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FIRE IN  
THE SKY

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# FIRE IN THE SKY

Penny  
Dreadful

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## INTRODUCTION

On April 10th, 1906, the forces of the Guild, headed by the Governor-General himself, fought against an unruly mob led by the Foundry overseer Mei Feng. During the battle, Mei Feng and the Governor-General each gathered an incredible amount of aetheric energy into their bodies and ascended into their avatar forms, becoming the embodiment of primal forces that were too powerful to fully exist in the mortal realm. The battle ended with no full victory for either side.

A month later, the Governor-General would attempt to push his ascension further in the hopes of becoming a Tyrant, a powerful entity capable of warping the very fabric of reality around them in ways that defy explanation. The Governor's ascension was sabotaged by his underlings, however, and his ritual spiraled out of control, pouring far more aetheric energy into his body than even a Tyrant could control.

The Tyrant Cherufe, which had been imprisoned at great cost within Sonnia Criid, sensed this sudden spike of raw magical power and attempted to harness the energy for itself. It broke free of Criid's control, incinerating those around her as it began ascending a scant handful of miles from the Governor's own uncontrolled ascension.

Like two matches flaring up next to each other, Cherufe's essence mingled with that of the newly forged Tyrant that had once been the Governor-General, combining them together into something larger and more powerful than either. On that night, Cherufe and the Governor-General ceased to exist, and the Burning Man warped its way backwards through time to the when the Governor-General first began to ascend: April 10th, 1906.

On that day, the Burning Man appeared in the sky above San Francisco, which is under Mexican control, prompting the Mexican government to contact the Guild to investigate the strange phenomenon...

# CONTENTS

This book is divided into four chapters. Each chapter focuses on a different aspect of the multipart adventure.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the current chapter. It provides some background information on this supplement and how to best use it.

## CHAPTER 2: ADVENTURE

The adventure makes up the bulk of *Fire in the Sky*. Each Act is presented individually and is intended to be played over one to two game sessions.

## CHAPTER 2: PEOPLE

This chapter provides descriptions, details, and stat blocks for the various people the Fated will meet over the course of their journey.

## CHAPTER 4: COMPLICATIONS

Sometimes, an adventure takes so long that it makes more sense to split it into two sessions. Other times, the Fated breeze through the story and need a bit more content to fill out a full session. In either case, the "Complications" chapter provides alternative plot hooks that can be used to present additional challenges to the players or to add a bit more action or intrigue to the session.

The Complications chapter is divided up by Act.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: APPENDICES

These appendices provide Tarot Tie-ins and a new magical theory for players picking up magic during the time of the Burning Man.

### CALL OUT BOXES

There are many call out boxes like this one scattered throughout the adventure.

These boxes have two main functions. Boxes like this one highlight rules or special notes for the Fatemaster.

Boxes like the box on the right are used to show dialogue or description. They are intended to be read by the Fatemaster aloud to the players. Be careful, though; some are only intended to be read if the Fated take certain actions or are successful at certain challenges.



"Yeah, I was there." The drifter sighs, his shoulders slumping at the admission. "It only lasted a moment, and I still don't know how I lived through it. There was only the one Ortega, but she was so fast with that gun of hers..." He shakes his head. "Two of the bandits were dead before they even realized she had drawn on them."

His gaze becomes distant as the memory comes back to him. "It was a ballet of death."





## FIRE IN THE SKY

The adventure begins with the Fated returning to Earth: specifically, San Francisco. While this adventure is intended to take place in mid-April of 1906, so as to match up with the infamous San Francisco earthquake of 1906, Fatemasters are welcome to move the date around as they see fit; the Burning Man's influence can trigger the earthquake just about any time it is convenient for the campaign.

When the Fated arrive in San Francisco, the Burning Man will have been active for a little over a week... just long enough for things in San Francisco to start coming undone at the seams.

The Burning Man first appeared above Alcatraz Island, where Tlalli Flores was being incarcerated on charges of political protest and numerous counts of murder and sabotage. In the glowing light of the Burning Man, Tlalli's mind snapped, and she imagined it to be Huitzilopochtli, the ancient sun god of the Aztec people.

Tlalli's preaching and crazed fanaticism won over many of the other prisoners and guards on Alcatraz, which eventually led to a coup that freed the troubled woman from her cell and saw her placed in a position of leadership among the other deluded cultists. She announced that she was the reincarnation of Coatlicue and that in order to save the world, her daughter had to be found and sacrificed to the Burning Man.

Madness rarely affects different people in the same way, however, and one of the former prison guards, Cuartio Leano, had his own ideas about what the Burning Man represented. Rather than attempt to steal power from Tlalli and her well-armed followers, he stole a boat and retreated to the mainland, where he founded his own cult atop the city's Twin Peaks.

It's only been a few days, but the Burning Man's influence has stretched far and wide, drawing more and more people into Leano's self-indulgent influence...



# ACT I

How the Fated become involved in the adventure (which, notably, requires them to leave Malifaux and return to Earth) can vary depending upon the Fated's connections.

Choose whichever of the following options makes the most sense, or failing that, come up with your own reason why the Fated would travel to San Francisco to investigate the Burning Man.

## GUILD

The Mexican Government is alarmed at the appearance of what can only be described as a man made entirely of flame appearing in the sky above San Francisco. It has been dubbed the "Burning Man," and while the thing itself has done little other than float listlessly in the sky, it is causing panic and hysteria in its wake. They have turned to the Guild - which, due to its stewardship of Malifaux, has experience in dealing with strange events like this - and requested that they send someone with experience in such things to help get rid of it (or at the very least, to tell them how to get rid of it). The Fated are those people.

The default assumption of the adventure is that the Fated are Guild agents. If the Fated have other connections, very little will change during the adventure, save that the Fatemaster might have to replace some mentions of the Guild with the organization that the Fated are working with.

### ORANGE FLAMES OR BLUE?

Throughout this adventure, the Burning Man is described as changing color from orange to blue and back again.

The Burning Man is normally surrounded by orange flames, but they turn azure blue when it creates a Breach between Malifaux and Earth. The Burning Man tends to remain in this state for a few minutes as portals continue to open all around it.

## ARCANISTS

It's easy to see why the Mexican Government might turn to the Arcanists for assistance with an unprecedented magical anomaly such as the Burning Man. As Mexico is one of the Arcanists' primary purchasers of black market Soulstones, the organization takes their request for help seriously, and the Fated are the ones who are tapped for the mission.

That they are to keep their identity as Arcanists secret should be made quite clear to the Fated when they travel back to Earth; the Guild has been quite effective at portraying the Arcanists as magical terrorists back on Earth, and if the Fated are exposed, public outcry will no doubt lead to their executions.

## TEN THUNDERS

The Ten Thunders don't have an active presence in San Francisco, but more than a few have relatives in Chinatown who write to them about the strange events that take place after the appearance of the Burning Man. Seeking to investigate further, the crime syndicate turns to some of its agents and arranges for them to travel back to Earth to investigate the phenomenon, calm relatives, and learn whether or not the Burning Man can be turned into an asset.

## OUTCASTS



If the Fated are unaffiliated with any of the above organizations - or if they're simply mercenaries for hire - then they might be approached directly by agents of the Mexican Government looking for people who have experienced some of Malifaux's weirdness. At this point, the Guild and the Arcanists have both made it clear that they're busy with other matters, and the Mexican Government is desperately grasping at whatever straws it can find.


## EARTHSIDE

Alternatively, if this is the start of a new campaign, the Fated might not have traveled to Malifaux yet! In this case, the Fated might be agents of the Mexican Government or even residents of San Francisco who are known to lead investigator Coyotl Flores. When things start getting bad, he turns to them and asks them for assistance.

This sort of opening takes more work from the Fatemaster to set up but could lead to a very unique way to start a campaign focused around dealing with the Burning Man and the portals it creates in its wake.

### MAGIC ON EARTH

Casting spells on Earth is far more difficult than doing so in Malifaux. Whenever a character attempts to cast a Spell or Manifested Power while on Earth, the resulting Challenge Flip suffers a . Thus, if the Fated are targeted by any NPC Actions that list a Magical Skill next to their name, they will receive a  on their Defense or Willpower duel to resist the Action (as appropriate).

Most successful spellcasters on Earth mitigate this penalty by using Soulstone charges to gain  on their casting attempt (assuming that they can find one of the rare gems). In addition, some of the most powerful spellcasters in this adventure have The Burning Man's Influence Magical Theory, which allows them to ignore this penalty when casting Spells or Manifested Powers on Earth. If the Fated want to use this Magical Theory themselves, it's explained in more detail in the Appendix (on page 112).

## ACT I, PROLOGUE:

### COMING IN TO PORT

When the Fated are ready, read the following text, adjusting as appropriate if the Fated are working for a group other than the Guild:



Three days ago, the Mexican government asked the Guild for assistance investigating the appearance of a flaming, man-shaped figure in the skies over San Francisco. You were chosen as the Guild's representatives in this matter, and you've been traveling ever since.

Your journey from Malifaux through the Breach to Santa Fe and then San Leandro was little more than one warm train ride after another, but as you passed over the Sierra Nevada mountains and started the long descent toward the coast, the summery weather gives way to increasingly cool temperatures.

You've barely disembarked from the train before you're rushed onto the San Francisco ferry. The weather hasn't improved, and the bay is shrouded in thick white fog. The dampness makes moving feel like you're slogging through a thick snow drift, and only the occasional slow blink of a lighthouse beacon turning your way gives you an idea of where you are.

As the slow ride continues and the buildings on the approaching shore come into sight, something else begins to slowly come into focus. At first, it looks a bit like a candle flame as seen through frosted glass. As you grow closer, however, you gradually begin to notice that the flickering flames have the rough shape of a man, and that they are drifting almost lazily above the city.



There are murmurs of concern from the other ferry passengers as the Burning Man comes into sight, and the rest of the ride is deeply uncomfortable.

## ACT I, SCENE 1:

# LA POLICIA DE SAN FRANCISCO

When the players arrive at the dock, they're met by Angela Guerrero, a Mexican soldier who has been instructed to greet the Fated and escort them to the police station for their briefing.

Read the following text, adjusting as appropriate if the Fated are working for an organization other than the Guild:



You step off the ferry just as the sun is rising high enough over the horizon to break through the fog a bit. You've lost track of the Burning Man in the low clouds that still blanket the bay, but, despite that, you find it difficult to stop thinking about its presence, like a cut on the roof of your mouth.

The town around you is coming alive as the sky brightens, and you can see people bustling through the fog as if it were a common occurrence. The paint on the buildings is vibrant and bright, and you can hear the shouts of a salesman a little way down the docks as they open their stores and booths for the day, all of it in Spanish.

A woman in the olive-green uniform of the Mexican military waits at the far end of the dock, and she raises a hand in greeting as you approach her. "Buenos días. Er... good day," she says in heavily accented English. "You are the agents of the Guild? I am *Soldado de Primera* Angela Candelaria Leon Guerrero. Would you come with me, please?"



Guerrero doesn't give much more explanation than that, but it's out of nervousness for the worsening situation than any rudeness on her part. If the Fated have Arcanist or Ten Thunders connections, then instead of asking if the Fated are with the Guild, she instead asks if they're the "independent investigators" she was instructed to meet at the docks.

If the Fated ask for more information, she realizes that she's being brusque and apologizes. Read the following text:



"My apologies," she says, looking flustered. "I am a soldier in the Mexican army. We were called as reinforcements when the Burning Man appeared over San Francisco." She looks up at the sky, a pall of nervousness crossing her face briefly, as though she felt that by mentioning the phenomenon, she might draw it closer. Turning her attention back to you, she continues. "I have been asked to take you to *Investigador* Flores, who is in charge of the Burning Man investigation."

She shifts impatiently from one foot to the other. "The sooner I take you to him, the sooner you can know what's going on, yes?"



If the Fated have any other questions for Guerrero - presumably about the Burning Man - she defers to Flores, assuring them that the *Investigador* will have all the information they need.

When the Fated finally agree to follow Guerrero to the police station, read the following text:



Guerrero herds you along the streets on foot, and it only takes a couple of blocks before you reach the police station. It's a low-lying stone and stucco Mission Revival building, and a pair of gables rise above the orange-tiled roof edge.

Two armed guards stand on either side of the door and salute Guerrero as she passes through. They give the rest of you a look over, in the manner of professional soldiers attempting to determine whether or not you are a threat to their mission.

Guerrero leads you past several officers that are questioning civilians and scrawling messages in notepads. At the moment, there's a crowded riot of police officers bustling from one office to another or hunched over paperwork, and all of them look harried and overworked.

Eventually you reach a back room where a tall man with short, dark hair and a hand-rolled cigarette held tightly between his lips is bent over a map of the city and the surrounding area. He's wearing what must have once been a reasonably nice suit, but the jacket is missing, its sleeves are rolled up, and it's wrinkled in a way that makes one think that the man wearing it must have spent more nights sleeping in his office chair than at home in bed.



Guerrero introduces the tired-looking man as *Investigador* Coyotl Flores. Flores looks up from the map, revealing features that seem to be a mix of Native American and Hispanic. He seems tired and worn out, and after dismissing Guerrero (who salutes and leaves, shutting the door behind her), he takes a moment to shake hands with the Fated.

The Fated can introduce themselves if they wish. If they are unfriendly, he becomes a bit annoyed during the rest of the conversation, but he won't allow personal feelings to come between him and his assignment. If a Fated character attempts to speak Spanish (even if poorly) to Flores at any point in the adventure, it earns that character a bit of additional admiration in his eyes.

Read the following text, adjusting as appropriate if the Fated are working for an organization other than the Guild:



Flores looks you up and down appraisingly as he grinds his cigarette out in an ashtray and immediately lights a new one. "So," he says in English, with much less of an accent than Guerrero, "you are the representatives sent by the Guild? Thank you for coming... I know that it is a long trip from Malifaux in more ways than one, but we just have no context for dealing with something like this. Hopefully you will have a better idea about how to handle this sort of thing than we do."



Flores offers a chair to the Fated, but there's just the one in his office, which makes it a bit awkward if any of the Fated actually take him up on the offer. When the topic of conversation turns toward the Burning Man (and he'll bring it up himself before too long), he sighs and gets down to business. Read the text on the following page.



Flores walks back to his desk, taking out a file and handing it to [NEAREST FATED]. “Honestly, we were hoping that you could tell us more about what this thing is. Its movements seem completely random, and we have been unable to discern any sort of motivation or plan.”

He runs a hand through his hair and then crosses his arms. “The only consistent thing about it is what it’s been doing to people. When it stops over a neighborhood, people lose their minds. Not everyone, just the... how to put it... mentally vulnerable. The depressed, the overzealous, the already unstable, they seem the most vulnerable to its influence.”

Flores shakes his head, as if finding it difficult to believe his own words. “I know how it sounds, but we’ve seen its effects first hand. When it first appeared, it was hovering right over Alcatraz Citadel, an army base with a prison out in the bay, and you can guess how well that’s been going. The military is there to keep things under control, but we haven’t heard from them since, and anyone that gets too close to the island is shelled by the gun batteries. That’s the real reason we’ve got soldiers like Guerrero running around; the government is worried that they’ve lost control of Alcatraz.”

Lowering his arms, he shakes his head, takes a long drag from his cigarette, and lights up another. “Anyways, that’s none of your business. The most pressing concern we have now is all the cults that have been springing up ever since the Burning Man showed up. Something about it just seems to inspire a... I don’t know, a religious obsession in people. There’s a group out by Twin Peaks that claim to be able to speak with him, so that might be a good place to....”

Flores is interrupted by a uniformed officer who appears in his doorway. He glances at the Fated and says something in Spanish, which causes Flores to swear loudly.



If any of the Fated speak Spanish, the officer says: *“Investigador Flores, we’ve just received word that someone broke into the museum last night and stole a number of valuable artifacts. The security guard is dead!”*

Flores grinds out his cigarette and motions for the Fated to follow him as he explains the situation. “Come!” he shouts as they press through the mob of police officers. “I shall show you what the Burning Man is doing to this city!”



## ACT I, SCENE 2:

### MUSEUM HEIST

Flores accompanies the Fated to the museum. Read the following text:



Heading northeast from the police station, Flores leads you across another set of piers on the coast of the San Francisco mainland. If not for the industrial activity, the fishing boats, and the nearby chocolate factory, you would have a rather picturesque view of the bay and the distant Alcatraz Island. You can see buildings vaguely outlined on the island through the fog, but if they're anything but dark and silent, you can't tell from here.

After crossing the piers, Flores veers west into a nicer neighborhood. The two-story museum rests a little ways back along a path in a park-like setting. A pair of police officers is standing near the entrance, across which they've set up a rope to discourage any curious passers-by.



When the Fated arrive, one of the police officers steps forward, salutes Flores, and gives a report of the situation in rapid Spanish.

If the Fated speak Spanish, they can follow the conversation as Flores describes it in the text box in the next column. If the Fated don't speak Spanish (or haven't let Flores know that they speak Spanish), then he turns to them and sums up the report. Read the text box in the next column.

Read the following text:



Flores pulls a pack of cigarettes from his pocket, lights one with a match, and pulls a long drag from it. "The thieves stole some Aztec paraphernalia. Obsidian-tipped spears and knives, ceremonial outfits and headdresses, that sort of thing." Though his voice is tired, it's clear that he's pleased with his earlier assessment of the situation. "Unfortunately, the night guard seems to have been killed during the robbery."

"We're still gathering information, but it seems as if the break-in happened late at night after the museum staff had left, though we're not sure of the exact time. We have an officer interviewing some of the, ah, itinerant population, but thus far we haven't turned up any witnesses."

He takes another pull from his cigarette, then drops it to the ground and grinds it out beneath his boot. "You are welcome to join me in looking over the scene of the crime, if you feel that it will assist your investigation. Regardless, I would suggest that you investigate the cult that is squatting out by Twin Peaks. They claim to have some sort of connection with the Burning Man, which may make them a viable source of information."

Without waiting for a response, Flores marches into the museum while swearing softly under his breath.



If the Fated decide to skip the museum investigation and investigate the Twin Peaks cult, skip to Scene 3: Reporter Trouble.

If the Fated head into the museum, read the following text:



The museum is quiet with no sign of any patrons or staff. The foyer has a large, open floor that is only partially partitioned into different areas of focus or display. Ahead of you, wide stone steps lead up to the second floor, and underneath them, double doors lead into the next room. Similar double doors flank either side of the foyer, each leading into large, open rooms of their own. Standing in the center of the foyer, you can easily see into each of the museum's three first floor rooms.

The floor of the foyer is decorated with a tile mosaic of an Aztec warrior wearing a feathered cloak and wielding a jade spear. Behind him is an elaborate, blazing sun. If the city weren't smothered in a blanket of fog, it's easy to imagine that the mosaic would be both bright and beautiful.



Any sort of exploration of the first floor uncovers the broken window that the thieves used to enter the museum. The stolen artifacts were kept on the second floor, and the glass that once protected the now empty display cases is shattered and covers the floor.

Anyone that isn't wearing thick boots must make a TN 8 Acrobatics Challenge when they cross the floor. Those that fail suffer 1 damage and gain the following Condition until the damage is healed: **"Injured Feet:** This character cannot declare Charge Actions or declare more than one Walk Action per turn."

The body of the night guardsman is near the entrance to the second floor room, in a pool of drying blood. From where he is laying, it looks like he came across the robbery while it was in progress, and he was shot and killed.

If the Fated attempt to search for clues, it is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

### SEARCH FOR CLUES

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Notice, Art, History, Track
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 10
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 6
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 3

At the end of each Duration, the Fated learn one Clue from the list below for each success they achieved. For every failure, they learn one Mistake from the list below. If your players can easily separate player knowledge from character knowledge, feel free to give the Clues and Mistakes to them individually, perhaps even written down on small slips of paper they can reveal to the group. This allows them to each have an "Aha!" moment where they reveal their findings (or their false assumptions) to the group.

If your players find it difficult to separate what their characters know from what they know, however, you can just give the Clues and Mistakes to them at the same time, ensuring that, like their characters, they're not easily able to separate the truth from their false assumptions.

If the Fated manage to successfully complete the Ongoing Challenge, they learn the Breakthrough, which should give them a solid push in the right direction. If they critically fail the Ongoing Challenge, however, then they learn the Red Herring, which is likely to pull them well off course.

### CLUES (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER):

- **First Floor:** The Fated find a partial muddy boot print near broken window. The tread looks like it belongs more to a military boot than any sort of workman's boot. (The thieves were former military personnel from Alcatraz Citadel.)
- **First Floor:** A scrap of olive-green cloth is on the glass of the window, apparently hooked as someone went through. (The cloth is the same shade as the military uniform worn by Guerrero and the other members of the Mexican military.)

- **First and Second Floors:** From the scuffed boot prints on the ground, it looks like there were two or three burglars and that they went right to the second floor exhibit from their entry point on the first floor. (The burglars knew what they were after.)
- **Second Floor:** The Fated find a broken eagle feather mixed in with the broken glass of the display cases. (It fell from one of the stolen eagle cloaks.)
- **Second Floor:** The dead security guard's chest is a ruined mess of bullet holes; from the look of him, he was cut down by a military-grade machine gun. (The thieves were very well-armed and have military connections.)

### MISTAKES (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER)

- **Second Floor:** Searching the pockets of the dead security guard, the Fated find a business card for "The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn," an organization associated with occult practices. On the back of the card is scrawled "It was fun talking with you" in a feminine hand. (The guard met a woman at a bar and chatted with her. After he excused himself to use the restroom, she left him a note on one of her business cards and then departed before he returned. The address on the card is a location in San Francisco, but if the Fated investigate, there's nothing particularly unusual about the Order; it's little more than a private club for bored, wealthy people.)
- **First Floor:** The Fated find a worn wallet beneath one of the glass display cabinets. Opening it reveals three 100 peso bills (around 5 scrip each) and an identification card for the Pinkerton National Detective Agency that names its owner as Jarrod Janson. (Janson is visiting San Francisco on vacation from New York; he lost his wallet yesterday and has been desperately trying to find it ever since. He's staying at the Palace Hotel, and if the Fated track him down and return the wallet, he's very grateful. If the money is still in the wallet, he peels out a bill and gives it to the Fated as a reward. If questioned about his whereabouts the previous night, Janson claims he was at a local bar, and the bartender can vouch for him... and the fact that he had to put his drinks on a tab, on account of having lost his wallet.)

### BREAKTHROUGH

The Fated discover a small sign that has been knocked off its pedestal and wedged between it and another case. The sign claims that the Aztec people worshiped Huitzilopochtli (pronounced wee-tsee-loh-pohch-tee), their god of sun and war, and that the items on display - headdresses, cloaks, and obsidian weapons - were considered to be sacred by them.

If the Fated succeed on a TN 12 History Challenge, they remember that Huitzilopochtli was a god of sacrifice who required enormous amounts of blood on his festival days to ensure that the sun would survive the 52 year cycle the Aztec culture believed it had. If the Fated achieve a Margin of Success on this Challenge, they realize that one of those festival days will be arriving in only a few days' time (on the day that the Burning Man returns to Alcatraz in Act IV).

### RED HERRING

The Fated find a small sign in one of the shattered cases that thanks the Flores family for donating relics to the museum. (Specifically, the relics that had been in that case: a few obsidian weapons that Coyotl Flores' grandfather bequeathed to the museum in his will. Flores knows nothing about this, but pointing it out to him makes him concerned that it might have something to do with his sister Tllalli, which might make the Fated suspicious of his motives.)



Once the Fated have finished their investigation, Flores asks them what they found and listens intently, recording the information in his small, handheld notebook. He tells the Fated that he will be remaining at the museum to interview employees, and that they should return to their investigation of the Burning Man. If they are not certain how to do that, he once again mentions the Burning Man cult that is squatting near Twin Peaks and suggests that they investigate there. The cult claims to be able to communicate with the Burning Man, which makes them his best lead on the investigation.



## ACT I, SCENE 3:

### REPORTER TROUBLE

As the Fated make their way to Twin Peaks (or if they start investigating another lead and need a bit of a gentle push back toward the plot), they encounter Adelita Ortega, a reporter for the *Diario de San Francisco*, the local (Spanish) newspaper, being harassed by members of the Twin Peaks cult. Read the following text:



As you're making your way down the street, your thoughts are interrupted by a loud gunshot and a woman's cry of pain! Both seem to have originated from a block away.



If the Fated investigate, read the following text:



When you investigate the commotion, you find a woman standing back from two men and a woman in poorly dyed orange and red robes. The attacking woman, dark haired with blue eyes that are filled with religious fervor, has the arms torn off her robes, revealing a muscular upper body. The men are thin, but taller.

The woman they're menacing is short and has her back to you, so it's difficult to see any distinguishing features, aside from her simple green dress and hat. A briefcase lies at her feet, having apparently snapped open to reveal a disorganized mess of papers and folders. The woman is pointing a snub-nosed pistol at her attackers but seems more annoyed than afraid.

"*Lárguense de aquí, hijos de coyotes y culebras!*," she spits out, and you can see her hands tightening on the gun.



If any of the Fated speak Spanish, her insult translates as "*Get out of here, you children of a coyote and a rattlesnake.*"

The Fated, at this point, are welcome to step in if they wish. If they ask Adelita what's happening, she steps to the side just enough to bring them into her field of vision. She claims that the three of them attacked her, and they don't seem to disagree with her version of events.

To drive off the three Twin Peaks Cultists without violence, a TN 11 Intimidate or Convince Challenge is needed, at which point they leave with a few threats in Spanish that amount to, "We're gonna come back for you, Ortega."

If the Fated fail to drive the Twin Peaks Cultists away (or if they choose to do nothing), the Cultists laugh and attack Adelita (and the Fated, if they are involved). Their stats are identical to those on page 92, save that they have no firearms.

During the fight, Adelita attacks the cultists when possible. She hits automatically with her pistol and unarmed attack and deals weak damage with each hit. The Cultists attack her if the Fated are not presenting an immediate threat; their unarmed attacks automatically hit her and inflict weak damage with each hit.

After the fight, if Adelita is still conscious, read the following text:



The woman, who looks to be in her late thirties, sheathes the gun in a thigh holster and then readjusts her dress. "Thanks for that," she says, looking each of you over with narrow eyes. After a moment, her expression softens, and she holds out her hand. "I'm Adelita Ortega, by the way. I'm a reporter with the *Diario de San Francisco*."



Once the Fated have introduced themselves, Adelita asks them some basic questions about what they're doing in San Francisco. They need to pass a TN 14 Deceive Challenge to lie to her, but if she catches them, she's only mildly annoyed by it: she's used to having people lie to her on a regular basis, and while she still doesn't enjoy it, she's at least resigned to it.

If the Fated tell the truth or mention their investigation (of either the Burning Man or the museum theft), she gets very excited. Read the following text:



*“Fantástico! Thank you so much for talking to me,”* she gushes, suddenly seeming ten years younger in her enthusiasm. *“If you're willing to tell me about your investigation, I'm certain that I can help out. I promise that I won't print anything without your permission.”*



The Fated can attempt a TN 13 Scrutiny Challenge. On a success, they realize that while Adelita is being sincere, her enthusiasm seems like it might get the best of her, given a sufficiently interesting story.

If the Fated turn down her offer, she's disappointed but doesn't hold it against them; she was half-expecting to have her offer turned down in the first place. She tells them that if they change their minds, they can reach her in her office and then returns there herself.



## INFORMATION SHARING

If the Fated agree to share information with Adelita, she gathers up her briefcase full of papers and asks the Fated what they want to know about. As she reveals what she knows, she shuffles between papers in an unorganized manner, making certain that she has her facts straight before stating any names or dates. Some possible topics of conversation are listed below.

### THE ATTACKERS

If asked about the people who attacked her, Adelita sighs and rolls her eyes. “They’re from the cult that’s squatting over by the Twin Peaks. I interviewed their leader yesterday, thinking that it’d be a good piece for the paper, but he ended up more interested in getting me to join them than in answering any real questions. Evidently he wasn’t willing to take ‘no’ for an answer.”

### THE TWIN PEAKS CULT

Adelita says that she visited the cult yesterday and interviewed their leader, who has been calling himself ‘the Magister.’ She’s done some investigation since then and learned that his actual name is Cuartio Leano. According to her research, he was a military guard at Alcatraz Citadel until recently, at which point he apparently left to start up a cult near the Twin Peaks. She suspects that Leano was influenced by “one of the crazies” up at Alcatraz Citadel.

From her interview, she was able to determine that the cult worships the Burning Man and believe that it is a sign of the coming apocalypse. They’ve been quickly gathering impressionable recruits and now number about forty people.

## ALCATRAZ CITADEL

If the Fated ask Adelita about Alcatraz, she looks off to the north, toward the island at the mouth of the San Francisco Bay. “I was doing some snooping around up there a few weeks ago. It was an investigative report on prison conditions and how the government was locking up political dissidents. People with strange religious beliefs, conspiracy theorists, members of a native uprising... that sort of thing.”

She then shakes her head and explains that a week later, the Burning Man appeared in the sky above Alcatraz, and now nobody can get close to the island, on account of the gun batteries. Everyone she’s talked to in the Mexican government assures her that the situation is under control, but she suspects that there was a military revolt of some kind.

### THE ORTEGA FAMILY

If the Fated ask Adelita about her last name and whether she has any connection to the Malifaux Ortegas, the question makes her slightly uncomfortable. She says, “Yeah, they’re relatives... I guess. Distant relatives. Not all of us ran off into the unknown to become gunslingers.” She’s unwilling to discuss the subject further, though a TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that she’s downplaying her relation to them.



If the Fated mention Adelita to Flores, he rolls his eyes at the mention of her name and asks that the Fated discuss any information they intend to give her with him before they do so. He reveals that he knows her, having seen her at the station bothering his officers on multiple occasions. If the Fated succeed on a TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge, they get the sense that he doesn’t have any strong opinions about her one way or the other, save for annoyance at how often she badgers the police.

## ACT I, SCENE 4:

### TWIN PEAKS

This scene occurs when the Fated investigate the cult that is squatting near the Twin Peaks, the two prominent hills near the center of San Francisco. While the hills are technically in San Francisco, it's enough of a hike to reach their summits that the city has thus far just left the cultists alone. If there's any trouble on the hills, the Fated will be on their own. As they approach the hills, read the following text:



As you approach the Twin Peaks, the name feels like a slight misnomer. A pair of linked grassy hills stand before you – tall, certainly, for hills, but they're nowhere close to being called mountains – and after a long, two-hour hike, you finally reach the summit of the northernmost hill.

The cultists have erected a palisade of sorts on the hill's summit, from which sharpened wooden spikes jut out on all sides. Strange emblems vaguely resembling familiar religious symbols that have been altered in uncomfortable ways adorn makeshift banners that hang along the length of the wooden walls. A dozen plumes of campfire smoke rise from behind the walls and fade into the blue sky.

The compound is, in general, as loud as a mad peacock, with occasional singing breaking through the general clamor before dying away just as quickly. Its distance from the city proper is likely the only reason the authorities haven't banged the door down to arrest everyone inside. Two men dressed in red and orange robes linger near the gate, their attention upon the distant figure of the Burning Man to the northwest. Each cultist wears a gunbelt cinched over his robe. Behind them, the open gates lead into the compound proper.



If the Fated attempt to approach the compound undetected, they can sneak past the guards with successful TN 9 Stealth Challenges. On a failure, the guards catch sight of the Fated and demand that they halt.

If the Fated are caught – or if they simply approach the guards openly – they ask if the Fated have come to join the cult. A TN 5 Deceive Challenge is enough to convince the guards that the Fated are indeed interested in joining, at which point the guards will escort the Fated inside to meet with “the Magister.” If the Fated achieve a Margin of Success on this Challenge, the guards simply point the Fated to the Magister's large tent and trust them to find the way themselves.

If the Fated take a more honest approach (or fail to lie to the guards), then they can still talk their way into the compound with a TN 12 Bewitch or Convince Challenge. A TN 14 Barter Challenge and a bribe of 2 scrip (or about 40 pesos) is also successful in obtaining access to the compound.

If the Fated choose to take a more direct approach, the stats for the Twin Peaks Cultists can be found on page 92. As soon as someone fires a gun, there are screams of panic from within the compound, and at the start of the fourth round of Dramatic Time, cultists within the compound start pushing the gates closed. A character may take a (1) Action while within 1 yard of the gate to make a TN 12 Labor Challenge. On a success, the character is able to push a closed door open or to keep a door from closing. If the gate doors are both closed at the start of any turn, the cultists bar the gate, increasing the TN to 18. Climbing the walls requires 2 AP and a TN 12 Athletics Challenge, but any Fated who succeed in scaling it are shot at by the cultists on the other side of the wall, which shifts the scene into Dramatic Time. Unbarring the gate from the inner side is a 1 AP action.

Once the Fated enter the compound, read the text on the following page, adjusting as appropriate to include running, screaming cultists if there was gunfire from a battle at the gates.



The interior of the compound is surprisingly crowded. People in various states of dress (and, in some cases, undress) mill about, cooking food, mending robes, and chanting as they raise their arms toward the distant orange flame of the hovering Burning Man. There are tents everywhere and nearly as many small fire pits, the source of the smoke you saw from outside the compound.

A large fire pit dominates the center of the camp, and standing within it is a towering wooden framework resembling a twenty-foot tall humanoid. Orange- and red-robed cultists are gathered around it, weaving flexible wooden bands together to form a cage-like opening in the figure's stomach. The woven statue's head is still missing.

Near the northern end of the camp, past the statue, is a group of tents that have been sewn together to make a single pavilion-sized tent. They're all white, but drawn on them are symbols much like the ones drawn on the banners hanging from the compound's outer walls. Here, however, they're rendered in a reddish-brown color that you hope is faded red paint and not dried blood.



If the Fated fought their way into the compound, there are a dozen Twin Peaks Cultists here. Only a third of them have firearms, but their stats are otherwise identical to those on page 92. They attack amidst shouts of religious fervor, calling out to the Burning Man as they “punish the unenlightened.”

The non-combatant cultists mostly just run around in a panic and cower near their tents. This provides everyone in the compound with soft cover for the first four rounds of Dramatic Time; if an attack misses due to the soft cover penalty, it hits a random fleeing cultist (which can be assumed to have 4 Wounds, for the purposes of determining whether they survive the attack).

If the Fated didn't start a combat, however, then the cultists generally ignore them under the assumption that the Fated are new recruits. Men and women come up to them singly or in pairs and welcome them to “the family” with laurels made from braided poppies and prolonged hugs. Many of the cultists seem to be wandering around in a dream-like state, and if the Fated ask about this, they explain (in either Spanish or broken English) that the poppies allow those who partake of them to contact the Burning Man and receive visions of the future.

If the Fated investigate the smaller tents scattered throughout the compound, they find small cooking pots, tattered bedrolls, dirty pillows, and a fair number of poppy plants, most of which seem to have been heavily harvested for their seeds.

## A REQUEST FOR HELP

If the Fated entered the compound peacefully (and without a direct escort to the Magister), they're soon approached by a young man with haunted eyes. He tries speaking to them first in Spanish, but he switches to English if they seem unable to understand him. Read the following text:



The young man licks his lips nervously as he motions for you to step away from some of his fellow cultists. “The others are watching, so I can't speak long, but... you're not here to join the cult, are you?”

Without waiting for a response, he lowers his voice to a paranoid whisper. “Please, you have to help my sister. I came up here to rescue her, but the guy that runs this place, the Magister, he... I don't know, he gave her something to mess up her mind. I can't get her out by myself, but... can you help her? Her name's Alejandra Aquino... she's apparently one of the Magister's new wives.” He looks angry at that, but he doesn't let his voice rise above a whisper.



The young man's name is Ramiro Aquino. A TN 8 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that he's telling the truth and that he's very worried for his sister's safety. He's only been at the compound for a few hours, but he's already heard them talking about "joining the Chosen One with the Burning Man." Given the wicker man that they've spent the morning building, Ramiro doesn't want to risk his sister being that Chosen One.

Alejandra Aquino is in the large pavilion tent, at the Magister's side. If the Fated meet with him in The Magister (below), they'll notice her presence there.

## THE MAGISTER

If the Fated ask to speak with the person in charge of the compound, they're directed to the pavilion tent and told that they should speak with the Magister. Alternatively, the Fated could come across him simply by investigating the pavilion tent.

Even if the Fated fight their way into the compound, guns blazing, the Magister meets them in the same serene manner as if they had arrived peacefully. He has moved beyond such concerns as physical safety and truly believes that his words can turn even the most violent wolf into a peaceful lamb. In short, the Magister abides.



Read the following text:



The interior of the pavilion tent is much more opulent than the ones huddled in the rest of the tent city outside. There's a small table stacked with papers that are leaning to one side, many of which contain drawings of the Burning Man hovering over San Francisco. A few show the flames of the Burning Man descending down onto the town below, engulfing it in flames as the very earth cracks beneath him.

To the left, a currently unoccupied section of the pavilion tent appears to have been set aside for dining, while a length of cloth on the right separates another section like a large curtain. You can detect movement from behind it, and a moment later, a young man in his late twenties or early thirties pushes aside the cloth to greet you with a serene smile. He's dressed in white robes that have been painted with the same rust red substance as the tents outside, and glancing past him into the bedroom beyond, you catch a glimpse of three naked women sprawled out on a large mattress, each of them with the distant, far-away gaze of someone who is lost in the grip of opium.

The man lets the curtain fall behind him and then spreads his arms in a friendly gesture. "Welcome, my friends, my family. Please, seat yourselves and speak peacefully. Have you come to learn the mysteries of the Burning Man from his prophet on Earth?"



The leader of the Twin Peaks cult is Cuartio Leano, though he now goes by the name of ‘the Magister.’ All in all, the Magister should come across as surprisingly serene, but the longer that the Fated talk with him, the more ‘creepy vibes’ he should inspire. He’s not hostile or aggressive, but he is nevertheless a morally bankrupt man who would watch with pleased silence as parents tossed their children into a fire to prove their devotion to his so-called god.

The Magister is more than willing to speak to the Fated about the Burning Man, and it becomes obvious fairly quickly that he views the Burning Man as a herald of the apocalypse, called “The Great Flame” or simply “The Flame” by the cult. He talks about how the Burning Man will spare his children after the world has been purged in blue flame, and how he was chosen to lead the “true believers” into the rituals necessary to worship the Burning Man and prove their faith.

Fated that speak with the Magister can attempt TN 12 Scrutiny Challenges. On a success, the character realizes that, while seemingly harmless at the moment, the Magister has lost his battle with insanity and is quite delusional.

If the Fated bring up the topic of the women in the bedroom, the Magister calmly explains that they have become one with him in spirit, as the Chosen One must eventually become one with the Burning Man. He sees nothing wrong with this and accepts it as a fact of nature, as sure as the sun rising in the morning or rain falling from the sky. If there are any particularly attractive female Fated present, he will even go so far as to suggest that, should they see the truth of the Burning Man, he would allow them to join with him as well.

One of these women is Alejandra Aquino, but if the Fated mention her name, the Magister corrects them, claiming that her name is now “Sidereal” and that her former life is behind her. He quietly protests any attempt to take her or the other women away, but a TN 16 Convince Challenge is enough to persuade the Magister to allow her to peacefully leave the compound. Alejandra (and the other two women) are more or less nonfunctional due to the opium in their system and must be carried out (requiring at least one person per woman).

If the Fated attempt to remove her without the Magister’s permission, he lets them leave without raising a hand to stop them, but he warns them that they will regret doing so. He does not elaborate further upon his threat.

If the Fated threaten the Magister with violence, he does not fight back, stating that the Fated “must do what the Burning Man wills of them, as must we all.” If the Fated begin physically harming him, however, he uses his Beseech the Burning Man’s Favor to call out to him, which causes the Magister to burst into bright blue flames. He attacks the Fated while screaming in pain; the transformation did not render him immune to the heat of the flames that now surround him. Stats for the Magister can be found on page 94.

As their conversation with the Magister comes to an end (either peacefully or as a result of his transformation and subsequent attack), the Fated hear a commotion outside. The exact nature of that commotion depends upon their actions earlier in the adventure.

If any the Twin Peaks Cultists that attacked Adelita Ortega in Scene 3 were not permanently dealt with (either by killing them, tying them up, or turning them over to the police), then they return to the compound with the struggling, screaming reporter, whom they intend to make into a sacrifice for their god. See “The Chosen One” on page 22 for details.

If the Fated killed the Twin Peaks Cultists that attacked Adelita Ortega in Scene 3, then the cult is forced to make due with a lesser sacrifice. See “The Lottery” on page 24 for details.

## THE CHOSEN ONE

If the Fated did not permanently deal with the Twin Peaks Cultists that attacked Adelita in Scene 3, they quickly regroup and recover and ambush her again shortly after the Fated part with her. This time, their attack is more successful; they knock Adelita unconscious and are able to carry her halfway to the compound before she regains consciousness.

Read the following text when the Fated leave the pavilion tent to investigate; if the Magister has been killed or incapacitated, simply replace him with another cultist who takes over in his place):



As you step out of the tent, you're greeted by the sight of Adelita Ortega being dragged toward the center of the compound by one of the cultists that attacked her hours earlier. The Ortega's hands are bound behind her back, but she's clearly fighting every step of the way.

The Magister steps forward from behind you, raising his hands to draw the attention of the gathering crowd of awed cultists. "*Hermanos*, the Chosen One has returned to us!"

The crowd releases a cry of pure joy, but quickly quiets back down as the Magister starts speaking again. "I first realized that this woman was the herald of the End Times when she came to me, speaking the questions foretold by prophecy. To prepare the way for the End Times, the Chosen One must ready her mind with the gift of the poppies, abandon the mortal concerns that cloud her vision, and then become one with the glory of the Burning Man."



Naturally, Adelita isn't interested in being sacrificed by the cult and fights back against them, struggling and swearing and shouting at the Fated for help. If they do nothing, the cult drags her into a tent to prepare her for sacrifice later that night.

Should the Fated intervene, they will find it exceedingly difficult to convince the Magister to release Adelita; it takes a TN 16 Convince Challenge or a TN 14 Deceive Challenge to persuade him to release Adelita or trick him into thinking that he has the wrong Chosen One. If the Magister isn't present and another cultist is speaking to the crowd, the TN of these Challenges is reduced by -2.

If the Fated can't peacefully resolve the situation, the only other option is violence. There are two Twin Peaks Mobs (pg. 93) present, as well as either the Magister (pg. 94) or a Twin Peaks Cultist (pg. 92). One of the Twin Peaks Mobs surges forward to grab Adelita at the start of combat; at the end of each round, she suffers 1 damage as they claw and tear at her while chanting prayers to the **Burning Man**; the Twin Peaks Mob is considered to be **Slow** while it holds her in this manner. If Adelita was damaged during Scene 3, then she has not yet had time to heal from those injuries.

Should the Twin Peaks Mob holding Adelita be dispersed, she stumbles to safety and spends the rest of combat firing her snub-nosed pistol into the other Twin Peaks Mob (if any). Each time she does so, she hits for moderate damage (which reduces the Mob's Rank Value by 1).

The Magister shouts encouraging words to his worshipers and attempts to Demoralize the Fated, but he does not directly attack them unless they attack him first, at which point he uses his Beseech the **Burning Man's** Favor Action and self-immolates as described above (pg. 21). He then attacks the Fated and fights to the bitter, flaming end, no doubt horribly burning many of his followers in the process with his blast damage.





## THE LOTTERY

If the Fated killed the Twin Peaks Cultists that attacked Adelita Ortega in Scene 3, then the cult is forced to make due with a lesser sacrifice. Read the following text:



When you step out of the pavilion tent, you see cultists with gunbelts around their waists gathering their half-dressed or drugged brethren together into a group. A bald cultist with fresh tattoos of flames on the sides of his head raises his hands in the air, drawing their attention to him.

“*Hermanos!* The Chosen One has eluded us!” Cries of alarm and wails of disappointment rise up from the crowd, but he silences them and motions for an assistant to start moving through the crowd, letting each of them draw a match stick from a bundle in his hands.

“The End Times may not come tonight, but we must have faith! We will find the Chosen One and allow her to join with the Burning Man, but until that day comes, one of us must take her place to appease the Burning Man’s will. We leave the decision up to his will.”

The assistant brings the last match back to the bald man, and he holds it up in the air above him. The others slowly, one by one, begin to follow suit.



The cultists stand like that, each one holding a match in the air, for a few long moments. Expectation hangs in the air, and many of the cultists stare up at their raised match with intense religious belief.

After the Fated have had a moment to react to the situation, read the text on the following column.



Suddenly, a match held by a young woman – a teenage girl, really – with frazzled blonde hair bursts into flame. Her eyes widen as an expression of pure joy appears on her dirty face, but it quickly turns to confusion as she’s seized by her fellow cultists.

“The Burning Man has spoken!” the bald man calls out, to the cheers of the others. “Place her in the wicker man!”



The cultists drag the protesting woman to the center of the fire pit as she begins to panic and call for help. If the Fated do not intervene, they push her up into the flammable structure, bind her hands and legs, and eagerly work to finish their construction as the woman continues to scream for help. They burn her later that night, as noted in the Leaving the Compound section on page 25.

If the Fated intervene, they will find it very difficult to convince the cultists to release the woman; it takes a TN 14 Convince Challenge to persuade them to release the woman.

If the Fated choose to resolve the situation violently, there are two Twin Peaks Mobs (pg. 93) present, as well as the bald Twin Peaks Cultist (pg. 92). One of the Twin Peaks Mobs holds the sacrificial woman tightly in its grip and tries to make its way toward the central fire pit; once there, it focuses all of its attention on getting the woman into the wicker man, a process which requires a total of 2 AP to lift her into the structure and 4 AP to bind her limbs (1 AP per limb). The Twin Peaks Mob may spend these AP across any number of turns, so long as it’s within 1 yard of the central fire pit.

If the woman ends up bound within the wicker man and it looks like the Fated have the upper hand, the Magister will exit the pavilion tent (if possible), spend 2 AP crafting and lighting a torch from a nearby campfire and will then make his way to the wicker man to set it ablaze. He only needs to take a 1 AP

Action while within 1 yard of the central fire pit to do so, and once alight, the flammable structure goes up quickly. The Fated have five rounds to save the screaming woman within before she is consumed by the flames. Freeing her from the wicker man requires a 2 AP Action and a successful TN 10 Labor Challenge.

As the woman burns, the Magister raises his arms to the sky and implores the Burning Man to accept the “willing sacrifice of his beloved children.”

If the Fated attack the Magister, he uses his Beseech the Burning Man’s Favor Action to self-immolate and then attacks the Fated with waves of blue flame. While aflame, the Magister can use his Cone of Blue Flames Action to light the wicker man on fire from anywhere within that Action’s range. Similarly, if the wicker man is caught within range of a blast from his Cone of Blue Flames (or any other blast damage that gives out the **Burning** Condition), the wicker man immediately catches flame.

## LEAVING THE COMPOUND

If the Fated disperse the Twin Peaks Mobs, the remaining noncombatant cultists cower in fear until the Magister is defeated or otherwise silenced, at which point they flee down the mountain in a disorganized mess of half-dressed confusion.

If the Fated rescued Adelita, they can take her to a doctor to get her stitched up or let her fend for herself; either way, she’s grateful for their assistance. She claims that she intends to write a scathing report of her experiences with the “murderous death cult” and promises to make the Fated into heroes, though they can attempt Bewitch, Convince, or Intimidate Challenges to persuade her to either wait to publish the story (TN 8) or to abandon it altogether (TN 14).

If the Fated abandon Adelita (or her replacement sacrifice) to her grisly fate, then they earn the appreciation of the Magister. He assures them that the Burning Man has a plan for them, as he does for all of his children, and then excuses himself to tend to the Chosen One’s preparations. That night, the Fated (and everyone else in San Francisco) can see the distant shape of a burning wicker man on the top of the peak, a counterpart to the flames of the Burning Man overhead.

If the Fated rescued Alejandra Aquino from the cult, then her brother Ramiro is grateful for their assistance and promises to make it up to them. He asks where they are staying in San Francisco, and if they do not have a destination in mind, offers to get them free first class rooms at the luxurious Palace Hotel, where he works as a bellboy. He will prove to be a valuable ally in Act II.

If the Fated left Alejandra to her fate and left enough of the cult intact to defend her, then Ramiro attempts to rescue her after the Fated leave and is captured and burned to death by the cult.

## OFFICIAL REPORTS

Inspector Flores will be very interested in hearing about the true danger of the Twin Peaks Cult, especially if they’re kidnapping people. If the Fated mention opium, he sighs and mentions that they probably got it in Chinatown, which is, in his opinion, little more than one giant opium den.

Otherwise, he promises to send officers up the hills to arrest the remaining Twin Peaks Cultists in the morning. He says that tomorrow will likely be a long day of picking people out of a lineup, and if they did not get a free room from Ramiro Aquino, he says that the Mexican government has arranged for them to stay at the Palace Hotel. “It’s a very nice hotel,” he explains, a bit jealously. “The rooms are standard, but even a standard room at the Palace is like a king’s room elsewhere.”

Unfortunately, Flores’ planned raid will be canceled due to circumstances beyond his control, forcing the police to focus on more important matters.

## MEDICAL ATTENTION

If the Fated are injured following their confrontation with the cult, Flores sends for the best Mexican doctor they can find to treat them. This ends up being Pedro Vargas, a doctor in his late 20s who shows up later in Act III, and possibly in Act II. Vargas is able to patch up any injured Fated (healing 2 damage via first aid), and if any of them are burned, he’ll wrap the wounds to help reduce the risk of infection and tell them to return in two days for a check-up.

# ACT II

The second Act of this adventure begins with the Great San Francisco Earthquake of 1906. The city is completely devastated by the resulting earthquake, and the Fated are right in the middle of it. They have the opportunity to save some of the city's residents and solve some smaller problems caused by the quake. The earthquake wasn't entirely natural, however, and as the Act progresses, the Fated will encounter the Burning Man himself as well as a number of strange creatures drawn to Earth from Malifaux by the dimensional portals that open in his wake.

## ACT II, PROLOGUE: THE BIG ONE

This prologue assumes that the Fated are all staying at the Palace Hotel, one of the largest hotels in Mexican territory. It's 120 feet tall, with seven stories of white balconies overlooking an elegant carriage entrance. It features redwood-paneled hydraulic elevators, or "rising rooms" as they're called by the hotel, and each room has its own private bathroom as well as a call button to summon hotel staff. The Fated have the unfortunate honor of having rooms on the seventh floor.

If the Fated are staying somewhere else, the Prologue and Scene 1 of this adventure will likely need a bit of reworking, but so long as the Fated feel like they're at the epicenter of a natural disaster, it should preserve the feel of the adventure just fine.

Read the following text:



It's still dark outside when you're suddenly thrown from your bed to the floor. At first you suspect that someone has thrown you out of your bed, but as you begin to wake up, you realize that the entire room is still shaking. You can hear a rumbling sound that seems to come from everywhere all at once, and an alarm clock rattles off the nightstand and falls to the ground next to you, shattering the glass of its face. In the darkness, you can just barely make out that the hands show it to be 5:11 a.m.

Then, just as suddenly as it began, the shaking stops, leaving everything in an eerie silence.



The Fated have about twenty seconds or so to stand up, gather their wits, and perhaps wander out into the hallway to speak with their companions who choose to do the same. Unfortunately for the Fated, the shaking is just a foreshock, a smaller earthquake that takes place just before a much more devastating earthquake. Take note of any items the Fated grab during this twenty second period; when the floor collapses out from under them at the start of Scene 1, these will be the only items they have with them.

### VARIABLE LETHALITY

The escape from the Palace Hotel can be very dangerous! If you want to make things easier for the Fated, consider giving them rooms on the fourth or fifth floors, rather than the seventh floor.

## ACT II, SCENE I:

### THE COLLAPSING PALACE

At 5:12 in the morning, a devastating earthquake strikes San Francisco, shattering the city and igniting fires that will, together, result in roughly 80% of the city being destroyed. More relevant to the Fated's immediate concerns, however, is the collapse of the Palace Hotel around them... if they want to survive, they'll have to move fast!

Read the following text:



Just as you start to relax a little, the world turns upside down.

You're nearly thrown across the room as everything begins violently shaking, far worse than the earthquake a moment earlier. You can hear the complaining groan of the hotel around you, followed by a violent shudder and cracking below you. The floor beneath you suddenly falls away, and for the span of a single heartbeat, you hang suspended in the air before you slam into the floor below with a sickening crunch of bone that's more felt than heard.

The windows lining the wall behind you shatter inward as the wall deforms under the pressure of the collapsing roof, showering you with shards of jagged glass. Everything lurches to the side as the groans of the shifting hotel overpower the rumblings of the earth. As you scramble to cling to doorways, the floor tilts toward the shattered windows and the jagged glass teeth of their frames.

The shaking and rumbling end as quickly as they began, leaving the hotel listing toward the glass-lined windows at an awkward forty-five degree angle. Glancing outside, you can see other buildings in the distance crumbling into the cracked streets. The Palace Hotel groans ominously around you, as if tempted to follow their example.



The tilt of the windows gives the Fated a downward view of the street below; those looking out through the windows can see the cracked pavement of the streets. Beneath them, jets of flame shoot violently up from the ground (or more specifically, the ruptured gas lines beneath the street), turning the street into a hellish landscape of destruction and fire.

The Fated can hear groans and screams all around them as the other guests attempt to pull themselves or their own companions out from beneath fallen debris. As an added complication, since the earthquake struck in the early morning, the Fated are likely wearing little more than their bedclothes and are now a floor below their rooms, so they're unlikely to have any of their equipment.



## RETRIEVING EQUIPMENT

The Fated will no doubt wish to recover at least some of their equipment, though doing so will take time that they might not have. The earthquake has partially collapsed the hotel and scattered everything in every direction. The early morning darkness and the terrifying groaning of the hotel as it threatens to collapse makes for a tense search. This is handled by an Ongoing Challenge:

### LET'S FIND OUR STUFF

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Athletics, Centering, Labor, Notice
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 10
- **DURATION:** 1 minute
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** \*
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

At the end of every Duration, a character may find one item belonging to themselves or another member of the group for each success. For the purposes of this Ongoing Challenge, each set of clothing owned by the character counts as a single item. If the characters have a light source - such as a lantern, a lighter, or even a globe of magical light - they gain a **+** to their duels made as part of this Ongoing Challenge.

If the Fated achieve a catastrophic failure, the hotel shifts slightly as the roof begins to collapse into their former rooms; every character participating in the Ongoing Challenge suffers 1/2/3 damage from falling debris, and everyone is forced to evacuate as the ceiling collapses, burying their remaining equipment beneath the resulting rubble; such items are gone forever, either destroyed by the hotel's forthcoming flames and subsequent collapse or merely lost amidst the debris.

For every full five minutes that the Fated spend on this Ongoing Challenge, they automatically accumulate one Margin of Failure on the Escape! Ongoing Challenge (pg. 29). When this happens, describe the hotel groaning and shifting around them, the distant sounds of another wing of the hotel collapsing in on itself, and the gradual accumulation of smoke from a fire somewhere below them.



With the Palace Hotel collapsing around them, the Fated's primary goal should be escaping to safety.

The most obvious escape route involves lowering a rope out of the broken windows, but this relies upon the Fated having a rope (which will likely have to be retrieved via the Let's Find Our Stuff Ongoing Challenge).

The ruptured gas lines and the flames jetting out from the broken streets are also a serious impediment; any characters attempting to lower themselves to the ground must make TN 14 Athletics Challenges to pull themselves to one side or the other along the side of the crumbling building so that they can descend to part of the street that isn't on fire. On a failure, the character makes no progress but can attempt the Challenge again. If the character achieves a Margin of Failure, however, the rope catches on a shard of sharp glass in the broken window or a bit of jagged metal and breaks beneath her weight, sending her plummeting into the flames below. The character falls from 60 feet above the ground and suffers 10/12/14 damage. To make matters worse, she gains the **Burning +8** Condition as she lands amidst the roaring flames.

Each Athletics Challenge to takes 1 minute. For every full five minutes the Fated spend on this, they automatically accumulate one Margin of Failure on the Escape! Ongoing Challenge (pg. 29). If a character in the hotel helps lower a character on the rope to the ground, that character gains a **+** to their Athletics Challenge.

Alternatively, a character with access to the Teleport Magia can attempt to teleport down to the street, but they will have to have a range of at least 35 yards to reach safety past the flames.

## THE COLLAPSING HOTEL

The Fated can also attempt to navigate the shattered corridors of the Palace Hotel in an attempt to reach the ground floor before the structure completely collapses on top of them. Even if some of the Fated attempt to escape via rope or some other means, it's important to track how much time passes; the Palace Hotel is doomed, and if the Fated linger for too long, they run the risk of being buried along with dozens of other guests.

Escaping the Palace Hotel is handled by an Ongoing Challenge:

### ESCAPE!

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Acrobatics, Athletics, Engineering, Labor, Navigation
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 10
- **DURATION:** 5 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 3 per Fated
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 1 per Fated

Every character present must participate in this Ongoing Challenge.

During this Challenge, the Fated can use Acrobatics or Athletics to navigate the debris quickly, Engineering to figure out which walls they can knock down to get past blocked corridors, Labor to destroy walls or lift fallen debris so that other characters can crawl past, and Navigation to find the right way to go. As the Ongoing Challenge progresses, the Fated will find stairs leading downward, only to find them blocked and have to find another way around, which often means crisscrossing the various floors from one stairwell to the next.

The exact floor that the Fated are on at any given moment isn't especially important; just make sure that they make progress downward proportional to the number of successes they have achieved compared to those remaining.

After each Duration, one of the following Escape Events occurs. These are primarily intended to add drama to the scene and make the Fated's escape feel more meaningful.

### RAMIRO'S ASSISTANCE

If the Fated rescued Alejandra Aquino from the cult in Act I, then her brother Ramiro shows up to help the Fated as they make their way through the collapsing hotel. As a bonus Escape Event, the Fated are forced to break through a wall, only to find a surprised Ramiro on the other side. He's wearing his hotel uniform and wielding a sledge hammer, and there's a series of open walls behind them. He motions for the Fated to hurry, explaining all the way how he rushed to save them the moment the second earthquake ended.

Ramiro's clear path gives the Fated a one free success on the Escape! Ongoing Challenge.

### ESCAPE EVENTS (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER):

- **Trapped Cat:** The Fated catch sight of two of their fellow guests trying to escape the hotel: a young woman in a nightgown and an older man wearing a bellhop's uniform. The bellhop has his hand around the woman's waist and is forcing her to safety as she tries to rush back into her collapsing room. She catches sight of the Fated and cries out, "Please... please help my cat!" before the ceiling collapses between them in a loud crash, sending up a plume of dust as the woman wails in fear and presumed loss.

The Fated are cut off from the woman and the bellhop, but they can brave her collapsing room and find the cat, which is huddled in fear beneath the collapsed floor of the room above. If they choose to do so, a TN 8 Animal Husbandry Challenge coaxes the cat out of hiding and to safety, but the Fated carrying the terrified animal suffers a -1 to her final duel totals due to its panicking and occasional clawing as it tries to escape.

- **Roasting Pit:** The Fated come across David Rosin, a man in pajamas, who is laying down next to a hole in the floor and trying to reach down to his ten-year-old son Colin, who fell through the hole to the floor below. The fall broke his leg, making it difficult for the boy to stand, and worse yet, the flames are closing in on him; he doesn't have much time.

David pleads for the Fated to help him, and a TN 10 Labor Challenge (with a **+** if the Fated have a rope) allows them to climb down and lift the kid up to his grateful father. On a failure, the Fated can try again by voluntarily gaining a Margin of Failure on the Ongoing Challenge. If they choose not to do so, they must abandon the man and his son as they hurry toward safety. The Fatemaster is encouraged to allow the players to come up with other creative rescue solutions (such as teleporting the boy to safety). If saved, David and his son follow the Fated the rest of the way out of the hotel.

- **Tipping Point:** The corridor the Fated are passing through is slanted to one side at a sharp angle and open to the early morning sky; the rooms lining that wall have collapsed away into a heap of jagged wooden beams and twisted metal far below. As the Fated walk down the corridor, the damaged support beams beneath them give way, turning the slanted floor they're walking across into more of a slanted wall.

The Fated must make TN 8 Acrobatics Challenges to grab onto something stable (like door knobs or gas light fixtures) and keep from sliding down the sudden slope. Those who fail can attempt a TN 8 Athletics Challenge to grab onto the jagged edge of the floor as they go over, leaving them dangling above the jagged debris below; once they catch their breath, they can attempt another TN 8 Athletics Challenge to pull themselves up and climb back to relative safety.

If a character fails this Challenge, they can try again, but if they achieve a Margin of Failure (or fail the initial Athletics Challenge to grab onto the edge), then they go careening off the edge of the building and into the debris below, suffering 3/5/7 damage, +2 damage for every floor the character was on above the first.

- **Heavy Smoke:** Something is on fire somewhere in the hotel, and it's filling the building with clouds of thick, black smoke. Living characters must make TN 8 Toughness Challenges. Those who fail suffer 1 damage and gain the following Condition until they leave the hotel: "**Choking on Smoke +1:** At the end of each Duration, this character must attempt a Toughness Challenge at TN 8 + the value of this Condition. On a failure, this character suffers damage equal to the value of this Condition, then increases the value of this Condition by +1." Characters should make this Toughness Challenge before resolving the Escape Event for that Duration.

- **Elevator to Hell:** The stairs have collapsed, leaving the Fated stranded, and the only way down is in one of the hotel's elevators (or "rising rooms"), which is stopped about a foot and a half above the ground, leaving the elevator shaft exposed beneath it as smoke curls upwards from the darkness. The Fated have can either ride the elevator down or try to slip beneath it and climb down the elevator shaft by hand. If they climb down, each character has to make a TN 12 Athletics Challenge (with a **+** if the Fated have a rope). On a success, they make it down to the ground floor safely. On a failure, the character makes no progress and can try again. If a character achieves a Margin of Failure, however, they make it to the ground floor far faster than they had intended and suffer 2/4/6 damage, +2 damage for every floor the character was on above the first.

If the characters think to check the elevator before climbing into it, a TN 12 Engineering Challenge reveals that its safety brake has been damaged by the earthquake. It's fortunately an easy fix, and a TN 8 Artefacting Challenge is enough to jury-rig the brake. When activated, the elevator works fine for one floor... at which point the heat-weakened cables snap and send the characters into free fall. If the safety brake was repaired, it catches the falling elevator, jarring everyone but leaving them unharmed and two floors lower. If the safety brake wasn't fixed, however, then there's a loud sound of screeching metal as the elevator car falls, picking up speed before it crashes into the ground, dealing 3/5/7 damage to everyone in the elevator, +2 damage for every floor the characters were on above the second when they activated the elevator.



• **Burning Wallpaper:** As the Fated are moving down a smoke-choked hallway, they come to part of the floor that has collapsed, revealing flames below them. The Fated can maneuver around the hole without much trouble, but once they're past, the flames ignite the (highly flammable) glue that is holding the wallpaper to the wall. Flames race past the Fated as the wallpaper goes up, and the temperature spikes as first one wall and then the next burst into flame.

The characters must make a TN 8 Athletics Challenge to hurry out of the inferno and into the next hallway, where the flames haven't yet caught. Those who fail gain **Burning +2** (and thus, suffer 2 damage if they don't have any way to remove the Condition before it damages them).

If the characters suffer a catastrophic failure on the Ongoing Challenge, the Palace Hotel collapses around them... which isn't a good thing by any stretch of the imagination. The characters suffer 9/10/11 damage and get to spend the next six hours pinned beneath rubble and debris, breathing smoke-filled air and hearing the wheezing breaths of those around them slowly give out as other guests succumb to their wounds and pass away. Rescue workers eventually find the Fated a little bit before noon.



Once the Fated make it outside, they are safe. If the hotel is still standing, it releases one final groan of protest and collapses forward, sending up a massive cloud of dust that covers everything in the surrounding blocks with grime and ash. Once the building has settled, read the text in the following column.



As the dust settles, you finally have a moment to catch your breath and look around the surrounding neighborhood. Few buildings are as badly damaged as the Palace Hotel was, but the paved streets are cracked and uneven, and flames roar upwards from many of the cracks, no doubt fueled by ruptured gas lines. People are standing outside in their nightclothes, huddled together in small groups in the morning darkness, but here and there you can see loners, their horrified or frightened faces illuminated by the sinister glow of the raging fires.

Farther down the street, a police officer is organizing a bucket brigade to start dealing with some of the larger fires. The traumatized citizens are following his orders without protest, and many seem to be throwing themselves into their work with everything they have, no doubt seeking some way to regain some measure of control over their lives and city.



The Fated can join the bucket brigade if they wish. It's a fairly straightforward process, and while the effects don't have a significant impact upon the condition of the city, every little bit helps.

Eventually, one of the police officers will take notice of the Fated - either as they're standing on the street, helping with the bucket brigade, or pulled out from under the rubble - and recognize them as the agents of the Guild (or other organization). The officer takes the opportunity to let the brave mask he's wearing crack, becoming grateful that someone he knew survived the earthquake.

The officer asks the Fated to travel to the police station and inform Flores or whoever else is there about the collapse of the Palace Hotel; they'll need as many people as they can get to help find survivors, and part of that is letting the police know about the collapse.

## EARTHQUAKES ARE DANGEROUS!

Given all the horrible ways that a character might perish in the collapse of the hotel, it's not entirely unlikely that one or more characters might meet their final end beneath the ruins of the Palace Hotel. If you wish to offer your players an option to continue playing their characters, however, there are a few options that are available.

If you're using *Into the Steam*, the Fated character may use this opportunity to take the Augmented Pursuit at the next opportunity. The character will likely be unconscious (or at the very least, confined to a bed) for the rest of this Act as Coyotl Flores or Angela Guerrero make arrangements to get the Fated to the best Mexican doctor they can find (which is to say, they send police officers or soldiers, as appropriate, to find Pedro Vargas, a doctor in his late 20s who shows up later in Act III).

This introduces the Fated to Vargas a bit sooner than usual but also gives them a personal connection to the man that saved their friend's life after hours of surgery. Once the operation is done, Vargas informs the others that he had to make some quick decisions and replace some parts to save the injured character's life, but that they should pull through. He then returns home and is promptly attacked by the Child of Cihuacoatl that escapes Chinatown in Scene 4 of this Act. See pg. 40 for more details.

Alternatively, if you're using *Under Quarantine*, the Fated character might choose to take the Revenant Advanced Pursuit. This will result in the character returning to 'life' as an undead creature; a rare event on Earth, but one made possible by the proximity of the Burning Man. If this occurs, the character immediately gains the first rank of the Revenant Advanced Pursuit (and with it, the Spirit of the Departed Talent), but does not advance in her current Pursuit at the end of the session.

## ACT II, SCENE 2:

### THE WORSE IT GETS...

When the Fated return to the police station, they find it much different than the day before. Read the following text:



As you approach the police station, you can see the devastating effects the earthquake has had even here. The tall gables that originally rose above the roof are now shattered pieces of brick and plaster that litter the ground in front of the police station's entrance. Most of the windows are broken, and the bars over them are bent.

Despite the damage, however, the police station seems to have weathered the earthquake reasonably well, unlike the rest of the city. Paperwork is scattered across the floor and most of the desks are empty, and the few officers that you do see hurrying out of the building barely even spare a glance as they step past you. In the back of the building, you can see the glow of a lantern providing light for the otherwise dark office.



Flores is in his office, but in the confusion of the earthquake and the subsequent rescue efforts, he's all but forgotten about the Burning Man. Read the text on the following page.



The glow of a lantern casts Flores' office into stark shadows, and in them, you can see the man's haggard expression as he looks at the city map, which has been pinned to his wall. There are pen marks all over it noting which buildings have collapsed and where the current fires are, and beside them, pinned pieces of paper list the estimated death totals thus far.

There's a moment of confusion as he notices you, then recognition lights up his eyes. "You... right, the Burning Man." He rubs both hands over his face. "*Madre de dios...*"

Sighing, he lowers his hands and looks back at the map. "I guess it's a good thing you're here. As far as I'm concerned, you're in full command of the Burning Man investigation at this point. I don't know if he caused this... disaster, but I don't have time to deal with anything other than the earthquake. Half the city is on fire, and we can't find the fire chief anywhere. We have buildings collapsed or collapsing all across town, looting... you name it, it's happening somewhere in the city."



If the Fated tell Flores about the collapse of the Palace Hotel, he swears loudly and makes a mark on his map near the hotel's position. If they tell him that they were inside it when it collapsed, he stares at them in wide-eyed surprise for a moment, lights a cigarette, and then offers the rest of the pack to the Fated, claiming that they "probably need one after that."

If the Fated let Flores know about any injuries, he'll tell them to stay put while he fetches the police station's first aid kit... which mostly consists of a bottle of tequila, a needle and thread, and some bandages. He tells them to sit down on his desk so that he can stitch them up - he claims to have had some training as a medic in the army - and proceeds to do so if they don't protest. His medical attentions heal 2 damage on each character he stitches up... but it's not a painless procedure by any means, and the resulting scars from his stitching won't be very pretty.

## NEW LEADS

Once Flores is confident that the Fated are more or less in one piece (or if they just neglect to mention any injuries they might have), there's a shout from the police station's entrance.

The owner of the voice is none other than Adelita Ortega. If Adelita was killed in Act I, then in her place is Aracelis Fierro, another reporter at the *Diario de San Francisco* who introduces herself when she meets the Fated. Read the following text, swapping Adelita out for Aracelis if appropriate:



"Hey!" As she notices you, Adelita hurries to join you in Flores' office.

The investigator groans, pulls out a cigarette, and lights one as he sees her. "I don't have time for any questions, *señorita*. You can quote me on that."

The reporter's eyebrows raise in feigned surprise. "Are you sure? Cause I've got a lead on yesterday's museum heist." Digging into her pocket, she proudly pulls out a small, black... rock. Or at least, that's what you mistake it for at first. It's about as long as her palm, and very shiny. When you take a closer look, you can see that it has facets that suggest carving and a long shape that tapers to a point.

Flores casts a glare at the woman. "There are more important things for use to worry about at the moment, *señorita*."

She just gives him a determined glare. "I can't stop an earthquake or put out fires," she says, her voice steely. "But I can sure as hell track down some thieves while the *policía* try to save the city. So long as I'm working, I'm not thinking about the earthquake or how many of my friends lived through it." Her words seem to catch Flores off guard, and after a moment, he just nods in silent understanding.



A TN 6 Blacksmithing, History, or Melee + Intellect Challenge reveals that the rock is a spear tip of the sort that was stolen from the museum. If the Fated don't seem to recognize it, however, Adelita quickly explains what it is, though she seems a bit annoyed that they spoiled her dramatic reveal.

Adelita explains that she overheard some people talking about "weird people in costumes" down at the beach as she was walking home last night, and on a hunch, she decided to investigate. She found the spear tip on the north shore near the docks, along with a few eagle feathers.

Read the following text as Flores takes note of the conversation again:



Flores frowns as he looks the reporter over. "How did you know that spear tips were stolen from the museum?"

Adelita's eyes widen slightly, but she just shrugs her shoulders in a nonchalant way. "Oh, you know... word on the street."

He reaches up and pinches the bridge of his nose. "Are you bribing my officers again?" As she starts to make an excuse, Flores holds up his hand. "No, not today. I can't deal with this." His eyes drift toward the front of the building as another police officer appears, panting heavily. "What is it, Ramirez?"

The officer steadies himself against the wall as he tries to catch his breath. "It's the... Burning Man. It's coming down... over Chinatown. Like he's finally landing."

Flores groans. "Today of all days..."



Flores can't leave to investigate either the thieves on the north shore or the Burning Man's descent; he's too busy coordinating the rescue attempts all across the northeastern part of the city. Similarly, he doesn't have any officers to spare that can investigate either incident, as they're all dealing with the earthquake's aftermath.

He suggests that the Fated should get to Chinatown as quickly as possible, if only to finally learn what the Burning Man wants from the city. If he caused the earthquake, Flores points out, then he's likely extremely dangerous and has to be dealt with as quickly as possible. He's not sure whether or not San Francisco can still recover from the earthquake's aftermath, but a second quake would surely seal the city's doom.

Adelita seems a bit disappointed to have her news trumped by the Burning Man, but she doesn't disagree with Flores' assessment. She offers to look around the northern shore for clues and says that she'll start interviewing people in the hopes that someone knows something.

If the Fated are concerned about weaponry, he can offer them Collier Navy pistols and four dozen rounds of ammunition. He notes that the weapons may not do much against the Burning Man, but that it's better to be safe than sorry.

WEAPON (PISTOLS)	RANGE	DAMAGE
Collier Navy	12	2/3/4
<b>Special:</b> Capacity 6, Reload 2 AP.		

Once the Fated are ready to head out, Flores points out how they can get to Chinatown on his wall map. It's only a ten minute walk, and if the Fated hurry, they can make it in five.

## ACT II, SCENE 3:

### THE PROPHET OF DOOM

As the Fated make their way to Chinatown, they come across a crazed prophet that is preaching doom to a crowd of nervous-looking people. Read the following text:



As you hurry toward Chinatown, you catch sight of an unusual gathering of people in the street. An old man in ragged clothing is standing atop a literal soapbox and shouting at the crowd in a combination of Spanish and English.

“This is the End, good people!” The man points toward the sky over Chinatown, where the Burning Man can be seen descending from the sky. “The flames in the sky aren’t enough! Now, the flames have come to Earth and begun to consume this city in all its wickedness! Soon the flames will consume all the Earth!”

He looks across the crowd, his eyes narrowing. “And it is a doom that was brought to us, good people. Brought to us from across the ocean, from the corrupt lands of the Three Kingdoms like a poisoned acorn. Well, *Hermanos*, that acorn has sprouted into a tree, and that tree has taken root in Mexico and leached the goodness from her soil!” The crowd starts murmuring their agreement with the man. “There is only one way to free ourselves!” the man continues. “We must cut this tree down, before its branches can fuel the flames! The Burning Man is a sign! A sign of what must be done to the Chinaman to earn our freedom!”



The man continues to rile the crowd up with shouts of “Salvation!” and “Salvation through flame!” If the Fated do not immediately intervene, the crowd starts to gather up rocks and other pieces of wood as their fear finds an outlet in the man’s violent words.

The man is Nathan Rhodes, an American banker who was in town to discuss opening a new branch of the East Pacific Savings and Loan in San Francisco. After the earthquake hit, Nathan crawled his way out from under the rubble of the Palace Hotel, where his wife and son had perished, and staggered out into the streets. Reeling from the shock of such sudden disaster and loss, he had a revelation about the true reason the Burning Man had visited San Francisco and committed every last scrap of his shattered life toward warning the less fortunate of the coming danger.

Nathan is immune to any attempts to convince him to stop his preaching, but the Fated can convince the crowd that he’s crazy and should be ignored with a TN 12 Leadership Challenge. Alternatively, the Fated can try to scare the crowd away with a TN 12 Intimidate Challenge, which sends them scattering to the wind.

If the Fated attempt to start a fight with Nathan, he grabs a bottle from the street, shatters it on the curb, and lunges at them with the intention of opening up their neck. He has the stats of a Broken (pg. 95).

If Nathan is subdued, the Fated can either drag him back to the police station or convince the bystanders to fetch a police officer without too much trouble. If they ignore him and leave him be, however, they encounter a grisly scene when they return from Chinatown. See “The Foreign Threat” on page 41.

## ACT II, SCENE 4:

### CHINATOWN

The district known as Chinatown is a relatively small, rectangular area near the northeast part of the city. Even before the earthquake, Chinatown was little more than a ramshackle slum known for its insular immigrants, densely packed population, and prolific opium dens. The residents of Chinatown - which actually include a small number of Japanese and Vietnamese among their number - are primarily men, as the laws of the city prevent immigrants from bringing members of their family with them, a deliberate and blatant attempt to limit the number of Three Kingdoms citizens that come to their shores.

Racial tensions between the residents of Chinatown and the rest of the city are high, and the Hispanic city council and police have frequently found itself stopped at the district's borders by rifle-wielding Chinese men who claim that they police their own kind. In a way, Chinatown is almost like its own city, nestled within the borders of San Francisco.

The earthquake has devastated Chinatown. The cramped buildings and dense population were a disaster waiting to happen, and hundreds of immigrants died or were injured as the district more or less came tumbling down around them. The fires that plague the rest of the city rage uncontrolled within Chinatown, ignored by the police and other citizens, most of whom would be quite pleased to see the district burnt to ash in order to make way for something more pleasant.

When the Fated arrive in the district, read the following text:



Chinatown isn't a particularly large district, but the devastation here is of a magnitude far greater than what you've seen elsewhere in the city. The streets are sheered in half and pressed up against each other, leaving pavement jutting up from the ground like jagged teeth, and most of the buildings seem to have collapsed down into the street, forcing you to wind your way carefully through the debris and crushed human corpses. Smoke hangs heavy over the entire district, but mixed in with the acrid smell of burning wood is the sweeter, floral scent of opium.

Shining like a burning orange star overhead is the flaming, humanoid form of the Burning Man. Its arms are held out to either side of it, and as it slowly descends from the sky a few blocks ahead of you, you catch a glimpse of a face that is frozen in a silent, unending scream. Then it's out of sight, obscured by fallen buildings and clouds of black smoke... which is when the screaming begins.



Reaching the Burning Man is difficult, primarily on account of the fallen buildings between the Fated and it. Navigating these buildings is handled with an Ongoing Challenge, found on the next page.



### NAVIGATING THE RUINS OF CHINATOWN

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Acrobatics, Athletics, Labor
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 9
- **DURATION:** 1 minute
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 8
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 3

Every character present must participate in this Ongoing Challenge.

If any of the characters have access to the Teleport Magia, that character may use her Sorcery Skill in this Ongoing Challenge (with a  $\square$  modifier, per the rules for using magic on Earth), just as if it were on the list of Allowed Skills.

If the Fated succeed at this Ongoing Challenge, they successfully make their way through the ruins of Chinatown to reach the Burning Man; see The Burning Man on page 39 for more details.

If the Fated achieve a catastrophic failure, they hear a deep groan from one of the four-story buildings around them, followed by the crack of wooden beams as it finally surrenders to the damage it suffered in the earthquake and collapses... right onto the Fated. Each character may attempt a TN 12 Evade Challenge to escape the falling building. Those who fail suffer 4/7/10 damage as the building slams down on top of them, burying them in rubble. Once the characters beneath the building have been rescued from the rubble, the Fated can struggle the rest of the way through Chinatown to reach the Burning Man; see The Burning Man on page 39 for more details.

In order to provide a bit of flavor to this scene, a list of Obstacles has been given on the next page. It is recommended that each Obstacle is described prior to the characters making any Skill Challenges during that Duration, as some of the Obstacles allow characters to use specific Skills for that Duration or provide other modifiers to their duels.

## OBSTACLES (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER)

- The Fated must navigate a building that has collapsed on its side, crawling through weirdly positioned rooms like some sort of macabre funhouse. Chinese men moan quietly for assistance from beneath fallen beams and rubble. (The Fated can use the Doctor Skill during this Duration.)
- A collapsed wooden building serves as a makeshift ramp over the top of a tall pile of rubble, but it's unfortunately caught fire, forcing the Fated to brave the flames in order to climb up the ramp and over the obstacle. (The Fated can use the Toughness Skill during this Duration; those who fail their Skill Challenge this Duration gain the **Burning +2** Condition, and thus take 2 damage if they don't have some way to remove the Condition before it burns them.)
- As the Fated pass a solid piece of collapsed masonry, the bricks shimmer briefly and then fall away into a black void about two feet in diameter. A heartbeat later, slimy purple tentacles reach out through the portal, grabbing onto limbs as they try to pull their prey into the void. (The Fated can use any Close Combat Skill during this Duration; those who fail their Skill Challenge this Duration suffer a Severe Critical Effect as one of their limbs is pulled through the portal and fed upon by the entity on the other side. The portals close before the rest of it can force its way through, severing the tentacles and leaving them flopping on the ground back on Earth.)
- The Fated pass the burning remains of an opium den. (The Fated can use the Carouse Skill during this Duration; those who fail their Skill Challenge this Duration breathe too deeply of the scented smoke and are **Dazed** until the end of this Scene.)
- A group of four singed and soot-stained Chinese men are trying to organize a bucket brigade to put out the flames that have trapped a man on a third-story balcony. They motion to the Fated to come help them, as it's nearly a block between the water pump and the burning building, and they are growing fatigued. (The Fated can help, but if they do so, they do not make any Challenges this Duration and instead achieve two Margins of Failure for the lost time.)
- A wooden wall next to one of the Fated shimmers and then falls away, revealing a wall of water. A school of bright-colored, toothed fish like nothing the Fated have ever seen swim past them, followed by a human-sized fish-creature that snatches one of the toothed fish up in its fanged jaws. A moment later, the wall explodes outward in a wave of water, knocking the Fated to the ground before the portal shimmers closed. This leaves a flopping, snapping carpet of carnivorous fish around the Fated. The fish are slowly suffocating to death on dry land, but they're more than willing to spend their last few moments of life biting at the feet of anyone that gets near them. (The Fated can use the Evade Skill during this Duration; those who fail their Skill Challenge this Duration lose a chunk of their foot (and possibly a few toes) to a biting fish, suffer 1 damage in the process, and gain the following Critical Effect until the damage is healed: "**Injured Feet:** This character cannot declare Charge Actions or declare more than one Walk Action per turn.")
- The Fated hear a pounding from behind a floor that now serves as a wall. A man shouts at them in Chinese, pleading for help; even if they don't speak the language, the intent is clear. (The man was trapped in his falling apartment and can't get out. If the Fated stop to help him, they can only use Labor Challenges this Duration.)
- As the Fated are climbing over a pile of rubble, it shifts underfoot! (The Fated can use the Evade Skill during this Duration; those who fail their Skill Challenge this Duration fall through the rubble and onto broken wooden beams, suffering 1/2/5 damage. Any Fated who suffer Severe damage are impaled upon a jagged wooden beam and suffer a Severe Critical Effect in addition to the damage.)



## THE BURNING MAN

Once the Fated have succeeded in navigating their way through the ruins of Chinatown, they will finally be able to confront the Burning Man. Read the following text:



Half a block ahead of you, the intimidating figure of the Burning Man floats five feet above the street, moving at a snail's pace. The red-orange flames surrounding it obscure its features, leaving only a vague impression of a mouth opened in a silent scream. Despite the cries of fear in many different eastern languages from the survivors of the earthquake, it doesn't seem to acknowledge their presence. Its head doesn't turn, and while its limbs twitch and move, they do so seemingly at random, as if it were little more than an automaton experiencing a bad glitch in its logic engine.

Inching further and further, it makes its way with almost painful slowness to the center of the street, trailing flames behind it as it leaves an inferno in its wake. For a moment, anticipation permeates the air, even silencing the terrified cries of the district's frightened residents.

Then the Burning Man's flames turn azure blue, and all hell breaks loose.

A shockwave of air slams into you, nearly knocking you off your feet. It's accompanied by a terrible sound that feels like glass shards grinding against themselves in your brain, a fingernails-on-glass scream that makes you wince in pain. All around you, you can see the scattered natives of the district grabbing their ears in a vain attempt to drown out the sound, until one of them picks up a shard of glass from a broken window and drives it into the face of the woman he had been standing next to, presumably his wife. Other scenes of carnage unfold around you, making the Burning Man an epicenter of violent madness.



The Fated are set upon by the nearby survivors of the district, all of whom have been lost in delusions of violence and insanity. The newly created Broken charge toward the Fated from all directions, armed with shards of glass and sharp rocks and intent on using them to cause as much mayhem as possible. There is one Broken per Fated (or two Broken per Fated for more experienced groups), and their stats can be found on page 95.

It's recommended that there be at least three or four 3-yard-wide patches of flaming debris, primarily located behind the Burning Man, relative to the Fated. These patches are Severe terrain, and any character entering them gains the **Burning +2** Condition.

The Burning Man takes no actions during the battle, instead floating in place, five feet off the ground, like a lantern of bright insanity. Any character that ends its turn within 3 of the Burning Man gains **Burning +2** from the intensity of the flames surrounding it.

If the Fated attempt to target the Burning Man with Actions, it has Defense 6, Willpower 6, and counts as a Tyrant with a Rank Value of 14, which sets its stats at Defense 6 (20) and Willpower 6 (20). If the Burning Man suffers any damage, it shoots into the sky like a blazing star.



At the start of the third round of combat, if the Burning Man is still present, it opens a portal to Malifaux. Read the following text:



The Burning Man twitches, and the ground beneath it falls away into a black, swirling void. You catch a glimpse of a rocky desert and a wave of intense heat washes over you, and then the portal explodes upward in a plume of yellow-brown sand and dust. The Burning Man shoots upward into the sky like a blazing star, and when the sand collapses back down to the ground like abrasive rain, there are three large, serpentine creatures lying on the ground where the portal had been a moment earlier.

Gradually, the serpentine creatures pull themselves upright, their reptilian eyes squinting as they look up at the sun in confusion. Forked tongues flicker from their mouths as they taste the foreign air, and as you watch them, you can't help but feel their confusion at being thrust into a strange new world.

A crazed Chinese man charges one of them, screaming as he holds a shard of glass above him in a bleeding hand, and the snake-creature hefts a sword forged of obsidian in its clawed hand and cuts the man in half. One of its companions hisses as it raises an obsidian sword of its own, while the third flicks its tail and darts into the ruins of a collapsed building, evidently choosing flight over fight.



The snake-creatures are Children of Cihuacoatl (pronounced "thE wO kO AH'd"). Two of them begin attacking the Broken around them, killing or incapacitating one Broken with each melee attack until they reach the Fated. They are merciless opponents and prey upon the weakest enemies they can find, hoping to cut them down quickly before moving on to more dangerous adversaries. Stats for the Children of Cihuacoatl can be found on page 96.



## THE FOREIGN THREAT

If the Fated ignored Nathan Rhodes' preaching on their way to Chinatown or failed to disperse the mob surrounding him, the Fated encounter a grisly scene on their way back to the police station.

Nathan Rhodes has worked the crowd into an anti-Chinese fury, and they've captured five Chinese immigrants and are preparing to burn them alive in a roaring bonfire. Rhodes is standing on an unstable platform above the flames, and as he reaches his hands up to the heavens, he calls out to the Burning Man, imploring it to watch as they sacrifice "the heathen foreigners that have so offended you."

Unless the Fated intervene, the crowd will toss the pleading Chinese men into the flames, where they burn to death in horrible agony. After the last one has died, Rhodes reaches up to the sky, calls out for the Burning Man to "accept his sacrifice in the name of Salvation" and then steps from the platform into the flames.

If the Fated intervene, there are ten Broken here that will fight against the Fated while the others scatter. They shout out in anger, demanding that the Fated let them "purify the corruption in their midst with flame" or to "finish the work that the Burning Man began" as they slash at them with jagged glass or metal shanks.

If all of the Broken are defeated, Rhodes leaps into the flames, calling out to the Burning Man and asking it to forgive the Fated even as he burns to death.

## THE AFTERMATH

Once the Fated have confronted the Burning Man, they will no doubt have more questions than answers, but at the very least, they've confirmed that it is a source of insanity and learned of its ability to create dimensional portals.

When they return to the police station, Flores asks for a report on how things went. He had heard from one of his officers that the Burning Man had shot up from Chinatown "like a falling star, but in reverse" and had been concerned for their safety.

After learning about the state of Chinatown, he shakes his head and looks upset. Flores explains that many people in the city want to run the immigrants out of Chinatown to claim its beautiful view over the bay... a view, he explains, that many believe should belong to private homes and hotels, rather than a slum.

In the end, however, it's just one more problem in the larger scope of things, and Flores can do little other than wish the Chinese the best of luck in dealing with the horrors the Burning Man has unleashed upon them. Still, it seems as if the Fated drove the Burning Man away; he no longer hovers in the skies over the city, which bodes well for the city's chances.

It's still early, but the Fated are probably beaten up and in need of some rest. Flores makes sure they sit down, have a cup of coffee, and take time to catch their breath. Adelita Ortega (or Aracelis Fierro, if Adelita has been killed) is still looking into the missing artifacts that were spotted earlier on the beach, and while Flores is not very concerned with the robbery at this point, the fact that it might have something to do with one of the Burning Man's cults makes him worried. He suggests that one of the cults might have done something to draw the Burning Man to San Francisco... which means that they might be able to draw it back.

Flores mentions that a lot of the displaced are congregating in Golden Gate Park, and he suggests that it might make a safer place for them to sleep than the Palace Hotel had been. The Mexican soldiers are handing out field tents and organizing the refugees with temporary latrines, bathhouses, and other sundries. He notes that it would also allow them to keep an eye out for cult behavior among the survivors.

# ACT III

In the wake of the earthquake, the worshipers of the Burning Man on Alcatraz Island have taken to kidnapping people from San Francisco. The Fated become involved in the investigation when they learn that Nenetl Flores, Coyotl Flores' niece, has been kidnapped.

In their search for the kidnapped girl, the Fated will learn that other people have been kidnapped as well. They may even have the opportunity to interrogate a wounded Alcatraz cultist, which should give them some insight as to just what the cult is planning on the fortified island.

By the end of this Act, the Fated should be able to realize that Nenetl Flores is likely being held at Alcatraz Citadel and that the cult that controls the island has sinister intentions that put San Francisco - and indeed, much of the world - in peril.



## ACT III, PROLOGUE: GOLDEN GATE PARK

The Fated likely spend the night in Golden Gate Park, where the Mexican military has begun to gather refugees and survivors into a crude tent city. Supplies are still limited, including tents, so roughly two-thirds of the tents are homemade from clothing, sheets, and other materials.

Read the following text:



You awaken the morning after the earthquake in much less of a panic than the day before. You can hear the cries of hungry children outside, and crawling out from your tent, you can see that a long line has already started to form in front of the distant soup kitchen. You can barely make out the form of Angela Guerrero near the soup kitchen, trying desperately to keep some semblance of order among the hungry refugees.

As you stretch your legs, you see a young boy moving through the crowds wearing a sandwich board. There are a variety of headlines painted onto it, and along the bottom is the name of a newspaper, *Diario de San Francisco*; apparently, they're doing what they can to keep people informed while circulation has been interrupted.

The boy is shouting the headlines out in both Spanish and English. "Violent earthquake shakes up San Francisco!" he cries. "Burning Man stops over Chinatown and chaos ensues! Cult activity on the rise with the appearance of the Burning Man! Even in the least affected areas, kidnappings and disappearances are the order of the day! Just a few pesos for all the details!" He stops near you and holds out a cup filled with pesos. "Want to know more about any of the headlines?"



The boy, Raul Gutiérrez, will explain the full story behind each of the headlines for only a few pesos (0.1 scrip is enough for all of the headlines). When the Fated ask about a specific headline, Raul closes his eyes and repeats back the memorized story. If Adelita Ortega died in Act I, replace all mention of her in these stories with Aracelis Fierro.

The headline summaries are on the following page.

## Headlines

- **The Earthquake:** “People are doing their best to rebuild what they can of their shattered lives after yesterday morning’s earthquake, despite the fires still ravaging the city. Our good police and firefighters are working with the military to halt the worst of them, but early reports suggest that insurance fraud may be to blame for some of the fires.”
- **Chinatown:** “Already devastated by the earthquake, the Burning Man added fuel to the fire by making its second full stop directly over the small neighborhood. While little is known about the consequences of the Burning Man’s stop over Alcatraz a week and a half ago, in Chinatown, madness and chaos followed in its wake. Reports of inhuman monsters appearing in the Burning Man’s wake are unconfirmed. The distraction of the earthquake has prevented order from being restored to the area, and city officials have suggested that the district may be beyond saving.”
- **Cults:** “While the cult at Twin Peaks and the dark rumors surrounding it have already become well known over the past week, rumors of new cults have begun to spread following the earthquake. Our top reporter, Adelita Ortega (or Aracelis Fierro, if Adelita was killed in Act I) is investigating a new lead connecting one of these cults to a break-in at the city’s museum the day before the earthquake. Could the cult be behind the recent kidnappings? Only time and our intrepid reporter will be able to tell!”
- **Disappearances:** “Multiple disappearances have occurred on the northeast end of the city. While these people were originally believed to have perished in the earthquake, our intrepid reporter, Adelita Ortega, has uncovered reports of strange individuals carrying unconscious victims to the beaches, only to disappear mysteriously into the fog. What sinister villainy could be behind such acts in an already hard-hit city? Human trafficking? Rising cult activity? The situation is currently under investigation, and the *Diario de San Francisco* will let you know more as it develops.”

Despite everything going on, the headlines and stories are clearly trying to play up the dramatic nature of what’s going on and sensationalize it as much as possible.

## ACT III, SCENE I:

### MISSING PERSONS

Once the Fated have braved the long lines to get some breakfast (or decided to skip it), a young police officer arrives to collect them. Read the following text:



A young man in a police uniform spots you and hurries up to you. He looks out of breath, like he ran all the way to find you. “I’m sorry to grab you so early, everyone, but *Investigador* Flores wishes to speak with you as soon as possible. It’s urgent.”



The officer has commandeered a horse-drawn street car, and once the Fated are ready, he hurries them back to it and instructs the driver to return them to the police station. The resulting ride is fast – some might say “break-neck” – and the Fated make it back to the station in record time.

When they arrive, the station is still largely empty, though there are more officers at their desks than the day before. Read the following text:



Flores almost seems to glare at you as you enter his office, as if you were a criminal the officer were bringing in instead of someone who was trying to help manage the chaos. He sighs, then, and grinds out his cigarette in a nearby ashtray that seems on the verge of spilling over.

“Sorry,” he says. “I’m on edge. That [Ortega or Fierro] woman went public with the information she learned about the cults instead of bringing it to us, which has just got people riled up and...”

*Continued on next page...*



Flores' voice trails off as he pulls out his pack of cigarettes and lights a new one. "Look, I'll be honest with you. My niece has been living with us ever since her mother got tossed into Alcatraz a few years ago. Her mother and I were close when we were younger, but then she went off and fought the government for the sake of the Nahuatl people, and ended up getting herself arrested, along with most of the other political dissidents."

The inspector takes a long pull from his cigarette as he waves the explanation away. "Doesn't matter, I guess. The important thing is, when I got home last night, she was gone. The nanny that I hired to watch her was dead, and there were signs of a struggle, and..." His expression cracks and turns desperate. "I'm still trying to deal with the earthquake here. I want nothing more than to drop everything and look for her, but I need to stay here and coordinate rescue efforts. I'm hoping that you will do me a personal favor and find my niece."



Flores gives them the address to his house. He notes that other than rushing to his niece's room, he didn't touch anything, so the crime scene is still secure. He left the nanny's body where he found it; there's just nowhere else to put it at the moment.

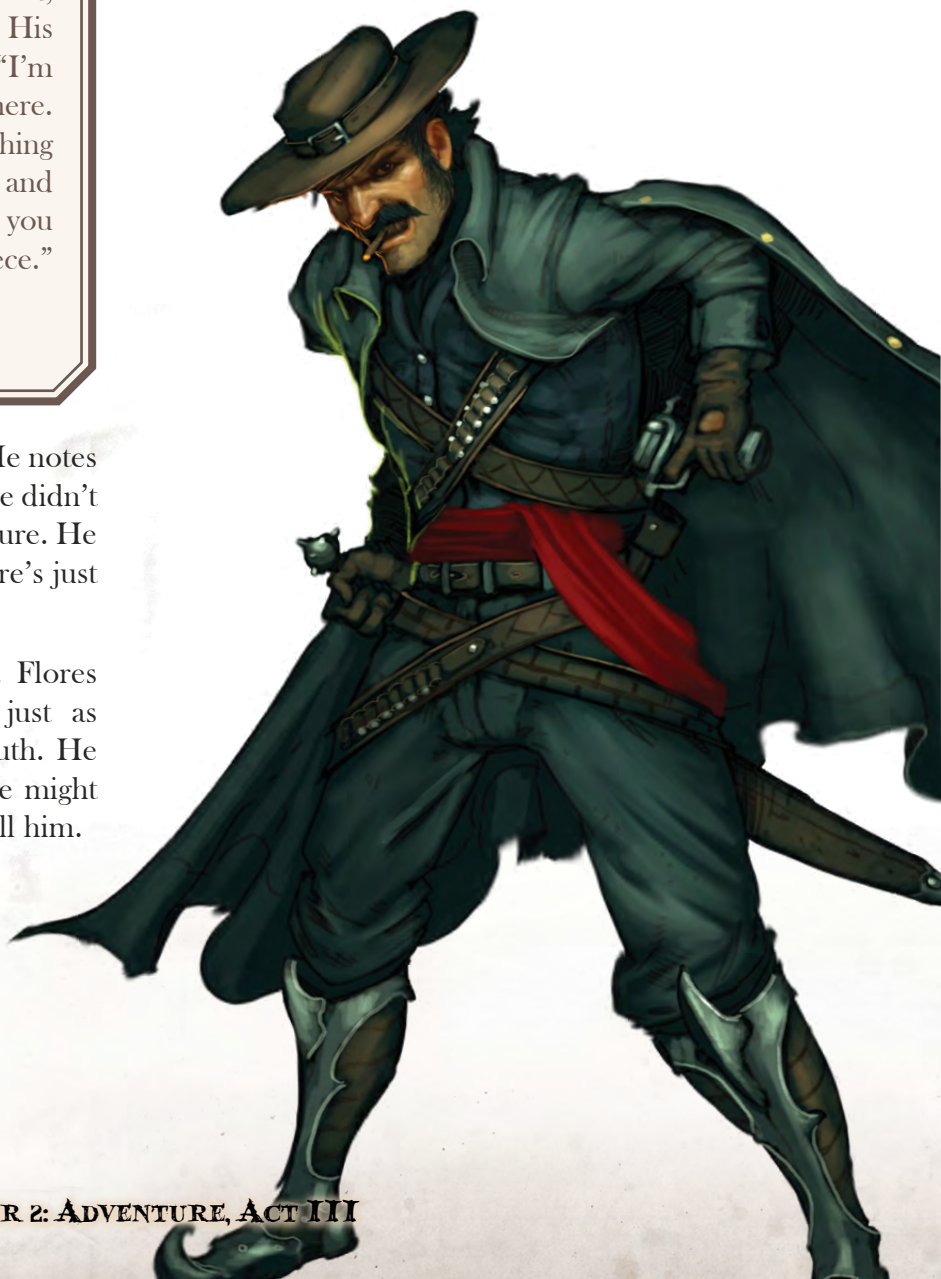
His niece, Nenetl Flores, is ten years old. Flores describes her as "a firecracker" that is just as stubborn and idealistic as he was in his youth. He doesn't know who her father is or where he might be, and his sister hasn't felt it necessary to tell him.

If the Fated don't think of it, the Inspector will mention that Adelita Ortega (or Aracelis Fierro, if Adelita was killed) seems to have evidence regarding kidnapers on the northern shore, which is in the vague vicinity of his home. She hasn't told him anything; he only learned about the kidnappings from a girl wearing a sandwich board on his way to the station this morning. Flores doesn't know where she lives, but he can give them the address for the *Diario de San Francisco* offices.

If the Fated choose to talk to Adelita (or Aracelis), see Scene 2: The Newspaper Office for more details.

If they decide to investigate Flores' home, that is handled in Scene 5: Missing Niece.

If the Fated head directly to the northern shore to look for the kidnapers, see Scene 6: The North Beach.



## ACT III, SCENE 2:

### THE NEWSPAPER OFFICE

The office of the *Diario de San Francisco* is only about ten minutes from the police station. When the Fated arrive, read the following text (and replace all references to Adelita Ortega with Aracelis Fierro, if Adelita was killed):



The two-story building housing the offices of the *Diario de San Francisco* seems to have survived the earthquake without too much damage. The ground floor contains the printing presses and is dark, but you can see movement in the windows of the upper floor.

The stairs creak and complain under your footsteps as you head up, but they don't show any signs of being ready to break or collapse. Soot stains the ceiling, and at the far end of the hall, you can see a few rooms that look to have been gutted by a fire.

The door of Adelita's office contains a window that's been half-shattered; you can see the broken pieces on the ground, carefully brushed to one side. Words clearly used to be printed on them, undoubtedly declaring Adelita's name. Through the empty pane, the reporter's pristine shirt, skirt, and jacket are a sharp contrast to the half-burnt office. There are seven other people in the room with her, all of them carefully painting sandwich boards with the same headlines you saw earlier this morning.



Adelita is happy to see the Fated and welcomes them into the office. She explains that they're making sandwich boards in an attempt to get the news out to the people; most of the paper burned up in the fire, but they've got plenty of wood to work with. The sandwich boards were her idea, and if questioned about them, she claims that "the citizens still need to know what's going on! The earthquake hasn't stopped that need."

If they are upset with her because she went public with her kidnapping story, she points out that she's a journalist, not a police officer. She's more than happy to work with the police, she claims, but she has an obligation to report the truth as she learns it.

If they mention the missing people, Adelita hops up and grabs her notebook. Read the following text:



"I spent most of yesterday talking with people on the northern shore. Fifteen people said that they saw strange men and women in feathered cloaks lurking along the beach, and two of those people saw them carrying bodies back with them."

She flips through her notebook, finally settling on two names. "Here we go. I have the names of two people who were spotted after the earthquake but later disappeared in the vicinity of the north beach. The first is Pedro Vargas, a doctor, and the second is Candelaria Naranja, a teenage girl." She turns the notebook and holds it out to you. "Take a look."



Adelita goes over her notes on each of the kidnapped people as the Fated look at the notebook.

- **Pedro Vargas:** "This Vargas is known for being a good doctor, though he doesn't seem to be very sociable. I couldn't find anyone that knew him socially. He's apparently one of the youngest graduates from his medical school, though, so there's that." She leans over a Fated's shoulder

and points down at the bottom of her notes. “Bit of a softie, too. He keeps some rescued cats and does volunteer work over at Alcatraz. Someone reported seeing a ‘snake monster’ lurking in the area... maybe it was one of those military guys in a snake costume?” She’s found his address, but when she went by his home last night, it was dark.

- **Candelaria Naranja:** “According to her parents, Candelaria is quite the social butterfly. She had a few lads that were trying to woo her, and she’s certainly pretty, so it’s no surprise why. Her father works as a sailor on freighters, so her family doesn’t have much money. I got the impression she was trying to marry up.” She shrugs her shoulders, evidently not passing judgment on the idea. “Her parents are convinced that she ran off with one of the boys that liked to climb the fire escape and try to talk to her in the middle of the night, but it seems strange that she’d run off the day after an earthquake, when most people just want to hug their families tight.” Candelaria’s address is scrawled at the bottom of the page.

Adelita hasn’t heard about the kidnapping of Flores’ niece, but if the Fated mention it, she covers her mouth in surprise. “Oh, that poor girl,” she says. “It’s proof that something strange is going on, though, don’t you think? Someone’s snatching people up... but why?”

If the Fated are talking with Adelita (but not Aracelis), they can attempt TN 12 Scrutiny Challenges. On a success, the Fated notice that Adelita seems to be taking the news of Nenetl Flores’ kidnapping particularly hard. If the Fated question her about it, she sighs and admits that it reminds her of her own children. They weren’t kidnapped, but they did go running off into Malifaux to fight who knows what with some of their cousins without telling her about it, so hearing about another parent who has unexpectedly lost a child opens that wound a little bit.

If the Fated choose to investigate Pedro Vargas’ home, see Scene 3: The Doctor is In for more details.

If the Fated decide to investigate Candelaria’s home, see Scene 4: Vanished Belle (pg. 51) for more details.

### ACT III, SCENE 3:

## THE DOCTOR IS IN

Pedro Vargas has an apartment north of Chinatown, about six blocks from the flaming wreckage of that district. When the Fated arrive, read the following text:



Smoke hangs heavy over the distant Chinatown as you reach Pedro Vargas’ apartment building, though fortunately, you’re upwind and only have to deal with the twin scents of salt and fish on the wind. The surrounding area seems to have avoided the worst of the earthquake damage, though you still pass a few buildings that have partially collapsed into their neighbors.

Vargas’ apartment is three-story building of white-washed, cracked plaster and red roof tiles. The front courtyard is surrounded by a wrought iron gate, which seems to have been torn from its hinges. In the courtyard beyond, you can see a smattering of red debris from broken roof tiles that were shaken free during the earthquake.



The front door of the apartment building is similarly broken and hanging partially open. If the Fated succeed at a TN 8 Notice Challenge, they find the wooden door lying nearby and turn it over to reveal the deep, clawed gouges in its surface.



Once the Fated are inside, the building is quiet. Read the following text:



There's quite a bit more damage in the hallway than outside. Vargas' apartment is two doors down, and its door hangs open, the lock having been torn completely from the door. Inside, you can see books strewn across the floor, though there seems to have been some effort made toward cleaning them up. You catch sight of a stuffed mouse beside one of the book piles that appears to have been much loved by a resident cat.

Just inside the door, you can see what used to be a very large pool of blood, some of it smeared. It's dry now, little more than a brown stain on the floorboards. You barely have time to glance at it before your attention is drawn to the dead, shirtless man splayed out on the room's desk.



Searching Vargas' home is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

### SEARCHING FOR THE DOCTOR

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Doctor, Notice, Track
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 11
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 6
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 3

At the end of each Duration, the Fated learn one Clue from the list below for each success they achieved. For every failure, they learn one Mistake from the list below. If your players can easily separate player knowledge from character knowledge, feel free to give the Clues and Mistakes to them individually, perhaps even written down on small slips of paper they can reveal to the group. This allows them to each have an "Aha!" moment where they reveal their findings (or their false assumptions) to the group.

If your players find it difficult to separate what their characters know from what they know, however, you can just give the Clues and Mistakes to them at the same time, ensuring that - like their characters - they're not easily able to separate the truth from their false assumptions.

If the Fated manage to successfully complete the Ongoing Challenge, they learn the Breakthrough, which should give them a solid push in the right direction. If they critically fail the Ongoing Challenge, however, then they learn the Red Herring, which is likely to pull them well off course.

### CLUES (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER)

- The hallway outside Vargas' apartment is strewn with sand, and from the tracks, it looks like there was a group of four people wearing military boots and another trail that seems to have been caused by a large snake. (The tracks were caused by Alcatraz Cultists following the Child of Cihuacoatl.)
- The dead man is surrounded by lengths of discarded gauze. A bowl of lukewarm water rests near one end of the desk, and inside it are various scissors, needles, and clamps of various size. (Vargas attempted to save the Alcatraz Cultist after he was attacked by the Child of Cihuacoatl but was unsuccessful in doing so.)
- The dead man is of Hispanic descent and is dressed in military pants and boots. He isn't wearing a shirt, which makes it easy to see the bloody mess that is now his chest. Some effort seems to have been made to treat the deep lacerations across his chest, as they've been cleaned and stitched up. His right leg has a tourniquet around the thigh and is little more than a ragged, torn stump below that point. (The cultist was killed and partially eaten by the Child of Cihuacoatl.)
- The Fated find streaks of blood on the walls near the blood pool, indicating that it was likely spilled with some sort of slashing weapon. (The blood was splattered across the walls by the Child of Cihuacoatl's claws, when it attacked the Alcatraz Cultist.)
- The smears in the blood pool aren't footprints, but instead seem to be three sets of knee prints. (The surviving Alcatraz Cultists knelt down in awe before the Child of Cihuacoatl as it murdered their companion.)

## MISTAKES (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER)

- The Fated find a small appointment book that lists a meeting with “Valeria Flores” in roughly three hours. The address to Vargas’ clinic can be found at the front of the appointment book - via a “Return to this address if lost” note. (The Flores name is just a coincidence with an unrelated patient, and if the Fated investigate the clinic, they find that it’s been destroyed by the earthquake and is little more than rubble. Needless to say, Valeria Flores doesn’t keep her appointment.)
- The Fated notice a framed, black-and-white photograph of Alcatraz Island at sunset hanging on the wall. The photograph is shot from the east, which makes the island look like it’s aflame in the bright light of the sun. It’s the only photograph that hasn’t fallen from the wall. (Vargas bought the picture because he thought it looked nice. There’s no deeper meaning here.)

## BREAKTHROUGH

The Fated find Vargas hiding in his walls. See the Finding Vargas section in the next column for more details.

## RED HERRING

As they’re searching his room, the Fated uncovered a cloak of feathers in the closet. It’s old and smells a bit like mothballs, but it’s clearly been recently worn, and there are a few spatters of dried blood around its edges and far more on the inside. (This is the cloak of feathers the dead cultist was wearing. Vargas removed it from the man as he prepared for surgery and placed it in his closet for lack of anywhere else to store it.)



## FINDING VARGAS

If the Fated succeed at the Searching for the Doctor Ongoing Challenge, read the following text:



As you walk past the open bedroom closet, you hear a faint ‘meow’ from within it, following by a faint shushing. There’s nobody to be seen, but as you kneel down and peek inside, you catch sight of a small door in the back, about two feet to a side, that no doubt leads to some sort of small storage area.



If the Fated open the door to the crawlspace, they find a reasonably handsome man in his late 20s, with short-clipped black hair, wedged into the space and clutching two annoyed cats. His shirt is rolled up and stained with blood along the sleeves. Upon seeing the Fated, he breathes a sigh of relief and mutters a soft “*Mierda.*”

Vargas crawls out of the space and releases his cats, both of which immediately rush off to look indignant from a safe distance. Holding up his hands to show that he’s not a threat, he looks between the Fated. If he helped them after the earthquake in Act 2 (see pg. 32), then he recognizes them and is surprised to encounter them again. Otherwise, he points out that they “don’t look like the police or those *loco soldados*” and asks the Fated who they are and why they’re in his home.

After the Fated explain the situation, Vargas introduces himself. He’s not missing, as it turns out, but rather hiding from cultists. Read the text on the following page.



Vargas rubs gently at a bruise on his arm. “Yesterday, I volunteered with the rescue efforts. Trying to save as many people as possible, I suppose. I worked into the night and then returned here once the military officer in charge sent me away.”

He casts a concerned look toward one of the cats that he had been hiding with. “Along the way, I noticed that someone was following me. I had heard rumors of kidnappers and looters from the injured, so I picked up my pace and glanced back over my shoulder... and that’s when I saw the snakeman creeping up on me. It was keeping to the shadows, but...” Vargas shivers at the memory.

“I broke out into a run, slamming and locking the doors behind me, but it just tore them apart, one after the other! When I realized that the door wasn’t going to keep it out, I ducked into the crawlspace there and hid.” He runs a hand through his short hair. “It was pretty tense for awhile. I think it could smell me, but not good enough to pinpoint where I was. I’m just grateful I remembered to scoop up the cats.”

“Anyways, that’s when I heard the soldiers come in. I couldn’t see them, but I heard some swearing in Spanish, and then the sounds of... well, screaming and combat, I guess. I peeked out later, when it was quiet again, and found that man,” he gestures toward the body on the table, “in the middle of my living room, torn apart. I did what I could, but...”

Vargas takes a deep breath and sighs. “The weirdest thing is that I think the soldiers left with the snakeman. I could hear them talking or praying or... something, I don’t know. My Spanish is pretty good, but they were using words I’ve never heard before. When I heard you coming down the hallway, I was worried that it was them coming back for me.”



If the Fated ask Vargas to describe the snakeman, he gives a description that matches that of the Children of Cihuacoatl: a serpentine creature with the upper body of a man and the lower body of a snake. Its entire body was covered in scales, and it was carrying a sword “as black as midnight.”

Vargas is willing to patch up any of the Fated that are injured (healing 2 damage via First Aid), and if they raise the point of trying to move him somewhere safe, he only goes if they allow him to bring his cats along for the journey. Otherwise, he takes his chances with hiding in his apartment.

## CHASING A SNAKEMAN

If the Fated decide to follow the tracks of the snakeman and the cultists away from the doctor’s office, they can do so with a TN 14 Track Challenge. On a success, they manage to track the group back to their hideout. Read the following text:



The tracks lead through two more neighborhoods - each one with a similarly blood-drenched scene of violence - before finally winding back to the northern beach: three sets of human tracks and one slithering trail belonging to whatever it is the snakeman might be. You finally catch up with the group in the shadow of a large rock pile as the three soldiers - all of them men - are standing around a petrol motorboat as the snakeman hisses at them in an aggressive manner.

From the snippets of their conversation and the gesturing of their arms, they seem to be trying to convince the snakeman to climb into the boat, an action that it seems very hesitant to commit to. It keeps hissing and jabbing at the humans with its obsidian sword, while they seem to be doing their best to appease and calm it.



## LET'S GO TO ALCATRAZ, PART I

The petrol motor boat of the cultists is a convenient way for the Fated to travel to get to Alcatraz Island, though it requires a fair amount of stealth and deception on their part to reach the island safely. There are multiple 'hunting parties' in San Francisco, so as long as the Fated are able to look the part of the cultists - which generally means military uniforms or feathered cloaks - they can make a TN 11 Deceive Challenge to approach the island without being shelled.

If the Fated are successful, they can proceed directly to the Island Arrival section of Act IV (see page 65). On a failure - or if the Fated don't bother to disguise themselves - they're shelled as per the Swimming to Alcatraz Ongoing Challenge and are forced to swim back to the San Francisco shore (and Act III) rather than continue onward to Alcatraz.

Alternatively, the Fated might attempt to be stealthy and approach the island quietly, in which case they can attempt the Swimming to Alcatraz Ongoing Challenge (pg. 64). If they do so in this way, they cannot use the Athletics Skill and the Stealth Skill suffers a  due to the boat's loud petrol motor.

This is a shortcut - and one that might cause the Fated to miss some important information - but that's okay! They'll likely end up with some extra time to explore Alcatraz Island, so just keep track of the time, and in the evening, paraphrase The Burning Man Returns on page 59 so that they know the Burning Man is returning to the fortress island.

The three cultists and the Child of Cihuacoatl are about twenty yards away from the Fated, on the shore. There's a large rock to one side of them, but otherwise it's mostly open beach that leaves little for Fated to hide behind for stealth or cover.

The Fated can sneak around to the far side of the rock and creep up on the group unnoticed with a TN 12 Stealth Challenge. On a success, the Fated are able to close to within 5 yards of the cultists by sticking to the rocks. On a failure, however, the cultists spot the Fated and unleash a withering barrage of machine gun fire. The Child of Cihuacoatl, meanwhile, hangs back until the Fated are within charge range before darting out to cut them down. Stats for the Child of Cihuacoatl and the Alcatraz Cultists can be found on pages 96 and 97, respectively.

The Child of Cihuacoatl fights to the death and doesn't have much to say to the Fated even if it's captured. The cultists, on the other hand, will ramble about "the Children of Cihuacoatl" coming to "the promised land" to help them "birth Huitzilopochtli (pronounced wee-tsee-loh-pohch-tee) into a new body." They all have the wide, darting eyes of people who have suffered significant mental trauma and have desperately grasped to a belief structure for the sake of their own sanity. If pressured - such as with a TN 12 Intimidate Challenge - they break down in guilt-ridden tears and ramble on about all the poor people that "Coatlicue" is going to sacrifice to her bloody god. None of these cultists know Coatlicue's real name, only that she's "a loco woman who speaks for the Burning Man."

## ACT III, SCENE 4:

### VANISHED BELLE

Candelaria Naranja's home is located in the northeast part of the city, about four blocks from Pedro Vargas' apartment. When the Fated arrive, read the following text:



Candelaria Naranja's home is reasonably modest, much like the other homes in the area, all of which are built close together and painted in extremely bright colors. The neighborhood would have something of a garish feel if not for the fires that have gutted several of the houses a little way down from Candelaria's own.

A couple who must be the girl's parents are standing outside on the steps, speaking with several neighbors and well-wishers. They look curiously toward you as you approach, and the small group parts as the woman says something to her husband. He nods, then waves you over.



The couple introduce themselves as Marco and Tamara Naranja, Candelaria's parents. They ask the Fated if they're "from the *Policia*" but are eager to help the Fated find their daughter regardless of what answer they are given. A TN 8 Scrutiny Challenge reveals that they are genuinely concerned about their daughter's safety and aren't holding anything back.

If the Fated ask to look around, they openly invite them to enter their house. When they do, read the following text:



Candelaria's parents lead you up the stairs to their daughter's room, which is almost stereotypical in its level of girlishness. There's absolutely no sign of a struggle here, but the parents assure you that they've complied with the police officer's request not to disturb the scene.

A twin bed is set up against the wall near the window, which is open as wide as it can be. The covers, a blue duvet with some sort of crocheted lace overlay, have been pushed back rather than thrown off, as if its occupant had just gotten up to get something to drink rather than being kidnapped.



If the Fated search the room, a TN 12 Notice Challenge uncovers a black-and-white picture of the girl in which she is wearing glasses. There is no sign of her glasses in the room, however, and if asked, the parents admit that they haven't noticed them since their daughter disappeared the night before.

If the Fated suggest that Candelaria might have run away on her own, her parents refuse to believe it. They admit that there were a couple boys that were trying to court her, but claim that Candelaria hadn't shown very much interest in any of them. They reiterate that she's always been a very quiet and obedient young lady who mostly just spent time with her friends.

When the Fated have finished investigating the room, Candelaria's parents tell them that "Señor Juan Martinez," their neighbor, witnessed the kidnapping.

## JUAN MARTINEZ

Juan Martinez is a stooped but solidly built old man with one eye. When the Fated knock at his door, he opens it slowly and stares at them for an uncomfortably long time before asking what they want. When they bring up the topic of Candelaria's disappearance, however, he becomes much more animated and willing to talk to them. Read the following text:



"I will tell you what I saw," the old man says, his good eye narrowing as he lowers his voice. "It was a fortunate thing. I happened to be headed outside that night - my poor dog is getting on in years and needs to go outside a little more often - and I saw a light in the girl's window."

He shifts his weight on his cane. "Now, being as late it was, it seemed a bit strange to see the lights be on up there. I heard the fire escape groaning and took a closer look, and that is when I saw a giant bird soar out of the window with the little girl in its talons."

Martinez shakes his cane at you. "I do not tolerate giant birds in my neighborhood. I am a military man, and I have seen how that sort of thing gets out of control fast. Lots of animals dying from starvation due to the difficulty of finding food, like seals."

"I did not want to shoot the bird while it had the girl, so I shouted up at it. That is when its friend soared down from the sky and started scratching me. Knocked me right to my knees, and then the two of them flew off together with the girl."



The "giant birds" were, in fact, two of the Alcatraz Cultists in eagle cloaks; Juan Martinez is a nice man, but his sight and mind are both starting to go and as a result, he's prone to confusion. If the Fated make a successful TN 9 Leadership Challenge, they are able to ask the right questions and get something useful out of Martinez. He thinks about their questions for a few moments, then admits that "Yes, they had feathers, but also the muscles of men, like they were birds of war or something."

If the Fated achieve a Margin of Success on this Challenge, Martinez tells the Fated that he "won't stand for any giant birds kidnapping people" and tells them to wait while he gets something to help them. He slowly makes his way into his home and returns a half hour later with a large rifle. He tells the Fated that it belonged to his father, who received it as a gift for saving the life of a Navajo shaman. It's since been converted from a muzzle-loader to a breech-loader, but as far as Martinez is concerned, the gun was blessed to always find the hearts of the wicked in combat.

Martinez says that the rifle is called "*El Buscador de Corazones*," which means "The Seeker of Hearts." He tells the Fated to use it as best they can to rescue "little Candelaria" from "those terrible birds." The rifle has the following stats:

WEAPON (LONG ARMS)	RANGE	DAMAGE
El Buscador de Corazones	18	3/4/5
<b>Special:</b> Capacity 1, Reload 1 AP.		

There's not much more information for the Fated to learn here, but if they return to Candelaria's parents, they both assure them that Martinez is "as trustworthy of a soul as you'll ever meet." They express their hopes that the Fated can find their daughter but otherwise allow the police (or rather, the Fated) to carry out their investigation without harassment.

## ACT III, SCENE 5:

### MISSING NIECE

The home of Coyotl and Nenetl Flores is located a few blocks northeast of Chinatown. When the Fated arrive, read the following text:



Flores' home, located northeast of Chinatown, is in a neighborhood that becomes steadily rougher the further you get into it. Most of the homes have bars over their windows and metal fences around their entries. It seems that a detective's salary doesn't go especially far in terms of living quarters when you're also supporting a niece and a live-in nanny.

The house itself is one of several in a row of houses that have been built right next to each other, with barely a few feet between each building. The earthquake and fire damage here seems particularly severe, and several buildings nearby are still smoldering from within. Even the ones that are not in the process of burning are broken, collapsed, or damaged in some way.

The police officer stationed in front of the house greets you as you approach, and once you explain the situation, he leads you inside to show you the crime scene. The house is neat but otherwise clean, and you can see some places where the earthquake's damage has been cleaned up. An older woman lays dead in a pool of blood in the downstairs entryway, and upstairs, the door to Nenetl's room hangs ominously open.



The officer, Diego Rodriguez, explains that the dead woman is Viviana Cardona, the nanny. As far as they can tell, she answered the door and was stabbed and left to die. They found some footprints in her blood and stains on the stairs that suggest that the person or persons responsible pushed past her and went directly upstairs, where they presumably kidnapped Nenetl Flores.

Nenetl's room shows evidence of a struggle. Items are broken, the blanket is thrown halfway across the room, and small amounts of blood are all over the place. The window is broken outward, though it's difficult to tell if that was a result of the struggle or something that happened during the earthquake.

Searching for further clues is handled with an Ongoing Challenge:

#### INVESTIGATE THE CRIME SCENE

- Skills Allowed: Notice, Track
- Target Number: 11
- Duration: 10 minutes
- Success Requirement: 6
- Failure Requirement: 3

At the end of each Duration, the Fated learn one Clue from the list below for each success they achieved. For every failure, they learn one Mistake from the list on the next page. If your players can easily separate player knowledge from character knowledge, feel free to give the Clues and Mistakes to them individually, perhaps even written down on small slips of paper they can reveal to the group. This allows them to each have an "Aha!" moment where they reveal their findings (or their false assumptions) to the group.

If your players find it difficult to separate what their characters know from what they know, however, you can just give the Clues and Mistakes to them at the same time, ensuring that - like their characters - they're not easily able to separate the truth from their false assumptions.

If the Fated manage to successfully complete the Ongoing Challenge, they learn the Breakthrough, which should give them a solid push in the right direction. If they critically fail the Ongoing Challenge, however, then they learn the Red Herring, which is likely to pull them well off course.

## CLUES (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER)

\* First Floor: In a drawer in the kitchen, the Fated find a bundle of letters addressed to Nenetl Flores from Tlalli Flores, all of which have been mailed from Alcatraz. They go back almost seven years, with roughly one letter every two months. None of the recent ones have been opened. If the Fated choose to open the letters, most are heartfelt letters from a mother to her daughter, asking her to write and talking about how much Tlalli loves her daughter. The last one, however - mailed about a week before the Fated arrived in San Francisco - is more rambling and unsteady. It talks about how Nenetl is “the Chosen One” and how her mother intends to “wed her to the Burning Man in a ceremony of flame.” It’s signed as “Coatlucue,” rather than Tlalli. (Tlalli has been sending letters to her daughter ever since she was incarcerated and Nenetl came to live with her uncle. He stopped reading them years ago and hasn’t shown any of them to Nenetl, reasoning that her mother would be a bad influence on her.)

\* First Floor: The stab wound that killed the nanny was expertly placed. Her attacker must have either been exceptionally lucky or well trained in close combat tactics. (The attackers were former military personnel.)

\* First Floor/Second Floor: The boot prints in the blood pool lead up the stairs in a determined gait, as if they knew exactly what they wanted. The tread looks to belong to a military boot, rather than a workman’s boot. If the Fated found the muddy boot prints in the museum in Act I, they will recognize these prints as being identical to those prints.

\* Second Floor: The Fated find a very old obsidian knife beneath Nenetl’s bed. There are faint traces of dried blood on its blade. (This is the weapon used to kill the nanny. It was knocked from the attacker’s hand during his struggle with Nenetl.)

\* Second Floor: The Fated find a single blue slipper on the floor, near the door. It’s sized for a child, but there doesn’t appear to be any sign of its companion anywhere in the room. (This is one of the two slippers that Nenetl put on when she heard the commotion from downstairs, just before the cultists burst into her room to kidnap her.)

## MISTAKES (IN NO SPECIFIC ORDER)

\* A crayon drawing of the Burning Man has been pinned to the wall of Nenetl’s room. It shows her and her uncle holding hands with the flaming person. (This has little to do with anything; Nenetl saw the flames in the sky, heard her uncle talking about the Burning Man, and drew this picture.)

\* The broken window is only about four feet from another window on the next house over. It’s possible that the attackers escaped into the next house over to disguise their trail. (Possible, but not what happened; the attackers left through the front door.)

## BREAKTHROUGH

While looking out of a window on the second floor, the Fated notice a blue slipper in the yard across the street. A closer investigation reveals it to be child-sized and a match for the single discarded slipper in Nenetl’s room. Furthermore, there’s a trail of small blood spatters leading northward, away from Nenetl’s house.

## RED HERRING

The Fated find a thick book entitled “*Contiones de Rege Flammae*,” by Ephraim Wade, resting on an end table next to a chair in the living room. A glimpse through the book reveals that it is filled with quasi-religious propaganda about the Burning Man, espousing how he will burn the world in flame and bring about a new world. From the nearby ashtray and a few other books on the end table, it’s clear that the chair is where Flores sits to do most of his reading. Strangely, the book seems to be a few years old, meaning that it dates back to long before the first appearance of the Burning Man. (Flores learned about the book and spent an evening hunting book stores across the city to find a copy. He found it the night before the Fated arrived but has since been too busy to read it.)





## THE WOUNDED CULTIST

After finding Nenetl's discarded slipper and the blood surrounding it, the Fated can make a TN 9 Track Challenge to find and follow small splatters of dried blood that lead them northward for about three blocks. There, the blood trail diverts into a crawlspace beneath a half-collapsed house. The crawlspace is dark, and the Fated will need a light source to be able to see anything.

If the Fated explore the crawlspace, read the following text:



The crawlspace is damp and musty, and the darkness doesn't help the visibility at all. You can hear a faint dripping sound somewhere, undoubtedly from some pipe that broke open during yesterday's earthquake. After a few moments of silence, you hear a faint groan, drawing your attention toward a man half-curling up in the corner.

He's wearing army green pants and black boots, but no shirt or jacket. There's a ratty cloak of blood-stained eagle feathers around his neck and beneath him, and you can see recent scars on his chest that look like the result of ritual branding.

He gives you a half-grin, and it's then that you notice the pool of half-dried blood around him. As your eyes get used to the light, you can see that he's sweating. "*No se nos... puede parar,*" he gasps. "Can't stop... the rise... of Huitzilopochtli (pronounced wee-tsee-loh-pohch-tee)." He holds up an obsidian knife to threaten you, but his hand is shaking so much that you doubt he's any sort of actual threat.



The man's name is Sebastián Pérez. He's one of the Alcatraz cultists, and his wound is a result of being stabbed by Nenetl while he and his partner were trying to abduct her. When it became clear that his wound was slowing them down, he stayed behind, hiding in the crawlspace while his partner continued forward to bring the girl to her mother on Alcatraz.

If the Fated get too close to him, the man swipes at them with the knife but misses and falls over, resulting in a howl of pain as he drops the knife and clutches his chest wound. From that point on, he's effectively harmless, though he will curse at any Fated trying to help him and generally make it as unpleasant of an experience as possible.

Any of the Fated can attempt a TN 8 Doctor Challenge to realize that the man has a fever and has lost a lot of blood. If they can get to him, a TN 10 Doctor Challenge is able to stabilize him. If the Fated attempt to move the man without stabilizing him, the process opens up his chest wound and he gains the **Bleeding Out** Condition.

If the Fated ask the man any questions about who he is, where he comes from, or what he's done with Nenetl, they have to succeed on a TN 10 Bewitch, Convince, or Intimidate Challenge to get the man to do more than spit curses at them. If they succeed at this Challenge, read the following text:



"We come from... the holy island," he murmurs, pausing to cough up a handful of blood. "The Mexican government... defiled it... built a fort there and called it Alcatraz. We were... deceived by them... I was deceived... into service... but Tlalli, the human form of the god... goddess... Coatlicue... she opened our eyes."

*Continued on the next page...*



The man leans closer, wincing in pain as his eyes widen in fanatical devotion. “The Burning Man... Huitzilopochtli (pronounced wee-tsee-loh-pohch-tee)... he opened our eyes... hovering above the island like a second sun. We saw the truth in... in his flames, and she... she explained everything. The old ways. The Aztecs... they knew... and we forgot...”

He coughs again. “Coatlicue is the mother of Huitzilopochtli (pronounced wee-tsee-loh-pohch-tee), but he needs... her daughter, the Flores girl... to be reborn... because of her blood. That’s where... the power is, in blood. Gallons and gallons of blood, the highest quality sacrifices from... from this depraved city.”

“Then we will see the rise... the rise of the fourth sun. A rain of blood upon the nation... that committed so many crimes... against our people...”



Pérez’s rambling diatribe against the Mexican Government should clue the Fated in to the location of Nenetl and reveal that things on Alcatraz are likely more serious than they may have suspected.

## ACT III, SCENE 6:

### THE NORTH BEACH

If the Fated visit the north beach, read the following text:



It's low tide when you reach the docks along the northern beach, and the pungent scents of fish guts, oil, and other, less identifiable smells are trying hard to overpower the lingering smoke that has become so common since the earthquake. In the distance, you can see Alcatraz Island jutting out of the water like an impregnable fortress.

A few boats are moored to the docks, sitting low in the harbor, and there are a few dozen small boats out on the water, but none of them are anywhere near Alcatraz.



If the Fated search the area, a TN 14 Track Challenge turns up some footprints in the mud. The boot prints have the same military treads as the boot prints in the museum or Flores' house, but they end near the high tide line.

If the Fated approach any of the fishermen to ask them questions, read the following text:



As you approach the nearest group of fishermen, you overhear a few snippets of conversation. Three of them are trying to assess the damage to a fishing boat, while the fourth - a fishermen as well, judging from his manner of dress - is asking if any of them have seen his son. The men trying to fix the boat shake their heads and mention that one of their crew has gone missing as well, but they promise to keep an eye out for his son.



When the Fated join the conversation, the man who is looking for his son introduces himself as Antonio Benitez and asks them if they've seen his son, Samuel. He doesn't have any pictures of the boy, but he describes him as a fourteen year old with a mop of unruly black hair.

If the Fated take an interest in his missing son, Antonio says that his son disappeared shortly after the earthquake. He thinks that he might have been kidnapped; he found signs of a struggle and muddy boot prints in his house. If the Fated go to investigate, they have no problem connecting the prints to those they have found elsewhere.

The other fishermen are more concerned with the condition of their boat than with any problems the Fated might have, and as such, it takes a TN 9 Convince, Bewitch, or Intimidate Challenge in order to distract them from their repairs. They explain that the waves that came with the earthquake knocked their ship up onto the dock, which then collapsed under the boat's weight. They gesture toward a gap in the docks to indicate where it happened.

If the Fated achieve a Margin of Success on this Challenge, one of the men mentions that things have been weird even before the earthquake. The "military *hombres*" up at Alcatraz fired on a fishing boat that got too close to the island, destroying it, and just last night, he saw a small boat that was being piloted by people dressed up like birds.

If the Fated succeed at a TN 10 Scrutiny Challenge, they realize that the men are concerned about their missing crew member and are trying to distract themselves from the situation by focusing on the boat. They don't know anything in particular about what might have happened to the man (Juan Sandoval), but they suspect that he didn't survive the earthquake.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Once the Fated have finished their investigation, they can return to the police office to inform Flores of what they have learned. If they seem intent upon visiting Alcatraz before they speak with the inspector, he sends an officer to find them, wanting to know whether or not they've made any progress in finding his niece. The officer suggests that they return to the police station so that they can tell Flores in person; he's apparently taking her disappearance particularly hard.

When they return, Flores' reaction depends upon how much evidence they have gathered. If they found Pérez in the crawlspace in Scene 5, he's particularly interested, and if they managed to take him into custody, Flores considers it to be a major break in the case and begins making preparations toward interrogating the man. After seeing him, however, he's shocked; Flores reveals that he knew the man in passing and that he was "a military man, through and through, a real flag-and-country type."

If his sister, Tlalli Flores, is brought up, read the following text:



Flores sinks into a chair and sighs as he pulls out a cigarette. "I've worried about this ever since I first heard rumors of something happening at Alcatraz. We were close once. Both of us had this idea in our heads that we wanted to save the world. When we got older, we disagreed about just how to do that; Tlalli went off to fight against the government for the sake for the Nahuatl people, while I went to work for them in the police. I don't think she ever forgave me."

He takes a long pull from his cigarette and slowly exhales the smoke. "She's always been really charismatic. A lot of people flocked to her banner back then, all of them wanting the government to give them back their ancestral lands. Some of the protests turned violent, and the government snatched her and most of her followers up and threw them into Alcatraz, and I ended up watching over Nenetl. That was... eight years ago now."

Flores looks your way, his expression almost apologetic. "If she's involved in this..." He shakes his head. "You have to understand, Tlalli isn't a peaceful person. Even before this Burning Man nonsense, she wasn't afraid to spill blood if she felt she was on the right side of things. If she's involved, then things can only get worse from here." He laughs bitterly, as if something just occurred to him. "Honestly, I'm half surprised she hasn't started shelling the city with the cannons on the island. Maybe she was waiting until her daughter was safe."



In any case, it's clear that the Fated will have to travel to Alcatraz in order to rescue Nenetl. Even if they're not interesting in rescuing the girl, they should have enough clues to point toward Alcatraz as the source of a significant and powerful cult.

Flores doesn't think that there's any good way to get close to the island, though; the citadel is all but bristling with large cannons that can sink any ship before it gets close enough to land. He admits that he's not an expert, but he believes that he can explain the situation to the military, who might know a way onto the island.

He suggests that the Fated get some rest and meet back at the station first thing in the morning, after he's had a chance to pull some strings and call in some favors.

## THE BURNING MAN RETURNS

At some point that night, when the Fated are winding down - whether that's after they've left the police station or after a long planning session next to their tents in the park - read the following text:



Despite San Francisco's general tendency toward fog, the night sky ends up being relatively clear, especially considering all of the smoke in the air. You can't see anything but the brightest of stars, but there's another star hanging in the sky where you have never noticed one before.

At first it's like a small candle flame, but as it grows larger, you realize what you're seeing. The Burning Man slowly descends from the heavens, trailing fire behind it as it slowly makes its way toward Alcatraz Island. Its path is taking it northward, over the top of the city, and already you can hear shouts of panic.

From how slowly it's moving, you're guessing that the Burning Man will reach the island midway through the next day... and there's no telling what will happen when it does.



### LET'S GO TO ALCATRAZ, PART 2

If the Fated attempt to convince any of the local fishermen to take them to Alcatraz, they shake their heads and refuse to do so, explaining that, after the Burning Man showed up, the soldiers up on the island have been shelling any boat that gets too close to shore. After the *Manifest Destiny* was blown out of the water along with her crew, the fishermen have been giving Alcatraz a wide berth, and they recommend that the Fated follow their example.

Without a successful TN 16 Barter Challenge (and at least 100 scrip), the Fated will be unable to hire a boat to brave the dangers of the island. A TN 18 Bewitch, Convince, or Intimidate Challenge can sway their hearts as well, though the fishermen won't be ready to go until the next morning, on account of wanting to say farewells to their families and make certain that their boat is fully patched after the earthquake.

If the Fated decide to storm Alcatraz early, just proceed to Act IV (pg. 60) and continue from there.



# ACT IV

When the Burning Man first appeared near San Francisco, it appeared above Alcatraz Island. Its presence had a profound effect in those with weak psyches or mental trauma, such as many of the imprisoned political protestors, who had been kept in poor conditions and subjected to a great deal of mental strain during their incarceration. Had they been the only ones affected by the Burning Man, that might have been the end of it; after all, the prisoners were safely locked away behind bars.

For years, however, the Mexican military had been using Alcatraz Citadel as something of a prestigious posting for highly-trained soldiers who had experienced traumatic events on the battlefield. While they were still loyal and well-trained - and in many cases, heroes who finished their missions despite the deaths of their fellow soldiers - these soldiers often suffered from frequent nightmares, flashbacks, emotional numbness, and mild paranoia. Alcatraz, due to its proximity to San Francisco, was seen as a way to give these soldiers time to relax and recover while still keeping them on active duty and performing a useful task. The prisoners at the Citadel were primarily political, after all, and unlikely to pose any real threat to the soldiers stationed there.

When the Burning Man appeared above Alcatraz, the trauma in these soldiers' minds spread like cracks across a pane of glass. Many fell to the ground, grabbing their heads and screaming as their memories came flooding back to them with full intensity.

Ironically, it was a prisoner that would give them hope. Tlalli Flores believed herself to be of Aztec heritage and fancied herself as a sort of "modern-day Aztec warrior," waging battle against a corrupt government for the rights of native people (who were not actually of Aztec descent, which was not a point that Tlalli

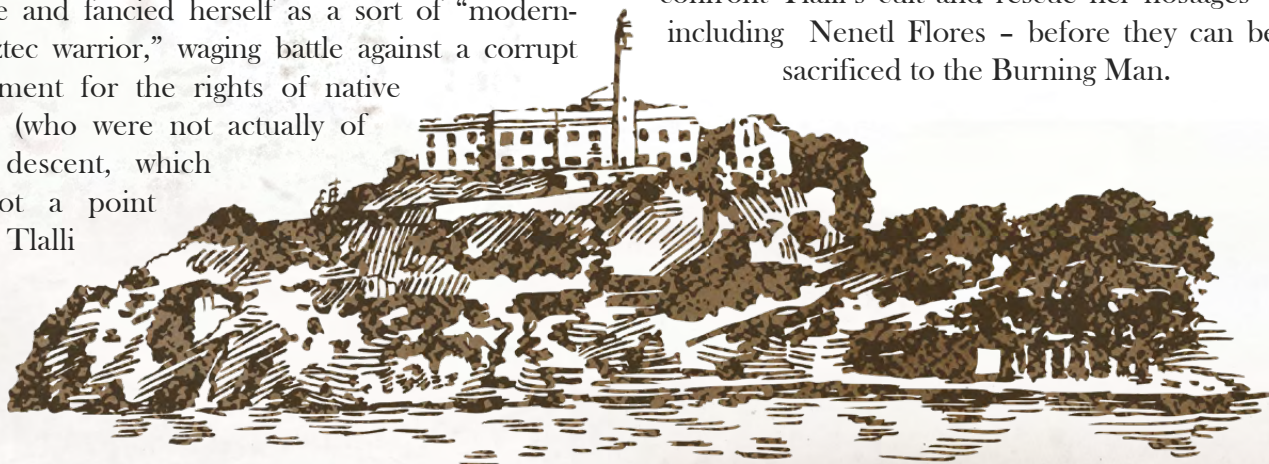
particularly cared about). As a child, she was fascinated by the Aztec exhibits at the San Francisco museum, and she would often spend hours there, staring at the artifacts and reading the placards over and over again.

When the Burning Man arrived, she mistakenly believed him to be a manifestation of Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec god of the sun. She had always been a charismatic woman, and her strength in a time of crisis - and her claims that she knew what the flaming person hovering above the island was - struck a powerful chord with the disturbed and troubled prisoners and guards.

Within two days, she had convinced many of them that the world was coming to an end and that it could only be saved through bloodshed. The magical powers that she was beginning to manifest only seemed to reinforce her claims that she was Huitzilopochtli's chosen priestess, and things quickly came to a head: the believers freed Tlalli from her cell and, with the help of both prisoners and soldiers, took control of Alcatraz.

Since then, Tlalli's madness has spiraled out of control, dragging the rest of the cult along in her wake. She had them break into the San Francisco museum and steal Aztec artifacts, which only served to reinforce the deepening psychoses of her followers. While many of them are still perfectly capable of rational thought, they've come to truly believe that they're the only ones who can save the world... by spilling blood in the name of the Burning Man.

In this Act, the Fated travel to Alcatraz Island to confront Tlalli's cult and rescue her hostages - including Nenetl Flores - before they can be sacrificed to the Burning Man.



## ACT IV, PROLOGUE:

### THE STATION

When the Fated return to the police station, they find Flores waiting with Angela Guerrero, the soldier who greeted them when they first arrived in San Francisco.

Read the following text:



When you arrive at the police station the next morning, Inspector Flores and Angela Guerrero are waiting for you. Flores' suit is more rumpled than usual, and the dark bags under his eyes and stubble on his chin make it clear that he didn't get any sleep last night. He's standing next to the city map that's pinned to his wall, and the crowded ashtray on his desk gives you some idea of how he's managed to stay awake so long.

Guerrero is once again dressed in her olive-green uniform and appears to be much more awake and alert. She inclines her head in greeting as she catches sight of you. "*Buenos días*. Flores was telling me that you chased the Burning Man away from Chinatown." Her lip curls in a faint smile. "Your heroics were enough to convince my *Sargento* to assist the *Investigador* with his plan. Were it not for that show of bravery, we might have been forced to settle on a... less ideal plan for regaining control of the *Ciudadela*."

"Shelling the island," Flores grumbles, evidently not happy that such a plan was even considered by his government.

"Which is no longer being discussed," she reminds him, before turning back to you. "You will have the full backing of the Mexican military during this covert mission."



If any of the Fated were injured during the previous Act, Flores asks how they're holding up and offers them a cigarette and a glass of whiskey to dull the pain. Once he's checked up on the Fated, he motions for Guerrero to explain the plan. Read the following text:



Guerrero steps forward and places a finger on the map, right next to Alcatraz Island. "The island is riddled with caves," she explains. "The traitors will be guarding the wharf and watching for fishing boats, motor boats, and trawlers... but something smaller and less conspicuous should be able to slip beneath their notice. The plan is for you to swim in while clinging to a small buoy to stay afloat, which should allow you to reach the caves and make your way up to the fortress."

The end of her sentence is punctuated by the flare of a match as Flores lights another cigarette. "Once you're there," he pauses to take a long pull from the cigarette and then exhale a cloud of smoke, "you'll want to disable the southern gunnery batteries and get any hostages to safety as quickly as possible. We'll give you a flare gun that you can use to send up a signal when the artillery is down and everyone is safe."

Guerrero nods in agreement. "When that happens, the military boats will approach the island and extract you and the hostages. If you can get them to a secure location before signaling us, to ensure that they are not injured in the fighting, that would be ideal." She casts a hesitant glance in Flores's direction. "If you are also able to gain control of the fortress' armory, it would certainly make the assault easier..."

Flores shakes his head. "It's too dangerous. Just focus upon bringing those batteries down and rescuing Nenetl and the other hostages. That will be more than enough to make you heroes in the eyes of the people of San Francisco."



Flores will note that they don't have much time for preparations, as they want to evacuate the hostages before the Burning Man reaches the island; it's been moving towards Alcatraz at a slow but steady pace, and if it doesn't slow down or speed up, they're expecting it to reach the island at noon.

It's currently 7:30 A.M., which means that the Fated only have four and a half hours to carry out their plan without having to deal with the potential complication of unstable portals and Malifaux monsters.

At noon, the Burning Man reaches Alcatraz Island and unleashes chaos. Keep track of how long the Fated spend accomplishing each objective. If they haven't fired off the flare gun to signal the military to begin their assault by noon, then progress to Scene 8: Huitzilopochtli Rising on page 82.

### ALERTED CULTISTS

Throughout this Act, there are multiple ways that the Alcatraz Cultists might be alerted to the presence of the Fated. Whenever this happens, they increase their numbers in preparation for the coming sacrifice to the Burning Man.

If the cultists still have access to the Armory when they are alerted (for any reason), then they reinforce their numbers with heavy weaponry; whenever an encounter in this Act mentions the Fated encountering a certain number of cultists, add one Eagle Warrior (pg. 98) to that encounter for each time the cultists have been alerted, to a maximum of three additional Eagle Warriors per encounter.

If the Fated seize control of the Armory, however, then the cultists are unable to reinforce themselves. If this is the case, then alerting the cultists will not result in their numbers increasing any more than they already have.

If the Fated decide not to travel to Alcatraz, Guerrero does her best to attempt to convince them otherwise, citing that the cult presents a clear danger to San Francisco and all of Mexico, and with so much of the military trying to keep order after the earthquake, the Fated are the city's only hope.

She lays it on a bit thick, and eventually Flores waves her off, instead asking the Fated to consider the fate of his niece. If they still refuse to assist, he slumps back down in his chair with a weary sigh.

The military bides their time as they attempt to come up with a new plan, but by noon, the cult succeeds in summoning the Quinametzin, which forces the military to attack the creature in desperation. See the Conclusion on page 89 for more details.



## ACT IV, SCENE 1:

### ESCAPE TO ALCATRAZ

Once the Fated have made their preparations, Guerrero bids farewell to Flores (who shakes the Fated's hands and wishes them good luck) and leads the Fated outside to a waiting horse cart. It's a half hour ride down to the beach, so if the Fated left immediately after speaking with Flores, they'll arrive at 8:00 A.M. Read the following text:



Guerrero is forced to detour around numerous blocked streets and still-raging fires, and as a result, it's nearly half an hour before you finally reach the northern beach. Small groups of soldiers in olive-green uniforms are clustered around petrol motor boats, no doubt preparing for the coming assault. Most have rifles slung over their shoulders and pistols on their hips.

As the horse cart clatters to a halt, you disembark and finally get a chance to see the buoy that you'll be using to infiltrate the island. It's little more than a large, circular donut that's a black 'hazard' color. The top part of it - the tower-like structure that should have been rising up to attract the attention of passing ships - has been sawed off and now rests, discarded, on the beach.

"It's the best we could do on such short notice," Guerrero says as she hops down from the cart and joins you. "This is the best way we could think of to get you onto the island. Stealth is paramount in this mission. If the traitors see you coming... well, you'll be approaching from the south, right down the barrels of Battery Vasquez. They have twenty fifteen-inch Rodman cannons, each of which can launch a three hundred and thirty pound explosive nearly a mile. They're meant to sink battleships, so..." She casts a concerned glance at the buoy. "Try to avoid being noticed."



Guerrero explains that once they reach the island, they'll have to skirt the shore to its western side, where they can find the caves that lead up into the citadel. She then motions to a fellow soldier, who hands one of the Fated the flare gun.

She notes that she would load them up with as many rifles as they could carry, but she's uncertain whether or not they would function after the swim, and that they'd likely be overly bulky and cumbersome. If any of the Fated are carrying bulky rifles or two-handed weapons, Guerrero also warns them that carrying such cumbersome and heavy weapons could be dangerous; it's a long swim to Alcatraz, and such cumbersome weapons will only make it harder to swim.

If the Fated are still willing to risk exhaustion for some better weapons, Guerrero asks one of her fellow soldiers to bring them Chesterfield 1895 Repeating Rifles and Collier Single Action Army Pistols, along with 30 rounds of ammunition for each. Stats for these weapons can be found in the *Fated Almanac* (pages 162 and 159, respectively).

Once the Fated have finished their preparations, they can begin their long swim to the island. The water is cold and choppy, and the unpleasant trip is handled with an Ongoing Challenge.

#### LET'S WALK ACROSS THE OCEAN FLOOR!

While Invested and Stitched characters are in no danger of drowning and could likely walk across the bottom of the ocean, doing so is incredibly time consuming, due to the increased viscosity of water over air. It takes two hours for characters to reach the island in this way. While this might be an option for a party that is comprised entirely of Invested or Stitched characters with no real sense of urgency, mixed parties still have to find a way to get their living members to Alcatraz, which likely means swimming with the buoy.


## SWIMMING TO ALCATRAZ

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Athletics, Navigation, Stealth
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 10
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 3 per Fated
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 1 per Fated

Every character present must participate in this Ongoing Challenge.

If the Fated decided to abandon the buoy and instead take a boat to Alcatraz, increase the TN by +5. If the boat is a motorboat, increase it by an additional +3 (for a total TN of 18).

If the Fated camouflaged the buoy with seaweed or a similar means of being less conspicuous, lower the TN of this Ongoing Challenge by 1.

A character that is carrying a two-handed weapon - such as a Heavy Melee weapon or a Rifle - suffers a  to this Challenge. Before attempting a Challenge, however, a character may choose to drop such an item into the ocean to make the Challenge without this penalty. Items abandoned in such a manner cannot be recovered. After each Duration, a character may pass a single two-handed weapon to another character to carry for the next Duration.

As the Fated make their way to Alcatraz, they can see the distant, flaming form of the Burning Man hanging in the sky, slowly making its way toward the island. It will arrive at noon, so while the Fated shouldn't be exceedingly pressed for time, they're still racing a very visible clock.

If the Fated succeed at this Ongoing Challenge, they successfully reach Alcatraz without alerting the cultists of their approach. See Island Arrival on page 65 for more information.

If the Fated suffer a Catastrophic Failure, however, then the cultists catch sight of them and fire a shot in their direction. See Under Fire on the next column for more information.



## UNDER FIRE



If the Fated attract the attention of the cultists, then they're in for a rough time. Read the following text:



The steady sloshing of the ocean waves is interrupted by a sudden explosion from the distant citadel. You barely have time to realize what it was before the water a few dozen meters to your left erupts in a colossal plume of water. The force of the explosion slams into you like a fast-moving brick wall, shattering the buoy to pieces and reducing your world to incredible pain and roaring noise.



Every character present must attempt a TN 11 Toughness Challenge. Those that succeed suffer 4/7/10 damage, while those who fail suffer 6/12/18 damage in addition to a Severe Critical Effect.

If any of the Fated are in desperate need of first aid, they might be out of luck; any attempts to perform First Aid while bobbing up and down in the middle of the ocean suffer a   penalty to the flip.

Even though the shot technically missed its target, the cultists still consider it to have been a success; the buoy was destroyed, any anyone that might have been clinging to it is presumed to be dead or dying and thus not a concern. The Fated can make it the rest of the way to the island, but doing so takes twenty minutes for each Success they are missing to complete the Ongoing Challenge.

If the Fated instead return to the shore, doing so takes twenty minutes for each Success they have accumulated on the Ongoing Challenge. If they wish to try again, the military can find and prepare another buoy in twenty minutes. In the Fated instead abandon their mission, see the Conclusion section on page 89 to learn what happens.

## ISLAND ARRIVAL

Once the Fated have arrived at Alcatraz Island, read the text below (adjusting as appropriate if the Burning Man has already arrived at Alcatraz):



Somehow, you manage to arrive, exhausted and soaking, at Alcatraz Island. Fifty-foot-tall cliffs dominate the island's southern face, leading upwards to the long row of cannons that make up one of the citadel's many artillery batteries. You can hear the distant, indistinct sounds of conversation far above you, and every so often, you can catch a glimpse of someone in a military uniform looking out over the water toward the slowly approaching Burning Man.



The Fated have three primary options. They can either attempt to stealthily access the island via the caves (which is described in *The Caves* on the next column), climb up the sides of the island (described in *The Climb* on page 66), or attempt a landing on the heavily patrolled wharf (described in *The Wharf* on page 67).



## THE CAVES

If the Fated choose to investigate the western caves, read the following text:



Somehow, the waters surrounding the island are the most treacherous so far, but you still manage to brave the strong tug of the currents to reach the western reaches of Alcatraz. You can see three promising indents in the rock face that might be low-lying caves: the first is fairly low, barely a foot above the water, while the second is tall, narrow, and worn smooth. The third - the furthest from you - looks jagged, as if some of it has recently collapsed into the water.



The Fated can attempt TN 12 Navigation or Wilderness Challenges to guess that the third cave - the jagged, half-collapsed one - seems the most likely to lead upwards. If the Fated choose to explore the first or second caves, they eventually end up at a dead end, which effectively wastes twenty minutes as they explore and then work their way back outside.

Once the Fated have the right cave, read the following text:



The narrow passageway slopes upward into darkness, allowing you to get your feet underneath you and shift from swimming to walking through knee-high water. The cave eventually narrows down to an impassable wedge, but you can see light a dozen feet above you, dim and silvery though it may be.



A character can climb up to the light with a TN 8 Athletics Challenge, which reveals that the light is filtering through the space between some poorly mortared stones. There's no sound from the other side of the wall, and a TN 9 Labor Challenge allows a character to push the weakened section of the wall down and gain access to a basement. Read the following text:



A lit lantern flickers in one corner of this basement, providing just enough light to illuminate a basement filled with rolled blankets and discarded clothing. Barrels are stacked along one wall, but judging from the water stains on the ground and the bugs that flutter about in the shadows, you're guessing that they've long since leaked out.

The air smells like mold and stagnant water, so you're guessing that before the basement became a temporary barracks, it must not have been visited very often. A wooden stairway along the northern wall leads upwards.



The stairs lead upward to a small room containing a desk, scattered paperwork, and another door that leads to a much better stocked pantry. This is the auxiliary storage area, which has fallen into disuse due to budgetary concerns and the gradual shifting of military personnel away from Alcatraz and toward more important areas of interest.


There's enough discarded apparel here for the Fated to create passing disguises, but doing so requires a TN 10 Sewing Challenge. Each attempt takes 15 minutes. On a success, the character creates one disguise, plus one disguise per Margin of Success. If the character achieves a Margin of Failure, however, she ruins the materials and cannot attempt to create any further disguises.

Once the Fated have left the building, proceed to Scene 2: Alcatraz Island, on page 68.

## THE CLIMB

The cliffs surrounding Alcatraz are seventeen yards (fifty feet) tall on the southern shore of the island. A character that attempts to climb the cliff has to make a series of TN 8 Athletics Challenges to reach the top. For each success, the character climbs a distance equal to half her Walk Aspect in yards, plus one additional yard for every full five points by which she exceeds the TN.

If the climbing character fails this Challenge, she simply fails to make any progress. If she achieves a Margin of Failure, however, the character loses her grip and falls to the ground, suffering 2/4/6 damage if she falls at least 6 yards, +1 damage for every full two yards the character falls above three yards.

Once a single character reaches the top of the cliff, she must make an immediate TN 10 Stealth Challenge. On a success, she manages to avoid detection by the cultists. If she has a rope, the character can tie it off to give every other character that ascends the cliff a  to their Athletics Challenges.

If the character fails her Stealth Challenge, however, she is spotted by the cultists and attacked by two Alcatraz Cultists, who notice her from a distance of 10 yards away. The cultists at first believe the character(s) to be escaped prisoners and will brandish their guns while shouting at the Fated to kneel down and put their hands on the ground. If the Fated at the top of the cliff comply, the cultists bind their hands and take them to join the rest of the hostages; see Scene 4: The Prison on page 72 for more information. The cultists do not expect anyone to be in the water (reasoning that they wouldn't survive a jump or a swim to shore) and don't bother to check over the edge to see if there are any other characters down below.

Stats for the Alcatraz Cultists can be found on page 97.

Once the Fated have climbed the cliff and dealt with any guards, proceed to Scene 2: Alcatraz Island, on page 68.

## THE WHARF

If the Fated decide it's wise to go to the island's wharf, they're likely in for a very tough fight. Read the following text:



The Alcatraz wharf is found on the northeastern end of the island. A dozen petrol motor boats are docked at the wharf, but as you approach them, you can hear the low banter of cultists speaking with each other, overlaid with sporadic singing in Spanish. Drawing closer and peeking out from behind a rock, you count nearly a dozen people – mostly men – loitering on the wharf. All of them have firearms, but they are in various stages of undress, with most just wearing olive-green military uniforms and boots, though a few are dressed in what appears to be threadbare white-and-black striped uniforms.

One man is wearing a half-cloak of ruffled feathers, though it's poorly made and seems to have been constructed entirely of pigeon feathers. Others have painted their bare torsos and arms with black and red paint.



There are a total of fourteen Alcatraz Cultists here. If a Fated makes a TN 10 Art Challenge, she's able to recognize that the cultists have painted their bodies with house paint. If the character achieves a Margin of Success on this Challenge, she also realizes that the designs seem to be reminiscent of those used by the ancient Aztecs, as envisioned by an untalented painter.

If the characters give away their position or otherwise attempt to interact with the cultists, they respond with a withering salvo of pistol fire; everyone is relatively relaxed, but they were trained soldiers or violent protesters before being driven insane and converted to their new religion, and they easily snap into battle readiness. The cultists also shout for assistance, which alerts the rest of the cult; the Alerted Cultists

callout box on page 62 describes how this changes the rest of the adventure. Stats for the Alcatraz Cultists can be found on page 97.

If the Fated attempt to get closer, they can attempt a TN 12 Stealth Challenge. On a failure, they are spotted by the Alcatraz Cultists and attacked as noted above. On a success, however, the Fated overhear two of the cultists speaking to each other in Spanish. If the Fated can understand what they're saying, read the following text:



You draw close enough to eavesdrop on two cultists as they look out across the water. "Do you think the police will try something?" asks a male voice.

"After the earthquake?" A second man laughs in contempt. "You've seen the smoke. They're too busy trying to keep their city from going up in flame."

There's a pause. "Military, then?"

"... yeah, probably." The second man sighs. "We just have to hold out until the Burning Man arrives. Then the Chosen One will ascend and we'll be given places of power in the new world."

The first man lowers his voice to a whisper. "Do you really think that Tlalli... er, that Coatlicue knows what she's doing? Killing all of those hostages..."

"Don't tell me that you're going soft." The second man's voice carries an implicit threat in his tone. "The sun god needs blood. Better theirs than ours, right?"

The other cultist mumbles a half-hearted agreement.



If the Fated defeat the cultists, proceed to Scene 2: Alcatraz Island, on page 68.

## ACT IV, SCENE 2:

### ALCATRAZ ISLAND

In this scene, the Fated have two primary objectives and two secondary objectives. First and foremost, they have to disarm the southern gun batteries - Battery Vasquez - to give the military an open route to the prison, plus they must also rescue the hostages and ensure their safety. These two objectives can be done in any order and are described in Scene 3: The Vasquez Battery (pg. 70) and Scene 4: The Prison (pg. 72), respectively.

Additionally, the Fated can attempt to seize control of the Armory in order to cut the cultists off from the vast majority of their ammunitions and weaponry. This is a dangerous option, but one that will result in a great many saved lives if the Fated are successful in their attempt. This secondary objective is described in Scene 5: The Armory Gambit on page 76.

Finally, if the Fated investigate the lighthouse, they have a chance to rescue Flores' niece, Nenetl Flores, from the sinister intentions of her mother, Tlalli... or Coatlicue, as she's taken to calling herself. This secondary objective is described in Scene 6: The Lighthouse (pg. 78).

If the Fated are running out of time, they may decide to split up in order to accomplish multiple objectives at once. Because keeping track of time for multiple parties can be difficult, it's recommended that you just keep track of how much time each groups takes and switch back and forth between groups after every half hour or hour of game time. This keeps one group from getting too "far ahead" of the other. It's fine to generalize and "round up" time to get to nice, round numbers.

There are a little over a hundred cultists on the island, but keeping track of their exact numbers shouldn't be necessary.

Read the following text whenever the Fated get a good look at the island around them:



Alcatraz Island is smaller than you would have expected; it's only a third of a mile long and about six hundred feet wide. On the eastern side of the island, perched just to the east of the large, heavily fortified *Ciudadela*, is Alcatraz's tower lighthouse, one of its most notable landmarks. The light isn't currently functioning, but otherwise, it seems relatively undamaged by the recent earthquake. Two men - one of them wearing a feathered cloak, the other shirtless - stand in front of the lighthouse door, guarding it.

The northern, southern, and western cliff faces are lined with heavy cannons, each of them at least eight inches in diameter and resting next to stacks of readied ammunition. The number of cannons is almost mind-boggling; there must be over a hundred of the deadly weapons situated atop the cliffs.

Various smaller buildings are scattered around the island, some of which look like they might have once been housing, while others seem purely utilitarian. One of the more squat and fortified buildings on the northern side of the island catches your eye, as every so often, a cultist will enter the building and exit a few minutes later with a machine gun in his or her hands. It's clearly some sort of armory, and as the Burning Man grows closer, everyone seems to be loading up on weapons and ammunition.

There's no sign of any hostages, but neither do you notice any bodies or any grisly evidence of mass murder. Were the cultists not wandering around topless with red- and black-painted skin or wearing cloaks of sewn feathers, you might almost think that the Citadel was undergoing business as normal.



Every time the Fated cross the island to move to a new location (to go from the gun battery to the citadel or from the wharf to the lighthouse, for instance), one of the characters in the moving group must make a successful Stealth Challenge (TN 8 + the number of times the cultists have been alerted) or encounter one Alcatraz Cultist, plus one Alcatraz Cultist for each time the cultists have been alerted. If the Fated are disguised or otherwise pretending to be cult members or hostages, a character in the group can attempt a Deceive Challenge against the same TN to pull off the ruse and avoid suspicion. On a success, the cultists speak to the Fated in Spanish for a few moments before continuing on their patrol routes (if the Fated are disguised as cultists) or haul them to the Prison (if the Fated are disguised as hostages).

On a failure - or if the Fated chose not to disguise themselves - the cultists attack them on sight and shout out warnings on their turns, alerting the other cultists to the Fated's presence. These groups are never reinforced with Eagle Warriors as described in the Alerted Cultists callout box.

Moving from one location to the next takes ten minutes, most of which is spent avoiding armed patrols, waiting for guards to pass, and generally trying to avoid being shot to death by a barrage of machine gun fire.

If the Fated fire off the flare gun and it's not yet noon, proceed to Scene 7: The Assault (pg. 79) to determine the success of the military assault and conclude the adventure.

At noon, immediately proceed to Scene 8: Huitzilopochtli Rising (pg. 82), regardless of what the Fated are doing at the time.



## ACT IV, SCENE 3:

### THE VASQUEZ BATTERY

Alcatraz Citadel is fortified with six different artillery batteries, at least one of which - Battery Vasquez - must be disabled if the Fated want any sort of backup from the Mexican military. The Vasquez Battery is located on the south side of the island and consists of twenty fifteen-inch Rodman cannons, which Guerrero warned them about on the beach, as well as two 120mm Howitzer cannons, which are smaller than the Rodman cannons and mounted on wheels, which allows them to be turned or moved without much effort.

When the Fated reach the gun battery, read the following text:



The cannons of Battery Vasquez are mounted in a neat row behind a five foot wall, pointing out across the water toward the still-burning city. Sixteen of the cannons are in a long row, fifteen feet from each other, while the other four are in a separate section to the east. The sections are separated by a raised platform, upon which is perched a smaller, 120mm Howitzer cannon that is mounted on a wheeled chassis, allowing for rapid redeployment.

The cultists have stacked the cannonball ammunition next to the weapons in large pyramids, and armed men and women dressed in military fatigues and feathered capes mill around the cannons, their attention primarily focused on the Burning Man that is hovering two hundred feet above the water like a flaming star.



There are ten Alcatraz Cultists scattered around the entire 100 yard length of the main battery line, and another two standing guard over the second, smaller section of cannons. If the Fated decide to go in

guns blazing, it will be a difficult fight, particularly if their numbers have been reinforced with Eagle Warriors due to the cultists being alerted. They're spread out, though, with one cultist per ten yards or so, which allows the Fated to engage the cultists one at a time.

If the Fated think to sneak up on the cultists, a TN 8 Stealth Challenge is enough for a character to sneak within one yard of a cultist without drawing suspicion. Since the cultists are standing near the edge of the cliff, all it takes is one good push (and a TN 8 Athletics Challenge) to send one of them careening off the edge and into the water below. Of course, this fall is accompanied by a scream of panic, which only serves to draw the attention of the other cultists as they turn toward the noise in surprise. The Fated have an entire round before the remaining cultists realize what is happening and attack. Stats for the Alcatraz Cultists can be found on page 97.

Fated that are disguised as cultists can walk right up to the cultists without having to make any sort of flip; they're too distracted by the Burning Man to really pay much attention to anyone else. Convincing the cultists to abandon their posts is difficult - many of them have military backgrounds - but a TN 14 Deceive Challenge is enough to send them to another part of the citadel for a short time, whether that's to help capture "escaped" prisoners or to reinforce another section of the defenses against attack. If the Fated achieve a Margin of Failure on this Challenge, the cultists realize that the Fated are imposters and attack them.

Alternatively, if the Fated are able to get to one of the 120mm Howitzers, they can use it to either attack the cultists or to intimidate them into surrendering. If they choose the later route, a TN 12 Intimidate Challenge is all it takes to convince the cultists to lay down their weapons and surrender. On a failure, the cultists shout praises to the Burning Man and charge the Howitzer with reckless abandon.

Once the Fated have dealt with the cultists, they will then have to disable the cannons in order to clear the way for the military. Doing so is handled with an Ongoing Challenge.



## DISABLE THE CANNONS

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Artefacting, Engineering, Explosives
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 9
- **DURATION:** 10 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 10
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 3

Each success the Fated achieve during this Ongoing Challenge successfully disables two cannons, either by damaging the firing mechanisms (via Artefacting or Engineering) or rigging them to detonate when they are fired (via Explosives). Even if the Fated fail this Ongoing Challenge, keep track of how many cannons they disabled, as that will affect the effectiveness of the military assault.

Fated disguised as cultists gain a **+** to every Challenge made as part of this Ongoing Challenge.

If the Fated suffer a catastrophic failure, the cultists notice them interfering with the cannons, shout out an alert, and attack them. The Fated can escape in a hail of gunfire without incident (the cultists are more concerned with protecting the cannons than chasing them), but if they remain behind, they have to contend with two Alcatraz Cultists per Fated and one Eagle Warrior per Fated.

If the Fated flee, an Eagle Warrior assigns extra guards to the cannons, rendering them too well-guarded to attack, and the handful of military gunners among their number repair half of the disabled cannons. If the Fated are defeated, they are tossed into a locked cell in the prison until it is time for the sacrifice.

### THE 120MM HOWITZERS

Alcatraz Citadel has been armed with six 120mm Howitzers, which are located in the areas specified in the maps. The cult has already loaded them in preparation for a military attack, but if the Fated can get to them, they can turn the massive weapons back around against the cultists.

The Howitzers are mounted on dual wheels that enable them to be turned in place or rolled forward. Moving one of the bulky cannons requires a 1 AP Action and enables the cannon to be moved a number of yards equal to the pushing character's Might Aspect (minimum 1 yard). There is more ammunition stockpiled next to the cannons than the Fated could possibly expend over the course of this adventure.

WEAPON (HEAVY GUNS)	RANGE	DAMAGE	CAPACITY	RELOAD
120mm Howitzer	☞ 100	8/12☠/16☠	1	6 AP
<b>Special:</b> Deadly, Heavy Loader				

## ACT IV, SCENE 4:

### THE PRISON

The cult's hostages - which primarily consist of people they kidnapped from the city in the wake of the Earthquake and the prisoners and military personnel that didn't "realize the glory of the Burning Man" when it first appeared above the island- are kept in the Citadel's prison.

#### RUNNING OUT OF TIME

Fated who wait to rescue the prisoners until just before the arrival of the Burning Man are in for a difficult time.

At 11:45 a.m., the cultists arrive at the prison to gather the prisoners. From 11:45 to 11:55, there are four Alcatraz Cultists and two Eagle Warriors inside the prison, opening cells and getting the prisoners ready. If the prisoners have been rescued by this time, they call out a panicked alert.

If the prisoners haven't been moved, the cultists march them north at 11:55 a.m. to the open area north of the Prison and east of the Bowling Alley. At noon, the cultists begin sacrificing the cultists as the Burning Man arrives at the island, bathing everything in bright, flickering light.

Cultists also show up at the Lighthouse to gather Nenel Flores at 11:50 a.m. If she's been rescued, they begin to panic and cry out to their fellow cultists about her escape, alerting them.

If she hasn't been rescued by that time, they bring her to the ritual area and arrive at noon, just as the ritual begins.

See Scene 8: Huitzilopochtli Rising (pg. 82) for more details.

As the Fated sneak across the island and encounter cultists, they should have the opportunity to eavesdrop on a conversation between two cultists as they discuss the location of the hostages. This can be worked in to another scene, such as while the Fated are dealing with the cultists guarding the lighthouse or artillery batteries, or the Fated can encounter two cultists that are discussing the hostages once they begin looking for them.

If the Fated speak Spanish, they can make out what the cultists are saying. If not, they only hear the two men speaking in rapid Spanish and gesturing in the direction of the prison building.



You manage to get close enough to two cultists to eavesdrop on them as they light cigarettes and gaze off toward the distant light of the slowly approaching Burning Man.

"Aren't you supposed to be guarding the prison?" The first man is wearing olive-green military pants, boots, and a plain white undershirt that's been marred with the drawn shape of a large, orange flame.

The second man is larger than the first and is more concerned with the fresh, raw tattoo on his arm - a flaming skull surrounded by pictograph-like letters - than his conversation partner. "Nah, I traded with Carlos. You can hear all them down there, calling out for someone to save them. It gives me the creeps."

The first man shrugs as he takes a drag from his cigarette. "It won't be much longer, eh? Soon as the Burning Man reaches us, Coatlicue is going to sacrifice all of them."

*Continued on the next page...*



“Yeah, yeah.” He gestures toward the fortified building. “I don’t have a problem with bleeding them out to give Huitzilopochtli (wee-tsee-loh-pohch-tee) the strength he needs to keep the world from ending. I just don’t want to listen to them begging for their lives.” He looks down at his cigarette and shrugs. “It’s sad, you know?”

The first cultist just nods his head in silent understanding and casts another glance toward the Burning Man.



Alternatively, if the Fated wander near the prison, either to investigate it or on the way to another part of the island, they are able to hear the muffled sounds of people crying and calling out for help and may be prompted to investigate the sounds.

When the Fated approach the prison, read the following text:



The prison is a two-story, heavily fortified building with thin, rifle-slit windows. You can hear muffled cries for help coming from inside the building, but the two cultists stationed outside the door - a man with a fresh, raw burn along one arm and a woman who has woven eagle feathers into her long, dark hair - are busy painting a mural on the side of the building. The blood that they’re using as their medium isn’t showing up too well against the building’s brick walls, and they seem to be arguing about it in Spanish.



If any of the Fated speak Spanish, they can make out the gist of the conversation, which primarily involves the woman claiming that, after Huitzilopochtli cut out the heart of the Copil and threw it back to Earth, it landed in the bay outside San Francisco, which is why she’s painting the mural: to celebrate the sun god’s return to his chosen people. The man, on the other hand, keeps trying to point out that the woman isn’t Aztec and doesn’t even have Aztec ancestors, unlike him, and that she should be with the sacrifices as an “unworthy outsider.”

If the Fated allow the scene to play out without getting involved, the woman responds by drawing a combat knife from her belt and slashing the man across his throat, causing him to stumble backwards and fall to his knees in surprise and pain. Rather than help him, however, she grabs his hair, yanks his head back, and shoves the bowl that holds the blood she was painting with in front of him to collect the blood spraying out from his severed neck, seemingly oblivious to all the blood that sprays over her as well.

When the man finally collapses to the ground, the now blood-soaked woman returns to her painting as if nothing had happened. The entire scene plays out over the course of five minutes. If there are any Eagle Warriors present (due to the Fated alerting the cultists), they watch the murder with surprise and revulsion, but none of them step forward to interfere: Huitzilopochtli needs blood to keep the world from ending, so none of them feel like they have any right to complain about the brutal murder, despite their discomfort.

If the Fated confront the woman, she ignores them unless they attempt to enter the prison or speak to her about her painting in Spanish (to the point of ignoring the Fated as they fight any Eagle Warriors that might be present). Any negative comments about the painting - or attempts to enter the prison - send her into a violent rage, however. She has the stats of an Eagle Warrior, though she does not possess a machine gun.

The doors of the prison are locked, but the keys to the doors (and the interior cells) can be found in the pockets of the male cultist.

## INSIDE THE PRISON

The cult hasn't posted any guards inside the prison, reasoning that even if the hostages did escape, pick the lock, and make it past the guards outside without raising an alarm, they wouldn't have anywhere to go; Alcatraz is a difficult island to escape from, which is why the Mexican government started using it as a political prison in the first place.

If the Fated don't acquire the keys from the male cultist guarding the doors, they can attempt to pick the lock, though it's difficult; they need to have lockpicks and must succeed on a TN 15 Lockpicking Challenge.

Once the Fated have made their way into the prison, read the following text:



You barely get one step into the prison before you're forced to recoil from the smell. The scents of sweat, body odor, urine, blood, mildew, and excrement all combine in the most unpleasant way possible to hint at just how much attention the prisoners have been given since the cult's apparent coup of the island.

The hallway is lined with dozens of steel doors, each with a little window that allows you to slide it back and look inside. Doing so not only intensifies the nauseating stench but also reveals the interior of the brick holes that the Mexican government seems content to call cells. The only light in the cells is weak, and it filters down from small vents at the top of each cell. Most of the cells contain two prisoners, many of which are dressed in military uniforms, though some are wearing civilian clothing or the white-and-black stripes of a prisoner. All of them seem physically weak and exhausted.

Every so often, one of the prisoners cries out for release or mercy, but there's little hope in their voices.



These prisoners are a combination of military soldiers and prisoners who didn't succumb to the influence of the Burning Man and the sacrificial victims that the cult abducted from San Francisco. Most haven't eaten in days.

The cell doors can be opened with either the key (which can be found on the male cultist guarding the prison) or with a lockpick and a successful TN 14 Lockpicking Challenge. The locks are all the same, so in order to prevent the rescue of the prisoners from devolving into repetitive card-flipping, assume that one successful Lockpicking Challenge is enough to allow a character to open all of the cells.

There are twenty-five cells on the ground floor of the prison. Opening them and helping the prisoners to their feet takes fifteen minutes, or half an hour if the Fated have to pick the locks. The cells on the second floor hold a few more, making a total of forty-three prisoners.

There's no sign of Neneti Flores (or any other ten year old girls) in the prison, but if they ask the prisoners, they mention that there was a little girl with them for a few hours, until one of the cultists showed up and took her away. If the Fated make a TN 7 Bewitch Challenge, one of the prisoners, a soldier, says that he overheard the "traitor" telling the girl that he was going to take her to the lighthouse to prepare for "the ritual."

If the Fated inquire about or search for Candelaria Naranja, the missing girl from Act III, they find her among the prisoners, frightened but otherwise unharmed.

## HIDING THE PRISONERS

Once the Fated have freed the prisoners, they still have to find someplace safe for them to wait out the military assault. While the prison is secure, none of the forty-three prisoners are willing to remain there; between their imprisonment and the terrible stench caused by their waste, they are anxious to leave before any of the cultists come to find them.

If the Fated are considering keeping the prisoners in their cells, one of the soldier prisoners will point out that anyone with combat training is too weak to fight back against the cultists, some of whom are armed with machine guns that could cut them down in the blink of an eye. The others nod their heads in agreement; convincing the prisoners to stay in the prison requires a TN 12 Convince, Intimidate, or Leadership Challenge. They insist on leaving the cell doors open, however, and a Margin of Success is required on this Challenge to get them to concede to closing the doors (which automatically lock when closed).

Outside of the prison, there are two good places to hide the prisoners: in the *Ciudadela*, the fortified building at the center of the island that was built as a position of last defense in the event of invasion (which is currently unoccupied by any cultists), or the western caves, where the prisoners can wait out of sight until the military has finished its assault. The Fated can choose to hide them in another building or location, but doing so will be less effective and result in some of the prisoners being caught in the crossfire between the cultists and the military. See The Assault on page 79 for more details.

Regardless of which option they choose, the movement of so many prisoners at one time will draw suspicion. Moving them is handled with an Ongoing Challenge.

## SNEAKING ACROSS CAMP

- **SKILLS ALLOWED:** Deceive, Navigation, Stealth
- **TARGET NUMBER:** 8 + 1 per time the cultists have been alerted
- **DURATION:** 5 minutes
- **SUCCESS REQUIREMENT:** 8
- **FAILURE REQUIREMENT:** 2

If the Fated attempt to move the prisoners in small groups, rather than in a single, large group, they gain a  $\blacklozenge$  to their flips made as part of this Ongoing Challenge, but it increases the length of the Duration to 10 minutes.

If the Fated succeed at this Ongoing Challenge, they manage to get the prisoners to the desired destination.

If they suffer a catastrophic failure, however, the group is spotted by cultists and the Fated are attacked by two Alcatraz Cultists and one Eagle Warrior (and possibly some additional Eagle Warriors, if the cultists have been alerted). The cultists shout out an alert at the start of combat and focus their attentions on the Fated, rather than the prisoners, whom they try to avoid killing (as they need them for the ritual).

After the cultists have been dealt with, the Fated can then get the rest of the way to their destination without incident.



## ACT IV, SCENE 5:

### THE ARMORY GAMBIT

When the Fated arrive at the Armory, read the following text:



The Armory is hunkered down near the north end of the island. Up here, you can feel some of the chill of the salty spring air as it blows in from the ocean.

The building is a squat, single story concrete building. The word "Arsenal" is carved into the concrete above a no-nonsense metal door set into the center of the facade. Through the two windows - both of which are crisscrossed with wrought iron bars - you can see one of the cultists bent over a table.



The woman inside the Armory is Loida Suero, a fisher who fell overboard in a windstorm that cropped up shortly after the Burning Man's first appearance. The cultists fished her out of the water, but once she was on the island, she quickly realized that they were "some sort of cult." She feigned a religious awakening and told them what they wanted to hear, and they stationed her here to look after the guns.

If the Fated are disguised as cultists when they enter the Armory, read the following text:



The interior of the armory is more or less what you expected. The floor is sanded, smoothed plywood, and there are rows of weapons - a truly bewildering number of them, primarily rifles and machine guns - trapped just out of reach behind wrought iron cages.

The woman inside the building looks up as you enter, then sighs and slumps down on the tabletop. "Let me guess... more machine guns?"



If the Fated are not disguised when they enter the Armory, instead read the following text:




The interior of the armory is more or less what you expected. The floor is sanded, smoothed plywood, and there are rows of weapons - a truly bewildering number of them, primarily rifles and machine guns - trapped just out of reach behind wrought iron cages.

The woman inside the building is middle-aged and heavy-set, with dark hair that's pulled back into a half-unraveled bun. She looks up as you enter, then jumps back in startled surprise. "You're not with the cult! Who are you?" She stares at you, clearly afraid.



While Loida knows how to fire a gun, she's not a very good shot and doesn't think that she can get off the island herself, no matter how well armed she is, so she's been playing along with the charade until she figures out an escape plan.


If the Fated reveal that they're trying to rescue hostages and bring down the cult, she's willing to help them in whatever way she can... so long as it's not dangerous for her. Getting her to go along with a dangerous plan (which includes locking herself in the Armory) requires a TN 13 Convince, Bewitch, Deceive, or Intimidate Challenge; if the Fated mention the military strike force that will be landing shortly, they gain a  to their flip.

If the Fated convince Loida to lock down the Armory, it prevents the cultists from reinforcing when they become alerted to the Fated's presence. Perhaps more importantly, whether or not the cultists can access the Armory affects how easily the military is able to seize control of the citadel during their assault. See Scene 7: The Assault (pg. 79) for more details.

If the Fated ask Loida to let them use the guns in the Armory, she lets them use any of the stored weapons, which include the following firearms (all of which can either be found in the *Fated Almanac* or listed below):

- **Pistols:** Collier Navy, Collier "Rough Rider"
- **Long Arms:** Chesterfield 1879 Repeating, Hawken Rifle, Alpine Machine Gun (see below)
- **Heavy Guns:** Mortar Gun (see below, 20 rounds of ammunition and a wheeled weapon mount are present in the Armory)


If the Fated ask Loida about the cultists or what their plans are, read the following text:



Loida's eyes go wide and she looks a little nervous at the mention of the upcoming ritual. "You know... they talk around me. They think I've been converted to their side. I think that all this nonsense has made their heads soft."

"But this ritual they've been planning..." She glances out the window and shudders, lowering her voice. "It's bad business, I tell you. This god they're so wrapped up in? According to that Coatlicue lady, he's a bloodthirsty bastard. She said that back in the day, people used to sacrifice a bunch of people to him."

Loida shakes her head. "Look, I don't want to be here for this. These crazies are planning to sacrifice everyone as soon as the Burning Man reaches the island. Something to do with her daughter or..." Her voice trails off into a sigh. "Poor little thing."



Loida hasn't seen Nenetl Flores and doesn't even know her name; she's just heard rumors that her mother is planning to "give her over to the Burning Man," which, in her opinion, is bad news no matter how it's interpreted.

WEAPON (LONG ARMS)	RANGE	DAMAGE
Alpine Machine Gun	12	2/3/5

**Special:** Deadly (this weapon adds +1 to its attacks), Capacity 18, Reload 4 AP.  
**Full Auto:** Characters using this weapon have access to the following Trigger:  
 • *Stutter Fire:* After damaging, immediately make another attack with this weapon against a different target. This extra attack may not declare Triggers.

WEAPON (HEAVY GUNS)	RANGE	DAMAGE
Mortar Gun	50	5/6/7

**Special:** Heavy (Attacking with this weapon costs 2 AP and requires a weapon mount), Indirect (This weapon can be fired without LoS, but if so, it suffers a -1 to its attack and defense and neither the attack nor the damage flip can be Cheated), Capacity 1, Reload 2 AP.

## ACT IV, SCENE 6:

### THE LIGHTHOUSE

The Lighthouse is guarded by two men, one of them wearing a feathered cloak, the other shirtless. Both are Eagle Warriors that have been tasked by Coatlicue to protect her daughter until the ritual and won't let any of their fellow cultists (or anyone disguised as a cultists) inside without a really good excuse (and a TN 15 Bewitch, Deceive, or Intimidate Challenge). If the Fated achieve a Margin of Failure on this Challenge, they see through the deception and attack the Fated.

Once the Fated have dealt with the cultists and made their way inside the lighthouse, read the following text:



The ground floor of the lighthouse is dominated by an office that is appointed in typical Spartan military fashion. A few bookshelves line the wall on your right side as you enter, and a fairly simple metal desk takes up the middle. Stacked on top of it and on top of the bookshelves are all sorts of alarming items, such as obsidian daggers, a large clay bowl, a variety of red and black paints, and other items in a similar vein.

You hear a small commotion behind the desk, and then a small girl in a dirty nightgown, around ten years old, jumps up into a standing position. She's wearing a headdress of feathers that was clearly made for an adult, held together with small bits of gold and decorated with blue and green feathers. Her face is painted in red and black designs, and her dark eyes are wide. She looks surprised at first, but quickly turns hopeful as she sees you. "*Estás aquí para salvarme?*"



The girl is Nenetl Flores, daughter of Tlalli Flores and niece of Coyotl Flores. She's asking if the Fated are there to save her.

Nenetl speaks English and will switch to speaking it if the Fated seem to have trouble with Spanish. She explains that she was taken from her home a day ago by "weird people dressed like birds." She met someone who claims to be her mother, but she's scary, so Nenetl doesn't like spending time with her.

Up until a few hours ago, Nenetl was being held in a cell with a bunch of other people (in the prison), but then the "bird people" showed up again and brought her to the lighthouse. She's been trying to find a way out ever since, with little success.

If the Fated ask her about her mother, Nenetl says that "she keeps going on about Huitza... Huit-something... and ranting a lot. I just want to go home to uncle Coyotl."

If pressed, Nenetl's expression becomes worried. "She said that they're going to do a ritual," she says. "I think she's going to kill a lot of people. We need to get them out of here." She then adopts a seriously determined demeanor, in a way that only a ten year old can.

Nenetl is small and quite good at hiding, so if the Fated are able to move her to somewhere other than the lighthouse, she'll be safe and hidden throughout either the military raid or the arrival of the Burning Man (though if the Fated flee from the island after hiding her and don't retrieve her first, she's never seen again).



## ACT IV, SCENE 7:

### THE ASSAULT

The Mexican military launches their assault on the island when the Fated signal them with the flare gun. Read the following text:



The flare fires up into the sky, a burning orange star next to the brighter light of the Burning Man. As it does, the military boats waiting on the far shore start their engines and begin racing toward the island at full speed. You can see armed soldiers crouched down in the backs of the boats, clutching their machine guns to their chests as they hunker down against the waves.



If the cultists are still capable of firing the guns of Battery Vasquez (i.e., the guns haven't been disabled yet), read the following text:



A shout goes up from the southern gun battery as men and women dressed in partial military fatigues rush to man the twenty fifteen-inch Rodman cannons. A woman with binoculars shouts out firing coordinates, and the cannons slam backwards on their firing tracks in a percussion of explosions. The military boats racing to your rescue explode in great plumes of water and splinters as the artillery fire rips them apart with brutal efficiency.

It's over in less than a minute; the military's assault force has been reduced to little more than splinters and floating corpses. Cheers of victory go up across the island as the Burning Man draws ever closer, oblivious to the massacre below.



Needless to say, the Fated will have to finish the rest of the adventure without military reinforcements.

If the Fated wait until they have disabled the guns of Battery Vasquez, however, then the military boats rush toward the island at full speed, then circle counterclockwise toward the docks. Their machine gunners pick off any cultists manning the 120mm Howitzer cannons, then they mow down any cultists present on the wharf and storm the island.

If the Fated secured the Arsenal, then the battle is relatively one-sided and the Mexican military is able to cut down the less well-armed cultists with minimal casualties. Angela Guerrero has spread a description of the Fated among the soldiers taking part in the assault, so unless the Fated are disguised as cultists, they're not in danger of being attacked by the soldiers. If they're disguised as cultists, however, then the soldiers will either take them prisoner (if they're unarmed) or shoot first and ask questions later (if they're also armed). Securing the island in this way takes thirty minutes (see the Military Evacuation section on page 80 for more details).

If the Arsenal is still under the control of the cultists, then the battle is much bloodier, with the cultists taking up defensive positions as they trade machine gun fire with the military. The military ends up bogged down and fighting from building to building, only really gaining an advantage once the boats return with reinforcements from San Francisco. Securing the island in this way takes an hour and a half (see the Military Evacuation section on page 80 for more details).

If the Fated rescued the hostages, then it takes the military two trips and forty-five minutes to ferry the hostages and the Fated back to San Francisco. If the Fated haven't rescued Nenetl Flores from the Lighthouse (see pg. 78), then she hides from the soldiers who check the building, thinking that they're cultists coming to grab her. If they've rescued her and hidden her away somewhere, then it takes five minutes to retrieve her and get her to the boats.

## MILITARY EVACUATION

If the Fated managed to escape the island before noon, then they are able to get to safety before the Burning Man arrives. Read the following text:



As you're pulling away from the shore of the island, the Burning Man finally starts to slow down above the island. You have some idea what to expect after your experience in Chinatown, and as its flames change from orange to blue, you instinctively reach for the deck rails. Angela Guerrero shields her eyes as she shouts at the soldier manning the engine. "*Vaya más rápido!*"

A high-pitched sound like a thousand fingernails scratching across a thousand blackboards fills the air, causing the soldiers standing next to you to grab their heads in pain, and then there's a flash of blue light as bright as the sun that forces you to turn away and shield your eyes. As the light fades, you look up to see a large, ragged-edged, vertical portal open in the sky above the island.

Beyond the portal, you catch a glimpse of the barren, scorched desert of another world. A swarm of wheeling, spinning bat-like creatures dart out of the portal in a screeching swarm, spreading out into the afternoon sky like a plague of locusts.

A massive creature, some sort of monstrosity combining the worst aspects of a beetle and the charred corpse of a jackal, follows the winged creatures from the portal, its head swinging from side to side as it shuffles forward, sniffing the air curiously. Guerrero murmurs "*Madre de Dios,*" as she stares up at the titanic monster in awe.



If the evacuation process lasts past noon, then the Fated still manage to escape onto the boats as above, but don't get far enough from the island to escape the attention of the smaller, bat-like Camazotz. Read the following text:



You've no sooner managed to pull your eyes away from the towering monstrosity when you notice that the smaller, flying creatures are wheeling toward the escaping boats. Officers begin shouting at their soldiers in Spanish, and on every boat, machine guns bark out rapid staccatos of gunfire as they rake the sky with bullets, cutting the things out of the sky and dropping them into the bay. It's not enough, though, and as Angela Guerrero turns to snatch up her machine gun, a pack of the scorpion-tailed bat-things dive downward, knocking her off the boat and into the churning water below.

It's difficult to make out just what the winged predators are at a glance - you have an impression of a humanoid bats with a long, scorpion-like tails, but they're charred black like burned corpses. Their eyes smolder like glowing coals, and as they finish with the soldiers and turn toward you, you can see flames licking the back of their throats.



There is one Camazotz per Fated. The military boats are mostly small, fast troop transports that are roughly three yards wide and ten yards long. The Camazotz take full advantage of their ability to fly to launch hit and run attacks against the Fated. If the Fated successfully evacuated the hostages, there are a half-dozen hostages cowering in the center of the boat who are entrusting their safety to the Fated; each has 3 Wounds remaining and is automatically hit by any Camazotz attacks (which deal moderate damage). Stats for the Camazotz can be found on page 100.

Guerrero spends the battle in the water, but once there's a lull in the fighting, she shouts up for the Fated to help her back into the boat. If they attempt to save her during the fight, it takes 2 AP to haul her back onto the boat. She dropped her machine gun into the ocean when she was knocked off the boat, but if the Fated give her a weapon, she does her best to help them fight off the Camazotz, effectively giving each of them  $\oplus$  to their attack flips against the creatures.

As the Fated battle the Camazotz, the other boats are attacked as well. Use their battle with the Fated as a microcosm of the larger battle; if the Fated have an easy time fighting the creatures off, then the rest of the military forces manage to pull through without too much trouble. If they have trouble and barely snatch victory from the jaws of defeat, however, then it's a much closer battle across the board, and there are likely a great deal of dead and seriously wounded soldiers on the boats when they reach the shore.

Once the Fated have escaped the island (and possibly dealt with the Camazotz), they can see the distant orange flames of the Burning Man heading westward, across the ocean and away from San Francisco.

The larger monster - the Quinametzin - casts a dubious gaze toward the military boats and then slinks off into the ocean, heading southwest past San Francisco.

See the Conclusion on page 89 for more details.

## BOAT COMBAT

Boats are not particularly stable fighting platforms. The military's petrol boats count as unstable platforms, so characters firing ranged weapons from these vessels receive a  $\square$  to their attack flip.

Any character who suffers damage while in the boat must succeed at an Acrobatics Challenge (TN 6 + damage received) or be knocked into the water by the force of the attack. Climbing back into the boat requires 2 AP and a TN 10 Athletics Challenge.



## ACT IV, SCENE 8:

### HUTTZILOPOCHTLI RISING

If the Fated haven't signaled the military by noon, then the Burning Man reaches the island as the cult's ritual reaches its peak. Depending upon how many of the hostages the Fated saved, the exact details of how this scene plays out may change as noted below. The ritual takes place on the eastern end of the island, north of the prison and east of the bowling alley, and should be visible from just about everywhere on the island east of the *Ciudadela*. If the Fated are on the western side of the island when the Burning Man arrives, the Fatemaster may need to paraphrase the descriptions of the events to account for their lack of visibility.

Read the following text as the Burning Man arrives:



As the Burning Man reaches Alcatraz Island, it slowly descends from the sky, trailing a comet-tail of crackling flame in its wake. The light shifts from orange to blue as it descends, casting the world around you in shimmering shades of azure that crawl across the ground and buildings like spilled ink.

The cultists gather beneath their supposed god as it descends, forming up in a wide circle of men and women that stare up at it in awe. One of them - a beautiful, dusky-skinned woman wearing an Aztec headdress, a necklace made of human hearts, hands, and skulls, and a skirt that appears to be made of dead snakes - steps forward into the center of the circle.



The woman is Tlalli Flores, the political prisoner turned cult leader who is at the heart of the madness that has engulfed Alcatraz. She believes that the Burning Man is a manifestation of Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec god of the sun.

Tlalli's madness has manifested in the form of grandiose delusions that she is the reincarnation

of Coatlicue, the Aztec goddess who gave birth to the sun god. In her twisted understanding of Aztec mythology, she believes that the Burning Man wishes to incarnate in a human, and since the Coatlicue gave birth to Huitzilopochtli, the host for his reincarnation must be the child that she gave birth to, Nenetl Flores. While she is sad about losing her daughter in such a way, she's also proud, because it means that her daughter will be able to save the world with her death.

In short, Tlalli Flores is crazy.

Unfortunately, proximity to the Burning Man has gifted her with magical powers, which has only fed into Tlalli's delusions and helped to further convince her that she is Coatlicue.

### NENETL FLORES

If the Fated rescued Nenetl Flores, continue with this text:



The woman stares up at the Burning Man, then lowers her gaze to her followers. "*El elegido ha sido robado de nosotros,*" she reveals, drawing cries of shocked disbelief from her followers. She silences them by raising her hands into the air. "*Los que mataría el sol no habrá victoria el día de hoy. Voy a aceptar las bendiciones del hombre en llamas, a pesar de que me va a destruir. Mi sangre se allanar el camino para el nuevo mundo. Preparar los sacrificios.*"

The cultists raise their arms to the sky, imitating her, as they begin to sing joyfully to her and the Burning Man.



If the Fated can understand Spanish, Coatlicue's speech translates to "The Chosen One has been stolen from us," and "Those who would slay the sun will not be victorious this day. I will accept the Burning Man's blessings, though it will destroy me. My blood will pave the way for the new world. Prepare the sacrifices."

If the Fated did not rescue Nenetl Flores, continue with this text:



The woman raises her hands up toward the Burning Man, her fingers splayed wide. *“Este es el comienzo de un nuevo mundo! Saque mi hija!”*

The cultists part, allowing a small girl in a dirty nightgown and an feathery headdress to hesitantly step toward the woman. It’s clear from the expression on the ten-year-old’s face that she’s terrified, and as she stares up at the Burning Man, you can make out the red and black designs that have been painted on her face.

The woman smiles down at her and stretches out a hand toward the girl, who bites her lip and reaches out to take it. For a moment, it almost seems like a touching moment between mother and daughter, but then the woman spins the girl around, grabbing onto her arms with a vice-like grip as the girl shrieks in surprise and terror.



Coatlucue’s speech translates to “This is the beginning of the new world! Bring forth my daughter.” She holds Nenetl tightly to keep her from running away from the ritual, but otherwise doesn’t harm her daughter.

## HOSTAGES

If the Fated rescued the hostages, continue with the text in the next column, using Nenetl or Coatlicue as appropriate, depending upon which of them is intended as the Burning Man’s host.



Deprived of their bloody sacrifices, the cult turns on itself as their leader points to her followers. Each time her finger lands on one of the Burning Man’s worshipers, they are seized by their peers and dragged into the center of the circle, struggling and protesting as they call out for help, evidently no longer quite as enthusiastic about their beliefs as they had been a moment earlier.

The woman in the Aztec headdress makes a sharp gesture with her hand. As one, her followers slice the throats of their makeshift sacrifices, spraying the blood of their former friends and allies upward into the air in splattering plumes of pressurized blood. Much of it strikes [Nenetl/Tlalli], drenching her in gore from head to toe. In the bright blue light of the Burning Man, it almost looks purple.



If the Fated did not rescue the hostages, instead continue with this text, using Nenetl or Coatlicue as appropriate, depending upon which of them is intended as the Burning Man’s host:



The cultists lead the struggling hostages to the center of their semi-circle and force them to their knees, forty-three separate offerings of blood to the Burning Man. Their leader raises her hands to the sky and calls out to her flaming god as the cultists press knives of obsidian or steel against the throats of the first ten hostages, spraying their blood upwards in splattering plumes that drench [Nenetl/Tlalli] from head to toe in gore. In the bright blue light of the Burning Man, it almost looks purple.

As the hostages die, the cultists push their bodies to the side and grab the next batch of screaming hostages, pulling them forward to continue the grisly ritual.



## ATTACKING THE CULTISTS

If the Fated are nearby, they can attack the cultists as they perform their ritual. If the Fated did not rescue the hostages, then there are three Alcatraz Cultists per Fated and one Eagle Warrior per Fated here. If the hostages were rescued, then this number drops to one Alcatraz Cultists per Fated and one Eagle Warrior per Fated after the cultists turn on themselves. Stats for the Alcatraz Cultists and the Eagle Warriors can be found on pages 97 and 98, respectively.

If the Fated have alerted the cultists, these numbers are bolstered as normal.

Coatlucue is also present, though she focuses upon calling out to the Burning Man and supporting the other warriors over direct combat. If she has Nenetl, she does nothing more than hold onto the girl and shout craziness in Spanish at the Fated; she only enters the combat proper if Nenetl escapes from her (which requires the Fated to break her grip on the girl with a single attack dealing 3 or more points of damage).

If the Fated attempt to stop the ritual by attacking Nenetl, then they are horrible people. Her death - or the death of Coatlucue - doesn't affect the actions of the Burning Man in the slightest, nor does it prevent the chaos that soon follows. Nenetl has a Defense and Willpower of 3 and 4 Wounds.

## MALIFAUX RISING

A few moments after the cultists finish their ritual (or at the start of the third round of combat, if the Fated attacked them) Breaches to Malifaux open across the island as the Burning Man hovers overhead. Read the text on the following column.



The light shining down from the hovering Burning Man intensifies to almost blinding brightness. The ground beneath the cultists begins to crumble away into what can only be described as some sort of dimensional portal opening underfoot, making a sound like a thousand fingers scraping across a thousand chalkboards.

The rocks tumble away into the barren, scorched desert of another world as the cultists scramble to move away from the rapidly expanding Breach. A wave of intense heat washes over you, as does the acrid stench of smoke and burnt meat. You catch a glimpse of something impossibly large on the other side of the new Breach, a titanic, desiccated creature surrounded in a cloud of smaller, darting bat-things.

As one of the cultists falls through the portal, she's snatched up mid-air by two of the winged creatures. They screech at each other as they fight over their meal, eventually pulling her apart in a shower of screaming gore.



The new Breach expands rapidly beneath the ritual site. If the Fated are within 10 yards of the center of the ritual site (most likely from charging into melee range of the cultists), then they have to succeed at a TN 10 Evade Challenge or fall into the Breach as the ground gives way beneath them.

The Malifaux side of the Breach is centered sixty feet above the ground, so a character that falls through the Breach suffers 10/12/14 damage as she lands on the hot, scorched sand on the other side. Even if the character survives, she's trapped in a hitherto unknown corner of Malifaux and - unless she is capable of flight or teleportation to pass back through the Breach - is likely gone forever.

If the other Fated are particularly resourceful, however, rescuing their companion could be the basis for another adventure, perhaps one focused around following the Burning Man after it departs from Alcatraz in the hopes of finding another portal back to the burnt desert.

The Breach swallows up the entirety of the cultists and hostages present at the ritual, save for Coatlicue and Nenetl, who, if present, is dragged to safety by her mother.

## THE REMNANTS OF THE FOURTH SUN

The Fated have a few moments to react to the appearance of the Breach, which eventually stabilizes at roughly fifteen yards in diameter. The cultists nearest the Breach raise their arms upwards to the Burning Man as they leap into the portal, believing it to be the new world that Coatlicue had promised them.

The cultists who aren't present at the ritual begin retreating to the wharf as soon as the Camazotz come through the Breach. Read the following text:



You hear a deep, wheezing growl from the other side of the Breach, and then a swarm of winged, bat-like creatures burst out of the portal, arcing high into the sky as they screech and twirl in the unfamiliar skies overhead. Long, scorpion-like tails trail behind the bat-things as they spin and wheel overhead, and all across the island, you hear shouts of surprise followed by bursts of gunfire.

Over the chaos that engulfed the island, you hear someone yell the word "Camazotz" and start ordering everyone to fall back to the wharf for evacuation.

The cult, it seems, is abandoning Alcatraz to the denizens of Malifaux.



Regardless of whether the Fated choose to stand their ground or flee with the cultists, a group of the Camazotz - one per Fated character - swoop down from the roiling swarm overhead to torment them. The Camazotz utilize strike and fade tactics, attacking whatever characters seem weakest and doing as much damage as possible before retreating to regroup. Stats for the Camazotz can be found on page 100.

If the Fated have not either rescued Nenetl or told her to hide somewhere, then another Camazotz swoops down and snatches her out of her mother's grip. The Fated can wound the creature and get it to drop her with any sort of ranged attack against the creature; a single hit distracts it long enough for Nenetl to squirm out of its grasp; she doesn't fall far enough to take any damage.

Each of the Fated can attempt a single ranged attack against the Camazotz. If all of them fail, the Camazotz disappears into the swarm overhead with the screaming Nenetl, who is never seen again.

## THIS BOAT IS FULL

If the Fated attempt to flee with the cultists, they will find that there aren't quite enough boats at the wharf to go around. The cultists are motoring away even as the Fated arrive at the wharf, but there's a single petrol motor boat left. Two cultists - Encarta Soto, a former soldier with a half-shaved head and military pants, and Nidia Cabello, a former prisoner wearing striped prison clothes that have been painted with orange flames - are attempting to untie the knot mooring the boat.

There's enough room for four others in the boat, but neither of the women is willing to let any of the Fated aboard. The Fated can either force them to hand it over (in which case they both have the stats of an Alcatraz Cultist, pg. 97) or succeed at a TN 10 Bewitch, Convince, or Intimidate Challenge to persuade them to take the Fated with. Two Margins of Success with an Intimidate Challenge are required to get the women to abandon the boat entirely.

If the Fated fail to obtain passage on the boat, the cultists speed away, leaving them behind for the horrors overhead. They can leap into the water and attempt to swim to the San Francisco shore, but doing so requires five TN 10 Athletics Challenges. Each Margin of Success on one of these Athletics Challenges reduces the number of Athletics Challenges needed to reach the shore by 1. Each time a Living character fails one of these Challenges, she gains the **Suffocating +1** Condition and must then attempt the Athletics Challenge again. The Suffocating Condition only ends once the character reaches the shore. An Athletics Challenge represents about ten minutes of swimming.

Alternatively, the Fated could signal for the military using their flare gun; there are no longer any cultists manning the artillery batteries, and the soldiers on the boats have plenty of room to evacuate the Fated and any hostages they rescued. As the boats approach the island, however, the Fated are attacked by a group of two Camazotz per Fated; the boats arrive at the wharf at the beginning of the fourth round of combat and take off for safety as soon as everyone is on board.

Read the following text as the Fated escape from the island, regardless of whether they do so via swimming or rescue boat:



Looking back on the island, it almost looks like a bee hive with all the creatures swarming around it. The titanic, desiccated creature that you saw on the other side of the portal is visible no matter how far you get away from the island, like the centerpiece atop a horrible cake. The bay water's gentle waves seem almost disconcertingly relaxing after what you just escaped.

As you watch the Burning Man float away from Alcatraz and out toward the ocean, you can't help but think that the cultists may have been right. They have ushered in a new era on Earth, and it seems to be an era of blood.



Once the Fated are safe, proceed to the Conclusion to see how things shape up for Earth in the aftermath of the battle.

## THE QUINAMETZIN

If the Fated choose to remain on the island, they will have front row seats for the arrival of the Quinametzin, the desiccated giant on the other side of the Breach. Read the following text, omitting the part about Coatlicue if the Fated have already killed her.



Suddenly, two large, taloned claws that seem somewhere between bone and chitin jab through the portal, grasping the edges of the crumbling ground as the titanic creature from the other side of the portal scrambles to pull itself into another world.

The woman in the snake skirt and grisly necklace watches in awe as the titan scrambles for purchase, and she steps forward, her hands splayed out in front of her as she closes her eyes and starts to sing to it in Spanish. The colossal beast barely seems to even notice her.



The 120mm Howitzer cannons are particularly useful weapons against the Quinametzin, and as such, they gain **+** to their attack flips against it. Stats for the Quinametzin can be found on page 101.

The Fated have four rounds of combat to attack the Quinametzin as it tries to pull itself up through the Breach. Since only its head and arms are visible, treat any Critical Effect results of **♥** as if they **✕** and any results of **♣** as if they were **♣**. If the Fated are able to cripple, amputate, or otherwise render one of the Quinametzin's arms useless, then it falls back into its own world with a screeching howl of anger.



Read the following text if the Fated succeed in sending it back to Malifaux:



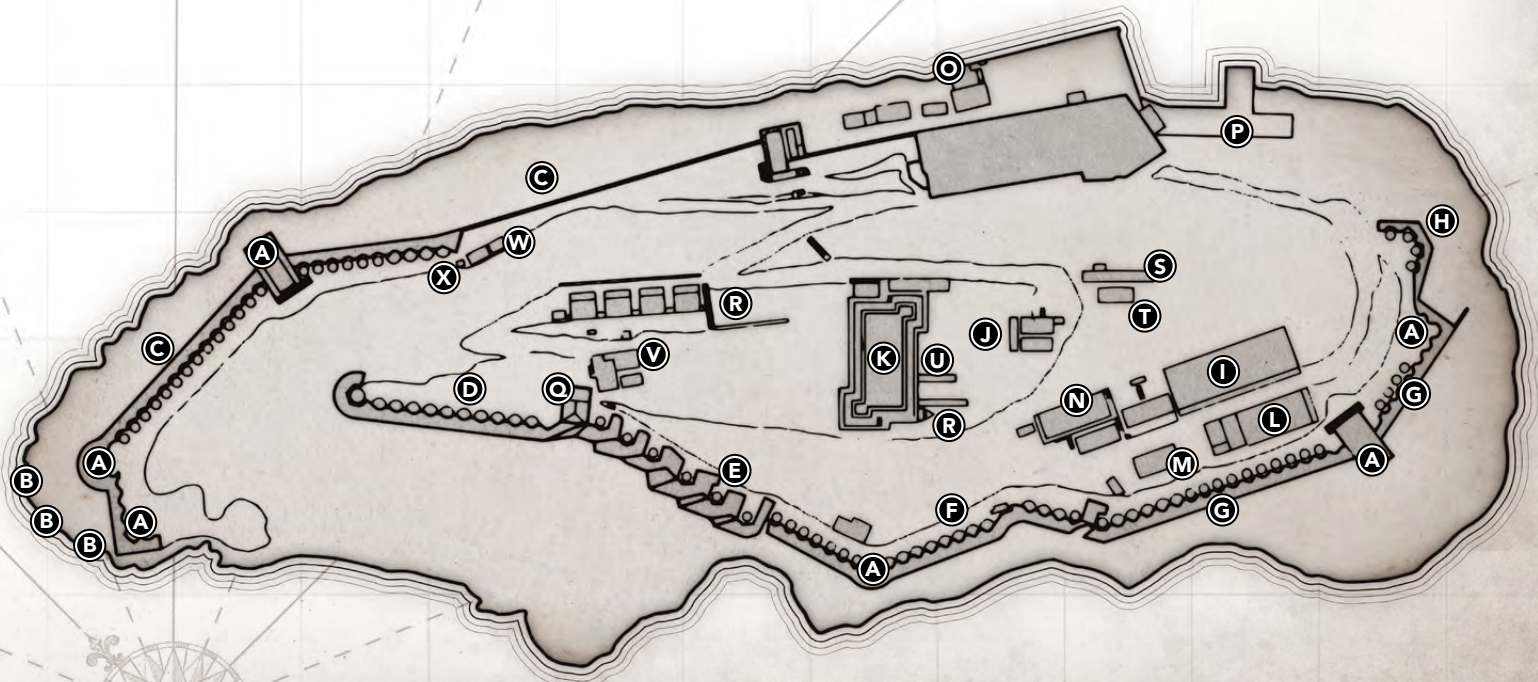
The colossal beast scrapes at the ground as it staggers for purchase, but to no avail. With an ear-shattering, screeching howl, it falls back into the portal, its limbs flailing as the bat-creatures nestled in its chest launch themselves into the air, abandoning it. Before they can reach the portal and transition to Earth, however, the portal shimmers and collapses in on itself, leaving normal rock and stone in its place.

The acrid scent of burning meat lingers on the air a moment longer before being blown away by a gentle sea breeze. Were it not for the circling Camazotz overhead and the deep gouges in the stone, you might almost be able to convince yourself that the colossal horror had been nothing more than a momentary nightmare.



## ALCATRAZ ISLAND

- |                            |                            |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> 120mm Howitzer    | <b>G</b> Battery McClellan | <b>M</b> Armory            | <b>S</b> Bowling Alley         |
| <b>B</b> Western Caves     | <b>H</b> Battery Anna      | <b>N</b> Engineer Barracks | <b>T</b> Bakery                |
| <b>C</b> Battery Rodriguez | <b>I</b> Prison            | <b>O</b> Boat House        | <b>U</b> Rifle Projectile Shed |
| <b>D</b> Battery Hidelga   | <b>J</b> Lighthouse        | <b>P</b> Wharf             | <b>V</b> Auxiliary Storage     |
| <b>E</b> Battery Gonzales  | <b>K</b> The Ciudadela     | <b>Q</b> Magazine          | <b>W</b> Blacksmith            |
| <b>F</b> Battery Morales   | <b>L</b> Mess Hall         | <b>R</b> Ordnance          | <b>X</b> Furnace               |



Otherwise, at the start of the fourth round of combat, the Quinametzin pulls itself full through the Breach and rises up to its full height. Read the following text:



The twisted creature begins to slip back down into the Breach, but then it tenses its arms and with one final burst of energy claws its way upward, its talons scratching deep furrows in the rocks of Alcatraz. It barely manages to scramble free of the portal before the dimensional rip closes behind it.

Chest heaving from the exertion, the titanic creature draws itself up to its full height, revealing a desiccated, chitinous body that looks something like a beetle and a dead jackal that's been left out in the hot sun for far too long. Its chest is a gaping gash, and you can see dozens of the bat-things clinging to the bones of its rib cage like some sort of sentient, living cave.

The scent of burned meat rolls off the titan in waves, and as you stare up at it in awe, it starts loping toward the southern shore of the island, its head turning this way and that as if seeking to make sense of the countless new scents on the wind.



The Quinametzin lopes off toward the southern shore of the island, lowers itself down over the cliff, and starts making its way toward San Francisco as the Camazotz flap around it in a screeching cloud. If the Fated haven't yet disarmed Battery Vasquez, then they have a single chance to take the titan down before it reaches San Francisco: each character manning a functional cannon can make a single Heavy Guns attack against the Quinametzin. On a hit, the character inflicts 6/12/18 damage as the artillery shell strikes the colossal creature.

If the initial salvo does not kill the Quinametzin, however, then it merely screeches in pain and continues toward San Francisco as fast as it can, reaching shore before the Fated have a chance to reload or switch cannons. See the Conclusion on the next page for details about what happens if this occurs.



# CONCLUSION

The biggest question at the end of the adventure - at least in a global sense - is whether or not the Quinametzin was able to escape from Alcatraz. If the Fated stopped the creature from coming through the Breach, then they have earned a significant victory and have prevented the loss of untold lives and devastation across their homeworld. If the Fated didn't launch the military rescue and didn't stop the Quinametzin from reaching San Francisco, then it rampages through the city, causing far more destruction than the earthquake two days earlier. Thousands of people die before the titan shuffles off to the south, leaving the burning husk of the city behind it.

If the Fated launched the military rescue, then it likely slips away into the waters south of San Francisco, avoiding the city. Either way, the monster makes its way deeper into Mexico and ravages the unprepared nation. The Fated will no doubt see plenty of headlines about the creature and the carnage it leaves in its wake in the weeks to come, especially if they spend any time in Mexico.

If Coatlicue survived the adventure, then she follows after the Quinametzin, stirring up the horrified locals with her own unique brand of insanity. With monsters such as the Quinametzin walking the Mexican countryside, she finds plenty of converts who are willing to turn to her for understanding and guidance in a world that's been turned upside down. The cult - which calls itself the "Remnants of the Fourth Sun" - eventually becomes a significant problem for the Mexican government.

Regardless of what happens, Alcatraz becomes a roost for the Camazotz, which becomes a significant problem for the people of San Francisco. The winged beasts wheel above the burned streets of the city, snatching up the displaced population and starting fires that burn for weeks to come. The Mexican military eventually declares San Francisco a disaster zone and institutes martial law in order to combat the Camazotz infestation.

If the Mexican military was able to rout the cult quickly, then the barricade is generally successful and they manage to keep the Camazotz confined to Alcatraz. If they were forced into a bloody confrontation with the creatures, however, then their numbers aren't great enough to keep the Malifaux natives in check and they gradually spread up and down the western coast, becoming a significant threat to everyone in the area.

If the Fated successfully rescued the hostages from Alcatraz, then they're hailed as heroes by the people of San Francisco. If Adelita Ortega is still alive, she writes an news article celebrating their victory (and glossing over their failures) that is picked up nationally and then, eventually, world-wide. The Fated soon become world-famous and may be called upon to deal with the other catastrophes that spring up in the wake of the Burning Man. If Adelita Ortega was killed, then Aracelis Fierro writes the article, which isn't nearly as sensational (or good) as Adelita's would have been; the Fated earn local acclaim but don't receive any attention beyond San Francisco.

If the Fated rescued Nenetl Flores, she has a happy reunion with her uncle, who sweeps her up into his arms and hugs her closely. He tells the Fated that he owes them far more than he can ever repay, and in the future, he goes out of the way to help them in whatever way he can. They have made a skilled and influential ally, and Nenetl considers them to be wonderful people (and may even decide to follow in one of their footsteps as she grows older).

If the Fated utterly abandon their mission and don't travel to Alcatraz, then the military attempts to launch an assault on the Quinametzin when it appears, with little success. Their boats are shattered by the beast and the Camazotz pick off any survivors as the titan strides into San Francisco to vent its anger on the populous there. It eventually moves south as noted above, leaving the charred husk of San Francisco behind it as Coatlicue follows in its wake, preaching doom as her teachings spread like wildfire through the frightened people of Mexico.

The Burning Man, meanwhile, continues to drift through the skies of Earth, leaving chaos in its wake...



## PEOPLE

The following pages contain stat blocks for the Fatemaster characters that the Fated are likely to encounter over the course of the adventure. They have been created with an eye toward ease of use by the Fatemaster and are arranged in the order that they appear in the adventure.

These stat blocks should provide Fatemasters with everything they need to run the adventure and challenge their players.

Depending on the situation, Fatemasters more familiar with *Through the Breach* may want to adjust some of these characters' Rank Values ahead of time to create more or less of a challenge for their players.

It may also be worth drafting up a few additional characters to add to the adventure at places you feel will be extra important to the Fated. These might be allies or rivals that the Fated met in Malifaux, who have since traveled to San Francisco to escape them or for unrelated business. This can make the later parts of the adventure particularly tense for the Fated as they attempt to save a beloved ally from the aftermath of the earthquake... or come across a rival who is trapped beneath fallen debris and is unable to defend themselves.

Remember that this is your adventure! You should feel free to adapt and add to it as you see fit.

# ADELITA ORTEGA

Adelita Ortega is the lead journalist for the *Diario de San Francisco*. Half of the newspaper team are amazed by her, and the other half are terrified; she uses both reactions to her advantage.

The authorities of San Francisco - the mayor, the police chief, and just about everyone who works for either of them - consider Adelita to be a rabble rouser, but she's regarded by the general populace as something of a folk hero for her willingness to take a stand against injustice. In truth, she's somewhere between the two extremes, as she absolutely believes in helping out "the little people" when possible... at least partially because it helps to sell newspapers.

When the Breach first reopened, most of Adelita's children and extended family ran off to Malifaux to fight monsters, including her husband. The whole affair is a bit of a sore spot for her, and as a result, she doesn't like to talk about her family or their exploits on the other side of the Breach.



## ADELITA ORTEGA

Enforcer (7), Living, Journalist

<i>Might</i> 0	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> 2	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 3 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 5 (12)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (12)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

**Skills:** Bureaucracy 2, Bewitch 2, Centering 3, Convince 3, Deceive 1, History 2, Intimidate 3, Leadership 2, Literacy 4, Notice 4, Pistol 3, Pugilism 2, Scrutiny 4, Stealth 2, Toughness 1.

**Concealed Carry:** This character gains  $\blacklozenge$  on attempts to hide her pistol.

**Disguised:** This character has mastered the art of seeming unimportant in combat. She may not be the target of the Charge Action.

### (1) Roll of Coins in Fist (Pugilism)

AV: 2 (9) ===== Rg:  $\blacklozenge$  1 ===== Resist: **Df**  
Target suffers 2/3/3 damage. This attack gains  $\blacklozenge$  to the damage flip.  
 $\blacklozenge$  *Left and Right:* After damaging, take this Action again against the same target.

### (1) Custom Weshorn & Smitte (Pistol)

AV: 5 (12) ===== Rg:  $\blacklozenge$  12 ===== Resist: **Df**  
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage. This weapon may not declare Triggers. Capacity 6, Reload 1.

### (0) Shrug Off

This character may discard a card to remove one Condition on herself.

## TWIN PEAKS CULTIST

Minion (6), Living, Cultist

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> 0	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> -2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 3 (9)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (9)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

**Skills:** Carouse 2, Labor 1, Notice 2, Pistol 2, Pugilism 2, Stealth 1, Toughness 1.

**Crazy +2:** This character suffers -2 to the final duel total of any duel involving a Mental Aspect. They may hear voices or see things that are not actually there, at the Fatemaster's discretion.

**Unnatural Inspiration:** If an Ace is discarded from the Fate Deck during Dramatic Time, this character may move 1 yard and heal 1 damage. If a Joker is discarded from the Fate Deck during Dramatic Time, this character becomes **Fast**.

### (1) The Ol' One-Two (Pugilism)

AV: 4 (10) ===== Rg: ♣ 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/3 damage.

♣ *Left and Right:* After damaging, take this Action again against the same target.

### (1) Refurbished Collier Army (Pistol)

AV: 4 (10) ===== Rg: ♣ 12 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. This weapon may not declare Triggers. Capacity 8, Reload 2.

## TWIN PEAKS CULTIST

The Burning Man has a strong influence on those with unusual thought patterns, such as artists, poets, or the mentally unstable. The cult that gathered at Twin Peaks is composed of people such as this: listless dreamers, disturbed schizophrenics, and irrational mendicants.

One by one, the cultists felt a pull toward the Burning Man, and in an attempt to become closer to him, they climbed to the top of Twin Peaks. There they found others like them, though nobody knew quite what the Burning Man was or what it meant.

Then the man calling himself the Magister arrived. Sensing that the cultists were lost and confused, he told them stories of the Burning Man and the visions he had seen, promising them a future where they could leave behind their troubles and become one with the purifying flames of his presumed god.

The Magister presented himself as the Burning Man's chosen representative on Earth, and the impressionable and deluded cultists fell quickly under his spell. Most of them are high on opium purchased or stolen from Chinatown, which keeps them from questioning the Magister's "requests" too closely.

Deluded, confused, and disturbed by their brief exposure to the Burning Man's influence, these cultists have lost much of their former lives to their madness. Some are useful and can still be sent into town to fetch supplies and run errands for the Magister, but others are so far gone that the best they can do is paint crude flames onto their clothes and pray to the glowing fire god in the sky.

# TWIN PEAKS MOB

While the Twin Peaks cultists aren't too much of a threat individually, they can be quite dangerous in large numbers. This holds especially true in their mountain stronghold, where there are always more cultists ready to come to the aid of their fellow true believers. With the proper motivation and a fiery speech, even the most pacifistic cultist can be convinced to take up arms against the enemies of the Burning Man.

These mobs usually don't last for very long, as it's difficult for the cultists to focus on a single thing for very long. Typically, they only form when it's time to sacrifice someone to the flames and only last through the end of the ceremony. Then the mobs break apart, each cultist going his or her way as the flames die down and the scent of burned meat starts to overpower their opium-addled senses.



## TWIN PEAKS MOB

Peon (Variable Rank Value), Living, Cultist

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> 0	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> -2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 3	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (varies)
<i>Willpower</i> 4	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> Special	

**Skills:** Carouse 2, Labor 1, Notice 2, Pistol 2, Pugilism 2, Stealth 1, Toughness 1.

**Collective Focus:** This character has the following Condition: "**Rank Value +8:** Treat this character's Rank Value as equal to the value of this Condition. This character does not add its Rank Value to its Defense."

**Angry People:** This character is immune to Willpower duels and can never perform duels using Skills it does not possess.

**Multiple Bodies:** This character does not have Wounds; when this character would suffer damage, instead reduce its Rank Value Condition by 1, unless the attack dealt ♣ or (X) damage, in which case its Rank Value Condition is reduced by the full amount of damage dealt. When the Rank Value Condition reaches 0, the Twin Peaks Mob disbands.

**Without Number:** If an Ace is discarded from the Fate Deck at any point during this character's turn, increase the value of this character's Rank Value Condition by +1 (to a maximum of 13) after resolving the current Action.

### (1) The Ol' One-Two (Pugilism)

AV: 4 (varies) ----- Rg: ♣ 1 ----- Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/3 damage.

♣ *Left and Right:* After damaging, take this Action again against the same target.

### (1) Wild Pistol Firing (Pistol)

AV: 4 (varies) ----- Rg: ♣ 12 ----- Resist: Df

Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. This weapon may not declare Triggers. Capacity 8, Reload 2.

## THE MAGISTER

Enforcer (8), Living, Cultist

Might -2	Grace 1	Speed 2	Resilience 1
Charm 3	Intellect 2	Cunning 3	Tenacity 3
Defense 4 (12)	Walk 5	Height 2	Initiative 2 (10)
Willpower 5 (13)	Charge 6	Wounds 5	

**Skills:** Alchemy 2, Athletics 1, Bewitch 3, Bureaucracy 1, Carouse 3, Convince 3, Deceive 2, Doctor 1, Intimidate 2, Leadership 3, Long Arms 2, Sorcery 2, Toughness 1.

**Contagious Zealotry:** Friendly Cultist characters that begin their turn within 8 of this character may discard a card to gain **Focused +1**.

**The Burning Man's Influence:** This character ignores the ☐ penalty for casting spells on Earth.

**Manipulative (10):** When an enemy character targets this character with an Action, they must pass a TN 10 Willpower Challenge. On a failure, this character may change the target of the Action to a legal target of his choice.

### (1) Demoralize (Convince)

AV: 5 (13) ----- Rg: 8 ----- Resist: **Wp**

Target becomes **Slow**. If this Action achieves a Margin of Success, choose one of the target's readied weapons and apply its damage to the target. The damage flip has a ☐.

☞ *The Truth Hurts:* After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition until the start of this character's next turn: **"Stunned:** This character may not take (0) Actions."

### (0) Beseech the Burning Man's Favor

This character may discard a card to gain the following Condition: **"Apotheosis:** This character loses Manipulative and is surrounded in blue flame. He floats 1 yard above the ground, may ignore any terrain below that height when moving, and cannot take the Drop Prone Action. Characters striking this character with Close Combat attacks suffer 1 damage."

### (1) Cone of Blue Flames (Sorcery/Intellect)

AV: 4 (12) ----- Rg: 8 ----- Resist: **Df**

Target suffers 2/4☠/6☠☠ damage. All characters damaged gain **Burning +2**. This Action can only be taken if this character has the **Apotheosis** Condition.

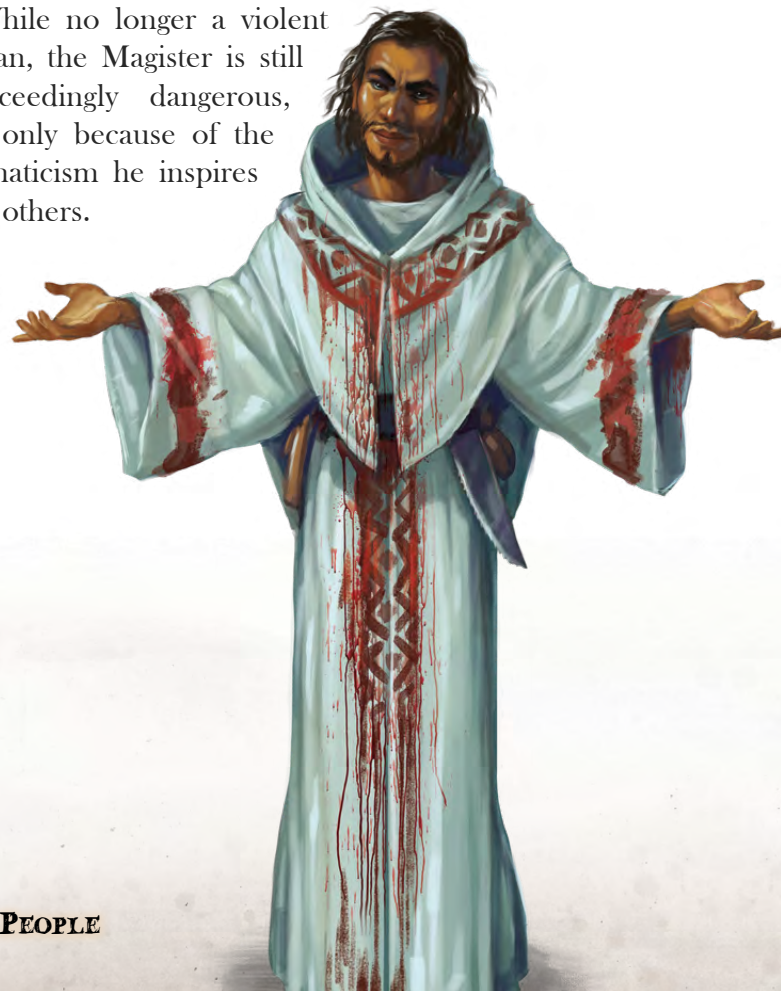
## THE MAGISTER

The leader of the Twin Peaks Cult is a charming, manipulative man who calls himself "the Magister." Before he was the Magister, however, he was Cuartio Leano, a military guard at Alcatraz Citadel.

When the Burning Man appeared over Alcatraz, Cuartio had a vision of the world consumed in flame. Rather than destroy the world, however, the flames burned away the corruption and evil, ushering in a world of peace and love. He attempted to share his vision with his fellow guards, but Tlalli Flores' star was burning much brighter than his own, and it soon became clear that she was winning over more of the guards and prisoners with her "lies" than he was with his "truth."

Cuartio was clever enough to see the blood-smeared writing on the wall, and in the middle of the night, he stole a boat from the prison and paddled his way to the coast. From there, he followed his visions to the top of Twin Peaks, where he found a congregation of enthusiastic worshipers waiting for him. Dubbing himself "the Magister," he shared his visions of the coming apocalypse with them and won their hearts.

While no longer a violent man, the Magister is still exceedingly dangerous, if only because of the fanaticism he inspires in others.





# THE BROKEN

The presence of the Burning Man affects everyone a bit differently. Some people seem unbothered by its flickering blue light, but others find the cracks in their minds opening wider, as if the flames of madness were being fanned by sheer proximity to the burning effigy. Others are plunged so deep into madness that something inside of them snaps, leaving them twitching, cackling madmen with no goals other than to bring harm to others.

These unfortunate souls are known as the Broken. Traumatized by their exposure to the Burning Man, they have lost all sense of compassion and reason. In their place, they have discovered a newfound zest for violence, which they seek to perpetrate upon anyone within reach. Given the choice, they prefer to attack those who still possess some semblance of sanity, but once their victims have been dispatched, the Broken invariably turn upon themselves,

laughing maniacally as they butcher their companions and are butchered in turn.



## THE BROKEN

Minion (5), Living, Tormented

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 0
<i>Charm</i> -2	<i>Intellect</i> -2	<i>Cunning</i> -2	<i>Tenacity</i> -2
<i>Defense</i> 3 (8)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (8)
<i>Willpower</i> 2 (7)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 5	

**Skills:** Labor 1, Melee 2, Notice 2, Stealth 1, Thrown Weapons 2, Toughness 1.

**Crazy +4:** This character suffers -4 to the final duel total of any duel involving a Mental Aspect. They may hear voices or see things that are not actually there, at the Fatemaster's discretion.

**Falling Into Madness:** If a Joker is discarded from the Fate Deck during Dramatic Time, this character permanently increases its Rank Value by +1.

### (1) Broken Glass (Melee)

AV: 3X (8X) ===== Rg: // 1 ===== Resist: Df  
Target suffers 2/3/3 damage.

X *On All Sides:* Immediately increase this character's final duel total by +1 for every hostile character engaged with the target (including this character).

### (1) Thrown Rocks and Glass (Thrown Weapons)

AV: 4 (9) ===== Rg: 6 ===== Resist: Df  
Target suffers 1/1/2 damage.

X *Oops, Glass In Your Neck:* After damaging, the target must succeed at a TN 11 Toughness Challenge or gain the **Bleeding Out** Condition.

## CHILDREN OF CIHUACOATL

Enforcer (7), Living

<i>Might</i> 3	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -3	<i>Intellect</i> 0	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 5 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Evade 3, Martial Arts 3✘, Melee 3, Notice 2, Toughness 2, Wilderness 2.

**Armor +1:** Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +1, to a minimum of 1.

**Armor Training:** This character's Defense is not reduced by its Armor.

**Slither:** If this character takes the Run Action, it may make a free 1 AP Close Combat attack against a legal target at the end of its movement.

### (1) Obsidian Blade (Melee)

AV: 6 (13) ===== Rg: 2 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

✘ *Obsidian Shards:* After damaging, the target gains the following Condition until the end of Dramatic Time:

**"Embedded Shards:** After this character takes a Walk Action, it suffers 1 damage. This Condition counts as a Critical Effect."

### (0) Vicious Bite (Martial Arts)

AV: 5✘ (12✘) ===== Rg: 1 ===== Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/6 damage, ignoring Armor and Hard to Wound.

✘ *Venomous Bite:* After damaging, the target gains **Poison +3**.

## CHILDREN OF CIHUACOATL

The so-called Children of Cihuacoatl are serpentine creatures hailing from a distant corner of Malifaux. They are a race of fierce warriors who, at one time, laid claim to an expansive civilization that stretched across nearly half of their continent. Their people have been in decline for some time, however, and the arts and sciences they once studied and practiced have been forgotten in favor of bloodshed and violence.

The Children of Cihuacoatl believe that they were born from a powerful entity that mixed its own blood with the ground up bones from previous ages. According to their half-remembered myths, the Children sprung fully formed from this primordial mud, ready to fight and kill for their forgotten creator. Some tribes of Children claim that they turned on their creator, cutting its black bones from its body and sharpening them to make the first of the obsidian weapons they now wield. Others claim that their creator was defeated by another and merely lies sleeping, beyond death, waiting for its Children to shed enough blood to once again return it to the world of the living.



# ALCATRAZ CULTIST

The cultists of Alcatraz Citadel are a combination of former military personnel and former political prisoners who have banded together in service to the Burning Man. The cult's beliefs have been heavily influenced by Tlalli Flores, who convinced her fellow prisoners that the Burning Man was a manifestation of Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec god of the sun.

Caught up in her delusions, the other prisoners echoed her claims, until soon the troubled guards - many of whom were already having strange visions in the wake of the Burning Man's appearance above their citadel - started to believe her stories.

Tlalli was freed from her prison, and together with the guards she had won over to her side, she staged a coup and seized control from the military personnel who had not yet succumbed to madness. The first wave of sacrifices was bloody and brutal, and as Tlalli held up the first of many bleeding, beating hearts to the sky and called out for the Burning Man to witness her offering, the last vestiges of sanity fled from the shattering minds of the rebels.

The cultists have fortified themselves inside Alcatraz, only leaving in order to snatch up the Chosen One and other sacrifices for their god. Huitzilopochtli is a bloody god, but in the mind of the cultists, they have to do what they must to prevent the world from slipping into darkness.



# ALCATRAZ CULTIST

Minion (6), Living, Cultist

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> 0	<i>Intellect</i> -1	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 4 (10)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 3 (9)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Bureaucracy 1, Centering 1, Evade 2, Heavy Guns 1, Intimidate 1, Labor 1, Long Arms 2, Melee 3, Notice 2, Pistol 3, Pugilism 2, Stealth 1, Toughness 2.

**Crazy +3:** This character suffers -3 to the final duel total of any duel involving a Mental Aspect. They may hear voices or see things that are not actually there, at the Fatemaster's discretion.

**Df (P) Riposte:** After a Close Combat attack fails against this character, this character deals the damage of one of its readied blade weapons to the attacker. This damage flip receives  $\square$ .

**Unnatural Inspiration:** If a Joker is discarded from the Fate Deck during Dramatic Time, this character gains **Reactivate**.

## (1) Combat Knife (Melee)

AV: 4 (10) ----- Rg:  $\lll$  1 ----- Resist: **Df**

Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

$\times$  *Screaming Madness:* When damaging, this Attack deals +1 damage and the target becomes **Slow**. End this character's turn.

## (1) Collier Single Action Army (Pistol)

AV: 3 (9) ----- Rg:  $\lll$  12 ----- Resist: **Df**

Target suffers 2/3/4 damage. Capacity 6, Reload 2.

$\mathcal{P}$  *Critical Strike:* When damaging the target, this Attack deals +1 damage for each  $\mathcal{P}$  in the final duel total.

## EAGLE WARRIOR

Enforcer (7), Living, Cultist

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> -1	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 5 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 4	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 2 (9)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 4	<i>Wounds</i> 8	

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Bureaucracy 1, Centering 2, Evade 3, Heavy Guns 2, Intimidate 2, Leadership 1, Long Arms 3, Melee 3, Notice 3, Scrutiny 1, Stealth 1, Toughness 3, Track 2.

**Crazy +4:** This character suffers -4 to the final duel total of any duel involving a Mental Aspect. They may hear voices or see things that are not actually there, at the Fatemaster's discretion.

**Calm and Collected:** This character adds +1 to the value of any **Focused** Condition it gains (to a max of **Focused +3**).

**Unnatural Inspiration:** If a Joker is discarded from the Fate Deck during Dramatic Time, this character gains **Reactivate**.

### (1) Obsidian Knife (Melee)

AV: 5 (12) ----- Rg:  $\text{///}$  1 ----- Resist: **Df**  
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

✖ *Hobble:* After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition for the remainder of Dramatic Time:  
**"Hobbled:** This character may only declare one Movement General Action per turn."

### (1) Alpine Machine Gun (Long Arms)

AV: 5☉ (12☉) ----- Rg:  $\text{r}$  16 ----- Resist: **Df**  
Target suffers 2/3/5 damage. This weapon grants this character the +☉ in its AV. Capacity 18, Reload 4.

☉ *Stutter Fire:* After damaging, immediately make another attack with this weapon against a different target. This extra attack may not declare Triggers.

## EAGLE WARRIOR

Long ago, Eagle Warriors were fierce warriors in the Aztec army. They were widely feared for their weapon prowess and for the blessings they carried into battle, for the eagle was the symbol of Huitzilopochtli, the sun god, and they were his chosen warriors.

The life of an Eagle Warrior was one of constant battle, as the Aztecs needed to take prisoners to sacrifice to their gods. This constant struggle appealed to Tlalli Flores, and as her madness spiraled out of control, she convinced those under her command to break into a museum on the mainland. Once they had escaped with the stolen obsidian knives and feathered eagle cloaks the museum had kept on display, her own Eagle Warriors finally looked like the ancient warriors that had inspired them.

Despite the somewhat ratty appearance of their feathered cloaks, the cult's Eagle Warriors benefit from extensive combat training, either as members of the Mexican military or as experienced (and often violent) political protesters. Armed as they are with the most powerful weapons stored at Alcatraz Citadel, the Eagle Warriors are among the most dangerous of the cult's many crazed members.



# TLALLI FLORES / COATLICUE

Tlalli Flores has lived a hard life. From a young age, she believed that she was destined for something special, but time and again, the world seemed to disagree with that belief. She eventually left her home to fight against the Mexican government for the sake of the Nahuatl people, at first as a political protestor and then, later, as an armed protestor. Along the way she had a child, Nenetl, but Tlalli was captured and tossed into Alcatraz shortly after her daughter's second birthday.

Nenetl went to live with her uncle in San Francisco, and Tlalli agreed to admit her guilt in the crimes she was charged with in exchange for being allowed to write letters to her daughter. That was eight years ago, and though she never received a letter back, Tlalli was certain that her daughter was writing her and that the Mexican government was keeping the letters from her.

When the Burning Man appeared over Alcatraz, Tlalli realized that she was, in fact, as special as she always thought she was. In her visions, she realized that she was the reincarnation of Coatlicue, and that in order to save the world, she had to give her daughter over to Huitzilopochtli.

Everything she's done since then - all the murders and bloodshed and sacrifices - have been, in her eyes, for a noble goal: she believes that she is helping her daughter save the world.



## TLALLI FLORES / COATLICUE

Henchman (10), Living, Cultist, Tormented

<i>Might</i> -1	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> -1
<i>Charm</i> 3	<i>Intellect</i> 1	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 4 (14)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (14)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (15)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

**Skills:** Art 1, Carouse 1, Convince 4, Deceive 2, Forgery 2, History 2, Leadership 4, Melee 2, Navigation 1, Necromancy 3☛, Notice 2, Pistol 1, Sorcery 2☛☛, Stealth 2, Teach 2, Toughness 2, Wilderness 1.

**Crazy +5:** This character suffers -5 to the final duel total of any duel involving a Mental Aspect. They may hear voices or see things that are not actually there, at the Fatemaster's discretion.

**Blood in the Air:** If an enemy character is killed within 10 of this character, every friendly Cultist within 10 gains **Fast**.

**The Burning Man's Influence:** This character ignores the ☐ penalty for casting spells on Earth.

**Visions of the World to Come:** If an Ace is discarded from the Fate Deck during Dramatic Time, this character may take a 1 AP Action after resolving the current Action.

### (1) Obsidian Knife (Melee)

AV: 1 (11) ----- Rg: ☞ 1 ----- Resist: **Df**  
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage.

### (1) The Light of Creation (Sorcery/Intellect)

AV: 3☛☛ (13☛☛) = Rg: ☛ 15 yards === Resist: **Df**  
Target suffers 3/4/5☛ damage. Every character damaged by this attack gains the **Blind** Condition until the start of their next turn.

### (1) Obey (Necromancy/Charm)

AV: 6☛☛ (16☛☛) === Rg: 10 yards === Resist: **Wp**  
The target performs a 1 AP Action controlled by this character. This Action may not force the target to sacrifice itself directly but can cause her to take Actions against her own nature.

# CAMAZOTZ

Minion (6), Undead, Beast

<i>Might</i> 2	<i>Grace</i> 2	<i>Speed</i> 3	<i>Resilience</i> 2
<i>Charm</i> -4	<i>Intellect</i> -2	<i>Cunning</i> 1	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 5 (11)	<i>Walk</i> 6	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 5 (11)
<i>Willpower</i> 4 (10)	<i>Charge</i> 7	<i>Wounds</i> 7	

**Skills:** Acrobatics 3, Athletics 2, Martial Arts 3, Navigation 1, Notice 2, Pugilism 2, Toughness 2, Wilderness 2.

**Flight:** This character is immune to falling damage and may ignore any terrain or other characters while moving.

**Hard to Wound +1:** Damage flips against this character suffer ☐.

**Hunting Flame:** This character may take the (2) Charge Action as a (1) Action when targeting a character with the **Burning** Condition.

**Saracenar's Plight:** Reduce the damage this character suffers from the **Burning** Condition to 0.

## (1) Curved Talons (Pugilism)

AV: 4 (10) ----- Rg: ♣ 2 ----- Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/3/5 damage.

☞ *Flaming Breath:* After succeeding, the target gains the **Burning +2** Condition.

♣ *Snatch Up:* After succeeding, move this character up to 8 yards in any direction, then place the target in physical contact with this character.

## (1) Stinger Tail (Martial Arts)

AV: 6 (12) ----- Rg: ♣ 1 ----- Resist: Df

Target suffers 2/4/6 damage and gains **Poison +2**.

✂ *Paralyzing Toxins:* After succeeding, if the target has **Poison +4** or higher, it becomes **Paralyzed**.

## (0) Flames of Mictlan

This character may discard a card. If it does so, all characters within (X)3 gain the following Condition until the start of this character's next turn: "**Everburning:** This character does not remove the **Burning** Condition at the end of its turn, although it suffers damage as normal."

# CAMAZOTZ

These bat-like creatures infest one of the darker corners of Malifaux, a blasted desert of scorched sand and burning stones in which nothing can survive for very long. Forced to flee from their native lands into the wasteland, the Camazotz eventually succumbed to the relentless heat and died, their bodies baking as surely as if they had been shoved into a colossal oven.

Instead of completely consuming the corpses of the Camazotz, however, the flames settled in their chests, bringing them back from death and into an existence of relentless agony. Now the Camazotz infest the burning desert, filling the skies like locusts and ensuring that those unfortunate enough to wander into the searing wasteland have more problems than just the heat.

Some of the Camazotz have taken to roosting within the chest cavities of Quinametzin, which generally seem to ignore their presence. They often swarm around the lumbering titans like flies around refuse, filling the sky above them with dark clouds of screeching beasts.



# QUINAMETZIN

Long ago, before the Breach, before even the Tyrants, the Quinametzin roamed the southern continents, feeding upon the smaller natives that could do nothing to defend themselves from the predations of the colossal beasts. In their desperate search for a way to slay the Quinametzin, these people pooled their magical talents and summoned a powerful entity known as Saracenar.

The entity turned its power against the Quinametzin, burning them from the inside out with flames that flowed like water. The people who summoned Saracenar could not control it, however, and its flames spread for hundreds of miles, devouring everything in its path. Unlike a natural fire, however, the flames created by Saracenar never actually died out. Long after the people that had summoned it were slain, the flames smoldering within the Quinametzin slowly grew in intensity, filling the charred corpses of the titanic beasts with living fire and bringing them back from beyond death.

Maddened by their undeath and the pain of the flames burning within their guts, the Quinametzin now care only for inflicting their agony upon others.



## QUINAMETZIN

Henchman (11), Undead, Beast, Defiant, Titan

<i>Might</i> 6	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 1	<i>Resilience</i> 7
<i>Charm</i> -5	<i>Intellect</i> -2	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 3
<i>Defense</i> 1 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 5	<i>Initiative</i> 4 (15)
<i>Willpower</i> 6 (11)	<i>Charge</i> 5	<i>Wounds</i> 13	

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Centering 4, Intimidate 5, Labor 2, Notice 3, Pugilism 3, Sorcery 3, Toughness 5, Wilderness 2.

**Armor +2:** Reduce all damage suffered by this character by +2, to a minimum of 1.

**Saracenar's Plight:** Reduce the damage this character suffers from the **Burning** Condition to 0.

**Titan:** This character is not considered to be engaged with characters of lower Height for the purposes of disengaging strikes, randomizing when firing into melee, or **☞** Actions. This character ignores the first Critical Effect it suffers each round.

### (1) Desiccated Claw (Pugilism)

AV: 9 (20) ===== Rg: **☞** 4 ===== Resist: **Df**  
Target suffers 4/7/10 damage and gains **Burning +1**.  
**☒** *Desiccating Touch:* After succeeding, the target gains the following Condition for 1 hour: "**Parched +1:** This character subtracts -1 from her Physical and Mental Aspects, to a minimum of -5. If all of the character's Physical and Mental Aspects are -5, she dies."

### (2) Exhale Flame (Sorcery/Intellect)

AV: 5 (16) ===== Rg: **☞** 12 ===== Resist: **Df**  
Target suffers 3/5 **☛☛☛**/7 **☛☛☛☛** damage. Every character damaged by this attack gains **Burning +2**.  
**☞** *The Flames of the Dead Sun:* After damaging, any character that had the **Burning** Condition before being damaged by this attack must discard a card or be instantly killed and reduced to ash.

### (0) Camazotz Cavity

This character may discard a card to summon a Camazotz anywhere within its engagement range. The summoned Camazotz may act this round without penalty.

# COMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides you with some extra plot hooks, arranged by Act, for *Fire in the Sky*. They are intended to add time, difficulty, and interest to certain elements of the adventure.

Each section includes a summary of the complications within it and an idea of when they can be used. The Fatemaster can use this summary to quickly peruse what complications are available to them.

The Fatemaster is encouraged to review these complications before running an Act in case she needs to add one to the session (either to make the session longer or just because it sounds like fun).

Beyond these, there are many other potential plot hooks that can be used to provide interesting scenarios for the Fated, and Fatemasters are encouraged to take advantage of whatever opportunities they see.

## ACT I

Below is the complication for Act I.

- **ART FIASCO** - Use this complication to lengthen the adventure a bit and provide another example of the Burning Man influencing people toward madness within San Francisco.
- **AN EFFIGY IN PROGRESS** - Use this complication to give the Fated the opportunity to learn a bit more about the Twin Peaks Cult before they arrive at the camp.

### ART FIASCO

This complication adds a difficult situation to the adventure and is best used when the Fated finish investigating the museum. The phone at the museum's reception desk rings, over and over again, until Flores or one of the Fated answer it. On the other end is an officer from the police station with urgent news: one of the students at the California School of Design has taken his classmates hostage! According to the man who called the police station, the student was ranting about the Burning Man.

Flores swears upon hearing the news and asks the Fated if they will accompany him to the school; the event clearly has something to do with the Burning Man, and he could use all of the help he can get in dealing with the student and trying to keep the hostages safe. If the Fated agree to accompany him, the trip only takes about ten minutes. Read the following text when they arrive:



The California School of Design is a four-story building that looks more like an eccentric mansion than any sort of proper school. One corner of the building almost seems reminiscent of a tower, while other portions look more like they originally belonged to a greenhouse.

There's a crowd of people outside, mostly young adults who are crouched down beyond the walls of the estate, whispering to each other in hushed whispers as they sneak the occasional peek over the wall. Among them is a large Hispanic man in a police uniform, who has drawn his gun and is peeking around the open gate and toward the looming building



The officer is Hernando Bermúdez, the first police officer on the scene. When he sees Flores, he breathes a sigh of relief and is all too happy to pass the case to his superior.



According to Officer Bermúdez, one of the students, Obdulia Tos, pulled out a pistol midway through her first class of the day and started commanding her classmates to paint pictures of the Burning Man. A few tried to escape and were shot in the process, but the wounds weren't fatal and they were able to escape. Bermúdez sent them off to the hospital along with some of their classmates. He evacuated the rest of the school but hasn't heard anything else from Obdulia since then.

Flores decides to head inside and try to talk Obdulia into releasing the hostages, but if the Fated want to accompany him or go in his stead, he doesn't object.

Inside the classroom - room 203 - Obdulia Tos is pacing back and forth, waving a gun in the air as she rambles about the Burning Man. She's a short, squat woman in early 20s, and her dark hair is pulled back in an unflattering ponytail. There are eight other students in the room, and they're all working together (under duress) to paint an expansive mural on the wall. It's nowhere near completed, but from the crude sketches the students made before starting to paint, it seems to depict the Burning Man leading the people of San Francisco through a flaming portal and into a new realm, though the realm beyond the portal has yet to be sketched out.

If Flores or the Fated enter the room, Obdulia immediately hurries over to the nearest student and puts a gun to his head, threatening to kill him if she's "not allowed to complete her masterpiece." The Fated have a few options here. They can attempt to fight her. She has the stats of a Broken, but has the following pistol attack (and, if possible, uses it on her first turn to execute her unfortunate classmate):

#### (1) Wild Pistol Firing (Pistol)

AV: 2 (7) ----- Rg: 12 ----- Resist: Df  
Target suffers 1/3/4 damage. This weapon may not declare Triggers. Capacity 8, Reload 2.

Alternatively, the Fated might attempt to talk her down. Doing so takes a TN 11 Bewitch, Convince, or Deceive Challenge; any attempt to Intimidate her simply results in her shooting her classmate. Once Obdulia has been dealt with, Flores sighs and says that he'll take care of the rest; the Fated are free to investigate Twin Peaks (and run into Adelita Ortega along the way).

## AN EFFIGY IN PROGRESS

This complication allows the Fated to learn a bit more about the Twin Peaks Cult before they arrive at the camp. As they are climbing the hills, they encounter Valeria Ibarra, a former member of the cult. Read the following text:



About halfway up the hill, you encounter a strange sight. A middle-aged Hispanic woman is seated on a flat rock, surrounded by dresses that have been spread out in the grass around her. Scraps of fabric are piled next to her, and as you watch, she takes a seam ripper to the red dress in her hands, quickly and efficiently cutting through the threads holding it apart.



Valeria is a bit unstable as a result of the Burning Man's influence, but she isn't violent. If the Fated take an interest in her and ask what she's doing, she quite proudly explains that she's building an effigy to the Burning Man. She tearing her dresses apart for the fabric, and then she's going to sew a Burning Man-shaped "pillow" and fill it with the unused fabric and grass. Once that's finished, she intends to hang it from a nearby tree and set it aflame in order to honor the Burning Man.

If the Fated ask about the Twin Peaks Cult, she scowls and spits on the ground, cursing them. Valeria explains that she was one of the first to arrive at the summit, having been "called to the Burning Man," but that she left after "the *bastardo*" arrived and "took all of the pretty young girls meant for the Burning Man into his own bed."

If the Fated make it clear they have no love for the Magister and succeed on a TN 9 Bewitch Challenge, Valeria can help them create a distraction for the guards at the camp, which either gives them a + to their Stealth Challenges to sneak in or surprise on the first round of combat. Even if the Fated fail this Challenge, she's more than willing to tell the Fated that the Magister resides in the largest tent in the camp, along with "those poor girls he's seduced."

# ACT II

Below are the complications for Act II.

- **RAIN OF JAGGED DEATH** - Use this complication to make the Fated's escape from the Palace Hotel a bit more difficult.
- **UNLIKELY ASSISTANCE** - Use this complication if the Fated are pretty beaten up when they arrive at Chinatown and you want to give them some assistance.

## RAIN OF JAGGED DEATH

When the Fated seem on the cusp of escaping from the Palace Hotel, this complication can be used to inject some additional danger into the scene.

After the Fated complete the Escape! Ongoing Challenge, but before they make it outside, read the following text:



After a long and grueling climb down from your room, you finally reach the open plaza at the building's center and spot the hotel's front doors! As you're hurrying across the plaza, however, the ground lurches beneath your feet, knocking you off-balance. More alarming than the aftershock, however, is the shattering sound you hear from above.

Glancing up, you see a glittering sea of bright light hovering overhead. A heartbeat later, you realize what it is; the aftershock shattered the hotel's skylight, and now jagged shards of broken glass - some as long and wide as your thigh - are plummeting down toward you at high speeds!



The Fated can each attempt TN 12 Evade Challenges to leap or roll aside or underneath pieces of fallen debris. Those who fail this Challenge are sliced upon by the falling shards of glass and suffer 5/7/8 damage. If a character achieves a Margin of Failure, they also gain the **Bleeding Out** Condition.

## UNLIKELY ASSISTANCE

The Ten Thunders don't have much influence in San Francisco's Chinatown, but they do have a small handful of agents within the district. These unobtrusive spies have been tasked with monitoring the opium trade in the city in order to discern whether or not the Ten Thunders could stand to make a profit by expanding their influence to the western shores of the Americas.

When the earthquake hit, one of these agents - Ru Chong - went against his orders to avoid drawing attention to himself and began helping the people of Chinatown, rescuing them from raging flames and collapsed buildings and drawing upon his mystical powers to heal their wounds. When Chong notices the Fated - injured and yet moving deeper into the district - his curiosity is aroused.

This encounter could happen before or after the Navigating the Ruins of Chinatown Ongoing Challenge, or even as one of the Obstacles during that Ongoing Challenge. Read the following text:



As you climb over a pile of debris, you reach the top to discover an Asian man in combat armor crouched atop it. You can't see his eyes behind the thick goggles that cover them, but it's still clear from his posture that he's watching you. A long staff with metal ends rests across his knees, and his bright blue cape has been flipped around his face to hide the lower portion of it.

"Welcome to Chinatown," he says in heavily accented English. He nods his bald head toward your weapons. "Forgive my interruption, but if you are scavengers here to rob my neighbors or their homes of their possessions, I shall have to take objection to your presence."



If the Fated explain that they're investigating the Burning Man, Ru Chong introduces himself and offers to assist them by treating their injuries. If they agree, he uses his The Peaceful Waters Action to heal their wounds, one at a time.

If they attempt to lie about their reasons for being in the district, however, they have to succeed on a TN 9 Deceive Challenge to convince him of their intent. If the reason they give him seems altruistic or beneficial for Chinatown, Ru Chong will heal them as described above, but if they are antagonistic or hostile toward him, he takes offense and attacks them in order to protect the people of the district.

The debris pile that Ru Chong is standing upon is about four yards in diameter and four yards tall, so Fated that fall off of it suffer 2/4/6 damage. When reduced to 0 Wounds or below, Ru Chong flees, heals himself once he's safe, and then launches another attack once the Fated are distracted by the fight with the Children of Cihuacoatl.

If the Fated are truthful about their reasons for being in Chinatown, it's possible that they might be able to impress upon Ru Chong the importance of their mission and earn his continued assistance. Persuading him to help further requires a TN 11 Convince Challenge. On a success, he accompanies them until they reach the Burning Man, at which point he darts around the battlefield, healing the Fated and battling the Broken as an independent character.



## RU CHONG

*Enforcer (7), Living*

<i>Might</i> 1	<i>Grace</i> 1	<i>Speed</i> 2	<i>Resilience</i> 1
<i>Charm</i> -1	<i>Intellect</i> 2	<i>Cunning</i> 2	<i>Tenacity</i> 2
<i>Defense</i> 5 (12)	<i>Walk</i> 5	<i>Height</i> 2	<i>Initiative</i> 5 (12)
<i>Willpower</i> 5 (12)	<i>Charge</i> 6	<i>Wounds</i> 6	

**Skills:** Acrobatics 2, Doctor 2, Enchanting 3☉, Grappling 3, Heavy Melee 3, Notice 3, Stealth 2, Toughness 1.

**Brutal Sensei:** This character is immune to the **Burning**, **Poison**, and **Slow** Conditions.

**Reading the Wind:** This first time each turn this character takes the Focus Action, he gains an additional **Focused +1**.

### (1) Iron Staff (Heavy Melee)

AV: 4 (11) ----- Rg: ☞ 2 ----- Resist: **Df**

Target suffers 1/2/4 damage.

☛ *Knock Back:* After damaging, push the target 3 yards away from this character.

### (1) Arm Lock (Grappling)

AV: 5 (12) ----- Rg: ☞ 1 ----- Resist: **Df**

Target suffers 0/1/2 damage. If this weapon deals Severe damage, the target is **Paralyzed** until you take another Action.

### (1) The Peaceful Waters (Enchanting/Cunning)

AV: 5☉ (12☉) ----- Rg: ☞ 1 ----- Resist: **Df**

Target heals 1/2/3 damage. This Action can only target the same character twice in a single hour.

# ACT III

Below is a quick list of the complications for Act III.

- **TROUBLESOME REPORTER** - Use this complication to provide some ties back to the Twin Peaks Cult.
- **ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13** - Use this complication to spring a surprise on the Fated after they've returned from Chinatown.

## TROUBLESOME REPORTER

This complication ties the later events of the adventure back to the Twin Peaks Cult found in Act I. If Adelita Ortega survived her encounter with the Twin Peaks Cult, she's out on assignment when the Fated arrive at the *Diario de San Francisco*.

The other employees of the newspaper explain that she's been investigating the Twin Peaks Cult ever since her encounter with them and that she's out chasing down a lead. They seem about ready to mention something further, then seem to think better of it; if the Fated succeed on TN 8 Bewitch or Intimidate Challenges, Adelita's coworkers let it slip that she's meeting with a contact at "the Old Mission."

If the Fated achieve a Margin of Success on this Challenge, her coworkers mention - not with a bit of concern - that they saw her checking her pistol to make certain that it was loaded before she left. They're not sure what exactly she's involved in, but they're concerned and worried for her.

The reporters can give the Fated the address for the mission, but even if they forget and are forced to ask people on the street, it's not difficult for them to get directions: the mission - Mission San Francisco de Asis, or Mission Dolores - is the oldest surviving structure in San Francisco, so it's a bit of a landmark. It's perched on the intersection of Dolores and 16th Streets and is roughly a fifteen minute walk from the newspaper offices.

When the Fated arrive at the Old Mission, read the text in the following column.



Surprisingly, the white adobe mission seems to have been untouched by the recent earthquake. The air is heavy with the scent of smoke, and the sky has a particularly smudged and gritty look to it, but the building stands resolute against them, almost in defiance of the destruction around.

There doesn't appear to be any sort of service going on at the moment; the mission and its bells are both silent.



If the Fated enter the mission, they find a relatively empty room filled with rows of pews and lit by glowing candles. Adelita Ortega is handing a stack of pesos to a woman the Fated recognize as having been a member of the Twin Peaks Cult, and in return, the woman hands over a wrapped package and then quickly leaves, her head bowed as she pushes past the Fated with a mumbled apology.

When she notices the Fated, Adelita approaches them and asks what they're doing at the mission. They can attempt a TN 14 Deceive Challenge to lie to her, but even if they fail, she just rolls her eyes and notes that she can take care of herself.

Either way, she shows them the item she purchased from the former cultist: it's a book titled "*Contiones de Rege Flammae*," by Ephraim Wade. It belonged to the Magister, who wrote his own notes in the margins. Adelita bought it in the hopes that it might be useful for the story she intends to write about the cult, but she can be convinced to part with it with a TN 11 Bewitch or Intimidate Challenge. Regardless of their success or failure, the Fated can then ask her about the missing people as described on page 45.

The book (or more precisely, the Magister's notes in the book's margins) serves as a Grimoire that contains the Elemental Engulf and Elemental Weapon Magic, as well as the Blast, Fire, and Increased Damage Immuto.

## ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

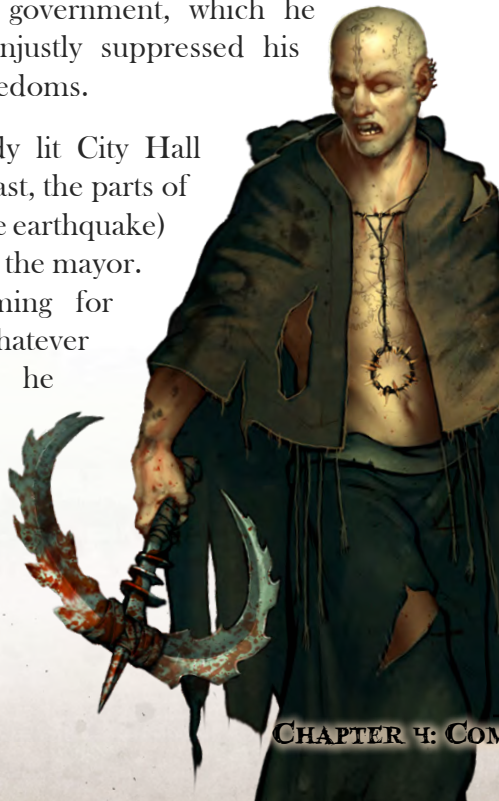
This complication introduces a surprise twist to the end of the Act, making it appropriate for players who thought that the showdown in Chinatown was a bit too easy (or that it was over a bit too quickly).

Once the Fated have received their briefing from Flores (per the Putting It All Together section on page 58), the Fated hear gunshots outside the building. Flores leaps to his feet and goes for his gun, but no sooner has he drawn it than a woman with unkempt hair and a maniacal grin throws open the door and police station.

"He sees you!" she intones gravely before lifting a pistol and firing off a wild salvo of shots toward the back of the station. More disheveled people - one additional Broken per Fated character - begin spilling into the station, wielding knives and crude clubs made from pieces of wood scavenged from collapsed buildings. Stats for the Broken can be found on page 95.

These Broken are being led by Hugo Lox, a local occultist who has had frequent run-ins with the San Francisco police (and Flores in particular) over the legality of sacrificing goats in exchange for magical power. When the Burning Man appeared, Lox found his weak magical powers blossoming into those of a full-fledged mage. Now he's gathered up some bullet sponges and decided to seek revenge upon the city government, which he believes has unjustly suppressed his goat-related freedoms.

Lox has already lit City Hall aflame (or at least, the parts of that survived the earthquake) and eviscerated the mayor. Now he's coming for Flores and whatever police officers he can find.



## HUGO LOX, DOOMSEEKER

Enforcer (8), Living

Might 1	Grace -1	Speed -1	Resilience 2
Charm -1	Intellect 2	Cunning 2	Tenacity 2
Defense 4 (12)	Walk 4	Height 2	Initiative 2 (10)
Willpower 4 (12)	Charge 6	Wounds 8	

**Skills:** Counter-Spelling 3, Evade 2, History 2, Husbandry 1, Melee 3, Notice 3, Sorcery 3📖, Toughness 3.

**The Burning Man's Influence (Magical Theory):** This character ignores the 📖 penalty for casting spells on Earth.

**Cynic:** This character gains 🎲 on any duels made to resist deception (including Deceive and the Trick Action).

### (1) Curved Ritual Knife (Melee)

AV: 4 (12) ----- Rg: 🌀 1 ----- Resist: Df  
Target suffers 2/2/3 damage.

### (1) Frozen Lightning (Sorcery/Intellect)

AV: 5📖 (13📖) ----- Rg: ⚡ 5 ----- Resist: Df  
Target suffers 3/4/5👤 damage. Every character damaged by this attack becomes **Slow**. This attack ignores Armor and does not randomize when targeting an engaged character.  
🐾 *Unstable Reality:* The target discards the top three cards of the Fate Deck. If any of the discarded cards were 🐾, the target is teleported to a safe location up to 3 yards away per discarded 🐾.

### (2) Maelstrom (Sorcery/Intellect)

Every character within (X)5 suffers 3 damage and discards the top card of the Fate Deck. Characters damaged by this ability gain one of the following effects, as determined by the suit of the card they flipped:

🌀 *Blue Light:* Character gains **Blind** until the start of her next turn.

📖 *Azure Flames:* Character gains **Burning +2**.

✂ *Poisonous Gas:* Character gains **Poison +2**.

🐾 *Time Distortion:* Character gains **Slow**.

**Joker:** The target is removed from reality until the start of this character's next turn. When the character returns, it must flip another card from the top of the Fate Deck and gain another of this action's effects.

# ACT IV

Below is a quick list of the complications for Act IV.

- **RANDOM INSANITY** - Use these brief descriptions to flesh out the descriptions of the Alcatraz Cultists and to further illustrate their insanity.
- **KAIJU SHOWDOWN** - Use this complication if the Fated trigger the military evacuation and want to fight the departing Quinametzin.

## RANDOM INSANITY

These brief descriptions are intended to help flesh out some of the cultists on Alcatraz and make them appear a bit more unique. Feel free to sprinkle them into the adventure wherever you want to add a bit of extra description.

**A Quick Snack:** The Fated come across a cultist hunched down over the corpse of a dead hostage. The hostage's shirt is ripped open, and there's a gaping hole in her chest where the cultist has torn out her heart. If they draw the cultist's attention, he looks up, revealing a mouth smeared with blood and gore; he has been eating the hostage's removed heart.

**Blue Blue Blue:** One of the cultists has stripped off his clothes and painted himself blue in an attempt to become closer to the Burning Man. Now he's trying to paint as much of the island blue as possible. When the Fated come across him, he's in the process of doing just that. If disturbed, he charges them while brandishing the paintbrush and bucket like weapons (Range // 1, damage 0/0/1).

**Burn, Baby, Burn:** When a cultist spots the Fated (preferably near the docks), she grabs a can of petrol fuel and starts dousing herself in the flammable liquid. Unless the Fated stop her, she then pulls out a match, shouts at the Fated in Spanish, and lights the match, becoming a burning pillar of screaming flame that alerts the other cultists. Her screams seem to last far longer than they should; then, she collapses to the ground, little more than a burnt husk.

## KAIJU SHOWDOWN

This complication allows Fated who have triggered the successful military evacuation of Alcatraz to face off with the Quinametzin in an attempt to stop it from reaching San Francisco.

The Fated have two options here: they can either return to the island in an attempt to man the artillery batteries or pilot their boat directly toward the titan to face off with it like action heroes. Whichever option they choose, the Fated will need to convince Guerrero (if she is still on the boat) to disobey her orders and go along with their plan. This requires a TN 10 Convince Challenge, or a TN 12 Bewitch or Intimidate Challenge. On a failure, she refuses to place the refugees on the boat at risk and informs the Fated that "the Mexican military will deal with that monster."

## MONSTER BOOM-BOOM

If the Fated decide to return to Alcatraz and fire at the Quinametzin with its artillery batteries, then they will have to avoid the Camazotz that are swarming over the island. The Fated have the same options for entering the island as they did when they first arrived (coming up through the caves, climbing the cliff, or landing at the dock; see pg. 65), but no matter which option they choose, a group of Camazotz (numbering one per Fated) swoops down onto their boat as draw near the island.

Once the Camazotz have been dealt with, the Fated can continue onto the island. If they chose to climb the cliffs, then they don't have to deal with any further Camazotz; they're at Battery Vasquez. If they decide to circle around to the caves or dock, however, they'll have to deal with a larger flock of the creatures as they hurry across the island. Each of the Fated must attempt a TN 15 Stealth Challenge; for each failure and Margin of Failure, one Camazotz swoops down from the swarm overhead to attack them.

Unfortunately, the Battery is likely still disabled from the Fated's earlier disarmament. In order to repair a cannon, the Fated will have to succeed at a (very rushed) TN 16 Artefacting Challenge. On a success, they manage to repair a single cannon

enough for a single shot. One of the Fated can make a single Heavy Guns attack against the Quinametzin. On a hit, the character inflicts 6/12/18 damage as the artillery shell strikes the colossal creature:

Regardless of whether or not the shot hits the Quinametzin, it's enough to attract the beast's attention. The massive creature turns around and starts sloshing back toward the Fated; they have one minute to prepare before it's within 50 yards, and after that, it moves towards them at full speed. If they remain at Battery Vasquez, the Quinametzin walks right up to the cliff and starts attacking them as two Camazotz swoop down from the sky to join the fight at the start of the round after the Quinametzin reaches them. If the Fated retreat further inland, the Quinametzin swipes angrily at the cannons, destroying them, and then retreats back toward San Francisco.

### BOAT BATTLE

If the Fated decide to take the boat out to fight the Quinametzin, they're in for a difficult fight. If Guerrero is with the Fated as they veer off to chase the Titan, she orders two of them to open a large crate at the foot of the boat. Inside is a prototype autocannon that was entrusted to Guerrero's care in case the military forces needed some heavy firepower during the assault. It takes one minute to attach the autocannon to one of the boat's weapon mounts.

The autocannon is unloaded. It has the following stats:


WEAPON (HEAVY GUNS)	RANGE	DAMAGE
Autocannon	36	4/5/6

**Special:** Attacking with this weapon is a 2 AP Action. It must be braced to fire. Capacity 10, Reload 6 AP.


**Full Auto:** Characters using this weapon have access to the following Trigger:

- ☛ *Stutter Fire:* After damaging, immediately make another attack with this weapon against a different target. This extra attack may not declare Triggers.

Once the Fated reach the Quinametzin, read the following text:



The boat makes swift progress toward the burned monstrosity, which is wading its way through the bay with steady determination. Steam billows up around it in a hazy cloud, no doubt the result of an impossibly high body temperature. Small shapes circle around the titan's head, and as you draw closer, they slowly coalesce into bat-like creatures with swaying, scorpion-like tails. They look just as burnt and decayed as the larger beast, and as it turns its skin-stretched head toward you, a wave of the creatures swoop down from the sky toward your boat!



The battle is fierce; Guerrero pilots the boat to within 10 yards of the Titan and tries to keep that distance; she can move the boat up to 15 yards at the start of each round for each AP she spends piloting it.

Three Camazotz begin swooping down toward the Fated; they and the Quinametzin both begin the battle 40 yards from the boat. Stats for the Quinametzin and the Camazotz can be found on pages 100 and 101, respectively.

During the fight, the Quinametzin releases new Camazotz to hamper the crew of the boat; if there is a Camazotz threatening Guerrero, she cannot pilot the boat, and the Quinametzin uses that opportunity to close the distance with the boat. Every attack a Camazotz makes against her deals 2 damage, and she can suffer 8 damage before she falls unconscious.

Once it's in range, the Quinametzin attacks the patrol boat in an attempt to sink the Fated and end the fight quickly. The boat has an effective defense of 4 (8) while moving or 4 while stationary. It has Armor +2 and 10 Wounds.

Once the boat has been reduced to half Wounds or less, it starts taking on water. When its Wounds reach 0, it breaks apart, dropping the Fated into the ocean. The Quinametzin turns back towards the coast at this point, leaving the characters to the Camazotz.

# APPENDIX

## TAROT TIE-INS

Below is a list of possible Tarot Tie-Ins for each Act, pulling from the Crossroads Tarot of the *Core Rules*. Use these as ideas to help fuel your players' Destiny Steps or to inspire ideas about Destiny Steps that aren't listed here.

The first two letters of a Tie-In stand for the Tarot used. In this case, CR stands for Cross Roads Tarot.

The next two letters indicate the card's position. For the Cross Roads Tarot, ST is Station, EC is Endeavor Card, MC is Mind Card, RC is Root Card, and BC is Body Card.

Finally, the two values - the number and suit - indicate the specific card tied to that destiny step.

## ACT I

CREC 8☷: "Once your strangers travel in threes" could refer to the three cultists that attack Adelita Ortega when the Fated first meet her.

CREC 11☷: "As you cross the bloody threshold" could describe the Fated entering the encampment at Twin Peaks, especially if you take the time to play up the dried blood symbols drawn on the otherwise white tents inside the camp.

CRMC A♠: "You will lead the children through the valley" might describe the Fated saving the confused but nonviolent members of the cult by leading them down the mountain and back into the city proper.

CRRC 5♣: "But there is no mercy in her heart" might refer to Adelita Ortega, who - after being nearly sacrificed by the cult - shows no mercy when dealing with the people who almost murdered her. If this is the case, it is suggested that she ask to borrow the character's firearm or weapon and then use it to execute one of the guilty cultists... perhaps even one that is unconscious.

## ACT II

CREC 6♠: "Once you rise from the ashes" could well describe the players escaping from the certain death that is the collapsing Palace Hotel... particularly if you play up the ashes in the air from the burning hotel and city.

CRMC 10☷: "Your eyes will be open unto the abyss" might well describe the strange vistas that the Fated witness through the tears in reality that appear as the Fated make their way through Chinatown. This can be further enhanced by giving the character brief glimpses of darker realms as she makes her way toward the Burning Man.

CRMC 4♠: "The dusk of a new sun will light your steps into the cave" could describe the Fated approaching the Burning Man and the light that it gives off. This works particularly well if the buildings that make up Chinatown are described as having fallen and collapsed into each other, leaving just enough space underneath them for the Fated to advance... effectively creating a "cave" out of fallen, flaming buildings.

CRRC 9♠: "And you will find the other lands on the day she dies" has the potential for being relevant if the Fated are particularly attached to Adelita Ortega. When they return from Chinatown and the visions of other realities they saw there, Flores gravely informs them that he just received word that Adelita was gunned down on the north beach by men wielding automatic weapons. In this case, Aracelis Fierro will pick up the investigation where Adelita left off, but the murder of the character's friend should provide plenty of incentive to investigate the disappearances in Act III, especially once Flores (correctly) assumes that the same people who kidnapped his niece are likely responsible for Adelita's death.



## ACT III

CREC RJ: "Once you witness your golden sunset" could easily describe the final moments of this Act, if the Burning Man appears in the west and starts floating toward Alcatraz as its flames take on a glowing, golden aura.

CRMC 5X: "You will not heed the mentor" might describe Juan Martinez and his less-than-amazing memory. If this is the case, it's suggested that you play up Juan as an old man who is constantly telling other people how they should go about doing their business in order to give him more of a "mentor" feel.

CRMC 9W: "He will abandon you at the moment of tragedy" could refer to the Burning Man disappearing during the battle in Chinatown. If this is the case, it's suggested that he linger over the battle like an ominous presence until the Fated are in a tough spot, at which point he rockets upwards into the sky, leaving them to (presumably) turn the tide of battle back in their favor.

CRRC 10P: "And you will drown in the sorrow of yesterday" is particularly apt for an Act that takes place the day after one of the most devastating earthquakes in human history. If this is the case, it is suggested that you play up the devastation of the earthquake all around the Fated and make frequent mention of the mourners and displaced that fill the city's unsafe streets.

## ACT IV

CREC 8X: "When at last you look upon your beating heart" might be an interesting Destiny Step for a character that is knocked unconscious by a cultist. Instead of moving on to a new target, the cultists starts trying to cut out the character's heart, perhaps even succeeding as the pain snaps the character back to consciousness. If the character is killed by an cultist, this may even be the last thing she sees before spontaneously animating as an undead Stitched character (see *Under Quarantine*), due to the influence of the Burning Man.

CRMC 6P: "You will be the uninvited" more or less sums up the Fated during this Act. The cultists hold Alcatraz and do not wish to let the Fated onto the island, which necessitates them sneaking into the citadel undetected.

CRRC 9P: "And you will come to fear the red letter" might apply if the cultists at Alcatraz have painted cryptic messages in blood or red paint across some of the walls of the citadel. These might range from "He sees you" on random walls to "The door that wakes in darkness, opening into nightmares" next to the door of the Prison or Armory.

CRBC 5W: "The red woman will light the path" might refer to Tlalli Flores, covered in blood and heralding the way for the Quinametzin to come to Earth. If this is the case, it's suggested that you play up the description of the blood-drenched Tlalli in order to make the reference clear.

# NEW MAGICAL THEORY


Below is a new Magical Theory option for allowing characters to more easily cast spells while on Earth.

## THE BURNING MAN'S INFLUENCE

The Burning Man is a font of magical power the likes of which has never been seen on Earth. As it drifts idly through the sky, those below often find themselves spontaneously developing magical powers, even as their minds begin to shatter and crack. From one continent to the next, the Burning Man leaves magically-infused madmen in its wake, seemingly unconcerned with the chaos they might unleash after it has drifted away.

This influence is represented by The Burning Man's Influence Magical Talent. Only characters that have spent time in the Burning Man's presence can take this Magical Talent, but what counts as its presence is rather loose: having the Burning Man hover briefly above a town one is visiting is more than enough to qualify. While this Magical Talent infuses those affected with impressive magical power, it also erodes their sanity, gradually driving them deeper and deeper into the depths of insanity.

### *The Burning Man's Influence Talent*

This character ignores the  penalty for casting Spells or Manifested Powers on Earth. When this character casts a Spell or Manifested Power in Malifaux, she may discard a card before performing the duel to add its Suit to her final duel total.

At the start of every session, this character must succeed on a TN 12 Willpower Challenge or gain the following Condition: **"Crazy +1:** This character suffers -1 to the final duel total of any duel involving a Mental Aspect. They may hear voices or see things that are not actually there, at the Fatemaster's discretion."



## SWAPPING MAGICAL THEORIES

If a Fated character that already has a Magical Theory wishes to gain The Burning Man's Influence Magical Theory, they should be allowed to swap without issue. This essentially represents the Burning Man "scrambling" their current Magical Theory and may result in blue flames erupting from the Fated character, terrible visions that force her to collapse to the ground and grab her head, or other similarly cinematic moments that make it clear something has drastically changed in the way the character channels magic.

# D Penny readful



FIRE IN  
THE SKY

Wyrd

# THE BURNING MAN APPEARS...



Called upon by the Mexican government to investigate the strange appearance of a flaming, humanoid figure in the sky above San Francisco, the Fated must travel back to Earth to unravel the mystery of the Burning Man.

Wherever the strange, floating figure goes, madness follows. The more impressionable residents of San Francisco have already started to lose their minds and take up residence atop the Twin Peaks, where they hold disturbing rituals intended to appease the Burning Man.

Malifaux may be dangerous, but Earth will never again be the same...



A Fire in the Sky is a four session adventure for the Through the Breach roleplaying game that brings the Fated back to Earth. It requires the Fated Almanac or Core Rules to play.



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