

DQ #1

1E&5E  
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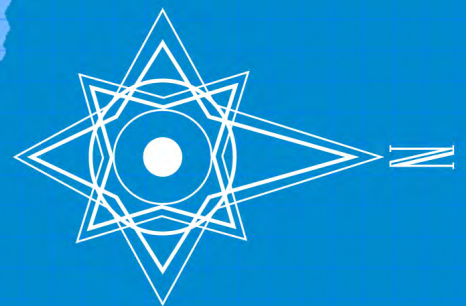
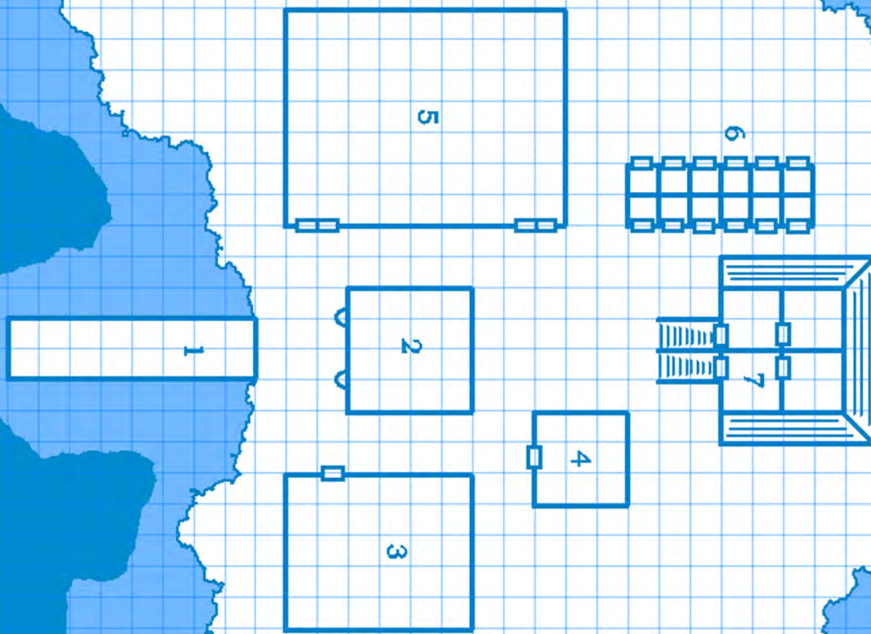
INTRODUCTION TO THE GUN KINGDOMS TIMELINE!  
A STEAMPUNK INSPIRED ADVENTURE FOR LEVELS 1-3

THE  
NAMELESS  
REALMS

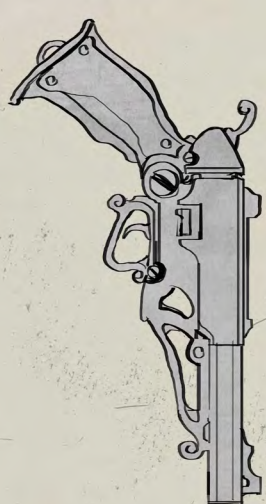
GK1 The Adventure Begins  
New Monster: Final War Automaton (Sentry MIV)  
Handbook NRGK1 The Gun Kingdoms Setting

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## Digital Quarterly

# HANDBOOK



Folio Digital Quarterly #1

First of all, I'd like to thank everyone who was involved in making The Folio Digital Quarterly a reality. It's not very often that I get to take a personal pet project and move it into the realm of a public release, but in this case it happened. When artist David Dietrick and I first started working on how to develop the world of The Gun Kingdoms, I had no idea that it would turn into one of my all-time favorite periods of Nameless Realms history. Our initial thought was to set it on Mars, much like Frank Chadwick had done with Space: 1889, but as things began to expand it became clear that we were doing much more than a redux of a past classic. The Gun Kingdoms took on its own life, as did the characters, and suddenly the timeline exploded with possibilities.

I hope that you will take to what we've created as much as we did. This is certainly a labor of love, and there are certainly going to be growing pains as this setting expands over time and we continue to incorporate bits and pieces of both the 1E & 5E mechanics. So in conclusion, I wanted to say thanks again for your support of Art of the Genre and its projects. Without you, none of these great adventures would be possible!

Why steampunk? Well, I have to say that David's artwork has always inspired me to create things, be that work in a future setting like FASA's Battletech, or even an alternate past like GDW's Space: 1889. Still, having enjoyed old TSR's Boot Hill on more than one occasion, and reading Gary's notes on Sixguns & Sorcery in the AD&D DMG, I couldn't help but want to see a version of this genre played out in the Nameless Realms. But truly, instead of steampunk, this setting would be more appropriately called magepunk, as magic still lives within the setting. The Gun Kingdoms is a world in transition, one that once relied on magic but is now trying to move fully into mundane industrial might. This amalgamation is what makes the Gun Kingdoms so dynamic, and utilizing the elemental bound races born out of my work in both fiction and gaming, there are some really cool plots that can play out. Finally, I've got to admit there is some anime influence in this time period as well with shows like Akira Kurosawa's Samurai 7 lending a feel to the apocalyptic nature of the wastelands. So if you enjoy such things, then holster your weapon and get ready for a wild ride!



# The Gun Kingdoms as a Setting

In the Nameless Realms I've managed to develop many different settings that I call 'Ages of Man'. They begin in primordial fantasy with the Age of Mists, move through high fantasy in the setting you'd find in Roslof Keep and Taux, and then move to apocalyptic fantasy, cyberpunk, and space opera, but amid all these lies my magepunk setting of The Gun Kingdoms nestled deep in the 11th Age of Man.

## What are the Gun Kingdoms?

A half-dozen adjectives to describe them come to mind including brutal, deadly, superstitious, paranoid, lawless, and cruel to name a few. In essence, the Gun Kingdoms are pockets of military dictatorships run by former generals and admirals of the Final War who now control large swaths of land. Each now works to create a true nation-state from the ashes of the war by controlling population centers and trade routes. At the heart of these small empires you can find civilizations at the crossroads between failing magic and rising technology: a high society of merchants, tech tycoons, xenophobic clergy, and mercenary lords. Outside these stabilized zones are the Outbanks, smaller outposts linked to the cities by rail and airships, where a second class of up-and-coming privateers seeks to make fortunes as each empire expands. Beyond the Outbanks are the Hazards, a series of expansive wastelands tortured by years of cataclysmic war. If there is a true frontier, it lies within the

Hazards, and only those with strong backs, quick wits, and icy nerves travel there. In the Hazards, the saying goes 'Fortune rides shotgun with Death', and those with magic are known to dwell far out of the reach of dictators' bounties.

## History and the making of the Gun Kingdoms

The most critical precursor to The Gun Kingdoms timeline actually comes from the 6th Age, the Age of Splendors. It was in this time that immortals, spurred on by the use of high magic, tore a hole in the Elemental Plane of Shadow and allowed the Streambenders to ravage the world. In a last ditch effort to save as many people as they could, the various races of the world locked themselves into seven 'Shining Cities' that even the mightiest of the Streambenders couldn't breach. This had two irrevocable effects, the first being that those inside the cities were basically pressure cooked with elemental magic for a thousand years, forever changing their DNA structure, and second, those who were left outside the cities discovered that stripping themselves of elemental essence made them less attractive as prey for the Streambenders. After a millennia, the hole in the Elemental Plane of Shadow healed, and the Streambenders were forced to retreat to their own plane. When the Shining Cities opened, they found a ravaged world filled with pockets of hollow-eyed and magically devoid people that they called Samaya. Over the next age, the Enlightened—those who

emerged from the Shining Cities—became an almost divine ruling class, but their numbers were small, and the Samayan populations skyrocketed after the Benders were no more. Eventually, the Samaya would rebel against the rulership of the Enlightened, destroying their Shining Cities and hunting them after a conflict called the Final War. However, to achieve this victory, the Samaya still had to utilize magic that had been taught to them by the Enlightened, and they mixed technology with magic in the process. When the Final War was over, the now xenophobic Samaya turned on their own magically skilled soldiers, killing them in a final attempt to cleanse the world of magic once and for all. Still, some Samayan tome-mages and technomancers escaped the purge, fleeing into the wastelands where rumors of Enlightened still persisted. Magical relics and magepunk artifacts still exist away from the Samayan cities, and high bounties have been placed on the recovery of either. This is where The Gun Kingdoms timeline falls, and the challenge for players is walking between the worlds without getting killed by either side in the process.

### **Running in the Gun Kingdoms**

I've created this timeline as a place of high adventure, and it should reflect overblown anime, dime store pulp classics, cutting-edge horror, and some Jules Verne, all set to a backdrop of a Spaghetti Western. If you can

pull that off as a Gamemaster, then you've done your job. Also, two things that I've driven home in my fiction are fantastic transports and places—airships, overland boats, tunneling trains, and lost cities deep in the Hazard. I highly recommend starting your players with a ship of some kind, even if it is mundane, as they can likely add to it as any campaign moves forward, and that act of upgrading should endear them to the setting all the more.

For the purposes of this adventure, the Gamemaster will only be dealing with a single Gun Kingdom controlled by the Garin Clans. The kingdom comprises what was once the countries of Dragmarsh and the Hinterlands and currently holds the remnants of the Enlightened Shining City of Findalynn.

### **Fantasy Class Conversions**

In The Gun Kingdoms setting, all non-magical classes are available to players including fighter (called soldier), barbarian (called wastelander), cavalier (who becomes cavalryman), thief, assassin, and monk (called pugilist). Rangers (called scouts) still exist but are denied any magical casting abilities. Clerics no longer exist, although priests of the Garin Orthodox Church hold sway in the Samayan faith, but they now use the paladin class and have no magical abilities. Magic-users [5E wizards] are called tome-mages and although they are rare, do exist, but certainly have bounties on their heads. Druids have withdrawn from the

## Note

*If a ranger is somehow taught magic by an Enlightened or a tome-mage, it is possible for him to gain magical casting abilities, but this would put him on the bounty list. The same is true for clerics or paladins who worship the Nameless Realms Saints (outlawed as heresy and witchcraft by the Garin Orthodox Church) as that old world faith still provides magic to the faithful.*

world, although rumors sometimes rise that they do still exist and are trying to heal the world. Any other magical classes would have to be brought in at the Gamemaster's discretion, but are not seen by me as being readily viable in this setting.

## Fast Rules on the Enlightened

Okay, so the Enlightened are the 'problem' within this system, meaning, they are epically unbalanced in gameplay. For that reason, I'd suggest not allowing players to play them. However, if you've read *The Gun Kingdoms* or *The Airship of Fools*, you'll note that Skylla is a half-Wizard. Having a half-blood of any of the Nameless Realms races can add an interesting wrinkle, but you'll have to be sure that the players embrace someone with this power (and curse as they are constantly hunted). It is also fun for the players to have Enlightened allies, as they can be incredibly powerful and fun to utilize during climactic encounters. Still, it is up to you, but know that the Enlightened in the *Gun Kingdoms* are extremely rare, and won't normally show themselves for what they are.

Also, simply put, I designed the world so that people should really fear Wizard Enlightened, so keep that in mind.

Another special note, the Enlightened never use 'weapons of technology', instead they rely on the old ways: magic and blades. It is for this reason that magical weapons (especially bullets) are so rare, because after the Samaya purged their own tome-mages, stocks of magical weapons were used up. There are two caveats to this rule, the first being the



Eldaryn (Enlightened) enjoy using pistols (as they developed gunpowder in the first place), and the second being half-bloods have no issues using tech weapons that they are able to empower. Keep that in mind.

Whatever the case, I'm going to lay the groundwork for quick-play of Enlightened below, and remember, they have changed since the days of the Nameless Realms Races supplement, their overt power much more pronounced.

There are two quick rules to adhere to when dealing with Enlightened characters or NPCs. Both deal directly with dice, either number or type, that Enlightened can use each round while drawing directly from their element.

### **Constitution and Elemental Magic**

The ability to wield the elemental power is tied to the Enlightened's Constitution attribute. An Enlightened may use her elemental dice a number of times a day equal to  $\frac{1}{2}$  (rounded up) her Constitution score. If an Enlightened wants to use her elemental dice more than this, she must make a saving throw vs. spell [DC 18 Constitution] each time she 'direct channels' her element. If the saving throw is failed, she internalizes the energy and takes her elemental dice in damage.

### **Elemental Connection**

Typically, Enlightened don't suffer negatives to their abilities as long as they aren't somehow opposed to their element. Examples of direct

### **First Rule**

*Enlightened Affinity is tied to die type, Low equals 1d4, Medium equals 1d6, High equals 1d8. This rule is uniform across the board on Enlightened races except when dealing with the race of Wizards who always get 1d20.*

### **Second Rule**

*Enlightened level is tied to the number of dice they can use per round. Thus, a 5th level Enlightened character would have 5 dice to use as she chooses (offense or defense) each round.*

### **Note:**

*A Wizard in or around water will add his character level to EACH d20 he rolls.*

opposition would be a jai-ruk (Medium Earth) on an airship, a human (Low Fire) on a boat, or an aspara (High Air) in a dungeon. If such a situation arises, then take the Enlightened character's die type down one category [1d6 becoming 1d4]. This can mean that a Low Affinity Enlightened may completely lose connection to her power. Also, if the connection is heavily compromised, like an Eldaryn in a submarine, the Gamemaster should not allow any elemental connection and consider the Enlightened to be stunned while in this situation.

Now, there are also times where the connection can be stronger, like an Eldaryn in a forge or an aspara in an airship. In these cases, the die type will increase by one type.

## **Half-Enlightened Characters**

Characters with mixed Enlightened blood get a die type that is 1 lower than their Enlightened parent would get. Thus, if a half-aspara (High Air) character were being played, he would get 1d6 instead of 1d8. Skylla, for example, as a half-Wizard still gets 1d12, the next die type down from a d20. Also, if the half-Enlightened is from a Low Affinity [1d4], then she receives 1 point of elemental power per level (i.e., a 3rd level half-human would get 3 elemental power points—offense or defense—per Constitution point).

### **Offense Elemental Attacks**

For game purposes here, I'm going to keep this simple and allow for direct single-target damage from the elemental dice. Thus, if a 7th level Enlightened Eldaryn (High Fire) decides to throw a flame blast at an enemy, he will get 7d8 in flame damage. Also, this damage can be added to a weapon, so the same Eldaryn can add the flame damage to a short sword and do 1d6+7d8 damage. Note: Elemental Dice cannot be split between offense and defense at this stage, so you must choose one or the other each round.

### **Defense Elemental Actions**

Instead of using elemental dice for attack purposes, an Enlightened may surround herself with her element to ward off damaging attacks. Thus, a kin might erect earthen shield walls, an aspara might turn bullets aside with a wind blast, or a lowl might turn blows away

with a heat shield. If an Enlightened chooses defense, at the beginning of the round roll her elemental dice, get a total, and then use that as temporary hit points for that round. Example: A 6th level kin rolls 6d8 and gets a total of 34, so for the next round he is considered to have 34 more hit points (subtract damage from these first), but these will dissipate at the start of the next round.

## **Creating a Crew**

In standard fantasy role-playing there are adventuring companies, and The Gun Kingdoms setting should be played no differently, save to say that in all likelihood the players will be part of a ship's crew. It might be that you want the players to have found a ship and started their own crew, or they might be new recruits to an already established crew that is utilized on 'away missions'. In the latter scenario, you can have a chain of command that the players can slowly work their way up through, one day perhaps commanding the ship on their own, but only time and your players will decide that. Whatever the case, it is my hope that you will take the crew option seriously, because most missions that happen in the Gun Kingdoms are work-for-hire shots, although certainly local legends might entice random exploration as well. One thing to keep in mind, nothing in the Hazard is easy, and just like in Firefly it is the job of the captain to keep his ship sailing and his crew together, so if you



want to put a bit of Mal in there, be my guest as there was obviously a nasty war recently that had a whole lot of losers in it.

### Sample Ship, the Sand-Tyger

When David and I first started the project of creating our novels, I came up with the idea of an experimental vessel that could go on both water and land. David enjoyed the notion and he soon started work on the designs of the Sand-Tyger. The ship, included in this adventure for purposes of possible ship ideas, was one of the latter designs of the Final War, and although it didn't make it into full production, certain prototypes were made. Finds like this one can make for a great campaign starting point, and the smaller size of the ship will also keep the crew in close quarters while keeping your NPC inventory as a Gamemaster down as well.

Certainly another great option is an airship, but this might make missions a bit too easy to start with and make for less of an experience of navigating the Hazard. A ride in one is always a fun aside, but you might want to keep them out of your players' reach until higher level so that they can experience the dangers on the ground first.

### Equipment

I'm not going to make a huge equipment list here, save to say that there are still standard 'adventure packs' that won't have changed too much from what you already find in the character resource materials for 1E & 5E. However, that

isn't the case when talking about weapons, so I'm going to give you a sample of a few so that you can see how the mechanics work and then go to town either using them exclusively or making up your own similar versions.



## Pistols

**Sage-Mourn Fynn Revolver:** Reminiscent of the Earth's Colt Peacemaker, this is the weapon of choice by the bulk of desperados who travel the Hazard.

Cost: 250 SP Dam: 1d8 3 lb. Rate of Fire: 3/1

[Cost: 250 SP Dam: 1d8 3 lb. Piercing,

**Ammunition [6] (range 20/60), loading, special]**

**Saint Erik's Break:** With a single high caliber slug, this weapon can be utilized as either a scatter-gun or a heavy pistol. Loading is problematic, but most people agree that one shot is often all you need with it, especially if you are loading Arcana Rounds.

Cost: 500 SP Dam: 2d8 12 lb. Rate of Fire: 1/1

[Cost: 500 SP Dam: 2d8 12 lb. Piercing,

**Ammunition [1] (range 40/80), loading, special]**

**Fynn-Mark Naval Carbine:** Utilized by several world navies during the Final War, this tough carbine holds a good-sized clip of ammo and also can be utilized as a blade weapon in hand-to-hand combat [for blade damage use hand axe].

Cost: 500 SP Dam: 1d10 8 lb. Rate of Fire: 2/1

[Cost: 500 SP Dam: 1d10 8 lb. Piercing,

**Ammunition [5] (range 30/70), loading, special]**

**Tress-Panther MII:** This five-shot bolt action rifle was the bread and butter of the Samayan forces worldwide. It is probably the most common weapon in the world at this point in time.

Cost: 500 SP Dam: 1d12 11 lb. Rate of Fire: 1/1

[Cost: 500 SP Dam: 1d12 11 lb. Piercing,

**Ammunition [5] (range 40/120), loading, special]**

**Tress-Panther MV Lever:** An increased ammo capacity and quicker cocking mechanism sets the MV apart from its older cousin the MII. Some folks say that a man in the Hazard won't live long unless he has one of these on his saddle.

Cost: 750 SP Dam: 1d12 12 lb. Rate of Fire: 2/1

[Cost: 750 SP Dam: 1d12 12 lb. Piercing,

**Ammunition [7] (range 40/120), loading, special]**

**Shining Seven Nail Caster:** One of the few new-age weapons employed by Enlightened, this is more a magically driven crossbow than a gun. Still, it can be deadly, silent, and if enchanted, reusable, which is unlike bullets fired from guns.

Cost: 750 SP Dam: 2d8 12 lb. Rate of Fire: 1/1

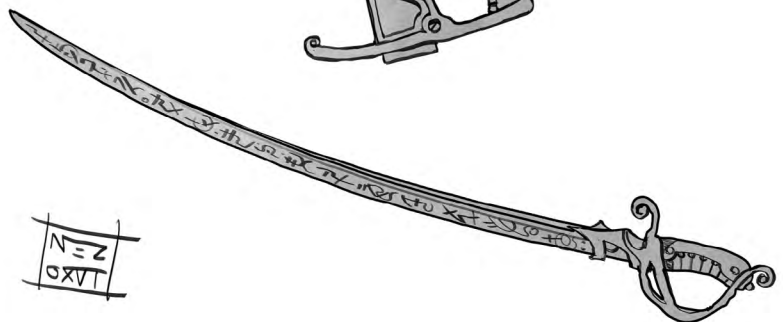
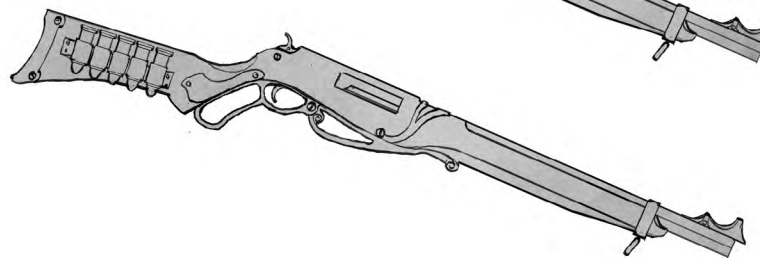
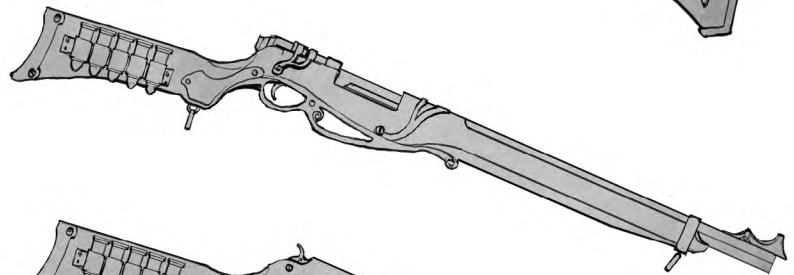
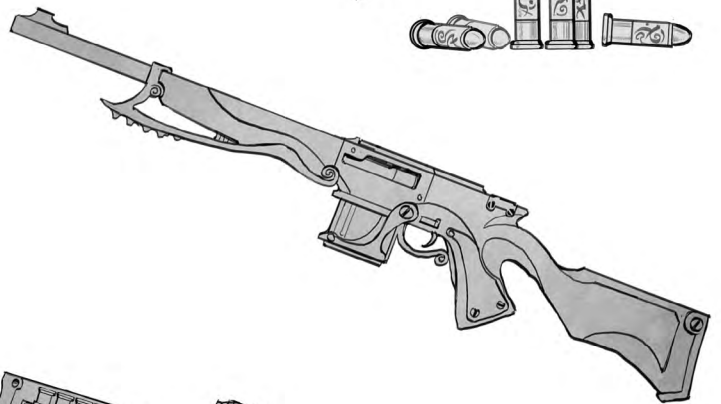
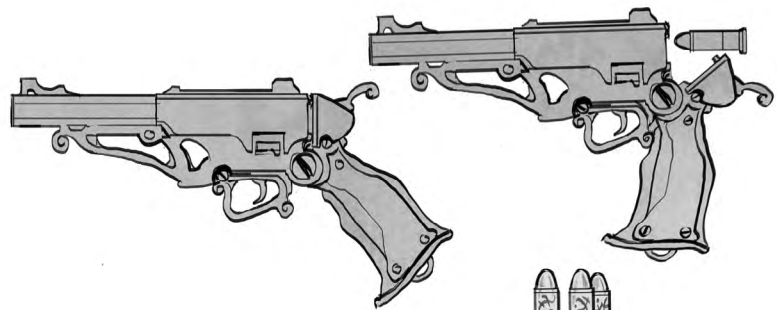
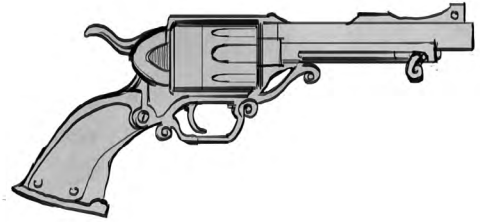
[Cost: 750 SP Dam: 2d8 12 lb. Piercing,

**Ammunition [1] (range 20/60), loading, special]**

**Arcana-Lathe Sky Cavalry Sabre:** Air marines were known to carry enchanted sabres on many of the larger vessels during the Final War. Although few and far between, these weapons are still highly prized due to durability and hitting power, especially on fragile airships where bullets can be problematic.

Cost: 1,750 SP Dam: 1d8+1 3 lb. Enchantment: +1 (or higher)

[Cost: 1,750 SP Dam: 1d8+1 3 lb. Finesse, Enchantment +1 (or higher)]





Also in terms of converting cost from fantasy settings, all Gun Kingdoms costs are at a 1/1 rate from gold pieces to silver pieces, thus a 25 GP longsword in a fantasy setting would convert to a 25 SP longsword in the Gun Kingdoms. Gold has been stored away in the vaults of the new empires after the war, but there is a standardized bank that the armies used during the conflict called the War Bank, and War Bank Notes (bill currency) are utilized in most civilized areas including cities and even the Outbanks, but in the Hazard hard currency is typically needed.

### **Final War Arcana Rounds**

During the great war that decided the fate of the Enlightened, the Samaya enchanters developed a number of enchanted rounds that could be used by their forces against the powerful magic of the enemy. Some of these rounds still exist today and can be found at a high price if they ever come on the open market. Arguably the most powerful of these are called 'The Eleven', which is the number for which they were designed, and they are known to destroy magic. Another special note, Arcana Rounds conform to ANY weapon, meaning they change caliber depending on how they are loaded. Costs for these rounds are not listed because it is a seller's market on a finite inventory.

**A.** The One: Simple Fire Burst magic, adds 2d6 fire damage to any shell

**B.** The Two: Low magic Ice Burst that adds 2d6 frost damage to any shell

**C.** The Three: A nasty little damage over time round that will cause 2d6 acid damage for 1d4 rounds

**D.** The Four: An upgraded 'One', this adds 5d6 fire damage to any shell

**E.** The Five: An upgraded 'Two' this adds 5d6 frost damage to any shell

**F.** The Six 'Sandman Round': Will knock out a target of 8 HD or less [4 HD are denied a saving throw] [DC 15 Constitution]

**G.** The Seven: Enchanted with damage over time, once hit, a target will bleed for 1d12 rounds at an additional 1d8 damage per round

**H.** The Eight: Enchanted with impacting magic, this round will knock a target prone unless a save versus spell is made [DC 17 Dexterity]

**I.** The Nine: Enchanted with disintegration magic, a target must make a saving throw versus spell or be vaporized [DC 17 Constitution]

**J.** The Ten 'Screamer': A sonic damage round that causes 5d6 damage to a 20x20 foot area around where it hits.

**K.** The Eleven or 'The Null': This is an Anti-Magic Shell round. If carried, the possessor is immune to incoming magical spells, and if the bullet hits an enemy, he becomes incapable to use magic until the round is removed.

# New Monster

## Final War Automaton (Sentry MIV)

Neutral

Armor Class: 2 (Elemental Hardening + Chain Armor)

HD: 8+8

Move: 9"

No. of Attacks: 4

Damage/Attack: 1-8/1-8 (Guns) plus 1d8/1d6 (Blades)

Special Attacks: None

Special Defenses: Immunity to Charm & Sleep

Magic Resistance: Standard

Intelligence: Very

Size: M

Psionic Ability: NIL

% in lair: 20%

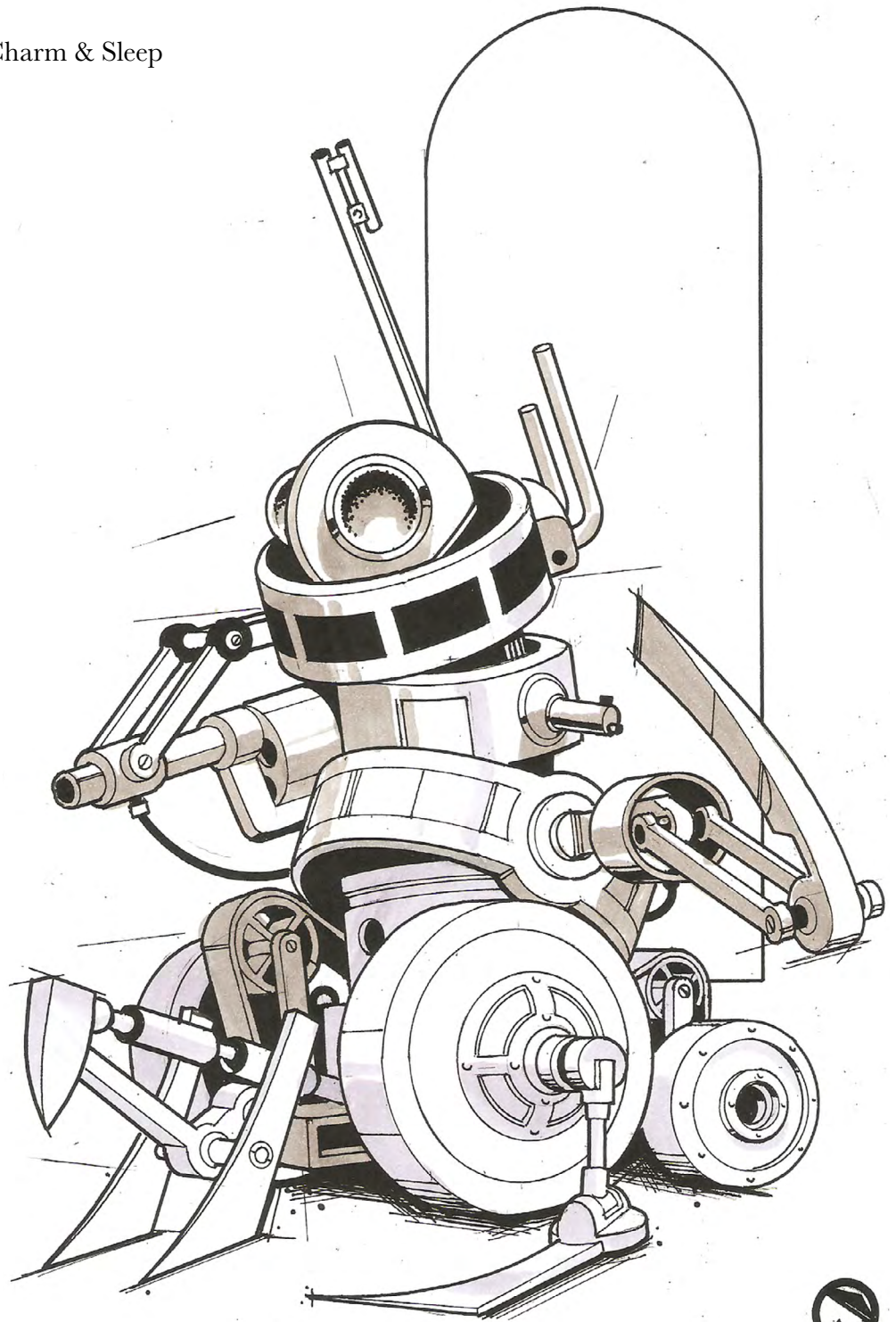
Treasure Type: L, M

**[Final War Automaton (Sentry MIV): [AC 18, Speed 30 ft, HD 8d12+16, HP 64, #Attack: 4, Hit +6, Damage Guns 8 (1D8+4) and Blade 10 (1d8+6), Multiattack, Immunity (Charm & Sleep)]**

During the Final War, a vast amount of enchanted automatons were created to battle the Enlightened to help weaken the elemental power they possessed. The most effective and mass produced of these were the Mark IV Sentry units. Coming in at just under seven feet in height, and armed with two guns and two

curved blades, these guard robots can be easily modified for specific tasks and with more refined weapon systems.

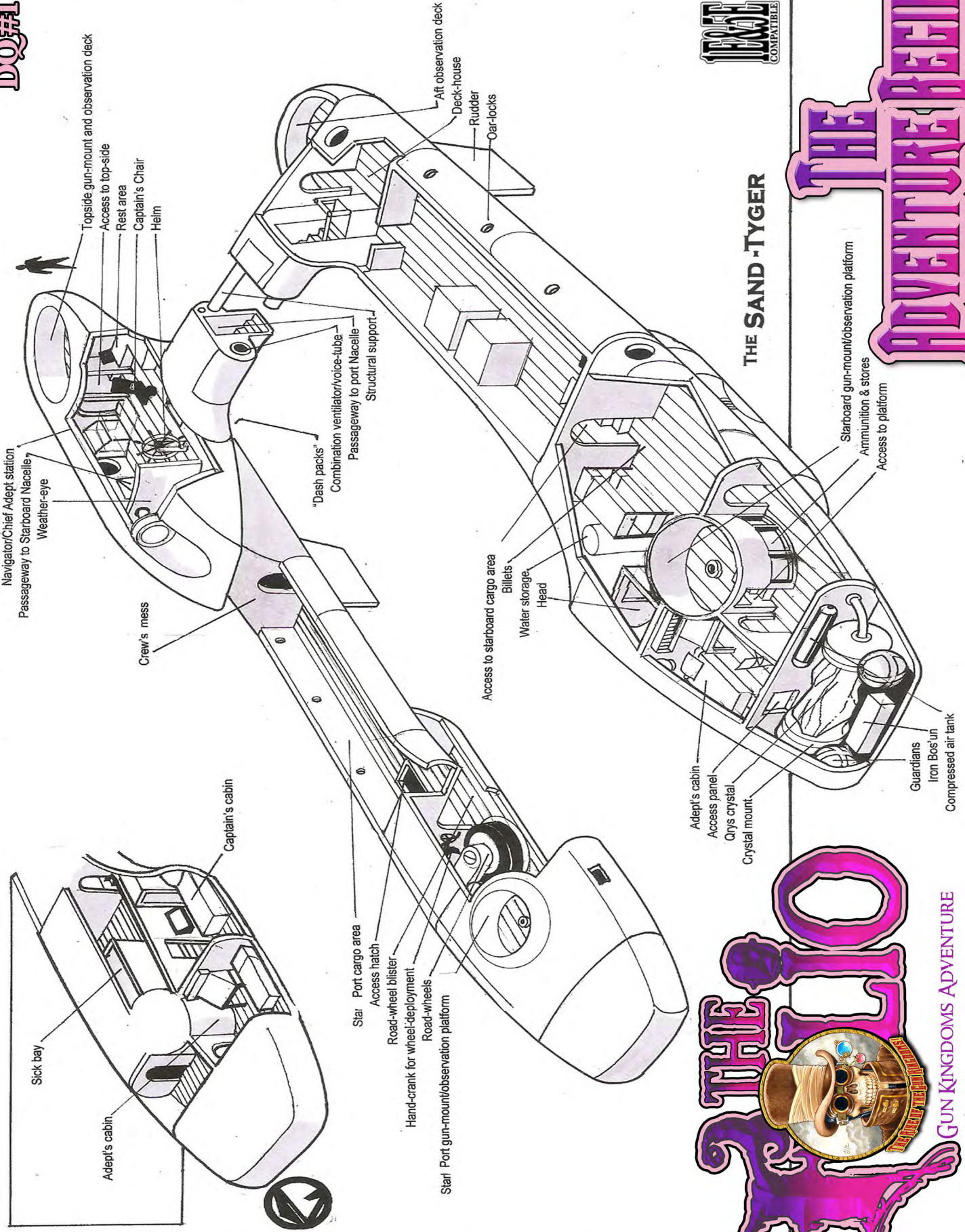
The lifespan of each automaton is wrapped up in its elemental core, but if placed in 'reserve mode' the energy reservoir of a MIV can seemingly last up to a century or more.







THE SAND-TYGER



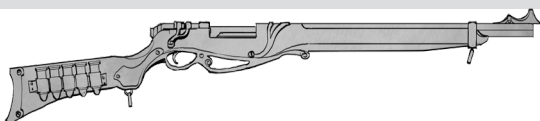
THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

# THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

## Players' Intro

One thing I've always found more difficult to conceptualize than pure fantasy combat is what I call bullet combat. It has always seemed more abstract when a player gets hit with a sword, as though perhaps the blow is deflected a bit rather than delivering a dismembering slice, which only wears down on the total hit points. This never seemed the case to me when a player gets shot, because essentially a bullet hits the target! Now, having aged inside the hobby, I more readily see bullet combat as a Hollywood action film. You know what I'm talking about, when someone like John McClane is in the Nakatomi Plaza getting bullets fired at him in mass numbers, but he always ducks out of the way just in time. Well, that is how I now see bullet combat—bullets aren't always actually hitting the target—sometimes you just take a flesh wound or dive around as the 'action' wears down your total hit points. This theatrical vision should be applied to combat in the Gun Kingdoms, where a critical might mean you've actually got a bullet in your ass, but otherwise, until you go down to negatives, you probably just have bits of prop blood and some dirt on you.

**All 'grey blocks' are for 5E conversions in this section.**



## Adventure Breakdown

I've broken this adventure down into four distinct parts, and each will provide action for the players while getting them immersed in the setting, attached to the main narrative, and used to the combat. Like the Taux Trilogy, The Gun Kingdoms will rely heavily on 'the story' and how the characters fit inside it. It should also be noted that this will be the first part of an ongoing storyline, and it will run much like a quick tournament module, so keep that in mind.

## Ship

Remember, Gun Kingdoms adventures are always based around a ship and a crew, so be sure to have all the details of the players' ship and crew in place before you begin. One suggestion would be to utilize the map included in this module and have another advanced prototype of the Sand-Tyger for use by the players.

## Suggested Adventure Arc

The primary conflict within the Gun Kingdoms setting rests in the relationships between the Samaya and the remaining Enlightened, so I'd suggest running an adventure with an 'Ahab' type captain looking to destroy Enlightened whenever possible. His xenophobic insanity (he blames Enlightened for all evils in the world) should be played out readily so that when the final encounter happens, the players must make a decision about who they will side with—either becoming Enlightened hunters or friends to a dying race.



## Part One: The Port

What better place to start an adventure than in a port, the place where many great journeys begin. In Part One, the party will be hired to transport a relic to Taux, but must first thwart an attempt to waylay their ship before they can even leave. This scenario should be played as a dark meeting followed by an ambush, and finally a flight to a waiting ship.

‘Smoke coiled like writhing serpents around the heads of those moving through the dusky interior of the bar. As you moved farther back into the dive, rummy eyes, gap-toothed and gold-capped snarls, and froth-soaked beards decorated the tables and stools; a reflexive brush of your hand on the pistol against your hip inspired a bit of

gun-metal bravery. At the back, behind a half-closed red velvet curtain sat a man in a top hat, a monocle hanging from a chain around his vested and jacketed neck.’

This man is Parm Relva, a trader of contraband within the Port of Findalynn and neighborhood of Shay’s Circle. He has a relic that he’s already sold to a powerful steel tycoon in Taux, but he needs a ship to deliver it across the Halo. During this meeting, the party should negotiate their fee (between 3,000 & 5,000 SP) and acquire the relic.

If a character is currently in charge of negotiations, they must make an opposed Charisma check with Relva [CHA 15]. If they succeed, they can get the full 5,000 for the mission, if they fail, they get 3,000. If an NPC captain does the talking, the ship will get 4,000 for the mission.



Once the negotiations are done, Relva will hand over the relic, a black-metal revolver marked with orichalcum runes. It's known as 'The Reaper's Six', and is said to have a dozen enchantments upon it and was once carried by Cronyn Knox, the first rogue general of the Samayan uprising. Its value is an enigma. It should be worthless—magical artifacts such as this are to be destroyed as is required by all governments. But as contraband, its value is... well, a lot! Also, a negative concerning the weapon, it only fires Arcana Rounds, so that certainly makes using it problematic for the owner. This tidbit of information will be explained to the party in case anyone has any ideas about it being prudent to just take the weapon (that and it has another powerful owner now, one who would gladly place stout bounties on the heads of the crew and the captain who didn't deliver it).

### Reaper's Six

This weapon is considered to be enchanted to a +4 level and is known to double the applicable damage of any Arcana Round placed into it. Rumors persist of other powers as well, but none have been confirmed as of yet.

Dam: 1d8+4    3lb.    Rate of Fire: 3/1

**[Dam: 1d8+4    3 lb. Piercing, Ammunition [6] (range 20/60), loading, special]**

The party will be able to leave the bar unmolested with the package in hand.

However, a successful search [1 in 6] [Passive Wisdom 14] will note that they pick up a tail halfway back to the ship. Within another block's travel, figures will appear and request the package. Assuming the captain and first mate are with the party, you can have them 'deal' with perceived stronger enemies while the lower level party members tangle with the standard pirates, who will be hard enough. Use your judgement to determine the number of pirates that engage the party.

(Variable #) Pirates [AC 7, HD 5, HP 30, #AT 3/2, D 1–6 (Short Sword) or 1–8 (Pistol)]

### TREASURE

25 SP PER PIRATE

(Variable #) Pirates [AC 12, HD 5d8+5, HP 25, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +4, Dam Short Sword 5 (1d6+2) or Pistol 6 (1d8+2), Pack Tactics (Pirates are at advantage if attacking with allies within 5 feet.)]

## Part Two: The Crossing of the Halo and the Traitor

The second part of the adventure is all narrative driven, and the Gamemaster should keep that in mind, allowing the players to explore the ship, interact with crew, and settle into the setting.



## **1.** **The Players' Places**

The largest role-playing opportunity for this adventure falls in the time spent on the ship as it makes its way on a long voyage over the Halo from Findalynn to Taux. This trip will take upwards of a week, and it is here that you as a Gamemaster will have the opportunity to provide personality to the crew, especially the captain. If you are running this module as 'Enlightened Friendly', then you should showcase the captain's cruelty, his anger, his obsession, perhaps even having him get drunk, finger the relic revolver, and talk about killing Enlightened with it and his hope that it still has some 'death left in it'. His command crew should be no better, with the first mate an extreme loyalist to the captain and the quartermaster sporting a necklace of finger bones that he claims are from Enlightened victims.

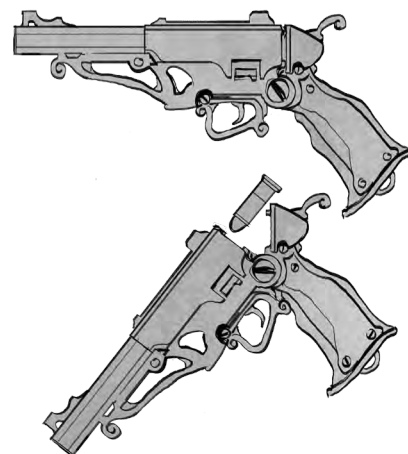
## **2.** **Merfolk Sighting**

During the third day of the journey a spotter (perhaps a character) will spot a pod of dolphins to the ship's port side. As they watch, several merfolk will appear to be playing in the waves with the pod. If this is brought to the captain's attention, he will order the ship's guns to be used on the pod, killing both dolphins and merfolk in the process. It should be seen as a murderous act of carnage and will likely 'shake' much of the crew. A wounded young merman

will be netted and brought aboard, who the captain will place a boot on before sending a round from his pistol into the creature's head. Once dead, the captain will hang the body off the port pontoon as a trophy.

## **3.** **The Traitor Takes Shape**

The day after the merfolk incident, a member of the crew, a sickly young woman by the name of Sabrina, takes one of the ship's steam launches in the night. Once an alarm is raised, it will be discovered that not only has she taken the merman's body (or at the very least cut it loose to fall beneath the waves), but also managed to steal the Reaper's Six. To this point, the players should have interacted with her and found her to be both introspective and kind, although obviously suffering from some withering sickness or consumption. Utilizing the magical effects of the ship's weather eye, the captain locates the launch (by its smoke cloud on the horizon) and gives chase. Hours later, amid a shoal of heavy clouds and mist, an island rises up from the choppy waves, one not on any map the captain has at his disposal.



## Part Three: The Out Islands

During the early Ages of Man, a conclave of Wizards took shelter among a small collection of islands deep in the Halo. Here, they practiced their magic, slowly mastering aspects of it before age finally began to wear them down. Seeing that there was still so much to learn, they turned to necromancy to preserve their life forces, thus becoming the Lich Lords who terrorized the coastal reaches of the Nameless Realms for millennia. With the coming of the Benders, the Lich Lords were destroyed, but their mysterious islands remained, and in the Final War the Samayan nation-state of Opal used the islands as a waystation until some latent magic froze their garrison. Now, the islands lay abandoned, but the Enlightened, Sabrina, has chosen them as a place to hide the Reaper's Six so that it will not again fall into the hands of a Samaya willing to use it against her people.

The captain looks to scout the island in a small dirigible, but to do so he has to construct and inflate it on the deck of the ship. Not wanting to waste time, he intends to send an away team after Sabrina on foot, and this should be the player characters, their mission being to track Sabrina and send up a flare once they've found her.

### 1. The Fallen Dock

**A frothy spray of white-capped waves laps against a stone pier stretching far out into the depths of the bay. Along its length, docking births, rusted metal crates, and a weathered sign of a fallen Samayan nation-state stands against the cold wind.**

A ship, be it air or water, can tie-off here and debark an away team. The launch stolen by the traitor rests down by the dock near the shore. Anyone approaching the shore will find a layer of frozen liquid, as if blue horefrost blankets everything including the launch.

### 2. Wayward Temple

**Your boots crunch against the icy ground, frosted mountains looming overhead as the small settlement lies quiet and entombed. Ahead, a stone temple set with two dark entry pillars and no door gives hollow greeting to anyone stepping off the pier.**

The temple was once used as a company command HQ, debris from a naval staff placement littering the inside under a layer of ice. Two ice mephits now inhabit the temple, choosing to attack those entering with frost magic from the stone rafters.



2 Ice Mephits [AC 4, HD 6, HP 24, #AT 1, D 1-4 (Claw) or 1-6+2 (Ice Ball)]

## TREASURE

NONE

2 Ice Mephits [AC 16 (3/4 Cover), HD 6d6, HP 21, Initiative +1, #AT 1, Hit +3, Dam Claw 3 (1d4+1), Frost Breath 5 (2d4) (Recharge 3-6), Death Burst (DC 10 Dex or take 4 (1d8) frost from death explosion)]

### 3. The Merman's Screams

A large wooden building, leaning heavily to the right, is covered with ice before you. Its second level has long ago collapsed, and an iced-over sign hangs frozen in mid dangle from a single chain. Upon further investigation, the words 'Merman's Scream' and the image of a tortured merman can be found on the sign.

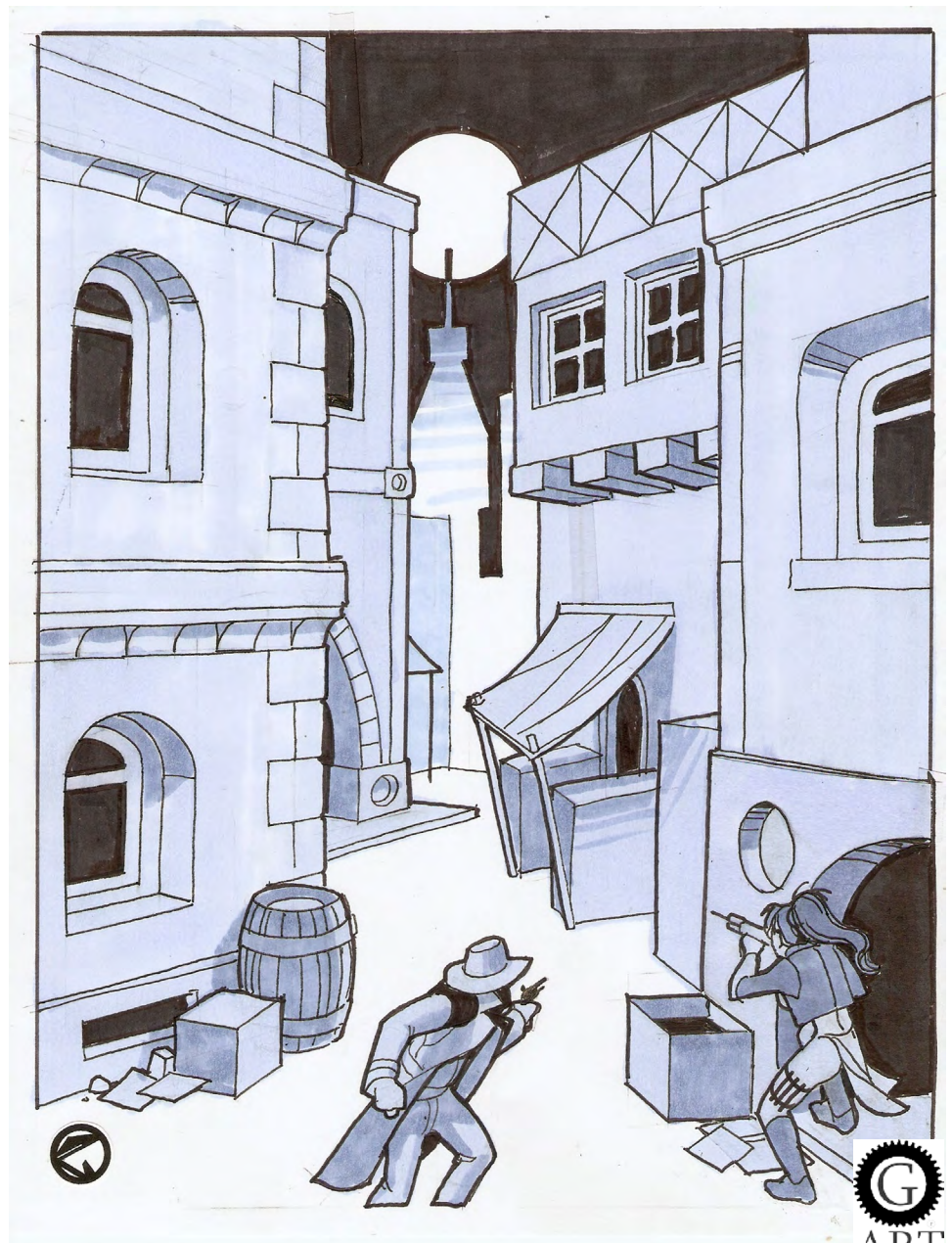
Within the open common room, still seated around a dark hearth, a half-dozen men

in crimson coats are seated as though trying to warm their hands by an absent fire. These are remnants of the marine force killed almost instantly by the horefrost that swept the town decades ago. Their bodies have been turned into ice-zombies, and once warm-blooded creatures come close, they will rise, the ice falling away from them as they draw blades from sheathes at their sides.

6 Ice Zombies [AC 7, HD 3, HP 12, #AT 1, D 1-6 (Slam)]

## TREASURE

4 SP EACH



**6 Ice Zombies [AC 12 (Ice), HD 3d8+9, HP 22, Initiative -2, #AT 1, Hit +3, Dam Slam 4 (1d6+1)]**

#### **4. Shipwright's House**

**A great rusted anchor lies frozen outside the door to this lonely structure. Shattered storm shutters and broken windows are covered in long icicles, and a ruined door lies broken at the threshold.**

This is the former home of the settlement's shipwright and later the office of the garrison commander, but now is a hollow and frozen building. However, a small and extremely heavy safe still rests in the back of the building behind a frozen desk. It is covered with ice that must be cleared before any type of opening can be attempted. As it is a combination lock, a Pick Locks roll will be at -40% [DC 22]. It is steel, and has appropriate hardness with a HP total of 500 to break it [1/2 of all damage will be deflected back on to any weapon used against it, destroying the weapon very quickly].

Inside, however, are 7 Arcana Rounds and a bag with 320 gold coins (worth 3,200 silver on the open market). Rounds include: 3 'Ones', 2 'Fives', 1 'Six', and 1 'Nine'.

#### **5. Warehouse**

**The roof of this massive building has long ago collapsed making the inside a huge mound of wood, slate, and ice.**

This was a warehouse for stolen goods meant for the Lich Lords, but it is empty now save for a small remorhaz that has taken up residence. If the party investigates the ruin, the remorhaz will rise up and attack, however, it will not leave its lair, so fleeing is possible.

1 Young Remorhaz [AC 0, HD 7, HP 36, #AT 1, D 6–36 (Bite)]

### **TREASURE**

NONE

**1 Young Remorhaz [AC 14, HD 7d10+21, HP 56, Initiative +3, #AT 1, Hit +6, Dam Bite 20 (3d10+4) + Heat 7 (2d6), Heated Body (7 (2d6) within 5 feet) ]**

#### **6. Slave Pens**

**A long run of twelve iron cages, likely meant for prisoners, lies frozen to the north of the warehouse.**

The cages are now empty, but the traitor has left a surprise for anyone searching them, having summoned a small fire elemental that will attack upon sight. However, as it is so cold and icy, the creature's natural defenses have been weakened and mundane attacks will hurt it.

1 Fire Elemental [AC 2, HD 8, HP 48, #AT 1, D 3–24 (Slam)]

### **TREASURE**

NONE



## 7. Sporting Pits

A large forty by forty pit has been dug fifteen feet into the rock, the bottom now covered in a layer of ice. Walls breaking it into four separate pits that have weakened and bent over time. A small set of stone bleachers overlook three sides, and two stairs lead down into the pit from the south.

Out Island raiders used to entertain themselves by casting slaves into this pit, but now it simply stands as a dark testament to what that island once was.

### Part Four: The Mountain Ruin

Once the players have cleared the town, they will find only one route out leading away through the encircling cliffs. Tracks in the snow indicate that Sabrina must have come this way, and they should be inclined to follow her as no sign from the ship has yet been made to recall them.

At the top of the route, an entrance to what appears to be a man-made cave appears, but as yet there has been no physical sighting of Sabrina.



## **1. Lord's Entry**

**Beyond the frosted rock of the cliff, a single entry lies within a slight recess. There, a set of double doors emblazoned with twin skulls lie open, the sign of footfalls in the disturbed snow leading within.**

This is the entry to the domain of one of the long forgotten Lich Lords. Although gone now, the lord's domain still holds vestiges of magic. Once inside, you can read the following:

**Two dark basalt pillars rest on either side of the entry, a single metal door beyond. Light snow whips around the room casting little wisps, like elementals, into the air.**

The door is closed but not locked, as the magic that once sealed it was sucked away long ago in the Bender invasions.

## **2. Skinning Stands**

**A large twenty-by-twenty chamber opens up around you, half a dozen brass stands around it that look like they would be used for stretching hides.**

This was the skinning room of the Lich Lord where he would prepare fresh skin for his aging body. Eventually it was abandoned when he achieved Demi-Lich status, but the horrors of his earlier trials still rest here.

## **3. Book Binding Area**

**Several old tables and some kind of press apparatus decorate this room along with three large shelving units. No books remain here, but several crisp and dry sheets of leather rest on one table.**

The Lich Lord bound his own books in ages past, and this was his bindery. Beneath one table a snow serpent resides and will attack anyone investigating the room. Also, and probably vitally important at this point, the serpent is coiled around 4 bottles of healing potions which still hold power.

1 Snow Serpent [AC 6, HD 10, HP 40, #AT 1, D 1–10 (Bite) + 3–30 (Constriction)]

## **TREASURE**

**4 POTIONS OF EXTRA HEALING [GREATER HEALING]**

**1 Snow Serpent [AC 14, HD 10d8+10, HP 50, Initiative +2, #AT 1, Hit +6, Dam Bite 7 (1d10+2), Constriction (STR DC 15 or take 17 (3d10+2))]**

## **4. Viewing Pool**

**A thin layer of ice rings a deep blue pool at the center of this large chamber. Above, a polished disc of silvered glass reflects the surface while also casting an odd light around the room.**



This was the divination and remote viewing room of the Lich Lord. It still holds traces of magic, although not enough for long distance viewing. If a person with magical abilities enters the chamber, they will note that the water's surface does reflect the outside world, but little more than the town, pier, and ship.

## 5. Spell Component Storage

**The smell of old spices and strange oils still fills this chamber as shelves remain stacked with thousands of vials, jars, and boxes.**

The spell component chamber has a spell still laid into it that keeps components fresh, and a magic-user can find various items here to help with spell creation. Taking random vials and such from the chamber and later selling them can glean a person upwards of 1,000 silver on the open market of a large city.

## 6. Enchanting & Summoning Chamber

**A crackling of energy sets the hairs on the back of your neck on end as a thousand odd runes, glyphs, and engravings in this massive room shimmer with energy.**

This is the most magical of all rooms within the Lich Lord's domain, but even this magic has been siphoned away during the reign of the Benders. Now, only residue remains along with strips of precious metals left in some of the arcana. However, anyone trying to steal

precious metals will enact the chamber's final spell—the summoning of a corrupted horror.

1 Undead Corrupted Horror [AC 7, HD 10, HP 60, #AT 2, D 1–10 (Slam)]

## TREASURE

NONE

1 Undead Corrupted Horror [AC 13, HD 10d8+10, HP 50, Initiative +1, #AT 2, Hit +6, Dam Slam 9 (1d10+4)]

## 7. Hanging Room

**A series of long frost-coated chains and hooks hang from the ceiling of this otherwise non-descript chamber.**

Although the Lich Lord didn't have to sleep, he did meditate often, and in so doing enjoyed hanging his body from chains, slowly swaying as he drifted into semi-consciousness.

## 8. Throne Chamber

**A high-backed throne dominates the north end of this chamber. It is made of stone and seems highly uncomfortable, yet high enough to certainly look down on anyone entering the room.**

Although the Lich Lord had few visitors, he did hold court here with his reavers.

Now empty, the chamber has nothing of value save two secret doors, one on the east and one on the west walls respectively. Standard chances for finding the doors applies **[DC 15 Perception]**.

## **9. Skull Chamber**

**Beyond the stone door a twenty-foot-square chamber is covered with alcoves housing hundreds of skulls. Each stare out at you with lifeless sockets.**

A successful search [1 in 6] **[DC 17]** will note that one skull has a ‘twinkle’ inside. This is the giant diamond (25,000 SP worth) that once housed the Demi-Lich but was destroyed during the Bender invasions.

## **10. Exit Stair**

**A long stair leading upward moves deeper into the mountain.**

This is the rear exit to the Lich Lord’s lair and leads to a special water pool from which much of his power was restored on a daily basis. The stair moves nearly half a mile into the mountain before opening up into chamber 11.

## **11. Waterfall Chamber**

**A massive cave grotto opens before you, light shimmering from a hole in the vault above where water cascades down into a huge pool below. A single winding stone stair descends to the pool, and at**

**the water’s edge near a warmly glowing lantern is a small woman with coppery hair and red eyes. The Reaper’s Six is in her hand, and the runes on it catch the light of the lantern as she turns toward you.**

This is Sabrina in her natural form as she is an Eldaryn (who are known to shape shift). Although still at odds with the presence of so much water, she has recovered slightly since she is no longer at sea. It is her hope that she can convince the players to see reason in what she’s doing, leaning on the captain’s cruelty and any good relationships built with the players during the crossing. Once the players have seen her, you can read the following:

**‘I’m sorry to have dragged you to this place my friends, it was never my wish but the captain seems to be harder to evade than I previously thought. Yes, I am Sabrina, although you now see me in my natural form. I’m Enlightened, what your people would call an Eldaryn, a fire spirit, and I’ve come here to cast this dread weapon into this ancient Wizard’s wellspring so that it might be taken from the world beyond the reach of those who would use its power against my people.’**

Before more than a cursory question by the players can be fielded, the light from the opening above the falls is blotted out. The captain and his command crew have come, along with two other relics from the Final War, MKIV Automaton. The two machines will drop



down onto the shore between Sabrina and the players, and the captain and his crew will begin the slow descent downward (taking three rounds to reach the pool but being able to fire guns in round two).

It is now the time when the players must make a decision, protect Sabrina and turn mutineers against the captain, or make short work of her with the assistance of the MKIVs. If they decide to help Sabrina, and if they have recovered the Arcana Rounds in the town safe, she can be convinced to throw the players the Reaper's Six so that it can be utilized in the battle. Otherwise, combat will be standard and the players will be very hard-pressed to defeat the captain.

(2) 1st Mate & Quartermaster [AC 5, HD 7+7, HP 42, #AT 2, D 1-8 (Heavy Sabre) or 1-8 (Pistol)]

## TREASURE

40 SP EACH

(2) 1st Mate & Quartermaster [AC 15, HD 7d10+7, HP 42, Initiative +3, #AT 2, Hit +5, Dam Heavy Sabre 6 (1d8+2) or Pistol 6 (1d8+2)]

1 Captain [AC 5, HD 10+10, HP 70, #AT 3 (+4 to hit), D 1-8+5/1-8+2 (2 sabre/1 pistol)]

## TREASURE

ARCANE-LATHE SKY CAVALRY SABRE +2, 14 SP

1 Captain [AC 15, HD 10d8+20, HP 65, Initiative +5, #AT 3, Hit +7, Dam Scimitar 8 (1d8+4), Pistol 7 (1d8+5), Multiattack (2 scimitars/1 pistol), Parry (+2 AC against one attack)]

3 Final War Automatons (Sentry MIV) [AC 2, HD 8+8, HP 48, #AT 4 (+2 to hit), D 1-8/1-8 (Guns) plus 1d8/1d6 (Blades)]

## TREASURE

NONE

3 Final War Automatons (Sentry MIV): [AC 18, Speed 30 ft, HD 8d12+16, HP 64, #Attack: 4, Hit +6, Damage Guns 8 (1d8+4) and Blade 10 (1d8+6), Multiattack, Immunity (Charm & Sleep)]

Sabrina [AC 5, HD 8+16, HP 64, #AT 2 (+5 to hit), D 1-8+3, Constitution 16, Elemental Dice 8d8]

## TREASURE

GRAVIS-SEX ELDARYN REPEATER [2d8 DAMAGE]

Sabrina [AC 15, HD 8d10+24, HP 64, Initiative +5, #AT 2, Hit +7, Dam Pistol 13 (2d8+5), Multiattack, Elemental Dice 8d8]

If the players are victorious, and Sabrina lives, she will ask that the Reaper's Six be returned to her so that she can cast it into the Wizard's

wellspring. If she died during the assault, you can have her give the players a last plea to do the deed for her before she expires [bleeding out].

## Final Resolution

If the battle did go in the players' favor, they now have a decision to make. The captain, first mate, and quartermaster are dead, so the ship might technically be 'taken' by the players upon their return, claiming it as their prize and providing the remaining crew with whatever story they wish to tell. Should Sabrina live, she will thank the players for their honor toward

her people, but she will not return to the ship, instead providing the players with a rune-covered lighter that she says will be recognized among her people should they ever meet more of them. She will then take the dirigible (assuming it is intact) and bid farewell.

Without their cargo, the players must now make a choice of destination, but in all likelihood it would be wise to avoid both Findalynn and Taux for some time, thus prompting a new course for the South and old Aflyr and Mahe, the City of Jade.

