

# THE STRANGE™



## MASTODON

BY BRUCE R. CORDELL

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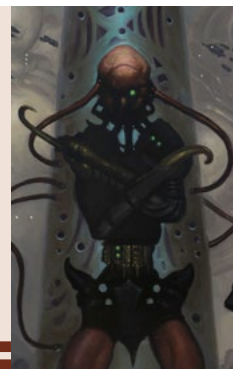


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## INTRODUCTION

*Mastodon* is an adventure for The Strange suitable for beginning players. It starts on Earth but fairly quickly asks that PCs travel (translate) to the Mad Science recursion called Ruk. As an adventure designed to be run at a convention, *Mastodon* throws the characters right into the action. In addition, you'll see alerts designed to give convention GMs cues regarding timing, and advice on whether or not to dive fully into a written encounter depending on the amount of time remaining for the session. Of course, GMs running *Mastodon* at home have more temporal freedom.



## SYNOPSIS

The PCs must figure out who or what is killing former members of a secret military program codenamed Mastodon before they die next. Doing so requires that the characters translate to Ruk, on the trail of the Mastodon Project's civilian consultant, Amelia Chun. She supposedly died ten years ago, but she's very much alive and a native of Ruk, where she goes by the name Amla-shoon. She's the one responsible for killing former Mastodon unit members and other ongoing atrocities. The PCs have the opportunity to stop her if they can locate her hidden lab in Ruk, which is challenging for Earthborn natives to navigate.

## INTRODUCE THE CYPHER SYSTEM

If you are running *Mastodon* at a convention, begin by introducing the Cypher System to the players. Fairly soon, let the players choose from the pregenerated characters that come with this adventure. When doing so, provide the following summary of each character. Letting the players have the character sheets in front of them will help you explain the game system.

**Camille Valentine:** Stronger than she looks, Camille likes to carry a baseball bat when she looks for trouble. She's good in a fight.

**Kevin Chancellor:** Taking nothing at face value, Kevin is an expert in fringe science and has the ability to zap things at a distance with his mind.

**Léopold Watson:** Brash and rarely afraid, Léopold is good in a fight and at solving mysteries.

**Luis Ventura:** Tough as nails, Luis has a way of encouraging his friends to great heights and fast-talking foes into looking the other way.

**Padma Ananda:** Pleasant and appealing, Padma can sometimes foretell the future and move things with her mind. Rather than coming

across as scary, she's funny and puts those around her at ease.

**Yuki Kobayashi:** Yuki has always been lucky, which is convenient when she pretends to be someone else or when she applies her amazing computer hacking skills.

**Ruk Focus Sheets:** Do not give players the Ruk focus sheets associated with each character yet (pages 35-40). Hand them out when the time comes for the PCs to access their Ruk foci (when they translate to Ruk).

**Experience Points:** As part of the introduction, tell the players that you're giving them each 1 experience point (XP) and that one of the things they can do with it is reroll a bad die roll. They can also use 1 XP to refuse a **GM intrusion**.

**Difficulty and Effort:** If you're running this adventure at a convention or for players new to the Cypher System, explain the difficulty of tasks, attacks, and defense rolls they're attempting (and the number that must be rolled) during the game. This helps players to understand more quickly how the game works and whether applying Effort is something that is reasonable to do.

**Wrapping Up:** Introducing the characters and the Cypher System should take ten to fifteen minutes. Once the players understand the basics, start the adventure.

*Translation, page 125*

*Recursion, page 134*

*Ruk, page 190*

*GM intrusion, page 121*

## COREBOOK CALLOUTS

Throughout this adventure, you'll see page references to various items accompanied by this symbol. These are page references to The Strange corebook, where you can find additional details about that item, place, creature, or concept. It isn't necessary to look up the referenced items in the corebook; it's an optional way to learn more about the situation and provide additional information to your players.

## ADVENTURE START

Once you've wrapped up introducing the Cypher System and players have chosen their characters, read or paraphrase the following.

### *read aloud*

*You were recruited into a secret military unit, codenamed Mastodon, where you were trained to awaken and use latent paranormal abilities. Funding for the unit eventually fell apart, and you returned to civilian life. That was ten years ago. You'd almost forgotten about your time in the service—until other members of your old unit started turning up dead, one by one.*

*Lieutenant Alessandra Torres, your old unit commander, made contact with you, and she invited you to New York after the most recent murder so you can meet, compare notes, and try to figure out what's going on. Given that she paid for your airfare and hotel, it was easy to accept the invitation.*

The PCs begin play having just arrived at the Milagro Hotel in midtown Manhattan, New York. Torres arranged a private room in the hotel for the meeting.

But having arrived early, the characters meet about twenty minutes ahead of time in the hotel bar. Alessandra Torres hasn't arrived yet (or perhaps she is upstairs setting up the meeting room—the PCs don't know). Over drinks, the characters can introduce themselves, establish their connections with each other, and ask the GM for additional pertinent information about their time at Mastodon.

**Introductions:** First, ask the players to introduce their characters to the group, including the connection information in the second paragraph of their Background, unless the players want to keep that part secret. The players may also decide to reveal their characters' personal history (the first paragraph under Background). Introductions should take five or ten minutes.

**Tell the PCs More About Mastodon:** The characters probably have a few questions for you.

Use the Mastodon Project section to answer. If they don't have questions, tell them about the unit in general terms as described in that section. Be sure to tell the players about their characters' previous translation to Ruk, which is important information. It will give them confidence later in the adventure when they must translate to Ruk once more.

Spend no more than ten minutes talking about Mastodon. If you're tracking the time during convention play, it should take no more than 35 minutes to introduce the game system, have the players introduce their characters, and answer questions. Then it's time to move on.

**Time to Meet Alessandra:** Let the players know the time for their meeting with Alessandra—scheduled for the hotel's Ibis Room at 6 p.m. sharp—is almost upon them. Torres never showed at the bar; she's presumably waiting in the Ibis Room.

## IBIS ROOM

At 6 p.m., the PCs are scheduled to meet Alessandra Torres in a Milagro Hotel meeting room called the Ibis Room. The Ibis Room is on the third floor, flanked by several other meeting rooms, and the PCs can reach it by elevator or stairs. No other meetings are scheduled for the evening; a sign shows only the Ibis Room in use, reserved for "Mastodon Party" at 6:00.

When the PCs arrive in the room—whether it's early, late, or right on time—they discover everything has gone to hell.

### *read aloud*

*The double doors under the sign reading "IBIS ROOM" are wide open. Inside, you see something your brain at first refuses to believe: three velociraptors in the hungry, gory flesh. Two of them tear at a woman's corpse lying at the base of a movable whiteboard. The other one advances on three people in hotel livery who cower in the back of the meeting room, eyes wide with terror.*

Reveal **Show 'Em A** (page 20) to the players.



*Be sure to tell the players about their characters' previous translation to Ruk, which is important information. It will give them confidence later in the adventure when they must translate to Ruk once more.*

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## MASTODON PROJECT

The PCs all had the rank of specialist during their time at the Mastodon Project. Their training involved a lot of boring stuff interspersed with moments of wonder, including trippy experiences involving a drug regimen that allowed the team to “unlock their full potential.”

A big focus of Mastodon was to give specialists the ability to astrally project into realms other than those known on Earth, though civilian contractor Amelia Chun referred to the process as “translation,” not “astral projection.”

## TRANSLATION TO RUK

One crazy evening, the unit conducted a joint exercise in which everyone simultaneously translated to a realm called Ruk, which the PCs remember as a fantastic panorama similar to an epic science fiction city scene, filled with flying cars, living skyscrapers, and a dense populace so heavily bio-modified that most citizens hardly looked human. The strangest thing of all was that when the characters arrived in Ruk, they fit right in, adopting similarly wild and nonhuman forms, and gaining strange new memories, as if they’d always lived there.

The PCs remember that experience, though some recall it as an acid trip or a dream. A few might have repressed it until talking about it at the bar brings it to mind.

## MASTODON EXTINCTION

After the first successful test, the Mastodon Project was dissolved and everyone involved was discharged because of the death of Amelia Chun. It was never really explained how she died, and the PCs received their honorable discharge and stipend so quickly that none of them looked into it afterward. After the unit disbanded, none of the characters kept in direct touch with one another or with other former members of the organization for long.

## MASTODON ORGANIZATION

The org chart for Mastodon was simple.

**Captain Anson Brady:** The captain headed up the program and seemed to the characters like a stand-up guy. No one has had contact with him since.

**Amelia Chun:** Brady’s right-hand woman—and the one who really seemed to know how to make latent powers active—was civilian contractor Amelia Chun. The project was shut down after she was mysteriously killed. How she died was never revealed to the characters. Her death seemed to hit Brady particularly hard.

**Lieutenant Alessandra Torres:** The PCs’ direct unit commander, Torres trained along with the characters. Like Brady, none of the PCs ever had an issue with her.

**Six Other Specialists:** The PCs recall six other specialists who rounded out the unit. Unfortunately, according to the message Alessandra sent, they’ve all been killed under suspicious circumstances. The names are not especially important to the plot, but if the PCs insist on asking, feel free to use the names on the whiteboard in the Ibis Room.



## DINOSAUR ATTACK

Ask the players to roll for initiative, and explain the following tactical information to them.

The two “velociraptors” eating the corpse (actually, they’re called *deinonychus*, as a savvy character might know) immediately look up and lock eyes on the characters. These two creatures are an immediate distance from the entrance where PCs begin the encounter.

The *deinonychus* advancing on the three cowering hotel staff in the rear of the room is a short distance from the entrance. The staff, all the way across the large room, are just beyond short distance from the entrance.

One other exit to the Ibis Room, on the left-hand wall from the entrance, is currently closed (it leads to a neighboring meeting room, which is empty). This door is also just beyond short distance from where the PCs begin the encounter.

Finally, the corpse is Lieutenant Alessandra Torres, minus one hand and major organs. If a PC wants to investigate the body of their former lieutenant more closely while the fight rages, see Aftermath of Dinosaur Attack, below.

**Deinonychus Tactics:** The two velociraptors eating the corpse recognize the PCs as a threat and as fresh food; they attack the characters like

*A specialist (SPC) is just above private first class in the Army military rank and receives pay equivalent to a corporal.*

**Deinonychus (velociraptor):** *level 4, perception as level 5; health 15; Armor 1; bite inflicts 4 points of damage, and victim who fails a Might defense roll is held in its jaws and takes 6 points of claw damage each round until he breaks free with a Might roll; for more details, see The Strange Bestiary, page 40*

**GM Intrusion:** Another hotel staff member walks into the room from the side door, and a deinonychus attacking a PC breaks off and goes for the staffer.

**Hotel staffer:** level 2, tasks related to running a hotel as level 5

Anson Brady, page 7

Breakaway Couriers, page 7

Amla-shoon, page 15

the savage, fearless predators they are. Unless distracted by attacks that deal damage, the other velociraptor continues to advance on the three helpless-seeming hotel staffers. If the PCs do nothing to prevent it, a hotel staff member is killed every other round until all three are dead, and messily so.

## AFTERMATH OF DINOSAUR ATTACK

After the initial creatures are dealt with, the PCs have a chance to investigate in peace.

**Freaked-Out Hotel Staff:** First, the characters should deal with the freaked-out hotel staff, if any survived. Bringing a spinner's gifts to bear might do it, especially if the PCs can provide some kind of even halfway-plausible explanation to paste over what happened (such as "people in dinosaur costumes—we're shooting a prank TV show"). Surviving hotel staff risk developing post-traumatic stress disorder. More immediately, they set off an alarm, which will bring police and other official involvement within fifteen minutes.

**Alessandra's Remains:** Alessandra is a terrible sight to behold. Near her is her purse, the movable whiteboard, and a white plastic courier package.

**Alessandra's Purse:** In her purse, Alessandra has three cyphers, various odds and ends one might find in a purse (including \$50), and a smartphone. The smartphone has only one recent number in the call history that is not one of the PCs. It belongs to Anson Brady, and it's been called several times in the last week. The number is a local New York number.

**Courier Package:** A white plastic courier package lies open on the floor near the corpse. The package is addressed to "Alessandra Torres, Milagro Hotel" in unfamiliar handwriting, marked URGENT! A bicycle logo and the company name Breakaway Couriers is stamped on the front. Inside, an investigating PC discovers a glossy photo of a "Lost World" landscape rife with dinosaurs, primeval foliage, and volcanoes. This is the still-active murder weapon—a cypher bomb.

**GM Intrusion:** As the photo is withdrawn from the package, a deinonychus head emerges from the flat image in a physics-twisting moment, and it snaps at the neck of the character holding the photo. Because this is a surprise attack, the difficulty of the character's Speed defense roll is increased by two steps.

The victim can choose among many options on her turn; however, if she doesn't choose to rip the glossy photo in half, on the deinonychus's next turn, it fully emerges. (The victim can rip the glossy in two even if the creature's jaws have clamped onto her.)

At whatever point the glossy is ripped in two, every deinonychus in the room—as well as any spilled dinosaur blood, severed parts, and the photo itself—shimmer away to nothing. Even if the photo isn't destroyed, the same thing happens after another ten minutes or so, erasing all evidence of dinosaur involvement.

Characters can draw whatever inferences they want, but the truth is that the package was sent to Alessandra Torres by Amla-shoon in order to kill the lieutenant and whichever Mastodon unit members happened to show up. Amla-shoon knew of the meeting thanks to her connection with Anson Brady.

**Alessandra's Cyphers:** The characters feel a faint tingle when they find these items, which they recall from their training as special "astrally endowed" objects called cyphers. They each already carry a few similar items. By spending a few rounds with each cypher, a PC paradox can determine what effect it has.





**SOUND DAMPENER**

**Level:** 4

**Form:** Hat

**Effect:** Asset to stealth tasks for ten minutes



**FORCE FIELD**

**Level:** 5

**Form:** Ring

**Effect:** +1 to Armor for twenty-four hours



**TELEPORTER**

**Level:** 5

**Form:** Spectacles

**Effect:** User teleports up to 1,000 feet (305 m) to a location she can see

**Whiteboard:** The whiteboard has each of the PC's names on it, as well as the names of Alessandra Torres, Anson Brady, and six others—the six other specialists who are dead. Each of those names has a red line drawn through it. The crossed-off names are not especially important to the plot, but if the PCs insist on asking, consider using the following:

- Specialist Karen Higgins
- Specialist Daniel Westfield
- Specialist Eric Johnson
- Specialist Ernesto Lopez
- Specialist Samantha Aziz
- Specialist Jayden Henry

**BREAKAWAY COURIERS**

The PCs may decide to investigate the courier service rather than follow up directly with Brady. If so, a use of **Premonition**—or a more traditional investigation technique—reveals that a nice man named **Jeffrey Barnes** at Breakaway Couriers handled the transaction for this particular package delivery. If PCs call or go over to Breakaway Couriers (a twenty-minute taxi ride from the hotel), they're told by Jeffrey, who is working behind the counter, that Breakaway doesn't reveal its clients. That said, if the database is hacked or if the PCs bedazzle, fast-talk, or otherwise convince Jeffrey of their right to know who sent the package in question, they learn it was a woman named Amelia Chun who walked in earlier in the day, paid in cash, and walked out.

**The Real Story:** Amla-shoon translated from Ruk with her prepared cypher bomb, appeared in her Earth form as Amelia Chun, and sent the package

at Breakaway Couriers. Then she translated back to Ruk. Of course, it will be hard for the PCs to figure this out until they get more information.

**ANSON BRADY**

Back when the Mastodon Project was active, Captain Anson Brady was the unit commander, though the PCs interacted more with Lieutenant Torres than with him. The PCs lost contact with Brady after the unit was disbanded.

Now the captain has come back into their lives—at least, his name has (on the whiteboard in the Ibis Room, and on Alessandra's cell phone in the recent call records, at minimum).

The PCs can determine where Captain Brady lives after a bit of digging online or through notes in Torres's purse, though it seems likely that they would call their old captain before they head over, given that they have the lieutenant's cell phone and call history.

**CALLING ANSON BRADY**

If the PCs call Brady fairly soon after finding Alessandra Torres's phone with his number in the call history, he answers. If the PCs wait to call until they've traveled all the way out to his apartment in New Jersey, he spends that intervening time coming to a decision and translates away from Earth, without ever speaking directly to the characters.

Over the phone, Anson comes across as intoxicated and weepy. If the PCs are using Alessandra's phone, he at first assumes that she is the caller, and his greeting is a yell: "Stop! I said I don't wanna be involved, so just stop calling me!"

If PCs question Brady, he explains that he has no interest in coming to any meeting, having anything to do with Mastodon, or otherwise getting involved. He doesn't even want to talk about Mastodon.


The captain soon realizes that whoever he's talking to, it's not Alessandra Torres, at which point he begins to question them on what's going on. If the PCs tell Brady that Torres is dead, he pauses a moment and then harshly whispers, "Then you need to hide!"

Then Brady hangs up. If PCs try to call again, he doesn't answer.

**The Real Story:** What Anson Brady doesn't explain is that he's being harassed—and blackmailed—by his former lover Amelia Chun,

**Experience Point**

**Awards:** For each hotel staff member saved, each PC gains 1 XP. If the PCs take the time to calm the staff, award each character 1 additional XP.

  
Premonition, page 32

**Jeffrey Barnes:** level 2, tasks related to pleasant social interaction as level 5

If the PCs search online for Amelia Chun, she doesn't seem to have left a record of her existence. If she is named as a topic for Premonition, a PC may learn "Amelia Chun does not exist; she is in abeyance."

A PC with Strange training knows the word "abeyance" can be used for someone who has astrally projected into a different world, leaving no physical form behind.

Anson Brady, like Amla-shoon, is quickened, and both have the ability to translate.

When objects and creatures with inherent abilities dependent on an extreme law like Mad Science arrive on Earth without translation, they usually degrade within a few hours or days. The umbilical, however, has no abilities and thus is relatively stable.

who now spends most of her time in Ruk. Half a year ago, she demanded that Brady join her new project. When she explained its nature, he refused, for the same reason that he stopped the Mastodon Project—Amelia is a sociopath with no ethics, and she doesn't value human life any more than she would a bug's existence.

Indignant over the recent shove-off, Amla-shoon tried everything she could to get Brady to agree. She finally settled on assassinating former Mastodon unit members, one by one. Mastodon was the only thing in the world that Brady felt proud about having accomplished (and later guilty about for having subjected people to Amla-shoon's attention). When former Mastodon members began dying, Brady dived into a bottle instead of facing the situation. When he learned of Alessandra's death (via the PCs or, if they don't call, via his own quickened Premonition-like sense), he finally decided to do something about the situation and joined Amla-shoon to save the surviving Mastodon team. However, he has an ulterior motive.

## VISITING ANSON BRADY

Brady lives in New Jersey, in suite 5 of an upscale tenement building. It's about a two-hour drive from the Milagro Hotel.

No one in his suite answers a knock or hail, and if the door is unlocked or forced (a level 4 Speed or Might task, respectively), no one is home.

### read aloud

*Empty whisky bottles are everywhere, competing for space with piles of pizza boxes and Chinese takeout containers. The only clear space is the coffee table in front of a couch strewn with old magazines and newspapers. On the table is a manila envelope with a yellow sticky note and a fishbowl filled with hazy water.*

**Manila Envelope:** The yellow sticky note on the exterior of the envelope has a message, written by Anson Brady, which reads as follows.

"Mastodon: If you're reading this, I'm so sorry Amelia targeted you for death. I'm finally going to try what I should have done ten years ago, when I learned what Amelia—or should I say, Amla-shoon—really wanted. She's torturing them to death! I can't . . . Forgive me. I'm going to Ruk, even though I'll probably die trying to stop her. ~Anson"

Reveal **Show 'Em B** (page 20) to the players.

Inside the manila folder is a dossier titled "Ruk" (show the players the Ruk dossier two-page spread, or give them a handout, if one has been prepared). It's not important that they read it from beginning to end. Just tell the PCs that the dossier talks about a crazy limited world—a "recursion"—called Ruk. The dossier has been compiled by a nongovernmental organization called the Estate, which is obviously well aware of recursions. Brady managed to get hold of it by pulling strings so he could learn about the place where Amelia came from.

The information in the dossier provides sufficient knowledge of Ruk to allow the PCs to translate there. (The umbilical in the fishbowl provides an alternate connection allowing the same.)

**Fishbowl:** An umbilical from Ruk lies coiled in a fishbowl filled with hazy salt water. To Earthly eyes, it resembles a finger-thick cable of brown, fleshy material. If a quickened PC examines it closely and uses knowledge of the Strange, Premonition, or a related ability, she learns that the object is from another reality called Ruk and can be used as a focus for the "astral projection/translation" abilities the Mastodon unit members learned. Therefore, they can use it as a "key" to travel to Ruk. (The Ruk dossier provides an alternate connection allowing the same.)

**Exploring Brady's Suite:** An in-depth search of the rest of the suite turns up several handguns (medium-range weapons) and ammo, a safe (level 6) that contains almost \$5,000, and three cyphers:

### DESICCATOR

**Level:** 4

**Form:** Syringe

**Effect:** Injected target sweats out internal liquid, taking 4 points of ambient damage each round for three rounds

### EAGLESEYE

**Level:** 5

**Form:** Pill

**Effect:** See ten times as far for one hour





## REJUVENATOR

**Level:** 6

**Form:** Syringe

**Effect:** Regain 6 points to one stat Pool

### AFTER BRADY, WHAT THEN?

At this point, the PCs know that someone named Amla-shoon in a recursion called Ruk is trying to kill them. They also know that Anson Brady has traveled to Ruk to try to stop her, though he doesn't hold out much hope. The PCs have a hazy memory of having translated to Ruk once before, and thanks to Brady's preparations, they have all they need to try again immediately, if they wish. The characters know, based on their previous experience, that when they translate, they'll appear in a default location, which is a main square in Harmonious, Ruk's largest city. From there, they'll have to track down Amla-shoon in a foreign city inhabited by humanoid aliens.


The characters might consider translating to Ruk if they want to help Brady, to make sure that their assassin is stopped, to save whoever is being tortured to death (as mentioned in

Brady's note), or to avenge the other murdered Mastodon members.

The PCs could also simply do nothing and see what happens, or stay on Earth and lay a trap. In either case, nothing happens immediately. However, Amla-shoon continues her research, which involves abducting humans from Earth for her experiments—more all the time, almost all of whom die in gruesome agony. A PC with psychic sensitivity begins to have nightmares of Amla-shoon's research facility, where people are cut up and spliced into strange machines until they die.

### TRANSLATING TO RUK

When the characters translate to Ruk, the PC who initiates the **translation** can focus on the information described in the dossier, or touch the umbilical from Brady's fishbowl. If the other player characters aid the translation, the trancelike state requires only ten minutes, after which the PCs disappear from Earth (their Earth forms go into abeyance) and appear translated into the context of Ruk, standing at the center of

 *Translation, page 125*

Harmonious, the Glistening City. The PCs have new abilities and possibly a new look.

Read or paraphrase the following, and then hand the PCs their Ruk focus sheets (pages 35-40).

### read aloud

*You feel strange. Your clothing tugs, loosens, and shifts, and your skin prickles and tingles all over.*

*Camille, a weird new sensation bubbles up inside you, and you suddenly know you can change your form at will, becoming a raging battle chrysalid that all things fear.*

*Kevin, a feeling of utter strangeness nearly overcomes you as you bud off a clone of yourself, which stands silently, ready to do your bidding.*

*Léopold, your acute perception gives way to an unearthly stealth; you feel as if you could sneak into almost any location. A spear and spiker pistol materialize with your Rukian clothing.*

*Luis, you feel your flesh toughening even further, becoming so resilient that you figure you could survive almost anything. The slicksuit that melts into existence around you doesn't hurt, nor does the spear and slaughter pistol you find yourself armed with.*

*Padma, your clothing shifts and alters to become Rukian, even as you feel an amazing ability to regenerate your tissue kindle in your flesh. Your light pistol becomes a needler pistol.*

*Yuki, protective plastiskin armor grows over your body, a spiker pistol appears on your hip, and you learn about the All Song as your brain capacity expands.*

### ARRIVAL

Give the characters a moment to look over their new focus sheets, and then tell them what they see all around them.

### read aloud

*You stand at the center of an epic floating city, which you somehow know is called Harmonious. The city, which seems straight out of science fiction, swarms with thousands of humanoids, each sporting unearthly biomechanical enhancements, most of them so extreme you're not even sure what you're seeing. The press of humanity travels by foot and also by air, weaving aerial layers overhead that only partly obscure the magnificently elevated skyscrapers reaching higher still. The wide public plaza where you appear is thick with Rukians*

*standing, sitting, floating, and passing around strange objects, but mostly lying spread-eagled, their eyes closed and their umbilicals plugged into the All Song communal that stands at the center of the area. No one seems to have noticed your sudden appearance.*

### WHAT TRANSLATED CHARACTERS KNOW

Characters who focus on the sights, people, and objects discover that new information about aspects of Ruk floods into their minds, uncoiling like the threat of a migraine from behind their left eye, though it's a pain that quickly subsides. You can provide the PCs with the following information all at once or naturally as they ask you questions—whatever seems right for your group.

In Ruk, the law of Mad Science is ascendant (instead of Standard Physics, as on Earth); Ruk is a place of extreme biotech and body modification.

Ruk is not born from fiction, but peopled by humanoids who have been around Earth since before modern humans evolved.

Feuding factions rule Ruk.

The **All Song** is a shared web of knowledge, insight, and inspiration, though some distrust it (favoring the **True Code**, an ancient but mostly lost store of knowledge). The All Song is the Internet of Ruk, and people plug into the **communals** when they want to learn something, advertise something, or escape something.

### ENCOUNTERS IN RUK

Decide whether you want to use one, two, or all three of the following encounters as the PCs make their way around Ruk, though spread them out. If you use only one, present it as a GM intrusion (and give 2 XP to the PC initially involved, one of which she must give to another player).

**Convention Timing:** If you're running *Mastodon* at a convention, time is short, so don't spend too long on the encounters. In fact, you may get a chance to include only one.

### SPIRAL DUST SELLER

A short Rukian with a green scale coat, robotic legs, and an angelic little boy's face peeking



All Song, page 192

True Code, page 192

All Song Communal,  
page 198

out of an organic, flowerlike headpiece taps a character on the shoulder. “Try a sample of amazement? A sample of pure joy? It’s just the thing to ease your troubles, to give you that sweet sense that life has a purpose, you know, like when you were just ten revolutions old!”

The “kid” (named **Um-gana**) is selling spiral dust, one dose for just 3 bits. Spiral dust is strongly addictive and has some unpleasant consequences for users, but a single dose should be safe—probably.

A dose of spiral dust has the following effects on a first-time user (though someone who repeatedly uses the substance eventually disappears, never to be seen again):

- Euphoria for one hour.
- The difficulty of all tasks related to noticing, perceiving, spotting clues, and seeing what’s hidden decreases by three steps for one hour.
- The difficulty of all tasks related to combat increases by two steps for one hour.

### BODY MOD. HARD SELL

A female Rukian with extreme body modification (reveal **Show 'Em C**, page 21) almost knocks over the character and says, “You look naked. Where are your mods?”

The woman (named **Raf-lalen**) takes any response by the PC as an opportunity to describe the wonderments of body modification and why it’s for everyone. However, she also subtly releases a level 4 pheromone, which requires the character to succeed at an Intellect defense roll while her spiel unfolds or become passionately convinced that body modification is needed, and needed now.

**Spiel:** “Your body is a canvas, a space to mix and match elements that define who or what you want to be! I represent people who provide surgical body modifications and grafts for spiritual, decorative, and personal protection purposes. Explore something as simple as a body piercing or as extreme as an entirely new skin to achieve a unique new you!”

**Goods:** If a PC decides that body modification is for him, Raf-lalen offers to take a down payment of just 25 bits toward fulfillment in a surgical theater in ten days’ time. A PC who failed the Intellect defense roll to resist the pheromone’s effect gladly pays up and receives

a receipt (in the form of a tattoo of the Whole Body Grafts logo etched on his bare shoulder or neck).

### TOO MUCH WONDER

The PC becomes the target of a Rukian “delighter” named **Ton-vaal**. A delighter is someone who gets her kicks by surreptitiously targeting random strangers with a stubby device called a wondergun. The wondergun produces a level 4 attack at long range; on a failed Intellect defense roll, a jolt of pure pleasure fills the character’s brain, making his face light up as all tension drains out of him. (Depletion: 1 in d10.) Targets are usually dazed and lose an action when this happens. However, a few rounds later, a hollow, sad feeling comes over the character. The pleasure, so intensely blissful, is gone. Will anything ever be so wonderful again?

Most targets of a wondergun shake off this secondary despondent feeling within ten minutes or so. However, too many jolts would leave anyone hopelessly dependent on it, or the slave of someone else who controls its application.

### PLUG INTO THE ALL SONG

One of the PCs’ best options for finding Amla-shoon is to connect to the All Song. If the players don’t seem to realize that, tell them so, because their characters—fresh with newly translated knowledge of Ruk—would certainly know it. When a character connects his umbilical to an All Song communal for the first time, treat it as a GM intrusion because it’s a brain shock.

#### *read aloud*

*It’s like you’re in the middle of a swarm of a billion insects, all coming for you. Each promises to give you the name you seek, if you’ll only let it in. Opalescent beetles against your eyeball. A furred hatch of spiders at the corner of your mouth. A marching ant colony seeking passage in your nose. And all of the unknown entities, the ones you’ve never seen—the silvered grubs, the black maggots, the torn-winged bloodmoths, the unnamed, the shadowed, the glistening, the newly hatched bodies that burrow and borrow and bite and eat.*

The PC connecting to the All Song must succeed on a difficulty 4 Intellect defense roll.

**Um-gana:** level 4, tasks related to deception and seeing through deception as level 6

**Ton-vaal:** level 3, stealth tasks as level 5; carries a wondergun

**Raf-lalen:** level 5, all tasks related to surgery and body modification as level 7



Damage track,  
page 108

*The True Code is the ancient knowledge of Ruk, much of which is lost, though many still cleave to it and attempt to rediscover it.*

On a failure, he loses 3 Intellect points and moves down one step on the **damage track** (learning nothing about Amla-shoon).

If the same PC who failed wishes to try again, or if a different character wants to try connecting, forewarned is forearmed. This time the difficulty is only level 3, and failure results in a loss of only 1 Intellect point.

Unfortunately, a successful roll still provides an unsatisfying amount of information. The All Song reveals that Amla-shoon is present in Ruk, is something known as a “True Code Archeologist,” and has a lab somewhere in Harmonious where she conducts “experiments.” But it doesn’t reveal the exact location.

### FINDING AMLA · SHOON’S LAB

Not only is the location of the lab not forthcoming, it’s also clear that someone has redacted its location from the All Song (which characters would have thought to be impossible).

Characters can proceed in various ways. If they question a random NPC about finding information not located in the All Song, that

NPC might suggest that they look into a lore shark. Alternatively, if the PCs make different queries of the All Song in hopes of finally uncovering the lab, multiple negative results automatically trigger suggestions for alternate queries. The most prominent suggested result reads as follows.

“Mal-daru the lore shark knows all, or can find it out, for the right price. Request a meeting, and Mal-daru will be in contact with you.”

### LORE SHARK?

If the characters search the All Song for the meaning of the term “lore shark,” they discover that it is a person who functions not unlike an earthly loan shark. However, lore sharks give their clients a piece of secret knowledge, and the client must pay that information back tenfold, usually with bits or valuable items, though presumably valuable secrets would also do.

If the PCs send out a query for Mal-daru’s services (which requires that they give their location, a contact name, and the description of at least one PC), refer to the next section.

If the characters proceed in some other fashion by devising another way to find Amla-shoon's lab (or if time for the session grows short), work with their ideas. The PCs' ingenuity should drive the energy of the adventure forward, where possible.

## MAL · DARU, THE LORE SHARK

If sufficient time remains in the session, the guide Um-gana takes the PCs to Mal-daru, by way of the Market Tri-Tower.

**Convention Timing:** If you're running *Mastodon* at a convention and only about an hour remains in the session, collapse this encounter with the final encounter by having Mal-daru be in the pocket of Amla-shoon. Thus, when the lore shark

sends a guide to fetch the PCs, the guide actually takes them to Amla-shoon's factory. (She became aware of multiple inquiries about her name through autonomous monitoring of the All Song, and prepared her trap.)

## UM · GANA, THE GUIDE

The PCs may or may not have already encountered Um-gana trying to sell spiral dust. If they haven't, Um-gana approaches them as if attempting to make a regular sale. However characters respond to the pitch, Um-gana rolls with it. He then surreptitiously explains that he received a call to find them and direct them to an unlisted location, though he won't explain whether he works for Mal-daru or not. "That's need to know, and you don't." Would they be so kind as to accompany him?

Um-gana tells the PCs that they will be traversing first by "tube," by which he means pneumatic elevator tube.

## MARKET TRI · TOWER

If led by Um-gana to meet the lore shark, a dizzying, roller coaster-like ride through the pneumatic tubes spits the characters out at the base of the Market Tri-Tower.

### *read aloud*

*A set of three interconnected towers lies near the core of Harmonious, dwarfing other nearby structures. Magnificent swaths of storefronts, galleries, eateries, studios, apartments, and shops for which there are no easy names ascend, in spiral fashion, to the tip of each tower, with dozens of arching bridges and tubes connecting the three structures into one cohesive, magnificent whole.*

Um-gana leads the characters into the mass of Rukian flesh patronizing the Market Tri-Tower, and they spiral about a third of the way up one of the towers. The PCs can buy normal equipment available in Ruk, but don't let them get bogged down in the process. As they ascend, they might also have another encounter with a native, as described under *Encounters in Ruk*.

Um-gana finally leads the characters into the back of a shop hung with all manner of leathery Rukian clothing. An advertisement reads: "Slicksuits Altered, Cleaned, or Destroyed With No Questions Asked."

*Um-gana, page 11*

## PNEUMATIC ELEVATOR TUBE

Whether the PCs travel through Harmonious on their own initiative or follow a guide, they have several options for getting around the massive city quickly. However, by far the most convenient method of travel is the pneumatic elevator tube system.

The pneumatic elevator tubes are transparent, flexible hollow shafts that feel slightly wet and adapt in diameter to every passenger who uses them. The tubes go all over Ruk, providing direct, quick access to specific points around (and beneath) the city. Unlike elevators on Earth, any given tube can branch, bend, curve, and otherwise redirect a passenger in any direction on the way to a stated location. Some tubes can even change their destination on the fly, while a traveler is still zooming through it.

A tube uses an instantly evaporating frictionless gel to rapidly accelerate travelers via complex peristaltic action—it's like the tube is constantly swallowing a passenger. For a Rukian, stepping into a tube is normal. For someone from Earth, it can be an intensely claustrophobic, potentially horrifying, and certainly dizzying experience. After being delivered by a tube, an Earthborn native, even one who has been translated, becomes nauseous for a few rounds on a failed difficulty 2 Might defense roll.

*Ruk equipment, page 91*

*Encounters in Ruk, page 10*

At a small door in the back of the shop, Um-gana leaves the PCs. He indicates that they will find the lore shark if they go through the door. If the characters have been decent to him, he warns them to be careful.

## OFFICE OF MAL · DARU

A door in the back of the slicksuit tailor's shop leads through a series of three unlit storerooms filled with bundles of clothing and the odor of something like onions and cinnamon. Beyond them is a chamber about 25 by 25 feet (8 by 8 m) with no windows.

### read aloud

*Globes of light hang from the high ceiling in this chamber, as do hundreds of arching umbilical strands, all slowly twining as if partly alive. About a dozen of those umbilicals descend and connect to the head of a humanoid standing with his back to the door. Lying bound and gagged at his feet are three Rukians sporting bruises and contusions. Otherwise, the chamber is appointed with several comfortable chairs, divans, and low tables set with strange food. Four doors provide potential exits from the chamber.*

When the PCs enter, assuming they haven't sent a spy to infiltrate ahead of time, the figure turns to face the characters. Reveal **Show 'Em D** (page 21) to the players.

The figure is Mal-daru, and the many umbilicals attached to his head constantly feed information into his mind. He can walk about the chamber without hindrance, but he mentally commands the umbilicals to disengage and withdraw when the PCs show up. Also notable is the fact that his torso is covered in faces, which may or may not be obscured by his clothing.

## MAL-DARU'S CAPTIVES

If the PCs ask about the bound captives, Mal-daru says nonchalantly, "This filth? Folks who don't pay their interest on my lore in a specified period become mine. It's in the contract. Don't pity them; they did this to themselves. Not sure what I'll do with them yet. Maybe eat them. I'm always a bit hungry, you know. Ha, ha, ha, just joking!" (He's actually not joking.)

If the PCs at any point decide to fight Mal-daru to protect the captives or for some other

reason, they can force a defeated Mal-daru to tell them where to find Amla-shoon's hidden lab—assuming that he can be defeated.

## NEGOTIATING WITH MAL-DARU

Mal-daru begins the conversation, if the PCs haven't done so already, with a huge grin and an apparently gracious attitude. "How can I help you find what you're looking for? You came to the right place. I'm the best there is at divulging secrets. That's because I've eaten most of the competition! Ha, ha, ha, only kidding." (He's actually not kidding.)

**The Request:** Once the characters explain the information they're looking for (which could be anything, but is presumably the location of Amla-shoon's laboratory in Harmonious), Mal-daru considers for several seconds before answering—it's a tactic to make clients feel off balance. Finally he agrees that he can find that information. Should be no problem. He'll have the characters what they need within an hour, tops. While they wait, they can put up their feet and recline, and help themselves to refreshments.

**Mal-daru Working:** When Mal-daru sets to work looking for sought-after secrets, he paces the chamber, connecting and disconnecting various ceiling umbilicals as he walks, and muttering things like "hmm," "interesting," "that can't be right," and so on.

**What Will We Owe You?** If PCs don't inquire what they'll owe the variokaryon, he doesn't bring it up, either; their acceptance of the information constitutes their willing entry into the terms of the contract. If they do ask, refer to Repayment, below.

## AND THE ANSWER IS . . .

After twenty or thirty minutes of activity on Mal-daru's part, he disengages the umbilicals, drops into a chair, and rubs his eyes. He tells the PCs, "I've got your location. Her lab is in Karandar Tower, on the twenty-third floor, which is supposedly empty because of an unspecified previous biohazard incident. Who knows if that's true? This Amla-shoon of yours is adept at hiding herself in plain sight." Then he grins widely, as do the faces on his chest.

## REPAYMENT

As all good lore sharks know, it's better not to advertise the repayment and interest schedule

*The umbilicals are keyed to Mal-daru, and a PC who tries to connect to one takes 3 points of Intellect damage (ignores Armor) on a failed difficulty 4 Intellect defense roll. On a success, a PC can use an umbilical to connect to the All Song.*

**GM Intrusion:** One of the PCs recognizes Mal-daru as a highly dangerous creature called a variokaryon. In addition to being addicted to grafts, variokaryons eat by vomiting an external stomach, appearing as a many-layered white shroud, over its food—food which is, often enough, living Rukians.

**Variokaryon:** level 4, attacks and stealth as level 5; health 23; regains 2 points of health per round (or 1 point when its health is 0); spend action to gain +4 to Armor and +10 to health for one minute; vomits external stomach on foe in immediate range, who takes 6 points of acid damage each round until it breaks free; for more details, see *The Strange* corebook, page 297

until the last possible moment, after the client is hooked. If Mal-daru can get away with waiting until he gives the PCs the answer they're looking for, he does. However, he'll divulge the information sooner if they won't be put off.

Repayment is simple. For each piece of information Mal-daru provides, he expects to be repaid within ten days' time with ten "valuables." A valuable can be a "drift" (300 bits), a graft worth at least 300 bits, or a cypher. Each day past ten days that a repayment is not made, an additional valuable is due to the lore shark. However, once ten days are past, he can instead engage the penalty clause, which gives him the right to collect the client and do with that person as he chooses. This usually ends poorly for the client.

The PCs could simply skip out on their debt by translating away from Ruk. However, if they do, they make a long-term enemy of Mal-daru, who puts a bounty on their heads.

## AMLA · SHOON

Using the pneumatic tubes for travel, the PCs can specify their destination and find their way to Karandar Tower. A tube empties into the lobby of the twenty-third level. (Other levels of the tower are owned by various other factions, including the ubiquitous Zal.)

### read aloud

*The lobby is dimly lit by worklights studding the ceiling. By the look of things, some kind of bio-organic rot has taken over the level, coating the floor and walls with whorls of thick, amberlike residue. Other than doors to an open veranda and the pneumatic tube port, the only other exit is a circular door similar to that of a bank vault. Flanking the door are two Rukians in chrysalid-like armor.*

Reveal **Show 'Em E** (page 22) to the players.

The two **Rukian guards** merely observe the PCs and do not fight (at least, not initially). Even if the characters attack, the guards first try to fall back to the area beyond the door, which is Amla-shoon's lab. If questioned, the guards simply point at the door. They've been told to expect visitors and to let them through.

## AMLA · SHOON'S LAB

The door from the exterior lobby isn't normally locked. In fact, thanks to the PCs' earlier attempts to locate Amla-shoon, she knows that someone is looking for her, and she suspects that it's Mastodon. Because she's overconfident and sociopathic, she believes there's a reasonable chance she can put the PCs into her employ rather than kill them, just as she believes she's convinced Anson Brady.

### read aloud

*This wide factory floor is set with hundreds of stations, each about 20 feet from the next. Most of the stations are empty, but about a dozen contain humans. Some of these humans are hooked into stations via tubes, but others suffer a far more drastic connection. Several are linked directly, with the naked nerves, arteries, and veins of their hands, feet, legs, and arms spliced into silvery mechanisms. Some are missing the lower parts of their bodies altogether. And a few are just heads, spliced into the center of an analytical machine in a web of nerve fibers and pumping tubes.*

*Begging appeals, heartbroken crying, and pleas to be released emerge from the mouths of some of the humans, though even the most alert are only semiconscious.*

*Standing in the center of the lab is a man you recognize as Anson Brady, despite his translation to Ruk. He's holding a huge gun that you know to be something called a slaughter accelerator.*

*Next to Brady is a woman in a terrifying chrysalid manifestation. Her lower body is a coiled mechanical snake, her upper body is all sharp stabbing implements, and a handful of gun drones orbit around her.*

Reveal **Show 'Em F** (page 22) to the players.

## AMLA · SHOON'S OFFER

Unless the PCs have been particularly sneaky in gaining access to her lab, Amla-shoon expects the characters and is waiting for them when they arrive. She makes them an offer. While she does, Anson Brady looks pensive and nervous, almost as if he's sick with dread. Likewise, the human experimental subjects, in various states of semiconsciousness and blind agony, beg and plead to be released.

**Rukian guard:** level 3, perception and detecting deception as level 5; health 15; Armor 1; melee attack inflicts 4 points of damage

**GM Intrusion:** One of the PCs recognizes Amla-shoon as a highly dangerous creature called an Apoptosis-class battle chrysalid (for details, see page 21 of *The Strange Bestiary*). They are made for conflict, extremely dangerous and hard to kill.

*If the PCs used the lore shark Mal-daru, he found Amla-shoon's lab by contacting her. She sold Mal-daru her location, which he in turn sold to the PCs. This exchange is another reason she was forewarned of the characters' arrival.*

**Amla-shoon (hale):** level 8; health 60; Armor 2; long-range radiation blasts from four floating nodes inflict 8 points of damage against up to four separate targets as one action; regains 2 points of health per round

**Amla-shoon (hurt):** level 5; health 30; Armor 1; long-range radiation blasts from two floating nodes inflict 4 points of damage against up to two separate targets as one action

**GM Intrusion:** When Amla-shoon makes a successful melee attack for 5 points of damage, a victim who fails an additional difficulty 5 Might defense roll begins to undergo programmatic cell death. As the PC's cellular machinery kills itself, the character descends one step on the damage track each round that she fails an additional Might defense roll.

**Anson Brady:** level 3, betraying shot with slaughter accelerator as level 9

Use the following talking points to help bring Amla-shoon's point of view and conversation to life as she negotiates with the PCs.

- "Join me in my quest for the lost secrets of Ruk, just as Captain Brady has. Share with us the bounty of the True Code." (While speaking, Amla-shoon strokes Brady's face, as a lover might, with one of her needlelike prosthetics. He flinches.)
- "My quest is to uncover the True Code! I am a True Code Archeologist." (Amla-shoon is an extremist when it comes to the True Code, the source of knowledge Ruk once used to govern its affairs.)
- "I need humans—ones who haven't been quickened—because that's where I will find the remnants of the True Code. My experiments are designed to find what was hidden in ancient hominid DNA when Ruk first crashed in Earth's shadow." (Whether that's true or not isn't as important as the fact that Amla-shoon believes it's true with all the fierce passion of a newly converted believer.)
- "That's why I need Brady—and now that you're here, why I also need you. I need quickened recursors to collect non-quickened Earthborn and bring them to me. You can choose the candidates: convicted killers, felons who've gone free but deserve punishment, or corrupt politicians and corporate heads who never paid for their crimes. The choice is yours!" (If the PCs don't choose the candidates, she'll just choose people at random. Those who become part of her experiments rarely survive the experiences.)

## ANSON BRADY'S NEXT MOVE

If questioned in the presence of Amla-shoon, Brady is tight lipped, saying only, "You shouldn't have come."

Essentially, Brady takes his cue from the PCs. If the characters decide they have to take out Amla-shoon because she's a dangerous sociopath taking innocent lives in pursuit of a questionable end, that finally gives Brady the courage to do what he came to do. He shoots Amla-shoon with his slaughter accelerator (see Fighting Amla-shoon, below).

If the PCs agree to help Amla-shoon, Brady bites his lip and continues to bide his time, indecision a continual agony eating at him.

## FIGHTING AMLA·SHOON

If it's a fight, the two Rukian guards encountered in the lobby arrive and support Amla-shoon, unless the PCs are quick-witted enough to close the heavy door leading to the lobby before the guards respond to the sound of battle (the closed and secured door is a level 6 barrier).

In a straight-up fight with Amla-shoon, the PCs would likely lose (see her "hale" stats). But the characters have an ace up their sleeve in Brady, though they probably don't realize it until he makes his move.

**Brady's Betrayal:** After the first round of fighting, Brady shoots Amla-shoon from behind, with surprise, and at point-blank range with his slaughter accelerator. This event turns the level 8 unstoppable battle chrysalid into a level 5 threat that is still dangerous but much more manageable (use her "hurt" stats at this point).

**Brady's End:** Unfortunately, on her following action after being betrayed by Brady, Amla-shoon mentally detonates a surveillance graft she installed on Brady's neck, which blows his head right off his body in a grisly, rocketing explosion.

**Amla-shoon's Tactics:** Amla-shoon is insane and will fight to the death unless she can escape—she will never surrender. If her guards are locked outside, she may try to slip over to the door and let them in, unless the PCs prevent that.

## JOINING AMLA·SHOON

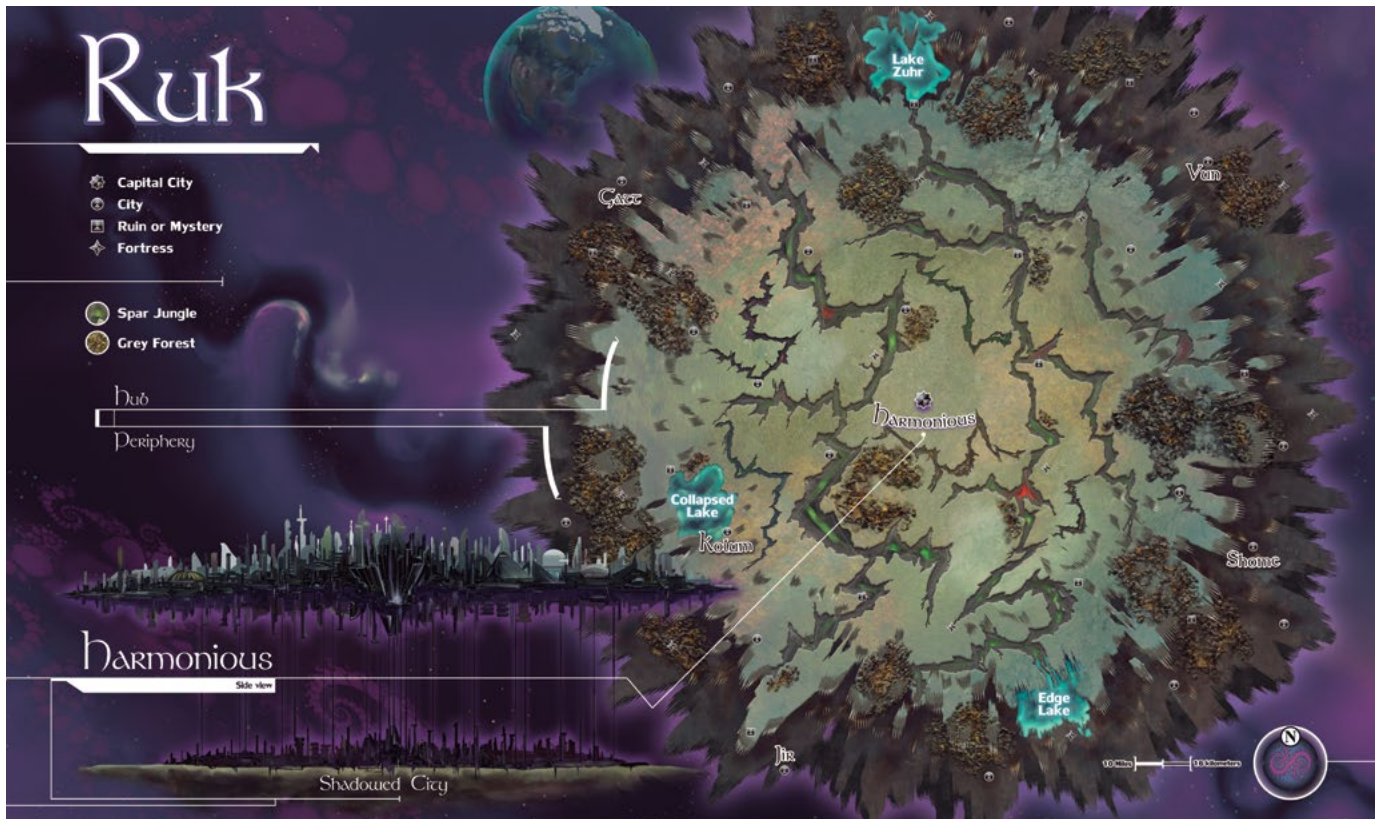
If the PCs are unmoved by the plight of the captives and rather like the idea of becoming vigilantes who can deliver those they deem to be criminals into the hands of a Rukian sociopath, that is also a way to wrap up the adventure.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If you're running *Mastodon* at a convention, the adventure ends when the PCs defeat Amla-shoon (or fail to do so) or join her.

If they defeat her, congratulations are in order. Tell the players they have saved all the





experimental subjects currently assembled, though some require extensive reconstructive surgery—surgery that can be had in Ruk, especially once the PCs make friends with an Earth-friendly faction called the **Quiet Cabal**.

If the PCs join Amla-shoon instead, congratulate them on becoming part of her network. In a couple of days, they will be dispatched to Earth to find and transfer a new batch of experimental candidates (five people minimum) via an **inapposite gate** that Amla-shoon locates for them. Tell the PCs that their work is hard, and it puts them on the radar of groups like the **Estate** and **OSR** on Earth, and the Quiet Cabal in Ruk. At least initially, they manage to make a go of their new career. But enemies abound.

Hopefully, the adventure ends with the PCs standing over a defeated Amla-shoon. If so, and there is time for a little more wrap-up, they can question the experimental subjects by slowly bringing those least hurt to full consciousness. One of these who looks human is actually a Quiet Cabal faction member named Abath-lul, who can set the PCs up with connections they need to save the rest of the humans. She promises to clean up and deal with things

using the resources that a recursion-traveling organization can bring to bear.

Another test subject, Mikhos Seligmann, claims to be an Estate operative who was brought into Amla-shoon's experiments as a control because he's quickened. He is very surprised to see the PCs operating as a cohesive unit, despite not being part of the Estate, OSR, the Quiet Cabal, or other known recursion-hopping organizations. He's so impressed, in fact, that he offers them jobs as full-time operatives of the Estate. (This offer is a good place to finally wrap up the adventure.)

As to whether remnants of the True Code really do reside in human DNA, hidden away by ancient Rukians against some future need, this adventure does not presume to answer. But it seems all too likely . . .

### EXPERIENCE POINT AWARDS

Each PC gains 4 XP for putting an end to a cruel scheme that would have continued to abduct innocent victims from Earth, only to see their dismembered corpses rot in Ruk after Amla-shoon used them in her body-shredding experiments. This is in addition to any XP the characters earned by other means.

**Quiet Cabal**,  
page 194

**Inapposite gate**,  
page 135

**The Estate**, page 148

**OSR**, page 157



# THE ESTATE FOUNDATION

## RUK

### PREPARED BY THE FIXER

If you're reading this, pat yourself on the back, friend. A fair percentage of operatives who receive dossiers on upcoming missions only skim these. Those dumbasses will be the ones looking to you for answers when the shit hits the fan. And if you're translating to and from Ruk, it probably will.

Last time I went to Ruk, I almost splattered my brains across Harmonious, the Glistening City, while pursuing a Karum fugitive. I'm not sure a brief like this would've helped prepare me. But who knows? Maybe it'll help you, and I'll be saved the hassle of cleaning up after your mess.

In addition, this brief provides three related pieces of information about Ruk that will serve as a required connection to initiate your translation to the recursion.

Good luck. You'll need it.

The Fixer

# ESTATE EYES ONLY

## RUKIANS KNOW THEY INHABIT A RECURSION

In recursions birthed by Earth fiction, natives don't usually realize they live in a limited world. That's not true in Ruk. The bastards are aliens. They built a vessel capable of operating and traveling through the Strange—a strangecraft—to flee their homeworld, which they don't remember, when it got wrecked by disaster, which they also don't remember. They traveled through the Strange for a few hundred thousand years (they don't know the exact figure themselves) and eventually ran aground in the Shoals of Earth. Rukians have made the most of it since then.

## RUK IS OLD

When I called them bastards, I meant sneaky bastards. Ruk has hidden in Earth's shoals since before humanity evolved. Creatures that were never human populate Ruk. The disaster I mentioned wiped a lot of the truly primeval history from Ruk's cultural memory. You might ask why people in Ruk look so much like humans, except for all their insane biomodifications. I've asked it but never received a good answer. Those fuckers are cagey. Best guess: the original Rukians modified both their own DNA and that of hominids on Earth to bring the two lines visually close together. Why? I'm still asking.

## MAD SCIENCE WORKS IN RUK

One of the biggest issues the Estate has with Ruk is that crazy science-fiction scenarios are not only possible in Ruk, but commonplace. So common that superscience artifacts from Ruk find their way to Earth via matter gates more often than they

should—usually because some dumbass recursor gets a “genius” idea. Luckily, most of these things function for only a short time, but that's usually just long enough to cause a major shitstorm. Don't bring artifacts back from Ruk, even if you find an inapposite gate. If you feel you have to, do *not* keep it a secret from your supervising officer, and file a report with me straightaway. Then I'll know to expect the worst.

## THE TRUE CODE VS. THE ALL SONG

Some mumbo-jumbo called the True Code was once the repository of all knowledge in Ruk. But it was damaged almost beyond salvage. The All Song was developed to repair that damage. Of course, in Ruk, where everyone is always looking for a new argument, the dominance of one or the other is just another thing the natives can kill each other over.

**Accessing the All Song:** Take it from me: forget about the True Code. Focus on the All Song. It's a biological data network. Rukians use it to store information and communicate over vast distances, sort of like our Internet. Grab an umbilical to tap into the network more directly. You'll find an umbilical in your equipment after you translate—it's not a snake, like one dumbass thought the first time he translated. Find a connection point (they're called communals) and plug in. Be ready. The experience is like dropping acid on a roller-coaster. You might puke in your boots the first time.

## FACTIONS RULE RUK

Feuding factions rule Ruk; a faction is like a religion, a corporation, and a governing body rolled into one. Sneaky bastards, like I said. The factions are always working against each other, even if some of them





# THE ESTATE FOUNDATION

make a show of being allied. And at least one faction, the Karum, thinks Earth's continued existence is the biggest problem facing the recursion.

## KARUM

I'd burn these fuckers in a fire if I could. These bastards are trying to destroy the Earth, because that'll force Ruk to abandon its "hiding spot" in Earth's shoals and continue on its original path through the Strange to ██████████. Thankfully, the Quiet Cabal—another faction of Ruk—opposes the Karum. Karum agents travel to Earth, pretending to be scientists studying high-energy particle physics and quantum computers. What they're really attempting to do is create conditions that might result in a planetovore finding and destroying the prime world. What is it with some people?

**Dadanum-Tal (Dr. Gavin Bixby):** The Karum agent with the best record advancing the cause is Dadanum-tal; on Earth he goes by Dr. Gavin Bixby, professor of nuclear research. I've tried (and failed) to snuff him three times so far. If you learn of his current whereabouts on Earth, in Ruk, or in some other recursion, alert the Estate immediately, along with the nearest Quiet Cabal agent or contact.

## QUIET CABAL

We like to think of the Quiet Cabal as the good guys, but that's a mistake. They're sneaky bastards, too. They're as ruthless as the Karum. They've done things that would make a seasoned operative cry. Which would be me. Their only saving grace, as far as the Estate is concerned, is that the Quiet Cabal believes Earth's continued existence is vital for Ruk. So do what you can to work with them if you must, even if you have to compromise your ethics a little. All of Earth could eventually fall otherwise. Yeah, I know, it's a shitty deal.

**Udam-magir (Maggie Lawrence):** The Estate interfaces with a Quiet Cabal agent named Udam-magir—Maggie Lawrence on Earth. She and I don't get on especially well, but your mileage may vary.

## OTHER FACTIONS

A few other prominent factions include the following.

**The Church of the Embodiment:** These dumbasses think that bringing back the True Code is the answer to all their problems. Too conservative by far for my blood.

**The Unified Choir:** These guys preach unity, harmony of the True Code and the All Song, and everyone getting along. It all seems a little too perfect in my book, and I wonder what they're really selling.

**Zal:** The only difference between these guys and Enron, besides the obvious, is that Enron got caught.

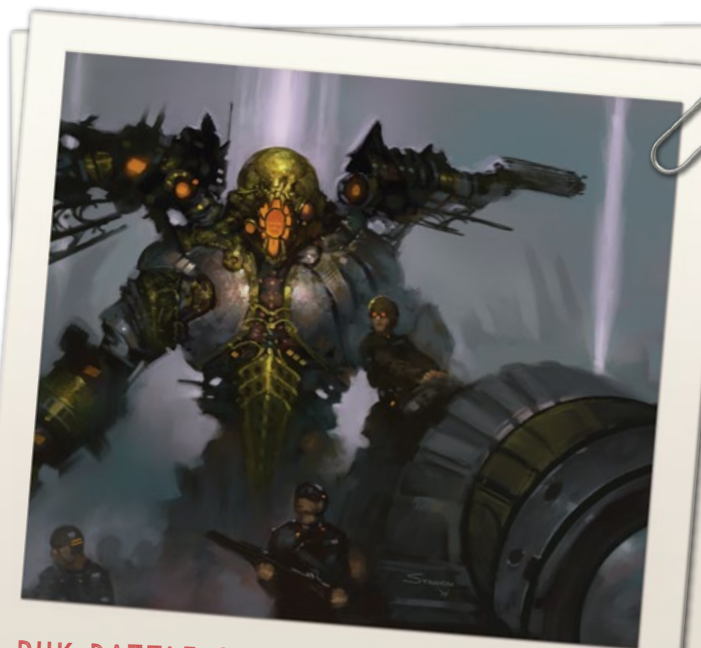
## HARMONIOUS

If you visit Ruk, Harmonious is where you'll likely spend all your time. Harmonious floats above the surface. It's a multileveled, horizontal metropolis that defies gravity via massive and ancient technological engines. The first time I saw it, I was thinking someone had gotten their *Blade Runner* in my *Jetsons*.

### RUK DEFAULT TRANSLATION SITE

The default location for first-time translators to Ruk is in a wide public lobby of Harmonious, the Glistening City.

**Harmonious Public Lobby:** The open-air platform secured by organimer trusses between several tower structures streams with Rukians sporting body modifications of every kind, some of them extreme. A public All Song communal is available here. Plus a lot of body-modification shit that you should steer clear of. We've lost too many operatives to mind-altering brain pods.



RUK BATTLE CHRYSALIDES ARE THE WORST.



A. \_\_\_\_\_



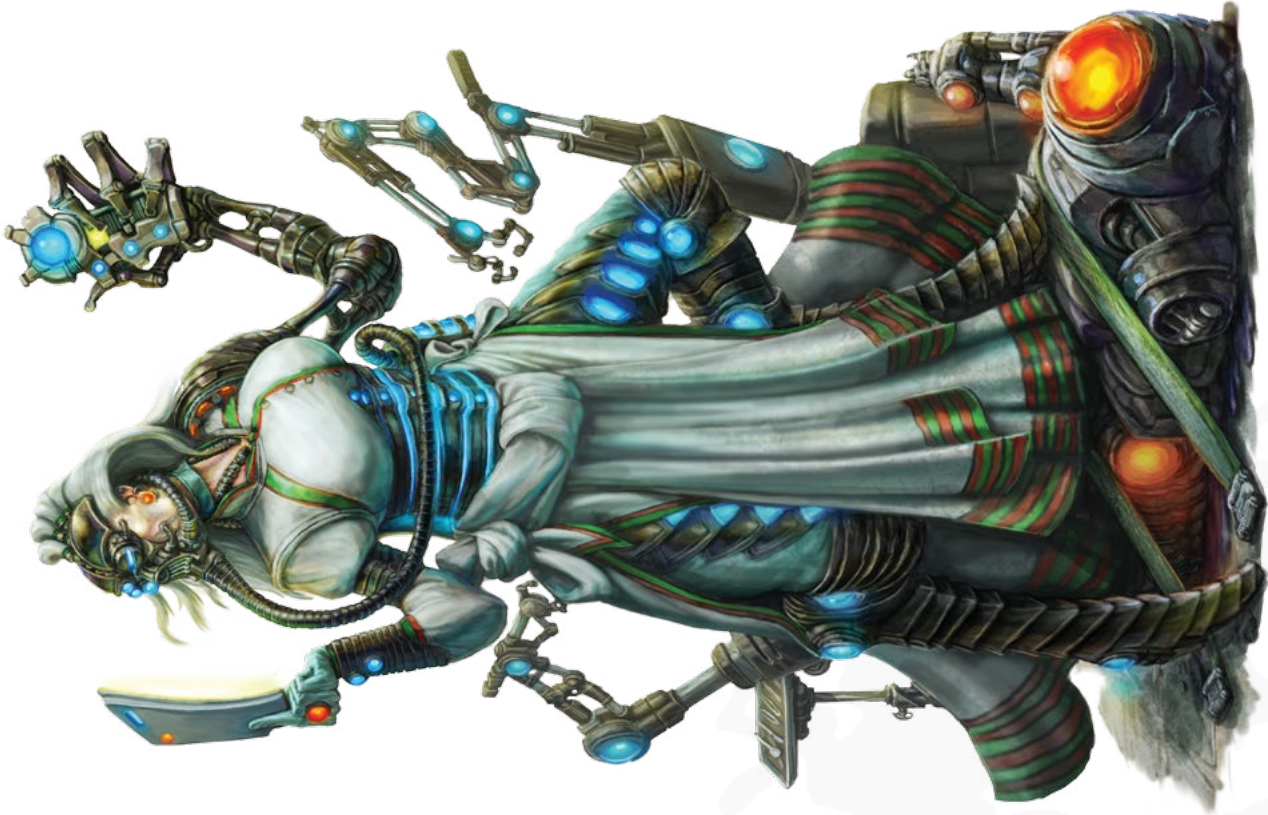
B. \_\_\_\_\_

Mastodon: If you're reading this, I'm so sorry Amelia targeted you for death. I'm finally going to try what I should have done ten years ago, when I learned what Amelia - or should I say, Amla-shoon - really wanted. She's torturing them to death! I can't... Forgive me. I'm going to Ruk, even though I'll probably die trying to stop her.

- Anson



C. \_\_\_\_\_



D. \_\_\_\_\_



E.



F.



# THE STRANGE

1  
TIER

1  
EFFORT

0  
XP

Camille Valentine

IS A

Strong

vector

WHO

Looks for Trouble

ON Earth

CYPHERS

2  
LIMIT

Ceramic Sphere (level 5, grenade): long-range attack creates electrical discharge inflicting 5 points of damage on all creatures within immediate range of the target.

Melt-all (level 4, fluid in clear container): organic slime dissolves 1 cubic foot (.03 cubic m) of material each round. After one round per cypher level, the slime dies and becomes inert.

• MIGHT •			• SPEED •			• INTELLECT •		
POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
19	1		10	1		9		0

• SKILLS •		
○ Breaking things	○ Speed defense	○ Healing
○ Jumping	(when not	
○ Running	wearing armor)	
○ Swimming		

• ATTACKS •			MOD		DAM		• SPECIAL ABILITIES •	
Hunting knife (light)	-1		3				Practiced With All Weapons (Enabler)	
Baseball bat (medium)			5				Practiced in Armor (Enabler)	
Medium pistol (medium)			4				Bash (1 Might point)	
							Translation	
							From Strong:	
							Breaking stuff (already figured in skills)	
							Very Powerful (already figured in Pools)	
							Jumps (already figured in skills)	
							From Looks for Trouble:	
							*Wound Tender (already figured in skills)	
							*Brawler (already figured in attacks)	

• EQUIPMENT •		
1	Cell Phone	\$400
	First Aid Kit	
	Heavy leather coat (already figured into Armor)	
	Street clothing	
	Utility Knife	

• RECOVERY ROLLS •			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ACTION	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 MINS	1D6+ 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 HOURS
			<input type="checkbox"/> 1 HOUR

• DAMAGE TRACK •	
<input type="checkbox"/> IMPAIRED	+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE
<input type="checkbox"/> DEBILITATED	CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE

# THE STRANGE

## CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

USE THE PRIMARY SHEET TO DESCRIBE YOUR CHARACTER ON YOUR STARTING RECURSION  
USE A FOLDED RECURSION SHEET FOR EACH ADDITIONAL RECURSION IN YOUR GAME  
THE INFORMATION ON A RECURSION SHEET MAY CHANGE FROM ONE RECURSION TO ANOTHER



## • ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES  
++ points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION  
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT  
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING  
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER  
Refer to The Strange corebook

← RECURSION SHEET HERE →

## • BACKGROUND •

You received an athletic college scholarship, but you got in so much trouble outside of class that the scholarship was eventually revoked. The Mastodon Project offered you a way to pay off your debts.

### Connection

Back when you were part of Mastodon, Padma got all weird on you and told you that you were going to die an early death. Well, it's been ten years of hard living, and nothing's hurt you yet. On the other hand, you're a bit spooked by the idea that Mastodon is coming back together. Maybe your time is finally up?

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were part of a secret military project called Mastodon.

## • PORTRAIT •

## • NOTES •

← RECURSION SHEET HERE →

← RECURSION SHEET HERE →

← RECURSION SHEET HERE →



# THE STRANGE

1  
TIER

1  
EFFORT

0  
XP

Kevin Chancellor

IS A **Skeptical** **Paradox** WHO

Conducts Weird Science ON **Earth**

• MIGHT •			• SPEED •			• INTELLECT •		
POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
8		0	8		0	20		1

• SKILLS •		
T	S	Identifying
T	S	Psychology
T	S	Seeing through tricks, illusions, ruses, or lies
T	S	Strange training
T	S	* Scientist training:
T	S	* Electrical engineering
T	S	* Intellect defense (from Closed Mind)

• ATTACKS •		
	MOD	DAM
Light pistol (light)	-1	2

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Practiced With Light Weapons (Enabler)  
Exception (1 intellect point)  
Closed Mind (Enabler)  
Translation

From Skeptical:  
Insightful (already figured in Pools)  
Skeptical training (already figured in skills)

From Conducts Weird Science:  
\* Lab Analysis (3 Intellect points)  
\* Scientist training (already figured in skills as Electrical engineering)

• EQUIPMENT •

0 **ARMOR**

- Street clothing
- Science field kit
- Light tools
- Smartphone
- Pen knife

\$900 **MONEY**

• CYPHERS •

3  
LIMIT

Attractor (level 4, glove): unanchored item your size or smaller within long range is drawn to you, arriving without dangerous momentum one round later.

Adhesive (level 7, tube with paste): creates a level 7 bond between any two objects.

Curative (level 5, blue pill): restores 5 points to Might pool.

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

1 ACTION  10 MINS  1 HOUR  10 HOURS

1D6+

• DAMAGE TRACK •

IMPAIRED

+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL  
IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS  
COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

DEBILITATED

CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE

# THE STRANGE

## CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

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## • ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES  
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION  
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT  
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING  
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER  
Refer to The Strange corebook

## • BACKGROUND •

An experiment you conducted in your garage blew up, caused your home to burn down, and killed some of your family. You still dream about it sometimes. When Mastodon contacted you, you were ready to try something different.

### Connection

Back when you were part of Mastodon, that bastard Léopold stuck you with a thrown knife during weapons practice. It was reported as an accident, but you've always wondered. You can never forget, because the scar is on your face—though some people say it makes you look dangerous.

You stayed in contact with Yuki Kobayashi for a few years after Mastodon, because she asked you to make a device able to pick any key card lock. You delivered the item, and afterward, feeling guilty that she was going to use your invention for illicit ends, you broke off contact.

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were part of a secret military project called Mastodon.

## • PORTRAIT •

## • NOTES •

# THE STRANGE

1  
TIER

1  
EFFORT

0  
XP

Léopold Watson

IS A **Brash** **Vector** WHO

Solves Mysteries ON Earth

CYPHERS

2  
LIMIT

Sleep inducer (level 6, taser): touch attack puts victim to sleep for ten minutes unless woken by violent action or noise.

Strange ammo (level 5, clip): for one hour, your firearm attacks deal 3 additional points of acid damage.

• MIGHT •			• SPEED •			• INTELLECT •		
POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
11		1	16		1	9		0

• SKILLS •

<input type="checkbox"/> Climbing	<input type="checkbox"/> Balancing	<input type="checkbox"/> All actions that involve
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/> overcoming or
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Speed defense (when	<input type="checkbox"/> ignoring the effects of
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> not wearing armor)	<input type="checkbox"/> fear or intimidation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Perception
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

• ATTACKS •

	MOD	DAM
Hunting knife (light)	-1	2
Medium pistol (medium)		4

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Practiced With All Weapons (Enabler)  
Pierce (1 Speed point)  
Practiced in Armor (Enabler)  
Translation

From Brash:  
Energetic (already figured in Pools)  
Bold (already figured in skills)

From Solves Mysteries:  
\*Investigator  
\*Sleuth (already figured in skills)

• EQUIPMENT •

<b>1</b> <small>ARMOR</small>	Street clothes	<b>\$300</b> <small>MONEY</small>
	Heavy leather jacket (already figured in Armor)	
	Cell phone	
	Flashlight	
	Laptop	
	Street clothing utility knife	

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ACTION	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 MINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ID6+ <b>1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 HOUR	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 HOURS
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• DAMAGE TRACK •

<input type="checkbox"/> IMPAIRED	+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE
<input type="checkbox"/> DEBILITATED	CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE

# THE STRANGE

## CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

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## • ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES  
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION  
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT  
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING  
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER  
Refer to The Strange corebook

↑ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

## • BACKGROUND •

Your sister is the lead singer in a really popular band. You're not such a bad singer yourself, and you sometimes tour with her as a backup singer. Sometimes, really rabid fans recognize you.

### Connection

Back when you were part of Mastodon, you remember that Padma Ananda particularly liked your singing, and used to ask for you to sing for the group after Taps.

During a live-weapons practice, you winged Kevin Chancellor with a thrown knife. He still has a scar.

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were part of a secret military project called Mastodon.

## • PORTRAIT •

## • NOTES •

↑ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

↑ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

↑ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

# THE STRANGE

1  
TIER

1  
EFFORT

0  
XP

Luis Ventura

IS A **Tough** **spinner** WHO

Leads ON **Earth**

• MIGHT • • SPEED • • INTELLECT •

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
9		0	9		1	16		1

• SKILLS •

0 Might defense	T		0 Intimidation	T	
S			S		
T			0 Social Interaction	T	
S			S		
T			T		
S			S		
T			T		
S			S		
T			T		
S			S		

• ATTACKS •

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

	MOD	DAM	
Medium pistol (medium)		4	Practiced With Light and Medium Weapons (Enabler)
			Fast Talk (1 Intellect point)
			Spin Encouragement (1 Intellect point)
			Manipulator (already figured in skills)
			Translation
			From Tough:
			Healthy (already noted in recovery roll)
			Resilient (already figured in armor)
			From Leads:
			* Good Advice (1 Intellect point)
			* Natural Charisma (already figured in skills)

• EQUIPMENT •

1 ARMOR	car Laptop very nice clothing Smartphone	\$1500 MONEY
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• CYPHERS •

2  
LIMIT

Visual displacer (level 6, belt): gain asset to Speed defense tasks for ten minutes.

Telepathic bonder (level 5, two pills): two people enjoy a telepathic bond for one hour, no matter how far apart.

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ACTION	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 MINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ID6+ 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 HOUR	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 HOURS
-----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--	---------------------------------	-----------------------------------

• DAMAGE TRACK •

<input type="checkbox"/> IMPAIRED	+1 EFFORT PER LEVEL IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE
<input type="checkbox"/> DEBILITATED	CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE

# THE STRANGE

## CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

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## • ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES  
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION  
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT  
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING  
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER  
Refer to The Strange corebook

↑ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

## • BACKGROUND •

You have no memory of anything that happened to you before the age of 18. One of your first memories is being accepted into the Mastodon Project, so you've always been suspicious of it and everyone connected to it, though you hid that unease by assuming leadership roles.

### Connection

Because of your unease with Mastodon, you tried not to make too many connections with your old team. However, you always hoped that one day you could get Kevin Chancellor to build you a device to help you recover your memories. Now that you're reunited with him (against all odds), you're debating whether to finally ask. What if you find out something you really didn't want to know?

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were part of a secret military project called Mastodon.

## • PORTRAIT •

## • NOTES •

↑ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

↑ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

↑ RECURSION SHEET HERE ↓

# THE STRANGE

1  
TIER

1  
EFFORT

0  
XP

Padma Ananda

IS A **Appealing** **Paradox** WHO

Entertains ON **Earth**

CYPHERS

3  
LIMIT

Field projector (level 4, belt buckle): grants +1 to Armor for one hour.

Antidote (level 5, large pill): ends an ongoing poison, paralysis, or disease.

Gravity inverter (level 6, ceramic sphere): gravity reverses for one minute in short-range diameter around sphere, excluding a diameter of immediate range around the sphere. Spheres can be moved.

• MIGHT • • SPEED • • INTELLECT •

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
9		0	9		0	18		1

• SKILLS •

T	S		T	S	
					Computer use
					Pleasant social interaction
					Resisting persuasion or seduction
					Strange training

• ATTACKS •

	MOD	DAM
Heavy-duty letter opener (light)	-1	2
Light pistol (light)	-1	2

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Practiced With Light Weapons (Enabler)  
 Levitate Creature (2+ Intellect points)  
 Premonition (2 Intellect points)  
 Translation

From Appealing:  
 Resistant to Charms (already figured in skills)  
 Charismatic (already figured in Pools)  
 Pleasant (already figured in skills)

From Entertains:  
 \*Levity

• EQUIPMENT •

0  
ARMOR

Smartphone  
 Electronic Keyboard  
 Street clothing  
 Pen knife

\$300  
MONEY

• RECOVERY ROLLS •

1 ACTION  10 MINS  ID6+ 1  1 HOUR  10 HOURS

• DAMAGE TRACK •

IMPAIRED  
 +1 EFFORT PER LEVEL  
 IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS  
 COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

DEBILITATED  
 CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE

# THE STRANGE

## CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

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## • ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES  
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION  
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT  
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING  
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER  
Refer to The Strange corebook

## • BACKGROUND •

You worked for a famous psychic, but she threw you out when she realized your abilities were real, as opposed to her tricks. That's when you got involved with Mastodon.

### Connection

Back when you were part of Mastodon, you really loved hearing Léopold Watson sing and would dearly love to hear him do so again.

You told the fortune for Camille valentine back in Mastodon and predicted that she was going to die a grisly death. She didn't believe you, but you know that her death is closer than ever. (What you never told her was that the only way that death will pass her over is if you sacrifice yourself instead.)

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were part of a secret military project called Mastodon.

## • PORTRAIT •

## • NOTES •



# THE STRANGE

1  
TIER

1  
EFFORT

0  
XP

Yuki Kobayashi

IS A

D.S. Lucky

spinner

WHO

Works the System

ON Earth

## CYPHERS

2  
LIMIT

Nullification ray (level 5, taser): ends one ongoing effect within long range produced by an artifact, cypher, move, revision, twist, or other special Strange-related effect.

Phase changer (level 4, belt): puts the user out of phase for one minute. During this time, she can pass through solid objects as though she were entirely insubstantial, like a ghost. She cannot make physical attacks or be physically attacked.

## MIGHT • SPEED • INTELLECT

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
9		0	12		1	13		1

## SKILLS

T	S	T	S	T	S
		0	Deceiving		
		0	* Computer programming		

## ATTACKS

	MOD	DAM
Medium pistol		4

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

Practiced With Light and Medium Weapons (Enabler)  
 Spin Identity (2+ Intellect points)  
 Sleight of Hand (1 Speed point)  
 Manipulator (already figured in skills)  
 Translation

From Lucky:  
 Luck Pool: 3 points  
 Advantage

From Works the System:  
 \*Hack the Impossible (3 Intellect points)  
 \*Computer Programming (already figured in skills)

## EQUIPMENT

0  
ARMOR

Street clothing  
 Laptop  
 Smartphone  
 Electronic lockpick (asset to card reader locks)

\$500  
MONEY

## RECOVERY ROLLS

1 ACTION  
 10 MINS  
 ID6+ 1  
 1 HOUR  
 10 HOURS

## DAMAGE TRACK

IMPAIRED  
 +1 EFFORT PER LEVEL  
 IGNORE MINOR & MAJOR EFFECT RESULTS ON ROLLS  
 COMBAT ROLL OF 17-20 ONLY DEALS +1 DAMAGE

DEBILITATED  
 CAN ONLY MOVE AN IMMEDIATE DISTANCE IF SPEED POOL IS ZERO YOU CANNOT MOVE

# THE STRANGE

## CONSTRUCTING YOUR CHARACTER

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## • ADVANCEMENT •

(You must have four of these to advance in Tier. Cost = 4XP each.)

INCREASE CAPABILITIES  
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARDS PERFECTION  
+1 point to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT  
+1 point into Effort

SKILL TRAINING  
Train in a skill or Specialize in a pre-existing skill

OTHER  
Refer to The Strange corebook

## • BACKGROUND •

You sometimes supplement your income by acquiring things with your five-fingered discount, either in person or via Internet hacking. The latter is what first got Mastodon interested in choosing you as a candidate.

### Connection

You met Kevin Chancellor and the others at Mastodon. Afterward, he made an electronic lockpick for you that has really come in handy over the years. You were grateful, but he broke off contact soon afterward. Well, screw him—life is hard.

### Initial Link to Starting Adventure

You were part of a secret military project called Mastodon.

## • PORTRAIT •

## • NOTES •

• PORTRAIT •

Camille valentine

• NOTES •

Notes area with horizontal lines for writing.

Metamorphosizes

ON

RULE

IN

• MIGHT •

19

CURRENT

EDGE

1

10

CURRENT

EDGE

1

9

CURRENT

EDGE

0

• SKILLS •

- 0 Breaking things
- 0 Jumping
- 0 Running
- 0 Swimming

T	S
T	S
T	S
T	S
T	S
T	S
T	S
T	S
T	S
T	S
T	S
T	S

• ATTACKS •

Chrysalid claws (medium)

MOD

DAM

4

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

- Practiced With All Weapons (Enabler)
- Practiced in Armor (Enabler)
- Bash (1 Might point Translation)
- From Strong: Breaking stuff (already figured in skills)
- Very Powerful (already figured in Pools)
- Jumps (already figured in skills)
- From Metamorphosizes:
  - \*Battle Chrysalid (2 Intellect points)
  - \*Practiced with Chrysalid attacks

• EQUIPMENT •

1

ARMOR

- Rule clothing
- Light armor: plastiskin (already figured in Armor)
- Umbilical

70bt

MONEY

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE

• PORTRAIT •

Kevin Chancellor

• NOTES •

Lined area for notes.

Spawns ON RUK

REFRAIN

• MIGHT • • SPEED • • INTELECT •

POOL: <b>8</b>	CURRENT: <b>0</b>	EDGE: <b>0</b>	POOL: <b>8</b>	CURRENT: <b>0</b>	EDGE: <b>0</b>	POOL: <b>20</b>	CURRENT: <b>1</b>	EDGE: <b>1</b>
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• SKILLS •

T S		Identifying	0
T S		Psychology	0
T S		Seeing through tricks, illusions, ruses, or lies	0
T S		Strange training	0

• ATTACKS •

	MOD	DAM
Quiver shiv (light)	-1	2
Ignores Armor		

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Practiced with Light Weapons (Enabler)  
 Exception (1 intellect point)  
 Closed Mind (Enabler)  
 Translation  
 From Skeptical:  
 Insightful (already figured in Pools)  
 Skeptical training (already figured in skills)  
 From Spawns:  
 \* Friend in Yourself (Enabler)

FOLD HERE

**0**  
 ARMOR

• EQUIPMENT •

Rule clothing  
 Umbilical

A level 2 clone of you that follows you around and serves as an asset on attacks

**30bt**  
 MONEY

FOLD HERE

• PORTRAIT •

Léopold Watson

• NOTES •

Lined area for notes.

Infiltrates

ON

RULE

• MIGHT •

POOL CURRENT EDGE

11

1

• SPEED •

POOL CURRENT EDGE

16

1

• INTELLECT •

POOL CURRENT EDGE

9

0

• SKILLS •

Q Climbing

S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	

Q Balancing

S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
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S	
T	
S	
T	
S	

Q Initiative

S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	

Q Speed defense

T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	

Q All actions that involve

S	overcoming or
T	ignoring the effects of
S	fear or intimidation
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	
T	
S	

• ATTACKS •

MOD DAM

Spear (medium bladed melee)	4						
Spiker pistol (medium ranged)	4						

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Practiced with All Weapons (Enabler)

Pierce (1 Speed point)

Practiced in Armor (Enabler)

Translation

From Brash:

Energetic (already figured in Pools)

Bold (already figured in skills)

From Infiltrates:

\*Stealth (Enabler)

• EQUIPMENT •

1

ARMOR

Rule clothing

Plastiskin (already figured in Armor)

Umbilical

Bag of light tools

500t

MONEY

FOLD HERE

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• PORTRAIT •

Luis Ventura

• NOTES •

Lined area for notes.

Adapts to Any Environment

ON

REMAIN

RULE

• MIGHT •

• SPEED •

• INTELLECT •

POOL  
9

CURRENT

0

EDGE

POOL

7

CURRENT

1

EDGE

POOL

16

CURRENT

1

EDGE

• SKILLS •

0	Might defense	T	S																	
		S																		
		T	S																	
		S																		
		T	S																	
		S																		
		T	S																	
		S																		
		T	S																	
		S																		
		T	S																	
		S																		

• ATTACKS •

	MOD	DAM
Slaughter pistol (medium)		4
Spear (medium)		4

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

- Practiced with Light and Medium Weapons (Enabler)
- Fast Talk (1 Intellect point)
- Spin Encouragement (1 Intellect point)
- Manipulator (already figured in skills)
- Translation
- From Tough:
  - Healthy (already noted in recovery roll)
  - Resilient (already figured in Armor)
- From Adapts to Any Environment:
  - \*Defend (figured in normal Armor)
  - \*Heal (already noted in recovery roll)

• ARMOR •

3

- Rule clothing
- Light armor: slacksuit (-2 to Speed while worn; figured)
- Bag of light tools
- Breather
- Umbilical
- Recovery Rolls
- 1d6 + 3

• EQUIPMENT •

50bt

MONEY

FOLD HERE

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• PORTRAIT •

Padma Ananda

• NOTES •

REFIN

Regenerates Tissue ON RUK

• MIGHT •

• SPEED •

• INTELLECT •

POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE	POOL	CURRENT	EDGE
9	0	0	9	0	0	18	1	1

• SKILLS •

T	S	0	Computer use
S	T	0	Pleasant social interaction
T	S	0	Resisting persuasion or seduction
S	T	0	Strange training
T	S		
S	T		
T	S		
S	T		
T	S		
S	T		
T	S		
S	T		

• ATTACKS •

	MOD	DAM
Needler pistol (Light)	-1	2

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Practiced with Light Weapons (Enabler)  
 Levitate Creature (2+ Intellect points)  
 Premonition (2 Intellect points)  
 Translation  
 From Appealing:  
 Resistant to Charms (already figured in skills)  
 Charismatic (already figured in Pools)  
 Pleasant (already figured in Skills)  
 From Regenerates Tissue:  
 \*Regeneration (1 Intellect point)

• EQUIPMENT •

0 ARMOR

Rule clothing  
 Umbilical

50bt MONEY

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE

• PORTRAIT •

Yuki Kobayashi

• NOTES •

Lined area for notes.

Processes Information ON RUK

REFRAIN

• MIGHT •

POOL: 9  
CURRENT: 0  
EDGE: 0

• SPEED •

POOL: 10  
CURRENT: 0  
EDGE: 0

• INTELLECT •

POOL: 17  
CURRENT: 1  
EDGE: 1

• SKILLS •

T	S	0	Deceiving
T	S	0	All Song research
T	S	0	Ruk geography
T	S	0	Microbiome engineering
T	S		
T	S		
T	S		
T	S		
T	S		
T	S		
T	S		
T	S		

• ATTACKS •

	MOD	DAM
Spiker pistol		4

• SPECIAL ABILITIES •

Practiced with Light and Medium Weapons (Enabler)  
Spin Identity (2+ Intellect points)  
Sleight of Hand (1 Speed point)  
Manipulator (already figured in skills)  
Translation  
From Lucky:  
Luck Pool: 3 points  
Advantage  
From Processes Information:  
\* Storage Capacity (already figured in Intellect Pool)  
\* Knowledge Storehouse (already figured in skills)

• EQUIPMENT •

1 ARMOR

Ruk clothing  
Plastiskin (reduces Speed by 2 because not practiced in Armor; figured)  
Healing kit  
Umbilical

50bt MONEY

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE

FOLD HERE



# THE STRANGE™



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