

DEGENESIS

LAST WATCH



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AN UNFORESEEN FUTURE NESTLED
SOMEWHERE IN TIME
UNSUSPECTING VICTIMS NO WARNINGS, NO SIGNS
JUDGMENT DAY THE SECOND COMING ARRIVES
BEFORE YOU SEE THE LIGHT
YOU MUST DIE
[SLAYER]

MARKO DJURDJEVIC & LIAM FOLEY

NO TIME TO DIE

A WAY INSIDE

LAST WATCH begins with the characters approaching Watchtower 17N at the behest of the Office of Protectorate Affairs, at which point they are flagged down by one of the occupants and inexorably drawn into the events of the adventure, however the way the party reaches the point of first contact is not concretely set. Several alternate entry paths are presented as options below:

LETTER FROM A LOVER: Out on the border, the watchtowers only receive mail shipments every other week, and it's easy for letters to be lost in the system. The characters were given a small sum of Drafts in exchange for carrying a misplaced letter out to the watchtower outwith the normal schedule, addressed to its inhabitant.

GOLD OF THE PAST: The characters have heard stories of the old ruins out near the watchtower, supposedly a relic from the City Wars. They were told that it had been picked clean, but a rumor drifting through the Scrapper halls suggests that there could be an unexplored underground vault, locked by an advanced key cylinder. What could be inside?

WRONG PLACE, RIGHT TIME: During their travels, the group wandered into the conflict zone and were spotted from the watchtower and signaled over before they fell prey to a Cockroach ambush. They didn't plan to be in this situation, but they have no choice but to see it through if they want to make it out alive.

Watchtower 17N rises above the grasslands to the north of Siege, looking out over the wastelands beyond the borders of the Protectorate from what was once considered Exalt's territory. It is part of the critical defensive line ensuring the citizens within the borders of the Judiciary's utopia remain safe – and it has gone silent. It has been days since its personnel sent their regular radio ping back to the main control tower in Siege, and no one can be sure if they are even still alive. By decree of the Office of Protectorate Affairs, no Judge who gives up his life for Justitiam may be left behind, and so efforts must be made to investigate and recover any bodies. A team is formed and sent from Siege, along with a memo that they can likely expect either a deserted post or a broken radio.

The truth is far more grim. The resident Judge, Murdoch, and his Vagrant, Angus, were ambushed by a roving vanguard of Cockroaches while out on a routine patrol. The Vagrant died a gruesome death, while the Protector barely survived with a cruel gash torn in his leg, rushing back on his horse into the safety of the watchtower. The savages were hot on his heels the entire way, shrieking like banshees ready to rip him to shreds. With the last of his strength he was able to reach the top deck, turning the tower's mounted machine gun on the approaching Cockroaches and mowing them down. They've pulled back for now, but he knows they're still nearby, and he's out of bullets. Now, he swims in and out of consciousness, tended to by Hakkal, a Jehammedan, who arrived at the watchtower following the blaring noise of gunfire. Both men won't last much longer.

THE STATE OF THINGS

Decades ago, the Judges led a purge of their territory, pushing the savage Clans back past the borders, slaughtering them with musket volleys and crushing them beneath the hooves of their cavalry. Their opponents were overwhelmed by the brutal assault, the hammer wielders caring little for details such as their targets being combatants. Cockroaches and Phosphorites alike were forced to flee, retreating to the south where the Judges would not, could not, follow. With their campaign ostensibly complete, the victorious Judiciary turned its back on the wastelands, confident that nothing could survive there for long, and refocused inwards on their own blossoming Protectorate. Slowly, the Clanner threat was forgotten. Until now.

Unbeknownst to the Judges, their complacency and hubris allowed the Clans to regrow their numbers. The Cockroaches retreated into a habitable refuge nestled against the fires of the Reaper's Blow, hiding in heated underground tunnel networks to escape the impenetrable and deadly fumes blanketing the surface, while the Phosphorites returned to their ancestral bunker systems and sealed the gargantuan entryway until they were prepared to emerge, revitalised and resupplied. In each other

Surrounded

LAST WATCH is a scenario for intermediate level characters which takes place on the borders of the Protectorate, defending one of the crucial watchtowers preventing the Cockroach hordes from swarming into the vulnerable interior of the Judges' paradise. The characters will be forced to use their wits and the environment around them to solve an urgent situation where they are massively outnumbered, and hopefully come out of the experience in one piece. If they're lucky.

The adventure is intended to be a tense, self-contained experience which can be used at various points along a campaign or a party's journey, and while a series of hooks to potential future plot threads are

included, the main focus is on the immediate events facing the characters as they struggle to survive the Cockroach assault. As a Game Master, it is crucial to take into account the structure and setup of the scenario – the characters are in a tough situation, and are for all intents and purposes trapped until they either call for reinforcements or engage the dangerous Clanner vanguard in combat.

As such, utilizing the open structure of the adventure to its fullest extent by allowing the characters and Players to use their ingenuity to set up traps and exploit their environment to its fullest potential is critical, along with potentially adjusting the power level of the enemies presented to be

a suitable, but not impossible, challenge for a group as suggested. Should the characters manage to fight their way out of their situation, they will find themselves with a pair of extremely useful contacts in their debt. Following Murdoch's path leads back to the Protectorate, where the Judiciary will reward and thank the party for their aid in securing the borders against the manifold threats to society facing them, before finding an excuse to send them back into the fray, potentially leading them even higher in the eyes of the Judges.

Meanwhile, Hakkal leads them down a different trail, back to Justitian's Jehammedan Quarter where he is called by an otherworldly figure to take up arms...

they found a common hatred of the hammer-men, enough to smooth their differences and unite them in purpose – the destruction of Justitian, and the slaughter of those who once cast them out. Nothing will stand in the way of their conquest.

The Clans have gathered into an army the likes of which hasn't been witnessed in centuries, a roiling horde of bodies painted with glowing runes or clad in bone armor, every one of its members infused with divine fury. They launch their attacks on the border of the Protectorate, and the Judges scramble to respond. They quickly realise the folly in their overexpansionist tendency, faced with hundreds of kilometers of borderlands needing patrols and protection. Siege becomes the centerpoint of their defensive line, with watchtowers strung out across the perimeter like emergency lights blinking in the desert. The first Cockroach assaults on Siege are repelled with ease, but the Clans quickly learn their lesson: the borders are the weak points. Now, strike parties delve deep into the Protectorate by finding holes in the net, and the situation grows more desperate by the day.

CLOCK'S TICKING

Watchtower 17N is well fortified, but the Cockroaches prowling around the demarcation line of the area are far from primitive or foolish. They know that the Judge cowering inside was wounded by a poisoned blade, and they'll soon realise that the deadly machine gun on its main

deck is out of commission, leaving the tower guard defenseless against their attacks. They will launch a massed assault, flood the compound with warriors, and rip the hammer-man limb-from-limb. Only a matter of time.

There's only one way out for the Judge and his unlikely Jehammedan companion. While it's currently inoperable, the large generator on the nearby cliff can be powered up during a dust storm, energised by the swirling magnetic currents flowing through the statically charged air. In that moment, they will be able to send out a distress call, leading to the Northern Cavalry Squad being scrambled to their location, along with any neighboring watchtowers that can spare the help. Problem: the Judge will never manage to make it up the cliff with his infected leg, and the Jehammedan will be spotted and picked off should he attempt to climb up and fix the generator alone. They need help.

NIGHT HUNTERS

The two survivors in the watchtower are facing down no mere Cockroach cohort hungry for fresh meat, their opponents have direction and a purpose. They are a vanguard for a larger warband of Sphingids preparing to strike a lethal blow at the Protectorate's inner cities, and at its head is a warrior renowned for his brutal cunning. He is motivated by an ancestral prophecy, but the shamans have placed an ultimatum on him – succeed here, or die. He will not allow his troops to retreat.





LAST
WATCH



BEFORE THE FALL

Everything Murdoch once believed in is crumbling away. He had it all; a brilliant military career lay in his past, he excelled at all the drills and training back in Justitian, and he keenly studied the Codex. When he was ordered to Siege, his future looked so bright. He'd collect bandoliers and medals, run through a few easy patrols and swing his hammer at some savages, and return home as an honorable Protector. He'd be able to provide for Aubrey, settle down, make some kids. That was the dream.

Now, all that's left of that dream is cracked and rotten. He had believed his service was almost over, but now it's all about to end prematurely. The sight of his Vagrant being cut down before his eyes has left a bloody scar on his soul and made him aware of his own mortality. Every hour he replays the moment in his head. He's volatile, and he doesn't want to die.

SPRING

Spring has been a close companion to Murdoch for years, ever since the mare was assigned to him during his promotion from City Judge to Protector. He has cared for his steed ever since, and she has carried him through more tough situations than he can remember. There's not much left to keep Murdoch's mind tethered to sanity, but Spring's steady presence remains a solid anchor. For now.

MURDOCH

Sweat lingers on his neck, seeping down his spine, sending tremors into his hands. The poison is throbbing through his veins, taking an inch of his sanity with every hour that passes, only worsened by the pain in his calf where the damn wound has blistered into a necrotic hellscape as it continues to crawl toward his knee.

Murdoch shakes his head in disbelief. "It can't end like this!" But the tingling sensation of his fingers doesn't cease, and the numb feeling rising up his arms when he aims his musket into the wide open... damn, too slow. He can't think straight. All he has up here in the watchtower are shreds of his past, ready to be conjured as lame entertainment for his darkening mind.

It feels like only yesterday that he placed a wreath of cornflowers on Aubrey's head and kissed her, in hopes of growing old with her. Now, after a year in the soot, he can barely recall her face. He can't remember her smile. He can't conjure her smell. She's a faint memory, and even her laughter is nothing but a hollow reflection of his own bitter sneer. "Back before you even have time to find someone else," he had said to her. He chuckles, although it's followed by a desperate groan.

Murdoch is delirious. These damn roaches will be back, he knows it. They're just waiting for a chance to take this godforsaken hill while he's distracted. He can see them at dusk through the sights of the machine gun, just out of range as they creep through the tall grass. Not that he could do anything, even if they were in spitting distance – the damn gun's magazine ran dry during his panicked escape from their ambush. All he can do is watch. They're savages, murderers. They killed Angus without mercy, now they're coming to take his blood. But Murdoch is ready. He'll drive his dull bread knife through the skull of the first roach to mount the tower. If need be, he'll even ignite the black powder kegs stored below to blow everything to dust. Anything to avoid being eaten alive, anything to get revenge on these bastards.

ROLE PLAY

Murdoch is grim, over the edge – with his eyes peeled and nerves raw he scans even the faintest swaying of grass blowing in the wind. He fears that he'll die in this goddamn outpost, and he trusts nobody, not even Hakkal. A realist at heart, he's counting his chances, and when he looks at the opposition he's facing, there is little that makes him believe that he can make it out alive. And if he can't, he'll at least drag as many roaches to hell with him as he can.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Righteous, Judge, Rank 3; Protector

ATTRIBUTES: BOD:3 AGI:3 CHA:3 INT:2 PSY:3 INS:4

SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Brawl 4D, Force 7D, Melee 8D, Stamina 5D, Toughness 6D, Navigation 5D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 6D, Arts 4D, Conduct 6D, Expression 5D, Leadership 5D, Negotiation 5D, Seduction 4D, Legends 5D, Cunning 4D, Domination 6D, Faith 7D, Reaction 7D, Empathy 6D, Perception 7D, Primal 7D, Survival 5D, Taming 5D

BACKGROUNDS: Allies 1, Authority 2, Renown 1, Resources 2

SPECIAL: Dead Inside: The poison seeping through Murdoch's veins is potent and lethal, draining (1) Trauma every other day if untreated. A Spitalian field hospital would be able to purge his body of the toxins, but he has to make it to one first.

POTENTIALS: Hammer Blow 2, Beastmaster 1 (Bond: Spring)

INITIATIVE: 7D / 14 Ego Points (Primal)

ATTACK: Judgement Hammer, Melee 6D, Distance 1m, Damage 8, Blunt, Impact (3T); Judges' Musket, Projectiles 6D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 8, Mag 1, Muzzle Loader

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 6D;

Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Faith 7D

MOVEMENT: 5m

ARMOR: Heavy leather coat, and metal vest, Armor 3

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 4/12, Trauma 5/6

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: A folded handkerchief containing the wreath of cornflowers he once placed on Aubrey's head when they first wed; Judicial insignia; Dispatch orders from Siege

HAKKAL

Hakkal knew that something had happened when Senna didn't return with the herd on time. He shouldered a heavy backpack, grabbed his hunting bow and went to look for his niece. After hours of walking, he finally came across her herd. The goats stood in the plain, grazing peacefully, surrounded by the wild growth of the blooming tundra. But there was no trace of the girl.

He aimed further south like an arrow shot by the Last Prophet, determined to find Senna. Did robbers take her? Was she wounded? Hakkal cursed his own worries and cast them back into the recesses of his mind. On the third day out in the wastelands, he wasn't sure any more. He came across Senna's scarf, torn to shreds, fluttering from a dead tree. There were fresh traces of a battle nearby and Hakkal sensed an ambush – then the Cockroaches came rushing out of a tar pit. Hakkal aimed. Took down two. A third was laid out by a quick slice of Hakkal's dagger.

He searched the area and found a trail leading further southeast, into uncharted territory. This was the path Jehammed had chosen for him. Suddenly, the sound of rapid gunfire gave him the orientation he needed, eventually finding himself in an open grassland between a lonesome watchtower and ruins covered in thick foliage. He noticed the yelling from the tower, saw the flashing of the mirror only an instant before spotting a dozen hostiles crouching in the grass. He ran – escaping to the fortified outpost within an inch of his life. Inside, he found a deserted Judge in the tower, alone, trapped, and weakened, with pus leaking from his leg. Hakkal finally understood the wisdom of the Last Prophet. This was his redemption, his chance to make amends for the sins of the past. Praise be unto Jehammed.

ROLE PLAY

When all hell breaks loose, Hakkal remains peaceful. His spirit is unshakable and his faith is firm, focused on the target at hand. He believes in the beauty of creation and only picks up a weapon to defend himself or his loved ones. He harbors no hate and sees goodwill even in his worst enemy, yet his stoicism is being tested in ways unknown to him. The Cockroaches are a foe he doesn't comprehend, and the fact that he cannot reason with them leaves him questioning his own convictions.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Mediator, Jehammedan, Rank 2: Sword of Jehammed

ATTRIBUTES: BOD:2 AGI:4 CHA:3 INT:4 PSY:3 INS:2

SKILLS: Athletics 5D, Force 5D, Melee 4D, Stamina 3D, Toughness 5D, Crafting 5D, Dexterity 6D, Mobility 5D, Projectiles 7D, Conduct 7D, Expression 5D, Negotiation 5D, Focus 6D, Legends 5D, Medicine 6D, Science 7D, Faith 6D, Reaction 5D, Empathy 5D, Perception 6D, Survival 5D

BACKGROUNDS: Allies 2, Network 1, Renown 1, Resources 1, Secrets 2

SPECIAL: Family Ties: Senna's disappearance has struck the Sword deep, and his thoughts are constantly in motion. Was she killed? Kidnapped? Worse? He cannot bring himself to stop worrying about her, and cannot replenish Ego Points through his Concept in any week where he isn't trying to find her.

POTENTIALS: Ire of Jehammed 1, Quick Eye 2

INITIATIVE: 5D / 12 Ego Points (Focus)

ATTACK: Hunting Bow, Projectiles 7D, Distance 10/40m, Damage 8, Mag 1
Survival Knife, Melee 5D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, Smooth Running (3T);

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Dodge), Mobility 5D;
Ranged Combat active, Mobility 5D; Mental, Faith 6D

MOVEMENT: 5m

ARMOR: Traveling clothes, Armor 1

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/12, Flesh Wounds 10, Trauma 5

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Pouch of herbs and basic medical supplies (+1D to INT+Medicine, only enough for 3 uses); Senna's red scarf; Backpack with survival gear (+2D to INS+Survival)



BROKEN HOME

Hakkal was one of the first children born during the settlement of the Jehammed-an Quarter some 30 years ago, growing up in the safety of the city and into an upbringing far different than usual. He once counted Anabaptists, Apocalyptic, and even Judges among his friends, taking a far more moderate view of the world. After the Colossus fell, though, that all changed for the worse. Hakkal saw his people ostracised, and shunned by society. He worked hard to win back trust, and often found nothing but walls of silence erected all around him. He considers the situation at hand a challenge laid out by Jehammed himself, a test of belief and confidence, to allow for wounds of the past to be healed by actions of the present...

URGENT CARE

Murdoch is in bad shape, and while Hakkal has picked up the basics of first aid from his Abrami he lacks the knowledge needed to cure an advanced necrotic poison such as the one ravaging through the Judge's blood stream. All he can do for now is keep the wound clean, and provide what little medicine he can grind together from the herbs he carries in his pouch.

FIRST BLOOD

The silence of the plain is unsettling. Chest high grass sways in the wind, but there is no sound to accompany it. Not even a damn cricket far and wide. Instead the landscape seeps into an area of roving hills. One of them beckons with a lonely structure, surging into the sky like a needle at the top. A metallic glint shines in the sunlight of an early spring afternoon. That must be it. Watchtower 17N.

A dry creek suddenly dissects the grassland like a trench. Blocks of concrete, covered in lichen and of unrecognizable origin lay askew. Over there a bridge of fallen rocks leads across the deserted waterway. Why in the world is it so quiet? From this distance, one can make out more detail on the structure ahead to the northeast, a tall, well maintained building emblazoned with a Judge's Hammer. Not a single sign of life in any direction. Something doesn't feel right.

It takes a moment for the characters to notice the flashing. Someone in the watchtower is rapidly blinking a mirrored panel in their direction like an alarm. Anyone capable of understanding a Judges' signal code will instantly recognize the situation, but even those who have no understanding at all can quickly get the gist – there's danger in the air!

Hurrying up the steep hill towards the watchtower, the characters can capture more details of the structure indicating its long life, the blast scars coating its paneling suggesting a violent history. They pass through a series of tall, metallic pylons coated with electrical circuitry and emitters, reminiscent of Chronicer structures from Justitian. The reinforced gate of the walled compound is open, allowing them to enter a small courtyard. A horse idly chews on a haggard pile of hay in a stable, and a pair of low storehouses flank the thick base of the watchtower. "17N" is scrawled on the backside in letters as tall as a man, leaving no doubts as to the identity of this site. A head ringed with dark hair emerges from the observation deck, calling down to the characters: "Up here! There's a ladder inside!" Onwards and upwards.

TAKING STOCK

The hollow inside of the tower is pitch black. Thick armor plates block out all light. Every footstep on the sturdy steel ladder up to the observation deck clanks like a hammer-blow through the open space. As the characters reach the top, a hatch opens allowing them to pass up into the watchtower's cap. A quick look around reveals the occupants who had flashed them the urgent warnings.

"Dunno what brought you all to this godforsaken place, but you're about to die just like us," croaks the Judge slumped against the wall, holding an extensively bandaged leg out straight. "Have you at least got bread? Supplies? Bullets that'll fit in that damn gun?"

If the characters are carrying a dispatch form from Siege, or have a letter for the occupant of the tower, they'll be able to quickly identify the Judge as Murdoch, the Protector posted here, which he'll confirm with a tired nod. If not, the other figure steps forward, hand resting on the knife through his belt. No weapons drawn, yet.

"His name is Murdoch, and he's sick, poisoned. He needs proper treatment, but if we make a break for it we'll be run down in no time." This one is another sight for sore eyes, although at least he can stand. The tattoos on his face identify him as a Jehammedan, a fact he confirms when he introduces himself as Hakkal, a Sword. "My niece went missing, and I found my way here while looking for her. Now we have a problem."

Hakkal directs the characters' attention south, through the opened slats of the tower. "Out there are several dozen Cockroaches and, judging by what Murdoch tells me, they're keen to take this tower. He's already had a run-in with them, hence..." he nods towards the Judge's bandaged leg, before Murdoch lets out a cough and butts in.

"They killed my Vagrant! Those bastards killed Angus!" A choked groan escapes his throat, "And they're gonna kill us too, before long. They ripped his head off..."

STRUCTURE

LAST WATCH presents a series of key scenes which can be played out as they are, but intentionally leaves much of the connective tissue less well defined, instead showcasing the environment and giving suggestions for how various aspects of the scenery may be used by the characters to survive their predicament. Game Masters should encourage their Players to use these tools in inventive ways, and allow them to explore Watchtower 17N and its surroundings – without getting complacent, as the Cockroaches are always watching.

OCCUPANTS

The two occupants of Watchtower 17N couldn't be more dissimilar. Judge and Jehammedan, one rugged, erratic, and callous, the other calm, thoughtful, and warm. They are two sides of the same coin. As a Game Master, these NPCs should be used to sway the actions of Players in one direction or another. There is only one thing that Murdoch and Hakkal would ever agree upon: they both want to make it out alive. However, both men are forged by different experiences, and possess different worldviews. Their ideals do not overlap, nor do their methods.



The Watchtower

Over a century ago, before Supreme Judge Archot was even a glint in his mother's eye, the first steel sheets of Watchtower 17N's heavily reinforced frame were just being laid down. The site lies on the border of Exalt's old territory, and was constructed by Cultrin's armies as they began to spread out from their stronghold and initiate their conquest of Borca, forming part of their first line of defense against any opponents that would stand in their way. In a curious turn of fate, after the catastrophic fall of Exalt, this minor outpost changed hands, conquered and repurposed by the Judges during their expansionist rush to control the entire Black Lung, and now serves precisely the same purpose it once did for precisely the opposite faction.

Watchtower 17N forms one of the many nodes of the Judiciary's border, each with a team of guards to maintain oversight

on a particular stretch of land, or over single area deemed strategically significant by the battle planners nestled within Siege's Garrison, to ensure that the enemies of the Protectorate are unable to sneak through and wreak havoc behind their backs. This tower, which had gone unoccupied for decades, was recently reactivated to oversee a large patch of open grassland which was identified as a potential weak spot.

While a normal post in such a location would be given at least a handful of Judges and Vagrants, the planners declared this section as more easily defensible due to the machine gun mounted on its observation deck, along with a set of Chronidler-designed Defense Pylons installed when the tower was first overtaken. Based on projections from the similar guns in use on the walls of Siege, a single man should be able to hold against hundreds of opponents. As such, Murdoch

was sent out with only a single Vagrant in tow. If only those blasted pencil pushers had remembered to give him enough bullets for hundreds of opponents. Now, with the ammunition box depleted, it would be more useful as a club to bash a few heads in – if he could even remove the damn pintle mount, which has been welded down. All it's good for now is intimidating the Cockroaches, until they realise it's lifeless.

Murdoch has no understanding of the true history of his post-turned-coffin, but a savvy character can make the connection to the old Exalter designs with an INT+ Engineering (3) roll, giving them some insight into what this tower was once used for. This also brings up the question of the deserted ruin located a few hundred meters to the south – perhaps there are some more clues hidden inside. "Been there countless times," Murdoch claims, "empty shell."

WHERE ARE THE CORPSES?

Murdoch says that he managed to gun down more than a dozen Cockroaches during his retreat to the tower. Part of that number is probably his deteriorating mental state playing tricks, but there should still be some evidence of such an encounter – where did the bodies go? If the characters ask, Murdoch explains that the Cockroaches recovered them during the night, dragging them back through the underbrush. Why? “To eat them, of course, damn savages...”

LAY OF THE LAND

From the watchtower’s vantage point, the characters finally get a good overview of the layout of the grassy plain before them. It’s all a deserted rust brown and yellowish mush, featureless and barren. Murdoch provides some commentary as they look around, dry and cynical, from his months of patrol out here.

Of the dry riverbed winding through the plain, “I think those damn cannibals are using it to move about where we can’t see them. I’ve never been able to get a good look inside from up here, it’s just too deep.”

Asked about the generator, or if there were ever any Scrappers here, “They used to camp around years ago on the other side of the cliff, my dispatcher told me. They don’t come through here anymore though.”

Finally, if the ruin across the riverbed is pointed out, “I’ve walked through every inch of that damn wreck. Unless you’re real eager to waltz into roach territory to look at some melted concrete, don’t bother.”

“There’s a radio in the shed below us, but the generator is broken and its mast is needed to boost the signal range. I’d go out myself, but the roaches would see and charge. If the weather doesn’t betray us, there’s a dust storm incoming,” Hakkal says before being interrupted by a rasping Murdoch.

“We gotta call reinforcements! We gotta hold out until then!”

Hakkal nods “We can’t use the horse to escape on our own, either, we think there are traps on the road, and they’d probably run us down before we made it far anyway.”

SCENE 1: THIS IS BAIT

The conversation on how the trapped inhabitants plan to escape is cut short as Hakkal’s eyes snap to the grasslands. “Something’s coming our way.”

“What the hell are you talking about?” Murdoch fires back. By now, the characters can take a look themselves. Out in the tall grasses, they can spot a dark shape hurriedly approaching from the dry creek, but an INS+Perception (2) roll is necessary to resolve the detail at this distance.

“Get up, use the sight.”

Hakkal helps the injured Judge stagger to his feet and limp over to the machine gun, taking aim to use the aperture. His eyesight swims in and out of focus, but he can get a good enough view for a few moments. “It’s a woman, looks like a roach. What in the world is she doing running over here?”

“Maybe she’s attempting to desert? Swap sides?” the Jehammedan muses, squinting to get a better view.

“I think she’s carrying something...” Any characters with more than (2) Triggers on their INS+Perception roll will be able to discern the nature of the bundle held in the Cockroach woman’s arms.

Hakkal’s eyes go wide as he works it out himself, “It’s a toddler! She’s carrying a child!”

“What the hell...” the Judge curses as she draws nearer, now only a few dozen meters from the perimeter of the Defense Pylons. “This is bait! I’m going to shoot the cunt.” He turns, hands shaking, and grabs his musket.

Before the livid Judge can finish fumbling with his ramrod, however, Hakkal intervenes. “Wait, hold on, she’s doing something with the child.”

THE FIRST SACRIFICE

The Cockroaches have devised an insidious plan. One of their own will drop her newborn, starving child within earshot of the watchtower to unsettle the occupants and force them to act. The Swarmer woman doesn’t care if she dies so long as she fulfills her task, the call of the Totem overriding every single normal instinct.

Hakkal will stop at nothing to prevent the characters or Murdoch from shooting the woman. If they act against his warning, and the infant drops into the grass, he will charge out of the safety of the compound himself in an attempt to rescue the child. The characters must make their decision quickly.

- ◇ If the female doesn’t get shot, she’ll drop off the toddler and retreat back to her group. The child quickly begins to let out an anguished and agonizing wail, forcing the inhabitants to make a Mental Defense (3) every five minutes, with failure causing the loss of (1) Ego Point. After 10 minutes of listening, Murdoch will snap into motion, aiming and firing his musket into the grass with wild abandon, hoping to “just shut the bloody thing up!”
- ◇ If the characters exit the tower to confront her, she’ll toss the infant aside and engage in frenzied melee, fighting to her death.
- ◇ If the characters don’t do it themselves, Hakkal will do what he can to bring the child to safety. The infant is barely a few months old, and in bad shape. Now the group has got itself a newborn Cockroach to take care of, on top of everything else.

- ◇ Should the characters remain in the tower and hinder Hakkal from saving the infant, the child will lay in the grass for hours on end, screaming at the top of its lungs, weeping to be picked up until someone's conscience cracks from the endless cacophony.
- ◇ In any case, if anyone sets foot outside the gates, the Cockroaches are ready, having used the chaos to sneak into range. They charge ahead, trying to snare their prey with an immediate attack.

THE ATTACK

Three Swarmers are prowling through the grass. As the would-be rescuers rush out of the tower and down the hill, Murdoch spots the ambush and begins firing to support the characters, who in turn must succeed in a Conflict of INS+Perception against the Swarmers' AGI+Stealth (8D) to catch the directions from which they are coming. Characters who fail the Conflict lose their Initiative on the first Combat Round.

The Cockroaches throw themselves headlong into the conflict, fighting with no regard for their own survival or that of the child. The Swarmers lash out at their opponents with crude weaponry, bone axes and knife slashes flying at terrifying pace. They choose their target based solely on who is closest to them once they break from cover, without any tactical acumen. However, despite their lack of planning or coordination, they are dangerous – and absolutely fearless. They are fully prepared, and expecting, to meet their ends in this fight, and will not break or retreat under any circumstances; any attempts to cause them to fall back automatically fail.

Amidst the flurry of combat, the characters will notice that each of the fighters has a thick, wound rope tied around their chest, leading back into the grass. No time for puzzling out the purpose of them, though, duck! The Cockroaches actively fight to push their prey backwards, closer to the walls, even allowing openings for attacks in exchange for moving forwards. All this is a test to see if the machine gun will begin to fire. They also seem apprehensive of the Defense Pylons at first, hesitating to step through the perimeter traced by them for a moment, before realising that the mechanism is inactive. They got what they came for.

REASSEMBLE

The Cockroaches are defeated, but there's still a damn child wailing on the ground. Hakkal rushes ahead to pick it off the dirt, and leads a swift retreat back into the compound.

Up in the tower, the screaming infant is even more intolerable than before. Murdoch spits on the floor. "Would you just drown the thing already? I can't take this shit anymore!" he yells, stumbling and limping towards Hakkal to deal with the "problem" himself.

The Jehammedan staunchly refuses. "You're losing your mind. It has been delivered to us by the will of the Last Prophet. I will foster it until we make it out of here safely." Hakkal removes his coat, slicing a strip from it with his dagger before knotting it across his chest to create a sling for the infant. Resting against his body, Hakkal's new charge slowly quiets and, after the Sword finds a small pouch of goat's milk to feed it with, it eventually drifts off to sleep.

Murdoch can't do much but scoff at this meaningless display of kindness. "I didn't know Jehammed allowed you to raise demons." He looks around, gauging responses. "Alright, there's a generator up on that cliff that we need to get back operational, and we'd best get it done before nightfall, before these beasts return. It's the only way to ping for support troops to get us the hell outta here. I can't get up there with my leg, and our friendly Jehammedan prefers to care for kids instead of machines."

Before he can finish his rant, however, Hakkal waves the characters over to the lookout. Spying down the hill, they see the corpses being tugged away through the grass by the ropes bound around their chests. "They're bringing them home," Hakkal says sullenly.

THE SUPPLY SHED

The supply shed of the Watchtower only features bare necessities. A bunk for two guards, workbenches and supply crates. A bleached poster of Archot from the year 2581 adorns the wall, along with faded most wanted posters of Apok of Ferropol, and Blacksmith, the Bear Brother. This place clearly has a history.

The characters can search the compartments for useful things in case they want to equip themselves, put together a trap, or otherwise need a place to devise a plan. As they rummage through the stock, they'll come across at least the following items:

- ◇ A heavy duty toolkit provides the means to repair the connection between the tower and the generator, although someone will have to go up onto the cliffs first.
- ◇ The munitions store contains a dozen shotgun shells and eight sealed kegs of black powder, brandishing the logo of Justitian's Powder Mill. Enough to detonate a hill...
- ◇ A series of pipes which require a saw and some skill to be made into crude, one-use shotguns with an AGI+Crafting (4) roll.
- ◇ Some old scrap plating is stacked up against one wall. If necessary, one could create barricades or cumbersome shields from the available material.
- ◇ One of the workbenches collects a tiny assortment of simple hand tools for basic maintenance: saws, hand crank drills, etc.
- ◇ The main desk features the watchtower's old radio. The rusty thing is still functional but without power until the generator is restarted.

SCENE 2: THE GENERATOR

Looking out from the observation deck, the collection mast of the generator is just barely visible over the crest of the cliffs to the west. “The climb is doable, at least, if you’ve got both legs working,” Murdoch comments, pointing out a path up the sheer basalt face of the formation. “From the top, you’ll be able to get access to the generator. I don’t know what’s wrong with the damn thing, but it should be hooked up to power this entire compound. That means the toads’ electrical fence down there, too.” He nods towards the Defense Pylons circling the watchtower.

It’s clear that the only way the generator will be fixed is with someone going up to repair it, but Hakkal is worried: “They will be watching us, if they see you climbing up there they will scramble to stop the attempt. I doubt they know what the machine does, but we’re vulnerable out there and they will strike.” The Jhammedan ponders for a moment, before solemnly proclaiming “I’ll take the horse and break out in a circle across the grasslands. The Cockroaches will focus on me, leaving you free to work.” Should there be an experienced rider among the characters, Hakkal will give up his role as bait, instead staying in the tower to help load Murdoch’s rifle to provide support.

Murdoch isn’t pleased with the prospect of his horse being taken to the slaughter, “You make sure Spring comes home safe, or I’ll shoot you dead. Lost too much to these cannibals already.”

What about the Scrapper camp behind the cliff? Murdoch pipes up, “Fuck me if there’s anything left of value, dirt diggers usually pick it all clean – including their own camps. You might find an easier path up, though.”

It’s late in the afternoon as the characters prepare to set out; Hakkal licks a finger, holding it out of the slot. *INS+Survival (2)* is needed to measure the approximate time until the dust storm will roll in. The Jhammedan was right when he predicted a storm earlier, there should be a powerful one rolling through in the early morning, 8 hours, give or take, meaning they just have to survive the night.

THE SCRAPPER CAMP

At first glance, the Scrapper “outpost” hardly seems to live up to the name. A faint path leads towards a handful of ragged structures, little more than shacks made from rusted metal playing stacked together. Runes cover the nearby cliff face, with several distinct styles of inscription obvious, along with the clear age of the markings. Conclusion: this camp has seen significant use over the years.

Rummaging through the shacks, an observant character will be able to spot something out of place – an *INS+Perception (2)* roll reveals that each shack features a metal plating on the floor, cut with an opening for a hatch. Pulling a section up opens a tunnel down into the earth, where a large burrow has been excavated. Inside, several bunks are stacked against the dirt wall, along with a small stash of around 5kg of Tech IV scrap. Forgotten leftovers for sure.

The runes on the wall give up many secrets to those who know how to read them, beyond the usual coarse language of Scrapers bitching and whining about bad weather and poor hauls. More importantly for now, the characters can see a different face of the rocky cliffs, along with the metallic frame of the generator poking out near the top. Going up this path will give them a headstart before any Cockroaches take notice of their presence, an extra ten minutes to stay out of sight – not much, but it could be critical. As they begin to start their climb, though, a blurry shape sails across the sky for an instant, before disappearing behind the cliff. A huge bird. Now it’s gone.

UP THE CLIFF

Amidst the chaos of the Eshaton, the Earth’s crust split apart all across its face, ejecting gouts of superheated lava to blanket the land. Over time the material cooled down and the tectonic disturbances abated, but this countryside was forever changed. The molten rock eventually solidified to create a ragged cliff reaching many kilometers inland, a natural barrier of hardened basalt that dissects the plain. Its chiseled and uneven surface is difficult to climb, and moving a large invasion force over it would be impossible. This made it a simple choice for the Judiciary to adopt it as a core part of the Protectorate’s border, with watchtowers at either end and listening posts nestled atop its surface.



SCRAPPER RUNES

If there are any Scrapers among the characters they’ll be able to decipher the runes scrawled on the walls of the cliff with ease, requiring nothing more than a successful *INT+Legends (1)* roll. Anyone unfamiliar with the obtuse and obscure language of the dirt diggers will just read them as gibberish, and will need to spend hours trying to crack the code – a Complex *INT+Legends* roll, with an interval of 10 minutes and a requirement of (40) Successes.

- ◇ “Crew dismantled last Bygone pylon. Found three magnet coils and a transformer. Area grazed. 2511 – Grifhound”
- ◇ “Fuck you Grifhound! Found a circuit board and a generator core. Area grazed, my ass! 2513 – Preskov”
- ◇ “Lotsa’ corpses. Roaches. Outta here! 2524 – Tiny”
- ◇ “Exaltian ruin, southeast. Granite glazed. Possibly energy weapon. Area grazed. 2548 – Ajax”
- ◇ “Found crystallized battery acid in the soil near the ruin. Compass needle erratic. No ammo left. Returning later. 2572 – Mangler”

Seizing the cliff's face is no easy feat, with some of the rocks rising tens of meters into the air. If a character dedicates their movement entirely to climbing, they can move up and down the cliff vertically at their normal movement rate, however any additional Actions taken during this time are at a -2D penalty. Reaching the first plateau at 40 meters, they can make out the generator nestled against a frazzled rock, surrounded by rough, uneven terrain. The wind is picking up speed, but the view from up here allows them to gain an overview of the entire plain – including the dark shapes moving over the hill line far to the south. That must be the camp of the Cockroaches. Best not to dwell on things, there's work to be done.

THE CHRONICLER DEFENSE SYSTEM

When the Judges claimed Watchtower 17N for themselves, they requested that the Chroniclers reinforce the compound with a defense perimeter which could be placed under high voltage to fry any enemy approaching within fifty meters of the tower. To supply the system a robust generator was mounted atop the nearby cliff which would soak up energy from passing dust storms, providing electricity for the compound and powering its radio connection, with its collection mast doubling as a signal booster.

Over the years of exposure to the harsh wind and environment of Borca, the generator has steadily deteriorated – a fact worsened by the lack of any preventative maintenance performed by the Judges. Its internal circuitry is completely coated in dust, and several cables have been frayed to the breaking point. If the machine was hooked up to a load, it would catch fire before powering anything. A Complex INT+Engineering (15) or AGI+Crafting (20) roll is required to clean out its insides and replace the broken cables, with an interval of 10 minutes per roll. As they get to work, they will be able to see Hakkal or another character riding out from the compound. If their companion gets into trouble, one of the characters can begin sending potshots downhill at the Cockroaches swarming from the grass. Unless there's a sniper on the team, the range makes accurate fire all but impossible, but the psychological effect of bullets flying past the roaches will at least cause some hesitation.

Once the repairs are complete, and the panels put back together, it's time to get back down the cliff. However, an INS+Perception (2) roll will allow a character to spot a line running from the outer shell of the casing to a nearby rock pile. Excavating it reveals a small box with a hand crank, and some printed writing reading "Emergency Surface Charger." In order to dissuade overenthusiastic Scrappers or Clanners, the Chroniclers installed a static electricity charger to deliver a brutal shock to anyone who touches it. In this case, it would ensure no Cockroaches can destroy the generator overnight. It takes 5 minutes to crank the handle enough to build up a proper charge, and anyone who puts their hand near the casing of the machine at that point will feel the power running through the plates. Look, don't touch.

SPOTTED

The repair must happen quickly and requires stealth and care to not be spotted. Should the characters ignore the threat and draw attention, by rolling a Botch while cleaning the generator or taking more than 40 minutes to fix it, the Cockroaches will respond and dispatch a cohort to cut them off from returning to the watchtower. Swarmers and Feeders will rush the cliff in an attempt to separate the descending characters and pick them off one by one. During the climb down the characters can make use of their height advantage, yet they're exposed on the cliff themselves.

When attacking down the steep sides of the cliff, the characters add +1D to their Attack rolls, but must be careful not to overextend – a Botched roll, or a counterattack from a Cockroach, will force them to take an Action to steady themselves or tumble to the ground below. The basalt formations of the cliff can be used as cover, or even kicked loose with a BOD+Force (5) roll to crash down on the roaches.

Meanwhile, the Cockroaches send Swarmers scrambling up the back face of the cliff, intending to pincer the characters. They'll arrive after (5) Rounds have elapsed, launching sling-fired rocks and boulders down on the group's heads. Other roaches will grab and claw at the legs of those above them, trying to destabilise and make them fall should they fail a Conflict of AGI+Mobility against their attacker's BOD+Brawl.

DIVERSION

If Hakkal or another character decides to take Spring out to divert the enemy, the Cockroaches will abandon the characters on the cliff, instead attempting to encircle the rider and prevent him from returning to safety. Several Swarmers are cowering in the grasslands on this side of the riverbed, waiting for a chance to strike, and rise up as the horse approaches, attacking in two ways. One group of Swarmers rushes towards the horse, shrieking and roaring in an attempt to shy it and force it away from the tower, regardless of the rider's intent.

Hakkal is able to keep her mostly under control, but a character needs a Combination of AGI+Navigation (2) and INS+Taming (2) to do the same. Meanwhile, the other Swarmers bring slingshots and crude spears to toss at the rider, trying to topple them from their perch more than do any damage. If impacted, an AGI+Mobility (2) roll is required to remain stable.

If Hakkal is the rider, midway through the excursion he is drawn into an unexpected trap, encircled by the roaches. Unless the characters can provide long-range fire support, it's likely that he'll have to abandon Spring in order to save himself and the infant strapped to his chest. The Cockroaches won't pursue far, the horse is enough of a victory.



SCENE 3: HYBRID WARFARE

Back at the compound the iron gate snaps shut behind them. The pursuing roaches fall back before they reach the Defense Pylons. Murdoch made it down to the yard, stumbling on crude iron crutches.

If Hakkal or another character has returned without Spring, the Judge's mood turns grim. "You're not telling me you left the mare behind?" His face freezes over and he points the musket point blank at the Cockroach newborn, nestled against Hakkal's chest. Someone has to calm him down, or he's going to end up doing something stupid. "You left my horse to die, but you saved a cannibal child?" Eyes bloodshot, mouth foaming, hands trembling.

If the characters manage to distract him, or at least reassure him that it was a noble sacrifice, his questions come like a staccato. "Did you fix it? Is the generator operational?" The Judge is tense and aggravated, "SOMEONE SHUT THIS DAMN THING UP!" It's the characters' turn to give their best to bring the heat down.

Despite surviving the ambush and succeeding in their objective, Hakkal is far from content. "This isn't right. The Cockroaches stopped their pursuit too soon. The day is not yet done." He turns to look at the sun setting to the west, silhouetting the cliff.

"They're scared of the Pylons you filthy Jehammedan,

what else? They surely didn't fall back because of you!" Hakkal refuses to engage, rocking the screaming child to quiet him.

The bickering is suddenly interrupted by a bird shrieking in the sky. A massive gyrfalcon soars high above the compound and drops off an object just feet away from where everyone stands. The bundle goes down in the dust with a thunk while the bird circles the tower one time and flies off to the south.

Attention quickly turns to what it dropped. Murdoch is stunned, slowly collapsing to his knees. "Angus," he whispers. Before him lies the disfigured and shrunken head of his former Vagrant, brutalized beyond recognition. Murdoch is overcome with dire anguish, sobbing loudly, tears running down dirty cheeks. "They're going to do the same to us," he stammers. Hakkal quietly approaches the head to pick it up.

Something is wrong. Far from just delivering his companion's severed head, in a display of inhuman cunning and brutality, the Cockroaches have planted a phosphorus bomb inside the withered mouth of Angus' severed head. As the wetted pouch containing the substance dries out, the chemical payload begins to react with the oxygen in the air, setting in motion a deadly chain reaction. In order to



both see the danger and react in time, a Combination of PSY+Reaction (2) and INS+Perception (2) is needed, success allowing one to see the first slivers of smoke drifting from under the eyelids, and the dull white glow emitted from the mouth. An INT+Science or INT+Legends (2) roll is enough to know – it’s about to explode!

They have to act, now! Ripping the head from the Jehammedan’s hands and tossing it over the walls of the compound requires BOD+Force (2), but the true struggle comes from the wail of despair emitted from Judge as his Vagrant is once again callously taken from him. The bundle sails over the wall, detonating in mid-air in a blinding white flash and raining down in molten sparks. The shockwave knocks Murdoch onto his back, where he remains, terrified, eyes wide, staring into the darkening sky.

PREPARATION

Hakkal returns to the courtyard, and the characters, after helping the despondent Judge find a comfortable resting place. “Murdoch is out of action for now, we need to handle this ourselves. Waiting for another attack is the way to a slow death, the fisherman’s way. We must seize the moment, as Jehammed teaches.” He points into the direction the falcon disappeared to. “If they are capable of something

like this, they must be coordinated, and have a leader. That bird will bring us to him.”

The Sword unstraps the sleeping child from his chest, placing it next to an apathetic Murdoch before securing his belt and bow. “Bring everything you think will help from the storage. I spotted movement in the ruins to the south while you repaired the generator, I wager that is our target.” He looks up, watching the edge of the sun meet the top of the walls. “I will make a firebomb. I suspect it will be useful.”

The characters must prepare to venture out across the grasslands to the other side of the riverbed. What awaits them is unknown, beyond a horde of brutal and vicious Cockroaches. Any equipment not absolutely necessary should be left behind to ensure they can move quickly and quietly, and they should comb the supply shed and the compound for useful items.

By tearing apart the fabric of the bunks and sheets intended for the occupants, an AGI+Crafting (2) roll will allow for the creation of dark cloaks, which will give a +1D to AGI+Stealth in the dark as the sun sets. Hakkal pours half a keg of black powder into a crude leather pouch, along with a simple fabric fuse. Basic, but lethal if properly placed. It will have to do.

The Vanguard



THE SPHINGID
TOTEM

MATERIAL ADVANTAGE

Combat profiles for the 40 Cockroaches under Golo Guzan's command can be found in *JUSTITIAN: THE RIGHTEOUS FIST*, Chapter 4: Dark Omens. The Feeders and Swarms are considered expendable to the warband's leader, but when the time is right for a lethal blow he will personally lead his Warrior siblings into battle.

INFERENCE

The Cockroaches are not yet aware that the Chronicer Defense Perimeter is connected to the disabled generator atop the nearby cliff, as the power cables bridging them are buried underground. Should they see any of the watchtower's inhabitants darting towards it and attempting repairs, they will begin to draw conclusions between the strange machinery and the electric fence system.

Chalk Breach will fall. This much is clear. It won't be long until the Sphingids take over that wretched outpost and slay the remaining inhabitants. The siege is ongoing and the people trapped on the inside are mere fodder for the blood gods.

But there is more for the taking. This particular flank of the hammer wielders' realm is a weak spot, and the Cockroaches know it. All they need is a means to circumvent or break through the dotted line of watchtowers that protect this swath of territory and they'll be able to seep into the breadbasket of the Judiciary, where they can cause real damage.

Golo Guzan has identified the exact spot that needs to be pierced, this one particular watchtower which remains strategically important, yet is nothing more than a weaponized obstacle waiting to be claimed. The Sphingids under his command have little interest in the bodily trophy of the hammer wielder and his horse. Instead, they are dead set on this hill, and what an opportunity it will provide for their pulsating masses: a clear path towards more chaos, more victory!

The cohort under Golo's command is only forty Cockroaches strong, divided into Feeders who supply the main lines, Swarms to set up ambushes, and a handful of capable Warriors ready to whip up a fury. For now, they are testing the watchtower's defense system, seeing how far they must go to lure their prey out. If Feeders or Swarms die in these attempts, so be it. Golo cares only for the mission, and he will divide the fallen among his people as nourishment in preparation for the final assault. For now, they have understood that the tower has abruptly ceased its rapid fire rain of lightning bolts and that its death rattle has fallen mute. They know that this is a sign of their Totem, and that the moment to strike has arrived.

TACTICS

The Sphingids are the most numerous of the Cockroach tribes preparing to gut the Protectorate, and so they have adopted attrition as their main strategy. They surround their prey, starve them out, set up traps to ensnare anyone trying to escape, and finally use overwhelming manpower and force to bring down any remaining resistance. Golo's brigade is small in comparison to a main strike force, but it still outnumbers the defenders in the watchtower by almost ten-to-one. Bolstered by a supply of phosphorus from their brothers in arms, which they have packed into a number of grenades for surprise use, they are well equipped and ready to take this hill.

Golo's vanguard uses the dry creek to maneuver through the grassy plain as a means of covert movement, while creeping closer to the watchtower and hiding in the tall grass. At night, with their existing skill at stealth combined with the darkness, they become nearly invisible.

WEAKNESSES

Although many of the Swarms and Feeders carry slings and small blowguns, Golo's cohort has an overall lack of ranged firepower. If they are faced with an opponent they cannot drag into a frenzied melee, they will retreat and seek out another avenue of attack.

The core of the vanguard is made up of Golo and his three Warriors, a trio of battle-hardened lieutenants bound to their leader by blood and who have fought by his side all across Borca. They are dauntless, and resolute. However, the rest of the force are far less loyal: should their commanders be killed in battle, the remaining Cockroaches will disband and find a new tribe to cling to. They will not continue fighting without leadership. Therefore, the only way to fully dismantle the warband is to eliminate Golo along with his siblings.

While the hardened inner circle are used to the intimidating displays of technological prowess present in the Protectorate's arsenal, the rest of the pack are rife with superstition. Should they be faced with any active items of Tech V or higher they will be struck with fear, and must succeed a Mental Defense (3) or lose (3) Ego Points.

GOLO GUZAN

The sky drum is thundering across the plains, the heavens have been skinned alive, and oceans of blood pour from the throats of the beheaded gods, flooding the earth and rejuvenating the Sphingids. The time of the great rebirth has arrived, when the armies of the world will climb from the womb of the earth to shatter and smite all that lies in their path. They will feast on the hearts of the wretched men, women, and children who stood in their way, and they will drink their souls. And everyone will know, these are the signs of the final times...

Golo saw what the Sphingids were able to accomplish in the east, and he witnessed the ground tremble when the Cockroach Kings rose to smite the city of chalk, on the far border of the hammer wielders' realm. It was then that the shamans promised to Golo that his loins would be rich, and that he would beget more Kings. They offered him a chance to lay with the Broodmothers and create offspring for the next generation, to continue the great conquest. But first he must offer a suitable sacrifice for the Totem and lead the Sphingids into the heart of the enemy. Only then would they allow him to claim his prize. Should he return unsuccessful, his body will be used to feed another Warrior's offspring. Such is the way of things.

Now he's found the spot. The feeble human trapped inside the tower is the last obstacle. He is a wounded doe and Golo knows that once the poison claims its victim, the time will be ripe for conquest.

The Warrior looks out over his vanguard. Some of them are weak, and will need to be sacrificed in combat so that the great horde will be able to strike farther. Their spilled blood will fill the empty rivers and pave the way to redemption. Golo hears the Totem speaking to him, throbbing in his beating heart, fueling him with the burning vengeance that infuses his entire people. The battle cry surges to his lips, and the air tastes of burnt flesh. "KREEOGH!"

ROLE PLAY

Golo is driven by pride. Once he sets his eyes on a target, he cannot let go. The watchtower is his greatest trophy and he will stop at nothing to take it, even if he has to waste his entire vanguard in return. This is a battle he must lead to the very end, and he won't allow himself to falter. Yet, deep inside, there is a kernel of doubt growing slowly, for the hammer wielder inside the tower has shown an unforeseen resilience. His enemy is strong. Golo must be stronger.

PROFILE

ARCHETYPE: Borca, The Conqueror, Clanner, Rank 3: Sphingid Warrior

ATTRIBUTES: BOD:5 AGI:4 CHA:2 INT:2 PSY:3 INS:5

SKILLS: Athletics 8D, Brawl 7D, Force 10D, Melee 9D, Stamina 7D, Toughness 8D, Crafting 7D, Dexterity 6D, Mobility 8D, Projectiles 7D, Stealth 6D, Expression 5D, Leadership 7D, Negotiation 4D, Legends 5D, Cunning 6D, Domination 7D, Faith 7D, Reaction 6D, Empathy 6D, Perception 8D, Primal 10D, Survival 8D, Taming 7D

BACKGROUNDS: Allies 5, Renown 2

SPECIAL: Blood Link: Golo has fought alongside his brothers and sisters for years, and they are a well oiled machine. Golo adds +1D to his attacks when in combat beside his Warriors

POTENTIALS: King's Blood 3, Marathon 2, Tough As Nails 2, Beastmaster 2

INITIATIVE: 6D / 20 Ego Points (Primal)

ATTACK: Obsidian Mace, Melee 8D, Distance 1m, Damage 11, Impact (2T), Blunt Bone Knife, Melee 10D, Distance 1m, Damage 5, Smooth Running (2T) Phosphorite Grenade, Distance 10/40m, Damage 8, Deviation, Cloud (5m, 2 Rounds), Fire Hazardous, Terrifying (2)

DEFENSE: Passive 1; Melee active (Parry), Melee 8D; Ranged Combat active, Mobility 8D; Mental, Faith 7D

MOVEMENT: 8m

ARMOR: Layered furs, hides, and bone armor, Armor 2, Terrifying (2)

CONDITION: Spore Infestation 0/14, Flesh Wounds 16, Trauma 8

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: Bone whistle to recall Sokol from long distances; Carved Totem of the Sphingids



SOKOL

When the Cockroaches first came across the gyrfalcons soaring on the thermals above the Reaper's Blow, and observed the huge birds swooping down to eviscerate their prey at immense speeds, they knew they had found creatures that would be useful. Since then, warband leaders have been given a personal bird to augment their own leadership.

Sokol belongs to Golo, an overfed beast with proud black plumage and a wingspan close to 2 meters, fully extended. Golo uses his lethal pet for recon missions, and the animal is trained to give off warning screeches if it detects an enemy nearby, but it can also be sent to scrape at the eyes of Golo's enemies with deadly talons. Sokol stays out of range until it swoops in to attack, using an Action Number of 7 and dealing 1D+3 Damage if successful. Shooting it in midair requires a roll of AGI+Projectiles (5), and catching it mid-attack demands a Combination of PSY+Reaction(3) and BOD+Melee/Brawl(3). Despite its savage ferocity, its bones can be easily shattered in one's hand. A single strike will be enough to clip its wings.

POTENTIALS

KING'S BLOOD

PREREQUISITE: Cockroach

While Golo himself has not triggered the genetic markers required to become one of the colossal Cockroach Kings, the shamans have identified his bloodline as a carrier of the sequence, and when his body is pushed to the limit, some of the powerful effects emerge. When Golo falls below (6) Trauma, he receives a burst of last ditch energy, allowing him to regain (2) Flesh Wounds and (2) Ego per Potential level.

INTERVENTION

If it so happens that either Hakkal or one of the characters is captured during the events of Act 1, the following scenes will play out as a rescue mission, rather than a swift retaliation. In that case, the Cockroaches will abduct their prey and drag them into the ruins. Golo plans to torture and ultimately sacrifice the live captive in the morning hours and devour the corpse as nourishment before the final assault. Under these circumstances, the ruins will be stacked with 4 additional Swarmers and a single Warrior, prepared to defend the ruin, who are far less likely to be caught off guard.

IRREGULARS

The Feeders who have been posted on the ruins may be expendable, but they are not quite so eager to throw their lives away on a whim. Should the approaching group of characters be detected by one of them, they will sound the alarm – a shrill, chirping birdcall – and retreat back towards the main Cockroach encampment to the south. Even after detection, the main force will require time to respond, giving the characters time to examine the ruins and prepare for the counterattack.

CALL AND RESPONSE

Golo is no fool. The scouts follow a basic pattern of low audible clicks to communicate with one another. The ones stationed in the ruin report to the ones prowling through the area. Once the prowlers have made their full circle, they head back to the camp to be replaced by the next group of scouts. A basic schedule, but if broken, the leader of the Cockroaches will realise that something is off. Should the characters successfully eliminate all four scouts before any can escape, they will have bought themselves an approximate hour of preparation time to examine the ruins and choose the location for their trap before the main swarm is scrambled into action.

ON THE OFFENSIVE

As the red glow of the sun disappears below the horizon, night blankets the land. Clouds are forming overhead, obscuring the pale light of the moon and soaking up the contours of the grasslands. Hakkal cracks open the gate of the compound, swathed in a dark cloak.

Slipping downhill through the grass, crouched low, the characters are all but invisible as they push towards the dried out riverbed, to the west of the crumbled wreckage they had used to cross earlier in the day. The creek comes into sight quickly, a steep drop down to the rocky basin – “Can’t use the bridge,” Hakkal had said, “they’ll see our outlines against the sky.” A hesitant scramble up the other side, fast, up and over, and the group is through. The hill with the ruin at its crest rises to their east, a frayed silhouette cut out against the dim moonlight. Keep going.

SCENE 1: SHOT IN THE DARK

Two routes lead up to the ruin, potentially infested with roaches; a short way along the riverbed, staying low to avoid any guards, or taking the longer path to enter the wreckage from the south, allowing to enter the destroyed building from an unexpected angle. With their approach masked, a successful roll of AGI+Stealth (2) is required to remain hidden in the grass on the way up.

Details are coming into focus, despite the darkness all around. Hakkal’s first assumption was incorrect, the ruined structure is not the campground for the Cockroach horde, but it is not deserted either. With INS+Perception (2), two Feeders can be spotted at the northern tip of the ruin. Both cower close to a metallic plinth, monitoring the watchtower for signs of movement. A further roll of INS+Perception (3) reveals another pair of Feeders creeping through the grass outside. If the group wants to remain hidden they must all be dealt with. Fast.

The characters can split up, each choosing a target. Sneaking up on a Feeder requires a roll of AGI+Stealth (3), with +2D due to the darkness, with the Triggers carried over to a subsequent Attack roll against a Feeder’s Passive Defense. All Triggers on the roll apply as direct Trauma Damage, however if the target isn’t fully brought down they’ll have to get more personal – a Combination of BOD+Brawl (2) and BOD+Force (3) is needed to grab one of them in a chokehold and keep them quiet while they bleed out or fall unconscious.

CAT AND MOUSE

Grabbing hold of another human being, even one as brutal and savage as a Cockroach, and forcing them to remain quiet and still as the life drains from their body is a difficult task at the best of times. Should one of the roaches be able to slip away from the characters and make a break for the main camp to the south, there are only a few seconds to act before he gets away and sounds the alarm.

In order to catch a fleeing Feeder and bring him down, a character must succeed in two subsequent BOD+Athletics (3) rolls, or else he’ll get away. Should the roach manage to evade the clutches of the characters, it will be a matter of minutes before a response comes.

With the scouts dealt with, Hakkal and the characters regroup in the center of the ruins. While there is clear evidence of this spot being extensively trafficked, many sets of tracks obvious on the ground in the dim light, an INS+Survival (1) roll is enough to realise that most of the tracks are leading elsewhere. Hakkal crouches down, examining them, and comes to a conclusion. “It seems their true camp is somewhere further south, but since they left a picket here, they must be using this hill as a staging ground. We should set a trap, to catch them off-guard.”

SCENE 2: EXALTIAN RUINS

A hundred years ago this barren plain was the outlier of the Empire of Exalt. Cultrin's forces had risen to domesticate the world, and emboss their idea of a perfect future into the minds of men. This period went down in history as the City Wars, a nightmarish conflagration that gripped all of Borca and dragged its peoples into a whirlpool of death and destruction.

The Exalters were equipped with ancient armaments salvaged from the Bygones, and they put their arsenals to good use to decimate the forces that stood against them. In those days, it was Noret that responded, and the Marauder Gusev who directed his Machine Men against Exalt. But Cultrin's brigades understood how to deal with the Marauder's automated henchmen.

The barracks that once crowned the top of the hill served the commanders of Exalt's armies as a strategic chokepoint against their opponents and was therefore heavily secured. The whole damn countryside surrounding the barracks was plowed and peppered with mines and other heavy ordnance to make short work of any AMSUMO battalion sent into the fray.

What the characters are unaware of is that they are standing atop one of the major battlefields of the City Wars. The watchtower they were sent to defend is the only remnant of an entire region that was once fortified to the teeth to repel the counter attacks of Noret and Cathedral City. Most traces of fortification are gone forever, pulverised by weapons of mass destruction, disintegrated, buried under dust and landslides, or dismantled in the blurry years that followed.

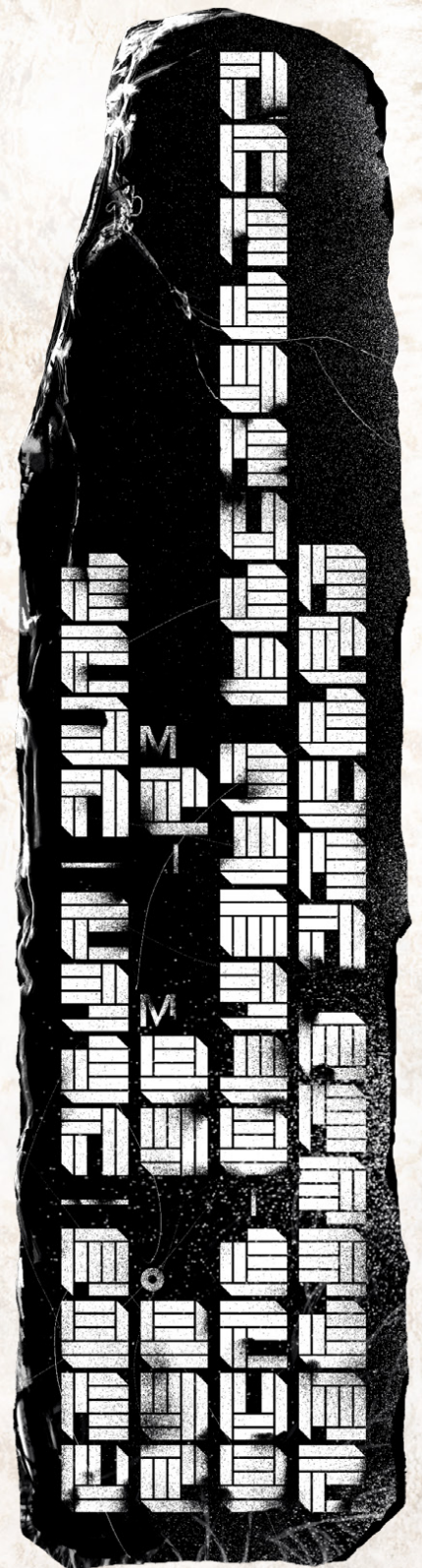
The only thing still resembling something that might have been a larger building are the foundation stones of the barracks, toppled over and covered by tall reeds and heavy moss, forming the distinct architectural outline of what the Exalters had erected here. But something is odd about the leftover rock formations. All of the top faces of the granite that was used during construction are glazed, molten, as if someone had sliced through them with a searing hot blade. Bizarre, almost organic droplets and shapes remain as a remnant of whatever destroyed this place, hidden beneath a century of decay.

INSPECTING THE RUINS

With the Cockroach response on the way, the characters must hurry to search the ruins for anything that may help them lay a trap, or at least provide a good spot to place Hakkal's black powder bomb. INS+Perception (2) is needed to peer through the dark night and pick up any details as they comb through the rubble. Searching the layout of what might once have been an armory, a long strip of thin cord can be found to serve as a more suitable fuse than Hakkal's crude fabric stand-in.

Besides any other historical conclusions which can be drawn from the bizarrely molten debris, there is one particular object which stands out by itself, a blocky plinth the Feeders were using as cover. It rises to waist height and remains strangely free of decay despite all other structures being grotesquely overgrown with weeds, appearing to be made of a cleaner, more finely carved rock than the rest of the ruin. Why are there no plants taking root on it? There is a hint of an odd shimmer on its flat top, but only a Paler could make out such details in the dark, other characters will need some sort of light source.

The blood of one of the Feeders has splashed onto the top surface of the plinth, and is behaving abnormally. Instead of resting still, rounded droplets slither around, before slowly settling into geometric shapes, revealing part of a symbol. It's a quick leap of deduction to grab a water skin and pour more liquid onto the plinth, revealing a chain of pictograms covering its upper face. Each is a square made up of a number of



THE PLINTH

CODEBREAKER

The symbols only appear in the outlines of fluid on the surface due to a hydrophobic coating of the plinth; there is no other visual indication of their presence. According to the standard Tarot, each of the symbols is given a value from 0 to 21, and by extracting these digits from the surface and decoding them into alphabetical form, the message can be deciphered. It is divided into two sections: First, a directional key, giving a position down the hill to the west, a few meters beneath the surface. The second is a clipped description of the device buried at the location; the trigger mechanism for an ancient trap.

BEAR / DIST / DPTH, 250 / 50 / -2,
ANTI AMSUMO MINEFIELD TRIGGER DEVICE

LEVERAGE

With the Cockroach horde rapidly closing in, the characters must use the ruined structure and environment to its fullest extent to ensure their trap has maximum effect. The toppled columns and overturned pillars of the former building create tight corridors, enough for just two warriors to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with room to move, preventing them from being overwhelmed by the typical swarm tactics of a Sphingid host. With their basic familiarity of the area, each character gains +2D to any Active Defenses inside the ruin, ducking and using the cramped conditions to deflect and obstruct incoming attacks. Additionally, with quick thinking and the creation of some pre-set tripwires, requiring a roll of AGI+Crafting (3), several blocks which have weakened foundations can be rigged to topple over onto approaching enemies, thinning their ranks even further.

straight lines, along with small markings beside groups of patterns.

Chroniclers, Apocalyptic, or Palers can roll INT+Legends (4) to decipher the script, adding their Secrets Background as extra dice, while other characters can only attempt the roll if their Secrets Background is greater than (3). Success reveals them as the symbols used on the Apocalyptic Tarot, however, their specific combination is akin to a code. If no one present can decode the inscription despite making the attempt, Hakkal interjects, "I have seen those symbols before, on scrolls belonging to the Iconide in Justitian... I believe each corresponds to a number." Unfortunately, he isn't able to recall the correct numeric mapping on his own, his advice only allowing a second attempt at the roll with a +1D bonus.

HEAVY ORDNANCE

After cracking the code on the plinth, or by combining the clues from the markings decoded from the Scrapper runes near the cliff, the characters can begin their search. INS+Orienteering (4) is needed to identify the right spot, with +1S for correctly understanding Mangler's message, and +3S for decoding the plinth's secret. As they approach the exact location, the ground is littered with white, metallic crystals that crackle with every footfall leading them to the epicenter.

Digging away at the ground is difficult without at least some tools, as the pale crystals cause a burning sensation when touching bare skin, but even a repurposed sword is enough to reveal the package beneath. Two meters deep a hardened plastic case has split open, leaking iridescent fluid which dried and oxidised to travel as residue to the surface. Delicately opening it reveals a device resting inside; a fully operational detonator for an anti-AMSUMO minefield, along with a basic pictorial representation of the locations of each payload – buried in a semi-circle around the hill on which the barracks were erected. The image features a dozen warheads. If only half of them are still active, the blast radius would be sufficient to completely eviscerate any army of attackers. Assuming they're detonated at the right moment.

SCENE 3: RAMPAGE

Time's up. The wind blows in from the south west, and the air is tasting of static, dusty, and dry. Suddenly, the massive gyrfalcon swoops across the heads of the characters. Damn bird, they've been detected. There's a rattling noise incoming, traveling on top of the wind. The Cockroaches are rushing in from all sides, taking the hill, movement everywhere, only preceded by chaotic roars and dull humming. It's impossible to guess how many. 30? 40? More?

"We gotta lure them into the trap! Someone has to detonate the damn charge at the right time!" With these words Hakkal brings himself into position near the plinth, and draws the first arrow.

Two twisted Cockroaches lead at the head of the assault, both rushing at the forefront of the force. One, tall, and covered in ashes and bone armor, is matched in pace by the colossal bird. The leader of the warband? Another lags a step behind, a musclebound female bearing a fierce sword in her hand. As the horde reaches the foot of the hill the leader falls back, allowing his second to push ahead.

Confronting the rabid vanguard out in the open is plain suicide. The characters must lead a slow, steady retreat through the ruins, maintaining the illusion of battle without being drawn into a prolonged melee, and overwhelmed by sheer force. The female Warrior, one of Golo's siblings and highest skilled fighters, exclusively hunts for the most intimidating target to take on alone, engaging them while her attack force splits off to assault the rest of the group.

Using the ruin to their advantage, the characters each face off against one Sphingid at a time during their withdrawal. Other than Golo's lieutenant, the rest of the front-line fighters are Swarmers. The overwhelming manpower behind the first enemies ensures that every time one is cut down, another steps up to fill their place, however a character killing their opponent will give them a Round of respite as their next target surges in.

(5) Combat Rounds into the encounter the situation escalates, with more and



more enemies flooding the ruin, and requires them to abandon their posts to make a dash for the trapped area.

Near the back of the fray, the wretched leader of the Cockroaches makes his presence known by sending his gyrfalcon to battle. Sokol swoops through the tight confines of the ruin, pulling its wings in to dive through and claw at the eyes of the characters, its shrieks echoing over the din of combat and drawing Swarms to the characters location. Golo himself waits for his moment to strike, his trophy is nowhere nearby.

As the characters fall back and reach the creek the Cockroaches at their back begin to spread out, in an attempt to encircle and eviscerate their prey. "Now!" Hakkal calls, prompting his companions to sprint for the riverbed. The character holding the detonator must hold his nerve, waiting until the bulk of the forces in pursuit are within the blast zone before pressing the switch. The night changes to day as the heavy, anti-AMSUMO payloads fulfill their century-old purpose.

THE SHOCKWAVE

The trigger activates the mines. Four out of twelve payloads blow up as intended. The ground groans, buckling

like an earthen stallion, before detonating in a terrifying thunderclap that heaves an ungodly tonnage of dirt and soil into the air and rockets it skyward.

The shockwave blasts the characters off their feet and tosses them back towards the watchtower. The entire hillside below the barracks erupts into a blaze of fire, raining body parts across the open grassland. At least a dozen roaches were disintegrated in the eruption.

Ears ringing. The echo of the explosion is amplified by the nearby cliff. It takes a few moments before the characters can even begin to rise back on their feet and gaze to the other side of the creek to evaluate the success. The hillside has been plowed open, revealing massive craters and licking flames setting fire to the dry grass. Squinting through the billowing plumes, they see some of the bodies blanketing the ground begin to move, staggering upright, while other shapes scramble further up the hill. It's impossible to get a headcount from this distance, but there are survivors. Which means, they're not safe. One of the silhouettes stands out, the ash-coated warrior from the ruin. He looks over the creek and lets out a roar of anger, the sound harrowing his call for revenge. Back up the hill for a final stand at the watchtower. The storm is coming. Finally.

THE DUST STORM

Back at the camp the storm has garnered power. Murdoch awaits, with a infuriated Cockroach infant on his arm, his face a display of acrimony. “What the hell was that explosion?”

“We dealt with the situation – what in Jehammed’s name are you doing with the child?” Hakkal asks. The Judge presses the baby against his chest awkwardly, like a thief caught in the act.

“Had to calm this thing down. We don’t have time for this, though, are they still coming? Did you get them all?”

Hakkal shakes his head, “Not all.”

Murdoch gulps at the response, and kicks up dust. “Fuck that, they’ll just climb over the walls now! Come on, the generator is kicking in, you have to get the Pylons running!”

Cobalt blue lightning cracks above the cliff. The generator jolts to life, pushing its current through the underground cables and lighting up the breaker box in the supply shed, marked with a large Chronieler barcode. Murdoch hobbles over, ushering the characters, “I think I busted the switch last time I used this thing, it’ll need some work to get the system started back up.” He opens up the panel showing off a tangled mess of cabling and buzzing wires.

Hakkal takes a single look over the insides of the breaker and shakes his head, “I’ll watch from the walls and warn you if anyone approaches.”

The characters must get to work tinkering and preparing to charge the Defense Pylons by themselves. It takes a few moments to grasp the instructions, but it soon becomes clear – the system has a minimum startup voltage, but the generator won’t be able to meet that requirement until its capacitors are fully charged, perhaps hours from now. Murdoch chimes in, “There’s a handcrank in the shed, maybe that’s what it’s for?”

Only one character at a time can operate the crank manually, with the Pylons requiring a Complex Action of BOD+Athletics (25) to start up, with an interval of (1) Round. After the first revolution, Hakkal shouts down urgently from the walls, peering out through the dust; “They’re bringing everything!”

OVERKILL

Golo has lost more than half of his force, whether to the devastating explosion tearing them apart or desertion in the chaotic aftermath. All that’s left are his two remaining siblings and a core squad of ten Swarmers. It will be enough. The Sphingid Totem refuses to accept failure. The Warrior’s heart burns with incandescent rage at the death of his sister, but he knows that he has no time to regroup and risk losing his chance entirely. He and his soldiers surge over the wall, trying to surmount the barrier to flood into the courtyard and rip apart their enemies. The taste of their flesh will be a poor exchange for all he has lost, but it will help ease the pain.

The frontline of the Cockroach squad, featuring Golo and his two lieutenants, will take (5) Rounds to reach the Defense Pylons, and another (3) Rounds to overcome the outpost wall. Each Round after that, 3 more Swarmers will arrive. One character must stay to charge the defenses as fast as possible, preventing Golo from receiving reinforcements, while the rest must prepare to repel the final assault.

LAST DITCH

The courtyard quickly devolves into brutal carnage as more and more of Golo’s forces surmount the walls and join him in the fray. The characters must use any and every possible advantage to deal with their final challenge – they either make it out of this fight alive, or they end up in a Cockroach’s gut. Throughout the confrontation, the dust storm keeps building in strength, flushing the yard with sizzling particles. Every (2) Rounds, the intensity increases, imposing a -1D penalty per increase when attacking any target more than 2 meters away, or attempting to see clearly past that distance. After (6) Rounds the storm has become so tempestuous that anyone in the courtyard

FINE TUNING

Act 3: The Dust Storm forms the climactic final conflict with the antagonist of the adventure, bringing them together in a brutal close-quarters encounter amidst a blustering tempest. This is the moment where the characters can truly shine, using all of their wits to make it through the situation in one piece. If they took the chance during Act 1 to set up traps or create weapons and bombs from the resources in the supply shed, now is the time to go all out and put them to use.

It is important as a Game Master to correctly tune the difficulty for each group of characters, ensuring that the scene is both appropriately tense and knuckle-clenching, but not outright impossible. Several possible mechanisms for modification exist: the number of hostiles killed during Act 2’s climax can be raised or lowered to alter the volume of Cockroaches swarming the outpost here, or the composition of the force can be adapted to include more Warriors and increase the challenge. Similar techniques can be used to improvise the tone of the finale, deciding on whether the last battle with Golo Guzan is a heroic stand against incredible odds, or a gritty, messy fight down in the dust, depending on the game being played.

is forced to move at half their normal speed, rounded up, or spend (1) Ego per Round to ignore the penalty.

- ◇ Thinking quickly, a character can position themselves in the watchtower and use Murdoch's musket, or their own weapons, to fire down at the Cockroaches as they approach the walls and climb over them. The high vantage point, along with optimum sight lines, give them a +1D bonus to Attack rolls while doing so, however as the melee develops in the courtyard they will need to be careful – from this height, firing down at the tightly packed brawl, a Botch will cause a stray shot to hit a friendly target, rather than an enemy.
- ◇ When there are at least five Cockroaches within the walls, one of them will grab a ceramic cartridge from her belt, cursing out a guttural codeword before tossing it towards one of the characters. The arcing grenade detonates with a blinding hiss of phosphorus on impact, causing third-degree burns on exposed skin and sizzling as it reacts with moisture in the eyes or mouth. To make matters worse, a Swarmer rushes into the incandescent smog to grab hold of a character, grappling them with a Conflict of BOD+Brawl to drag them into the cloud.
- ◇ The inside of the supply shed is one of the few remaining islands of calm in the storm, but it won't stay that way for long. A character can attempt to use the remaining kegs of black powder to create crude pipe bombs with the lengths of tubing inside and a roll of AGI+Crafting (2) per bomb, with each dealing (10) Damage at its epicenter, although throwing the awkwardly shaped packages imposes a penalty of -3D on AGI+Projectiles. While in the shed, the characters will hear the static discharge of the old radio shocked back to life. Hurriedly using the codebook nearby, one can easily tune it to an emergency Judiciary channel and begin signalling distress. After (2) Rounds of attempts, a dispatcher for the Northern Cavalry Squad will acknowledge the message, and inform the radioman that reinforcements will arrive within the hour.
- ◇ The leader of the Cockroach warband is ferocious in combat, and he's going for victory. He uses any tactic he can to press his advantage, attacking in concert with at least one other Cockroach to drown his opponent with merciless blows of his mace, and using specially trained calls for Sokol to direct the bird to vulnerable targets.
- ◇ Murdoch is Golo's personified nemesis, and he will go after the Judge before any other prey. "CHAMMER MANNESKE!!" he roars, charging for Murdoch. He will bring down the hammer-wielder, even if it's the last thing he does. The characters are the last obstacle in his way.

EPILOGUE

The storm slowly abates, the winds dying down to leave the courtyard coated with a frosting of red dust, the corpses littering the ground blending in with the rest. It's time to let out a held breath, collect oneself, and let the tension ease – the characters have made it through the night, and they've survived an all-out assault by a Cockroach warband. This will make for a hell of a story, someday.

MURDOCH

Murdoch may have come through the final battle in just about one piece, but he's in bad shape and it's getting worse. When the Northern Cavalry Squad arrives and hears his report, they'll scramble to bring him to Siege where the Spitalians in the Eastern Wing will be able to attempt treatment for the necrotic toxin festering in his leg. Will they be able to save the limb, and let him return to his beloved in Justitian on his own two legs? Only time will tell.

THE INFANT

With the battle over, the group has emerged from the fray with an extra life in their midst, rather than losing some. Mathematically a win, but who's going to deal with the thing? If the characters don't decide to take care of the creature themselves, or convince Hakkal to keep it for a time, the Northern Cavalry Squad will drop the newborn off for an examination in Siege. From that point on its life will be in the hands of the Spitalians in the military hospital.

SENNA

Hakkal's journey is far from over. This diversion has only forced him to delay his true quest, tracking down his niece and returning her to safety. In the morning he reexamines the area, and believes he has found her tracks leading off to the north-east, away from the Cockroach horde. Did the damn girl really just run away? Deep inside, he believes he will find her. Alive.

BURIED HISTORY

Eight anti-AMSUMO mines remain buried in the hill, unexploded, and their mere presence here has more concerning implications – what else could have been missed in this place? The knowledge of this unsuspected cache is valuable to both the Cluster and the Cartel, and the characters can turn this information into profit fast. The question, then, is: who do they tell?

THE WATCHTOWER STANDS

Murdoch will be rotated out and replaced with another poor soul in due time, the Judiciary cannot leave the location undefended. What will happen to that Judge, then, if the Sphingids should return? Will they overrun it once and for all?

DESERTED SUPPLY TRACK TO
CHALK BREACH AND THE KLAWEN

THE GENERATOR

SCRAPPER CAMPS

OPEN GRASSLAND

DRIED-OUT
CREEK

COLLAPSED
MAGLEV PYLON

DRIED-OUT
CREEK

BEATHEN PATH
TO SIEGE



THE WATCHTOWER

AND THE SURROUNDING WASTELANDS
2598 AD



ELEVATIONS

- +60M
- +50M
- +40M
- +30M
- +20M
- +10M
- GROUND LEVEL (0)
- CREEK / COBBLES



WATCHTOWER 17N

CHRONICLER DEFENSE PERIMETER

COLLAPSED MAGLEV PYLON

DRIED-OUT CREEK

COLLAPSED MAGLEV PYLON

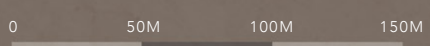
OPEN GRASSLAND

ANTI-AMSUMO MINEFIELD

THE PLINTH

TRIGGER DEVICE

THE EXALTIAN RUINS



THIS IS BAIT!

