

# BATTLE RUN

THE QUEST

2

FOR THE THING





# THE RAINS OF SOLARIS

There was weather outside. There always was. But this weather—this weather was particularly atmospheric. It did an excellent job of setting the mood for the events that were about to happen.

Outside, it rained. Inside, Jonas Hadry wept.

There was no immediate cause for his sorrow. Hadry had everything a person could want—a loving companion, vast wealth, tremendous physical strength, a cleft chin that resembled the bottom of a well-toned, physically fit infant, and the adoration of all he encountered.

Yet part of his greatness was a depth of emotion, and today, those emotions were sad.

His floor-to-ceiling windows provided expansive views of the Black Hills neighborhood of Solaris City, allowing him to see dozens of mansions designed in the Flaunt It architectural style so popular among the wealthy. A yellow bus full of Lowlands residents slowly rolled by, part of a neighborhood initiative to make sure the poor people were fully aware of just how nice the mansions in the foothills were. Hadry imagined the passengers could see him as they rode by, and he tried to feel the warmth of their inevitable adoration. But all he felt was cold.

Lean, tender hands snaked around his waist, and he accepted a hug from his lover, Nadja Daviar.

"I can tell that something is bothering you, my love," she said. "What is it?"

He maintained a steely gaze while patting her hands. "Nothing you need to worry about."

She shifted around him and looked him in the eyes, and he drowned in the compassionate liquid of her gaze.

"Tell me," she said. "Like so many beautiful women in genre fiction, I exist primarily as a vessel for your desire and ambition. I am empty—you can fill me."

He grabbed her by the shoulders in a firm but loving way. "You are the strongest woman I know. But I can't ask you to be strong for both of us."

She melted in his grasp like a curvy, sexy scoop of ice cream. "I only want what you want. But don't you want to be happy?"

He looked around for an item to break dramatically. There was a small table near the window, but everything on it was too valuable. He sighed, walked across to a coffee table, picked up a glass ball whose purpose he didn't really understand, raised his arm, then worried it might just thud or crack instead of shattering spectacularly. He put it down and opted instead for a plate that a Liao official had given him for winning the Best Ever Tournament, a platter he had been assured was a valuable heirloom but he was increasingly convinced was just a cheap tourist item. He carried it back to the window, made sure Nadja re-assumed a concerned and caring expression, then raised his hand so he could dash the plate on the ground. It shattered in a satisfying fashion.

"Simply sitting still and not doing anything important is not the sort of thing I should be doing!"

Nadja raised an eyebrow at him.

He nodded. "You're right. That wasn't good. Hold on." He rubbed his hand on his chin, nearly burying his index finger in the cleft. "I'm bored of just sitting here!" He held up a hand before Nadja could react. "No, I know, don't say it. That was compact but inartful. One more try." He stiffened his spine. "I was not made for inaction!" He saw the glint in Nadja's eye. "Nailed it."

"You're indefatigable spirit is one of the things that is most lovable about you, along with everything else. But what will you do?"

He gazed levelly at the horizon, or maybe at a rain-drop winding its way down the window. Whichever was more dramatic.

"I will search for my destiny. And I will find it."

Just then, his futuristic communications device beeped. Futuristically.

Destiny was calling.



## INTRODUCTION

Welcome back to the Eighth World! The following adventure is definitely legit and has actual rules references and everything.<sup>1</sup> For those of you who want to play *BattleTech* crossed with *Shadowrun*, this is the adventure for you! For those of you who say, “What? That concept seems totally unworkable,” this adventure also is for you! It’s for everyone! Except for people who don’t care about *BattleTech* or *Shadowrun*! Screw them!

So here’s what we’re gonna do. We’re going to summarize the plot of the adventure, and then we’re going to provide the details of the adventure we already summarized, but we’d like you to act surprised. We’ll hold back some details to help maintain the suspense.<sup>2</sup>

Sound good? Let’s roll.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Jonas Hadry, winner of the Best Ever Tournament, renowned MechWarrior, dashing super spy, and all-around good guy is seeking a dramatic purpose, and he found one. A call comes to him about a notable relic, the Infinity Grail, and he knows he’s the only one who has a chance of finding it and keeping it out of the hands of those who would abuse its power. He has to gather a ragtag band of heroes to find where the Grail is hidden and obtain it. There is competition for it, though—the most nefarious, in terms of sheer annoyance, group in the Inner Sphere will meet them at the finish line to battle them for the Grail.

Hadry is an NPC, and a good one. The players take the roll of his merry band of heroes, following his orders and keeping him safe. They’ll love it!



### Scene 1:

## THE CALL

### SCAN THIS

This is where Hadry learns about a super-secret mission and starts to size up what he’ll need to do to get it done. He’ll look really cool the whole time. The PCs don’t appear in it, but they should enjoy the chance to watch Hadry be Hadry.<sup>3</sup>

## TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You’re not with the legend known as Jonas Hadry right now, but somehow you hear about this scene. Probably because people are always talking about Hadry. Anyway, Hadry is in his fabulous mansion, brooding over a rainy landscape, when a call comes in.

“Go for Jonas,” Hadry says, in a way that sounds cool rather than immediately dated.

The voice on the other end of the call was sinuous and insinuating, with an odd accent that could be traced back to some European country on ancient Terra, though no linguist could ever have exactly pinned it down.

“Mr. Hadry. Delighted to make your acquaintance. The name’s Johnson. *Mr. Johnson.*”

Hadry nodded. The caller couldn’t see the gesture, of course, but Hadry knew he’d feel its implications.

“I have a peculiar mission I need accomplished, and I believe only a person of your certain set of skills could perform it adequately. Would you be kind enough to grant me a meeting so I can discuss a possible arrangement?”

“You have a job, and you want to hire me,” Hadry said in a blunt yet charming fashion.

“Your gift for restatement lives up to your considerable reputation. Yes, I would like to talk. How about tonight, at La Truite Grincheuse? Perhaps, say, eight o’clock?”

“I’ll be there,” Hadry said.

“Oh, and Mr. Hadry? This mission is dangerous. You’ll want help. I would bring company, if I were you.

“Understood.” Hadry snapped his comm closed, which he could do now—it was more than a thousand years in the future, so foldable smart phones had finally been perfected. He turned to Nadja.

“Looks like I have some work,” he said.

She leaned into him. “Is it dangerous?”

“Is there any other kind?”

They clung to each other while they could, for the moment could not help but end.

<sup>1</sup> Don’t ask us to which games, though.

<sup>2</sup> And of course, bad jokes are guaranteed to be scattered everywhere.

<sup>3</sup> Keep them entertained while this happens. Give them some popcorn or something.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

Behind the scenes, Jonas Hadry is a handsome, athletic person everyone loves, while Mr. Johnson is untrustworthy. We thought we'd spell that out, as we were worried maybe we were being too subtle.<sup>4</sup>

The main purpose of this scene is to inspire Hadry to gather a team/loving group of sycophants for this mission. He should determine, through his superior insight, that the skills he needs for this mission exactly match those offered by the PCs. Even though he has no idea what the actual mission is. This means that it is *perfectly legitimate* for him to think to himself, "You know what this mission needs? A pixie adept, a minotaur spellcaster who hops instead of walks, and the human alcoholic ex-MechWarrior who only speaks in rhymes and hates anyone whose name ends with 'n'!" And then he should go out and get those very people.

The PCs should be so thrilled to work with Hadry that they accept immediately, and perhaps forget to ask about pay. If they show any reluctance, feel free to use one of these time-tested gamemaster tricks:

- Stare silently at them until they give in.
- Bribe them with pizza, cookies, or one of those giant pizza-cookies.
- Tell the players that maybe it's time that *they* run something for once in their lives.
- Recount, in full detail, all the sacrifices that you, the wise, thoughtful gamemaster, have made for them, the selfish, short-sighted players, including the prep time you put in, the magic items you've deigned to let them own, and that time their first-level wizard should have *totally been overwhelmed and eaten* by a tribe of kobolds, because that wizard *sucked*, but you made it so the kobolds were distracted by a hunting horn or something, so that weak-ass wizard *survived*, and *this* is how they repay you? Take the job *now*, and do it right, you maggots. Players, man. They're the *worst*.<sup>5</sup>

Anyway, Hadry can also offer them like 10,000 nuyen or c-bills or whatever currency you're using in this setting. I think we used c-bills in the first one. Go with that.

## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

We tend to imagine Hadry as, like, Brad Pitt-hand-some, but we're plenty open to the fact that there are all sorts of ways to be a beautiful man, so if you want

to go with maybe a Timothée Chalamet thing, or a Billy Porter thing, that's cool. You could go with the Rock, or Adam Levine, or Idris Elba—we're not here to limit you.

## DEBUGGING

We covered that in **Behind the Scenes**. So let's move onward!

### Scene 2:

## THE MEET

## SCAN THIS

Hadry and his team go to a restaurant, eat a lot of food, run up a disturbingly large bar tab, and disconcert all the squares and normies at the place. Oh, and they also get a job.

## TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

La Truite Grincheuse is a nice restaurant, the type of place where the waiters don't actually bring you the food, because they have waiters of their own. Hadry leads you to the maître d' stand, where he doesn't have to say anything. After one look at him, the maître d' immediately conveys him to the best table in the place.

Seated at a large private booth is an aging, balding man with a lobster bib carefully tucked into his shirt. He already has polished off one crustacean and is starting on another, but he drops his lobster mallet when he sees you and smiles. He does not, however, get up.

"Sit, sit, please sit," he says. "More food is on the way, and order whatever liquid refreshment you need. We have much to discuss."

Time to find out what's so important that it could demand the service of Jonas Hadry and his crew of runners, the Hadry Bunch. Or the Hadrians. Hadryites?<sup>6</sup>

The name could wait. Time to bargain.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

La Truite Grincheuse is an upscale seafood place, the kind that requests that patrons wear a suit jacket and throws people out if they request tartar sauce on the side. Mr. Johnson has a private booth with a rating 5 white noise generator and rating 5 area jammer to provide extra privacy.

<sup>4</sup> As it turns out, Mr. Johnson won't actually double-cross anyone, but no one has to know that yet.  
<sup>5</sup> Yes, that's a D&D reference instead of *Shadowrun* or *BattleTech*. We figured you'd catch it anyway.  
<sup>6</sup> Jonas and the Hadrys? The Jo-Jo Crew? There are no wrong answers. Except that last one.



To add spice to the conversation, the course of Mr. Johnson's dialogue is not predetermined. Instead, it will be free-flowing and seemingly random, and by "seemingly" we mean "totally." Each time the PCs are done speaking, roll a D20 (yes, *Shadowrun* and *BattleTech* are D6-based games, but we have faith that players might have a D20 lying around their homes, or at least enough tech know-how to call up a web-based dice roller or something). Then consult the **Mr. Johnson Speaking Parts** chart and read the indicated line. Proceed that way until the PCs have a job! Or get kicked out! Or rage quit the conversation!

## MR. JOHNSON SPEAKING PARTS

- 1 If you say that again, we're going to have a problem.
- 2 Delighted to meet you, too! Now, let's get down to business.
- 3 The trout is excellent, but the oysters are questionable at best.
- 4 That's far too much, even for a job of this nature.
- 5 Just because you have pointy ears doesn't mean I find you attractive.
- 6 Mr. Hadry, can I just pause for a moment to say how extraordinary you are?
- 7 I'm not entirely sure that caviar should be classified as food.
- 8 I'm wary of the Word of Blake, but that *Behind the Robe* reality show is as addictive as hell.
- 9 That's part of what you'll need to discover as you do your job.
- 10 (First time): The job is to recover the legendary Infinity Grail. Think you're up to it? (second time): Then we're agreed! 10,000 c-bills apiece! Good luck!
- 11 (First three times) You drive a hard bargain; I can offer 1,000 nuyen more (adjust final payout accordingly) (fourth time) I'm afraid this isn't going to work. Good day.
- 12 That's an excellent question. Let me have one of my people look into it.
- 13 Maybe when we're done with this job, we can talk about this idea I had for JumpShip-based fish hatcheries. It's solid gold!
- 14 I'm sorry, every time you talk, I just hear this buzzing in my ears.
- 15 What do you have to do to get service around here?
- 16 Oh, no, no, no. That would be most *improper*. [Pro tip: Sound as much like Sydney Greenstreet as possible when

delivering this line.]

- 17 What makes you think you can succeed?
- 18 Would you like something to drink?
- 19 Please don't make the mistake of thinking we're equals.
- 20 I'm not looking forward to being stabbed in the back, if that's what you mean.

Now look, some players may tell you that this table leads to circular, frustrating conversations that are more off-putting than informative, and they don't encourage a good resolution.<sup>7</sup> Don't let the fact that they are right persuade you!

If truly necessary, you can improvise a few speaking parts to make sure the conversation stays on track and the runners don't leave. Then, as soon as the players start believing the conversation won't be totally deranged, start rolling the die again.<sup>8</sup>

Once the bargaining is over, the players might be concerned about niceties such what the Infinity Grail is and where to find it. Mr. Johnson tells them that the Grail has untold power both on the field of battle and in the halls of commerce, and he refuses to get more specific than that. He also snidely suggests that if he knew where the Grail was, he wouldn't need to hire runners at 10,000 c-bills apiece.

He tells them one word about what he's heard about the Grail's location: Obeedah. They'll have to go from there.

## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

If the Mr. Johnson Speaking Parts table does not introduce enough chaos into your game, double it so that you have to roll 2D40, or better yet, make it a D100 chart. We dare you.

## DEBUGGING

The only thing that possibly go wrong is someone getting annoyed at the Mr. Johnson Speaking Parts table, and we don't think it will happen, even though it happened every single time we playtested it. But it has its own debugging included, so you're good!

<sup>7</sup> They're still better than many computer conversation bots we encountered growing up. But then again, when we were growing up, "computers" were punch cards connected by staples and phone wire. We think.

<sup>8</sup> If the players look dismayed every time you pick up a D20, you're doing it right.



## Scene 3:

## LEGWORK

### SCAN THIS

In this scene, the PCs need to help Hadry get solid info about the Infinity Grail and the planet of Obeedah where it supposedly resides. They'll definitely find good information, not a bunch of crap we made up because it amused us.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You have two things to go on—the name “Infinity Grail” and the planet Obeedah. Time to shake every tree in the urban jungle and see what falls out.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

While we're sorely tempted to go with another random table after seeing how annoying the one in Scene 2 was, we're going to be strong and resist.<sup>9</sup> Instead, we're going to throw an ocean of information at the PCs and watch them swim.

The secret of this scene is that *everyone* has information on the Infinity Grail and Obeedah—a whole flood of information—but only if the PCs ask twice. The first query will get a vague “Hmmm, don't know if I've heard of that”-type answer. The second query will unleash the flood, and the NPCs will release information like a college freshman who just took a survey course and is hopped up on truth serum and methamphetamine.

Information on each subject is presented in the order it should be shared—again, regardless of who the PCs are talking to.

### INFINITY GRAIL

“All right, you know the basics of quantum theory and parallel dimensions, right? Well, the easiest way to talk about the Infinity Grail is that it's a religious artifact from another dimension where Mother Teresa, instead of working with nuns in Calcutta, became a thirty-meter-tall, fire-breathing lizard. You get me?”

“There are a lot of legends about the grail, and they say a lot of things, but one common thread is that the grail is huge. Giant huge. Like, how-have-we-not-found-this-thing-because-it's-so-big huge. No human can lift it. Not even a troll. You'd need something that's, like, made of metal, and a few stories tall, and vaguely humanoid in shape, and weighing 20 to 200 tons. If you

can imagine such a thing.”

“The grail is supposed to have two sets of powers—combat and non-combat. In combat, it acts like a force multiplier for the side that possesses it—every unit suddenly becomes as effective as two units. I don't know about the non-combat powers.”

“Oh, you want to know about the grail's non-combat powers, do you? From what I hear, there are two—the magnetic gaze and the repulsive push. Anyone who uses the magnetic gaze power become incredibly attractive to the person they're looking at, and I mean that literally—the target is pulled toward the person using the power. The repulsive push does the opposite, sending things away from you, and it works on both living beings and objects.”

“You may know about the powers of the grail, but do you know how to control it? The grail is fickle, giving its power to whoever controls it—but to control it, you must physically touch it. If more than one person is touching it, it sides with any side that has the plurality of people touching it.”

“As is the case with most power, the grail imposes a cost for its use. The longer you touch it, the weaker you become.”

“You want to know about the powers of the grail? Tell me what you have heard so far [pause to listen]. That's fascinating, but it's all lies. It's really just a giant cup.”

### OBEEDAH

“Oooo, you're dealing with some dark stuff, there. That's one of the five supposedly hidden worlds of the Word of Blake, which means it's probably now part of the Legion of the Batshit Insane, and *no one* wants to mess with those guys.”

“The Word of Blake had five worlds that, through one means or another, they took off interstellar maps—and they often gave them new names. They used them to build their armies and do other nefarious things, like construct giant laundry facilities for those stupid white robes. Anyway, three of the worlds got trashed, and we don't know where the other two are.”

“The three known worlds were in the Lyran Commonwealth, Free Worlds League, and Draconis Combine. You might decide logically that the other two are in the Capellan Confederation and Federated Suns, but I'd go for the Magistracy of Canopus and, I don't know,

<sup>9</sup> This is very rare for us. Ask anyone.



maybe the Outworlds Alliance? I mean, don't you think the Blakists *absolutely would* do the most annoying thing possible?"

"If you want to find Obeedah, you better get moving. All the major houses have started talking about it again recently, after ignoring it for a while. You're going to have to race to get there first. If you want to know what's going on, talk to the joint operations person at the MRBC."

The "joint operations" person at the MRBC is Kyla Strunk-Davis, the head of the Joint Operations of House and Nation Services, Ordo Novus (JOHNSON). The section derives its name from the fact that it coordinates requests from different houses and nations that have overlapping areas of interests so that the various mercenaries signing up to do jobs don't step on each others' toes, and also from the fact that the person making the name was bad at Latin. Following a lead to talk to that person takes us to the next scene.

## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

We have a standard motto here at Battlerun HQ: When in doubt, add more nonsense. You can add red herings and misinformation to the hunt for data on the Infinity Grail and Obeedah. In fact, we encourage you to use predictive text to come up with things contacts might say! Here we have some examples of sentence starters, along with the examples we generated.

The powers of the Infinity Grail include ...

(Example: The powers of the Infinity Grail include the tax burden on a fiscal year and the annual revenue of the advisory committee. *Note: Look, we've been doing some public policy work on the side lately. It's a hobby.*)

Moving the Infinity Grail requires ...

(Example: Moving the Infinity Grail requires that you are willing and you are always in your life. *Note: That's clearly not wrong.*)

If you want to find Obeedah, you must ...

(Example: If you want to find Obeedah, you must pay the full amount for your own way. *Note: That's one cheap-ass Mr. Johnson.*)

The dark secret of Obeedah is ...

(Example: The dark secret of Obeedah is that a dragon and a vampire dragon roll in the back of the adventure. *Note: First of all, "vampire dragon"? No, predictive text. Just no. Second, spoilers! Don't ruin the adventure for people!*)

We could probably do this all day, but you should get the gist by now.

## DEBUGGING

I suppose, if you wanted, you could feed the players *less* nonsense, but if that's what you want, why are you playing this?

### Scene 4:

## JOHNSON

### SCAN THIS

The PCs intend to get more information, but their meeting with the MRBC's JOHNSON does not go as planned, as the meeting explodes into a series of disguises, double-crosses, and ambushes.

## TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The MRBC JOHNSON department is full of people who have heard all of the jokes you're currently thinking of and are amused by none of them. The soft lighting, muted carpet, and wood-paneled walls of their offices speak to a certain quiet dignity, as people in dark suits walk briskly back and forth carrying out business that they clearly believe is important.

Behind a black lacquered desk sits a fashionable young man who is far more interested in everything in the room besides you. He doesn't look at you, even when you approach, but he does speak.

"Who are you here to see, please?"

### WHEN THE PLAYERS MEET KYLA STRUNK-DAVIS:

Strunk-Davis is an isle of warmth in the brisk efficiency of JOHNSON. Her office has exposed brick and lots of wood accents, she dresses in comfortable, natural fabrics, and she smiles warmly when she sees you.

"Welcome! I hear you need information. As it so happens, information is my business. Come in! Let's talk!"

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The meeting with Kyla Strunk-Davis is the last normal thing that happens in this scene. Events should go off the rails quickly. This is how it happens.

The PCs should know who they are supposed to meet with, and they will be escorted to her office after mentioning her name. All that will go smoothly.

The problems begin when the conversation with Strunk-Davis starts. It will initiate a cavalcade of revealed secrets, hidden identities, and more. Each event that unfolds is listed in one of the small headers below.



## KYLA STRUNK-DAVIS QUICKLY BECOMES PARANOID

Once the PCs start talking to Strunk-Davis, she quickly starts to act suspiciously, asking them things like, “Where did you hear that?” “Who sent you?” and “Are you wearing a mask? That looks like a mask.” She will also try to pull on the character’s faces to see if their skin comes off.

At some point, the PCs should question her behavior, unless they’re willing to just let her run with it, which honestly would be kind of awesome. As soon as such a question arises, Strunk-Davis pulls back a little and starts sneering at them, saying things like, “Oh, you think you figured it out? Aren’t you *clever*.”

## KYLA STRUNK-DAVIS REVEALS HER SECRET IDENTITY

Soon after that, Strunk-Davis reaches to her neck and peels off the mask she is wearing, showing herself to be none other than Katrina Steiner-Davion, the icy blond of Alfred Hitchcock’s dreams. While most of the Inner Sphere thought her to be dead, a series of rejuvenative treatments and carefully used body doubles allowed her build a new life—until the PCs walked in and blew up her secret. She seems calm about it, but she works to find out the runners’ next steps.

“You’ve found out my secret. Here I am, one of the most hated women in the entire Inner Sphere, hiding in plain sight in Solaris City. What are you going to do about it?”

The PCs can work on whatever answer they want, but before long they should be interrupted by the next incident.

## LOFWYR INTERRUPTS

The door to Strunk-Davis/Steiner-Davion’s office flies open, and a distinguished but ferocious white-haired man charges in, roaring like the dragon he is.

“You will pay for your betrayals,” Lofwyr (because that’s who it is) shouts.

S-D (it’s easier to call her that) sneers, because that’s her default response to everything. “You think you can collect a debt so many others have failed to obtain? I wish you luck.”

Lofwyr glares at her, then takes the extreme measure of turning into his draconic form right there in the office. The walls and floors shatter,<sup>10</sup> and S-D, Hadry, and the PCs are flung out. Now they’re in free fall. They should probably do something about that.

## EMERGENCY JETPACKS ARRIVE FOR SOME REASON!

Maybe the PCs figure some way out of this jam, but they don’t have to, because while they are in mid-fall, self-driving jetpacks fly in and attach themselves to the backs of the PCs, keeping them aloft. Why? *Because jetpacks are cool*. And maybe this plot point will payoff later. Who knows?<sup>11</sup>

Anyway, once they’re not going to fall to their deaths, the PCs can figure out their next step. Lofwyr is chasing S-D, who also has a jetpack, and S-D is supposed to have information about the Infinity Grail, so they should probably keep pace with her. S-D heads low, moving toward a large dockside warehouse. Perhaps she is going to ambush Lofwyr there, or maybe escape him and then find a place to lie low, but events soon make her intentions irrelevant.

## ‘MECH ATTACK!

Just then, a squadron of unseen ‘Mechs unleash a torrent of fire! They were hidden, because things that are a lot like walking three-story houses are really easy to conceal. Pick four of your favorite ‘Mechs<sup>12</sup> and have them let loose on the developing chase scene. Things should blow up! Buildings should crumble! It should be *amazing*!

## WAIT, IT’S AN ILLUSION!

Then, as S-D and Lofwyr approach the warehouse, it *rises into the air*! As it does so, it sheds the illusion that has concealed it! It’s not a warehouse at all—it’s a World-War-I-era warship, and it’s somehow levitating in the air! Yes, we *absolutely are going there*!

The boat unfurls a pennant with the clenched fist of House Steiner, and both S-D and Lofwyr head for the foredeck of the ship, where the ship’s captain waits for them. Perhaps they can work out their dispute while safe in the confines of the ship. But a surprise awaits them!

## THE CAPTAIN IS A BUG SPIRIT!

As everyone lands on the deck, the arms of the ship’s captain suddenly extend to grotesque lengths, as do his legs. His head explodes, and a mantis-like head grows in its place. Wings rupture his uniform as they explode out of his back. He emits an unearthly hiss. Clearly, he’s up to no good.

Lofwyr could, of course, roast this bug and chomp it down as an afternoon snack, but he suddenly remembers he has an afternoon appointment and is all, “Later,

<sup>10</sup> In the distance, a claims adjuster screams.

<sup>11</sup> It won’t.

<sup>12</sup> Hint: It’s the UrbanMech.



peeps! Gotta jet.”<sup>13</sup> So he flies off, leaving you and S-D to deal with the bug spirit. Luckily, S-D is a master politician and a skilled tactician. She’s got this.

“Run!” she says, and she sprints below decks. The PCs should definitely follow.

## JETBLACK LIVES!

As S-D, Hadry, and the PCs run through the maze of the belowdecks area, they find a peculiarity—a small auditorium with a rudimentary stage, which is currently loaded with music gear. On stage is a black-clad elf playing brooding synth-pop. He has an ageless face and incredible magnetism. Characters with a music-related knowledge skill can make a Perception (2) test to recognize him as legendary performer JetBlack—here, on stage of a levitating ship! What are the odds? Anyway, the players don’t have long to contemplate this, because as soon as JetBlack sees the PCs, fangs protrude from his mouth and he launches into a vampiric attack! For the purposes of this adventure, use the stats for **Vampire**, p. 218, SR6.

JetBlack toys with the PCs for a bit until he recognizes S-D.

“Kerry?” he says. “Kerry Smith-Deneuve? Is that you?”

S-D says that it is in fact, her, and that she’s really happy they ran into JetBlack. “These people are looking for the Infinity Grail. I was going to give them directions, but you could do better than that—you could escort them. Are you up for the job?”

JetBlack grins toothily. “Always,” he says.

## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Seriously?

## DEBUGGING

The PCs might be confused by the intricate plot twists and odd references that pop up in this scene. Assure them that it is entirely their problem, and it would be great if they could maybe keep up for once.



## Scene 5:

# A LONG JOURNEY

## SCAN THIS

JetBlack tells the PCs what they’re in for, prepares them, and sets them on their way. He also tags along.

## TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Now that he’s not set on eating you, JetBlack seems like a decent sort, with a wry expression and a relaxed manner. Still, he holds a certain intensity that you suspect could quickly come bubbling to the surface.

“So, you’re after the Infinity Grail, are you?” he says. “You are part of a long tradition. Unfortunately, it’s mostly a tradition of failure. If you think you can do better than so many who have made the attempt, you have a long, hard journey ahead of you. Are you ready?”

<sup>13</sup> Great dragons are *very* fond of ancient slang.



## ASSUMING THE PAYERS INDICATE THEIR READINESS AND AREN'T SPINELESS WUSSES, JETBLACK CONTINUES

"The journey ahead of you will be long and perilous. You will have to endure tribulations that have driven many people past the brink of insanity. You may think you are strong—but we will find out *how* strong you are.

"Finding the Infinity Grail requires a *long* journey. We must travel by DropShip and JumpShips, but there are *no direct flights*. In fact, we will probably have *two layovers*, and one of them will require us to spend *two hours* in a port where *all of the restaurants and concessions are closed*. And of course, two hours is *not long enough to go anywhere else*, so we have to *just hang out at the airport!*"

"Additionally, the planes on which we will travel have seats that *do not recline*, and there is *no complimentary food service*. On top of that, all of the in-flight entertainment options are *movies that you already saw but didn't really enjoy!*<sup>14</sup> Or you can listen to a selection of *music played in mall stores catering to pre-teens!*<sup>15</sup>

"If we somehow are able to survive all that, we have to exit the airport at our destination by weaving our way through people through people who think that *they can make other people understand English just by talking really loud*. Then we will stay the night in a hotel where *all the guests are on package tours*.

"That is the gauntlet through which we must pass. Should we make it, I will guide you to the vast cavern where the Infinity Grail rests."

## BEHIND THE SCENES

JetBlack laid it out pretty plain. The PCs have a fourteen-day trip in front of them, structured like this:

- Day one: waiting at first port
- Days two through five: first flight
- Day six: layover at second port
- Days seven through nine: second flight
- Days ten through twelve: layover at third port
- Days thirteen through fourteen: final flight

Each hour of the trip, make a Composure test. The threshold starts at 1 and increases by 1 per stage, so that the final threshold is 6. Each time a PC fails a Composure test, they freak out. Appalled at the conditions in which they are traveling, they verbally dress down any airline or airport employees they can see, including repeated requests to speak to a manager. For each failure, they have to pay 100 c-bills in fines to the airport or airline,

plus they receive a temporary Reputation decrease of 1, as videos of their behavior circulate across the Matrix, with the title "OMG Passenger from *Hell On My Ship!*" This, of course, increases the chance that people at their destination recognize them as the passenger from hell.

Eventually, they reach the distant planet of Obeedah. If they manage not to go on an immediate frustration-induced rampage, JetBlack leads them onward. Then ditches them at the beginning of the next scene.

## Scene 6:

# TRIAL OF BLOOD, RIGHT?

## SCAN THIS

Entry to the caverns holding the Infinity Grail is not granted to just anyone. The PCs have to show their moral, mental, and physical fitness through the only valid test of these areas: an obscure trivia challenge.

## TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You have been walking for two days over a barren landscape. Orange and brown rock stretch as far as you can see, with no visible vegetation. Last night was dark and cold, but the sun spent the entirety of the next day waging war on your head, threatening to explode it into a hot mess of brainy mush. The sun has now descended, and the chill that is sure to follow seems almost promising.

JetBlack suddenly pulls the reins on his horse. Yeah, he has a horse. In fact, he has six, but the other five are carrying his clothes, instruments, and a bunch of bunraku puppets that JetBlack says are there "in case of emergency."

JetBlack is a jerk.

Anyway, he pulled his horse to a stop because he saw something ahead.

"There it is," he says, though it is not clear what he is talking about. "The entrance. Now—prepare to be tested."

You walk forward and see a trap door on the ground, set into the stark rock. On the other side, presumably, is your destiny.

JetBlack rides off, because your destiny isn't really any of his concern.

<sup>14</sup> Starring David Hasselhoff.

<sup>15</sup> Featuring *Now That's What I Call Kidz Bop!*, which includes cover versions of *other* cover versions of songs that, as of six months ago, you never wanted to hear again ever.



# BATTLERUN II: THE QUEST FOR THE THING

## READ THIS WHEN THE PCs OPEN THE TRAP DOOR:

The trap door opens to reveal a rope ladder that drops through a polished stone shaft. Below it, you can see some warm light glowing. Something is down there—probably someone.

## READ THIS WHEN THEY DESCEND INTO THE CHAMBER UNDERNEATH

The chamber below the trap door looks like something ripped off from an Indiana Jones movie, or maybe the Brendan Fraser *Mummy* movies—all polished stone, cracks that might hide doors, and lots of chances for evil laughter to echo from an indeterminate direction.

Two robed figures stand below. Their robes are alarmingly white—like, Legion-of-the-Batshit-Insane white. They don't, however, have any Word of Blake or Aztechnology markings. They stand solemnly, faces hidden, as you descend.

When you reach the floor, one of them finally speaks.

"Answer me these questions three ere the other side ..."

The other one hits the speaker. "Shut up, Neil! I told you we weren't *doing* that!"

The first one giggles.

The second one speaks. "If you wish, your character must be tested. Only the most worthy can pass this chamber. Are you ready to prove yourselves?"

## BEHIND THE SCENES

As is the way in these things, before the PCs can find the incredible treasure they seek, they must prove themselves. As the guardians state, the PCs' mental, moral, and physical strength is to be tested through the following means:

- Mental: Trivia test
- Moral: Also trivia test
- Physical: People who test mental and moral strength through trivia tests don't really care about physical strength.

So this is a trial of blood, in that blood and pop culture trivia are both necessary to maintaining life. The two guardians, Neil and Fitzwilliam, are very passionate about staging this trivia contest and adamant that success at their game reveals genuine superiority. There's one hitch, though—Neil and Fitzwilliam have been down in this chamber for a long time, separated from the universe and all of their source material. Thus, the answers they think are right for the questions are entire-

ly wrong—and both of them disagree on which answer is right (to reiterate, though—both of them are wrong).

The trivia questions, the correct answers, and Neil and Fitzwilliam's answers are listed below, but let's talk about the endgame of this scene for a second. The scene should be intensely annoying, and the players should be sick of Neil and Fitzwilliam in short order. The guardians should delay *everything* with their arguing and should be very persistent in how vehemently they insist being wrong.<sup>16</sup> They should ignore every possible bit of proof or evidence displayed to them, claiming that it has been "Photoshopped." Even if it has no graphical elements whatsoever.

In the end, the PCs should just attempt to plow through Neil and Fitzwilliam. This requires an unarmed attack roll. As long as the PCs don't critically glitch, they succeed. Neil and Fitzwilliam are knocked to the floor, and their large hoods twist and cover their faces, making it difficult for them to see. They struggle with the hoods for a minute, then see that (presumably) the PCs have made it past them. They save face with an argument along the lines of "Your impetuosity has proved your worthiness" or something like that, and then they scurry toward the nearest chair to take a load off for a while.

If the PCs glitch their attack on Neil and Fitzwilliam, they lose their footing and fall at the feet of the white-robed men. Neil and Fitzwilliam *love* this, and they take the opportunity to gloat over their fallen foes, talking about how they are the pawns of destiny and their superiority is granted by greater powers than the PCs have ever seen and some such stuff. This lasts until the PCs try again and knock them on their hoops.

Getting past the guardians lets the PCs access a twisting cave that eventually opens up to the grand finale—Scene 7.

## THE TRIVIA CHALLENGE

Here are Neil and Fitzwilliam's questions, with the right answers and the answers Neil and Fitzwilliam vehemently fight for.

### QUESTION

In his rant defending a two-front war during the Xin Sheng movement, Sun Tzu Liao mentioned three planets the Confederation had been told to give up: St. Ives, Tikonov, and what?

*Neil's answer:* Warlock III. His main rationale is that it must be the right answer because the name sounds cool.

*Fitzwilliam's answer:* Northwind. The Confederation owned it for almost twenty years once, and *they're* the best, and *Northwind* has the best military academy, so of *course* Sun Tzu is still bitter about losing it.

*Correct answer:* Chesterton

<sup>16</sup> And to be very clear, they are *definitely* not at all similar to people we have sometimes seen on the internet.



## QUESTION

What is Horizon CEO Gary Cline's best movie?

*Neil's answer:* *A Side Order of Death*. Come on! It's the one where he stabs a guy in the mouth with a skewer and is like, "How about eating some kabab!" That was awesome!

*Fitzwilliam's answer:* *Knights and Pawns*. He showed his full dramatic range by not being a total idiot for once.

*Correct answer:* *Mitchell*

## QUESTION

Who is the most competent ruler of House Marik?

*Neil's answer:* Iris! Best four months the Free World Leagues ever had!

*Fitzwilliam's answer:* Thomas Marik! The fake one! Sure, he was an impostor, and kind of under the Word of Blake's thumb, but he was a good guy! If not actually a Marik!

*Correct answer:* None of them

## QUESTION

On what street is Ares' new Atlanta headquarters?

*Neil's answer:* Peachtree Avenue

*Fitzwilliam's answer:* Peachtree Drive

*Correct answer:* Peachtree Lane

## QUESTION

What kind of 'Mech did Phelan Kell use during Operation Bulldog?

*Neil's answer:* UrbanMech. And if he didn't, he *should* have.

*Fitzwilliam's answer:* Wolfhound IIC. He will accept absolutely no evidence to the contrary, including printed material.

*Correct answer:* Executioner

## QUESTION

Which of the Wu quintuplets is "the studious one"?

*Neil's answer:* Gum

*Fitzwilliam's answer:* Fo

*Correct answer:* Reducing people in the public eye to a single trait is dehumanizing and participates in unhealthy, media-driven narratives.

## QUESTION

What's the best word to describe the death of Natasha Kerensky?

*Neil's answer:* Abrupt

*Fitzwilliam's answer:* Implausible

*Correct answer:* Two words: Arthur Fiat

## QUESTION

What was the piece of cyberware that pushed Hatchetman over the edge and into the cyberzombie state?

*Neil's answer:* Cyberarm

*Fitzwilliam's answer:* Cyberskull

*Correct answer:* Implanted Tamagotchi egg

## Scene 7:

# THE BATTLE FOR THE GRAIL

## SCAN THIS

The good news is that the players have found the legendary Infinity Grail. The bad news is that the dreaded Legion of the Batshit Insane has also made it to this point, and they are determined to not let anyone have the Grail. It's time to fight it out!

## TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

After winding your way through a long, dreary cave, the stone walls open up into a vast, high-ceilinged cavern. You immediately see the object of your quest standing before you, tall, shiny, and majestic, like a greased-up John Cena. But bigger. Identical 'Mechs—BattleMasters,<sup>17</sup> if you don't miss your guess—flank the Grail. At the far end of the hall are enormous, gold-plated double doors. It's the only apparent exit large enough to take the Grail through.

All that's fine and good, but you're not the only ones to have made it here. A squad of white-robed figures, moving with the leaping, twitchy fanaticism of extremists, is already here. One of them is running for a BattleMaster. The others are heading for the Grail.

Game on.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

This is it. The battle to win control of the Grail and to keep it out of the hands of the Legion of the Batshit Insane. Strike a blow for goodness and virtue everywhere! Play a rousing John Williams theme if you need

<sup>17</sup> Why not Urbies, you ask? We we tempted, believe me. But we thought, "Wouldn't it be funnier is someone, somewhere, actually tried to play this thing?" And we thought the Urbies would kill that idea dead right there. So instead, we went with something more tempting.



some motivation!<sup>18</sup> Then go out there and beat the bad guys!

The struggle here is all about controlling the Grail. The BattleMasters are the only things present capable of lifting the thing, grabbing it with their powerful left hand and using their right to help balance it. That's the goal of the LBI clerics here—one will pilot the 'Mech, the others will control the Grail until it picks it up.

Because control of the Grail is very important here. The powers ascribed to it are quite accurate. To activate the powers, one side has to have more of their people in direct physical contact with the Grail than the other. And when we say "direct physical," we mean it—actual skin touching the Grail. Spirits or summoned creatures can't do the work for you, and you can't have a stick or weapon extending your reach either. Get some pretts and do the job yourself.

The number of LBI clerics on hand should exactly match the number of PCs.

Once one side or the other has control of the Grail, any PC touching it can use a Minor Action to invoke one of its powers. Each player may only use one power per combat round, regardless of how many Minor Actions they may have.

The powers are as follows:

**Damage multiplier:** The next attack to hit an enemy after this power is invoked does double damage (the damage is doubled as the raw, pre-soak-roll value; the target may roll Body to resist after the doubling). If the team using this power loses control of the Grail before a hit successfully lands, this power is wasted and has no effect.

**Magnetic gaze:** For a combat round, whoever is using this power can look at any target, including the BattleMaster, and pull it toward them at the person's or thing's running rate.

**Repulsive push:** For a combat round, whoever is using this power can look at any target, including the BattleMaster, and send it away from them at the person's or thing's running rate.

The use of the Grail has a cost. For each round any character touches it (whether they use a power or not), their Strength drops by 1. If it becomes 0, they fall to the floor, helpless. Strength recovers at a rate of 1 point per combat round.

The combat should be nuts, about gaining control of the Grail and shoving away and attracting the right things. The LBI clerics should have a spellcaster using magic to add even more chaos, and they should be especially focused on using spells such as Animate Stone and Levitate to move people closer and farther from the Grail.

The combat ends when all members of one side are dead or incapacitated, or a 'Mech carrying the Grail exits through the Doors of Destiny at the far end of the hall.<sup>19</sup>

## LEGION OF THE BATSHIT INSANE CLERIC

(MUNDANE; PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)  
SR6

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	ESS
3	5	4(5)	3	4	5	2	5	6

AC	CM	Move
A1, I3	11	5/10/+1

**Initiative:** 10 + 2D6

**Defense Rating:** 5

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Close Combat 5, Con 2 (Acting +2), Cracking 3, Electronics 4, Engineering 4, Firearms 4, Influence 3, Outdoors 3, Perception 5, Stealth 4 (Sneaking +2)

**Augmentations:** Synaptic booster 1

**Gear:** Armor clothing (+2)

**Weapons:**

Ceska Black Scorpion [Machine Pistol, DV 2P, SA/BF, 10/9/8/—/—, 40(c), w/ folding stock]  
Stun baton [Club, DV5S(e), 6/—/—/—/—]

## MECHWARRIOR: DESTINY

STR	RFL	INT	WIL	CHA	EDG
2	2	2	2	2	

**Skills:** Acting 2+Cha, Athletics 2+Str, Computers 4+Int, Investigation 2+Int, Med Tech 2+Int, Melee Combat 3+Rfl, Science 3+Int, Small Arms 2+Rfl, Stealth 2+Rfl, Survival 3+Wil, Tactics 2+Int

**Traits:** Bad Reputation, Pain Resistance

**Armor:** Concealed flak armor

**Weapons:**

Auto pistol (Damage 4)  
Stun baton (Damage 2)

<sup>18</sup> No, not the one from *Schindler's List*. What is *wrong* with you?

<sup>19</sup> They're not locked. Because we say so.



## LEGION OF THE BATSHIT INSANE CLERIC

(AWAKENED, HERMETIC;  
PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	ESS
3	4	4	3	4	4	5	5	5	6.0

AC	CM	Move
A1, I2	11	5/10/+1

**Initiative:** 8 + 1D6

**Defense Rating:** 6

**Skills:** Astral 4, Athletics 3, Close Combat 2, Electronics 3, Engineering 2, Firearms 3, Influence 3, Outdoors 2, Perception 4, Sorcery 4, Stealth 3

**Spells:** Animate Stone, Chaos, Combat Sense, Cooling Heal, Fireball, Increase Reflexes, Levitate, Powerbolt

**Gear:** Armor vest (+3), Renraku Sensei commlink

**Weapons:**

Fichetti Security 600 [Light Pistol, DV 2P, SA, 10/9/6/—/—, 30(c), w/ detachable folding stock, laser sight]

Survival knife [Blade, DV 4P, 8/2\*/—/—/—, \* max range is 20 meters]

## MECHWARRIOR: DESTINY

STR	RFL	INT	WIL	CHA	EDG
2	3	3	3	2	3

**Skills:** Acting 2+Cha, Athletics 2+Str, Computers 2+Int, Investigation 2+Int, Magic 3+Int, 20 Med Tech 2+Int, Melee Combat 3+Rfl, Science 3+Int, Small Arms 2+Rfl, Stealth 2+Rfl, Survival 2+Wil, Tactics 2+Int

**Traits:** Bad Reputation, Pain Resistance

**Armor:** Concealed flak armor

**Weapons:**

Laser pistol (Damage 3)

Knife (Damage 1)

## AFTERMATH

The PCs have helped recover the Infinity Grail, but more importantly, they have helped the incomparable Jonas Hadry. They can drop his name in conversations for the rest of their lives, which is the greatest possible reward. There is no need for cash or Karma. Besides, they're in the Eighth World, a setting for which this is the second published supplement in more than a decade. What would they use their reward for?

But let's talk about the end of the story! Presumably, the PCs defeated the Legion of the Batshit Insane. If they didn't, the LBI has the Grail, so that's pretty much all she wrote for the universe.<sup>21</sup> But anyway, if the PCs have it, they are greeted as heroes by the entire Inner Sphere, even if it's not clear how the Grail will be used going forward. Mr. Johnson is happy, the leaders of the Great Houses are happy, and all is well.

The PCs have a great future in front of them. As word spreads of their deed and association with Hadry, they can choose their assignment in the Inner Sphere. Want to help the descendants of Johnny Spinrad make "Spinrad" a Blood Name? Give it a shot! Want to fund the development of 15,000 Taco Temple franchises<sup>22</sup> in every major nation and several minor ones? Why not? Want to design a teleportation machine? Dammit, *no*!

The point is, they should be able to rub elbows with the elite of the elite, hopping from system to system, doing whatever sounds cool. They have it made. All thanks to Jonas Hadry.

## CAST OF SHADOWS

### JONAS HADRY

Look, we overwrote the *hell* out of sections of this book to give you a sense of how awesome Hadry is, so we think you should get the point by now. He has whatever stats he needs to. His 6s always explode. No hands are large enough to hold all the dice he rolls at once. Printed stats, then, are clearly unnecessary.

<sup>20</sup> There is, of course, no magic skill in *MechWarrior: Destiny*. More's the pity. So you're just going to have to make something up. Or play *Shadowrun*. We know which one *we'd* recommend.

<sup>21</sup> If *Battlerun III* never comes out, it's their fault for ending the setting.

<sup>22</sup> Try the Smoked Jaguar burrito!

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