**GRAY TOWNS EVAC**

**EXTENDED SKILL CHALLENGE**

**Context**: This extended skill challenge is intended to be used during Mission 3: Floodgate, after Sepulcher and before Roadblock. Jacob Merrick is coordinating evac and relief efforts with the PCs as the machine horde is advancing toward the Gray Towns.

**Credit**: These rules are greatly inspired by [Acidburns’ Gray Towns Evacuation](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JibcUjShpY_KVaKNtTT6BE46UwxnIIANl_mXH6goAjc/edit?usp=sharing), and the Diplomatic Wrangling portion of the Last Call in Egregore Cross beat from the module. In fact, this is essentially a reskinned version of that challenge with some changes.

**CLOCKS**

Set out an eight-segment clock called **Countdown**, with all segments filled in.

Next, set out three six-segment goal clocks: **Merricktown Evac, Liu Maize Evac,** and

**Outer Settlements Evac**.

The **Countdown** clock represents the amount of time left before the machine horde’s outer perimeter reaches the Gray Towns and marks the end of the evacuation timeframe. The three goal clocks represent the progress of the evacuation efforts in each major area of the Gray Towns.

| **MACHINE HORDE CLOCK** |
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| **The critical *Machine Horde* clock that persists through Missions 1 through 4 will not play a part in this challenge, but the outcome of this challenge may affect it.** |

**GOAL**

The PCs must fill at least two goal clocks before **Countdown** is empty.

If the PCs fill in all three goal clocks, they will gain bonus reserves for the next combat encounter.

**RULES**

The GM rolls a number of d20s equal to the number of PCs. Each d20 result should be unique; either reroll duplicates or simply take the next highest result.

The results will determine which events are currently happening and in need of the PCs’ attention. (The list of events is private to the GM and included lower in this doc.) The events are all assumed to be happening simultaneously so that the PCs will need to split up and handle them individually.

After an event has been rolled, if the GM rolls it again later, the GM should reroll it or take the next highest result that hasn’t been rolled yet.

Once the events have been determined, the GM communicates (either in or out of character) the general overview of each event to the players. The players will then decide which event each of them will address.

Once all the players have locked in their choices, go through each event in a brief scene, adding as much narrative flavor and roleplay as you like, and ask the players how they handle their situations.

For each task, the respective player picks a goal clock, declares what they’re doing, and rolls (adding any bonuses from a relevant trigger and potentially +1 Accuracy from the PC’s background):

* **9-**: Gain **+1 for your goal clock** and take **-2** **Countdown**, or take **-1 Countdown** and **-1 from any goal clock**.
* **10-19**: Gain **+2 for your goal clock** and take **-1 Countdown**, or gain **+3 for your goal clock** and take **-2 Countdown**.
* **20+**: Gain **+3 for your goal clock** and take **-1 Countdown.**

After each event has been resolved, repeat the process by rolling another series of d20s and continuing on with more scenes and checks.

The challenge immediately ends when **Countdown** is empty, or when all goal clocks are filled - whichever comes first.

**OUTCOME**

If the PCs succeed in this challenge by filling two of the goal clocks, they successfully evacuate, or ensure the evacuation of, the vast majority of the people of the Gray Towns. The survivors are well on their way to Evergreen’s borders (until Roadblock, at least). Only a few stragglers are tragically lost to the horde, but not due to any failings on the PCs’ part.

If the PCs succeed by filling all goal clocks, the outcome is the same as above, and they get reserves from some of the people they rescued. Each PC may choose one of these reserves for the rest of this mission: **Shielding, Weathering, Deployable Shield.**

If the PCs fail this challenge, they are unable to evacuate a large portion of people. Also, the critical **Machine Horde** clock increases by two segments, as the machines take a lot of equipment and tech that wasn’t able to be extracted.

**EVENTS LIST**

The exact nature of the events can vary; some of them are obviously intended to be resolved by making a certain mech skill check, while others are much more open to how the players choose to respond to the situation. As long as some sort of skill check is required to resolve it, it’s perfectly valid for this challenge.

Also, the players should still be allowed to choose which goal clock they’re trying to increase, regardless of the narrative circumstances of the events.

Remember that in *Lancer*, the players are the ones who declare how they’re attempting to resolve a situation and what trigger they use, as long as the GM agrees it all makes sense.

| **1 - Not-So-Mobile Home** |
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| A large mobile home vehicle is stuck due to the muddy, churned-up road. |

| **2 - Traffic Jam** |
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| The main roads are congested at a key intersection. Someone needs to help with the flow of traffic at the choke point. |

| **3 - Desperate Times** |
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| Looters are pillaging a mid-sized farmstead. Most are doing it out of desperation or fear before being displaced, but others may just be taking advantage of the chaos. |

| **4 - Can’t Take it with You** |
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| Some farmers are taking far too long to leave their homes. They are afraid of losing their property, and are attempting to load up all of their possessions in addition to their essentials, delaying the evacuation and taking up extra space in supply trucks. |

| **5 - Bridge Down!** |
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| A bridge has collapsed, causing a large group of vehicles transporting refugees to be stuck on one side of a river. |

| **6 - A Real Big Tree** |
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| Farmers are trapped in a house under siege by rogue logging drones. The drones are using their tools on the house. They’re slowly but surely going to cause it to collapse at any moment. |

| **7 - Remain Calm** |
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| A family is being held hostage inside their home by a group of subalterns armed with primitive weaponry such as clubs and spears. The subalterns are forcing them to stay in their sight, and are repeating “YOU ARE SAFE. UNION IS HERE. REMAIN CALM AND STAY SHELTERED.” |

| **8 - Truckjackers** |
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| Some civilians are driving a military truck transporting rations and canned food that was being evacuated from one of the main towns. They claim they are going to share it with the rest of the refugees and are simply taking the initiative and “doing their part to help,” but Jacob Merrick is skeptical of their true intentions. (The GM may decide what the civilians’ true motives are.) |

| **9 - Flammable When Wet** |
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| A crop fire began spreading quickly towards the main roads, fuelled by a species of plant that sheds a waxy polymer after rainfalls, and this polymer is highly flammable even when wet. Most of the area has been cleared already, but the fire threatens to start advancing to the main roads again unless the PCs intervene in some way. |

| **10 - I Was Born Here, Dammit** |
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| An elderly man refuses to leave his home, thinking it safer to simply hide throughout the machine horde’s march. He’s stubborn but also afraid. |

| **11 - Elopers** |
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| A couple was not seen in a headcount of a group of evacuees. Some of the couple’s friends grew concerned about them and are refusing to go any farther with their caravan until the couple’s whereabouts are confirmed. The PC is easily able to find the couple without a skill check - they have decided to leave and go off on their own, wanting to establish a place for themselves far away in the wilds of Hercynia. |

| **12 - Time for Crab** |
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| The machine horde’s approach has roused a group of crustaceans from a nearby body of water. The creatures are essentially pony-sized lobsters with huge claws. They aren’t hostile unless threatened. The problem is that they have settled directly to the side of a somewhat flooded road, making it too dangerous for a group of refugees to make it back to the main road by going directly through it. |

| **13 - Stowaway** |
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| A large cargo truck carrying a lot of supplies has reported something “wild” going on in its load. The driver suspects there is a drone somewhere inside that was mistakenly stored away, and is now going haywire after waking up from dormancy. It threatens to destroy all of the supplies on that truck. The driver is afraid to get anywhere near it. |

| **14 - Mudslide** |
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| A group of refugees has paused at some point on the main road because a couple of their vehicles got caught in a mudslide and are now wrecked at the bottom of a steep dropoff. Nobody was killed in the accident, but there are several serious injuries. |

| **15 - The Isolationists** |
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| There’s a small settlement which hasn’t been heard from since the initial occurrences of rogue machines (in Mission 1). Jacob Merrick is ashamed to admit that he only just now remembered it, and requests for a PC to go there and help if they can. He warns the PCs that the people there may fire on them for “trespassing,” and that they have not been responding to Jacob’s comms transmissions. Upon the PC’s arrival, the settlement seems to be doing fine, untouched by the machine horde. The settlement has never had subalterns, but was aware of the initial wave of rogue machines. Now they simply don’t trust any technology, and thus the PC (if the PC arrives in a mech). |

| **16 - Car Crash** |
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| At a point where the main road intersects with a few different side roads, some supply trucks have crashed into each other. It is unclear which driver is at fault, but the main problem now is that the wreck is blocking the flow of traffic. |

| **17 - False Prophet** |
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| A recorded, looping transmission is going out from someone claiming: “Welcome back, my children, to *Gray Matters*. Only I, Judthon Grishom, can lead you to true safety! Disregard the lies you’re being told about Evergreen - that demonic place’s name is nothin’ but deceit! The metallic army is merely testin’ our resolve; the machines will pass over us if we simply leave our radios tuned in right here to channel 3945. My little ol’ broadcast tower emits frequencies too high for us humans to hear, but it’s a downright unpleasant earworm for any drone on this flat, green planet. ” It appears that a surprising amount of people are actually staying tuned in to this conspiracy theorist’s bullshit. The PC will need to either stop the broadcast by force in some way, convince the broadcaster to stop, or broadcast a competing message, for some examples. |

| **18 - Sunken** |
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| A houseboat made from prefab materials has been hit by stray ordnance. It’s now totally submerged in a lake and there are survivors trapped inside. |

| **19 - Don’t be a Hero** |
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| A squad of Gray Towns militia have set up a pitifully small defensive barrier on one of the roads. They seem to be very overconfident in their abilities to fight some “rickety old machines” and insist on staying to try and hold back the horde before falling back. They wouldn’t last half a minute. |

| **20 - Lull in the Chaos** |
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| If this result is rolled, it means there aren’t enough events going on to demand all the PCs’ attention. This allows one of them to help another with their event, granting **+1 Accuracy** on the skill check. |