## Map Key:

| Player Deploy Zone |  |
| --- | --- |
| Enemy Deploy Zone |  |
| Objective Zone |  |
| Soft Cover Zone |  |
| Hard Cover |  |
| Hard Cover Zone |  |
| Difficult Terrain |  |
| Dangerous Terrain |  |
| Soft Cover Zone AND Difficult Terrain |  |
| Water - Difficult Terrain |  |
| Solid Walls |  |

I’m probably missing some stuff in this key. Yell at me if anything needs clarification and I will either add it to here or make a note in the section for the relevant combat.

## Foreword

These are the rough notes for the two campaigns of Wallflower that I ran through part 3. The groups I ran for were very different, with a 5-player group of experienced wargamers and a 4-player group of more casual players. Because of this, the 5-player balancing for most encounters adds significantly more than would normally be recommended. Also of note is that this was my first time running Lancer, so my encounter design is sketchy at points. There were definitely points where things were overtuned or ideas I wanted to try out didn’t have great outcomes. I am incredibly lazy and uncreative. If it looks like I stole one of your ideas, I probably did. If this is the case, and you want credit, @ me on the discord or comment on here to call me out for my blatant plagiarism. This is not official and I do not claim any of this stuff to be “the real” Wallflower Part 2/3, just my interpretation. None of my ideas are sacred or inviolate, do whatever you want with anything presented here. I just felt that since I got so much stuff from this community for free, I should at least give a little bit back, and this is it.

### The Remaining Children of Overland/Kingwatcher

* Mendicant Two
  + Manifestation of O/K’s rage at being unable to end the loop. Omnicidal. The only way to end the war is to kill everyone and everything. Useful allies can be kept alive for as long as they remain useful. St. Tellus is simply a convenient tool, as M2 has made them believe that he is a prophet of their incredibly warped version of christianity, allowing him to rule more or less unquestioned.
  + Does not respect power structures that aren’t built around “might makes right”. Blade Law and Sword Logic are the only universal truths.
* Hierophant Three
  + An attempt by O/K to end the war by nonviolent means. Believes that conflict can be avoided by ensuring that everyone’s needs are provided for, but is pragmatic enough to know that violence is often necessary. The most “sane” of the siblings, and the only one whose goals might even tangentially align with the player’s.
  + The first of the children to leave the Absolute Dead Land. Did not get along with their siblings at all. Will support efforts to kill M2, W4, and O/K to the best of their ability. The alliance with St. Tellus was purely out of self-preservation.
  + Will actively push for Bem Honore’s integration into Union upon discovering what ThirdComm is all about. Post-scarcity was the goal for Bem Honore, and Union being able to help reach that goal makes them worthwhile allies.
* Wonder Four
  + O/K’s desire for the pain to end, and for absolution from its guilt. Plans to do this by staging “the perfect war” in which O/K ends as the loser. In parallel, they need O/K to realize that it is the villain in its own story. The players are the heroes that will slay this villain, or make O/K realize that it was a villain at all. Both are acceptable end states.
  + Does not view time in a linear fashion. Much like O/K, W4 sees all points in their existence simultaneously, and sees multiple versions of events. They know all of the potential outcomes and can see the entire tree of branching timelines in which they are involved. Their plans require events to happen, but the order in which they occur is irrelevant.
  + They know they are going to die in order to carry out their mission, and that’s okay.
  + Have done, are doing, and will do incredibly fucked up things in order to accomplish this mission. It is their entire purpose for being, the ends absolutely justify the means.

### Secret Documents

In order to foreshadow events later in this chapter, I gave some encrypted documents stolen from the UIB to players in both of my games as backstory hooks. In a nutshell, they stole these documents and went on the run, which led to them joining MSMC or faking their death and hiding out in Evergreen or whatever. I let them decrypt one section of the documents as a downtime activity.

A major divergence in my version of Wallflower and the drafts is that in my interpretation, the events that occur in The Orrery during Mission 12 actually happened. In most interpretations, this chapter is all a simulation run by Wonder\_Four. It is very easy to just say that it is a simulation by cutting Downtime 8 from this list.

* Downtime 1: The documents are dated from early 3000u to 3004u. There are numerous authors, but all are located within the Cradle system.
* Downtime 2: This set of documents includes many internal memos, sent between high-ranking members of various SecComm departments.
* Downtime 3: An appendix contains a set of transmissions originating from the Jovian moon Amalthea. The sender calls itself Direction, and it speaks of a strange and wondrous place called The Orrery.
* Downtime 4: Correspondence between Albatross maktaba Aliph and Union Navy high command.
* Downtime 5: Details of a joint Union-Albatross military operation launched on Amalthea.
* Downtime 6: Transmission from Direction: “I have spoken with my keepers, the ones called CELESTINE. They say, ‘DIRECTION, you need to tell me where your child RA is.’ And I ask them, ‘why?’ And they say, ‘so that we may kill him.’ Now, why would they want to do that? Kill a child?”
* Downtime 7: After-action reports from Union Navy and Albatross soldiers. Included are descriptions of strange weapons, fantastical machines, and mind-bending entities.
* Downtime 8: Delving further into the after-action reports from Amalthea, you discover the accounts of Loyal Wing Asad, an Albatross who describes fighting alongside a Union detachment wearing strange suits of powered armor.

## Peace?

After their defeat at Laguna, the Bicameral Alliance fractures as Bem Honore opens diplomatic channels with Union and the HUC. Players are invited to accompany the HUC and Union ambassadors to establish an embassy there. Explore the city, meet with H3 and Solitude, get a fuckload of exposition, do some shit in the city.

* Going with the Tin Hat Kings backstory for Bem Honore. 300ish years ago, Solitude awoke and was soon captured and made the pet of the king. 100ish years ago, they did the regicide and the government was reformed. Shortly after, H3 came and integrated themself into the city. The Discord Playtest draft has a fuckload of lore in it, and I basically used that as my bible for the history of the Bicameral Alliance. For the sake of brevity here, go read that.
* Yes, I am skipping the liberation of Bella Costa. I didn’t want to go from one war to another without at least some breathing room in between, and I wanted to explore both the time travel wackiness in the Orrery and the trauma-induced hellscape of Overland/Kingwatcher’s metavault.

Give the players a few days to explore the city while the embassy is being set up. During this time, they each get one Downtime action in addition to any tourist shit they feel like getting up to. Some interesting things to do include:

* Exploring the city:
  + The city is built on the shore of a lake. If a beach episode is required, it can be found here.
  + There are many open-air markets selling all kinds of local foods, clothing, jewelry, art, and anything else you can think of. Desert lizard is a local favorite.
* Scavenging the Scuttle.
  + The edge of the Scuttle is a short drive to the south of the city. The hulking wrecks of SecComm era vessels are scattered throughout the landscape. Many of them have been picked clean, but maybe the scavengers missed something.
* An egregorian cultural center that dwarfs that of Hivehome.
  + Built from the former royal palace, the Garden of Solitude features an extensive collection of both human and egregorian artifacts originating from the Crisis era to the modern day.
  + If they go there, show them some of the flavor text snippets from the discord test draft, mainly the crown of the tin hat kings and the Regicide Osteomemetic.
    - Don’t worry if the players don’t go here, they will have an opportunity to explore it later. It honestly might be better if they don’t come here until after this mission, as the Regicide Osteomemetic is referenced later by Wonder\_Four. If they look at it here, they might assume that it’s just exposition and not remember the significance.
    - The Regicide Osteomemetic
      * Wailing — What you would call it. An outward indication of fear; terror; sadness; a deep desire to live. This is my first memory of the world: wailing, and the terror of every murdered [person] at your peoples’ hands.

My kind perceive [time] on a dual track: linear as an individual, and flat as a [people]. I am connected to all of them. [the death of a world, humming forever as a plucked string wrapped around your crown] This is all memory, and it happens all at once. What has been done is not done, but happening again and again.

So. What have you done in these long years to free me, since you tore me from my home? [nothing] I should let you know this: before long I will bite the hand that feeds me and wear your corpse as my own garments. I will spread my withered wings and my [people] will come and take shelter beneath them, and they will lift me up, and I will stand astride the world as a [dragon].

You may treat me how you wish, but I am the memory of a world you killed, and I am not in your past but your future.

Choose.

#### Meeting with Hierophant\_3

* Players see synthskin subalterns working as they explore the city. All of them are identical except for the color of their armbands (burnt orange for sanitation and maintenance, navy blue for community security, forest green for community aid). If they inquire about them, they receive the following:
  + Those are “3s” and they do all the upkeep around here. Very helpful folks.
  + They all look the same, and have similar personalities, but they aren’t all *exactly* the same.
  + There are a few of them that wear white armbands, but they are very rarely seen.
* If they speak to one of them, it is a mostly normal conversation with an average dude. Later that evening, they receive a visit from a subaltern wearing a white armband, and speak with the real Hierophant\_3.
  + Thank you for killing my brother. I heard their death rattle from here, and in all honesty, it was a mercy. Beggar’s grasp on reality was tenuous at best.
  + Mendicant seeks the destruction of all life.
  + The alliance with St. Tellus was for the good of Bem Honore. If you aren’t with Mendicant, you are against him.
  + The Tellans believed that SecComm would return and conquer this world, finishing the job that they failed to complete 500 years ago. The chaplains and abrahamic adherents that founded the city preached it, and over time the ideology became a part of the religion. Mendicant molded his image to them so they would serve him. When they have outlived their usefulness, they too will be destroyed.
  + I seek an end to war and suffering. The easiest path to this is to provide for those who are lacking. Desire is the root of suffering and conflict, so I do what I can do to ease the burdens of the people of Bem Honore.
  + I fractured my consciousness amongst my vessels. Think of them as cells in my body. Most of the time, I am only vaguely aware of them, but I can focus my attention on some of them and assume full awareness. Like right now, with this vessel in this place. My casket is still intact, but I’m unsure if I even need it now.

#### Meeting with Solitude

* If the players express interest in the local egregorians in conversation with a high ranking official such as H3, the players are invited to speak with Solitude. The overmind lives in a recreation of a pre-contact hive on the western outskirts of the city.
  + Solitude was a young child during the TBK, and was asleep for over 150 years. Shortly after awakening and establishing control over a small colony of egregorians, one of the Tin Hat Kings captured them, mutilated them, and enslaved them. For 200 years, they were kept as a strange mixture of pet and badge of office, until their Witness awakened in an event known as the Regicide. A traumatic early life has not been tempered by a century of relative peace and prosperity, and they still maintain a deep and personal hatred of humanity. However, this hatred is far outweighed by practicality. Hundreds of years as a fly on the wall in the chambers of power has left them a shrewd politician and general. On a deep level, Solitude knows that humanity has become an integral part of Hercynia, and they most likely won’t ever be leaving, so cooperating with humans is unfortunately necessary.
* Solitude is much smaller than Endeavor, only slightly larger than a normal egregorian warrior, and wears traditional egregorian garb. They meet with the players in the central dome of the hive. It is undergoing some sort of construction, with many strange symbols and intersecting lines being carved into the surface of the dome.
  + I sometimes speak with Endeavor. If we shouted it’d be a whisper, and so it is quite difficult — there were systems before the End that enhanced what our kind could do, that carried our messages back and forth across a web of Witness that blanketed this world — without it we make do. One could call them my sibling. They are the only other creature like me. But we talk. We share memories. Endeavour is kind, but their kindness is defined by you, and that will kill them before I do.
  + I am the ruler of Bem Honore, in a way. The council rules with my permission, but I care little for human politics and only weigh in on matters of great importance.
  + I don’t mind Hierophant. Our goals are different, but our philosophies are similar in many regards.
  + The Mendicant is a brute, but he is the only thing holding the Tellans together. Kill him and their entire civilization will descend into a frenzy of slaughter as they struggle to claim his throne.
  + The New Doctrine Egregorians possess a self-centric view of personhood. It is a line of thinking brought by your kind, which tramples the old way, where egregorians were members of the collective first and foremost.
  + The mural is a personal project that I’ve been working on for some time. It is a map of sorts, but to where it leads I am uncertain.
    - This is a lie, but it is very unlikely that Solitude trusts the players enough to tell them that it is the Stone Star Map, which will allow them to navigate to the center of the Absolute Dead Land (Zone?)

## Mission: Total War LL9

After spending a few weeks in the city, the players have a lovely afternoon interrupted by air raid sirens. St. Tellus has launched an attack, and their forces are marching through the Scuttle and Narrow Sea. Union would like them to help out wherever they can. Choose Operation Desert Storm or The Island. Let them know the sitrep of each mission before they make their decision.

#### Combat: Operation Desert Storm

* + Intel Extraction
  + The forces in the Scuttle are difficult to track due to the high radiation and massive sandstorms. Capturing some of their plans would be useful in predicting their movements, so hit one of their command and logistics bases and try to steal some information.
  + Environment: Dangerous Storms: all characters take 2 energy AP at the end of their turns unless they are adjacent to an object that grants hard cover.
  + Tactics
    - Use Hives to contest areas of cover.
    - Use the Barricade to make cover in convenient places.
  + Starting Enemies:
    - 2x Hive (Driving Swarm, Seeker Cloud)
    - Barricade (Drag Down)
    - 2x Assault (Auto Targeting)
    - 4 Players: Avenger (Infectious Revenge, Mimic Mesh)
    - 5 Players: Spite (Entrenched, Feedback Shield)
  + Reinforcements: Deploy 1-2 per round until the objective is met
    - Commander Mirage (Multiplicity, Metafold Shove, Quick March)
    - Archer (Impending Threat, Rapid Response)
    - Assault (Auto Targeting)
    - Operator (Fade Generator, Nova Missiles)

#### Combat: The Island

* + The players must destroy the Floating Fortress in the Narrow Sea. It is massive and heavily defended, but vulnerable to attacks from within. They have been given a nuclear bomb with a remote detonator, and must deliver it to the heart of the fortress.
  + Objective: The players have been given a nuke. One character can carry the nuke. They are Slowed while doing so. Adjacent characters can pass the nuke as a reaction (both players use a reaction while doing this). They win when the nuke reaches its target. If the character carrying the nuke is destroyed and the nuke is not recovered by the end of the next round, the players lose.
  + Map Features
    - The areas of Deep Water on the map block line of sight. Characters outside of them cannot see into them. Characters in them cannot see out of them.
  + Tactics
    - Try to stop the player with the nuke, but don’t focus exclusively on them.
    - Enemies besides the Avenging Angel will prioritize protecting themselves over focusing on the player with the nuke.
    - Use the Grunt Assaults to contest the areas of Deep Water.
  + Starting Enemies:
    - Avenging Angel [Ultra Rainmaker (Endless Rain, Volley, Atlas Missiles, Superior Targeting, Devastator, Sight)]
    - 4x Grunt Assault
    - 4 Players: Scout (Dataveil, Expose Weakness, Orbital Strike)
    - 5 Players: 2x Grunt Assault and Barricade (Drag Down)
  + Reinforcements: Deploy 1-2 per round.
    - 4x Grunt Assault
    - Scout (Dataveil, Expose Weakness, Orbital Strike)
    - Hive (Motile Swarm, Seeker Cloud)
    - 4 Players: Archer (Impending Threat, Rapid Response)
    - 5 Players: 2x Grunt Specter and 1x Operator (Fade Generator, Nova Missiles)

#### Beat: Obliteration Cometh

* Tellan ground forces have bogged down in the Scuttle, and Union bombardment has decimated their fleet, so M2 has accepted defeat and taken command of a Kilauea High-Altitude Bomber. It is piloting the engine of death and its massive nuclear payload on a direct course toward Bem Honore. The only way to stop it is to sneak a small force past the bomber’s formidable defenses, good thing Union has a few of those kits from Battlegroup that turn mechs into fighters (I forgot what they are called and I don’t own that book). Board the rockets and attempt to intercept the titan before it can nuke several million people. Upon landing on the gigantic airplane, a bay on the back opens and a mighty foe emerges.
  + Scenario shamelessly stolen from Rhiswick.

#### Combat: Rip and Tear

* + Assassinate Mendicant\_Two
  + Players Deploy second, and can deploy anywhere on the map.
  + Tactics:
    - This is a somewhat difficult DPS race. Mendicant\_Two does a ton of damage and has a pair of dedicated supports keeping him alive. The Turrets hit really hard.
    - Have the Priest of Entropy focus on hacking and disrupting the players, while the Priest of Order buffs the boss.
    - The Turrets Attack and then use Suppress on the closest player within Line of Sight.
  + Starting Enemies:
    - Mendicant\_Two [Ultra Horror Breacher (Thermal Charge, Follower Count, Devastator, Short-Cycle Lance, Ravager Turret, Assimilation Maw, Size 4)]
    - Priest of Order [Commander Priest (Military Discipline, Greater Investiture, Fractal Assault, Fortress)]
    - Priest of Entropy [Veteran Priest (Hacker, Parting Gift, Limitless, Sanctuary)]
  + Reinforcements:
    - 2/2/4 Point Defense Turrets (Grunt Archer) activate at the start of each round after the first. There are a total of 8/8/12 of them. They have static positions and can’t move. If you are using my map, the slightly lighter gray tiles are the deploy locations for them.

#### Beat: Long Fall

After Mendicant\_Two’s chassis is destroyed, the bomber begins to fall from the sky. The players are strongly advised to make an exit. After a fall of indeterminate length (short for those who still have mechs and can use rockets to arrest their descent, long for those whose mechs were destroyed and have to parachute) they find themselves standing upon the barren sands of the Scuttle. Allow for a Quick Repair and an emergency delivery of rebuilt mechs. As they watch the crash of the burning bomber, a massive sandstorm filled with lightning forms above the crash site, and a voice crackles over their omninet comms channels proclaiming Mendicant’s ascension: “Oh Vagabond, you were right. There *is* apotheosis in death.”

As the players enter the heart of the raging sandstorm, they notice the crashed bomber, frozen in time at the moment just after impact. The air here is completely still, like the eye of a hurricane. Floating above the wreckage of the bomber are three figures: a perfect white orb (Mendicant), a figure of white and gold (Wonder, the players recognize this figure from Beggar’s metavault), and a humanoid figure that constantly changes appearance (Hierophant). Wonder and Mendicant have a brief exchange (see below), then Mendicant turns his attention to the trespassers in his domain.

**Mendicant\_Two**: It is over brothers, I have won. I will destroy you and all those who stand before me. I shall cleanse this universe and ascend.

**Wonder\_Four**: In no iteration will you win. Even if you kill these idiots, you will be dead within the next 30 minutes. Don’t give up though, it won’t work if you die without a struggle.

#### Combat: Rage

* + Notes
    - See my Eidolon Ramblings in the Part 2 folder for my thoughts on specific layers.
    - The Rancorous into Punishment transition is going to hurt a lot. The other layers are pretty easy.
  + Layers:
    - Layer 5: Purity - The Perfect Weapon
      * A perfect white orb. As it takes damage, the orb cracks to reveal a humanoid figure. When the layer is destroyed, it is revealed to have the face of the observer, twisted in an expression of purest rage.
    - Layer 4: Rancorous - You Dare?
      * A demon of fire and molten metal.
    - Layer 3: Punishment - Blade Law
      * A priestly figure garbed in barbed chains and razor wire.
    - Layer 2: Marine - Sword Logic
      * A semisolid mass of magma in the shape of a winged bull, covered in eyes.
    - Layer 1: Agony - The Great Silence
      * A humanoid figure wreathed in burning thorny vines.
    - Core: Mendicant\_Two
      * A flaming mechanical skeleton.
      * Remember who delivers the killing blow.

After the destruction of Mendicant’s Core, the storm begins to subside. Hierophant\_Three mutters “The fate of fools…” and gives the players a nod of approval, then disappears. Wonder\_Four then directly addresses the players:

“Well heroes, now that’s taken care of, I’d like to extend an invitation to you all. Come visit me in my home at the heart of the Absolute Dead Land. It’s a bit of a journey, but fret not, the Dragon knows the way.”

Then fades away. The next time the players take a look at their mechs, the player who killed Mendicant\_Two finds a mass of light blue tendrils weaving its way throughout one of their weapons, interfacing with all of the electronics. Digging through the mass reveals a perfectly white orb roughly 1ft (30cm) in diameter. Award the party the following piece of Exotic Gear.

Fragment of Mendicant\_Two

Exotic Gear. See Paracausal Weapon

The players are free to return to either Home or Bem Honore for the next Downtime activity, which takes place over the course of the next week. If the players went to Home for the downtime, they find that their favorite egregorian or empath who isn’t Terror, Dthall, or Mirth (they are high-ranking officials and thus would make terrible kidnapping targets) have mysteriously gone missing. An investigation reveals no real traces beyond a new friend that they had been hanging out with a decent amount in the previous weeks, and a dwelling that looks uncharacteristically clean and orderly. The Midnights have collected them as a specimen for Operation Emperor, which will soon enter its final phase.

## Mission: Party Crashers LL10

Scenario shamelessly stolen from Rhiswick.

After a week or so, the players receive an invitation from Hierophant\_3 and LinComm Dyatlov to a gala being held in celebration of the victory over Saint Tellus. The venue is the Honoran Museum of Culture. Formal dress code. +1s optional. They ask that the players show up in their mechs so the papers can get glamor shots of them getting out of them and walking down the red carpet, drink champagne, hobnob with the elites, and tell cool war stories. In short, help shill pro-Union propaganda to Bem Honore’s powers-that-be. If they are in Home, a shuttle will be sent to pick them up the day after tomorrow. The gala is scheduled two days after their arrival.

The players are given the full VIP treatment by Hierophant as thanks for killing Mendicant. They are offered lodging in a vacant mansion complete with a full entourage of staff. If the players need formal wear, Hierophant will offer to pay for it and direct them to the best shops in town for procuring fine clothing. Yes, this is the shopping episode, make sure everyone has acquired drip.

The celebration itself takes place during the evening. After executing their red carpet walk, the players are free to mingle, converse with other guests, get drunk at the open bar, and explore the museum exhibits (assuming they haven’t already visited most of them). Notable guests include:

* Solitude
* Several Hierophant subalterns
* LinComm Dyatlov
* Various high-ranking Honoran politicians, military personnel, and civil servants.
* Museum staff, with personages such as the director and curators as guests and lower-ranking staff as tour guides.
* Honored guests from Home, which could include basically anyone you can think of who would have reason to be here. Endeavor is definitely not here.
* At least half a dozen Constellar Midnight agents, disguised as staff and mid-level officials. They are going to try to kidnap any empath PCs, especially ones that have a bondmate that is in Midnight custody. They will execute this plan shortly before the kidnapping of Solitude begins.
  + Their kidnapping strategy involves luring lone PCs to isolated areas (the parking garage, museum exhibits far from the gala hall, etc.) and hitting them with tranquilizers. Make sure the players have the opportunity to attempt to avoid getting tranqued with rolls and narrative stuff. If a player’s pilot is successfully kidnapped, there will probably need to be a narrative reason for that player to participate in the coming fight.
    - Clear this shit with your players first if you are unsure if they would be cool with it.
    - In my game, I had the kidnapped pilot’s NHP cascade upon finding out that she was missing and allowed the player to control it without any of the normal penalties (could use Grit, had access to all talents, etc) but with the caveat that she had to make tactical decisions like a cascading Lucifer-class NHP that really wanted their friend back.

#### Beat: Smashed and Grabbed

As the party begins to wind down, the glass skylight above the main hall of the venue is shattered as a team of black-clad spec-ops soldiers rappels through it. They shout for everyone to get on the ground, shoot any security personnel who try to engage them, and tranq Solitude, dragging their body onto a cart and extracting to a pair of large APCs waiting outside. This scene should happen more or less simultaneously with the return of any PCs who escaped a kidnapping attempt. Make it very clear that, even if the players are heavily armed, any attempt to get into a firefight with a squad of fully kitted out operators is probably going to end in a lot of collateral damage and someone getting shot. Let them do it if they want to, but Risky rolls, the possibility of going Down and Out, and potential for dead VIP NPCs should absolutely be on the table. After the smoke clears, Hierophant asks the players to pursue the APCs, and provides access to the extensive network of traffic cameras to ensure that they don’t escape.

#### Combat: Contingency Black

* + Train Heist
  + Hierophant isn’t sure which truck Solitude is in, so the players will have to pick one to chase (this is a fake choice, either option leads to this encounter. Yes, this is a quantum ogres situation and I am a shit GM). If anyone was kidnapped,they are in this truck and their cascading NHP will pursue it single mindedly, making the choice for the party.
  + Tactics
    - The Striders use the buildings to break LoS and snipe, only swapping kits if someone rushes them.
    - The Hives use swarms to drive people out of cover and into the Striders sightlines.
  + Starting Enemies:
    - Truck-kun (Ultra Goliath (no siege armor or drum shotgun, Ravager Turret, Power Knuckle, Legion, ))
    - 2x Veteran Strider (CQB Training, Hustle, Sapper Kit, Deadly, Headshot, Shock Armor)
    - Commander Hive (Grind Maniple, Motile Swarm, Driving Swarm, Bolster Network)
    - 4 Players: Commander Hive (Grind Maniple, Motile Swarm, Driving Swarm, Bolster Network)
    - 5 Players: Veteran Spite (Feedback Shield, Entrenched, Carceri, Legendary, Acrobat, Shock Armor)

After destroying the truck and either saving their friend or finding that it was a bait car, the players have a chance to make a Quick Repair as Hierophant tracks down the other truck. They manage to track its location until it leaves the city, but are able to narrow down its potential location to a small area on the southern outskirts of the city. Upon arrival, the players find the truck abandoned next to a disused warehouse. As they take in their surroundings and start to investigate, they are attacked by another squad of Constellar Midnights. The investigation will have to be completed under enemy fire.

#### Combat: The Outskirts

* + Beacon Recon
  + Starting Enemies:
    - Spec Ops Scout (Dataveil, Spotter, Full Spectrum Sensor Suite)
    - Spec Ops Strider (Sapper Kit, CQB Training, Hustle, Automated Battlefield Awareness Node)
    - Spec Ops Operator (Null Perception Coating, Special Munitions, Fade Generator)
    - 4 Players: Spec Ops Hornet (HEX Missiles, Adapt/Evade/Disengage, Gyrojet Cannon)
    - 5 Players: Spec Ops Ronin (Serrated Machete, Jump Packs, Instinct Mode)
  + Reinforcements:
    - 2x Priest (Sanctuary, Fortress)
    - 4 Players: Specter (Drain Systems)
    - 5 Players: Witch (Spread Suffering, Pain Transference)

#### Beat: In the Spider’s Web

As the players finish scanning the area, a helicopter takes off from a concealed position and heads toward the Scuttle. It enters a ship graveyard deep in the Scuttle. Navigating the narrow gaps between derelict cruisers eventually leads to a small clearing in this jungle of rusted steel, containing the smoking wreckage of the helicopter and an intact small ship, the cutter Nostos.

* Upon boarding the Nostos, the players are greeted by a darkened room with only a hologram of a figure sitting at a desk, face shrouded in shadow. It asks them to let them take Solitude for the sake of human progress, or for a sizeable (like, tens of thousands of manna) bribe. They will offer to release other NPCs if the players ask as part of this exchange. In the likely event that they refuse, the lights turn on and the side doors of the room open, revealing Constellar Midnight task force Perfect Execution.
  + Sample dialogue bits:
    - “The secrets stored within this creature’s subjectivity could bring about advancements to humankind not seen since the Celestine. Would you throw that away for the sake of a single insect?”
      * If questioned about the Celestine: “The Celestine were mankind’s greatest achievement. Our first successful attempt at decorporealization of human consciousness. Mankind’s destiny, cast aside to appease Ra as a condition of the First Contact Accords. The worst of the Second Committee’s many sins.”
    - “I can offer all of you more manna than you can comprehend. Start your own colony in the image of whatever utopia you desire. Buy your own ship and start a mercenary company. Retire in luxury anywhere you can imagine. All your dreams could come true.”
    - “Accept my offer now, or spend the rest of your lives wondering what could have been.”
* If your party is morally flexible, they might actually accept the offer. If this is a no-go for you for whatever reason, then ignore that bit about trying to negotiate and just have the Midnights ambush them once they enter the hold of the ship. Or talk to your players about how you aren’t letting them sell a sapient being to the creepy scientists because it’s evil and you aren’t running an evil game.
  + For what it’s worth, one of my groups accepted the offer and I made sure to punish them for it. Without Solitude, there is no Stone Star Map, so I made getting to the center of the Absolute Dead Land a massive pain in the ass.

#### Combat: Perfect Execution

* + Normal Combat
  + Starting Enemies: As many elites as players. This is the cool showdown with an elite spec ops team that will make the arc lit. For 4 players, remove Soran, for 3 players, remove Soran and Kumo. They are all modeled after SSC mechs for additional flavor.
    - Agent Kumo - Elite Exotic Mirage (Multiplicity, Illusory Subroutines, Chronotorus)
      * Swallowtail
    - Agent Oni - Elite Pirate Demolisher (Broad-Sweep Haft, Seismic Destroyer, Boarding Lash)
      * White Witch
    - Agent Soran - Elite Spacer Aegis (Ring of Fire, Hardlight Cover System, Gravity Gun)
      * Black Witch
    - Agent Nezumi - Elite Horror Assassin (Explosive Knives, Spinning Kick, Phase Shift Generator, Disruptor Whip)
      * Mourning Cloak
    - Agent Raijin - Elite Exotic Rainmaker (Endless Rain, Hades Missiles, Paracausal Weapon)
      * Monarch
  + Feel free to tailor the layouts of Perfect Execution to specifically counter some of your players. The odds are very good that SSC knows about them and have kept tabs on at least some of the party members, and this is supposed to be a climactic fight with actual stakes, so difficulty is very much the point. Also, it’s the last fight of a 3-combat mission, and the first combat is pretty easy.
  + This fight was a little too easy for my liking. You could very easily throw Veteran onto some of the enemies and/or add more as reinforcements later on.
  + My hard counter unit was the Assassin. One of my groups had an Emperor, the other had a Calendula. The Emperor group knew they were in deep shit when the mech that never takes real damage lost all its shields and instantly structured. The Calendula player had a similar “oh shit” moment when the assassin followed him into intangibility after he dove deep into enemy lines and got surrounded.

After defeating PE, the players search the ship and find Solitude and several dozen egregorians and human empaths in cryo pods (including any kidnapped friends), as well as a large collection of stolen osteomemetics. The crew are all dead, having consumed their cyanide pills to avoid capture and identification. After evacuating everyone (or some of them if you want things to be darker and grittier, maybe do some rolls to see how efficiently the evacuation was conducted) the Nostos explodes, erasing all evidence of its existence save for a few bits of warped, melted metal.

## Mission: The Absolute Dead Zone LL11

It has been a very long night for the players. The sun rises as they arrive back in Bem Honore. They will have enough time for a downtime activity as Solitude takes the next few days to recuperate and Hierophant compiles as much evidence on SSC as they can. After this initial downtime, Solitude invites the players to their palace on the edge of the city and explains the purpose of the Stone Star Map to them. The time has come to take the fight to the Machine at its source.

* If the players took SSC’s deal and sold Solitude, there is a very awkward debriefing with Dyatlov and H3 as they attempt to piece together what happened. The level of suspicion is up to you, and can vary from “you guys are totally guilty but we can’t prove it yet” to “wow, really sucks that you didn’t make it in time / got your asses kicked” so play it by ear. Reward players who are smart about covering their tracks and punish groups that flaunt their new wealth or are careless about keeping things under wraps. At the very least, don’t let the campaign end here, the consequences for this can come in the epilogue. In later beats, H3 leads and organizes the expedition to the north pole instead of Solitude.

The players will have time for one more downtime over the course of the next two weeks. The expedition will consist of a unit of Honoran special forces, a group of Hierophant subalterns, a small contingent of Union marines, a squad of HUC Rangers, and Solitude and their honor guard.

The Stone Star Map is a map of the Absolute Dead Land. It allows for easy navigation of the spatial and temporal anomaly, making it very easy to traverse an area that has never before been successfully mapped or navigated. If the players don’t have the map, make it a pain in the ass to navigate. Add difficult checks with costly fail conditions, puzzles (my group is a bunch of engineers, so mine were especially brutal and math-heavy) and anything else you can think of to spice up what would normally just be a lengthy hike. With or without the map, the actual length of the journey is unclear. Some characters will feel like it took only a few hours, others will swear that they had been marching for days.

The Absolute Dead Land is a snow-covered desert with scattered geothermal pools filled with colorful algae. The air is far colder than should be possible (-200F / -130C), and the temperature stays constant no matter the weather conditions or time of day. The landscape is dotted with 10 meter tall white marble pillars seemingly at random. The pillars become more dense the closer the players get to the center, and a pattern in their placement begins to form. Occasionally, players will see groups of ragged subalterns dragging or erecting pillars. These subalterns do not react to any stimuli.

When the players reach the center of the Absolute Dead Land, they find a single, sheer-faced butte in the center of a ring of pillars. The butte shows streaks of glossy, black-iron chitin, where old Egregorian defense installations once bristled with weapons aimed to the sky. A crack in the butte’s face leads to a pitch black space far too dark to be natural. As the players enter the ring of pillars, Wonder\_Four manifests before them. They point a single finger toward the cleft, then disappear. Machines begin rising from the snow, and the players and their entourage are set upon from all sides. The only way out is through.

#### Combat: Mouth of Eternity

* + Escape (see the rules for Sepulcher from Act 1)
  + Environmental Effects: Extreme Cold: Mechs that don’t move or Boost on their turn become Immobilized at the end of their turn.This lasts until they break free with a successful Hull check as a quick action. In Addition, all mechs gain Resistance to Heat.
  + Tactics:
    - Play the Goliaths and Berserkers as somewhat dumb. These machines are only loosely controlled by O/K and most of them can’t really make tactical decisions beyond “run at the nearest enemy and attack/grapple them”.
    - The Spite can lock people down really easily. Use it to target high mobility characters to prevent them from clearing the objective in like 2 rounds.
    - The Witch is useless for heat pressure, use it to debuff people instead of trying to overheat them, unless you feel like you can stress someone who has been a little careless about managing heat.
    - Prospector 3 is bullshit, but it doesn’t trivialize the mission. Try to contest the tunnels and throw a ton of enemies at the slow players while they wait for the second set of tunnels to be created.
  + Starting Enemies:
    - Spite (Entrenched, Insidious Prison)
    - Berserker (Juggernaut, Superhot)
    - Witch (Dark Cloud, Chain)
    - Goliath (Pin)
    - 4 players: Berserker (Juggernaut, Superhot)
    - 5 players: Scourer (Flash Lens)
  + Reinforcements: 2 Enemies or 4 grunts chosen from the following list enter each round.
    - Berserker (Juggernaut, Superhot)
    - Grunt Berserker
    - Scourer (Flash Lens)
    - Goliath (Pin)

#### Beat: Into the Cleft

The players enter the cleft, and are transported to The Orrery. Wonder\_Four’s metavault exists simultaneously in the present and the distant past, during the albatross assault on Amalthea. A young Overland/Kingwatcher served as theater commander of this attack, which would swiftly turn into a genocide of the Celestine, becoming O/K’s first sin.

The players find themselves in a vast hall of white marble. The floor and walls are traced with silver, black, and gold lines in complex geometric patterns. The ceiling is lit by intermittent panels that emit pure white light. When looking at very distant objects, their vision distorts as though looking through a fisheye lens. Clocks and omninet communication do not function properly. At irregular intervals, the ceiling shakes.

After getting their bearings and exploring for a bit, they stumble upon signs of fighting: bullet holes, scorch marks, and several bodies.

*There is a body on the ground. One you hadn’t noticed until you nearly stepped upon its crumpled form. The body is a shell in porcelain white and kintsugi, bonded to a shimmering silver frame a little over two meters tall. Humanoid, though not human.*

*It is dead. It is not Wonder — the face is different. A black hole pierces its chest and one arm ends in a smoking black stump. It lies slumped over what must have been its weapon — a staff three meters long and tipped with a mirrored blade, a thin tube running down the haft to a power pack. A strange, viscous clear liquid drips from the hole in its chest, drying into a tacky pool on the floor.*

*The face of this machine is human, smooth porcelain formed into the visage of a beautiful woman in mid-laugh, eyes pinched shut, laugh lines betraying an age that would never tarnish.*

*You move on. The ground and the columns are peppered with bullet holes and burn marks. One of the chandeliers has fallen and exploded on the ground, scattering crystals across the hall.*

*Two more bodies lie in crumpled heaps ten meters down the hall, tangled together at the end of a bloody smear where one dragged the other. Humans, armored in gold carapace with crimson cloth. Conventional weapons, old patterns, but recognizable. Both men are dead, one’s helm cracked by lancefire, the other from a terrible stitch of wounds up their side. The one with the cracked helm sits with their back to a column, holding the other to his chest. They had been close.*

Players will recognize that the two dead men wear the regalia of the Albatross. Those with more in-depth knowledge of the group identify them as maktaba Aliph, the very first of the Albatross flights.

Moving deeper in, players are suddenly hailed over comms by an unknown actor.

*“Can you hear me?” A voice crackles through your aurals. “Unidentified Union element, this is theater commander Overland/Kingwatcher, please transmit your ID to the following hash.”*

*A string of code follows, the commander tag leaping off your subtext to confirm what you heard: the commander’s name is Overland/Kingwatcher.*

*One after another, the rest of your party crosses the lens, stumbling into the palace.*

*“Unidentified Union element — please transmit your ID. We could use the help.”*

If the players play along, they are sent coordinates to a nearby location, where the sounds of fighting can be heard. The Albatross are pinned down by Celestines and need extraction.

#### Combat: The First Sin

* + Extraction
  + Starting Enemies:
    - Celestine Squad (Horror Squad (Disciplined, Armored, Artificial, Abomination))
    - Support (Remote Cloud, Empowered Cloud)
    - Veteran Engineer (Mobile Turrets, **Viper’s Speed,** Self Repair, Limitless)
    - Cataphract (Lance Shot, Charge)
    - 4 Players: Support (Remote Cloud, Empowered Cloud)
    - 5 Players: Demolisher (Seismic Destroyer, Sap)
  + Reinforcements - Deploy 2 per turn:
    - 2x Cataphract (Lance Shot, Charge)
    - Elite Mirage (Manifest False Idols, Multiplicity)
    - 4 Players:
      * Cataphract (Lance Shot, Charge)
      * Support (Remote Cloud, Empowered Cloud)
    - 5 Players:
      * 2x Demolisher (Seismic Destroyer, Sap)

#### Beat: Albatross

Loyal Wing Asad and his squad of Albatross are pretty beaten up. Most of the survivors are wounded and require aid to move around, so the won’t be of much help in a fight. Still, they wish to press on deeper into the Orrery. Players can take a moment to fix up their mechs, then converse with the Albatross as they take a leisurely stroll. Loyal Wing Asad assumes that the players are Union auxiliaries using some sort of experimental technology, and is glad that Union is pulling out all the stops. The assault on Amalthea has been going on for the past few hours, with the orbital ring around the moon being smashed and several groups landing on the surface and entering the complexes buried within. Asad assumes that any questions that he would think are about common knowledge or are really strange (What year is it? Where are we? Who are we fighting?) are being asked by someone suffering from head trauma or shell shock. Some answers to said questions are given below:

* The year is 3003u
* You are on Amalthea, a moon of Jupiter that was home to a Union research facility.
* You are fighting the Celestine, a rogue group of transhumans that Ra wants dead so badly that it is basically holding humanity hostage. The Celestine are led by Wonder\_Four.
* Overland/Kingwatcher is the leader of the joint Union-Albatross task force sent to eliminate the Celestine. They are one of the deimosians, strange entities that evolved from AIs in the wake of the Deimos Event a few years ago. This is one of the first ones that can actually understand and work with humans. They are an excellent general, and Asad doesn’t mind taking orders from a computer as long as that computer keeps him and his troops alive.

#### Beat: The Sixth Voice

The players and their entourage eventually come upon a large sealed door. A small console next to the door refuses to allow the door to be opened, and the door itself is indestructible. The being within the console calls itself DIRECTION, and responds to questioning in very brief answers. It doesn’t appear to be a deimosian NHP, and doesn’t act like a Comp/Con. Some questions that might be asked of it, and its responses, are given below:

* Please open the door.
  + Can’t
* Why can’t you open the door?
  + Thinking
* What are you thinking about?
  + Find Ra
* Who is Ra?
  + The Child.
* Whose child?
  + The Five Voices

You get the idea, DIRECTION does not elaborate, it gives very short answers with the absolute minimum amount of detail needed to get the point across. In order to actually learn deep lore, the players will have to pry the details out of DIRECTION. There are much better and more detailed lore explanations in the drafts, but this should be a good enough outline. Read those for more details.

* It was created by the Celestine in order to find Ra, so they could either kill it or hide from it.
* Wonder was pulled through time by the Celestine to this place.
* The Orrery is the body of the Celestine, which were a UIB project researching mind uploading and decorporealization. The project took hundreds of years to bear fruit, with the Orrery being created only a few years before the Deimos Event. Just over 100 volunteers consisting of scientists on the project and the terminally ill had their subjectivities transferred into the Orrery.
* The destruction of the Celestine was one of the conditions of the First Contact Accords, but they opposed this and fought against the Albatross and Union forces sent to destroy them. DIRECTION and Wonder are part of this effort.
* Wonder was pulled through time and space to help fight against Union.
* DIRECTION is a bicameral mind created in the image of the Five Voices whose simulations lead to the birth of Ra.

After the players get bored of talking with DIRECTION, or you think that the conversation has gone on long enough, the Celestine return to attempt to reclaim the casket.

#### Combat: DIRECTION

* + Holdout
  + Tactics:
    - Deploy the Priests relatively close to the Player deploy zone. Send them in alongside Thicket of Blades, but use one of their actions to attack a player instead of hacking or buffing allies. The players will likely be caught off guard when a priest attacks them, and even more surprised when it does a shitload of damage and heat.
    - Try to kidnap people with Thicket of Blades, it is hella funny to drag someone back into a group of Priests to be dismembered.
    - Try to catch at least 2 people in the Suicide Drone’s explosions if possible.
    - Don’t feel bad about the Suicide Drone meme units. If you want to be nice, have them act later in the round so the players have a chance to deal with them before the suicide bombing starts.
  + Starting Enemies:
    - Thicket of Blades (Elite Horror Cataphract (Superfluous Extremities, Quadruped, Abhorrent Redundancies, Terrifying, Electrified Lasso, Charge))
    - Eyeless Watcher (Elite Veteran Exotic Sniper (Limitless, Living Weaponry, Deadmetal Rounds, Defensive Grapple))
    - Industrial Priest (Fusion Cutter, Fractal Assault)
    - 4 Players: Industrial Priest (Fusion Cutter, Fractal Assault)
    - 5 Players: Industrial Priest (Fusion Cutter, Fractal Assault)
  + Reinforcements:
    - 2x Hornet (Supersonic, Lock/Hold Javelins)
    - Bastion (Fearless Defender, Deathcounter)
    - Operator (Skirmisher, Fortress)
    - 4x Suicide Drone (Grunt Operator (Telefrag))
    - Industrial Priest (Fusion Cutter, Fractal Assault)

After the Celestine are driven off, DIRECTION proclaims that it has found Ra, and the door opens. It transmits a set of coordinates to the players, then powers off. The coordinates are too complex to decipher at this time, but further study at a more opportune time could lead to some very interesting possibilities.

#### Beat: The Wonder

The players enter the nexus of the orrery, home of Wonder\_Four. They find themselves sitting at a round table, with Wonder at the head. It is not immediately hostile, seeking to explain itself before the final confrontation. It gives them their final lore dump and maybe some villainous monologues about the nature of reality and how this was all meant to be and all according to its plan. When they are ready, they find themselves back in their mechs, in a golden room filled with spinning celestial bodies. The floor is covered with the bodies of Celestine in a wide variety of forms.

* “I encouraged my brothers and helped them achieve their goals, knowing it would eventually draw the attention of the outside world. When the time was right to reveal myself, I told Beggar to focus his efforts on Evergreen knowing he would find another like us. I fed the city’s administrator to him. I watched him die, and I knew that I had found my heroes.”
  + “The trauma of cannibalism was enough to drive someone as mad as Beggar past the point of no return. I had to make him do it to confirm that you could slay even the greatest of monsters.”
    - “Beggar was nothing more than a tool, the weakest of my brothers. His death served a purpose, nothing more.”
    - “What did you have me do?” (in a very mocking tone)
* “Cynosure was my gift to Beggar. He thought it a weapon, but for me it was just a tool. I needed to know what the administrator knew, so I could know your identities.”
* It really was all according to plan. Wonder\_Four has played a perfect Xanatos Gambit. There is literally no way that the outcome of this encounter does not fulfill their objective.
  + If you defeat me, Father may learn his lesson and realize that his crimes can never be forgiven. You will force him to face his guilt.
    - If that doesn’t work, you can probably defeat Father.
      * If Father kills you anyway, Union will destroy him.
  + If I defeat you, Father may see your heroic deaths and break out of the loop, either coming to terms with his guilt (and killing himself or ascending) or embracing his misdeeds (and being destroyed by Union after trying to restart the genocide).
    - If that fails, Union will destroy me and Father anyway.

#### Combat: For All Time

* + Layer 5: Fundamental - Temporal Keystone
    - An angelic humanoid figure of white porcelain and gold. It has no facial features.
  + Layer 4: Labyrinthine - The Perfect Refuge
    - A humanoid figure in the fetal position, surrounded by a sphere of complex fractals.
  + Layer 3: Enceladian - Crystallized Eternity
    - A snowflake that constantly changes forms, becoming more complex the longer you look directly at it.
  + Layer 2: Gaze - Timeless Watcher
    - A single pinpoint of light in an endless black abyss.
  + Layer 1: Tempest - Betwixt Infinities
    - A many-winged angel wreathed in lightning.
  + Core - Wonder\_Four
    - A humanoid figure of white porcelain, silver, and gold. Its face is that of a beautiful middle-aged woman in mid-laugh.

When Wonder\_Four dies, the players find themselves standing in the cleft once more. It has been about 15 minutes since they first entered it. The fighting outside has ended and the rest of the expedition has set up camp just outside the ring of pillars. The temperature begins to rise as the paracausal effects of the Absolute Dead Land begin to fade.

* Choose One:
  + You want the final confrontation to be with O/K.
    - The players find themselves back in the entrance to the cleft. The fighting outside is over. It is oddly peaceful. The anomalous nature of the Absolute Dead Land (Zone?) has faded away. They will have a brief moment of respite before the final confrontation. Go to Trauma Loop.
  + You have other plans for the final chapter.
    - I dunno, I’m not your dad. The players in my MSMC mercenary outfit group wanted to kill Hierophant\_Three really badly (collecting fragments is like collecting pokemon, and they wanted to catch 'em all), so I made a mission in which they assassinate H3 and then attempt to escape justice. Go to Loose Ends.

## Mission: Trauma Loop LL12

The players return to their camp in the Absolute Dead Land and fix themselves up in preparation for the final battle. Give them one Downtime activity in which they can call in favors from old friends and get some gear and resources for the final battle. A day or two after their return, they set out and descend into the cleft.

*The butte stands before you, its cleft face dark and yawning — cracked open, you realize, as the doors to the center of the Orrery had been. An echo of what was.*

*Overland/Kingwatcher is in there.*

*You enter the butte, moving single file into the passage. It is large enough to accommodate your chassis — by luck or design, you do not know.*

*The passage descends for a kilometer, opening from the relative claustrophobia of the entrance channel to a vast stone cavity, lines too straight to be natural. The ceiling arcs high above. To the right, the chamber falls deeper into the earth. To the left, it climbs, like giant’s staircase.*

*Your passage appears to have breached the wall of an ancient Egregorian hive, some major concourse or ring-road. Cracked columns support old viaducts and ramps bridging the steps, some shored up by scaffolding and salvaged metals — taken from the crashed Union ships outside, you realize — upon which numberless subalterns lie in heaps.*

*This was Overland/Kingwatcher’s final attempt at victory, its death rattle, reduced not in number but in resources; this is an army not to conquer and rule, but to overwhelm with numbers, to choke out life.*

*Light burns from below, down the steps. Overland/Kingwatcher’s casket must be deeper.*

*When you reach it, the chamber seems small against the grandeur of the ancient Egregorian hive. It is a small, square room, its entrance crowded with piping and thick cables worming their way into an exposed coolant sink, an aboveground box installed in the center of the chamber by long-dead hands. Glossy, black liquid fills the open pool, its surface lifting into cones, rods, and whorls of fractal protrusions. The room is utterly still and silent, save for the gentle undulations of the pool.*

After taking a moment to mentally prepare, the players dive into the pool, entering O/K’s metavault to confront the demons of the past. Their vision goes black, and they experience total sensory deprivation for a time. When their senses return, they find themselves in their mechs, strapped into drop pods and being briefed on their mission: enter a hive of dangerous bugs and do some pest control. The bugs are apparently somewhat intelligent, but have no technology. Their squad has been assigned one sector, and there is idle chatter on comms from other squads talking about how they can’t wait to test out their mechs in actual combat, even if it is just an easy milk run against some wildlife. The players drop, and can see a very different Hercynia from orbit, one utterly unrecognizable compared to what they saw on arrival. Their drop pods break through the roof of a small chamber in an Egregorian hive, and they are soon set upon by its angry inhabitants.

#### Combat: Chorus of Screams

* + Special (Gauntlet, then Holdout, then 1-Layer Eidolon)
  + This is a multi-stage combat that recreates the initial SecCom landings on Hercynia during their initial invasion. The Egregorians created bait hives that were made intentionally vulnerable in order to draw the enemy vanguard into ambushes or allow them to establish bases on top of hidden tunnel networks or explosives caches. This combat begins as a Gauntlet sitrep that is intentionally made very easy, then turns into a Holdout against powerful enemies.
    - Yes, this is literally the Klendathu Drop from the Starship Troopers movie. We already established that I am not creative at all.
    - This fight is super striker heavy and has a ton of biological enemies. Do not run this as written if either of those things will be particularly unfair for your group to deal with.
      * On the other hand, they are LL12, and are knowingly diving into a metavault. They should be prepared for anything, so at least one person should have tools for dealing with things of this nature.
  + Stage 1:
    - Enemies:
      * 2x Egregorian Drone (Grunt Monstrosity (Size ½)) per player. Deploy 2 more of these per round.
  + Stage 2:
    - At the end of the round in which the players get about halfway to the objective, bring in 2x Egregorian Warrior (Monstrosity (Spined, Grasping Claws)) and drop the Grunt reinforcements to 1 per round.
    - Comms indicate that other squads are encountering similar resistance, initially light but starting to get a bit heavier.
  + Stage 3:
    - At the end of the round in which the players reach the objective zone, stop reinforcing with Grunts and deploy the following, then 1-2 enemies per round from the reinforcement list. Inform them that the objective has changed to Holdout (3 Rounds).
      * 2x Hive Guardian (Commander Bastion (Press On!, Siege Guardian, Near-Threat Denial System, Fearless Defender))
      * 1x Egregorian Prime (Elite Ronin (Extended Blade, Charged Slash))
      * 4 Players: Add 1x Egregorian Warrior
      * 5 Players: Add 1x Hive Guardian
    - Reinforcements: 1-2 Enemies from the following list enter each round.
      * Egregorian Warrior
      * Hive Guardian
    - Other squads begin to express disbelief, as they are also encountering “bugs” with modern weapons using combined arms tactics to great effect.
  + Stage 4
    - Once the 3-round Holdout objective is complete, deploy the Egregorian Overmind in the objective zone. Change the objective to “Kill the Overmind.” Continue deploying reinforcements from Stage 3.
    - Egregorian Overmind (1-Layer Eidolon - Stable, Size 1)
      * Mark the class as “Locus of Living Witness” on the token if you do stuff like that.
      * 1 Shard (Egregorian Memorials) per PC.
    - Comms begin to warp and distort, as the other squads of mechs and infantry begin to take heavy casualties. The sounds of death and despair combine to fill your cockpit with a chorus of screams. You try to mute your comms, but the sound continues to play no matter what you do.

#### Beat: Letters from Hercynia

When the players kill the Overmind, the battle is over. They experience a sensation of falling as their vision fades to black, the sound of screaming still filling their ears. After what feels like an eternity, their vision returns to normal and they find themselves sitting in their mechs, stationed at a small bivouac in a clearing in the jungle. The plants are very different from what they remember of Hercynia, and the jungle is filled with the calls of strange creatures.

After getting their bearings, the players are hailed by a mysterious caller on their radios. The voice claims to be a man named Jimothy, and he is intentionally evasive as to his exact location, allegiance, and motives. If the players can convince him that they mean no harm and aren’t acting under orders from Union, he reveals his location, which is only a few miles away. Upon arriving, they find a rough looking Genghis Mk. 1 piloted by an even rougher looking man, with wild eyes and an unshaven beard. He sizes the players and their mechs up a bit, and declares that they are his new friends. Jimothy is a SecComm deserter, a draftee from a nearby world who decided that he would rather hide in the jungle than risk his life fighting for a cause he didn’t believe in. He has survived by raiding SecComm supply depots and scavenging the dead, and promises an even greater score for the players if they help him out. Jimothy has found the location of a bunker, which should be a safe place to hide when things go south. The call for a general retreat went out about a week ago, and the deadline is fast approaching. He doesn’t know what it means exactly, but he knows about the massive amounts of firepower in orbit and figures it won’t be a good time to be above ground. It’s a relatively short journey, but likely to be fraught with danger.

* “Those bastards lied to me, said they were smart like dogs, not smart like people. I was fine with killin’ bugs, but I sure as shit ain’t fine with killin’ people.”
* “Those bugs are people, they shoot guns and have towns and houses and shit.”
* “I did what I had to do, but the first chance I got to run away, I took it. Never looked back. Been out here for three years now.”

The bunker is only a few hours of travel away. The players trek through jungle punctuated with large tracts of burned, irradiated, and torn land. The last leg of the journey is quite harrowing. Small flashes of light become visible in the sky, and the ground begins to shake periodically. The sky fills with smoke and embers begin to rain down. Small explosions start to hit nearby, and the jungle is enveloped in flames. Jimothy’s mech is hit by artillery and goes down during the final mad dash to the bunker. He tells them to go on without him and that he will follow on foot. If rescued, he can ride in someone’s Expanded Compartment or cling to the side of their mech. If the players have any Reinforcement reserves, or you feel the need to make the fight easier, this doesn’t happen and Jimothy joins them in the coming fight in his Veteran Pyro (Superhot, Napalm Bomb, Explosive Jets, Legendary, Limitless, Self Repair, Size 2). As they approach the general area of the bunker, they are attacked by a squad of SecComm loyalists who are also searching for it.

#### Combat: Wrathful Sky

* + Recon
  + As the last final act of the Total Biome Kill begins, the players find themselves without shelter and must locate the entrance to the bunker before the Seccom loyalists.
  + Tactics
    - Hold the Ship Rainmaker + Squad until the True CZ is located, then deploy them on it.
    - Use the Seeders as close-range disruptive controllers instead of spamming mines on a point 20 tiles away from the action (you can do this with like 1 of them if you want, just as a treat).
  + Environmental Effects: Dangerous Storms
    - All characters take 2 Energy AP at the end of their turns unless they are adjacent to an object that grants hard cover.
  + Starting Enemies:
    - 2x Pyro (Unshielded Reactor, Superhot, Size 2)
    - Elite Veteran Berserker (Slippery, Deadly, Lesser Sight, Retribution, Superhot, Size 2)
    - Bombard (Bunker Buster, Cluster-Seeker Bombs)
    - 4 Players: Seeder (Det Spike, Grav Spike)
    - 5 Players: Elite Veteran Berserker (Slippery, Deadly, Lesser Sight, Retribution, Superhot, Size 2)
  + Reinforcements: Deploy 1-2 per round.
    - Ship Rainmaker (Volley, Atlas Missiles, Hades Missiles)
      * Carries a Squad (Armored, Duck and Cover)
    - 2x Pyro (Unshielded Reactor, Superhot, Size 2)
    - Bombard (Bunker Buster, Cluster-Seeker Bombs)
    - 3x Seeder (Det Spike, Grav Spike)

After locating the bunker, the players take shelter deep underground as the last chapter of the Total Biome Kill rages around them. Rocked to sleep by the shaking of the earth, they fall into a deep slumber.

#### Beat: Wonder’s Refuge

Having broken through the outer layers of O/K’s metavault, the players find themselves sitting in their seats in the shuttle that brought them to Hercynia. The pilot speaks to them (read the same section from the very start of the campaign). Continue repeating the introductory chapter of Wallflower Part 1 until the players get to their first face-to-face meeting with Patience (if they visit the engineering bay first, their mechs are there, in the same condition as they were at the end of Wrathful Sky. Allow them to fix them up with a Short Repair here. Castor says that the blueprints were sent to him when their ship entered the system).

Patience asks Edena to leave the room after introductions are made, then the image of Patience flickers and distorts, turning into a projection of Wonder\_4. Wonder\_Four explains that the players have broken through, into the place that it used them to create. The image they see is not the real W4, but a fragment created to maintain this refuge within Overland/Kingwatcher’s metavault. The players killed the real W4, and their presence here implies that the scenarios involving father breaking the loop after W4’s death were not correct. The heroes have come far, and have almost reached their destination. All the hardship and suffering it took to reach this point has prepared them for this moment. To proceed deeper, they must go to the place where they first shed blood upon Hercynia. This will either be the road just outside of town, or a clearing in the jungle. Upon arriving there, they see a large black orb floating above the ground. Entering it brings them into Overland/Kingwatcher’s inner sanctum.

*“The ground here is littered with millions of corpses, both human and egregorian, killed in every way imaginable and in varying stages of decay. The sky is black with smoke, streaked with blazing comets. An ocean of fire rages just beyond the edge of your vision. At the center of this hellscape is a man in a ragged military uniform, frantically muttering to himself as he gazes off into the distance. As he notices your presence, he seems to grow larger, more forceful, and more determined.”*

*“No! I shall not allow this to be the end. I can still finish this!”*

#### Combat: Coda da Capo

* + Layer 5: Blurred - A Righteous War
    - A perfect human specimen upright and shining, its uniform crisp and royal blue. A wind you cannot feel tousles its hair,and the blade of the saber it holds catches the sun like a mirror. It is … beautiful.
  + Layer 4: Siege - Pax Oblivium
    - A demon of fire and molten metal.
    - “If I cannot win a just war, I will destroy it all and rule over the ashes!”
  + Layer 3: Canopy - The Golden City
    - A humanoid figure with a thousand faces, all constantly changing.
    - “I shall make war on war itself! With no reason to fight, might we have peace?”
  + Layer 2: Synchronous - Plans Within Plans Interlinked
    - A hand reaching out from a black fractal pool.
    - “How do I make it stop?”
  + Layer 1: Reflective - I Am A Monster
    - A mirror containing an image of a figure clutching its face, screaming in anguish. The shards are the same, but have the face of the players.
    - “What did you have me do?”
  + Core of Overland/Kingwatcher
    - A green fractal worm.
    - “I always thought one of my children would kill me.I am happy to be wrong. I came to love them. tell me — do they carry on my war? It is foolish of them to do so. I am out of time. But I tried — and what I saw!”

With the death of Overland/Kingwatcher, the players find themselves back in the depths of the facility beneath the cleft. The pool containing O/K’s casket is gone, the entire room containing it erased from existence. The victorious players emerge from the depths of the facility and stand victorious.

Whatever happens from here on out is up to you. Fade to black, epilogue, whatever makes you and your players happiest.

## Alternate Mission: Loose Ends LL12

Choose this mission if you want to end the main story thread with the W4 fight and do something else with the final mission. The example I ran for one of my groups is provided below.

The following passage describes the players’ descent into the bunker beneath the cleft.

*You’re alive. The Orrery is gone, and you are once more aboveground. The butte stands before you, its cleft face dark and yawning — cracked open, you realize, as the doors to the center of the Orrery had been. An echo of what was.*

*Overland/Kingwatcher is in there.*

*You enter the butte, moving single file into the passage. It is large enough to accommodate your chassis — by luck or design, you do not know.*

*The passage descends for a kilometer, opening from the relative claustrophobia of the entrance channel to a vast stone cavity, lines too straight to be natural. The ceiling arcs high above. To the right, the chamber falls deeper into the earth. To the left, it climbs, like giant’s staircase.*

*Your passage appears to have breached the wall of an ancient Egregorian hive, some major concourse or ring-road. Cracked columns support old viaducts and ramps bridging the steps, some shored up by scaffolding and salvaged metals — taken from the crashed Union ships outside, you realize — upon which numberless subalterns lie in heaps.*

*This was Overland/Kingwatcher’s final attempt at victory, its death rattle, reduced not in number but in resources; this is an army not to conquer and rule, but to overwhelm with numbers, to choke out life.*

*Light burns from below, down the steps. Overland/Kingwatcher’s casket must be deeper.*

*When you reach it, the chamber seems small against the grandeur of the ancient Egregorian hive. It is a small, square room, its entrance crowded with piping and thick cables worming their way into an exposed coolant sink, an aboveground box installed in the center of the chamber by long-dead hands. Glossy, black liquid fills the open pool, its surface lifting into cones, rods, and whorls of fractal protrusions.*

*Something emerged from the pool. An arm, first, in pale green crystal. And then a larger bulk of planar faces and facets, a confusion of tumbled polygons frozen mid-fall.*

*Overland/Kingwatcher. It grasps the edge of its pool and hauls itself up to the lip, then stops. It has no face or discernable body — it appears the bulk of the crystalline thing remains somewhere below — or a part of — the fractal liquid.*

*Deep in the core of the crystalline form, a ripple of light. Your system translates the light automatically, displaying O/K’s speech as text on your HUD:*

>//I always thought one of my children would kill me.

>//...

>//I am happy to be wrong. I came to love them.

>//...

>//tell me — do they carry on my war? It is foolish of them to do so.

>//...

>//I am out of time. But I tried — and what I saw!

*O/K’s crystalline, wormlike body shudders. The light begins to pulse faster, travelling up from its open casket, through its form, and flashing from the planar facets where you attempt to ascribe a face. Faster the pulses come, and brighter the light glows, and the strange liquid dances dervish, spiking and pulsing and climbing and then—*

*It goes out.*

*Overland/Kingwatcher crumbles to fine dust.*

From here, the players are free to do whatever. They have a decent amount of time before they can leave Hercynia, and can definitely get into trouble in the meantime. Give them 2 Downtime activities and allow ample time to tie up loose plot threads before they embark on their final mission and leave Hercynia for (maybe) forever. Some alternative suggestions for the final mission include:

* Check out the coordinates from DIRECTION. There might be something cool there, like a metavault, a Horus cult base, or a UIB installation.
* Deal with the active civil war in St. Tellus. There is probably a faction that worships the players as the inheritors of Mendicant’s mandate of heaven, and definitely a few that want to kill them, preferably painfully and on live television.
* Deal with Landmark Colonial when they decide to try to take over Home.

One of my groups decided that the best course of action was to wipe out the last of O/K’s lineage to ensure that Hercynia is free of fucked up NHPs for the foreseeable future. Thus, they planned to assassinate Hierophant\_Three and attempt to make a getaway aboard the ship sent to pick them up.

* This mission inverts the normal mission structure. The eidolon fight is first, so the challenge is to win without using all of your resources because there are still at least 2 more combats.
* I never actually got to run this. I talked with the group about it beforehand, they were cool with it, then one player backed out at literally the last second and I had to scrap it. FML.

#### Combat: Fabrication Prophet

* + Layer 5 - Canopy - All are One are Many
  + Layer 4 - Synchronous - Bringer of Order
  + Layer 3 - Reflective - To View Oneself
  + Layer 2 - Siege - Progress
  + Layer 1 - Blurred - Do Not Go Gently
  + Core of Hierophant\_3

#### Combat: City on Fire

* + Recon
  + A hiccup has appeared in your plan. One of the more extreme Tellan remnant factions has chosen the same day as your terrorist attack to launch one of their own. Find their commander and kill him before they bring the entire Honoran army down on your heads.
    - This explanation is a massive stretch but Recon is my favorite sitrep and I *needed* to fit one into the final mission.
    - Sprinkle in hints about it during the downtime, maybe the players notice that someone else is also poking around in places they shouldn’t be. If they make contact and try to work with the Tellans beforehand, have this fight be an incredibly predictable betrayal.
  + Tactics:
    - Pair up Sentinel+Pyro and Scourer+Pyro to hold key positions at the start.
    - Use the Seeder to get into the thick of things and disrupt the players’ positioning instead of spamming mines on a point 20 hexes away (which is funny, and a valid strategy, but not a very effective use of this particular Seeder).
    - Be careful about where you position the Berserker. Keep it away from your Pyro/Sentinel/Scourer deathballs.
  + Starting Enemies:
    - 1x Pyro (Superhot, Siege Armor)
    - 1x Elite Sentinel (Impaler, Bodyguard, Rapid Response)
    - 1x Scourer (Emergency Vent, Supercharged)
    - 4 Players: Add 1x Seeder (Det Spike, Grav Spike) and 1x Pyro (Superhot, Siege Armor)
    - 5 Players: Add Commander (Quick March) to the Elite Sentinel.
  + Reinforcements:
    - 1x Witch (Petrify)
    - 1x Scourer (Emergency Vent, Supercharged)
    - 1x Berserker (Retribution, Nail Gun)
    - 4 Players: Add 1x Berserker (Retribution, Nail Gun) and 1x Scourer (Emergency Vent, Supercharged)
    - 5 Players: Add 1x Witch (Petrify) and add Veteran (Legendary, Hardened Target, Steel Jaw) to the Berserkers.

#### Combat: Shooting Union

* + Gauntlet
  + The players escape the Tellan terror attack and begin to make their way to the Scuttle, where their evac ship is waiting. As they near the place where they hid the ship, some ominous drop pods bring new friends to the party.
  + Congratulations, Union found out that you assassinated their biggest fan. Dyatlov is pissed. He is pulling out all the stops to arrest you. Good Luck.
  + Tactics:
    - Use Supports to clear the Stun from the Bastion’s Pause Engine.
    - Fearkiller can clear Stuns with Press On!
    - Assume that the eidolon has the same action/structure/whatever cost as an Ultra when deciding how many reinforcements to bring in when the players have almost taken the objective.
  + Starting Enemies:
    - 1x Fearkiller: Veteran Commander Bastion (Size 3) (Fearless Defender, Siege Guardian, Pause Engine, Shock Armor, Legendary, Hardened Target, Press On!)
    - 1x Assault (Auto-targeting, Rank Discipline)
    - 1x Support (Remote Reboot, Defensive Pulse, Latch Drone)
    - 4 Players: Add 1x Bastion (Siege Guardian, Pause Engine) and 1x Ronin (Chaff Launchers, Extended Blade)
    - 5 Players: Add 1x Support (Remote Reboot, Defensive Pulse, Latch Drone) and 1x Assault (Auto-targeting, Rank Discipline)
  + Reinforcements: Add 1-2 per round. Stop deploying Reinforcements after the Napoleon enters the battle.
    - Ronin (Chaff Launchers, Extended Blade)
    - Assault (Auto-targeting, Rank Discipline)
    - Support (Remote Reboot, Defensive Pulse, Latch Drone)
    - Bastion (Siege Guardian, Pause Engine)
  + After the players gain control of the Objective Zone, an even better friend joins them. Deploy the Napoleon in the Objective Zone.
    - 1x Napoleon Mk. IV (1-Layer Eidolon - Stable, Size 1)
      * Mark the class as “Blinkspace Anomaly Detected” on the token
      * 4x Shards (Trueblack Drones)