

NUMENÉRA™



VORTEX

BY MONTE COOK



INTRODUCTION

VORTEX

Credits

Writer/Designer
Monte Cook

Lead Editor
Shanna Germain

Proofreader
Ray Vallese

Typesetter
Charles Ryan

Cover Artist
Roberto Pitturru

Artists
Dreamstime.com,
Patrick McEvoy,
Roberto Pitturru

Cartographer
Alyssa Faden

**Numenera
Editorial Team**
David Wilson Brown,
Eric Coates, Ryan
Klemm, Jeremy Land,
Laura Wilkinson,
George Ziets

Vortex is a Numenera™ adventure that can take place almost anywhere in the Ninth World. It is suitable for beginning characters and comes in two parts. Part 1: The Temple details a small village, a strange structure from the past, and a cult with a nefarious leader. Part 2: Through the Vortex presents another, even stranger structure from the past and a horrific mystery there.

Vortex is presented as a sort of “sandbox” adventure. Rather than guiding the GM through a string of possible encounters, it presents all the people, places, and creatures in the adventure, along with a starting encounter. From there, the PCs can do whatever they wish.

BACKGROUND

Generations ago, adventurous souls discovered a structure from the past that exists outside of normal space, the entrance of which itself exists in the real world but skips across physical reality so that its location is always changing.

Within this structure lies a swirling vortex of energy that powers the structure. The discoverers believed this vortex to be a god and began to worship it. They decided to use the structure as its temple and began what they call the Cult of the Vortex.

Many years have passed. At first, the cult’s membership grew and prospered. But about thirty years ago, the cult fell on hard times. Membership dwindled. About ten years ago, the cult fell under the leadership of a man who has since come to abuse his power. He has ordered his flock to begin kidnapping people to indoctrinate them into the cult—a process that has achieved mixed results.

The cultists understand the temple now more than they did before, but much of it remains a mystery.



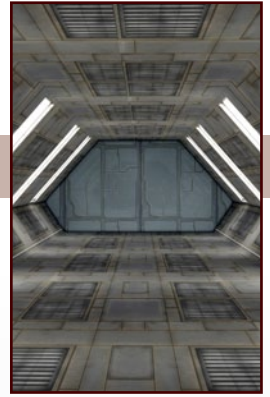
© 2013 Monte Cook
Games, LLC

Numenera and its logo are trademarks of Monte Cook Games, LLC in the U.S.A. and other countries. All Monte Cook Games characters and character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of Monte Cook Games, LLC.



PART 1

THE TEMPLE



This portion of the adventure offers a lot of options for the players. It presents the information the GM needs in a unique way. All the characters involved and locations come first. Then comes the initial encounter that starts the adventure. After that, it is up to the PCs to determine what happens next, where they go, and what they do. The GM should be very familiar with the cultists and their various motives, and keep track of which cult member is where.

SYNOPSIS

Although *Vortex* is designed so that it could go in many ways, one possibility is this: The PCs find a strange structure in the wilderness. While they investigate, they encounter a group of cultists attempting to perform a ritual outside the structure. After the ritual, a door in the structure opens and the cultists go inside. Soon thereafter, the structure disappears. However, the cultists have left behind evidence that allows the PCs to know where the structure will reappear, and when. If the PCs wish it, they can go to that place, perhaps spending the intervening time in a small village named Jutte. When the structure reappears, a single cultist emerges. She desires to escape from the cult that dwells inside what they refer to as the Temple of the Vortex, and while she managed to flee, she was not able to get her brother out. She begs the PCs to help her. If the PCs agree, they discover that the interior of this shifting structure is vast. After some exploring, they find and overcome the cultists, including their horrific leader, Abrassal. They also discover a powerful energy vortex that lies within, which the cultists worship as a god.

MODIFYING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure is designed for first- or second-tier characters, and it should be used with first-tier characters as a convention game. Although it could be used unmodified for third- or even fourth-tier characters in a regular campaign, the GM may want to add a level to each of the cultists (granting each +3 health, +1 damage, and other straightforward benefits). The Angel of Steel also might gain a level as well as getting an additional point of Armor.

For fifth- or sixth-tier characters, the GM may wish to add two levels to each of the cultists and the Angel of Steel, put two mesomemes in Dog Lake, and significantly change Abrassal. This Abrassal is level 8, with 40 health, 2 Armor, and a much more complete control of his magnetic powers, allowing him to use his power offensively at long range against anyone wearing metal or hurling metal objects, inflicting 10 points of damage whenever he does use it.

JUTTE

Jutte is a small village, the home of about 180 people. It's off the beaten path. Around the village, herders tend flocks of entelodon (hairy, almost hippo-like hogs), and grow various crops in small quantities and then bring them to the village market to sell. There's a small lake a few minutes walk from town (over a hill) that provides a fair number of fish to those who venture out in boats or just fish from the shore.

The village leader is an elderly woman named Gralle, but she keeps to her home most of the time as she is ill. A veteran of many wars, a skilled and hardy glaive named Trummel keeps order and protects the town from outside threats.

The market offers a number of things, mostly fruits, vegetables, and dry goods, although there's usually someone selling fresh fish. (There isn't when the PCs arrive, for the reason explained below.) There's even a vendor that sells a miscellany of various spare parts from all kinds of numenera devices. She doesn't have anything functional, but the back of her cart is a treasure trove to a craftsman or tinkerer.

NEWS AROUND TOWN

People in Jutte talk about two things. First, a group of strangers recently came through town (the day before the Initial Encounter, below). They bought foodstuffs and other supplies, but they raised suspicions because they traveled everywhere in a group and they all wore old, dirty yellow robes. There were five or six of them—the story changes depending on who is telling it. Some people in the market suspect that they stole or were up to even worse deeds (this is not

For a map of Jutte and the surrounding area, see page 10.

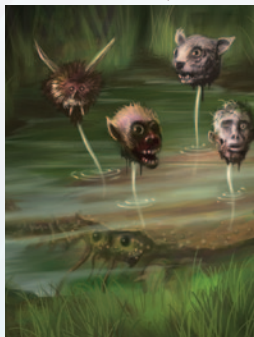


Throughout this adventure,

you'll see page references to various topics accompanied by this symbol. These are references to the Numenera corebook, where you can find additional details. It isn't necessary to use the corebook to run this adventure; it's an optional way to provide additional information.

Gregor: Level 4, 1 point of Armor

Mesomeme: Level 5, moves with stealth in the water as level 6, detects those sneaking in the water as level 7; 20 health, 3 Armor



Feán: Level 3, level 4 at any task dealing with the numenera, geography, or history

Norrid: Level 3. If he and the PC he resembles come within immediate range of each other, both are affected by a level 7 mental effect that knocks them unconscious.

Relle: Level 3, level 5 in all combat and defense actions; inflicts 6 points of damage with unarmed attacks; 18 health

the case). There was just something off-putting about their gruff and humorless manner.

Second, there is a monster in the lake. No one will go near it since the Dreavish brothers disappeared a few days ago, but stories of some kind of crablike beast are mixed with reports of ghostly voices and grisly apparitions in and around Dog Lake.

DOG LAKE

Dog Lake is filled with fish and its surface is home to waterfowl and insects. The lake is relatively shallow, and its banks are thick with tall reeds and other plants.

Hiding amid these reeds is a creature some in this region call a whispering lurker, but which is otherwise known as a mesomeme.

Hunting the mesomeme is not difficult, for if the PCs go down to the water, the creature will begin to stalk them. It already has the heads of a few of the villagers (the Dreavish brothers) as well as a very old murder head and those of a few assorted animals.

If the PCs manage to slay this dangerous beast (no small feat for first-tier characters), they earn the love and respect of the people of Jutte. The people don't have much to offer as a reward, but certainly give them free food and drinks and whatever simple things they might need for the duration of their stay in the area.

CULT OF THE VORTEX

The Cult of the Vortex believes that the vortex their forebears discovered is the source of all power and life in the world. They believe the people of the prior worlds—faithful and wise, aware of the Vortex's divinity—built the temple to house and protect the Vortex. The cult has taken up that stewardship.

Years ago, the cult numbered almost two hundred people, and there were families living in the temple. A few of the cultists (Gregor, Feán, Relle, Ashlin) were raised here. Things are bleaker now than they were, and that fact taints the outlook of all the remaining members. They feel isolated, and also resentful that the rest of the world doesn't see the truth that they see.

Is the cult evil? Not for the most part, although they all tolerate the dark and twisted tastes of Abrassal, their leader, and facilitate his horrible acts. This includes (but is not limited to) kidnapping and essentially brainwashing new cult members. Abrassal is abominable, and some of the other members are not particularly nice, but their worship practices and overall beliefs are benign. They are not necessarily all itching for a big fight, but most aren't going to react well to intruders coming into their sacred space, either. If Abrassal were eliminated, the cult's nature would likely change significantly (although presumably under Gregor's leadership, it's still not going to be particularly "nice").

All members of the cult wear yellow robes that are now a bit shabby after years of wear.

Gregor

Gregor likes to think of himself as Abrassal's second in command, but this is less because of any "official position" and more because when cult members leave the temple (which Abrassal never does), he takes charge and no one questions this. They defer to his strong personality.

Gregor is gruff, no-nonsense, and surly. He cares little about his appearance, and usually appears disheveled and smells bad. He speaks loudly and forcefully. He carries a long knife with him at all times. If he has the opportunity, he grabs a crossbow from his chambers and uses that as a weapon.

Gregor wears a level 1 artifact on his wrist that keeps perfect time and predicts the next day's weather with 80% accuracy and communicates both through symbols one needs to decipher. This does not function inside the temple.

Feán

Feán is, hands down, the smartest member of the cult alive today. He carries with him a notebook in which he has sketched a map marked with positions where the Narthex (see below) will appear, along with dates, times, and durations for when it will appear and for how long.

Feán is tall and thin, with angular features and a nose that seems too large for his face. He is friendly enough but seems continually distracted. He carries with him a level 5 artifact that fires a green neural disruption beam at long range. Those struck suffer 2 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) and must make an Intellect defense roll or lose their next turn, stunned. It has a depletion of 1 in 1d10.

Norrid

Quiet and introverted, Norrid rarely says anything. He does what he is told, moves to violence only very reluctantly, and surrenders quickly if shown great force. He is not regularly armed, but if need be, he can grab a knife from his chambers.

If there is a male PC in the group, Norrid bears an uncanny resemblance to him. If there is not, he looks very much like a male "version" of a female PC. This is as much a surprise to him as the PC.

Relle

Tough and crude, Relle is quick to take offense and challenge someone to a fight, and she's a very capable hand-to-hand combatant.

Relle is short with long black hair. She wears dark, mechanical goggles that no longer have any power, and thus merely serve as filters against bright light.



Ashlin

Ashlin is young and eager to prove herself. And yet she is very curious about the world, having lived much of her life in the temple. If encountered outside the temple, it is likely her first time outside in an extremely long time. Ashlin is the daughter of Nile and Savra, although those two are no longer a couple and the three of them are not much of a “family unit.” Ashlin is round-faced and of average height. She carries a wrist-mounted dart thrower with her pretty much all the time.

Duranis and Nile

Duranis is a tough-mannered, quiet man. Nile is an aging man eager to show that he is still capable. They’re quick to use force against noncultists. Both are willing and eager to do as Gregor says, unless Abrassal is present, in which case they defer to the leader. Both wear chainmail armor when outside or if the temple is threatened. Duranis carries a sword, and Nile an axe.

Savra

Savra is a middle-aged woman who has a matronly outlook for the other cultists. She feels particular sympathy for the plight of Shome and Evanna, but she is still a devoted cult member and believes that they will eventually come around to see that following

the “will of the Vortex” is for the best.

Savra is short and stocky, with short, greying hair.

Shome

Shome is a very recent inductee into the cult. He and his sister Evanna were both taken by Gregor and some of the others from their village in a far distant part of the world two months ago. He’s never had any inclination to join the cult and is little more than a prisoner here.

Evanna

Evanna is Shome’s sister and is all but a prisoner of the cult. She tried to learn the ways of the Vortex but never truly accepted it. Now she wants to escape. She has stolen a keystick and wants to use it to free herself and her brother. Evanna is in her late teens. She is slight of build and awkward in action and word.

Abrassal

Abrassal is a beast of a man. He leads the cult and is seen as its priest. He has a messiah complex and sincerely believes himself to be divine and that all people should serve him as the only true representative of the vortex on Earth. To him, people are playthings to be used. Selfish, arrogant, lascivious, and horrible, he is the worst person to lead a cult of dedicated worshippers, and yet he does.

Ashlin: Level 2, level 3 with her dart-thrower

Shome: Level 2

Evanna: Level 2

Duranis and Nile: Level 3, level 4 for all attacks as well as *Might and Speed* defense; 2 Armor; 15 health

Abrassal: Level 5, level 7 for all acts of persuasion, and debate; 22 health

Savra: Level 3



The other cultists avoid him if possible, bringing him what he asks for and then leaving quickly. They abhor him but truly believe him to be semi-divine based on the “visions” the vortex has sent him. Submitting to his will (and sometimes to his distasteful needs) is just a part of the price they must pay to be among the faithful.

Somehow, over the years within the temple, Abrassal has developed a strange power that not even he fully understands. He projects a hemispherical field, about 10 feet (3 m) across, of powerful magnetic repulsion. What this essentially means is that no metal of any kind can come near him. Metal ranged weapons cannot touch him, and anyone holding or wearing metal is hedged out and unable to approach him. The field is a hemisphere and does not project down, so he can walk normally across a metal floor. He could not, however, lay down or even fall down on such a surface, nor could he approach a metal wall. He has no control over this ability (not that he would admit that).

Should Abrassal ever die, the rest of the cult would not mourn him. In fact, they would probably doubt his divinity after all and would ultimately be relieved he was gone.

THE TEMPLE

The Temple of the Vortex is a gargantuan structure, the majority of which lies outside of space, but a small portion of which, called the Narthex, intrudes upon the world at shifting intervals. The cult actually uses only a small portion of the structure, and in fact has never even explored it entirely in all the many decades that they have inhabited it.

THE NARTHEX

The Narthex appears to be a single structure of grey metal and bits of yellowed synth. A few white symbols are precisely painted on the sides, but they are scratched and faded with age, and meaningless to anyone in the Ninth World anyway. From above, it is roughly in the shape of a human eye (an oval with sharply tapered ends) about 20 feet (6.1 m) long. It has no windows or obvious doors. The metal of the outside of the Narthex is utterly impervious to anything the PCs might try to do to harm it. However, there is nothing preventing out-of-phase characters from entering it, or characters using teleportation to get inside.

The “Keyhole”: The only thing that is really remarkable on the outside of the Narthex is a small rectangular depression on one side, about 2 inches (5 cm) by 1 inch (2.5 cm), and about an inch (2.5 cm) deep. Within the depression are two small round holes about the size of nail holes.

The Keystick: The keystick is an 8-inch-long (20 cm) rod of synth that has two metal prongs at one

end. It has six of buttons on it. It fits in the keyhole on the outside of the Narthex, and if inserted, the doors open. The cult believes that an elaborate ritual must be performed with the keystick outside the Narthex before it can be used, but this is not the case.

There are many keysticks, but when the cultists leave the temple, generally only one of them (almost always Gregor) carries one.

The Elevator: The elevator must also be activated with a keystick. There is a keyhole here as well, and merely putting the key in isn’t enough. One must also push the bottommost button on the rod once it is inserted in order to activate the elevator. It has only one destination and takes about 45 seconds to reach it. When it does, the doors open automatically, revealing not the outside where the Narthex was but the interior of the Nave.

THE NAVE

The Nave is a gargantuan chamber perhaps a thousand feet (305 m) across. It is, however, far too dark to make out the entire chamber, and even torches or glowglobes don’t help much. The room is roughly an octagonal cylinder much taller than it is wide, so it is a shaft. The elevator travels through a central stalk that rises up through the middle of this shaft, and when the doors open, they reveal a metal walkway suspended over this great shaft that encircles the stalk and then extends off into the darkness in many branches, like the multiple spokes of a wheel. Each of these leads to a door set into the outer rim of the shaft. In all cases, the walkway is about 12 feet (3.6 m) wide, with a thin side handrail about 3 feet (0.9 m) above the edges. All the doors are closed. Like in the Narthex, most everything here is far too durable for the PCs to possibly damage.

In the darkness, however, the ends of the walkways aren’t visible, except for one that is on a well-lit path.

THE PATH

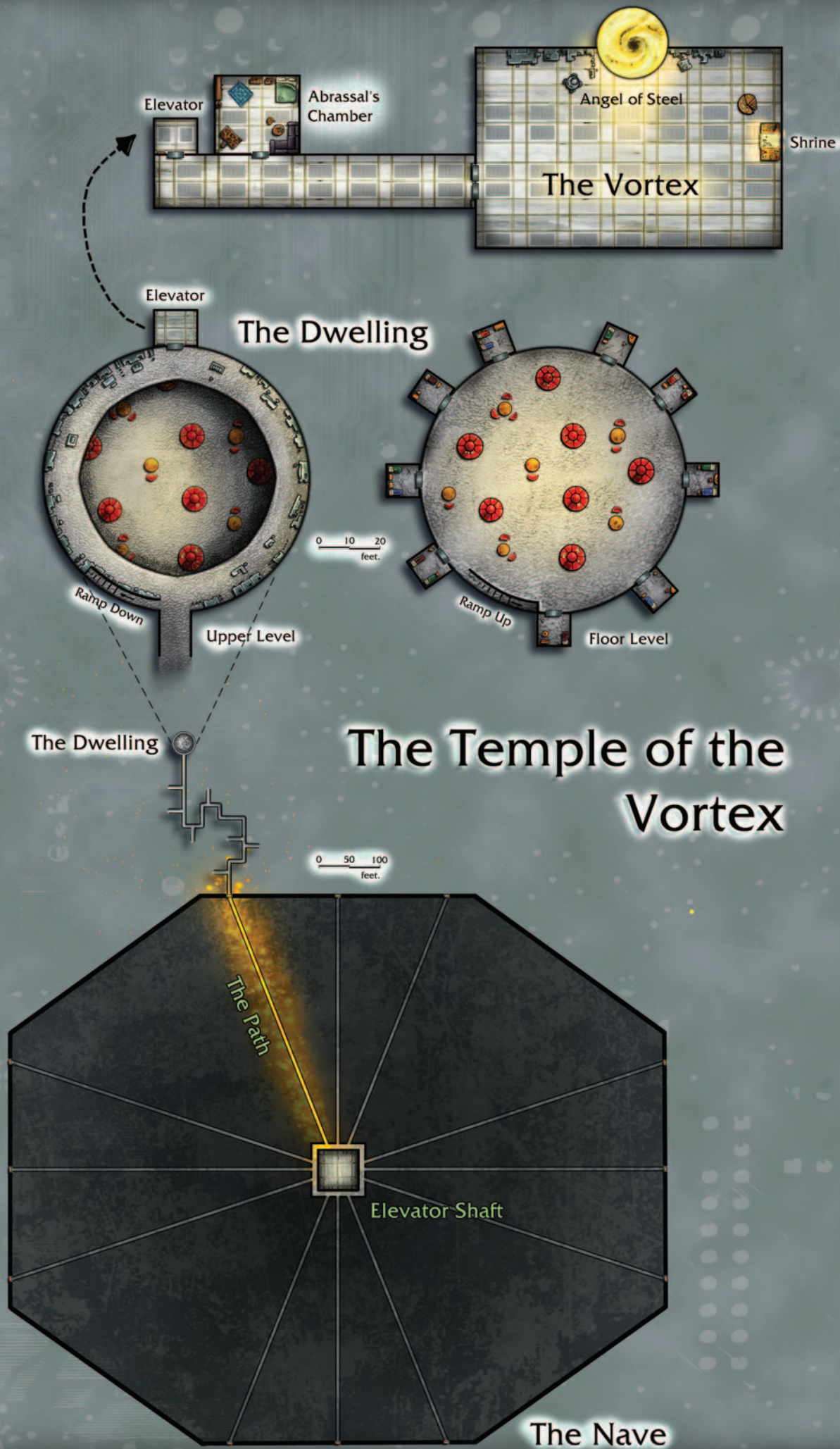
The path is decorated with beads, candles (some lit, most long burned down), incense, small religious icons, and miscellaneous shiny objects (small mirrors, shiny bits of metal taken from machines, and so on). There are thousands of these objects, strewn here over generations, marking the sides of the walkway leading from the elevator to one of the doors. Both the path and the railings bear the religious symbols.

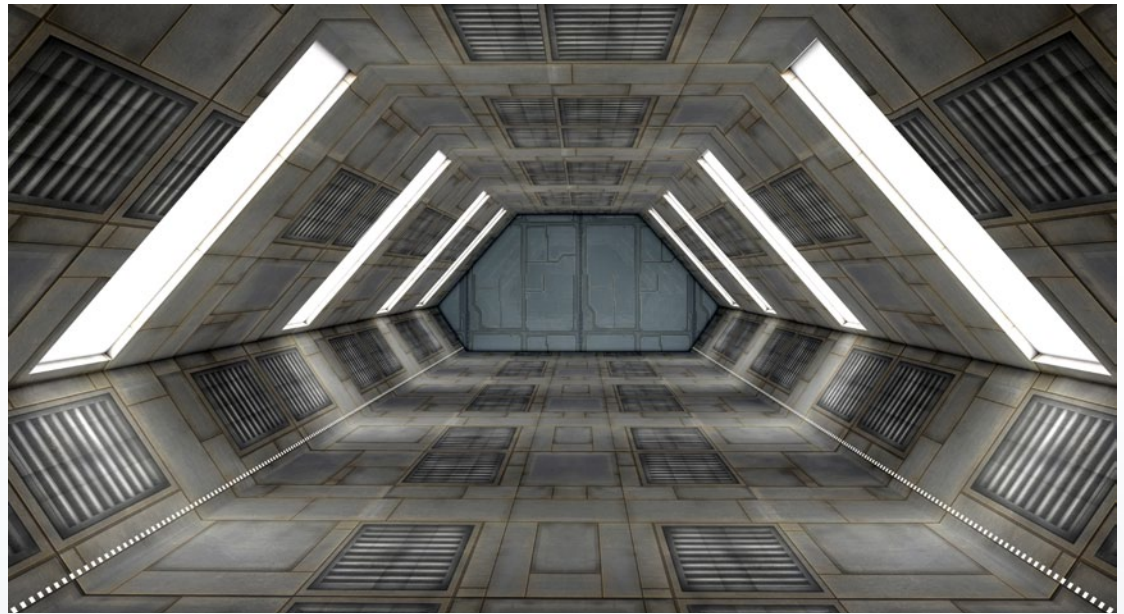
Thanks to the burning candles and incense, the path is dimly lit. It is the only light in the Nave, and thus the path is the only distinct area in the sea of darkness.

Religious Icons: Cult of the Vortex icons include spiral patterns, stylized sun symbols, and images of a very angular humanoid with four arms (the Angel of Steel; see page 10).

For some groups, the word “cult” is a loaded term that may unduly sway the actions of the PCs. If the GM believes this is the case, he should avoid using that word. Feel free to substitute words like “order” or “sect.”







The Door: The path leads along one of the walkways to a door. A keystick is required to open the door; players will need to press the topmost button on the stick to activate it. The door is almost 10 feet (3 m) wide and opens ponderously and loudly.

Beyond the door lies a corridor whose cross-section is hexagonal. The corridor leads a great distance farther into the huge structure. The religious path continues, so it is dimly lit by flickering candles. Although there are side passages and turns, if one keeps to the path, the seemingly endless maze is easily navigated to the heart of the cult, an area called

the Dwelling.

Veering off the path can be dangerous. See “Going off the Path” for more information.

THE DWELLING

The path eventually ends at a spot looking down into a well-lit, round chamber. From the entrance, a spiral ramp leads down to the floor 15 feet (4.6 m) below, although a 12-foot (3.7 m) wide ledge extends around the perimeter at that same height as well, effectively giving the room two levels. The ledge is covered in various control panels with screens, sliding switches, lit buttons, and more mysterious mechanisms. Everything appears to be functional, although the function is not readily apparent. A few panels have been scavenged for shins or other valuables.

At the floor level, round red couches furnish the space, along with a number of small, round tables. The floor itself is padded synth and is soft to walk upon. The room appears well lived in, with a few books and pillows scattered about the couches, dishes and cups upon the tables, and in more than one spot, one can see ashtrays filled with butts. There are nine small rectangular doors spaced equidistant around the room. Each of these doors opens easily by sliding into the wall (no keystick needed). Behind each is the living quarters of one to three of the cult members. Some are not currently used at all. Each is appointed and tailored to each cultist or cultists who live there, but they are fairly spartan and threadbare. Beds and bedding are worn, floors are stained, and so on. These rooms are lit by mounted glowglobes that cease functioning if removed.

In addition to the control panels, explorers also might find another elevator on the upper level. This also requires a keystick (pushing the bottom button again) to activate and takes people down to

GOING OFF THE PATH

The Temple of the Vortex is far too large to detail completely. Assume that it is a facility that goes for many miles. Lots of dark corridors, but a few are lit by panels on the ceiling. However, a few encounters for trailblazers could include:

- **A large, oval-shaped chamber** with a black globe depending from the ceiling. The globe is level 4 and senses movement and fires beams of destructive energy in rapid-fire fashion at intruders within long range, inflicting 8 points of damage. The globe has 2 points of Armor and 12 health and is 25 feet (7.6 m) from the floor. Whatever passage the PCs follow continues on the other side of the chamber.
- **A square, high-ceilinged chamber** with a wide and deep pool of clear, viscous fluid. It's not dangerous or poisonous, but it is so thick that it's impossible to really “swim” in. However, at the bottom lie some interesting-looking devices that fell in long ago. If the PCs can figure how to get them, they can scavenge 1d6+1 random cyphers.
- **A large control panel** in a long hallway. If someone can succeed on a difficulty 5 task, they can scavenge a random oddity from it. However, a GM intrusion could state that a sudden closing mechanism snaps shut on the character's hand, inflicting 3 points of damage and trapping them.



Abrassal's chamber and the vortex itself.

Occupants: If the full contingent of the cult is in the temple, everyone but Norrid, Relle, Abrassal, and Evanna are here. If caught unaware, they are simply minding their own business, relaxing, talking, or exercising. Most won't be wearing their robes. If they are expecting the PCs, they will be on their guard and in their robes.

It's worth noting that the cultists have played with the controls in this room for years and could never figure out what they do. They have raided some of them for valuables to pay for food when they leave the temple.

Loot: Further scavenging of the control panels here will yield 3d10 shins and 1d6 random cyphers. It is also very likely that anyone searching through the rooms will find at least one more keystick.

ABRASSAL'S CHAMBERS

This is a dimly lit, disgusting den of iniquity. Abrassal has abused his position and hoarded all of the cult's luxury and wealth. Here one will find a lavish bed, padded chairs and couches, a table covered in food and wine, beautiful artwork on the walls, soft carpets on the floor, and so on, all illuminated by a reddish glow that comes from the low ceiling. An observant PC might notice that there is no metal in this room

at all.

Occupants: If Abrassal does not know that the PCs are coming, this is very likely where he will be. In any case, this is where Shome can be found, chained to a large chair with synth manacles and eager for escape. The synth key for the manacles is hidden within a wooden chest full of other various belongings.

Loot: In a ceramic bowl, Abrassal keeps a mass of pills and small packets of powder. Most of these are depressants and hallucinogens, but three are level 4 anoetic cyphers:

1. Restores 1d6+4 points to any one stat Pool
2. Grants the imbiber +1 Speed Edge for one hour
3. Knocks the imbiber unconscious for one hour (or until vigorously awoken)

THE VORTEX

This room is the holy of holies of the temple, so to speak. It is a very large rectangular chamber, and in the center of one of the long walls is a raised circular platform surrounded by complex machinery. A vortex of energy swirls above this platform like a golden whirlpool in the air. Its radiance makes it difficult to look at, and its heat makes it difficult to stand near. It also creates a slight mind-inducing effect due to a high electromagnetic output at particular frequencies.





Those exposed to it have a subtle feeling of religious awe, as though they are experiencing something truly special.

The cultists know very well what happens to anything that *enters* the vortex. It is instantly incinerated in a flash of light and heat that hardly leaves any ash. They think of that as divine wrath. This is, essentially, 100 points of damage all at once.

The vortex is actually a wormhole that leads directly into the sun. The structure around it (what the cult calls the Temple) uses this as a power source. It is not intelligent in any way. It is not even necessarily the central focus of the vast structure.

In the center of one of the short walls of the rectangular chamber, the cult has built a shrine. This is covered in various icons, beads, candles, and incense, just like the path. On a wooden raised platform, reached by a short set of wooden steps, one can find a few handwritten religious books, decades old, written about the glory of the vortex by past members of the cult.

The Angel of Steel: Standing next to the vortex is a roundish figure of metal with four legs. The guardian

of the Vortex is a mechanical construct that the cult calls the Angel of Steel. They believe it to be a direct servant of the divine—a holy being. The automaton moves about the chamber, occasionally adjusting or altering machinery. It cannot speak or interact with anyone, but if the machinery in this chamber is threatened in any way, by anyone, it will attack.

Of course, the angel cannot come close to Abrassal and vice versa.

Angel of Steel

4 (12)

Description: The Angel of Steel is an automaton of metal and glass, with a round body and four long legs. It can produce up to four arms from panels within its round chest to manipulate objects or, if need be, attack and defend. It has no meaning in its existence other than to defend and maintain the vortex.

Motive: Defense

Health: 16

Damage Inflicted: 6 points

Armor: 3 (10 against heat)

Combat: The automaton can attack up to four foes as one action, although all must be within immediate distance of it and each other.

Interaction: The automaton cannot be reasoned with.

Loot: If destroyed, 1d6 cyphers can be scavenged from its remains.

INITIAL ENCOUNTER

The PCs are in the wilderness, well away from any civilized area (about six hours walk from the village of Jutte, but they don't even know this yet). They come upon a shallow stream flowing through a rough, lightly wooded landscape. Pausing at the bank for some water, they see that upstream something artificial rises from the flowing water.

Investigating, they find that it is the Narthex, but there's no way in. If the PCs investigate the streambed, they'll note that the sand and rocks are not positioned in such a way that it looks like the structure has been there long, even though it is obviously ancient. There are also a few dead fish, insects, and frogs on the riverbanks around it.

While they are looking at it, they hear people coming their way. The people are Gregor, Feán, Ashlin, Duranis, and Nile. They're carrying bags of food and other goods they procured in Jutte. If left to their own devices, the cultists perform a religious ritual before the Narthex, during which Gregor produces a keystick, and they open the door, go inside, close the door, and that's that. If the PCs stick around, the Narthex just disappears in about twenty minutes, leaving no sign of its presence other than a few dead fish and some disturbed sand that will likely return to normal in short order. Except for one



thing; Feán set down what he was carrying during the ritual—a burlap bag of vegetables and a leather shoulder bag that holds a few small tools, a pen, and his notebook (see below).

If the cultists are confronted—politely or not—Gregor is condescending and dismissive, asking them to go away. If they do not, he tells Ashlin to give them each a shin to go away. The cultists won't perform their ritual if there are people close enough to get into the Narthex with them when it opens. If the PCs agree to at least back off and give them a lot of room, the cultists don't care if they watch from afar (after all, they'll be disappearing soon). It's worth noting that the cultists are under time pressure, and they know it.

If the PCs threaten or attack them (a pretty shocking thing to do, actually, but not every PC is a good guy), they do not hesitate to fight back. They focus, however, on getting rid of the PCs as quickly as possible, and if that means driving them off rather than killing them, that's fine. They certainly do not give pursuit if the PCs do flee. This should be a hard fight for the PCs, so don't hesitate to use a GM intrusion to make it quite difficult.

If they watch the Narthex disappear, it's up to the players to decide what to do: go to Jutte, go to the next nearby spot marked in Feán's notebook, or ignore the whole thing and keep wandering in the wilderness.

If they kill the cultists, they'll have the map and the key. If they act quickly, they'll be able to get in before it disappears from the streambed.

FEÁN'S NOTEBOOK

This notebook is filled with maps, and one near the end is a map of this general area, with this precise spot marked, and time and dates that conform to about three days ago and the precise moment the Narthex disappears. It then shows a map of a completely different area of the world (unrecognizable to the PCs) with some dates and times that shows the Narthex will be moving around in places unreachable by the PCs for about ten days.

The map that shows this area, however, also has a spot marked that is about four days' journey away, on the other side of (and well beyond) a village named Jutte. The date and time for appearance is about ten days away, and the area is a hilly bit of wilderness miles from any settlement.

THE REAPPEARANCE

If the PCs go to where the Narthex will appear in ten days, it shows up on schedule. Soon after it appears, the door opens and Evanna comes out. She's trying to escape and is feeling guilt and fear for leaving Shome behind. If confronted, she will beg the PCs to go in and find Shome. She will give them her keystick.

VORTEX AS A CONVENTION GAME

This adventure was originally written as a two-round game for GenCon 2013, the launch of the *Numenera* game. If you are running this game at a convention, the key is in pacing. There are ways to speed up or slow down the pace as needed to create a satisfying adventure in the time allotted. For example, if it seems like the PCs are interested in exploring the temple, don't let them waste a lot of time in Jutte. But if they have little interest in the cult or the Narthex, then roleplaying some interactions in Jutte and playing up its lake monster might make for a very fun session all on its own.

If they go into the temple but insist on wandering off the path, the GM may decide to put a lot of sealed doors in their way, or have the maze of corridors lead them back to where the cult and the vortex is anyway.

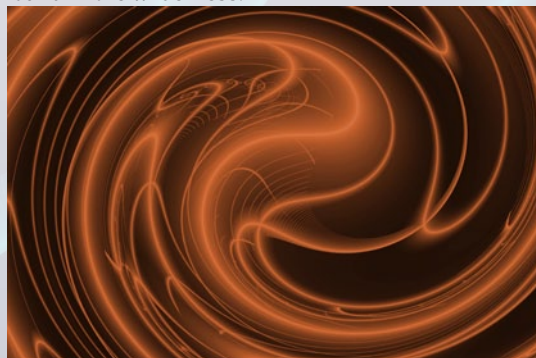
As a convention game, of course, the only goal is fun. However, should the PCs free Shome and deal with Abrassal one way or another, that's very likely the pinnacle of achievement in the Temple of the Vortex and sets them up nicely for the next part.

VORTEX AS A NON-CONVENTION GAME

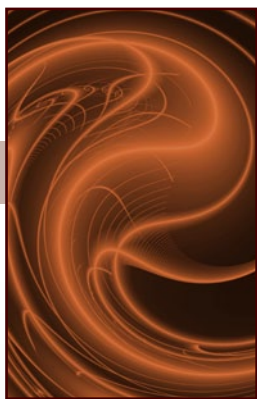
If this is used as a part of a campaign, you can obviously pace the game as you desire, and let the PCs explore (or not explore) as they desire.

For campaign play, award 2 XP to each PC who helps free Shome from his confinement and helps get him out of the temple. The discovery of the vortex is also worth 2 XP to each PC involved.

If the PCs do not interact with her, Gregor will lead another small expedition out of the temple later on, basically gathering fresh water and food that can be found in the wilderness.



It would be easy to transplant this adventure to any location in the Ninth World. The sparsely wooded region could just as easily be a desert, snow-covered tundra, or deep in the mountains.



PART 2

THROUGH THE VORTEX

The Vortex in the temple leads to an artificial habitat that floats, almost impossibly, within the sun. This location is known (to some, at least) as the Citadel of Radiance. Although its purpose is unknown, it now houses a number of constructs of pure mental energy, stored in a complex series of high-energy cells. The citadel is on the verge of finally succumbing to the incredible forces arrayed against it—primarily the heat and the gravity—and so it is crumbling and failing. Without special protection, no living creature could survive there long.

SYNOPSIS

The PCs are contacted by an intelligent artificial being named Aerridomos, who bids them to come to the Citadel of Radiance. First, however, they must find a special chamber within the temple that will clothe them in protective armor that will allow them to survive the trip through the vortex, as well as what lies on the other side of it. The chamber, called the Transformation Room, is a complex place of guardians and blessings, some of which aren't blessings at all.

The PCs explore the Citadel of Radiance, but their presence there only exacerbates its collapse. To help Aerridomos, they must figure out how to “flush” the system and free the psychic constructs within it, or—even better, but far more difficult—repair the citadel so that it does not collapse. But as they linger, the habitat becomes more and more unstable and dangerous.

MODIFYING THE ADVENTURE

This portion of *Vortex* is not particularly combat heavy. Adjustments might be needed to make it easier to repair the Citadel of Radiance or escape it alive, but in truth, doing so isn't recommended. Doing either should be extremely challenging for beginning characters and much easier for advanced characters. What GMs might want to do for advanced characters is introduce a second complication in the citadel. For example, multiple radiance knights that harass the PCs on an ongoing basis. Or the collapse of the armored sheaths while the PCs are still in the citadel, requiring

numenera knowledge (randomly required by the GM at different times for different characters, difficulty 7) to maintain them after, say, the first hour or so.

THE ENDANGERED RELIC-BEING

Things begin immediately after the death (or removal) of Abrassal, as one of the PCs senses something “strange.” It is as if there is a presence that wasn't there before. Soon thereafter, that character receives a telepathic message—like a radio broadcast directly into her brain. At first, it comes in a language she cannot understand. And then, in another language she still can't decipher. Finally, she can understand it, as if someone's been adjusting the transmission somehow. It says, “The wall is gone.”

This is from a very strange creature called Aerridomos. Aerridomos is an artificial construct powered by the psychic energies generated by the millions of different minds that helped create it (and others like it) in the deep past. It (they?) is one of many that has enjoyed a very long existence within the Citadel of Radiance but is now soon to be destroyed when that structure collapses. A byproduct of Abrassal's strange mutations was that he blocked Aerridomos from being able to sense or communicate with anything on this side of the vortex. With Abrassal gone, it can now reach out and attempt to communicate with intelligent creatures beyond the vortex (in the Temple), and the first ones contacted are the PCs.

Further communiqués include, “The invitation is open” and “If you come to where I am, any wish can be granted.” And finally, “But you must dress for the party.” This last message is followed by a mental set of directions guiding the PCs to the Transformation Room within the temple. As time goes on, Aerridomos will contact multiple PCs (and perhaps, eventually, all of them). It will not interact with them further (or more clearly) until they reach the Citadel of Radiance.

THE TRANSFORMATION ROOM

A 25-foot (7.6 m) high platform dominates this very large, odd-shaped chamber. Two smaller, round

GMs could change the tenor of this adventure by altering the PCs' goals and linking them to other events in the campaign.

Perhaps an item that they need lies somewhere within the Citadel. Or perhaps Aerridomos will reveal a secret that the PCs need if they assist it.



platforms on single support poles stand at a similar height on either side of it. Beyond it is a circular pool, with two large metal machines jutting out of the far wall above it, each sporting a massive mechanical arm. Characters likely first notice two large yellow crystals mounted on marble stands within alcoves that flank a ramp leading up to the central platform. However, closest to the entrance to the room are a pair of golden tripods that stand about as tall as a man.

The ceiling is twice the height of the platforms. A small side room is connected via an 8-foot (2.4 m) diameter circular tunnel. It contains a single control console.

This complex chamber contains many different devices, many of which are thought-controlled. However, they are not designed for the brains of Ninth World humans, and so the results are particularly strange.

Tripods: These level 8 devices are very sturdy and firmly affixed to the floor. They do nothing until someone begins to ascend the ramp. When someone does, each of these things begins to exude long crystalline growths that quickly form a circular lattice, eventually appearing to be a globular “snowflake” of a sort, about 4 feet (1.2 m) across. They fly across the room toward the offender and make spinning attacks with their razor-sharp crystal spines. Perhaps more dangerous, however, they take control of creatures’ perceptions, causing them to attack their friends rather than foes, make them walk off the platform without realizing it, and so on.

If the snowflakes are destroyed, characters can scavenge a small crystal shard (one per snowflake) that serves as a level 4 anoetic cypher that restores 4 points to the user’s Intellect Pool.

No more than two snowflakes are created per 28-hour period.

The Crystals: These level 7 crystalline structures stand tall enough so that a character might barely reach the top with arms outstretched. They immediately attune to the minds of anyone that enters the room, to the best of their ability. Whatever their original use, they are now weird and dangerous. The possible effects produced are varied and specific to each individual. The GM should choose (or determine randomly) the effect on each character when they enter the room. (Do not forget any NPCs that might be present.) Do not use any effect twice, generating new weird effects if necessary.

- Character goes through a powerful and painful molecular rearrangement that takes a full minute—during which he can do nothing—and when it is over, is 3 inches (7.6 cm) taller.
- Character gains the ability to speak a new language almost immediately. It is, however, a weird language very difficult for him to physically

speak. Moreover, much of the vocabulary he learns are for creatures, places, objects, and so forth that he cannot understand. And of course, no one else in the Ninth World currently speaks this language.

- Character is knocked unconscious for one minute, during which time he cannot be roused. When he does awaken, he is horribly thirsty. However, after he drinks he is never thirsty again.
- Character floats 10 feet (3 m) into the air and hovers for one round. Then, he drops and suffers 1 point of damage. If the character lingers in the area within 30 feet (9 m) of the crystals, this happens again.
- A small animal appears (it is literally created, molecule by molecule, by the crystals) that looks like a hairy bird about the size of a chicken with four catlike legs. Its hair is striped black and orange. It licks the character with a long, mammalian tongue and then wanders off.
- Liquid begins to condense all over the character’s body until he is completely coated in an orange, syrupy mixture. It is bitter but not poisonous. However, it is very difficult to clean off, being weirdly repellant to other liquids and sticky and gummy when one tries to wipe it off otherwise.

If the crystals are somehow destroyed, characters can scavenge three small crystal shards (per larger crystal) that serve as level 7 cyphers and restore 7 points to the user’s Intellect Pool.

The Platforms: Characters standing or walking upon any of the platforms feel a tingling sensation in their feet and hear what sounds like distant screams and screeches. The direction and distance (and source) of the sound can never be found.

If any creature stands upon the dais on the platform, the level 6 mechanical arms on the wall attempt to grab it. If they succeed, they immediately immerse the creature in the liquid in the pool.

The Pool: The pool is filled with a liquid compound of smart molecules. If a creature is fully immersed in the liquid, the liquid forms a sheath of complex metallic and ceramic armor around it. The creature is entirely encased. The armor supersedes any armor that a character is already wearing (it is unharmed, but it is also superfluous). The protected creature has 4 points of Armor and 100 points of Armor against fire and heat (and can thus survive the transition through the vortex). If the armor is breached, which is to say, if the wearer suffers more than 4 points of damage at once, the armor is breached, but the hole automatically seals within one second. This armor lasts for 28 hours before decomposing.

Further, the armor emits a high frequency sound when it first forms, which puts the direct path to the

Deadly Snowflake: *Level 4; 2 Armor; 6 points of damage; anyone within immediate range must make an Intellect defense roll or the snowflake takes control of their perception and the affected creature does not realize it.*





Initial cost,
page 89

GM Intrusion: *With a whine and a shudder, part of the room or hall around the character collapses. If she fails a Speed defense roll, she suffers 6 points of damage and is pinned (remember that suit breach is an additional 5 points of damage). It takes a level 7 Might task or two full man-hours to free a pinned character. Even if the Speed defense roll is successful, the character sustains 3 points of damage.*

vortex in the mind of the wearer.

Control Console: No sense can be made of these controls, or what they are for. However, if a character with two powered cyphers (a device, not a pill or liquid or the like) messes with the controls, these is a burst of electrical power that inflicts 3 points of damage to all within immediate range who fail a Speed defense roll. Meanwhile, the character has one cypher drained of power and the other now can be used twice. This strange effect happens only once.

Characters can scavenge the following from this panel:

- 32 shins
- A level 7 artifact called the death by angles. This object can be used as a weapon that fires a beam of energy up to long range. The beam always bounces off of inorganic materials but not living tissue or organic materials. So the weapon can only be used against living targets (or an organic, nonliving target). However, the beam is harmless unless it ricochets off a surface first. Strangely, the beam never ricochets in the way that a character expects, so attack rolls with the weapon are two steps more difficult than normal. The weapon inflicts 7 points of damage. Particularly skilled users discover that if the beam reflects off of more than one surface, the damage increases. For every additional surface, the difficulty increases by one step, but the damage increases by 3 (maximum 19 points). Depletion for this artifact is 1 in 1d20.
- A level 3 anoetic cypher in the form of a small jar's worth of oil. If a character coats an inanimate object with this oil, the object becomes almost indestructible (treat as level 10 for durability). There is enough for a single object, about the size of a sword, a shield, or a small case.
- An oddity in the form of three separate silver lozenges about an inch (2.5 cm) long that attach to flesh (but can be pried off with difficulty), but only if all three are on the same creature.

BACK TO THE VORTEX

The trip back to the vortex is uneventful and simple. If there are any cultists left in the temple, they will certainly flee and hide at the sight of the PCs encased in the armoring sheaths gained in the Transformation Room (which they've never seen before).

THE CITADEL OF RADIANCE

The Citadel of Radiance quite literally floats within the corona of the sun. The portions accessible to those that travel through the vortex are in fact only a portion of a large orbiting structure that has floated there,

weathering the impossible environment, for millions of years.

Now, however, the citadel is beginning to fail. The heat shields falter, and it is 180 degrees F (82 degrees C) within its rooms and corridors. Without the protective suits that the PCs very likely wore to handle the transition from the Temple of the Vortex, they would suffer 5 points of damage each round from the heat. This damage inflicted is immediate, so if a PC's protective suit is breached, even for a moment, he suffers 5 points of damage. PCs might not realize the interior of the citadel is so hot, at least at first, thanks to their protective sheaths.

Surfaces: All surfaces (floors, walls, and ceiling) are green synth and smooth, with rounded corners. It is a stark contrast to the Temple of the Vortex.

Doors: All doors in the citadel are stuck due to the buckling of the interior structure. Opening any of them is a level 4 Might task with an initial cost of 1 Might.

Debris: There is debris throughout the structure. Unless otherwise described, to clear a path through a debris area marked on the map would require ten man-hours (unless the workers possess some sophisticated cutting tools or numenera devices that would make it easier).

THE COLLAPSING STRUCTURE

Catastrophic forces are twisting and tearing at the citadel. This isn't new. It's been going on for ages. But the habitat has already survived far longer than its builders ever planned, and the unimaginable heat and pressure are finally winning. The force fields and hyper-advanced materials of the structure began to fail decades ago.

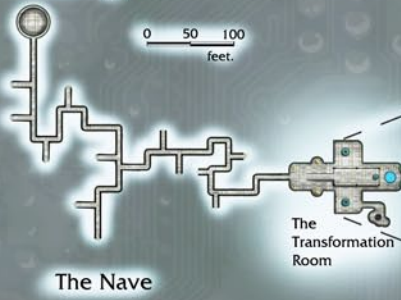
The interior of the structure also falters. Support beams buckle and break. Ceiling panels fall. Debris chokes the ground in places, making certain areas inaccessible. Debris is everywhere.

The presence of the PCs likely accelerates the collapse, unless they are extremely careful. More than likely, they will experience some dramatic and dangerous events while they are there, and they may very well have to flee to escape the citadel alive.

There is no strict timeline, nor is there some kind of die roll involved. Instead, the GM should use intrusions to let the players know that things are accelerating. At first, the GM should just describe the sounds of metal screeching and synth bending and snapping. The PCs should feel the surfaces around them shudder. Eventually, after about a half hour—or after the PCs have explored four or more areas of the citadel—the GM should use a GM intrusion to have a PC potentially caught in the collapse.

These should accelerate in frequency. The next dangerous collapse should occur after they have explored three more areas. Then two. After the third collapse that might damage a character, the next one

The Dwelling



The Nave

The Transformation Room



The Transformation Room



The Citadel of Radiance

Vortex

10

1

4

2

5

9

3

6

7

GM Intrusion: *There is a groan and finally a loud bang. All characters must attempt a Speed defense roll, and failure means that the character falls into a rent that has formed in the floor by the twisting of the citadel. Characters suffer 5 points of damage and are caught (remember that suit breach is an additional 5 points of damage). It takes a level 7 Might task or two full man-hours to free a caught character.*

potentially affects all of the characters. And after that one, the citadel begins to experience a catastrophic failure.

Catastrophic Failure: Once this happens, the PCs should flee back through the vortex quickly or they will be trapped here and die. PCs need to attempt three separate Speed tasks (difficulty 4). Success on all three means that the character gets out of the citadel before it collapses. Failure on either of the first two means that the character is moving too slowly and the difficulty of all further tasks increases by one step. Thus, if a character fails the first task, the next two are difficulty 5, and if he fails the next one, the difficulty is 6. The last one is the most important, as the success or failure of that roll determines whether the character gets through in time, or doesn't and is caught in the collapse.

GMs wishing to can modify the difficulty of the checks based on the location of the character when he begins to flee or other circumstances. Those right by the vortex in area 1, for example, should always get away safely.

AREA 1: THE FAR SIDE OF THE VORTEX

This squarish chamber has a raised circular platform set into one wall. A vortex of energy swirls above this platform like a golden whirlpool in the air. Its radiance makes it difficult to look at, and its heat makes it difficult to stand near. It also creates a slight mind-inducing effect due to a high electromagnetic output at particular frequencies. Those exposed to it have a subtle feeling of religious awe, as though they are experiencing something truly special.

Characters may hear Aerridomos's telepathic "welcome" once they reach this chamber.

AREA 2: CLEAR CHAMBER

No debris blocks this area. However, if the PCs enter this room, a red light on the ceiling flashes. While no other obvious effect is evident, what they do not know is that the radiance knight in area 7 has been alerted and will come to find them between one to two minutes from the start of the light flashing.

AREA 3: STOREHOUSE

A character (probably a small or thin one) can worm his way through the rubble and get into this room, but doing so is a difficulty 5 Speed task. Failure means that the character is caught, trapped, or stuck. A difficulty 4 Might task is required to free him, and doing so causes the debris to shift and more of the ceiling to fall. This increases the difficulty of further attempts at either task by one step.

Inside the room are various goods—sealed synth packets of food and water, weird tools, and items the PCs have no name for—on shelves, or in oval-shaped synth containers that seal when closed but are easily opened. Some of the objects stored here have warped, melted, or otherwise been spoiled by the intense heat. The food, for example, has burned (if it was ever digestible by humans in the first place) but the water is fine, although near boiling. The tools are all fine, although most have little meaning to the PCs. There are no weapons of any kind here.

The GM should feel free to place 1d6 random oddities here, amid the clutter of mostly non-functioning, incomprehensible items.

AREA 4: THE WEIRD SKELETON

Amid the debris in this room is the ancient (but remarkably well preserved) skeleton of a multi-





limbed, asymmetrical creature with three-fingered hands and a large, triangular skull. No creature like this is known in the Ninth World.

AREA 5: THE SOLAR SHIELDS

This hallway is at the outer edge of the citadel. The windows along the corridor are heavily shielded, but still radiance from the outside comes in.

In the wide, more rectangular area, there is a level 3 control console. Most of it appears to no longer function, but someone knowledgeable might be able to completely close the windows with heavy synth shields (on the inside). Alternatively, a large mechanism on the outside can be maneuvered that will give further shielding to this half of the citadel on the outside. This mechanism is faulty, however, and messing with it destabilizes the station further with a horrible grinding noise. At this point, saving the station just became even more difficult (see area 9).

Using this panel activates a red light similar to the one found in area 2 that draws the radiance knight from area 7 in about a minute.

Dismantling and scavenging from this panel yields 3d6 shins and 1d6 random cyphers.

AREA 6: ENERGY CELLS

The room is filled with transparent columns that rise from floor to ceiling. About half of them are broken, but the rest pulse with energy. Energy outside the citadel is drawn in and stored here, although the uses for this energy no longer exist.

If a character is successful in a level 5 numenera task, she can recover two minor energy cells from the broken columns. Either of these can be affixed to a used cypher to grant it an additional use if another numenera task is successful (use cypher level to determine difficulty).

AREA 7: THE RADIANCE KNIGHT

The perimeter of this large chamber is lined with columns made of bundles of transparent tubes, like those in area 6 but far more complex. In the middle of the room, a pedestal holds a large crystal connected to a small, curved, transparent screen. The columns are the storage cells that hold the constructs like Aerridomos. The pedestal is a level 4 control console that monitors the storage cells. Examinations might suggest that the cells hold living energy forms (unlike in area 6), and perhaps might convey a prison-like motif, but neither observation is entirely accurate. The constructs within the cells are not alive, but they are aware and intelligent. They are not held against their will, but in fact know no other existence.

Dismantling and scavenging from this pedestal yields one random cypher.

The small room off to one side, behind the door, holds an armored, bioengineered automaton



guardian called the radiance knight. This guardian wears armor similar to the sheath the PCs wear, although it seems more suited to battle. He ignores gravity and bears a shield and a built-in energy blade. If the knight hasn't already come out, he comes out when the PCs enter this area and attacks immediately. He cannot be reasoned with—he attacks all intruders and fights to the death.

If the knight is slain, the blade can be removed with a numenera knowledge roll and used as an artifact that acts as a normal broadsword that inflicts 5 points of heat damage with a depletion of 1 in 1d100. Failure on that numenera task means that the blade no longer functions.

AREA 8: COMMUNICATION ROOM

Coming into this room immediately triggers a collapse event (with no GM intrusion needed). With a whine and a shudder, the floor collapses beneath one character. She must make a Speed defense roll or fall into a hole leading down into the metallic superstructure of the citadel. The character suffers 5 points of damage and is caught (remember that suit breach is an additional 5 points of damage). It takes a level 7 Might task or two full man-hours to free a caught character.

Communication Screen: Along one wall is a massive glass screen. This is a level 2 device that, if activated, allows the PCs to visualize Aerridomos, a creature of interconnected energy strands. They can also talk to it for the first time. Aerridomos speaks in a stilted, alien manner. It knows nothing of the

GM Intrusion: Messing with any of the control panels in the citadel accidentally causes the artificially controlled gravity to malfunction, effectively making it so that the place is at zero gravity for the rest of the adventure (unless it can be repaired).



Fighting in zero gravity, page 98

Radiance Knight: Level 5, defends as level 6 due to shield; 24 health; 4 armor

Remember that suit breaches result in 5 points of additional damage. This is true for the radiance knight as well as the PCs.



If a PC uses the Wishing Well more than once or twice, it takes a heavy toll. GMs should feel free to inflict permanent Intellect damage on characters who press their luck too far.

GM Intrusion: *As the PCs use the Wishing Well to attempt to repair the station, a rent opens in the outer hull, pulling the character out and into the sun unless he (or another character standing nearby) can make a difficulty 4 Speed roll.*

Ninth World or even of Earth. It knows only that it has existed here in a state of perpetual bliss. It knows that the citadel floats within the sun, and that it will not exist much longer. It asks the PCs if they can fix the citadel (it has no idea how to do so). If they say that they cannot, it says that there is a way to exile them to a safe location somewhere in the citadel. It would rather they do that than allow it (and those like it) to die. It also knows that there is something in the citadel of incredible power that it calls the Wishing Well, but it has no idea what the well does or how to use it.

The screen also allows the PCs to view other constructs, but none are able to communicate.

AREA 9: THE WISHING WELL

The level 5 door to this room is locked. Within is a floating sphere of radiance about 2 feet (0.6 m) across. This sphere is an incredibly advanced and powerful molecular reassembler of level 8. A character attempting to use it must place his hands inside the ball of light and manipulate it with both his hands and his mind. This is incredibly difficult, like performing multiple complex math calculations at once. If successful, the user can reshape any matter currently in the station. A wounded character could be healed, a healthy character could be physically improved (adding 1d6 points to her Might or Speed Pool), or a device could be repaired or even created from the air (if the “wishing” character could make the device). And the citadel could be repaired, or at least stabilized, although doing so would require at least two uses of the device as the structure is large and complex—three if the PCs have caused further damage, such as by using the panel in area 5.

The possibilities of the device are vast. The GM can

afford to be generous with interpreting the effects as by this point, the time pressure will be significant and the task is so difficult.

Using the Wishing Well is taxing. There is an initial cost of 4 Intellect points, and the difficulty of further attempts to use the device without significant rest is increased by one step.

The Wishing Well cannot be moved from this chamber. It is powered by the energy absorbed from the sun and could never function anywhere else.

Attempting to use the device to repair the station but failing is very likely to hasten its demise.

AREA 10: THE EXILE PANEL

This chamber bears a single level 3 control panel. Its use activates the red light as described in areas 2 and 5. This panel has one function—it flushes the mental constructs out of the cells in area 7 to somewhere else. It does not reveal where, but it is away from the station.

Dismantling and scavenging from this panel yields 3d6 shins and 1d6 random cyphers.

FURTHER ADVENTURE IDEAS

The Temple of the Vortex is vast, and the cultists haven't explored even a fraction of it. It could hold all sorts of wonders. There also might be other entrances and exits that move through space in ways different from the Narthex.

The Citadel of the Radiance will likely be destroyed by the end of the adventure, but where did Aerridomos and the other constructs go if they were “exiled”? This is left to the GM to determine. But perhaps the PCs have not heard the last of their strange friend—who now owes them a debt.

CONVENTION GAME

Obviously, this part of the scenario is only applicable to a convention game if it is a two-part game, and it follows Part 1. This was the second round at GenCon 2013, and only one group out of twelve advanced to play it. Aaron Peterson, Michael Sanders, Nick Barone, Yoshi Creelman, and Troy Pichelman were the players who qualified for the second round, and they performed admirably, achieving a partial victory by saving Aerridomos but not the citadel. It could be used as a stand-alone event as well, but a different beginning point would likely have to be created.

The key to running this as a convention scenario is ensuring that the ending—very likely involving the complete collapse of the citadel—is dramatic and that the PCs just barely make it out. There are many GM intrusions built into this scenario, but the ending might force a number of XP earned to be used to make rerolls to get out safely.

Using the panel to download Aerridomos and the others can be thought of as a partial victory, while using the Wishing Well to repair the station would be a total victory (although without advanced characters, it's very unlikely).

Each part might provide about three to five hours of play.

NON-CONVENTION GAME

This is a very difficult, dangerous scenario that could easily end in PC death, despite the fact that the PCs all wear super-advanced armor throughout. A GM will have to monitor the situation carefully. PCs that discover the Transformation Room gain 2 XP, and they likewise get 2 XP for exploring the Citadel of the Radiance. They should earn 2 bonus XP for saving Aerridomos by exiling him with the controls in area 10, or 4 XP for repairing the citadel.