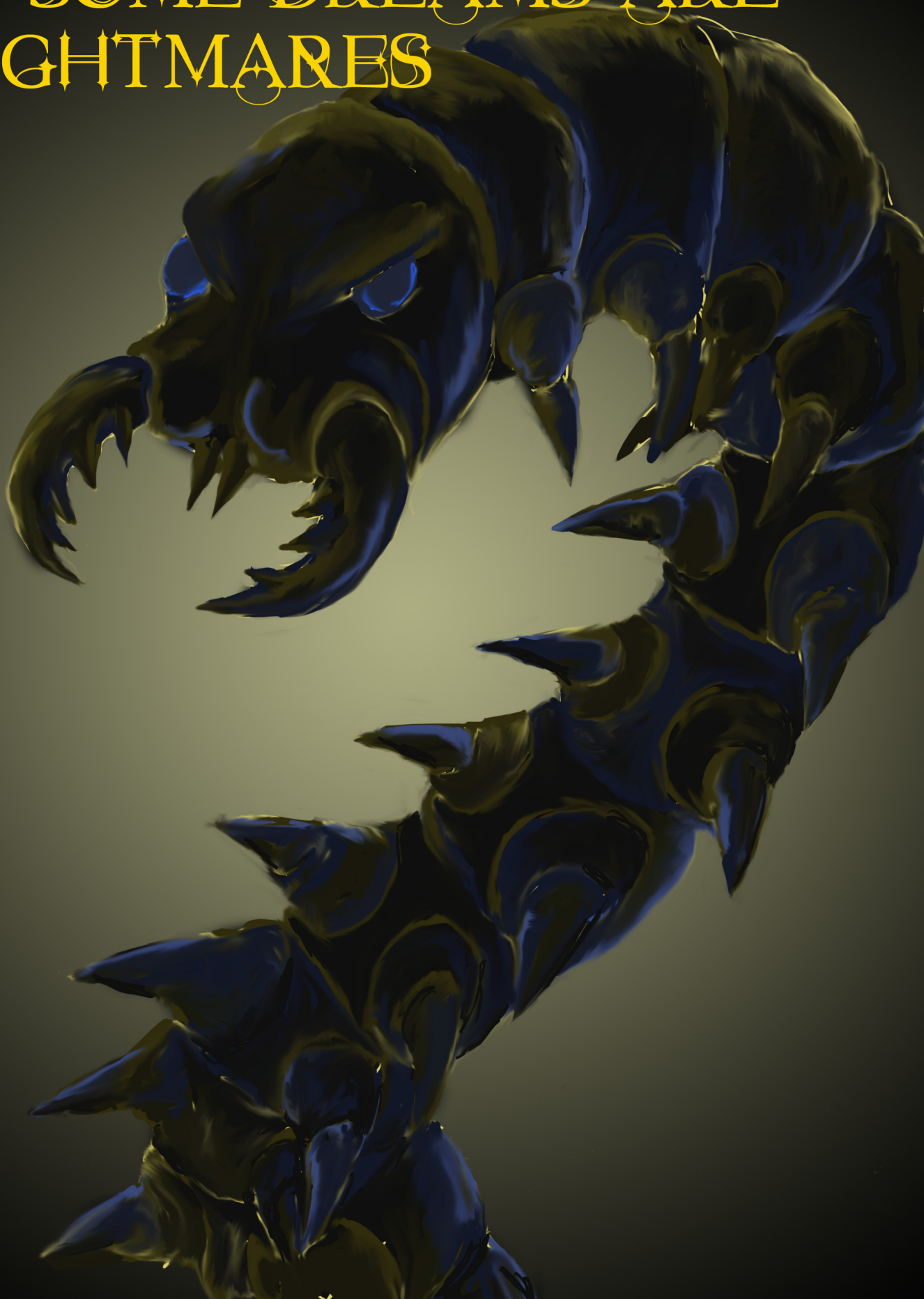


THE ARTIFACT
SOME DREAMS ARE
NIGHTMARES



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Some Dreams Are Nightmares

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Some Dreams Are Nightmares

The city of Gadios means cornerstone or foundation of dreams. Today, that dream is a nightmare.

This adventure is designed for The Artifact 3rd edition rules which can be found at www.theartifact.net

This adventure is suitable for starting or experienced characters either first arriving in Gadios from earth or

returning to the city. They are assigned in a small group commanded by a Second Lieutenant. Give the Lieutenant a proper name for the group they're in. If no Player Characters can speak Scimrahn, the second lieutenant speaks Scimrahn. They are assigned two trucks to retrieve the supplies. If the characters are all corporate, they may be helping to fulfill a military contract to deliver the supplies.

Introduction

The characters are doing routine duties preparing for their next mission. They are *not* considered "on assignment". They are instructed to travel into Gadios to get supplies from a corporate supplier that is operating within the city. On their way they travel deep through the middle of the city.

A cart overturns when a Pettok gets spooked in front of the lead truck. As Scimrahn scramble to clear the obstruction, a small 3-5 year old Scimrahn girl comes out of a doorway and approaches the truck crying and calls out in the Scimrahn language.

“Ahm! Lohzaken aenshnie rah-zah gethtozi”

The following are translations of the girl's cries according to fractional success results. For each success the player can choose one of these translations.

Basic understanding

Mother sick. Help!

Literally

Father! My mother bite by food sick. Help!

Metaphor

The word for 'food' is Zah, which might also mean the centipede like arthropod by the same name.

Intent

The girl needs help for her sick mother.

If the PCs do not speak Scimrahn or they do not respond to the girl's cries. The Lieutenant will respond to the cries and respond that it looks like the overturned cart will take time to clear and that the characters should help the girl. If they give any resistance as to the appropriateness of diverting from their mission, he will cite the need to render medical assistance and render aid to allies.

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The little girl's name is Cheah if anyone asks.

Inside the doorway is a small Scimrahn residence with a few rugs on the floor around a small cook stove. There is a tall cabinet against the wall. If the players are Scimrahn or have a Culture Scimrahn skill they will know that this is a pantry for storing food and any valuables. There are several jugs of water and a small drain/toilet in the corner of the room.

A young woman, the girl's mother, is laying on the floor. She is still and cold. If anyone examines her, or tries to use first aid, they will discover bumps moving under her skin. A medic will discover a small puncture wound at her neck and cuts on the back of her neck.

If the PCs pass a radio operation skill roll they will detect a low power radio signal coming from the young woman and the cabinet.



Giant Black Centipede

A long black centipede like creature with large pincer mandibles.

This is a nanotech robot similar to the Chezbah Hound. It emits a low level radio signal with an encryption BP of 62.

Species None

Length 3 m

Mass 42 Kg

Attributes

	Full	1/2	1/4	1/8
Con	45	23	12	6
Str	20	10	5	3
Ref	40	20	10	5
Agi	50	25	13	7
Dex	5	3	2	1
Bty	5	3	2	1
Cha	5	3	2	1
Int	75	38	19	10
IQ	20	10	5	3
Psy	100	50	25	13
HP	8			
BP	14			

Diet Omnivore

Actions Per Turn +2

Damage Bite-15 Entangle-10%

Impairment to Agility rolls

Defenses Armor (AR 5) Regeneration of five points a turn. Even after the centipede has taken 20 points damage it will continue to regenerate. If it is killed, it will rapidly dissolve into a black paste.

Special Ability: Injection, if the centipede uses it's stinger on a character it causes 30 physical and 15 functional stress per day. Treat as an infectious disease under rules. If the character dies from the injection, 5d10 parasitic centipedes will emerge from the body. If the character is wearing armor the attack must avoid armor to penetrate it.

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Inside the cabinet is a creature. The mother locked it in the cabinet before she died. Cheah is afraid of the cabinet and will cry and scream if anyone tries to open it. It is not locked and will open easily. The creature will attack anyone in the room.

Two turns after the centipede is released from the cabinet, parasitic centipedes will emerge from the young woman and a series of radio bursts will be emitted from them. The characters will audibly hear 'chirps' from their radio headsets. 2d10 (up to a maximum 5d10) will emerge for every PC.

The centipedes will try to escape down the drain. They will co-ordinate their efforts by communicating over radio. Half of the small centipedes will attack anyone in the room, the other half will attempt to escape.

If the drain is covered up with something, the centipedes will not be able to escape down it. They may try and run out the door but more likely will search the room for cracks that they can fit through. If the PCs are making good progress getting rid of the centipedes and blocking them from escape, the GM may opt that there are openings in the walls that are big enough to allow them to escape.

The PCs may not know that the centipede creatures are at all unusual in Gadios.

If there are any PC Comm Officers and the player has not realized that they can use the radio signal to triangulate the location of the centipedes that escaped, have them take an IQ roll to make the realization.

Emergent Black Centipede

A smaller black centipede like creature with pincer mandibles.

Species None

Length .5 m

Mass 5 Kg

Attributes

	Full	1/2	1/4	1/8
Con	45	23	12	6
Str	5	3	2	1
Ref	40	20	10	5
Agi	50	25	13	7
Dex	5	3	2	1
Bty	5	3	2	1
Cha	5	3	2	1
Int	75	38	19	10
IQ	20	10	5	3
Psy	100	50	25	13
HP	2			
BP	14			

Diet Omnivore

Actions Per Turn +2

Damage Bite-5

Defenses **Armor** (AR 5) Regeneration of five points a turn. Even after the centipede has taken 10 points damage it will continue to regenerate. If it is killed, it will rapidly dissolve into a black paste.

Special Ability: Injection, if the centipede uses it's stinger on a character it causes 30 physical and 15 functional stress per day. Treat as an infectious disease under rules. If the character dies from the injection, 5d10 parasitic centipedes will emerge from the body. If the character is wearing armor the attack must avoid armor to penetrate it.

If a scientist examines the paste that is left from a dead centipede, with a microscope and a successful Biology skill

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roll, they will be able to identify the creatures as not biological. More fractional successes will identify further information such as a material inside the goo that seems similar to egg yolk, that their decomposition is some kind of a self

destruct, and finally that the materials seem to be nanotech. These revelations can be made one roll at a time if needed.

The Kelec

Shortly after the last of the centipedes have either been killed or have escaped, the characters should take an Intuition check. If they pass they hear a commotion

going on outside. People are shouting "The Kelec is moving!"

The Kelec has white hair and a long white beard. His skin is albino as are all Kelecs. He wears Kelrath robes and a blindfold over his eyes. This is to prevent Loc from seeing things going on in Gadios although the PCs may not realize that. The Kelec was able to see everything the centipedes could see but if he were to warn the Scimrahn around him of the centipedes Loc and the Centipedes would know. The PCs knowledge allows him to act now.

He is being guided by the hand by his attendant boy to the PCs. As they travel through the street, the Scimrahn know that something important is happening. They call out for their neighbors to come and see.

The Kelec approaches the PCs. He now has a large entourage of onlookers following him. He has his attendant lead him to where the Earthers are. He approaches and in the PC's native language addresses them saying "The danger is not over. You must hunt them and destroy them all. Follow the signal."

If the PCs refuse to hunt down the creatures or seem the least bit unwilling. The Kelec will threaten to pin the death of the young woman on them, saying something like "I know what is in this



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home. If you do not help my people, I will tell them that you are responsible for the death of Cheah's mother. On a single word from me the crowd will tear you limb from limb. I give you 24 of your hours to hunt them, if they are not dead, I will come after you. I will remain at this door until then."

If the PCs have captured a live centipede, the Kelec will know it and can use it as further proof that they killed the woman.

His attendant places a chair at the door of the home and instructs a member of the crowd to take care of the little girl.

There are approximately two hundred Scimrahn on the street watching. A third are armed men (the equivalent of 6 Scimrahn Grunt Squads). If there was a significant fight the city garrison would be alerted and E-suits would come in to end the fighting. If the PCs had hurt or killed anyone they would be taken into custody. The Kelec, despite being blindfolded may cite these facts to the players if they still refuse to comply.

The Kelec will know if the PCs are actually hunting the creatures down because he can see what they see. If the PCs try to slip away and not hunt them,

the Kelec has seen them through the creatures eyes and can identify them. He will send a delegation of Scimrahn after them, framing them for the murder.

The Kelec doesn't really want to frame the PCs but it is the only way he can guarantee their cooperation. He'll actually feel a bit sorry about doing it. If he tells anyone about the creatures they will change their behavior to avoid being found because Loc knows what he knows.

The Kelec Attributes

	Full	1/2	1/4	1/8
Con	25	13	7	4
Str	30	15	8	4
Ref	30	15	8	4
Agi	25	13	7	4
Dex	60	30	15	8
Bty	40	20	10	5
Cha	65	33	17	9
Int	60	30	15	8
IQ	110	55	28	14
Psy	60	30	15	8
HP	10			
BP	36			
Fame Points	40			

Hunting

The characters have had some clues about the creatures using a low level radio signal that spikes before they emerge from a host body. They will need to identify and track this signal. This portion of the adventure is a Tech Challenge with 3 Challenge Points per PC. Follow the rules for Tech Challenges

found in The Artifact RPG 3rd Edition. For each Challenge Point the characters overcome, they encounter one or more of the creatures. Each roll to overcome the challenge takes 2 hours of effort. Skill probe rolls do not take any significant time.

Since the players are following a radio signal, skills like Radio and Triangulation are obvious choices for this challenge but the GM should try to work with a wide range of skills, especially if the PCs can explain how the skill will be used to track the signal.

Some suggested creature encounters.
A dead Gunthar laying in an alley that has creatures about to emerge.

A creature moving down the inside of a 10 cm thick drain pipe.

Creature(s) in a refuse pile consuming material so that they can grow.

An old Scimrahn sitting near the street that was stung and very ill but not dead yet.

Once all the CP have been reduced to zero, the PCs have honed in on the strongest signal down in the sewers

The Centipede King

The signal is strongest near a sewer cover that leads underground. The sewer line is a ten meter wide tunnel, climbing down will require climbing or rappelling down

by rope. PCs may want to wear their Vac-Suits when going down into the sewers. There is about a meter deep of sewer water in the bottom of the tunnel. Inside

Centipede King

A 3 meter tall ambulatory ball of the centipede creatures. It emits a low level radio signal with an encryption BP of 62.

Species None

Hight 3 m

Mass 4700 Kg

Attributes

	Full	1/2	1/4	1/8
Con	45	23	12	6
Str	200	100	50	25
Ref	10	5	3	2
Agi	50	25	13	7
Dex	10	5	3	2
Bty	5	3	2	1
Cha	30	15	8	4
Int	75	38	19	10
IQ	50	25	13	7
Psy	100	50	25	13
HP	400			
BP	1400			

Diet Omnivore

Actions Per Turn +6

Damage Bite-15 Entangle-10% Impairment to Agility rolls

Defenses Armor (AR 5) Regeneration of fifty points a turn. Even after the centipede has taken 600 points damage it will continue to regenerate. If it is killed, it will rapidly dissolve into a black paste.

Special Ability: Injection, if the centipede uses it's stinger on a character it causes 30 physical and 15 functional stress per day. Treat as an infectious disease under rules. If the character dies from the injection, 5d10 parasitic centipedes will emerge from the body. If the character is wearing armor the attack must avoid armor to penetrate it.

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the tunnel the signal grows much stronger and points the direction to go.

In the darkness the characters can start to make out the form of something rising about half a meter above the level of the water like an island. As they approach, the island starts to writhe and rises further out of the water to a height of three meters.

This is a large hive ball of the centipede creatures. It will move as a mass toward

the PCs but it will also shed 1d10 full sized centipedes that will individually attack the PCs. They will swim through the water and will be very hard to notice (70% Impairment to Intuition rolls to detect them).

The characters may use one of their actions each turn to make an agility roll to stay out of the water and up on the sloped sides of the tunnel.

Wrap Up

Once the Centipede King is destroyed, the Kelec will know it. He will tell the Scimrahn that the PCs are heroes to the Scimrahn and that they should be rewarded. The Scimrahn will lay a pile of goods and equipment at their feet worth 200,000 yen. They will also gain 3 Fame Points.