community of the Sorrows will have time to regroup and think of what to do. The Vagabonds might become involved, helping them negotiate with the local city of Nataku, or they might go their own way to the Flooded Countries in search of a new place to call home. What's clear is that, sooner or later, their actions in the Sorrows will have consequences which will come knocking at their door. Make sure to speak to your players about what they wish to see in the follow up!

The time of harvest is here. As the Vagabonds venture into the Archaean Sorrows, in hopes of fulfilling their debt and keeping their place at the crossroads haven, a family struggles through tragedy and hardship. What stalks them, beneath the still water, and the glowing fungi?

Family Matters is an adventure set in the mysterious region of Umbra, of desolated communities and the strange creatures that roam at the edge. It is an ideal starting point for any Nibiru chronicle.



Remember Your Past. Secure Your Future.

Nibiru is a Science Fiction Roleplaying Game of Lost Memories. Players take on the role of Vagabonds: amnesiacs lost in a massive space station, home to millions, where stories of drama and struggle are written on a daily basis.

MÖDIPHIUS
ENTERTAINMENT

