

MISSION MANUAL



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LUNAR OAK STUDIO PRESENTS

THE STORY OF SHEOL

MISSION MANUAL





IMPORTANT:

This is the Sheol Mission Manual. If you are playing for the first time, you should read up to the start of the main campaign, but no further (to avoid spoiling the story and your enjoyment of the game). Once you have read the introductory pages, consult the Rulebook to find out how to play.

WARNING:

Some parts of the Story of Sheol deal with topics and material suitable only for adults, such as desperation, death, violence, and nudity. The story also contains strong language, descriptions and images of monsters that some may find frightening, and content that may offend. It is therefore aimed solely at individuals aged 16 years and older.

CHAPTERS

Prologue.....	6	Main Campaign (Part 3).....	93
Scouts.....	8	Mission 10.....	94
Glossary.....	10	Mission 11.....	98
Intro Story.....	12	Mission 12.....	102
Main Campaign (Part 1).....	15	Mission 13.....	106
Mission 1.....	16	Epilogues.....	110
Mission 2.....	20	Luminaries' Campaign.....	113
Mission 3.....	24	Mission 1.....	114
Mission 4.....	28	Mission 2.....	118
Mission 5.....	32	Mission 3.....	122
Interlude (Scout Missions).....	37	Engineers' Campaign.....	127
The Pioneer's Mission.....	38	Mission 1.....	128
The Maenad's Mission.....	42	Mission 2.....	132
The Cyclops' Mission.....	46	Mission 3.....	136
The Breathless' Mission.....	50	Exiles' Campaign.....	141
The Half-Light's Mission.....	54	Mission 1.....	142
The Connector's Mission.....	58	Mission 2.....	146
The Merciful's Mission.....	62	Mission 3.....	150
The Wrench's Mission.....	66	Tz'mitah's Mini-Campaign.....	155
The Maul's Mission.....	70	Mission 1.....	156
Main Campaign (Part 2).....	75	Save the Game.....	160
Mission 6.....	76	Founders of the Citadel.....	162
Mission 7.....	80		
Mission 8.....	84		
Mission 9.....	88		

THE SUBMERSION

[From the ancient diary of Saul Mazur, a Luminary Monk of the Citadel]



IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS DARKNESS

Before, I didn't truly understand the meaning of the word darkness. Back then, I had no idea how immense, all-pervading, and truly horrifying darkness can be. Or that the more you try to evade it, the more it sucks you in. It is like an endless vortex that overwhelms and consumes everything. It dulls your thoughts, crushes your soul, saps strength from the young, and steals the voices of the old. We can't help but be terrified of this power that has descended upon us and robbed us of our planet. Yet, still we endure; still, we resist. On the ruins of what were once our great metropolises, there now stands our Citadel, our Island of Light. Valiantly, with its three-hundred-meter-tall walls, it challenges the Shadows. All that remains of humankind has gathered here to fight, to hope, or to brave it out until the end.

Today, I have brought one of my pupils to the top of the Citadel walls to look out on the horizon. It is cold, and the wind blows relentlessly from the distant mountains. The darkness, seen from above, looks like a vast, boundless ocean that swells gently, almost quivering as though it were a living thing. Somewhere down there, terrible beings move through what is left of our cities in search of the last survivors or small outposts of Exiles who still dare to shine light, opposing the destruction. The child leans out over the wall, like a lighthouse keeper, on a

cliff barraged by a raging storm. The Lightring surrounding our ramparts, reminding us of the strange magic of technology, gleams dimly, casting away the Shadows that try to penetrate our stronghold. No one knows what the Shadows' purpose is, if not to bring desolation and death to everything in their path. Two large sentinel mechs watch over the gates in the Citadel walls. They await the occasional merchant, traveling here from the external outposts, or scouts daring to brave the darkness in search of something - they know not what.

Sometimes I think that everything we do is in vain. So much time has passed since the Sun last shone on our Earth that I can't even remember the feeling of warmth on my skin and, even less, the colors that light bestowed on everything. When trying to explain it to young people, I tell them that the Sun was like the fire that warms us in the giant furnaces of the Citadel, or the brightly shining suspended lamps on the Second Level of our Island of Light, only bigger, much bigger. They struggle to imagine it. They can't appreciate how glorious the ancient society was. Our technology transcended the laws of nature and even made some of us immune to age. That was my fate: to be an amortal witness of mortal men.

THE LOSS

It all started many cycles ago (in a time when cycles were still called years), after contact with one of the stations on the dark side of the Moon was lost. No one could understand how all communication could be interrupted so suddenly. Nonetheless, every shipment that left the logistics stations on the light side of the Moon, bound for the dark side, disappeared without a trace and was never found, and every probe that was sent there simply stopped transmitting. The dark side of the Moon was indeed proving itself to be the mysterious place that had intrigued astronomers since ancient times.

And then, the scar appeared. A thin set of murky lines could be seen forming on the edge of the Moon. Every telescope on Earth was trained on it as, day after day, the cracks expanded like a dark cancer, enveloping our planet's once familiar satellite. Witnesses from the evacuated Moon colonies who had seen the phenomenon up close talked of a set of obsidian-like rivers that swallowed up the light, and of a shapeless mass like solid smoke that branched out in all directions — chaotic and evil.

The most incredible theories were formulated: there was talk of aliens, failed experiments, quantum strings, and creatures from another plane of existence. In the end, though, nobody

could understand the true nature of the black ocean that was forming. Various independent national missions were organized in order to study it, but as soon as the space probes approached the Moon, every single contact with them ceased, as if they had never existed. Thus, while the brightest minds worked to solve the mystery and more fragile souls were either gripped by panic or sought solace in religion, the dark mass continued to grow and proliferate. It was as if the deep void of space itself had decided to engulf the Moon.

After some time, the Moon became an aphotic disk that hid the cold, distant stars. For some months, there were no further changes - it was like it had entered a stasis. Then, just as people had started to calm down, the worst began.

THE WEeping

Few books still survive, but those that do recount an age-old legend of a time when the Moon was dark and, frightened by the abyss that surrounded it, it wept. From its tears, the demons that have populated the Earth since time immemorial were born. This weeping continued until the Sun, moved by compassion, decided to give the Moon part of its own light. The Moon stopped crying, but not before shedding one final tear of light. This teardrop gave rise to the first humans, who defeated the demons and took over the Earth. But then, after some time, a strange phenomenon occurred: the side of the Moon facing the Earth began to swell, and a pitch-black stream of darkness started to trickle down toward the planet. Some believed the apocalypse was beginning, while others thought the stream was carrying more demons down to Earth to reclaim it.

The great powers reacted strongly: dozens of antimatter missiles were launched to repel the lunar stream. At first, they worked and dispersed the mass of darkness into space, but then the flow increased, and it was clear that nothing could stop it. In the Citadel subnet, in some almost forgotten virtual layers, there are still images of that day when the flow of Sheol touched the Earth's atmosphere. Like ink spilling into a glass of water, the darkness began to contaminate the atmosphere, little by little obscuring the Sun and expanding across the Earth.

The Black Tide was neither water nor gas. It was something different, something no one had ever seen before. It was more like a fog or dense smoke that, simply by immersing you, had the power to devour you, to steal life from within you. Only light could keep it away; only light could save you, but how can





you escape something that keeps on getting stronger? Those were terrible days. Millions died as the darkness grew more and more dangerous. The nights were ever longer and colder, and resources more and more scarce. In less than a year, the Sun was completely obscured. Nations collapsed. Many died in the ensuing chaos and the sheer struggle to survive. All hope for humankind seemed to be gone.

THE ISLAND OF LIGHT

However, humans are resilient creatures. They are adaptable and somehow manage to give their best in times of crisis. In a way, it was miraculous: all the divisions that had plagued our society for millennia were suddenly set aside as humankind, employing the very latest resources available, discovered Lux, or liquid light, the only weapon capable of destroying the darkness of the Sheol and the Shadows that move inside it. I remember little of those days, except that the discovery came too late. The humans who had survived were too few to be

able to reclaim a world that had become boundless and alien. Thus, the Citadel became humanity's new home, their Island of Light the last stand against the darkness.

Light for us is everything. It is light that stems the tide of shadows, that allows us to keep warm, that powers our machines and brings life to our homes. On every level of the Citadel, even the upper ones where the wealthier classes live, every human being strives to preserve the Light. Some of the most beautiful areas of the Citadel, and its efficient greenhouses, sometimes fool us into believing that civilization is growing as in ancient times, but the truth is that our resources are limited, and the self-sufficient environment we have created cannot last forever. Periodically, groups of scouts leave the Citadel and head out in search of spare parts or other vital resources that we cannot produce ourselves but need in order to ensure the survival of the Citadel. Many do not return. Fewer and fewer individuals volunteer for these expeditions. Ours is a constant struggle against the darkness that holds us hostage, and every day becomes a more deadly challenge.

RESIST

We have been going on like this for years. These years of eternal night, which we call "cycles," make it difficult to keep track of the passage of time. Even the seasons no longer exist: there is only an immense cold stasis that covers the whole world. Most people now think that the Island of Light is approaching its end and take refuge in the virtual worlds of the subnet or drown their sorrows in alcohol in the slums. They no longer want to think about the world of darkness that surrounds us and settle for the decadent microcosm that the Citadel has become. Only the scouts still have faith in the future. Some of them, teams of brave individuals, travel through the Lands of the Night, resisting the cold, the Shadow attacks, the terror that devours the soul, and the infinite solitude, precisely because they still hope. Perhaps I am delusional, but I am firmly convinced that these men and women will win through against the Shadows and that the day will come, yes, the day will soon come when we will finally reclaim our home, our planet, our Earth.



TEAM NOVA

THE PIONEER

MARCO REED

The thrill of venturing into the depths of the night is something both magnificent and terrible at the same time. You don't have to tell Marco Reed this. He inherited the nickname "Pioneer" from his father, together with his father's indomitable spirit and readiness to explore the Lands of the Night. A true Lightstream-building expert, the Pioneer is always ready to take risks in order to indulge his passion for studying these lands. As long as he is able to bring his light, there will be a safe road to travel.

THE MAENAD

IRIS LIGHT

Iris is a survivor. Abandoned as a child and adopted by an infinity addict, she grew up dancing for money on the lower levels of the Citadel. Iris joined the scouts when she was very young but she fully committed to the training programs and to her missions, running up the ranks. She shows great prowess with Lightspears, and her dance-like movements are both graceful and lethal.

She uses a skull as a mask, but don't ask her where it comes from - she could replace it with yours!

THE CYCLOPS

BUD WASHINGTON

"To smash the corallbone skull of a creeping Shadow, you need biceps as big as barrels, but to wield an impulse cannon, you have to have muscles forged from the same titanium that supports the upper districts of the Citadel!" so Cyclops always says. After receiving an eye wound while a member of the CLEU, Bud Washington decided that, from that day on, he would use a weapon so powerful that taking aim would not even be necessary. And so he did.

THE BREATHLESS

AURORA CLARK

Before the Submersion, humanity had reached heights that some would call divine. One of these was the state of amortality, achieved through genetic engineering. Aurora was created in a laboratory, a perfect soldier to be used by governments to fight terrorism. When the Submersion and the collapse of civilization stripped her of her purpose, the Scout Corps gave her a new reason to keep on fighting. Hundreds of years of practice have made her an infallible sniper; what is more, the patience unique to an amortal means that she is prepared to wait days and weeks, motionless, for her prey.

Scouts

The scouts are the Citadel's oldest military corps, established before it was even founded. With the passing of the cycles, they have lost much of their prestige and their numbers have dwindled. Indeed, only a few small teams still remain. During the main campaign you will play the part of a member of one of these teams, Team Nova, a group of brave individuals who have refused to surrender to the domination of the Shadows. Team Nova is a heterogeneous group whose members are drawn from all the different social strata within the Citadel. Each member is characterized by their unique abilities.

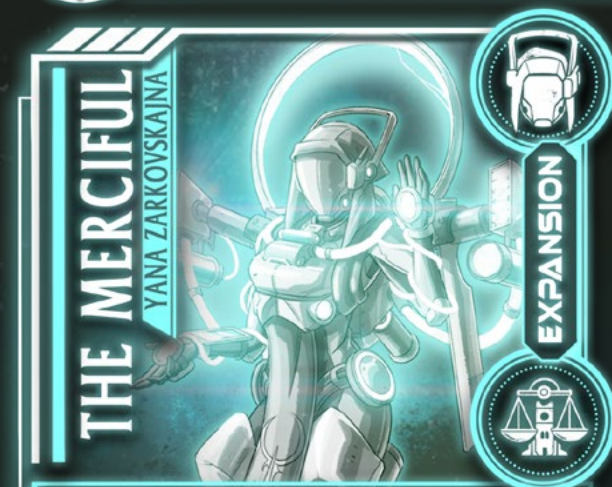
IMPORTANT: Some scouts follow special rules. See the "Choose Your Scouts" section of the Rulebook.



Gabriel is a bioengineer and physician. During waking hours, he works at a hospital on the Second Level of the Citadel. When others sleep, however, he secretly experiments with treatments, seeking ways of applying the regenerative power of the Shadows to human tissues. In the course of these experiments, he created a powerful drug for controlling the Black Tide. Convinced it would work, Gabriel tried it on himself, thus generating within his own body a dark creature that endowed him with certain extraordinary powers of the Shadows. Whenever this creature emerges, Gabriel struggles to control it.



Haamid is an elusive type. Those who have tried to map his movements through the tortuous virtual space of the subnet say that he even possesses the gift of omnipresence. They have found him cybernetically enhancing weapons in his laboratory whilst also fortune telling in the home of some noblewoman from the Third Level; and, at the very the same instant, at the market buying some spare part he wanted grafted into his chest (where he once had organs). What they don't know is that Connector moves only portions of his mind to those places, so he can devote the rest of his attention to cheating at holographic cards in the Citadel's outlawed gambling dens.



Yana is a member of the Order of the Ascendant, a branch of the Luminary Monks. Little is known about her and no one has ever seen her face, which is covered by the smooth Luminary votive mask. Some believe she was the victim of atrocious crimes, others that she was the perpetrator. What everyone agrees on is that her greatest skills are healing the wounds of her comrades and inflicting pain on her enemies. By the laws of the Lands of the Night, this is more than enough.



Leah always had a knack for mechanics and a solitary personality. Despite growing up in the bourgeois area of the Second Level of the Citadel, she never really learned what good manners are, since she spent most of her time in the workshop, covered in gear oil, preparing her drones for robot races. Indeed, it was only natural that she should become a scout engineer. For her, the Lands of the Night are the perfect testing ground for the drone cannons she designs.



The Exiles have three rites of passage. The first is to survive three nights alone in the Lands of the Night; the second is to kill a solid Shadow in one-to-one combat; the third is to travel to the farthest lands of the Shadows and bring back something the tribe has never seen before, typically a relic of the past or a valuable technological heirloom. Very few successfully complete all three tasks, and yet Knut Adabi did so before he was even 20 years old! The object he brought back, the Razorfang, is now part of his weaponry.

TOOLS FOR SURVIVAL

The story of Sheol is set in a vast and complex world. Every scout who roams the Lands of the Night and the cyber neighborhoods of the Citadel must be familiar with a set of basic concepts in order to survive. This section lists some fundamental terms with explanations that you will have to consult before or during the adventure. These and many others (explained in special boxes that you will encounter from mission to mission) appear in the narrative texts of the missions.

S.H.E.O.L.

This was originally an acronym for Shadow Hive Edge Off Limits, derived from the word Sheol, the world of the dead. It was written on signposts at the periphery of the areas still free of Shadows. Subsequently, the word Sheol came to be used with several meanings, referring to the Black Tide that had covered the Earth, to the outer limits of the areas still occupied by humanity and to the world of the dead.

LUX

Lux is the name of the liquid light that powers weapons, the scouts' lanterns, the Lightring, and many other machines used in the Citadel. As such, it is the main resource of the human survivors of the Shadows. Lux is a source of electrical energy and heat, and it is the only light radiation capable of harming the Shadows. Vibrating according to a precise pattern of resonant frequencies, low-intensity Lux illuminates the areas occupied by the black fog, dissolving it. Indeed, at high concentrations, it can even break down the fibers of solid Shadows.

Ever since the time of the Submersion, Lux has been drawn from a deep well, the Well of Depths, to which no ordinary person has access. Distribution of this resource is strictly regulated by the Council (on which sit Luminary Monks and Engineers). In fact, in the Citadel, Lux is also used as a form of money to obtain goods and services.



UMBRA

Umbra is a collective term describing obsidian-like solidified shadow crystals. This material is used as money in the outer settlements and for Lux synthesis in the Citadel. Even though Umbra is a part of everyday life for the inhabitants of the Citadel, it is still not known where it comes from. Most scientists believe that Umbra is a byproduct of the life cycle of the Shadows, but this remains a controversial question on which there are more suppositions than hard evidence.



THE SUBMERSION

The Submersion was the catastrophic event that began with the Lunar Weeping that first brought the Shadows down to Earth. During the Submersion, the Black Tide of Sheol expanded over Earth, smothering it in eternal night and destroying almost all its life forms, both plant and animal.

NIGHTS AND CYCLES: TIME IN THE CITADEL

With the Submersion and the disappearance of the Sun, it became difficult to measure the passing of time. The Council, therefore, decided to introduce a new calendar in which year zero began with the lighting of the Lightring, an event whose anniversary is celebrated each year with the Festival of Light. Since then, years have been named cycles, since the old months and seasons, now meaningless concepts, have been scrapped. Instead, days, having no light, are simply called nights. There have now been 422 cycles since the founding of the Citadel.

THE LANDS OF THE NIGHT

The areas outside of the Citadel are lands of eternal darkness, referred to as the Lands of the Night, or the Lands of Sheol. Unlike the nations into which the Old World were divided, the Lands of the Night are classified according to how remote they are from the Citadel. The closest areas form the "Twilight Zone", where there are numerous settlements; the more distant areas, known as the "Forgotten Areas," have a limited human presence, while the most remote are the "Shadow Areas": a mainly uninhabitable environment, densely populated by Shadows, all but abandoned by humans.

SINGULARITIES

Singularities are points of Shadow generation. The first scholars called them "nests", before realizing that they are not places where Shadows take refuge, but more like vortices that draw in the black mist and mold it into solid Shadows.

BLIP

A "blip," in scout jargon, is a point on the radar where a Shadow is detected. Blips are undefined shifting Shadows, which, when illuminated by lanterns, transform into solid forms such as Lurkers, Devourers, or Moths.

THE SHADOWS

Even though humans have been fighting them for over 400 cycles, the Shadows from space that fell to Earth during the Lunar Weeping continue to be an enigma. They move furtively among the dark immensities of collapsed buildings and watch every living thing, waiting to ambush it. For many cycles, the Twilight Readers, a lower sub-order of the Luminary Monks, have ventured out alongside scouts, trying to decipher their behaviors, to work out their purpose, and to understand the link with the corallbone masses that are to be found pretty much everywhere on the Sheol plains. The dangerous Shadows that are commonly present around the Citadel are divided into classes according to their characteristic behavior.

THE FACTIONS

At some point in their lives, all inhabitants of the Island of Light find themselves having to side with one of the three major political forces of the Citadel and its outer lands, namely the Luminary Monks, who control the Citadel's Third Level and its religion; the Engineers who, operating from the University on the Second Level, manage much of the technological systems of the metropolis; and the Exiles, who live in outlying settlements and control trade between the Citadel and these settlements. The latter, in particular, despite not having a seat on the Council, still exert some influence over the citizens, especially those who are dissatisfied with the oligarchic regime of the Citadel. All these influences are tangibly present. Therefore, as you make your way through the sprawl, you may easily find yourself visiting a chapel, getting information from a technical office, or purchasing something from street merchants. The necessary balance between these three factions is what prevents the Citadel from sinking into chaos.

THE LUMINARY MONKS

The Order of the Luminary Monks dates back to before the construction of the Citadel. While the Shadows were conquering the Earth and advancing relentlessly, religion in general was thrown into a profound crisis, unable to respond to the advancing darkness. It was then that, initially in the form of a sect, a new faith arose to worship "the Light" as a divine force. It is said to have been donations from the Luminary Monks that led to the discovery of Lux by an elite group of scientists who were among the founders of the Citadel.



ENGINEERS' CASTE

Engineers, technicians, and scientists from all over the world were the Citadel's original founders. Recognized as the best of mankind, their purpose was to secure what was left of humanity and to catalog and safeguard knowledge for future generations. Even after the discovery of Lux and consequently the development and building of the Citadel as we know it today, the Engineers have maintained their role as leaders in the multi-level society of the Island of Light. But the truth is that most of them act like modern aristocrats rather than the scientists they used to be. They live on the Second and Third Levels of the Citadel.



THE EXILED

After the construction of the Citadel, refugees and survivors from all over the world converged on it to find shelter within its walls, creating a melting pot of humanity. This led to an intensification in the various forms of intolerance and prejudice inherent in the variety of cultures and peoples which now found themselves living side by side. It took a series of bloody internal struggles before a state of stability was finally reached. The Exiles are those who could not accept the new order, and therefore prefer the Lands of the Night to the laws of the Island of Light. Living in tiny groups, which rarely manage to cooperate with each other, they live below the plateau or in remote outposts that offer protection and shelter to passing scouts in exchange for technology and information. Many of them are Umbra extractors or researchers of the occult powers of the Shadows.



ORDINARY MAINTENANCE

At the feet of the plateau, exterior walls – 422nd Cycle, 340th Night, 08:12

“Darn it, Ed, watch how you drive! You’ve almost unhooked one of the connectors.”

“Sorry, Don, it’s just that... I was looking at the posters.”

“I think they should remove those things and recycle the paper. They are useless now.”

The clutch moans and the gears, encrusted in coralbone dust, screech loudly. The vehicle struggles, and for a moment, the engine seems to give out, but then the tires find new strength to cling onto the crumbled rocks peppering the plane at the feet of the exterior walls.

The maintenance convoy drives past a line of posters showing a series of scouts in identical poses. The faded glory of the coralbone arabesques invites people to enlist to return to an age that has fallen under the weight of its own illusions.

“By the way, did you inform the REEF that we left early?”

“Don, you said you’d do it.” Ed glances at his companion but keeps following the flashing path projected on the windshield.

“I said I’d do it if I didn’t have to replace the Lux vials in the Jaw. Who gives a shit, anyway?” Don grimaces. “The scouts would have been there, standing guard and watching over us while we work, as usual. Just because they get to go past the Lightring they have delusions of grandeur, while we are the ones who are left holding everything together here. There, look...” He points out of the window. “Another asshole.”

A stylized representation of the face of Somerfield Shan, the Exiles’ leader, has been paint-sprayed in white on a piece of abandoned sheet metal. Around his head, as if inside an aureole, his motto glimmers under the lateral headlights of the convoy.

“Redraw the Circle!” Says Ed, automatically.

“Such bullshit... who’d ever wants those guys inside the Citadel? I mean... they live among the Shadows. I don’t even know if they are still fully human. Remember Fred? The one with the augmented brother who works with Umbra merchants. He said he saw Exiles breathing outside without masks on.”

“Without masks?”

“I tell you, Sheol has corrupted them to the core,” says Don, scratching at an encrusted patch on his suit. “If our ancestors exiled them, there must have been a reason.”

The convoy is suddenly illuminated by the dawn of the Lightring and the strange Lux light it emits. The immense circular pipe runs for kilometers around the plateau, demarcating the outer edges of the Citadel and holding back the Black Tide of Sheol that crashes unceasingly around it. From the terraces on the Second Level of the Citadel, the darkness is almost perceptible, as though it were a monstrous creature made of black smoke, an ocean of black ink that, tide after tide, threatens the roaring power of the ring whose light casts it away. From below, the Lightring is a colossus of twirling liquid galaxies resting suspended over its massive support pillars. Ed and Don, after climbing out of their vehicle and donning their protective masks, stop to look at it for a few seconds, entranced.

“It’s always such a fabulous view,” says Ed.

“Yeah, until you end up underneath it and get fried by the radiation,” Don jokes, but he agrees with his friend. Watching the dancing vortexes of pure Lux appearing and disappearing is like drowning in a dazzling river of light. “Come on, let’s unhook the Jaw.”

Ed climbs on the roof of the vehicle and activates the hydraulic pumps that open it up like a huge vertical accordion. Pushing the control levers with oily gloves, he lifts the section where he stands and slowly raises the Jaw to the Lightring pipe, many feet above him. Although it is still some distance away, the subsonic vibrations of the Lightring make his body tremble. Don, in the meantime, removes the stocky reduction cables from the lateral niches from the lower section of the convoy. He pants as he drags them towards the connectors of the nearest pillar. The wide junction openings await like the snarling mouths of metal beasts, and once connected, they echo with a dull clack.

“REEF, maintenance crew M015 reporting... do you copy?” Don calls the scouts’ headquarters from his SPI device. “Yes... we got here early... no... okay, we’ll do it right away. The Jaw is already in place.”

Ed, next to the convoy, gives a thumb up.

“We are about to switch the power from segment 83 to the underground network... yes... awaiting your go-ahead.”

Don yells to Ed: “Go! Keep going up, disconnect the flow.”

The technician acts on the lever and brings the Jaw closer to the almost blinding light of the Lightring. Ed’s maintenance tools hang from his right flank. He has to work fast: go up, check that the values match the nominal ones and get back down.

“OK, REEF... proceeding!” Don activates the pillar’s pump,

► THE WALLS

Two types of walls surround The Citadel: there are the lower walls that surround the inner Lightring, and the high colossal walls formed from the slopes of the plateau on which the Citadel stands. The lower walls are a frightening place, patrolled by the last fighting mechs, and only scouts and Exiles live near them. In the inner areas, at the foot of the high walls, are the prison, cemetery, landfill and REEF, which is the scout headquarters. The rest is bare rock connected to the pipes and cables that feed the mechanisms of the Citadel and the Lightring. So far, no Shadow has ever managed to breach the lower walls and the Lightring, but many realize that these walls will not be able to protect humanity forever. With every passing cycle, they decay a little more and the Lightring grows a little dimmer.





and the Lightring segment fades while a portion of the Lux is channeled underground. The radiation, which just a second ago would have instantly roasted one of those bald chickens they breed in town, is now only slightly higher than that emitted by the light saunas in the Canal District.

Ed hooks the Jaw to the Lightring. He is just a meter or two away, and the ring now looks like a blue vertical wall, furiously humming with power. Even though the segment has been almost completely turned off, he can still feel the latent heat and the radiation. Ed connects the PDA to the control panel; the Lightring values are displayed on the screen. Everything looks good. After a minute, Ed brushes the sweat from his forehead and glances down. It is not unusual for a small Shadow to try to sneak in past the Lightring when the barrier is temporarily down.

"How are things going down there?"

Don keeps his gaze on the Lands of the Night. Gray condensation smoke drifts out of his respirator. It is of the same color as the coralbone carcasses of the Shadows. They are a motley collection that fades into the darkness, where the white blends with the black.

"No blips." He checks the radar. "Perfect. All values are good here. All I have to do is to check the capacity of the —"

The Lightring turns back on suddenly. Ed is hit by an ionized blast of radiation so strong that the shielding mask melts on his face. The blast hurls him back and into the void. For a few seconds, the light from the Lightring envelops his body, making him look like a smoking comet, then he hits the ground - a heap of broken bones and splattered blood.

Don is immobile. The only part of his being that dares to move is his hand, which pushes the flow deviation lever back up. The Lightring shuts off again. The radio screams

something, but Don ignores it and keeps looking at the darkness. At a certain point, he hears a low and distant gurgling, like a terrible burst of laughter in slow motion. He takes his left hand off the lever and rummages in his pocket. With his right hand, he lowers his mask. The Sheol particles enlarge his pupils and create black veins on his face. He feels the night expand within him and pleasantly conquer him, while he breathes in deeply and then blows into an object he has taken from his pocket. Made of coralbone, it is shaped like a small flute, with a bulb in the middle and a couple of tin inserts as finger rests. Don blows out a shrill, discordant note. He repeats it three times, the third time longer until a first man emerges from the shadows. He wears red shining pendants manufactured by the Exiles and filled with corrupted Lux. A twisted coralbone structure envelops his shoulders like an organic shawl. His peers are wrapped in thick cloaks covered in ash. They pass by Don and nod a greeting while he mumbles slyly: "Redraw the Circle."



► THE LIGHTRING

The Lightring is the impenetrable circle of pure Lux that surrounds the plateau on which the Citadel, or Island of Light, stands. Ever since the time of the Submersion, it has protected this last dominion of humankind from the advance of the Shadows. The Lightring has four main openings, or gates, located at the cardinal points of the Citadel.

In these areas, the intensity of the Lux has to be reduced in order to allow the passage, in and out, of shipments and convoys. Indeed, at close range, the Lightring's radiation is deadly not only for the Shadows, but also for humans. The effects on anyone passing below it would be like those of a high-power X-ray barrage.



... ENLIST IN THE SCOUT CORP ...





MAIN CAMPAIGN

THE LAST GUARDIANS OF THE LIGHT

[PART ONE]

The main campaign of Sheol begins on the next page, and with it your journey into the Lands of The Night. Sheol is divided into five campaigns: the main campaign, those linked to the Citadel's three factions, and the mini-campaign of Tz'mitah. In addition, there is an optional Scout mission for each playable character to complete.

It is recommended that you follow the campaigns in the correct order so as not to spoil some of the developments in the plot, although it is possible to play any mission out of order with the use of the "Starting a Casual Mission" section of the Rulebook. Furthermore, with each mission there are new game mechanics introduced, which you will be assumed to be familiar with in subsequent missions.

The main campaign comprises 13 missions. Each one begins with a narrative introduction. It is worth reading these in order to really immerse yourself in the world of Sheol, but if you don't like excessive reading then you can always skip the introduction and go straight to the summary box, which outlines the goals of the mission. At the end of each mission there is a conclusion which continues the story, and the rewards and unlocked contents are listed.

LURKING SHADOWS

First Level of the Citadel, Refugee District – 422nd Cycle, Night 345, Time 21:34

Darkness, cold, and the pungent smell of ash — you can feel them seeping through the walls that stand tall around the edges of the plateau, creeping into the dirty streets and along the pylons of the subnet and the Umbra smugglers' analog cables. When you go out into the Lands of Sheol, the darkness enters your bones, and from then on, you can never be free of it. It is a baptism of blood and terror, a crown of black thorns on your bruised armor.

You are scouts, and you are cursed. The stares of the Citadel's slum dwellers, like those of the prostitutes draped languidly against the ventilation grids, are full of disgust. If your handheld

SPI communication device could intercept their whispers, it would quickly become saturated with hatred.

You turn into an alley that smells of fried food and biofuel. An old man in rags next to a pile of dismantled droids is begging for a few drops of Lux. His eyes are sunken from abuse of infinity, the dissociative drug that comes from Machine Vision Systems. He approaches, and one of you roughly pushes him aside. You haven't got time for this. You walk on, your footsteps shattering the light from the bulb lamps reflected in the shiny puddles.

You find the district chapel squeezed between a redbrick house and a maintenance system column. The Luminary who administers it is vigorously cleaning a stencil-sprayed coral paint design. The monk's sponge is impregnated with some mysterious substance, and as he works, you intermittently glimpse the face, framed by long, frizzy hair, of Somerfield Shan and his motto "Redraw the Circle" written in white under the image.

"Light forbid!" the monk mutters breathlessly. "These Exiles will destroy the Citadel."

Then he spots you and immediately looks embarrassed. He realizes there are Exiles in your group and, therefore, that you have nothing against them.

"I'm sorry, no offense meant," he says, dropping his sponge into a bucket and smoothing his robe, trying to look presentable. You notice that his garments look faded and are coming unstitched. Clearly, the monk isn't faring any better than the district's other inhabitants.

"We saw your request," you say.

"Yes, I called for a team almost 30 nights ago," the monk complains, "I was beginning to think no one was coming."

"We can only follow official orders. If it was so urgent, you could have gone down to the REEF or hired some common mercenaries," you reply brusquely. "How much are you paying?"

The monk leads you into the chapel. Although you knew it would be nothing like the bright churches you can find on the Second and Third Level, you certainly weren't expecting this: a loft studio with broken armchairs and crooked steps. The

only sign of religious activity is an altar in the center of the room with a female statue representing the Light. The monk retrieves a vial from its hiding place under the altar, in a votive alcove with holographic flowers in front of it.

"It isn't much," he says, pouring a couple of centiliters of Lux into your flasks, "but we are getting less and less in the way of donations from up above, and the people are hardly able to give us anything."

"That's okay, it's enough," you say, weighing it.

"Thank you, the members of my flock have worked hard to get these few drops together. You know how hard it is here in the slums. Here, take this as well, as a special blessing from me."

With great ceremony, he hands you an image of Father Ulm Saraji, a luminary saint.

"I know that this is extra work for you, and of little value to you," the monk goes on, "but for my little community, it is so very important to get prayer amulets to the outlying settlements."

"We didn't know the missionaries were still active."

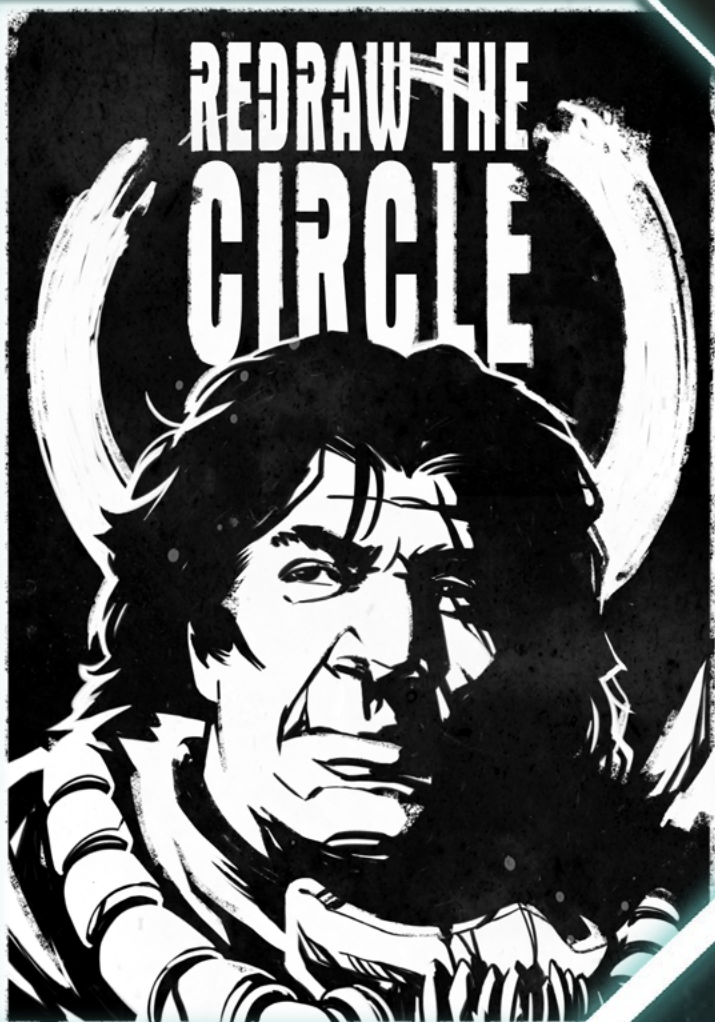
"We never stop bringing Light into darkness. Our amulets are of spiritual help to all those who believe in the Eternal Light."

Finally, he hands you a sealed container.

"Please leave it at the settlement temple without opening it. The luminary monks there will take care of the rest."

"What are the coordinates?" you ask, cutting him short.

"I will transfer them straight away to your SPIs."



S.P.I.

Base of the plateau, the REEF
(Scouts' General HQ)

Communication

As agreed with the Engineer responsible for the Umbra extractor control and maintenance program, your team is required to go directly to the Gamma 2 extractor and check it is functioning. Any damage or formation of corallbone structures must be reported.

As agreed between the Scout Corps and the Luminary, you will take care of delivering the votive artifact entrusted to you. It must be delivered, undamaged, to the settlement in sector M5.

Preserve the Light!

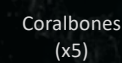
Comm. Adam Tuck





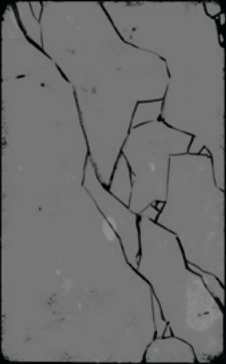




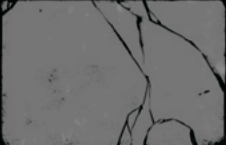
LANDS



COMPONENTS



ENEMIES

BLIP	SHADOWS	HERALDS	OUTER LORD
	 Lurker  Moth  Devourer		
2  2 	+0  +0 		



The Scout Corps - SCOUT (Seek and Connect OUTERlands) - has a glorious past, having been founded back in the time of the Submersion. Created as a special division of the CLEU military force, the corps aims to keep the cities submerged by the Black Tide of Sheol in communication with each other. Its motto is "create new ways and preserve those that exist."

The names of the various scout teams are inspired by the Light. Some of the most famous ones, in some cases renowned for particular heroic feats are: Dawn, Glow, Lumen, Svetil'nik, Hikari, and Radiance. Over time and following the closure of the Citadel from the outside world according to the dictates of Stability, the Scout Corps has lost much of its prestige.

MISSION CONCLUSION

Base of the plateau, the REEF (Scouts' General HQ) – 422nd Cycle, Night 346, Time 08:13

Maintenance report to General HQ

Section 83/22 showed evident coral formations. During the mission, the team was attacked by several Shadows, specifically type 3 (large) Lurkers and Devourers. We did not sustain any obvious damage, but this is the first time in at least 20 cycles that such large and aggressive shadows have been detected in the vicinity of the Citadel. We request further information on this and analysis of the corallbone material attached.

Preserve the Light!

Team Nova

First Level of the Citadel, Refugee District – 422nd Cycle, Night 346, Time 09:32

"Desecrated?!"

"Completely."

"But who by? Demons of the night?"

"We don't think so."

"For Light's sake! By who, then?" The monk paces back and forth. His eyes are protruding, and his hands are trembling as though he were performing an exorcism.

"We have put everything in an unofficial report which we have sent to the Scout Corps' chaplain. If the Luminary clergy feels it is necessary, it will carry out investigations. You can ask your superiors about that." Your tone of voice is flat and formal. "For our part, we can assure you that this was the work of humans. Two guardian monks were killed. One had traced a tear in blood on the portrait of Patriarch Saul hanging on the wall."

"Blasphemy! Why do such a thing?" cried the monk, his hand clapped to his mouth in horror.

"We have no idea, it could be a message of some kind, or it could simply be that the monk was trying to escape and happened to fall against the wall."



"But why kill innocents?! The Exiles are behind this, without a doubt!" shouts the monk, who is beside himself. "You have heard the news, haven't you? That terrorist, Somerfield Shan, continues to threaten the Citadel. And no one does a thing about it! Even Patriarch Saul, in his latest sermon, failed to take a stance. In fact, he even said we should be praying for him!" The Luminary lowers his voice, knowing that what he is about to say is rather scandalous, "If you ask me... may the Light forgive me, that Shan should be fed to the Shadows, just like his ancestor was."

"The tales of Petra Shan belong to the past, Father, and that is where they should stay. All I can say is that we scouts have

often had dealings with Exile settlements, and I have to say that the Exiles are no better or worse than people here in the Citadel. Somerfield's men are not murderers, and he is driven only by political motives. He just wants a place for his people," you explain firmly.

"You defend him?" the monk is shocked.

"Didn't you hear what I said? We don't side with anyone. As far as we are concerned, Engineers, Monks, Exiles – you are all the same! We are sorry about what has happened, but there is nothing more we can do. People die in the Lands of the Night. That has always been the way of things."

You try to take your leave, but the Monk holds you back.

"Wait, please. One last thing! My community has to know who killed our brothers and sisters!"

"It's nothing to do with us. Ask your superiors."

"My superiors don't care what happens to the monks in the suburbs! We will pay you!" he begs. "You have to agree to help us! We will collect donations and —"

One of you grabs the monk by the collar. The cloth of his vestments imbued with low-quality Lux glows slightly.

"Listen hard. There is no reward great enough to compensate for the risks we take out there. You have never been there, you have not seen the darkness devouring your comrades, leaving only their bones, or healthy men driven insane by the corruption, slashing their wrists in despair. You haven't seen the abyss staring right into your soul!" You push the monk towards the altar. "Now, stop bothering us and go back to praying to your Light."

You go out into the wet streets of the slums, looking for a tavern so that you can forget, at least for a while, the Lands of the Night, the slit throats, the dead coral expanses. The only sound is the voice of the monk, crying after you — "Just you wait and see! You'll pray to my Light when your own goes out!"

His words sound like a curse and would maybe worry you if it weren't for the fact that you are already scouts.

▶ PETRA SHAN

After the great retreat and before the Lightring was lit, the Citadel territories were a melting pot of desperate peoples who had fled from the Black Tide of Sheol. Even though, using colossal construction machines, a new level of the city had been built above the two existing urban ones, it was clear that the Lightring would not be able to protect everyone and that most of the external areas were destined to be conquered by the Shadows. Taking up the cause of the peoples abandoned outside the Lightring structure, the charismatic Petra Shan, former CLEU officer with a past as a political militant, threatened to destroy the structure if these people were not welcomed. The newly formed Council knew that letting in all the peoples outside the City of Light would mean the end of the Citadel, and finally managed to resolve the dispute by giving Petra a series of Umbra-powered artificial Lux weapons. The idea was that these would give the peoples outside the Citadel a means of protecting themselves, and the gift came with the promise that they would gradually be allowed to enter the Citadel, once the Lightring had been lit and the inner areas made safe. But this promise was never kept, and this left the outsiders definitively "exiled" or "betrayed" by the peoples of the Citadel. Shortly afterwards, Petra died in mysterious circumstances. It is thought that she was murdered.



MISSION REWARDS



x2

/

x1



UNLOCK

You have just completed the first mission and earned some Faction tokens and Development points.

Now you can play your first Development phase and spend them on acquiring new equipment and abilities. To do this, follow the instructions in the Rulebook in the “Development Phase” section. You unlocked level 1 Districts, level 1 Weapons, Lanterns and Accessories, level 1 Advanced Lightshields, and Twilight and Forgotten Lands Printer upgrades.

You unlocked Mission 2 of the main campaign.



► LURKERS, DEVOURERS AND MOTHS

Lurkers

Millions of tiny strands of darkness come together to form this class of Shadow, which is driven solely by the instinct to kill. A Lurker resembles a large snake. On its head, it has a coralbone formation reminiscent of an astral species of horned viper. An ambush specialist, the Lurker can silently sneak up on single scouts from behind and eliminate them without their comrades noticing anything.

Devourer

Scouts do not need to use Lux lanterns to understand when a Devourer is approaching. The shaking of the ground is usually a clear sign that it is time to run, before the Devourer's fury can overwhelm them. The Devourers are vast, heavy shadows with unusual and uncontrolled coralbone exoskeletons. Usually four-legged, they look like a cross between a huge gorilla and a bear.

Moth

A desperate cry, frenzied lights that tear through the darkness, and a body suddenly disappearing upward into the night. This is what you hear and see when, out of complete silence, a Moth launches one of its surprise attacks. Few manage to free themselves from the grip of a Moth without being crushed. The Moth, as its name suggests, is a winged Shadow that flies by manipulating the magnetic field of Sheol.

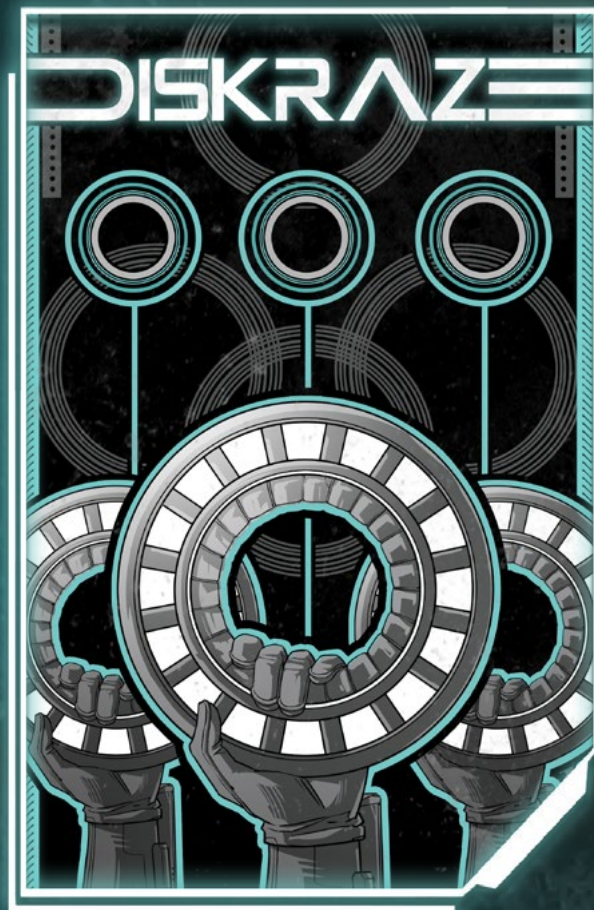
THE CONVOY

Base of the plateau, the REEF (Scouts' General HQ) – 422nd Cycle, Night 347, Time 08:25

The wind breaks on the walls of the REEF like sea surf. Two heavy patrol mechs creak as they make their way lopsidedly around a perimeter path that they have covered thousands of times before. The coralbone dust and ash of the Lands of the Night have penetrated their joints, and spare parts haven't been available for a long time now.

Heads down, you make your way towards the rusty barracks of the scout headquarters. You stamp your feet from the cold and exchange a few murmured words, which get distorted by the Lux respirators. Cursing the never-ending darkness and the cold, you quietly try to dispel the tension gathering inside you. You know that a direct summons from the Commander means that the mission in question is important. And important missions always end in someone's funeral.

"Hey, wait for me!" a member of Team Strobe runs up to you.



"We're late. My mates are already inside."

You recognize him. It's Larry. He is a diskraze enthusiast and also an inveterate gambler who regularly loses. He seems drawn to superior players like a moth to a flame and his teammates love to bet on his exploits, which really pisses him off. Fights between scouts in the REEF dormitories or in the gambling dens of the Electrorift District are commonplace. In the end, the high level of mortality, the pay (little more than you would get in the mines), and the scarce resources invested by the Council have made the Scout Corps the last resort for outcasts, ex-prisoners, and risk-takers in general.

For years, your team has been asking the Council to provide you with suitable equipment and decent vehicles for exploring Lands of the Night, but the Citadel's military resources are channeled mainly into the internal CLEU military police, whose role is to preserve the state of Stability. Were it not for the need to do maintenance work on the Lightring, and to maintain (albeit poor) relations with the external settlements, the Council probably wouldn't think twice about disbanding your corps. In the eyes of the people, you are not heroes, but the living memory of the defeat of humanity and of the terror that creeps relentlessly in the ocean of darkness around the plateau.

"Hey, did you catch the preview? Titan vs. Edgemont? It'll be the battle of the century. Bagel will be sure to make them pay after being sent off in the last match." He speaks animatedly, and you wouldn't mind betting that his lateness is due to some match he was following on his handheld SPI device.

"Well?" he insists.

You shake your heads; not many of you take much interest in diskraze.

"Shit, guys, come on! You have to see this game! I can get you tickets if you want, good seats in the corner. Ones that'd normally cost you twenty or thirty drops, or more."

"We'll think about it."

"Anyway, what about this summons, eh? Bloody hell..." Larry lifts his respirator and spits on the ground. "Well, if I die, put everything I have left on the Titans, they're going to win for sure." The incongruous lightness of his tone is grotesque, and only worsens the feeling of dread hanging over you.

You enter through a door rusted like it has been immersed in salt water for years. You go down a couple of steps, and the air becomes warmer, almost hot.

You enter a conference room. Half of the chairs are already occupied by the men and women of Team Strobe. They give you a nod of greeting. You reciprocate half-heartedly. The stern

gaze of the Commander standing in front of the holographic screen is enough to stifle any camaraderie.

"Welcome, all. I have summoned you about a matter of the utmost urgency. Please tune your SPIs to this frequency." The holographic screen projects a graphic code, and all you have to do is focus your handheld devices on it to receive the material for the briefing. The Ancients are said to have all used neural SPIs to communicate and download data directly into their brains. Now, only tech enthusiasts and Citadel hackers dare to graft neural chips into themselves in order to connect directly with the subnet, most of the time with disastrous results.

"As you well know, tensions with the so-called Revolutionary leader Somerfield Shan have never been greater. His policy to see external peoples embraced by the territories of the Citadel is beginning to win support at every level of society and making it necessary for the Council to reach an agreement quickly. Yesternight, at 15:08, Shan's troops took an Exile settlement in Sector 21 hostage."

Barricade constructs, lines of anti-Shadow lights, and tall chimneys appear on your devices. Several Engineers are tied to what looks like a gate, while women in large cloaks scream as they are forced to the ground by the Lux spears of Shan's soldiers.

"For the moment, there don't appear to have been any deaths, but Shan is threatening to throw one hostage into the darkness every hour if his demands are not met. For this reason, the First Engineer Wang Wei has been authorized by the Council to deliver prisoner 78X to Shan, and it will be your task to escort him to the settlement. Instructions will follow."

S.P.I.

08:39

Base of the plateau, the REEF
(Scouts' General HQ)

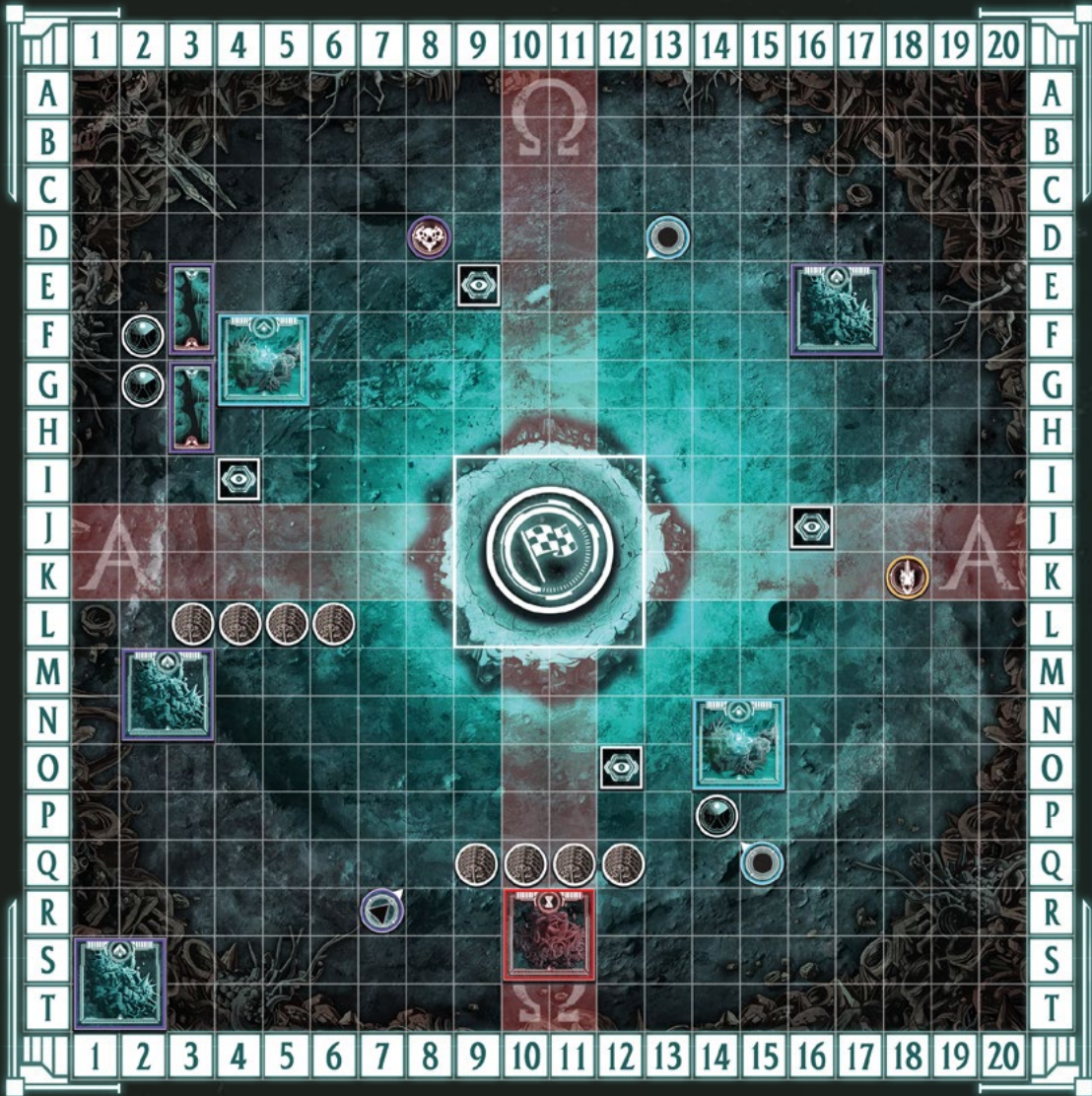
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Communication

In detail, your task is the following: Help Team Strobe to take prisoner 78X to the Exile settlement controlled by the Revolutionary forces. Report any sightings of Shadows along the way. Sheol fluctuation peaks have been reported in all the sectors outside the Twilight Zone.

Preserve the Light!

Comm. Adam Tuck



SPECIAL RULES / NOTES

Place a Lightstream tile on the space H9 and 3 stacked star tokens on top of it. These represent the convoy for this mission. Each star token represents a life point of the convoy. Each time a shadow ends the Shadow phase in a space adjacent to the convoy (even diagonally), remove a star token. If there are no more tokens, the convoy is destroyed, and the mission is failed. The Lightstream under the convoy cannot be damaged or destroyed. It is possible to pass over the convoy but not to end your movement on it. Obstacles appear for the first time in this mission. Find out how they work in the "Obstacles" section of the Rulebook.

*Starting with this mission, you may be asked to deploy shadows found in expansions (if you own them). To do this, place their revealed Shadow boards next to the main board and add their tokens to the shadow bag following the normal setup rules.



DISKRAZE

Apart from the cyber wars in the virtual worlds of the subnet, diskraze is the most popular game in the Citadel. It is a kind of cross between soccer and frisbee. The two teams face each other, and the objective is to throw disks into the other team's rings.

Each team can use up to three discs at the same time (more discs, less points). Unlike what happens in other sports involving a moving object (e.g., the ball in basketball or American football), in diskraze it is very difficult to coordinate the match and the players, precisely because of the variable number of discs on the pitch at any one time.

LANDS



COMPONENTS



ENEMIES

BLIP	SHADOWS	HERALDS	OUTER LORD
	 Lurker Devourer Moth Swarmer*		
2	+0		
2	+0		

MISSION CONCLUSION

Lands of the Night, Twilight Zone – 422nd Cycle, Night 347, Time 12:02

The convoy advances, corallbone creaking under massive wheels. You follow it like prisoners despite having no chains. Your greatest fear is the man who, every so often, you hear beating his fists against the sides of his sealed metal cage.

Shadows stir among the crumbled concrete remains of what were once gigantic pillars of a highway. You sense at least a couple of them, creeping surreptitiously behind you, obscured by a black dust that, like snow, has started to descend from the abyss above you. They are probably Lurkers, waiting for just the right moment.

“Oh!” Larry, of Team Strobe, appears alongside you. “Do you have a replacement filter? Mine is almost dead.”

Breathing with some difficulty, he assembles the filter you hand him. A small escort drone floats up to you and tells you to up the pace, before floating upwards to continue its perimeter reconnaissance. Machines do not need to filter out the microparticles of darkness that would destroy the alveoli in your lungs.

“Bloody Sheol!” Larry coughs. A small cloud of vapor rises toward the sky, which is like a grainy black wall above your heads. You point your secondary lanterns upwards to observe it better. You have no idea how thick the darkness is, exactly. Perhaps it extends infinitely into space. What is certain is that it has gobbled up all the stars. For a moment, you have the sense that your own survival must be an anomaly; that you are the last ones in the entire universe, whose master plan was simply to cease to exist.

Suddenly, the drone that had flanked you earlier explodes in a ball of red fire above you. You raise your weapons. Then comes a sound, first high and then throaty, that vibrates in the night. Could it be a Shadow? You don’t remember ever hearing anything like it before. It seems to come from in front of you, and for a fleeting second, like an illusion, you glimpse the sight of men, without masks, blowing mysterious musical

instruments. Then, a massive Moth-class Shadow blows over the black ash and glides to one side of the convoy.

“They’re attacking!” yells someone from Team Strobe, before being pierced by the dark tentacles of a Lurker. The Shadows are attacking from all sides at once and seem well-coordinated, which is absurd since you know that these are beings driven by instinct and instinct alone. Your Lux weapons hiss, firing madly.

“God, they’re everywhere!” shouts Larry, next to you. A Devourer charges at the convoy, which tips over on one side and begins to slide down a slope. Some members of Team Strobe chase after it. You realize you’ve lost even before the Shadows corral you into the nearest Lightstream marker, and your Team Strobe colleagues are annihilated. It all happens so fast: screams, torn guts, jets of Lux that sizzle against the darkness like boiling oil.

You race to the slope. Below, near the convoy, you see Larry and his companion firing madly at the Shadows. They are wounded and bleeding. Next to them lie the bodies of the other members of Team Strobe.

“Help us, quick!”

You shoot, but an explosion of energy bursts from the convoy. It looks like a Lux grenade, but it’s too powerful, too bright. The Shadows are incinerated, and you are thrown to the ground. Larry and his partner are overwhelmed, their bodies fried by the Lux radiation. The sound of their screams in the communicators is chilling. You get to your feet and run towards them, but there is nothing more to be done. They are dead.

The convoy, on the other hand, is completely gutted: the smoking metal has been turned inside out, as though a tremendous force has destroyed it from within. You look inside. It’s empty. The prisoner seems to have disappeared into thin air. You check the radars connected to your handheld devices to see if he’s anywhere nearby, but the explosion of energy seems to have damaged them. Cursing the Lands of the Night, you collapse, heads in hands, exhausted, while the blood of your fallen comrades slowly mixes with the coral ash

that falls from the sky.

A few minutes later, you sense a new wave of Shadows approaching. You have nearly run out of Lux and have no choice but to flee. You don’t even have time to recover the bodies of the fallen.

After a long march, you reach the Citadel, exhausted in body and spirit. As you finally make your way to the REEF dormitories, the night wind descending from the plateau carries the sound of a roar from the stadium. The Titans are winning.

Base of the plateau, the REEF (Scouts’ General HQ) – 422nd Cycle, Night 347, Time 18:17

SPI report

Mission failed. We confirm the unusual activity of the Shadows. We suffered a massive attack by type 3 specimens that forced us to retreat. Team Strobe has been completely wiped out, and we have injuries. Prisoner 78X is missing. Our radars are damaged, and we need them replaced.

N.B: We enclose an audio-sensory recording of high-pitched sounds heard prior to the attack by the Shadows. We do not rule out that they are organic or artificial in nature. We recommend they be investigated.

Preserve the Light!

Team Nova



▶ SPI HANDHELD DEVICES

Subnet Portable Interface handheld devices (SPIs) are widely used throughout the Citadel. They allow citizens to connect to the subnet (the Citadel’s “internet”), access services that require an identity check, and rapidly exchange information with other users. The SPIs used by scouts also allow the user to interface with radars and equipment during raids in the Lands of the Night. While SPIs are now indispensable for many of the social activities that take place within the Citadel, some people with links to the Exiles see them as a population control system run by the Engineering faction. However, there is currently no evidence to support this idea.



MISSION REWARDS



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x2

x1



UNLOCK

You unlocked Mission 3 of the main campaign.

At the end of the Development phase, remember to note how many tokens you have invested in each faction in the appropriate table at the end of this manual. They will serve to determine which one of Sheol's endings you have achieved.

► THE CITADEL



The Citadel, also called the “Island of Light,” stands on a plateau in the middle of a large plain and is surrounded by the Lightring of Lux and two levels of walls that protect it against Shadow attacks. With its soaring architecture and sophisticated road system, created by the different peoples who took refuge there after the Submersion, the Citadel is an ever-changing place — a kaleidoscopic pattern of interconnecting worlds. Accordingly, it is not unusual to encounter cyber-powered humans, subnet hackers, and rain-drenched beggars in the same street.

But, remember, do not be fooled by the pompous magnificence of the highest levels, with their mega-structures boasting astounding architecture, or the robotic wonders that survived after the Submersion. The Citadel is a deeply decadent place, constantly struggling to keep up appearances and to ration its resources. The truth is that most people prefer not to think about the sunless world beyond the lightring and refuse to acknowledge that the lights in the streets keep getting dimmer and dimmer.

THE FUGITIVE

First Level of the Citadel, Column District – 422nd Cycle, Night 348, Time 19:25

Lights gleam in the Column District's tangle of scaffolding and stilts like pearls caught in a giant spider's web. This district, which rises up to the Second Level of the Citadel, is made up of layer upon layer of clubs, walkways, open construction sites, and screens showing diskraze matches and adverts. Between one building and the next, the subnet's connectors, dripping with condensation, bear witness to hundreds of replacements and patch-up jobs, and give off a stench of old printed circuit boards and overloaded capacitors.

You are drinking a phosphorescent concoction on a terrace just above the western slums. The place is a little better than those a few meters below. There are few people at the tables next to yours. A couple flirt shamelessly next to the balustrade; she is astride the man, and you can see a white scar under her bare breast. She probably had her liver replaced to be able to better handle her alcohol. A little further on, four men are preparing to play chess with carved stone pieces. One of

them is wearing an expensive-looking white leather glove. You wonder whether he stole it from some rich man from the upper levels or whether he won it in a game. Another sets out the pieces with a robotic hand that jumps from square to square at superhuman speed.

Some of you have already drunk too much in an attempt to cancel out the memory of the deaths met by your colleagues in Team Strobe. Others gaze pensively at the horizon, at the urban structures in plastic steel that hang like stalactites from the ceiling of the First Level, and the gigantic column, called the Pivot, at the center of the Citadel. Some put it down to divine intervention that the first Luminary Monks discovered the Well of Depths, a source of pure Lux, thereby ensuring the salvation of the last men left on Earth after the betrayal by the Martian colonies on the Day of the Crosses. Some of your companions say that in the Spire, on the Third Level, there is a gushing fountain of pure Lux connected to the pivot's gigantic drill, which draws Lux up from the source in the subsoil of the plateau. You don't know if this is true, as you've never been there, but if you think of all the light that the nobles have, so much that even their clothes are imbued with it, you guess there must be some truth in it.

"I am sorry about your comrades. They were good soldiers."

You look up. The man with the glove has come over to your table. Now you can see him properly. He has a rough face and white teeth that smile beneath a bristly beard. His air of superiority irritates you. He acts as though he knows something you never could.

"My name's Ström." He opens his gloved hand to reveal a badge showing him to be an investigator with the CLEU, the Engineers' special military police.

"Since when has the CLEU given a shit about whether we scouts live or die?" you ask, draining another glass of acid. The man ignores the comment and draws up a chair from the next table.

"I heard you recorded some unusual sounds during your last expedition," he goes on, coolly, "I'd like you to tell me more about it."

"Read the report."

"I already have. I have also listened to the audio files. I want to know what else you saw down there." He pauses, before adding, "It could help us to work out who killed your mates."

"Who killed them?" you laugh bitterly. "You have a great sense of humor, detective, but now is not the time," you say in a hostile tone.

"I know the activity of the Shadows is increasing," he begins.

"It's nothing to do with their activity increasing! Escorting that convoy was fucking suicide." The couple stares over at you, and you lower your voice. "There's nothing to investigate. Our friends were killed by Shadows. We saw them with our own eyes."

The man grabs a drink from your table and drains the glass in one go.

"On the contrary, I might be able to surprise you."

"What are you saying?"

You are interrupted by the pulsing of your handheld SPIs. The stern outline of Commander Tuck appears on the screens.

"Urgent summons, the prisoner is still alive. Get yourselves to HQ right away."

The SPIs go off, and you get up from the table. The Engineer watches you.

"We will continue this conversation another time."

20:12

S.P.I.

Base of the plateau, the REEF
(Scouts' General HQ)

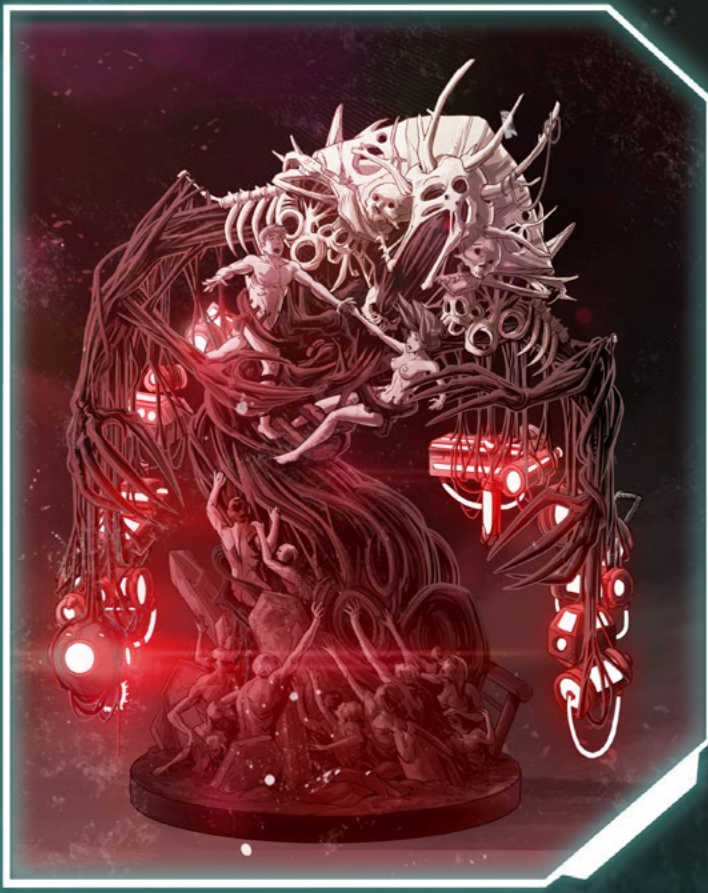
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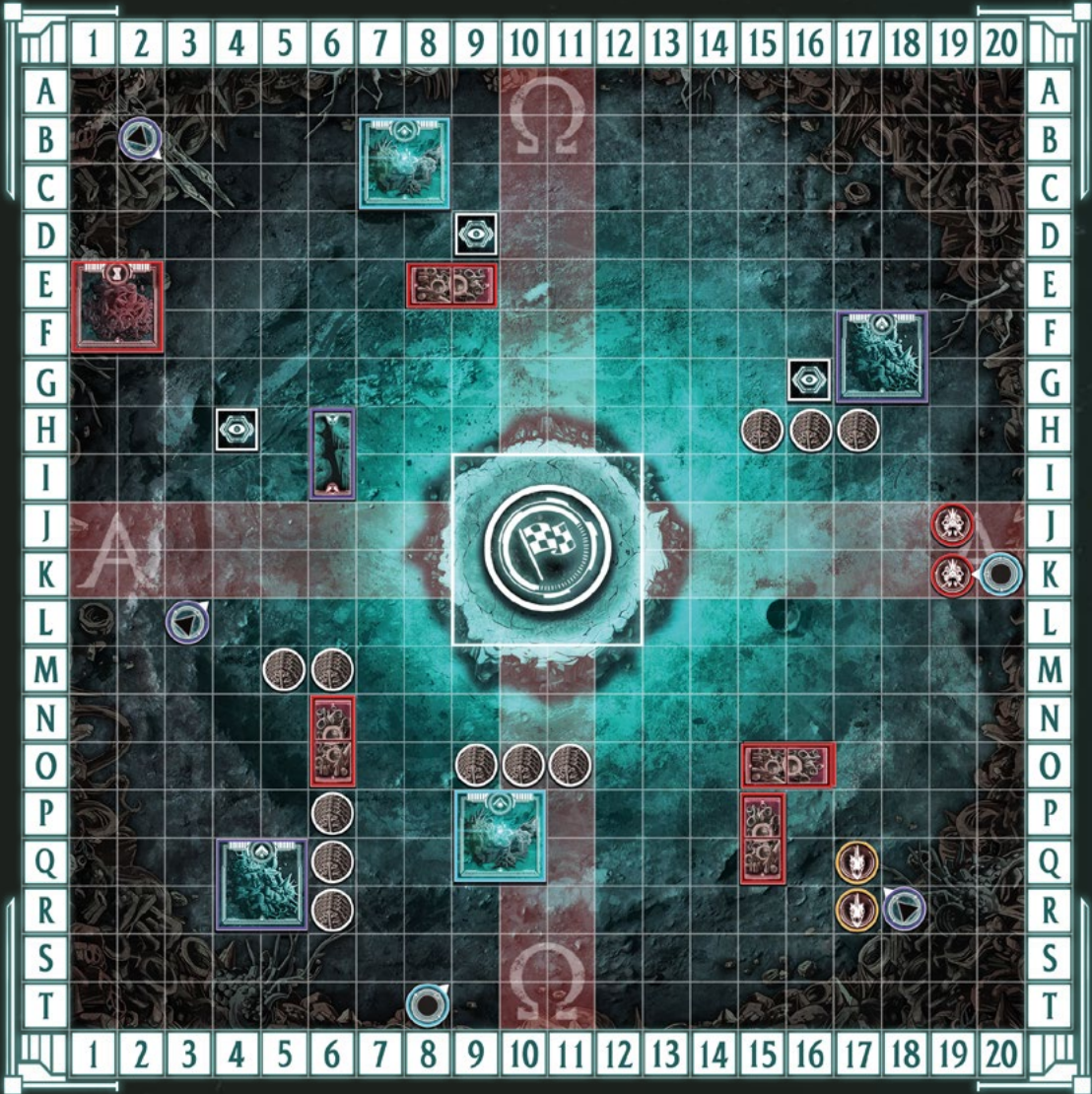
Communication

For safety reasons, prisoner 78X was injected with a locator chip. The signal was apparently down until a few hours ago when it suddenly resumed. The subject should preferably be recovered alive and brought back to the Citadel. You will be supplied with portable triangulation radio beacons. Shan's troops are restless, and it is feared the Stability could be compromised. We urge maximum confidentiality and speed in carrying out this mission. In addition, note the following instructions: report any movement of Exiled troops; for support, contact the CLEU squad sent to carry out repairs to the tower on the northern boundary of the Twilight Zone.

Preserve the Light!

Comm. Adam Tuck





SPECIAL RULES / NOTES

A Herald appears for the first time in this mission. Place the Awakener board and miniature next to the main board. Shuffle the Reborn deck and draw a card: place it at the bottom of the Awakener board and put the other cards back in the box. You must then compose the Reactions deck for the Herald. Take all the common Reaction cards and add the two unique Awakener Reactions, then shuffle and place the deck next to the Awakener board. You can learn how Heralds work in the “Heralds” section of the Rulebook.



THE CLEU

The origins of the CLEU date back to the time of the Submersion. As the wealthiest and the politicians fled to the colonies and to Mars, the world federation created a special police force, the CLEU (Crisis Law Enforcement Unit), in order to contain the chaos and protect the general migration project for the sake of the rest of the population. However, this unit was never implemented due to the betrayal by the Martians on the Day of the Crosses. Subsequently, under the leadership of the Engineers, the CLEU was renamed the “Crisis Light Enforcement Unit” during the Lightring project. Today, the CLEU is still this faction’s military force, and it is the Citadel’s main police force.

LANDS



COMPONENTS



ENEMIES

BLIP	SHADOWS	HERALDS	OUTER LORD
	 Lurker Devourer Moth Swarmer Sentinel	 Awakener	
2	+0	+0	
2	+0		

MISSION CONCLUSION

Lands of the Night – 422nd Cycle, Night 340, Time 00:41

You activate the field suppressor, and the singularity closes with a pop. The shockwave sweeps away the remains of the bodies manipulated by the Awakener as if they were just rag dolls. You still can't believe you have just tackled a type 4 Herald Shadow. The fact that the Shadow knew what it was doing, and made conscious decisions, is something you have never experienced before, even though you are sure you have read something of the kind in the REEF chronicles. However, the fact that a Herald has come to light after almost 100 cycles is a clear signal that something is changing in the Lands of the Night, perhaps the culmination of other signs you have noted in the last two expeditions.

But you don't have time to mull over all this, as one of you notices an opening precisely where the revolting tentacles of the Herald were struggling before. It is a half-buried staircase that leads downwards. That is where the signal from the fugitive prisoner is coming from. His position locator was probably swallowed by the Awakener, which must have taken him into its lair. Your orders were to investigate.

You make your way down steps strewn with earth and ash that gradually become cleaner as you descend, to the point that the last flight is practically spotless. Now several meters underground, you assume you are in an ancient bunker. The signal from the prisoner has become very strong. You open a ten-centimeter-thick steel door and enter a room. What you see leaves you speechless.

Naked human corpses are hung everywhere, each one connected to strange drips containing a black fluid. Many have had their skulls opened and their brains either removed or connected to electrodes that make mysterious machines pulsate. On a steel table, a corallbone growth from a massive Shadow has been divided up into several pieces; a series of annotated diagrams pinned to the walls show that some pretty rigorous research is being done in this laboratory of horrors. Revolted, you move into another room where a dozen

Shadows sealed in Lux-treated glass containers dart at you, aggressively opening what appear to be liquid mouths against the sides of their transparent cages. Under these cages, a number of necrotic human limbs float in a tub, filling the air with a nauseating stench.

Looking away, you continue to follow the prisoner's signal. You go in deeper and deeper, passing through a corridor that leaves you in no doubt as to the identity of the owner of the place. There is a white circle with the words "redraw the circle," and under the linear lamps and the pipes that flow along the corridor like so many metal tentacles. You notice a gleaming effigy of Somerfield Shan. A black liquid tear has been drawn falling from one of Shan's eyes, dripping to the floor. You immediately remember the image of Saul, the Patriarch Regent, that you saw in the monastery a few nights ago, but you don't have time to ponder on this as a sound, like footsteps, puts you on the alert. They come from behind a slightly open door.

The prisoner must be right behind it. Clearly, he must have somehow agreed with the Exiled forces to make his way here if the convoy was attacked, but did not know he was being tracked. Or maybe he knew it, and what you have got yourself into is nothing more than a trap he has set to rid himself of his pursuers. The thought makes you flinch as you extract your Lux guns and regulate their flow.

You throw open the door to find two men there. The first is dressed in a jersey of light fabric that emphasizes his thinness. His skin looks burned and wounded in several places, as if he has been tortured or exposed to very high heat. The small respirator he wears is all that characterizes his completely bald head. He has bright blue irises. On his neck, there is a tattoo reading 78X; it is red and bleeding, as though he has been trying to scratch it off.

The other man must be the owner of the lab and one of Somerfield's agents. You can't see him well as he is wrapped in a heavy cloak, but something about him makes your skin crawl,

as though all the horrors and darkness of that laboratory orbit around him, keeping him concealed and subliminally erasing anything that might make him seem like a human being.

But he is human, there is no doubt about that, as is his cry, and that of the prisoner, which they utter when you order them to surrender. Time suddenly seems to slow down, as you realize that the two men are screaming, not at you, but at each other. It is as though your entrance has suddenly made their minds snap back into the present and made them realize where they are. Then, the prisoner's mouth opens to an inhuman degree, and his irises light up with Lux blue, as do the veins on his body, which seem to swell, luminescent, as though they are being shot through by subcutaneous electrical discharges. The other man pounces on him, stretching out black fingers that look like they have been dipped in ink. He tries to stop him, but it's no good. The explosion overwhelms everyone present, and your minds are invaded by a whiteness that suffocates your every sensation.

Lands of the Night – 422nd Cycle, Night 349, Time 03:41**8th CLEU team report**

We have completed the rescue of the Team Nova members from the designated location. They are in shock and need immediate medical attention. The underground laboratory is completely destroyed, and we have detected DNA traces of prisoner 78X, whose death by annihilation we confirm. We have also found significant stocks of diluted Lux and raw Umbra, which we suggest should be recovered. Although audio-sensory recordings from Team Nova indicate that another man was present, we have detected no further human traces other than the lab corpses.

▶ THE SENTIENT SHADOWS

A young Luminary monk used to tell the following anecdote. One day, during a vigil in the Solar Library, he had found a rather old book in one of the lower wings. It was a scout report that spoke of a category of Shadows superior to any other ever recorded. They were huge, sentient Shadows that could emulate the scouts and their hunting techniques. It seems that these Shadows had highly complex corallbone structures, and also that they attacked explorers not only to kill them, but also to capture and study them. This last detail had filled the poor monk with terror. He immediately consulted his superior, who advised him not to mention it to anyone. The next day, inexplicably, the book disappeared from the Library.



MISSION REWARDS



x1

x1

x1



You unlocked Mission 4 of the main campaign.

UNLOCK

► THE AWAKENER

Sentient Shadows are diabolical entities. Most of those who venture into the Lands of the Night are totally unprepared to deal with them. With infinite patience, these beings lurk, waiting in the dark, watching with empty eyes.

They study humans as though human life were completely alien to them. Many of them are unable to distinguish life from death, and even target fallen scouts with their filaments of darkness. One Shadow, in particular, has made an art form of the manipulation of dead bodies.

They call it the "Awakener" because those that had been sleeping return to life in its evil grasp. Be warned: never wish for such an awakening, because it is far from preferable to the silence of death.

DREAMS FROM THE UNKNOWN

First Level of the Citadel, Electrorift District – 422nd Cycle, Night 352, Time 09:00

Clear sky. A light breeze blows across the red earth. You follow it, running barefoot to the top of a fence-ringed hill. There, a blond-haired woman is hanging out large white sheets in the sun.

Sun! You've never seen it before. It's so shiny... and warm! You would like to contemplate it forever, but you are drawn to the woman.

"Mommy!" you call out. Your voices are crystal clear, children's voices, eager for affection. She is your mother; you want her to hug you and never leave you.

"My children," she replies, before one of the sheets billows in the wind, hiding her.

"Mommy, where are you?" Now there's a slight tremble in your voices, betraying a fear of being abandoned. You run and run to get to her, but the hill seems to go on forever. Your feet slip on something cold. Beneath the grass flows a black liquid

that forces you down the hill.

You shout for help, but the liquid increases, becoming a stream, then a river, and finally, a sea of ink that threatens to swallow you up. The hill no longer exists, the sky is black, and the sun looks like a mouth stretched wide open in a scream that fails to materialize. It is your scream you hear when suddenly you wake from your dream.

The infirmary's robotic arms inject you with a sedative. Your entire body trembles, as though gripped by convulsions and your head feels like it is exploding. You have been hospitalized in a seedy hospital in the Electrorift District for three nights now, and some of you still haven't completely recovered. The latest news is being broadcast on dust-covered screens opposite your beds. Somerfield didn't get what he wanted and is blaming the Council of the Citadel, threatening repercussions.

"We will not yield. We will not allow the actions of a rebel to compromise the Stability achieved by the Island of Light," a stern-faced First Engineer Wang Wei is telling the interviewer.

"The question of allowing in the peoples outside the Lightring is something the Council must examine, and a solution is being sought. We will not allow anyone to get left behind, and these useless acts of guerrilla warfare are not the right way to reach a common agreement."

For decades, the Council has claimed to be working on a solution, such as setting aside neighborhoods of the Citadel to house Exiles, particularly after the population decline of the last 150 cycles. But the truth is that the trade in Umbra and old-world artifacts with the outlying settlements is an activity too profitable for the Citadel to give up. Furthermore, numerous settlements of Exiles are nervous about the kind of integration Somerfield wants. But might the increased activity of the Shadows over the last few nights have made them change their minds?

"So, are you recovering?"

Concentrating on the news, you did not notice a man enter the room. It is the detective and engineer Ström.

"Well enough to know there is nothing to say," you reply shortly, even though, in reality, your head is still throbbing. "What do you want from us now?"

The man slips his gloved hand into his jacket and pulls out a handheld SPI device. Connected to the

subnet, it is showing a film. "Children kidnapped from high places," "the conspiracy of the Monks and the laboratory of horrors" runs the commentary to images you recognize.

"Impossible..." you murmur, unable to believe it. The man puts away his SPI.

"For the moment, the story is running on a subnet bulletin board used by conspiracy theorists who believe in an imminent second Apnea, so I wouldn't think too much about it. However, someone is using your audio-sensory recordings to undermine the stability of the Citadel."

"The Exiled forces?"

"Too obvious to be true."

The man fingers his bristly beard, his eyes searching you as if trying to see right inside you.

"Last time, I asked you about the sounds you heard in Lands of the Night, but we were interrupted. I would like to know more."

You don't trust this man, but in the face of the unauthorized diffusion of your recordings, not to mention the still-to-be-avenged death of Team Strobe, you make up your mind. You tell him what you heard and believe you saw.

"Sounds of musical instruments and men without respirators... interesting." The detective thinks for a few seconds; then, he shows you some holographic photos. "They are of a settlement that I would like you to check out on your next outing. It may contain the answers we are looking for."

"What kind of answers?" you ask. Ström does not reply. He just points to a black tear and an eye engraved on the wall of one of the houses.



S.P.I.

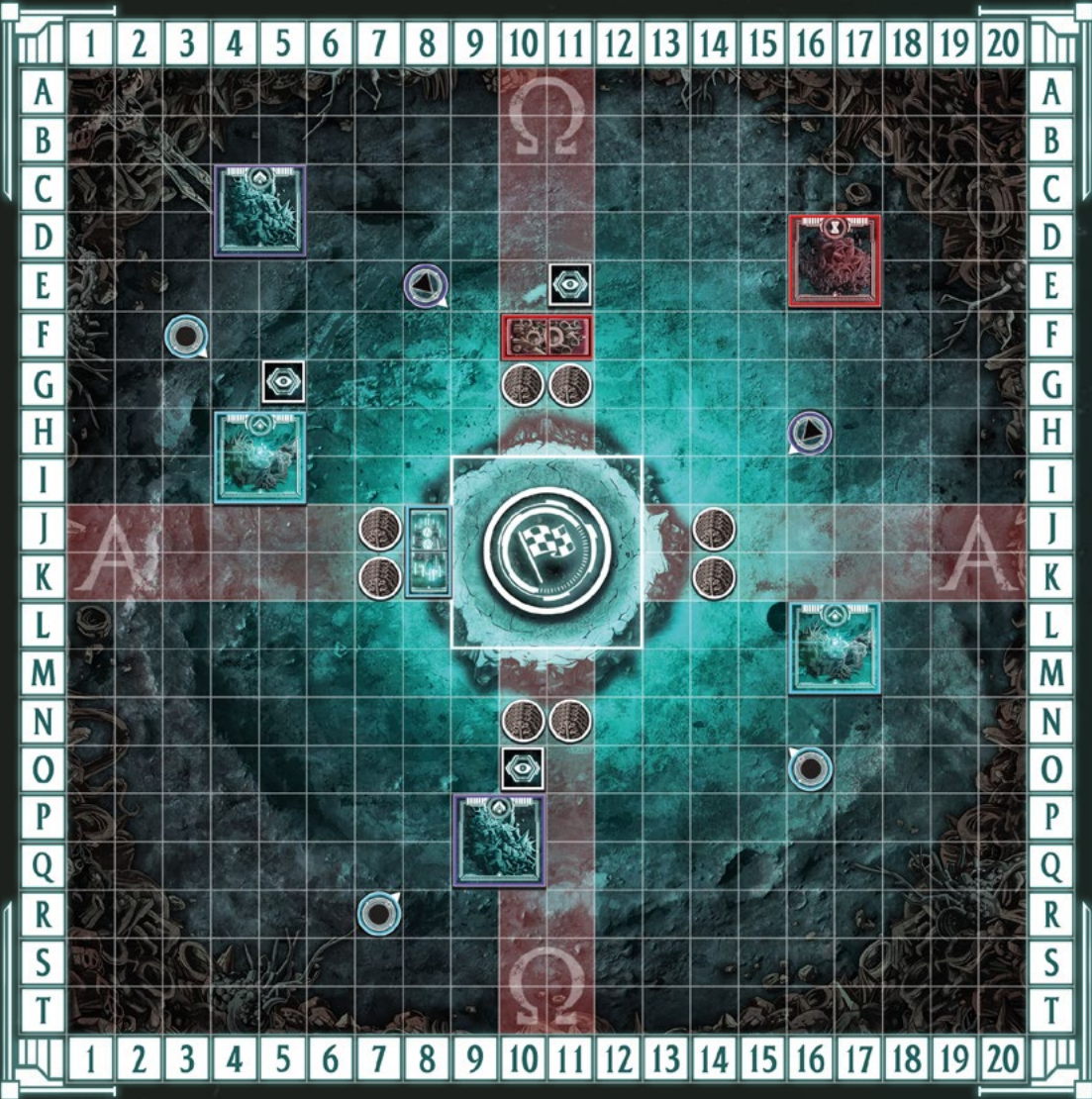
Base of the plateau, the REEF
(Scouts' General HQ)

Communication

In your absence, the situation has worsened. Somerfield's troops are threatening some neutral settlements and demanding the Citadel release new prisoners. Some vanguard scouts have reported a type 4 sentient Shadow similar to the one you encountered. Further investigation and intelligence are urgently needed.

Preserve the Light!

Comm. Adam Tuck



SPECIAL RULES / NOTES

This mission has some time-based mechanics. Make sure you have a good plan of action to contain the shadows and achieve your goal on time. A new Herald also appears. Prepare the respective board and miniature, the Reborn card, and the Reaction deck (inserting the unique Herald cards), as you did in the previous mission. Place everything next to the main board.

LANDS



COMPONENTS



Twilight Lands (x2)



Forgotten Lands (x2)



Shadow Lands (x1)



Events (x3)



Lux Trench (x1)



Dark Congolmerate (x1)



Coralbones (x8)



Circular Singularities (x3)



Triangular Singularities (x2)

ENEMIES

BLIP	SHADOWS	HERALDS	OUTER LORD
	 Lurker Devourer Moth Swarmer Sentinel	 Hunter	
2	+0	+0	
2	+0		

THE COUNCIL

The 29-member Council of the Citadel is the Citadel's highest governing body and the seat of legislative and executive power. It comprises the Patriarch Regent (the highest office of the Order of the Luminary Monks), the First Engineer (leader of the Engineers' faction), nine emeritus Engineers, nine clerics, and nine officials of the people. This structure represents a delicate balance that has been achieved over the course of the cycles, and not without conflicts and disputes that, on several occasions, have risked bringing the Citadel down. The fact that the officials of the people do not have a president is still bitterly disputed, but it is not permitted to dispute the wisdom of the Council and its choices. After all, it is thanks to the Council that the Island of Light, with all the contradictions and sacrifices that it entails, still survives in the face of the night.

MISSION CONCLUSION

Lands of the Night – 422nd Cycle, Night 353, Time 11:56

The Hunter's coralbone bullets whizz over your heads. The battle has split you up, scattering you around the buildings of an industrial estate from the old era. The buildings are encrusted in coralbone, and the cyclopean cranes that once moved machinery parts are now twisted monsters of metal and organic parts.

The Shadows hound you relentlessly. You would like to regroup in order to react, but your handheld SPIs are disturbed by the Sheol magnetic fields. Gradually, the Black Tide slides towards a clearing between the buildings, finally rushing into it to form the whirling vortex of a singularity. Lurkers crawl around, materializing from the black lightning that crashes on the ground and sends fragments of earth and coralbone flying in all directions. The sentient Herald Shadow makes a gesture with the blade on its right arm: it guides the other Shadows towards your positions.

One of you throws a Lux grenade to stem the advance of the Shadows but, seeming to sense the danger, they keep their distance. Then, a distorting wave emanates from the singularity, changing the density of the air and charging it with energy. This affects your weapons, which go out. You try turning them back on, but it is as if the Lux glow has been blown out like a flame in a strong wind.

You are in the dark, cut off, and with no means of communication.

Your greatest terror has materialized. You bang your weapons frantically, but it is useless. They refuse to come back on. The silence is broken only by the guttural vibrations of the Shadows and your own rapid breathing. As scouts, you always knew that sooner or later this moment would come, and you amaze yourselves by giving in to it calmly as though it were a form of release. You suddenly feel the full weight of the weariness you have accumulated over dozens of missions — missions you have accomplished without the Citadel ever acknowledging your worth. The Luminary who sent you to the Temple of Night had predicted that sooner or later your lights would go out, and that you would pray to the Light for deliverance from the darkness. Some of you do indeed pray, some curse

the darkness, and others ignore the thought, simply envying the men and women of the Island of Light, who are resting in their beds connected to the virtual worlds of the subnet, fucking, shouting at diskraze players, or laughing at any of the thousand other distractions that only humans are capable of creating. It looks like you are destined to die for them, without ever knowing what the hell has been going on in the last few nights in that land that doesn't belong to you.

It's so unfair, you think, and the very thought drives you to your feet. You stare at the darkness of the abyss that extends in all directions, almost unable to understand what is above and below, and ... incredibly ... you see lights. Or rather, you sense them, because even if you close your eyes, they are still there. This is not the Light, and it is not the Citadel; it is your comrades. You feel them; you follow their lights that join up with yours as if all were part of a strange web. You are in each other's eyes — you are connected like never before.

A hill. Blonde hair. Red earth. The voice.

"My children..."

Three flashes, and your weapons are rekindled. You abandon your hiding places in a perfectly coordinated manner, as though your arms, wrists, and hands, pulling the triggers of your Lux arms and accurately striking the Shadows in their weakest points, were all part of one spiritual body.

The Hunter shoots at you, but you are already one step ahead: your Lux arms discharge their vials at full power while a pair of perfectly thrown Lux grenades explode simultaneously inside the singularity, wiping it out.

The Hunter reacts by wielding the coralbone blade on its right arm. One of you acts as bait, allowing another to slice off the Herald's exposed arm with a single stroke of a Lux spear. You surround the Hunter, fire at its body of darkness from all sides. Its sizzles, bursts, and, amidst guttural sounds and desperate floundering movements that briefly and dramatically make it look almost human, disintegrates.

When it is all over, and you find yourselves staring at what remains of its coralbone skeleton, you briefly feel something between euphoria and utter hatred; a sense of destruction

diametrically opposed to the sense of unity that allowed you to coordinate your attacks. Then, the spell breaks, and you are back to how you were before: completely bewildered and staring at each other as you try to work out what just happened to you.

Lands of the Night – 422nd Cycle, Night 353, Time 12:20**SPI report**

The Exiled troops are withdrawing from the occupied settlements and gathering on the border of the Forgotten Areas, sector 65. Increasing Shadow activity and the appearance of unstable singularities in the attached coordinates. Impossible to continue the mission without support. We are returning to base.

Private note: Commander, the Exiles have told us about cultists called Tears that sport teardrop-shaped marks or tattoos. We request further information and attach sensory recordings of the marks we have observed in the course of our last few raids.

Preserve the Light!

Team Nova

Lands of the Night – 422nd Cycle, Night 353, Time 15:39

Footsteps approach the remains of the Hunter. They are so light that they barely leave footprints on the ash scattered everywhere. A knee bends, and a coralbone instrument full of strange holes is placed on the ground. A hand with black fingers caresses the remains of the Herald. There is suffering in the gesture, but also a violent craving. A knife flicks against the palm, and pitch-colored blood drips onto the creature's coralbone skeleton. The liquid is allowed to soak into the pores of the coralbone, and then suddenly, as though sucked out by a magnetic force, it is drawn back into the wound from which it fell. The fist closes suddenly and decisively in the manner of someone who has just had a revelation.

"So, it was them!" whispers the human-like presence before disappearing into the endless night.

► THE HUNTER

There was once a particularly skillful and ruthless scout. During reconnaissance missions, while the others gathered Umbra or worked on excavation sites in search of artifacts, he enjoyed venturing out and destroying Shadows. This is why they called him "the Hunter." One day, whilst in hot pursuit of some Shadows, he decided to take his team particularly far out to one of Sheol's unmapped lands. There, the Shadows lured his group into a trap, and his comrades abandoned him, fleeing in panic. The Hunter never returned to the Citadel, but some swear they've seen a Shadow bearing a resemblance to him and say it is capable of taking out a whole group of scouts with no trouble. Is this really the Shadow of the Hunter? Can anything quench this tremendous thirst for revenge?



MISSION REWARDS



x1

x1

/



UNLOCK

You unlocked Mission 5 of the main campaign. In the next mission, you will face a strong enemy. Use this Development phase to heal your scouts and prepare their equipment as best you can.

► THE STABILITY

Created by Father Ulm Saraji, predecessor of the current Patriarch Regent, Stability is the name of a set of measures, or rather indications, aimed at achieving a modus vivendi and, with it, preservation of the status quo within the Citadel.

Its founding principles are cessation of the will to reconquer the ancient human domains, and the personal growth of individuals in the Island of Light. Stability is based on the acceptance of the concept that each must accept their own role in order to preserve the efficiency and survival of humanity as a whole.



AVADON

THE WEEPING MOUNTAIN

Third Level of the Citadel, Solar Library – 422nd Cycle, Night 354, Time 8:30

Wang Wei, the First Engineer, and Saul, the Patriarch Regent, pace back and forth near the sacred sundial, a relic that is said to predict the return of the Sun. They both have the white hair and milky-colored skin typical of ammortals. The First Engineer wears his in an elaborate plait, which swings gently against his back as he speaks.

"I have dispatched Ström to gather more information, but if this is the way the land lies, we must be ready for anything."

"It doesn't seem possible, after almost a hundred cycles." The Patriarch Regent rests his deeply lined face on his hands, which he holds together in prayer. "It was a real mistake to send that Dreamer, our greatest resource."

"We knew that sooner or later this moment would come; the Dreamers predicted it," Wang Wei says, unperturbed.

"Yes, but discretion is called for. The Stability must not be compromised," the Patriarch murmurs, taking a leather-bound book from two Immolates, women dressed in splendid armor. The book has yellow pages and looks truly ancient.

"I started this diary nearly five hundred cycles ago, back when we still called them years. I was in one of the lunar colonies at the time. Do you remember those, Wang Wei, the colonies?"

The Engineer nods, but in truth, he only has a vague memory.



Regenerative nanomachines might well be able to keep a human body alive indefinitely, but the brain inevitably degrades. After all, human beings were originally designed to die.

"I never imagined I would go back and read this," the Patriarch says, flicking through the pages. "Here we are — the fall of Lucifer who brought the world down with him."

Base of the plateau, the REEF, medical area – 422nd Cycle, Night 354, Time 9:22

"Your test results are all fine. I would say that you are in excellent health, for scouts, I mean," the doctor sniggers. Being the REEF physician, he is used to dealing with mutilated bodies and cases of extreme delirium. Complaining of strange dreams and generalized head pain is like telling him you suffered a broken nail during a bombing raid.

"Yes, but it's as if there is some kind of connection between us," you insist. "It's hard to explain, but it's like there's a kind of synergy that wasn't there before."

"It is perfectly normal for a strong affinity to be created between fellow soldiers," the doctor explains in an authoritative tone.

"But —"

"As far as I am concerned, you are perfectly fit to resume operations," reiterates the doctor, in a way that makes it clear that if you continue to insist, he may start thinking you are looking for an excuse not to go out again into the Lands of the Night.

You leave the infirmary not at all convinced and quite frustrated by the lack of answers. When you got back, you had asked for an interview with Commander Tuck in order to ask him about the unusual activity of the Shadows and the presence of sentient Shadows, but you hadn't really got anywhere. Apparently, a strategy of action is being worked out at the highest level, and there are plans to guarantee a greater supply of resources and armaments to the Scout Corps, even though it seems that little importance has been attached to the musical instruments that seem to control the Shadows and to the tear-shaped signs in the settlement that Ström told you about. If you want vengeance for what happened to Team Strobe and to figure out exactly what's happening to you, you are going to have to undertake your own independent investigations.

First Level of the Citadel, Slum District – 422nd Cycle, Night 358, Time 22:15

A few days pass, and your nightmares do not seem to diminish, even though the strange feeling of unity that you experienced during your clash with the Hunter has shown no sign of recurring. You have spoken to Ström again, and also taken advantage of your free time to ask some questions in the lower

neighborhoods. In fact, there is no better place for finding answers than the slums, which, intermingling with the large structures of the sprawl on the First Level, form a multifaceted and chaotic complex, with nooks and crannies perfect for hiding secrets. This is where you spend the last remaining days of your leave, desperately interrogating tavern owners, cyber nightmare sellers, prostitutes, and traffickers affiliated with the Exiles who sell their goods in the external outposts. What is more, it is not always you asking the questions. Others you meet often quiz you about the unusual activity of the Shadows, and whether it is true that the attacks on the Lightring have resumed. The news begins to spread in the Citadel, and its effect can be likened to an electric shock delivered to a dying body, too long bowed under the yoke of Stability.

Finally, you learn something from an Exile merchant. The man has recently arrived from one of the most distant settlements, in the Forgotten Areas beyond sector 124. He is sinister looking, and on the right side of his face, he bears the marks of Sheol corruption. In exchange for a generous dose of Lux, he shows you some carved corallbone wind instruments with cybernetic grafts in them. They are like the instruments you saw in the Exile settlement, even though those seemed different, much more elaborate. The man calls them sound control instruments and says they come from a mass production facility established by Somerfield. He tells you that the Revolutionary is not leading his people to salvation, but to destruction, and that, following his latest deeds, numerous Exiled tribes have withdrawn their support. You decide to report everything to the Commander. If there really is a facility producing the same tools that caused the death of your comrades, it cannot be left in the hands of the Revolutionary.



S.P.I.

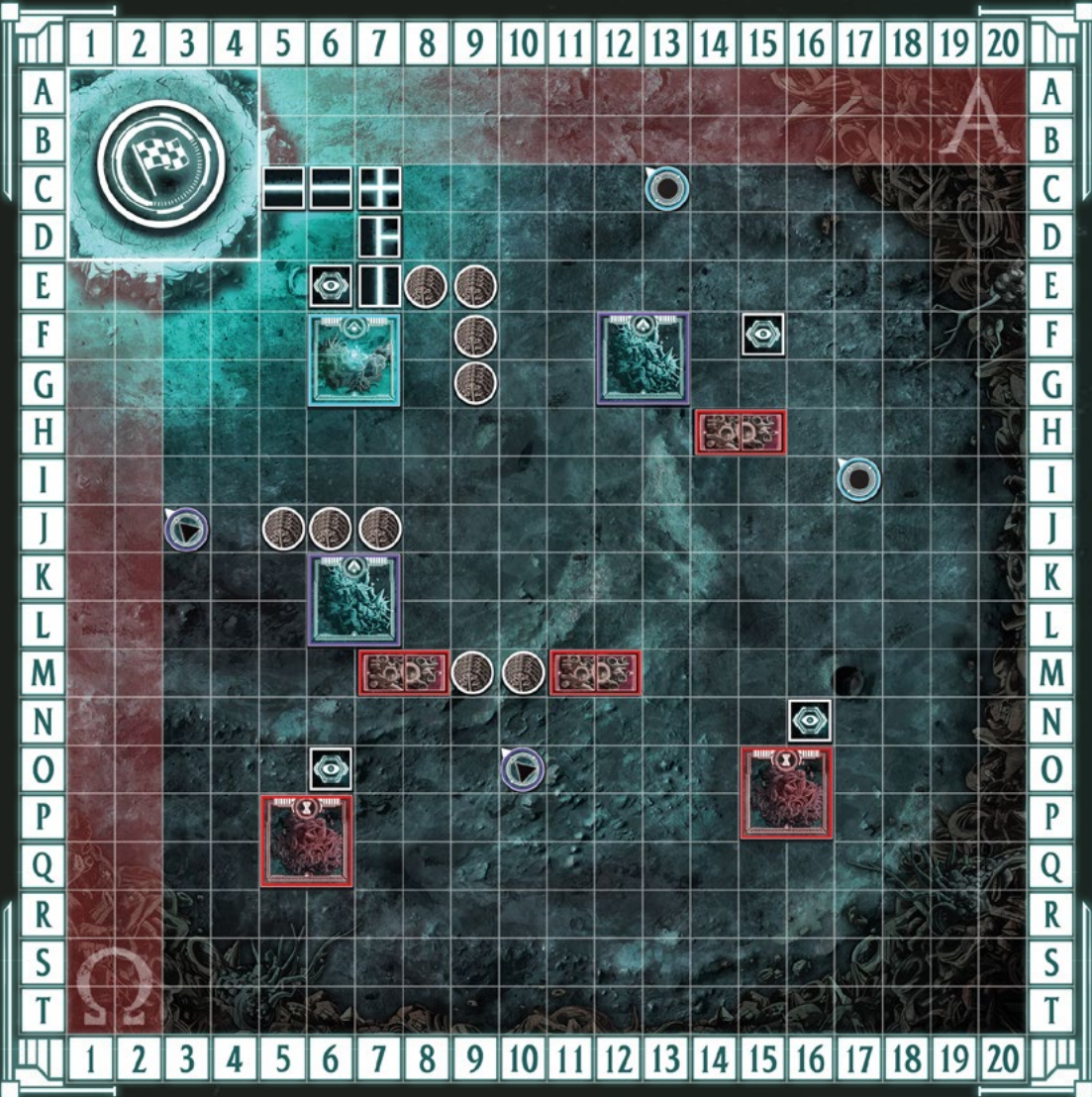
Base of the plateau, the REEF
(Scouts' General HQ)

Communication

The reconnaissance scouts have returned with the information we were hoping for. Somerfield and his army are camped at the foot of a mountain in sector 142. A CLEU team and a team of Immolates are ready to leave. You are to guide them in the Lands of the Night so that they can prepare an attack on the rebel Exiled forces. You will get support from several Exile settlements that have declared themselves neutral.

Preserve the Light!

Comm. Adam Tuck



SPECIAL RULES / NOTES

This mission uses the back of the board. Shadows move the same way, but will tend towards the top and left edge of the map when they move towards Alpha or Omega.

For the first time, an Outer Lord appears. Place the respective board, miniature, and related Action cards next to the main board. You then have to compose the Outer Lord Reaction deck. To do this, insert the following cards into the deck: Dark Shield (x1), Shutdown (x1), Land Eater (x1), Havoc (x1), Call (x1), Gravity Whirlwind (x1), Healing in Shadows (x2). To find out how an Outer Lord works, see the "Outer Lords" section of the Rulebook.

LANDS



COMPONENTS

Twilight Land (x1)

Forgotten Lands (x2)

Shadow Lands (x2)

Events (x4)

Dark Conglomerates (x3)

Coralbones (x9)

Circular Singularities (x2)

Triangular Singularities (x2)

T Lightstream Tile (x1)

Straight Lightstream Tiles (x3)

Cross Lightstream Tile (x1)

ENEMIES

BLIP	SHADOWS	HERALDS	OUTER LORD
	<div><p>Lurker</p><p>Moth</p><p>Devourer</p><p>Swarmer</p><p>Sentinel</p></div>		<div><p>Avadon</p></div>
2	+0		
2	+0		



THE IMMOLATES

The Immolates are the military force of the Luminary Monks. Devoted to the service of the Citadel, they do not act as a police force, like the CLEU, but focus on protecting the monks of the Third Level during missions in the Lands of the Night.

MISSION CONCLUSION

Lands of the Night, sector 126, inside the mountain – 422nd Cycle, Night 360, Time 16:44

You never expected to have such a tough battle on your hands. It took all your strength, but in the end, you manage to get inside the mountain. What you find inside is a cave full of gruesome corallbone structures depicting humans and other beings, the latter grotesque. You advance until you find yourselves in a room dominated by a large central structure, like a giant chalice of bone, which stands on a wrinkled mass that reminds you of the limp mushrooms on the Citadel's underground pipes. The essence of Sheol, in its densest form, flows from the rim of this "chalice," and on top of it floats a strange object that vaguely recalls part of a disc. Although you have never seen anything like it, you struggle to focus on the object, as it seems to be emanating some kind of invisible force that interferes with your minds.

"Is it them?" a voice startles you. You turn around and recognize Somerfield Shan, the Revolutionary. His long frizzy hair hangs limp, and his uniform is crumpled and bloodstained. Clearly horrified, his face is blanched of color, and he exudes none of the stern authority that characterize his image on posters around the Citadel. His eyes flick frantically from the chalice to a hooded figure at his side, as though asking the man to confirm his chosen course of action.

"At last," says the hooded man, "we shall be one, once again."

Some of you try to contact the REEF with your SPI devices, but you can't, probably due to an isolation field. It must be electromagnetic distortion caused by the mountain.

"Go ahead and try. It won't work," sniggers the man, clearly able to read you like a book.

"Who are you?" you ask.

The hooded man doesn't answer. You try to light up his face, as you did in the laboratory, but he seems to be wrapped in a layer of darkness. He suddenly raises his left hand in the direction of the goblet, reaching eagerly with his black, almost necrotic, fingers.

"Do not move!" you yell, readying your weapons.

The man ignores you and immerses his hand in the liquid shadow of the chalice. This immediately comes to life and darts at you. Shocked, you fire, but the Shadow is too dense

and, in an instant, it envelops your radiant armor.

"Yes!" cries the hooded man, almost deliriously. "Give me what is mine!"

"Wait! What are you doing? That's not what we agreed!" shouts Somerfield. The hooded man dismisses these protestations with a careless gesture, and a tentacle of black blood hits the Revolutionary on the chest, knocking him to the ground.

You feel completely drained of energy. You perceive an emptiness around you and a profound sense of bewilderment, of division. You are overcome by a mystic sense of horror, as though your very soul has been torn from within you, leaving only your body, like an empty dead receptacle, to wander in space. You are drowning in nothing, but suddenly you feel hands brushing yours — the hands of your comrades. You embrace and draw strength from each other. You feel united, in the same way you did when you defeated the Hunter.

A flash, the hill from your dream appears in front of you, as bright as a lighthouse in a storm.

"My children," calls a woman's voice.

"What energy!" The hooded man appears to be in trouble. Briefly, you see the disc-like object from the chalice floating towards him, but almost immediately, your reserves of Lux begin to glow, to vibrate almost. Then there comes an almighty roar, an explosion of light and shadow, a cascade of corallbone stalactites, and finally, darkness.

Lands of the Night, sector 126 – 422nd Cycle, Night 360, Time 16:49

Audio recording by the CLEU team on mission

We are making for the interior of the mountain. The flow seems to have diminished (Sound of boots creaking), wait a moment ... something's happening, there's a light ... Jackson! Quick, pass me the spyglass! (Indistinct sounds of clashing objects). Hell... there's a... a beam of light rising from the mountain... it's incredible! The sky...! The sky is opening (gasp) for the Light! I've never seen anything like it ... the beam, it seems to stretch up for miles ... oh God! The tide is being pushed towards us (thud of a falling body)... Fuck!... Run! Quick! Go... go... (the recording is abruptly cut off).

Lands of the Night, sector 126 – 422nd Cycle, Night 361, Time 21:00

Immolate report to the Council of the Citadel, encrypted connection

We have finished our reconnaissance and recovered some audio-sensory recordings from our brothers in the CLEU team. Team Nova is missing; we have not found any survivors. Many miles of mountainside have collapsed, and new corallbone structures have appeared on its eastern side. As we were setting up camp for late-night prayers, Brother Athos sensed faint fluctuations of Lux under the rubble of the landslide-submerged Somerfield factory. We will conduct on-site investigations tomorrow.

Lands of the Night, sector 126 – 422nd Cycle, Night 362, Time 21:00

Immolate report to the Council of the Citadel, encrypted connection

Fluctuations confirmed. Almost no Shadow activity since the accident, so we will excavate to try and establish the nature of the fluctuations. The corallbone is very thick, and this will still take at least two nights. If the Artifact has not been stolen, it is here.

Lands of the Night, sector 126 – 422nd Cycle, Night 363, Time 21:00

Immolate report to the Council of the Citadel, encrypted connection

Light works in mysterious ways. After drilling through the last layer of corallbone, we discovered the bodies of the members of Team Nova. Each was in a state of stasis and contained in a pure Lux shell. As soon as we touched them, the shells dissolved, allowing the men to emerge, dazed but unhurt. The medical team is now taking them to the Citadel. We have detected no further fluctuations and conclude that the Artifact was stolen before the collapse of the structure. It is conceivable that Team Nova witnessed the incident. It seems that Light, in its wisdom, has plans for them.

▶ THE OUTER LORDS



In some files from the time of the Submersion, recovered from a decommissioned subnet server, there is mention of creatures called Outer Lords. Although no specific details are given, there are also some confusing images, dating back to a more recent time, that show a colossal, megalithic creature, more like a natural force, such as a cyclone, than an organic being. Many wall sentries swear that they have seen beings as big as mountains moving along the horizon, but other than that, the presence of the Outer Lords has always been an urban legend in the Citadel.

MISSION REWARDS



x2

x2

x2



UNLOCK

Congratulations, you have destroyed your first Outer Lord! Once all districts are built on the first tier of the Citadel, unlock second level Districts, second level Weapons, Lanterns and Accessories, and second level Advanced Lightshields. Additionally, unlock the following new Actions during the Development phase: Citadel Fortification, Advanced Training. You will also be able to deploy Mechs during missions (if you have the Engineers' Caste expansion). Find out how in the "Expansion Mechanics" section of the Rulebook.

You unlocked mission 6 of the main campaign and Scout missions, which you can optionally complete in order to unlock a special Lightshield card for each scout.

▶ AVADON



Avadon is the name of the first Outer Lord destroyed by Team Nova in the 422nd Cycle. Avadon is a coralbone mountain that dates back to the time of the Lunar Weeping. It is the result of the creation and accumulation of thousands of generations of Shadows. Avadon has formations on its outer slopes that recall the skulls of monstrous beings. Some Exiled mystics say they are meant to resemble other races in the galaxy defeated by the Shadows, but this is only a hypothesis.



