

Reinier

It's not fair. None of your plans ever goes how you want it to. Is it really your fault that your desires outstrip your reach?

You are, of course, a Speculoid, though in this stage of your life you look the same as a human. You originally wanted nothing more than to learn the ways of science and Mirror Magick, and you did well enough in your university studies back on Specuceps. When you heard the great Librarian and Mage Siris was looking for an apprentice, you applied right away. No one would at all compare, it would be a dream come true. But then Siris passed you over for that numbskill Habibah. Habibah didn't have half your GPA and their thesis was a load of bad statistics and wishful thinking. The indignity of it!

You may, not, quite... have taken it in a professional manner. And that may, perhaps... have lead to difficulties in finding another mentor. But that doesn't matter. No one else was a worthy mentor for you! You found a different way. You eschewed the formal hierarchy of mages and found a secret society, the Vampires of Iron, that taught the forbidden world-bending magics. They taught you skills and techniques you'd never dreamed of. Techniques for not just observing and manipulating other worlds, but visiting them. The potential was extreme. You could get your revenge and explore unknown realms in a single stroke!

See, Siris had this experiment going observing two parallel worlds that were mirror images except for the introductions of different magic. They'd been working for centuries to document the effects of their meddling. So, 60 short years after the snub, you used your forbidden techniques to sneak into the library they were observing from, and from there to one of the worlds. There, in the village of Shady Springs, you found the Order of the Shadowy Text, which worshipped a divine figure called the Librarian. It was a simple matter to use your magic to pass yourself off as the Librarian, and then get them to help you open up a big portal between the parallel worlds using the giant mirror that connected the Library to Specuceps. Then, you convinced them to gather a huge army and invade the other world! It was chaos! Centuries of Siris's work was ruined, there was chaos and excitement everywhere, and messing with these humans was such fun!

Unfortunately, it didn't end the way you wanted. The people in Sleepy Valley should've been easy pickings, ambushed without warning. But despite the invasions initial success, somehow the humans in Sleepy Valley managed to figure out a powerful Mirror Magick technique, gather the Stones of Renewal, and shatter your mirror, cutting you and the Order off from your armies and cutting Specuceps off entirely. Had Siris helped them? You don't know. What you do know is you were trapped in the world of Shady Springs without the materials you need for your most powerful forbidden magicks and no way home. You still had the Order of the Shadowy Text, but somehow it was less fun to impress them after they'd seen your failure.

Fading Lights - Character Sheet

That was 124 years ago. You haven't been able to return to the Library. But given that it's cut off from Specuceps, and it's not like Siris or their apprentices would help you, you haven't been trying too hard. But you've been learning what you can of the world you're trapped in, building your contacts with the Order, and following any mystical leads you can find. You do know a ritual that'd let you get back home, but you haven't been able to find the necessary supplies. And you're nearing the end of your mobile life; soon you'll need to put down roots and become a tree, and you really don't want to be stuck among humans forever.

Of course, none of that is what brought you here. No, the magic that summoned you definitely originated here, in the Library. But your old approach wasn't getting you anywhere. Maybe this actually your chance.

Of course, this place does seem to be falling apart. But hopefully you'll be long gone by then.

Notes

- Most of your magic takes significant preparation. Aside from your "Mirror Portal" ritual, you don't have anything major ready.
- You've been passing yourself off as human but you're not terribly well-disguised, you wouldn't be surprised if Speculoids could recognize you.

People You Know

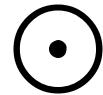
- Senior Librarian Siris: The Speculoid mage who snubbed you a century and a half ago and created the parallel worlds experiment.
- Librarian Habibah: The apprentice that Siris picked over you.
- Quinn Anthony: The head of the Order of the Shadowy Text, who thinks of you as the divine Librarian.

Goals

- Find a way to carry out your Mirror Portal ritual and return home.
- Failing that, figure out a better place to put down roots than here.
- Find out who's to blame for your invasion failing.
- Show up Siris and get your revenge. Well, additional revenge.

Items and Sheets

- The "Mirror Portal" Ritual
- A shard of the mirror that got shattered in your failed invasion
- Some Runes
- The "Specuceps" bluesheet
- The "Shady Springs" bluesheet



Mirror Portal

This ritual will create a temporary portal from the library to Specuceps. At the end of game, any players who are not anchored to a world and who have the ability to walk may walk through the portal to Specuceps. This does not affect the fate of the library. It may make it possible to draw the attention of the Hungry Void towards Specuceps, however.

This ritual requires half the characters in game, rounded up, including at least one Speculoid.
This ritual requires $(n - 2)$ Mirror Shards (consumed), where n is the number of players in game.
This ritual requires use of 1 ritual flashlight and of the Magic Mirror.

- (1) Designate one participant as the **Leader** and one participant as the **Reflector**. The remaining participants will be **Shadows**.
- (2) The Reflector will hold the Magic Mirror, the Leader will hold the flashlight, and the Shadows will hold the Mirror Shards.
- (3) The Leader says "From Specuceps came this interconnected world, and to Specuceps it will return."
- (4) The Shadows line up from the desired location of the portal to the mirror, standing in single file.
- (5) The Leader turns on their flashlight and shines it on the mirror. They say "The light will reach Specuceps once again"
- (6) The Reflector points the Mirror such that the light is blocked from the portal location by the line of Shadows.
- (7) One by one, the Shadows stand aside, allowing the light closer to the portal location, and placing their shards in the beam to color it. As each Shadow steps aside, they say "I will not block the light on Specuceps"
- (8) When the last Shadow has stepped aside, the now-multicolored light will reach the desired wall place for the portal.
- (9) The Leader says "To Specuceps we shine." and all other participants echo "To Specuceps we shine."
- (10) The Leader turns off the flashlight and the Shadows smash¹ their shards.

If this ritual is completed, notify a GM immediately.

¹ These shards are no longer useful for rituals, but they can still be used for the end-of-game vote.

Specuceps

Specuceps is a world of science, a world of logic, a world of magic, and a world of mirrors. In Specuceps, there are wonders and technology that far outpaces what the humans know. In Specuceps, everyone follows rules and principles to ensure that society functions efficiently for everyone. Speculoid technology and magic ensures that everyone in Specuceps enjoys a comfortable standard of living.

Specuceps values knowledge above all, and thus scientists, researchers, and librarians are the most prestigious roles. People study for years at universities in hopes to be impressive enough to be accepted as an apprentice to a leading researcher.

Since research in many other fields has been exhausted, one of the leading fields among the Speculoids is the creation and manipulation of parallel universes. Speculoid researchers observe other universes from artificial pocket realms and perform controlled tests on them, seeing how societies evolve differently when given corn instead of wheat, or given fire magic instead of ice magic.

Speculoids themselves undergo a life cycle that may seem strange to humans. When they are born, Speculoids are akin to tadpoles, confined to water. As they develop, they grow legs and arms and become humanoid, able to move easily out of water, use tools, and interact much as humans do. However, unlike humans they do not die of old age. When a Speculoid grows old, they instead take root and progress into a tree-like form, still able to talk and to manipulate objects with prehensile branches but no longer able to walk around. Since transplanting a rooted Speculoid is a delicate and risky operation, Speculoids choose where to root with great care. Tree-form Speculoids are immortal if not killed as long as they have access to the magic of Specuceps for nourishment. Elder treeform Speculoids can be important sources of knowledge and history.

There are various forms of magic that have been declared forbidden for the betterment of Speculoid society. These include:

- Magic that would allow non-Speculoids to move between universes
- Magic that would allow tree-form Speculoids to return to being able to walk around

This Library was one observation realm, designed to monitor two mirrored parallel worlds full of humans, one of which received the Power of Shadows and one of which received the Divination of Dreams. Normally, it has a small connection to each of the mirrored worlds enough to allow some travel between them and the Library. The Library's low magic levels seem to have made these connections stop functioning.

In addition, the Library was once connected to Specuceps. However, the connection of this observation realm to Specuceps has been severed, both preventing physical travel between it and Specuceps and cutting off its power source. Thus the Library's store of Specuceps magic has been running out, which seems likely to cause it to entirely collapse into the void between universes. This collapse has been repeatedly stalled with the Renewal ritual, but now it seems imminent.

Shady Springs

Shady Springs is a peaceful, normal town, nestled atop a hill among tree-filled valleys in a remote part of the state. It's a nice calm place to live away from the pollution and hassle of the big city. It might be only a matter of time before their warming and smog reaches here too, but for now Shady Springs is pristine, surrounded by unsullied nature.

The one distinction Shady Springs has, perhaps, is the Temple of the Shadowy Text, the primary worship place of a relatively minor religious figure. Most residents attend services intermittently. The local Festival of Tomes is sponsored by the Temple and draws some good-sized crowds, though the focus these days is more on used book sales and fair food than on anything terribly religious. Aside from during the festival, the town doesn't attract all that many tourists, though there are some B&Bs that do well for themselves in the spring and fall.

The civics classes teach that Shady Springs grew up around the temple, originally as a farming town, and grew slowly over time. Over a hundred years ago, there was a great war that conscripted heavily, and a memorial to the war dead sits in the town square. But since then things have been peaceful, and most pay this history little mind.

It's not that Shady Springs is completely untouched by progress. The trains make it easier to visit the city than it was in the past, and supplies the shops with clothing and appliances made far away. Ice cream and air conditioners certainly make the summers more tolerable than they were for previous generations.

All in all, it's a perfect town, one that provides a pleasant, supportive environment for kids to grow up in. It may not look like much, but to the townsfolk, it's home.

Familiar Faces

- Cass Peterson: local teenager who's lived here their whole life.
- Kendall Rodgers: grew up here but now travels the world as a travel writer, only sticking around occasionally in the off-season.
- Quinn Anthony: dedicate at the Temple of the Shadowy Text, holds regular services and oversees the formal portions of the Festival of Tomes.
- Ash Summers: local young adult who's graduated school and now works at the convenience store.