

NIBIRU



“FOUNDATIONS”

Writing
Federico E. Sohns

Cover Art
Leon Tukker

Layout
Federico E. Sohns

Proofreading & Editing
Olivia Hill

PROLOGUE

Foundations is a short Nibiru adventure, set in the Antumbran city-state of Ashur. It starts off after the PCs arrive at the city, as they meet up with a contact who holds the promise of a shot at life in Ashur. However, they'll soon find that the sacrifices needed to secure their livelihoods might be too heavy to bear, and that their choice will push the boundaries of what's acceptable and what's off limits when it comes to defending their newborn community.

This adventure deals with the sacrifices one makes when searching for a new home, a new place in the world. So far, the Vagabonds might have been wandering about, from one place to the other, in search for opportunities. This adventure should lead them towards achieving their goal—but of course, nothing comes easy to Vagabonds, and success will most certainly carry a price. The adventure exposes the nature of relations between Vagabonds, their tension, and it gives a glimpse into the Antumbran political sphere.

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 two Vagabonds who live in Ashur. One of them, Eshaya, is a Wildlander who has been on the run from Enki's Covenant for a while, and is the point of contact of the PCs. The other is Deena, a Dreamlander who leads a big design studio in the city.

What's Eshaya's plan?

Eshaya plans to use Deena and her involvement in the Redfields arcology projects to create a safe haven for Vagabonds. He has in his possession a modified blueprint of the Heron Group arcology which, if inserted into the BUILDER AIs, will add a hidden set of rooms to the building, accessible from the lower levels to those who have the key.

What's the problem?

The main problem is that Eshaya's brother has been taken by Enki's Covenant. This is something Eshaya doesn't disclose, but that Deena knows for a fact, meaning that there's risk of collusion between Eshaya and the Covenant. She will accept the plea from the PCs, since they are yet to be identified by the Covenant, on the condition that they either make sure Eshaya leaves the city, or outright kill him.

The story starts at the Khavian Glass Markets, two levels below the surface. Low ceilings make the stall's enclosure all the more cozy, and the characters are currently sitting at one of the tall, moon-shaped tables, enveloped with the aroma of smoked fungi. They're there to meet Eshaya, but it's been a while now, and he is still not showing up to the rendezvous point.

If they **Stay Alert** they will realize that, close to the edges of the vault, the Covenant's presence is minimal (which is something they should be worried about, given that they've all sneaked their way into Ashur).

As they look at their surroundings, describe the setting a bit more; the noise of the markets, the various products, such as coloured glass animals, a shop that sells a multitude of glass screens, maybe some sort of incident going on.

When Eshaya finally arrives, he'll look agitated—hiding under a hood and giving quick looks at his MAT.

MAT

A flexible, foldable mat made out of steel and fungi weave, MATs (Member Access Terminals) are as essential to life in the Skyless World as smartphones are in ours. Usually worn around the forearm, MATs depend on the local Network of their city-state to function, and are utilized for everything ranging from checking the news, to keeping up with the work cycle, from instant messaging to entertainment.

SCENE 1 LIVING THE DREAM

When Eshaya raises his sights, he makes a gesture for the PCs to get up and follow him. He leads them into a small corner and a lightwell, away from the crowd, and tells them that it's hard to know if you're being followed in the Neck, and that they should go with him to his current place of hiding.

Eshaya and the PCs will then move at a quick pace along the inner corridors, with exhaust vapour filling the air, occasionally running into Aliltu (Corebook, page 33) as they go about their business. Upon arriving at an intersection, they will spot a group of armed folk and a WAYWATCHER AI, standing at a gateway across the street. Immediately, Eshaya will signal them to **Hide**.

If someone fails, they'll see one of the armed folk taking note of them, then turning back to go on with their business. Eshaya will indicate that they need to use an alternative way to cross the street, by climbing up a small ladder to crawl into the building's ventilation systems, which will see them come out on the other side. If they do hide successfully, they'll be able to wait for the patrol to move along, crossing the intersection and moving through the gateway into a flight of rusty, spiraling stairs that descend into the dark.

Eshaya takes the first steps down, lights turn on as he reaches the floor. There's a claustrophobic feel to the place; a cloister with an elevator platform at the center and a bright orange light staining every surface. There are several rows of hatches on the floor, each separated by about four meters of one another. The PCs (specially those with some background in logistics) might Deduct that this cloister is an access point into stock containers, which has clearly seen better cycles. Each hatch has a codelock, and Eshaya moves towards one of the hatches, hurriedly keying in the corresponding code. He weighs his hand on the handle and says:

"I'm so fucking dumb. I should have remembered to grease the joints. You have to push it down so that the spring mechanism doesn't scream out your location, since these lockers are supposed to be empty and about to be repurposed. I need to move out within the next three lapses, before the inspection team arrives, but seeing that group of thugs outside kinda terrifies me. Maybe the stupid schedule has changed, and I wouldn't know since my Ummânu source cannot update me on a short notice. This is the sort of life you live with when you are in Ashur and on the run. This is what we are going to change".

In this moment, the characters and Eshaya will have a chance to talk and get to know each other. Eshaya will ask them about where they come from, what they've been doing, and what they've done to get to Ashur. This is pretty important, since it not only prompts the players to dialogue and, if this is their first session, brainstorm ideas about their recent past, all while interacting with Eshaya and establishing a relationship. This relationship matters because, later on, it's going to be put into question.

Eshaya should talk in a casual manner that helps make the PCs comfortable. Still, PCs that pay attention to the way he speaks might manage to **Empathize** with him, realizing that he is under an awful amount of stress.

Squeezing past the hatch sees the characters entering into a vertical container, repurposed to work as a transient refuge. A second floor has been bolted to the walls, and the place is lit by a carefully kept fungal growth. The blue glow of the fungi reveals that the first floor is where Eshaya sleeps, with a cluster of cables sitting next to a strange converter. Any character with a knack for **Engineering** will be caught by surprise when seeing this arrangement: a successful assessment of it will tell that the converter is drawing power from the fungal growth—the sort of technology that is definitely not available for personal use, meaning Eshaya has a very in-depth knowledge of electronics.

The bottom floor is Eshaya's work area, with tools lying around scattered through the floor, and a pair of MATs that seem to be rendering and processing a series of architectural patterns, interior designs and blueprints.

“Know Redfields? It’s a big development where a bunch of bloodsuckers are getting together. I’m talking about the cream at the top of the credit complex—people who feed directly off of Penumbra’s labor. My brother managed to get the blueprint for one of their cute little arcologies, and it hadn’t occurred to me how to use it until I was like... ‘Damn. I can actually fuck around with this and plug it into the Builder AI. You get what that means?’”

Eshaya will wait a moment, and then continue:

“Basically, I gave it a personal touch; a series of small habitation modules that don’t really look the part (I mean, I had some inspiration from my current living quarters), but that are secure enough to access from the district below. You won’t even need to look at them smug motherfuckers when going home, since you can just go through the backside of an old factory in the Neck. It’s as tight as it gets. What do you think?”

He will then have a chat with the characters, about the location, the security, the way the modules subtly drain power from the arcology. He will state that the modules could fit up to thirty Vagabonds comfortably, and that the whole project is miles away better than any past attempts at securing safe haven for the amnesiac kin in Ashur. Eshaya believes firmly in the plan, and will end his presentation by asking the group to help him realize this, and that being the first people to live there, they’ll have dibs on what modules they’ll get.

It’ll be pretty obvious that the PCs should help Eshaya, though at the same time they’ll probably want to know

what is it they need to carry out the plan. He will explain that installing the blueprint isn’t as simple as it sounds, since building a set of housing modules will be noticed by those responsible for the construction.

“Here’s the big twist; the leader of the Ummânu in charge of the project happens to be like us. Her name is Deeana, and she’ll be the one we need to let in on the whole plan in order to do this. The problem is, she is likely not going to listen to me. Unlike me, she’s stayed away from... problems. And it has served her position well. This is where you come in. I need you to arrange a meeting with her, and to convince her to add the blueprint. The plans will speak by themselves when it comes to security.”

If the PCs **Inquiry** about “those problems”, he’ll state that the Covenant is after him. He will not move into the modules, since that would mean putting at risk the new community that will inhabit them. He says he understands that the vetting process for new inhabitants will need to be rigorous; something that plans to put on the group’s hands if they are willing.

A lot can be said about Eshaya’s position, but it should be clear that the next step is to take the blueprint and show it to Deeana. Make sure the PCs have that clear, and proceed with the next scene.

SCENE 2 THE LONG GAME

The crude sight of scaffolding-clad monsters to the side contrasts sharply with the Future Food Fair, where the PCs find themselves after leaving Eshaya’s hideout. A cavalcade of travellers, hauling fungi of uncountable different species, march amidst glimmering stalls—all to give the populace a glimpse into the varieties that will soon be flooding the Redfields arcologies.

This is a good moment to paint the stark contrast between the cluttered, hive-like passages of the Neck and the open spaces of the Redfields district. This sort of contrast will help give character to the city, making it feel complex and multifaceted.

As the group makes way through the fair towards the building where Deeana works, they’ll be approached by an activist by the name of Nys. They will state:

“Hey there! I’m Nys. I’m campaigning for the Našparu to block resource and worker allocation for the fair. Do you care about knowing why?”

THE REDFIELDS CONGLOMERATE

The new social class of the Silu, born from the imbalance brought by the credit society, has in the Redfields district of Ashur (Corebook, page 36) one of its largest bastions of power. Lately, they've been trying to market themselves as a boon to local communities, in an effort to counteract the outcry from the Penumbraic free councils, who have been trying to expose the Silu for what they are

If they decline, Nys will take a step back and thank them, but if they accept, they will show the PCs a series of protests in Penumbra via their MAT, telling them that the Silu from the Redfields Conglomerate are in collusion with the Waywatchers to block local food production. Nys says that they are going to take food donations in three lapses to take to Penumbra, and will give the PCs a sticker with the address and time of dropoff, all while deeply thanking them for their time.

These short intersections help bring the political themes of Antumbra to the forefront. Even if your game isn't particularly focused on the struggle described above, it's great to show how inescapable political conflict is when inhabiting the skin of marginalized groups such as that of the Vagabonds.

If the PCs **Stay Alert**, they will note that the Waywatchers are more active here than in the Neck, which is likely due to the Conglomerate fearing violent reprisal from the Enēšu community. The patrols move along as the polished, pristine street morphs into a small square, and past the steelweave fountain a white building stands—seemingly made from refurbished hauler tankers. Upon entering the building, a Service AI approaches the group and offers help. It will lead them to Deeanā's office; a circular room with a long, thin glass table and large windows overlooking two of the main construction sites. Deeanā is sipping coffee and leaning on one of the windows, looking outside. She'll say:

"Normally I don't take visitors without an appointment but I'm not super busy at the moment. I'm Deeanā. Can I help you with anything?"

However it is that the dialogue develops, Deeanā will mostly ask questions to the PCs. By catching her **Social Cues**, the PCs will get that she is understanding of the importance of the matter—preferring to get the whole picture before saying yes or no.

At first sight, Deeanā's demeanor might seem indifferent, but in truth she cares a lot about the Vagabonds (of course, being one herself helps). In a way, her personality should contrast to that of Eshaya; whereas the latter showed a humble demeanor that could be read as "avoiding conflict at all cost", Deeanā's directness and her "always on poker face" speaks of the shark tank she inhabits, and of the personality traits one develops within specific environments. These reflect two different takes on the amnesiac kin, and the way life in Antumbra can shape them. Try to get the players engaged with roleplaying this bit of dialogue, and even if they struggle to sound convincing, give them a bonus to the next roll for their efforts!

Whoever took the helm will be **Persuading** Deeanā of taking part of the plan. The outcome of this, however, will not influence her decision to participate but instead the terms under which she will. She will ask her Service AI to cancel appointments for the current lapse, and will slowly walk across the room and sit down, offering the PCs to sit too. She'll open up by saying:

"Before anything, I want you to know that I get what you are going through, and how hard it is to find a place here. Understand that the path I took is different from Eshaya's. I admire his commitment to his ideals, yet I also understand that there's two problems with his method. First of all, he has, in the past, condemned me for taking the guise of the Silu—as if that disqualified me as an ally of our kin. I think that the degree to which we choose to partake is not as important as what we then do with the privilege that it grants us. He calls it treason—I call it playing the long game."

She claps, calling in a tuned Skitterbot, loaded with Krajj and a small furnace. She turns it on and continues:

"Secondly, in being stubborn as he is, he's got caught up in the Covenant's sights. It's important for you to know that that not only makes him unable to help (reason why he's sending you to me), but it also makes him a huge liability for the plan—a plan which, mind you, seems pretty solid."

Depending on whether they did or didn't sound convincing, she will state, respectively:

"That's why for me to partake in this, I'll need to you to take him out. Out of town, that is—out of the Core Sectors, preferably."

Or...

“That’s why for me to partake in this, I’ll need you to take him out. I’m very sorry to say this, but truth is that the danger he poses to the very future he’s seemingly trying to forge is too great.”

The conversation will probably see the PCs asking about why, how, and if she is sure that such a thing is necessary. It’ll be easy for them to **Empathize** with her, which will result in Deena revealing an important piece of information: Eshaya’s brother was taken by the Covenant, and she fears he might be tempted to use them as bargaining chips to free his sibling.

Deena will not negotiate this; she’ll state that there’s no way she will put the lives of others at risk due to Eshaya’s position. Eventually, it’s your job as the narrator to see them making a decision. She will state that she won’t seek for proof of their deed, but that she will eventually know if they’ve not dispatched Eshaya.

SCENE 3 DEPARTURE

Depending on the final say regarding Eshaya’s destiny, the PCs will probably speak with Deena about the way in which this will be carried out. One thing that will be clear (Deena will express how important it is to make haste) is that the arcology’s construction is about to begin, so it has to be done within the next lapse.

Making him leave will mean they’ll have to convince him, which means taking a side in Eshaya’s internal struggle between the idea of abandoning the fight and staying even if it puts the operation at risk.

Killing him is a whole different issue. First of all, the group might rightfully come to the conclusion that murdering him is a compromise they cannot make if they wish to establish a community built on compassion and solidarity. It goes without question that, of course, someone will have to take the shot—which is bound to bring a lot of inner turmoil for the group. Only then comes the issue of how and where to do it.

The PCs know that Eshaya is usually found in the Neck, and they know the location of his hideout. Still, the truth is that—as hinted at during their first encounter—the repurposing of his container block has been rescheduled. This forced him to move out, meaning the PCs will be faced with a cordoned-off operation when arriving at the intersection. Finding his location will depend on the PCs knowing where to start looking.

Offer the PCs an Influence Point each if they come up with a lead to find Eshaya’s location—which will take them to the Little Sisters (Corebook, page 43).

This place is nothing like the Neck or the surface; the heat of power generators, the stained walls, the vault’s bowels exposed to the pariahs that call it home; it all showcases a darker side of Assyrian society. Seems like this is a place where Eshaya could be hiding in.

Investigating the surroundings will result in them finding him near a food collection point, chatting to one of the locals before heading back with a small fungi container, walking along with a Sparkling by his side until reaching the green metal door of a living capsule.

If they wish to make him leave...

The PCs will be **Persuading** him to flee. Eshaya might resist, or ultimately accept this as his fate and guide them on how to do this. He will state that if Deena thinks that’s what should happen, he will comply. He suggests going to the Cocoon, where the krajj cartels will be able to smuggle him out of the city. *This can entail an entirely new scene, wherein the group goes to the Cocoon and negotiates with one of the krajj black marketeers—exchanging a favor for seeing Eshaya off the city. It also serves to establish more ties between the PCs and the city, fuelling new stories after this one.*

If they resort to murder...

Sneaking to Eshaya’s living quarters should be quite easy. Most weapons are illegal in Assyrian society, so assassination is likely to get messy. The worst part of this by far is the effect on the characters. Whomever does the actual killing will be making a **Stress Test (seven dice)** as a Response to Violence. Everyone else will be making a **Stress Test (six dice)** as a Response to Helplessness. *These tests symbolize the horrible realization of what killing Eshaya entails: the unnecessary killing of a compassionate, kind member of their community.*

SCENE 4 PRINTING THE FUTURE

Once the deed is done, the group should head back to Deena’s office. There, her Service AI will come out to their encounter, stating that she wishes to see them immediately. Deena will speak with desperation, stating that the printing process has started, and that the construction site has been cleared. She points at the massive Builder AI—its impossibly complex mechanism roaring as it weaves hot steel onto the colossal plot.

She says it's too late, and that there's a group of Silu from the Conglomerate already toasting to the start of the project. Peering out of the window, anyone with sufficient **Engineering** knowledge will be able to tell that there's still time to sneak in and change the blueprint.

Telling this to Deeana will make her come to her senses. She will turn to tell them that they're right, and that this might still be possible. She says that she will open the maintenance doors, and will take a tennis ball sized device from one of her drawers, plugging it to her MAT.

"This is a scriptbomb. Know what it does? It basically overrides an AI's functions. Granted, it means the Builder will break down after the arcology is built, but it'll do the job. You'll need to get into the machine's cabin. It's going to be dangerous. I'll handle the suits in the meantime."

She hands over the scriptbomb and tells them to head over to the maintenance doors. There, they'll hear the site's broadcast system: "STAND CLEAR: THIS SITE IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION WORKS", blasting over the noise of the machine. **This is most definitely somewhere people shouldn't enter, and it's your job as a Narrator to transmit the look of the place. Once they move through the doors, give the players an Influence Point each...**

Ten metal barrels shift along the platform at a terrifying speed, vomiting molten metal onto the floors to shape the foundations of the building. To the sides, the incessant screeching of welding machines makes the walling tremble, as the mechanical arms of the Builder AI dance amidst a shower of sparks. At the center, eight monstrous, orb-shaped scanners scour the surface.

Have one of the players (the one who's participated the least!) test AI Knowledge. Whether they succeed or not, let them know that those scanners are used to render a dynamic model of the site, and that if the group doesn't keep out of their sight, they'll be seen live by anyone at the party who happen to be looking at the model.

The characters might **Assess the Situation** on their approach. With each success on their roll, suggest a way they could tackle one of the following threats (some of which might be more obvious than others). These are presented in order to make the path to the center clear.

Foundation Presses

These barrels are bulky, fast moving, and extremely hot. There's no way to bypass them outside of **Jumping** over from the bridge. Failing to do so means certain death.

The Bridge

The bridge extends from the body of the AI at the center of the site, though if the construction is in process the only way to activate it is to press the button manually. **Throwing** some junk at it should work, though getting a good angle means going past the welding appendices.

Welding Appendices

These extend like arms from the base of the Builder AI, ending in two mechanical limbs (one below, the weaver, one above, the welder). **Squeezing Past** these is necessary to reach the platform where the bridge is deployed, as well as the subsystem remote control. Failing to do so will take the victim down a Body step.

Subsystem Remote Control

This small console gives access to some of the subsystems of the Builder AI, such as the sensors, scanners and the power settings of the machine. **Hacking** these will allow you to exert **Control** over the scanners (which will need to be done carefully to not make it obvious that there's something wrong in the construction site). **Failing that roll will make one of the Silu suspicious, which allows for a good hook into the next story!**

Once the PCs reach the Builder AI at the center, they can just insert the blueprint. The scanner-eyes of the automaton will flash for a second, and the process will continue. From then on, you can skip on any rolls they'd do to get out, and see them sneaking out of the maintenance door. The mission is a success!

Once the Silu leave, Deeana will contact the characters. She'll say it'll take about a cycle for the construction to end, and in the meantime she gives them an address they can hide in, situated in a vacated container much like the one Eshaya had. She'll thank them for their help, and ask them to see her once the construction is over.

THE HAVEN

*The follow up to this adventure can take many different shapes, yet it's most likely it'll be about the characters settling down and tackling any immediate threats to their security, while making new friends and allies and showing them the way into the Haven. Trust and secrecy are bound to be important facets of the upcoming sessions, as are the characters' relations with one another and the tension they will be subject to. Use the resources found in the **Nibiru Corebook** and remember to get feedback from your players to plan ahead!*

Deep in the city's bowels, Vagabonds meet. Their gathering heralds the establishment of new foundations; of a new community below the shadows of the Assyrian arcologies. But is this hidden utopia really worth the sacrifices they'll soon be pushed to make?

Foundations is an adventure set in the city of Ashur. It deals with themes of persecution, and of the sacrifices the persecuted make to find a place to call home. 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

