

STILL MISSING

Nick Ryder put his head between his hands, groaning. “You OK there, Detective?” the bartender asked. A slightly overweight elf, Jim had been the bartender at the Brass Star for several years now and knew the look on Nick’s face all too well. It was yet another of those nights. “No, I’m not OK, Jim. Haven’t been for a long time.” He drained his whiskey glass and set it down on the counter just a little too hard. He motioned for another, then waved at the small stack of folders in front of him. “Missing-persons cases. A dozen of them, and that’s just in the last couple months. Just the ones that get reported. The SINners. God only knows how many SINless went missing in that time period, how many of the poor slots in the CZ. Or how many SINners just never got reported or the corps are keeping under wraps. “This job is killing me. This town went to hell two decades ago, and we just refuse to admit it.” As Jim set another whiskey down in front of him, Nick knocked that back as well, slamming the glass onto the bar harder this time. Yep, definitely one of those nights. “For every person we save, a dozen more slip past us.” “Maybe you should take it easy, Nick?” the bartender said as Nick motioned for another refill again. “The thing is,” Nick began, his hands nervously gestulating in front of him. Jim rolled his eyes and took his time getting Nick’s refill. He couldn’t cut him off this early, but he could do his damndest to slow him down a little. “The thing is; there’s shit out there still. We all know that. Sure, the damn creepy-crawlies aren’t popping out of every sewer grate like they used to back in the bad old days, but we all know some of them are still around. There’s a reason the mayor kicked Ares to the curb, ya know?” “Why’s that?” Jim asked calmly. He set the next drink down just slightly out of Nick’s reach, forcing him to move a bit to get it.

“Because they came in, they played the big damn heroes, right? Made the rest of us all feel like chumps. They wall up downtown overnight, BAM, just like that!” Nick downed the next shot and slammed down the glass again, punctuating his “BAM” with the sound of the glass hitting the bar. “Take it easy with the glasses, Nick, would ya?” Jim shook his head. “So they come in, wall up the city, and then sit there saying ‘Look how cool we are!’ till one day they start hosing everything down with their magic goo. And suddenly ‘poof!’ the bugs are suddenly all gone? I don’t think so!” Nick slammed another glass and waited for the next one before continuing. “See, the thing is the goo just made them run and hide. It didn’t get ‘em all. They’re just hidin’ now. Hidin’, waitin’, and stealin’ our people. Making more of ‘em.” So much whiskey in so little time was quickly having an effect on even a veteran drinker like Nick, and his words slurred together. “Have you seen any bugs lately, Nick?” Jim asked. He’d done this song and dance before, so he just had to ring it out. He poured another drink as Nick waved at him again. “Well, no.” Nick replied. “I guess not. But that’s ‘cause they’re hidin’!” “Or, maybe this is just a big city, and this sort of thing unfortunately happens in every big city?” “Or maybe ...” Nick squinted at Jim. “Yeah, maybe that too, I guess. But why can’t I find these people? Help them? Protect them?” Nick’s head drooped and he rested his forehead on the edge of the bar. Jim could hear him still mumbling to himself, about missing kids and innocent girls, and shook his head. He didn’t envy Nick his job. He activated his commlink and called a cab for Nick.

COVER

STILL MISSING

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



INTRODUCTION

SRM 06-03: Ancient Rumbings is a *Shadowrun Missions* living campaign adventure. Full information on the *Shadowrun Missions* living campaign is available at shadowruntabletop.com/Missions and includes a guide to creating Missions characters and a regularly updated FAQ. All maps, player handouts, and other playing aids are found at the end of this document.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

SRM 06-03: Ancient Rumbings is intended for use with *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*, and all character and rules information refers to the Fifth Edition of the *Shadowrun* rules.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

SRM 06-03: Ancient Rumbings consists of several scenes. These scenes form the basis of the adventure, which should be completed in approximately four hours. If you are running short on time, you should streamline each and be a little more generous with clues, target numbers, and other requirements to aid in guiding the players through the adventure.

Each scene outlines the most likely sequence of events, as well as how to handle unexpected twists and turns that inevitably crop up. Each one contains the following subsections, providing gamemasters with all the information necessary to run it.

Scan This provides a quick synopsis of the scene's action, allowing you to get a feel for the encounter at a glance.

Tell It to Them Straight is written to be read aloud to the players, describing what their characters experience upon entering the scene. You should feel free to modify the narrative as much as desired to suit the group and the situation, since the characters may arrive at the scene by different means or under different circumstances than the text assumes.

Behind the Scenes covers the bulk of the scene, describing what's happening, what the non-player characters are doing, how they will react to the player characters' actions and so forth. It also covers the setting of the encounter, going over environmental conditions and other properties of the location as well as providing any descriptions of important items.

Pushing the Envelope looks at ways to make the encounter more challenging for experienced or powerful characters and other ways you can add some "extra spice" to the scene. This subsection should usually only be used for home games, or games where time is not a factor. At most convention and Open Play events, gamemasters should omit this information. It adds to the

scene, but does not contain important information.

Debugging offers solutions to potential problems that may crop up during the encounter. While it's impossible to foresee everything that a group of player characters might do, this section tries to anticipate common problems and other suggestions for dealing with them.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Gamemastering is more of an art than a science, and every gamemaster does things a bit differently. Use your own style when it comes to preparing and running the adventure and do whatever you feel is best to provide the best *Shadowrun* game you can for your players. *Shadowrun Missions* adventures are designed to run in a standard four-hour convention time slot.

Please keep this in mind when running the adventure. You should leave at least 15-20 minutes at the end of the time slot to complete any necessary paperwork and pass out the players' **Debriefing Logs**. (Make sure that you have enough copies of the **Debriefing Log** for this adventure to give one copy to each player after running the adventure.) This section offers some guidelines you may find useful in preparing to run *SRM 06-03: Ancient Rumbings* (or any *Shadowrun Missions* adventure).

STEP 1: READ THE ADVENTURE

Carefully read the adventure from beginning to end. Get a feel for the overall plot and what happens in each scene. That way, if something different happens, you won't be caught off guard and you can adapt things smoothly.

STEP 2: TAKE NOTES

Take notes for yourself while reading through the adventure that you can refer to later on. Possible things to note include: major plot points (so you can see them all at a glance), the names of various non-player characters, possible problems you notice, situations where you think a particular character can shine and other things you'll want to keep in mind while running the adventure.

STEP 3: KNOW THE CHARACTERS

Prior to the start of the adventure, examine the PCs' record sheets and Debriefing Logs for your reference and have basic information about their important abilities handy so you can refer to it during play. Also go over the characters and keep their previous events listed on the Debriefing Logs in mind when determining non-player character actions in various scenes if such a dynamic has been included.

COVER

STILL MISSING

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



STEP 4: DON'T PANIC!

Gamemastering involves juggling a lot of different things. Sometimes you drop the ball and forget something or you just make a mistake. It happens, don't worry about it. Nobody is perfect all of the time and everybody makes mistakes. Just pick up from there and move on. Your players will understand and forget about it once you get back into the action.

STEP 5: CHALLENGE THE PLAYERS

Gamemasters should challenge the players but should not generally overwhelm them. This is not to say that games cannot be deadly. If the characters die through their own actions and repercussions of those actions, then so be it. But the idea is to challenge the players and their characters, not to overwhelm them. If the enemies and challenges are too light for the characters present, then increase them. On the other hand, if the characters are badly outmatched by the enemies, then tone them down. Make things difficult but not impossible.

GENERAL ADVENTURE RULES

Shadowrun Missions adventures use the rules presented in *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition (SR5)*. Standard rules such as success tests, glitches, critical successes, and other common mechanics are described in *SR5* and are not repeated in this adventure.

Please keep in mind when preparing for the adventure, that the PCs will not necessarily be comprised of a balanced party. It's entirely possible that the party will be made up entirely of technomancers or back-to-nature shamans. If the characters run into a brick wall because of such complications, show flexibility and use your best judgment in how you lead them back to the plot.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) are essential to any adventure. They are the allies, antagonists, and background characters in the adventure that interact with the player characters. NPCs in this adventure have already been created and can be found throughout the adventure.

Minor NPCs are found in the individual scene that they appear in, and generally have a brief write up, noting only their important skills and the gear they are carrying.

Major NPCs can be found in the **Cast of Shadows** at the end of the adventure, and have more detailed write ups, and include most of the skills and the gear they have access to.

The NPCs in this adventure should generally stand up to the average player character but may need some adjustment to suit a particular group of characters, es-

BACKGROUND COUNTS

Background counts impose a negative dice pool penalty equal to their rating for all tests that are linked to or utilize magic in any way (i.e., spellcasting, summoning, assensing, any test made while astrally projecting, and any active skill that benefits from active adept powers such as killing hands, critical strike, great leap, or improved skills, etc). Dual-natured creatures and spirits suffer this penalty to all actions.

Aspected background counts grant a boost to any limit that utilizes magic in any way (see above) to any metahuman, spirit, or dual-natured creature that matches the aspected domain. This includes spellcasting Force limits, so spellcasters need to be careful as it can be hard to control the additional surge of mana. Any magically active being that does not match the aspected domain should treat this as a normal background count and suffer penalties.

Background counts above 12 are called either a flux (for aspected domains) or a void (for magically dead zones), and are very dangerous. Any being that is magically or astrally active in any way (dual natured, astrally perceiving, casting a spell, has an active adept power, has an active foci, etc.) takes background count - 12 unresisted Stun Damage each turn that they are active and exposed to the flux or void.

pecially a more experienced and powerful group. The scenes and NPC descriptions offer tips on adjusting the NPCs to suit the abilities of the characters in your group. To adjust the power level of an NPC, refer to **Helps and Hindrances** (p. 378, *SR5*). Take the player characters' abilities into consideration when assessing the NPCs in this adventure and modify them accordingly.

MISSION DIFFICULTY

Gamemasters are encouraged to use their own judgment, and to adjust the difficulty of the encounter to take into account the abilities of the players. If the players have no magical support, replace magical defenses with mundane ones. If the players are weak on combat, reduce the number of enemies by one or two. Conversely, if they're steam-rolling the opposition, add one or two enemies to the fight. Missions should be difficult and something of a challenge, but should not be insurmountable.

A simple method for adjusting difficulty is to simply increase the dice pools and Professional Ratings of the enemies. A simple +1 or +2 to all combat and defense tests gives enemies a minor boost in power, while a +3 or 4 will make them truly formidable. Adding to their Professional Rating will give them a larger group Edge pool to draw from, and gamemasters are encourage to use this Edge when logical.

COVER

STILL MISSING

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



Often a combat scene will tell you if it's supposed to be challenging or is simply there to serve as filler or a minor obstacle that the players should steamroll through. When possible, use this as a guide to know when to tweak the enemies and encounters. If it doesn't say, assume the scene should present a challenge to the power levels of the players.

A NOTE ON LOOT AND LOOTING

Gamemasters should be careful what they allow players access to, because they can and will try to steal everything not nailed down (and even then, they often have pry bars and claw hammers to deal with those nails). *Shadowrun Missions* operate under the assumption that two players who have run the same missions will have roughly the same amount of resources available to them (give or take some negotiation and a little bit of minor loot fenced), so when players are able to steal and fence a lot of gear or are able to get their hands on high-priced vehicles, cyberdecks, or foci, it can unbalance the game and make it unfair to players who didn't have the opportunity to get those items. Gamemasters should avoid letting the players get into a position to do high value looting whenever possible.

CHICAGO, THE CZ, NOISE, AND BACKGROUND COUNTS

While for many the Chicago and the Bug City Containment Zone are synonymous, the CZ holds less than 1% of the total landmass of the city of Chicago proper, not counting suburban areas and farmlands connected to the city. But the CZ is still big, and it is the rotted, gutted, feral heart of the Windy City. It starts at 115th Street to the south and runs nearly 30 km North way to Belmont Avenue to the north, and reaches from the Lake Michigan an average of fifteen kilometers to Harlem Avenue to the west. A mass of torn down buildings and hastily-erected barricades were added to and reinforced over the three-year period that the Containment Zone was in effect, and even now nearly twenty years later this barrier stands as an imposing divide between the Zone and the outside world. Anyone can supposedly freely travel between the Zone and Chicago proper, but Lone Star watches those coming out and the gangs and warlords watch those going in very closely.

Between the Cermak Blast, the bugs, the debilitating effects of FAB III, and years of death and metahuman misery, astral space in and around the Zone is horrible. Unless otherwise noted in the scene, assume a default background count of 2 anytime characters are within the Containment Zone. The count will fluxuate wildly at times, so players should expect to encounter everything from high background counts and mana voids to various aspected backgrounds and mana warps (see

Background Count sidebar for full rules; note that future *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition* rulebooks may supersede these rules). Areas of Chicago outside the CZ may also suffer background count bleed from the Zone.

Besides the background count, the CZ is a virtual nightmare for deckers and technomancers. The persistent low-level background radiation coupled with a distinct lack of modern matrix broadcasting equipment through the area results in a high level of constant background Noise that makes even basic matrix communication difficult. Noise levels will vary from area to area, but unless otherwise specified in the scene, assume a default Noise level of 2 anytime the characters are within the Containment Zone.

PAPERWORK

After running a *Shadowrun Missions* adventure, there are several important pieces of paperwork that need to be filled out.

The first is to make certain to distribute a copy of the adventure's **Debriefing Log** to each player. As the gamemaster, please make certain to fill this out and sign off on it for each character. In the interests of time, you may have each player fill out the sections, with appropriate values that you give them. Please consider the PCs' actions in the scenario when providing Reputation modifiers for those rules (p. 372, SR5).

The second is to make sure that all players have updated their character's **Mission Calendar**. PCs are allowed to go on one run per week. The calendar is used to track the character's monthly lifestyle expenses, adventures, and their downtime exploits.

Finally, once an adventure is completed gamemasters should head over to the official Shadowrun forums at <http://forums.shadowruntabletop.com> and look in the *Shadowrun Missions* section. There will be a section to post the outcome of the Missions adventure. Future adventures will be affected by these results. Without gamemaster feedback, the PCs' exploits will be unable to affect the campaign.

MISSION SYNOPSIS

Simon Andrews hires the runners to do a simple dive into an old Fuchi-America research facility ruin to see if they can find some tech rumored to have been developed there. The facility is barely standing, and the mission is a bust. As the runners leave, Becky 99 and several members of the Desolation Angels burst into the building to find some shelter from a firefight they are in with members of the Ramblers, a go-gang that owns I-294 and I-80 in Southside. Becky has been searching for her missing "little sister" Tasha; while searching, she ran afoul of the gang and is in a little over her head. She

COVER

STILL MISSING

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG





asks the runners for help, both with getting out of her current jam and with searching for Tasha. She thinks a gang or group in the Zone abducted her, possibly as leverage against the Desolation Angels and their growing power in the Zone.

Becky 99 gives the runners a few leads to track down, running through several gangs and groups that operate in the Containment Zone. Eventually these clues lead them to a person known only as the Altar Boy, a figure who has been active in the Zone for the last few months and has been attracting a bit of a cult following, though his motivations are unknown. The runners track Altar Boy down to an old abandoned storefront. There they find Altar Boy and a group of the elven gang, the Ancients, holding a knife over a young dwarf girl tied to an altar in what looks to be a strange, alien-looking ritual circle. The Ancients are acting obviously strangely, moving in a mechanical fashion with empty, blank stares, while Altar Boy looks positively maniacal. He attempts to sacrifice the dwarven girl, then escape, using the Ancients as fodder to cover his escape. Sadly, Tasha has been dead for days before the runners ever arrive, but they may be able to save one innocent young girl.

Ultimately, the adventure is a failure for the runners. They return empty handed to Simon Andrews, having come up with nothing from the Fuchi facility, and they

are unable to rescue Tasha from Altar Boy, probably their first real failure in Season 5.

Gamemaster's Note: The first portion of this adventure is a setup to get the players into the action, but it looks like it could be a big run in and of itself. Don't let the runners get too bogged down in preparation and planning for this section. Move them along to **Scene 3: An Angel in Need** as quickly as possible to leave your group as much time as possible.

Scene 1:

LOUNGE LIZARD

SCAN THIS

Simon Andrews (see **Cast of Shadows**) contacts the runners to hire them for a simple job. Rumor has it that Fuchi-America was working on a radically different version of the standard ASIST technology used back in the '50s.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You're kicking back, wondering if a job will come your way anytime soon or if you get to relax this weekend.

COVER

STILL MISSING

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



You're ready to turn on the trid and watch either reruns of "Tales of the Deathgun" or try the new sitcom "Troll for Hire," based on the down-and-dirty trog humor of troll funnyman John "Horny" Horniwicz, when your commlink beeps at you. Glancing at the display, you recognize the number of a rather unusual individual: the lizard changeling Simon Andrews.

"Right, let's get right to it, shall we?" Simon says without preamble in his distinctive sibilant London accent when you answer. "I need a few good deniable assets for a quick dungeon dive into the Containment Zone. You interested? Of course you are! This is what you do, and you lot are pros. Meet me in two hours, 10 PM at the Buried Treasure in Southside, a few blocks west of the Zone. Its ladies' night, so any birds on your team should wear a bandanna. They're giving out some Captain Jack's Hypervodka for any that do."

ONCE THE RUNNERS ARRIVE AT THE BURIED TREASURE:

If you couldn't discern it from Simon's sales pitch, the Buried Treasure is a theme bar, and the theme is pirates. The building's exterior has a large neon sign depicting a pirate ship sinking a galleon, which is enhanced by sound and other visual effects in augmented reality. The single-story building has a large Jolly Roger flag flying over its roof. There doesn't seem to be much of a crowd tonight, and you can walk right into the place. The doorman looks you over, pats you down for weapons, and allows you in with anything heavy pistol sized or smaller after giving it an AR tag.

*If anyone attempts to sneak a weapon in, he or she makes a **Palming + Agility [Physical] Test** with a threshold of 3 to sneak it past the bouncer. Weapons larger than a heavy pistol suffer a -2 penalty, and anything assault rifle or larger is automatically spotted.*

The bar isn't very large. There's a dance floor big enough for maybe a dozen people, a bar with a dozen stools sits along one wall, and a half-dozen small tables and an equal number of booths line the wall on the opposite side of the dance floor. Pirate-style rock music blares from a couple tinny-sounding old speakers, and the smell of old cigarettes, stale booze, and sweat fills the air. This is not the highest class of es-

JACKPOINT SEARCH PROFILE...

THE BURIED TREASURE

11845 SW Hwy, Palos Heights, IL

A cheap theme bar in Southside just outside the CZ, the Buried Treasure themes itself as a pirate bar, complete with Jolly Roger flags, old nautical decorations, and cheesy pirate-themed drinks. The place used to be called "Pete's Pub," but when the owner lost his leg in an auto accident a few years back he decided to embrace his loss and rebrand. He goes by Peg-Leg Pete now, for obvious reasons. The place maintained a small uptick in clientele for a while.

- Pete's friendly with a few local shadowrunners as well, so he doesn't mind when local fixers use the place for business.
- Traveler Jones

establishments. Only a dozen patrons grace the bar, and you can see the scaly, multi-colored lizard tail of your contact sitting at the head of two tables he's pushed together in anticipation of your arrival. He's wearing an eyepatch and has a stuffed parrot on his shoulder, obviously enjoying the atmosphere. He sees you walk in and waves you over.

"Glad you could make it! Sorry for the state of the pub; hard to find a good quality, low-class establishment around these parts. Sure makes me miss the Rubber Suit back in Seattle." He pauses a moment to chug down the last half-mug of beer and grimaces. "Weak swill, too. But never mind that. You didn't come here to listen to my complaints. You're here about the money, so let's jump right in, shall we?"

BEHIND THE SCENES

Before the bugs wrecked Chicago, Fuchi-America and Truman Technologies were in a fierce battle to produce newer and better ASIST technology, the interface that allowed people to plug their brains into the virtual world of the Matrix. Fuchi-America was less than six months away from announcing ACCEL, a revolutionary breakthrough that would reinvent how ASIST was used. Unfortunately, when the bugs hit and the walls went up, all contact with the Fuchi-America facility was lost. Not a single one of the 300 men and women employed at the facility made it out of the CZ, nor

COVER

STILL MISSING

INTRODUCTION

MISSION
SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP
THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF
SHADOWS

PLAYER
HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING
LOG

