

A fourth Synopsis of events in the [Chicago - a Cold Wind Blows](#) campaign.

A Tower Swaying in the Wind

Inside the Toji PR building, in the downtown Dreamlands of Chicago, [Alex Raiss](#) is working late, when she notices that what was supposedly construction rumbles going on down in the bowels of the building basement, are now causing the building to actively sway a bit. She makes her way down the stairs to the ground floor, but damage to the building makes the door impossible to open. She continues to the basement, finding a big maintenance corridor that looks relatively safe, and contacts her friend Katrina (Kat) and other co-workers to tell them to stay away from the building.

As Alex explores a bit, she gets a message from Kat that she's in the building and coming down to meet Alex. Alex tries to warn her off, but it turns out that Kat came down the stairs on the other end of the building, and has made it to the corridor safely. Together they head down a cross-corridor to where Alex recalls there is a reinforced secure server room. Ahead they see a figure in the corridors, which are growing more and more misty. They try to warn the individual, but he challenges them back, and Alex realizes it's the Toji security man named Mr. Jones.

Into the Dark

Alex gets a bad sense about something ominous Jones says, and tries to attack him. A consummate combat veteran, Jones disarms here. They argue. Alex grabs Kat and they go through the door on the other side of the room into what appears to be a very large room. Alex leads a frightened Kat on into the dark, and they hear voices ahead discussing somebody, also realizing that Jones is behind them.

They creep forward, and suddenly the mists clear up substantially, revealing that they appear to be outdoors somehow. The two voices are from a couple of figures standing behind a boulder. They move forward and address the figures, who are dressed oddly (later speculation was that these two were dark elves) and apparently engaged in observing something beyond the rock. They offer to introduce the pair to whomever is there. She goes around the rock and discovers that what they're talking about is a gigantic being made of earth and plants, even trees.



Above: the scene under the Toji PR building. Later speculation is that they were in the Fae Realm, and that the being in question is known to the Fae as “The Forest Mother” (a name Mai learned on her trip to the Fae Realm previously).

The Team Arrives

Having dimension walked from the Citadel where Ezra was recently shot by Mai after he had killed Wangarten (leaving behind a somewhat distraught Delphine to take care of Ezra), the group arrives at the Toji Corp PR tower just a couple of blocks away, brought by Alicia. The building is difficult to make out, but they look around it and find that it is riddled with holes that lead to where the basement should be. They clamber in, and get a load of the scene where Alex and Kat are in danger of drawing the attention of the titanic being, while the two unknown figures and Jones are behind a boulder.

Alex grabs Kat and runs. She notices the team, and heads for them. They meet, exchange a bit of information, and decide not to tarry long, clambering out. Alicia teleports in behind Alex (not wanting a putative normie to see her arrive out of thin air), and Alex senses her there, and gives her an elbow to the nose, knocking her out. They decide that they need to move to a safer location, and Alex suggests to Kat that she should go home, but Beta Three suggests that maybe it's safer if they all stay together. They discuss, as they walk carrying Alicia, where to go.

The Doomsday Club with New Friends

It turns out that Alex frequents The [Doomsday Club](#), and everybody agrees to follow here there (perhaps thinking that this is the last place the bad guys will look for them). They descend into the

club leaving Leo on the street to make a phone call. Alex looks about for "Sasha," but he's not around, so they take her usual booth and order drinks.

While they drink, Beta Three give them the basic recruiting spiel, asking them if they're willing to take the momentous step to join the underground. They agree, and Beta Three goes into some of the briefings on the spot. They suggest that she keep her public persona, and go see Jones, and play like she thinks she was hallucinating.

Alex, being still a bit skeptical, Mai uses her wind sorcery as a demonstration, while Beta Three explains that he believes she's already been to the Fae Realm. Suddenly Sahasradala appears, and Alex jumps up and hugs him, clearly being well acquainted with him. The team admits to having seen Sahasradala in the club before, and he states that he's interested in the team, and has been watching them. Alex asks if Sahasradala knows anything about what just happened at the Toji building, and he says he'll tell if he can get a dance with Mai.

Mai goes to the dance floor with Sahasradala, and Alex dances with Kat. Mai and he discuss morality and whether the deals he makes are good ones. He asks if she would like to make a deal, but Mai declines.

Meanwhile, Kat and Alex discuss whether or not they've been hallucinating, or if the people they've met are crazy. But they agree to give things a shot.

Suddenly somehow both sets of partners have switched, and now Sahasradala is dancing with Alex, and Mai with Kat. Mai and Kat get to know each other a bit better, possibly attracted to each other? Then they go and sit back down with the rest of the team. Meanwhile Alex asks Sahasradala if what the team is saying is true. After confirming she really wants to know, he tells her it's all true. He makes excuses to leave, but Alex makes him promise that they will have a drink at some point so she can learn more. Alex returns to the table.

Beta Three gives a briefing on "magic" (empathic powers), and it's determined that Alex has some latent empathic ability. He then tells them to go home, go to see Jones tomorrow to create their alibi, and then come see the group at the Citadel. To demonstrate one of the dangers that they face, Beta Three summons Alicia to teleport next to Alex, and then she teleports away.

Understanding a little better now, everybody departs the club. Walking down Michigan Avenue, Mai asks Beta Three to take her somewhere else than the base. They briefly discuss running away, but admit their consciences won't let them.

New Team-mates

A Recruitment

The Professor (a member of the underground on sabbatical since previous to the start of play) is talking to a new recruit about an event that they both just witnessed. [June Forte](#) has been his assistant on a project they've both been working on for the last six months, and the latest run of their equipment caused a portal to open, and something on the other side had waved to them. The Professor asks if she would accept being in the dark on this subject, warning her that if she does hear the truth, she'll be in possession of dangerous information.

June, ever a scientist, insists on knowing, so the Professor gives her a basic recruitment introduction.

Initiations at the Citadel

Back at the Citadel the next morning after the visit to the Doomsday Club, Beta Three and Mai discuss her shooting of Ezra, as two new initiations are about to happen.

June arrives with the Professor, Benny and Beta Three having heard from him and having told everybody that they were on their way. June announces herself as “Red” a codename that she'd come up with when the Professor had told her she would need one. All of the original members welcome the Professor back and introductions are made.

Mai and Leo get into a fight about Mai shooting Ezra, and Beta Three tries to get them to cool off. Mai heads upstairs with a bottle from the bar, and Beta Three follows her, concerned.

Alex and Kat arrive, having just visited Mr. Jones back at the now under repair Toji Corp PR building to establish their alibis (Jones seems to have been taken in). They get drinks while waiting for June to be initiated.

The professor tells June she'll have to be mind scanned to be initiated, and she eventually accepts this. Benny scans her. Meanwhile, Kat has decided her codename is Smoke. Alex (thinking it somewhat ridiculous for her to have a codename, given her fame) decides her codename is Deco. They are both introduced to June when Benny finishes with her.

Benny announces that, while scanning June, he felt the portal that she and the Professor had opened, and that the portal had felt like it connected to the Fae Realm. He also notes that the “wave” that the thing had given June has resulted in a special empathic mark on her. They discuss possibly trying to remove said mark, but decide just to keep an eye on it.

Alex and Kat are told they, too, have to go through scans, and do. Benny notes Alex's contact with Sahasradala, but doesn't find that he's tampered with her mind empathically. Beta Three is intrigued.

Mai returns from upstairs, and talks with the Professor. Axe gets involved, sensing that Mai is still in a tense mood, and offers to take her on a ride to go see his “kids.” They depart, and Mai has a little cry in the elevator on the way down.

Alex relates her experiences at the Vishanti Corp facility back in California, and how Sahasradala had saved her by moving her to Chicago when it seemed that Vishanti operatives were trying to kill her. Benny confirms that she has empathic talent, and then gives her the briefing on choices of branches of empathic training.

Visiting the "NuKids"

Axe sobers Mai up enough that she manages to hold on during a ride to an industrial area near the lake south of the dreamlands. There he gives her a bit of etiquette advice, and they meet up with a gang of mutant kids who ignorant people refer to as “NuKids.” They inform Axe and Mai that there is a facility upriver belonging to one SoDeer BioChem, a corporate subsidiary of Toji, that's dumping

massive quantities of chemicals into the marsh in the South Deering neighborhood (once part of Chicago). In addition, one of their number named Thanya, an empathic sensitive, disappeared while snooping around the place.

South Deering

Axe and Mai ride out to the general location of the Marsh, stopping at a TexMex place called Enrique's. A van arrives with Beta Three, Darcy and Rodriguez, to Mai's chagrin (she having wanted to be around fewer people). They determine that the factory is on an island in the middle of the marsh, and rather than try crossing in through the marsh just yet, instead they go about canvassing the locals. Axe takes Darcy to go house to house, while Mai, Beta Three and Rodriguez head to a Ballotmen housing complex Axe had spotted nearby.

Ballotmen Complex

The Ballotmen Complex is, unsurprisingly, a Toji-run compound. The group manages to get past the weak security detail by saying they're with Toji security looking into disappearances that have been occurring locally. They are instructed that a good bet is to talk to one Jacob Skansky, who they find in one of the communal TV rooms.

Jacob relates that things are worse than usual, as indeed several people have gone missing, the population of the place seeming to turn over quite a lot. Including one person he saw get ripped down into a storm drain by tendrils (in likely lethal manner, though the victim did not make a noise). They decide to take Jacob away from the area, perhaps to evacuate him to the farm, and he agrees, heading back to his room to get a personal effect.

The real Toji security arrives, and it turns out to be Mr. Jones again (seen last only the night before). They run for it, but Jones cuts them off. Mai distracts him, while Beta Three knocks him out. They take Jones and Jacob to the van.

In the van, Rodriguez records [Jacob's Description of Life as a Ballotman](#).

Back at Enrique's

Back at Enrique's Leo has arrived with the new recruits Alex and June to meet up with Axe and Darcy. The latter pair have talked to a few people who have also said that they're concerned about disappearances in the area, and everybody is afraid. Introductions are made. Everybody but Leo and Mai decides to go inside and get something to eat.

Axe says he asked the owner, Enrique, about the local situation before, but he hadn't said much. So Alex goes and butters him up. Enrique, like the other locals, is scared about something out in the marsh, saying it's like the whole thing is alive.

Mai, Beta Three and Rodriguez arrive in the van. Mai and Rodriguez go inside, while Beta Three stays with Jones, worried that if he becomes conscious he may be able to dimension walk away. There's a

discussion of the situation in the restaurant. Mai goes back to the van to check on Jones and Leo follows a bit later bringing Patron as a peace offering.

Meanwhile, inside, June goes to the window and looks across the highway to the marsh, and has a vision of it being alive. She also feels that it is somehow inter-dimensional space out there, and notes that it's her "mark" that's allowing her to see all of this so well. She announces that there is a problem to the group still in the restaurant. Alex gets from Enrique that he has a sense, to, that the marsh is alive or something. Alex comes over to Red, and she snaps out of her reverie, and asks to be removed from the situation. Axe agrees to ride her out of the area on his bike.

Alex sits down with Darcy, who reveals to her that she's cybernetically enhanced. They get Enrique to wrap up their food, and head out.

In the van, Mai has tried to entangle Mr. Jone's mind empathically, but she's too tired and falls asleep, her mind getting sucked into another dimension. Everybody jumps in the van, and they decide to meet Benny, who is on his way to meet them to help with Jones, further down the road. As Beta Three drives, he runs into somebody who walked out in front of the van in the dark.

Mai in the Fae Marsh

Mai's attempt to entangle Jone's mind so he won't dimension walk away has instead lead to her dimension walking into some part of the Fae Realm, a massive marsh area. Her mind inhabits a tall marsh strider thing, which she controls. She drives it towards a building nearby, noting a massive mound off in the distance. Two elves try to hide from her, but she converses with them.



Above: the marsh strider Mai controlled.

They note an ogre approaching, controlled by tendrils from the far off mound. It attacks and Mai's strider thing picks it up and detaches the vines. From the ogre, still held, Mai learns that the thing wants to control everything everywhere, and basically consumes anything to grow. Also that it is fae and harmed by iron. She lets the ogre go, and it plods off.

The elves, in return for the help, indicate that the Green Man has a plan to be rid of the mound in "the human world." Also that she can go meet somebody, more elves, at a bar in her world.

Mai wakes up, back in the human world.

Back on a Thorny Highway

Having hit somebody, Beta Three and Leo exit the van, only to find that the one hit, and others, are controlled by vines from the marsh, and ready to attack. They put a couple down, before realizing that these are normal people controlled by the thing in the marsh. They get back in the van and take off in the opposite direction.

Mai tells them about her dream, and they head to a nearby bar that they think may be the one to which the elves in the fae marsh were referring, forgetting for the moment about any chance of getting any rest.

Ragtyme II

They park and enter the bar called the Ragtyme II. The locals immediately take a dislike to the team, assuming that they're Toji corporate personnel. Leo revealing that he's a federal agent doesn't help much either. Leo goes off on a half-crazed rant, and scares off a harasser named Martin.

The team makes contacts with the two elves in question. They discuss dealing with the thing in the marsh, and decide a recon is in order. The elves leave, getting into a truck, and the team loads up into a van to follow. Mai notes Martin getting into the back of the elves' truck. Mai gets out and sneaks over, and confronts Martin, forcing him to get out of the truck. As he does so, Mai uses her wind sorcery to unbalance him, and he breaks a leg trying to get out, falling unconscious in the process.

The elves check things out, and communicate telepathically. Mai tries to listen in, and the elves insist that Mai not do that any more, because they worry it will tip off the thing in the marsh as to their presence. One of the elves puts Martin back in the truck bed, and they drive off. The team follows in the van.

On the road, Mai explains that she feels that they're on the same team as the elves, everybody being interested in killing off the thing in the marsh.

Following Elves

As the follow the elves' pick up into the marsh that makes up much of South Deering, they worry about Jones waking and have Mai try to scan him again (not having been able to meet up with Benny). She is a bit disoriented from this, but realizes a few things

- Mr. Jones has been to the top level of the SoDeer BioChem facility where something exists important enough for somebody to have put a mental block on the memory.
- Jones's mind is affected like hers, having been to the Fae Realm clearly.
- The Fae Realm has some connection to the Changing Lands.
- These proto-dimensions, mostly the Fae Realm, are linked to whatever is out in the marsh.

They discuss turning around, but decide to continue forward. Darcy discovers they have no cell coverage here, and so cannot contact Benny (and they don't want to risk empathic communication because of what the elves had said). They consider using the surveillance gear in the back of the truck to boost the signal. Mai gives it a shot, but cannot make it work.

South Deering Marsh Pumping Facility

Thorny Situations

They arrive at an old industrial lot facility bordered by chain link fences, where the elves have parked.

In the Apex Auto lot next to the facility lot, [William "Old Bull" Lee](#) (a professional exterminator, and new investigator into things in the dark) has just finished up tangling with one of the “zombified” folks

like the team had encountered on the highway a short while ago, when he sees vehicles arriving through the trees. He hides and observes worried about being thought a murderer. He overhears the elves tell the team that they'll have to wait a bit, and to keep an eye out for "thorn-heads."

Mai decides to take a look around. Meanwhile Bull sees a thorn-infested buck creeping up on the van in odd fashion. He announces his presence, comes out of hiding, and shoots the buck. Mai comes out, and decides to try to save the buck by shooting the thorns off of it. Bull feels that the thing is going to die anyhow, and being an exterminator, exterminates the buck, to Mai's annoyance.

Discussions

Bull, now realizing what's going on with the thorns, shows the team the dead body, explaining that he'd been called out to exterminate rats, only to be attacked by the woman in question. As this happens, Leo talks to the elves who are concerned that there are so many people now involved, and asks Leo if it isn't advisable to kill Old Bull (and he ignores the question). Mai and Bull get acquainted a little.

Mai, having noted the dark-haired elf working on some machinery, speculates as to its purpose. Meanwhile, [Math Cornish](#) has been sneaking up on the lot, having reconnoitered it for a couple of days, worried that the environment is being ruined even more than usual here. Bull observes the machinery as well, and agrees with Mai's assessment, having seen similar pumping gear in his travels. In the discussion, Mai realizes that Bull is a latent empath. The discussion comes around to snake people, somehow.

Bull, reeling from what seems to be a lot of crazy folks, heads back to his van intending to self-medicate, as the rest of the team form a perimeter. Math, seeing Bull head for the van, sneaks over to it. In the van, Bull grabs a gas can, intending to burn the buck and the woman he's killed. Math gets in, and they discuss who and what they've gotten themselves into here.

Mai interrogates the elf at the pump (her end of the perimeter), who admits she's just turned it on full blast; she insists they wait until "Zeb" gets there to explain the operation. Back near the van, Leo talks to the other elf, who still seems to think that eliminating Bull is a good idea. She tries to recruit Leo to their side, promising a nice retirement, but Leo resists her temptations.

Purple Flames

Benny contacts Mai mentally, clearly having gotten close. He promises to be there soon. Meanwhile, Bull has returned with the gas with which he intends to burn the buck and the woman. Math follows in behind Bull, and Mai spots him and confronts him.

Benny arrives and is assigned to keeping Mr. Jones unconscious. Bull burns the buck and the woman. Both burn oddly with a purplish flame. Some people start having trouble with the fumes, and they transport Math to another world; he wanders off.

An Old Friend is a New Friend

A limo arrives, and people get out. One of them turns out to be Brady from the Volo farm. He explains that, in fact, the being out in the marsh is another Fauth, one that's gotten out of control and needs to

be destroyed. The poison they're pumping into the marsh is only slowing it's growth. Leo sucker-punches Brady while he explains. Brady is hurt, but takes the blow not too terribly. They argue a bit, but decide to work together to take out the Fauth.

Brady admits that they can't take the thing out, because it's littered it's new proto-dimension domain with cold iron. Mai tosses a knife to "Brady," who dodges it, and then admits that it's a thing called Zebulon that's possessing Brady's body. Zeb promises a key to keeping the metal boys alive (claiming they're on borrowed time) if the team takes out the fuath. Mai makes him promise to do a favor, which he promises he'll do if it's not something that the Green Man (his boss) wouldn't like.

They make a plan to deliver a bomb to the mega-fuath to end it.

In the Mega-Fuath's Realm

Math, already in this new dimension being developed by this titanic fuath, hears something, and a short humanoid swamp being. He talks to it briefly, before the van comes trundling into the clearing. Math discusses the creature with Mai and introduces her to it. It wants to take them to it's "God," which it admits is a fuath. They also note other creatures.



Left: The "leaf creature" as Math called it.



Right: another creature from the proto-dimension of the Mega-Fuath.

As they discuss following the little humanoid swamp being, tendrils try to attack them. But they are unsuccessful in getting thorns in anybody, as the group leaps into the van and takes off after the humanoid.

Jones wakes up. Mai helps rout empathic power from members to Benny. Benny manages to put Jones into something like a hypnotic state. He relates that the intent is, indeed, to kill the mega-fuath here. Mai tells Math about the plan, and so forth, Math believing that he may be hallucinating on some of Bull's drugs. He goes on about his experiences, including how some friends of his got carried off. Mai asks Jones about this, and he admits that they've been taking people who've seen things to the "factory." Math asks if they've been putting bugs in people's heads, and Jones says that this is true.

Math explains that he saw a friend who did not recognize him, and noticed a worm or something in his eyeball. He asks Jones where the factory is, and he says it's down the road (presumably SoDeer BioChem). They agree that the factory should be shut down, but also agree to take out the Fauth here and now first. Math and Mai start building the bombs they need to blow it up.

Wood Demon

The humanoid comes back and says that something that should be avoided is coming down the road, and suggests abandoning the van to go cross-country. They discuss what to do and the humanoid goes off to hide. A monstrous demon-thing made of wood appears. Mai encourages Rodriquez to ram it, and he attempts to do so. It just grabs on. May communicates with it, and determines that it only wants to escape this new fragmentary proto-dimension. It dislikes the mega-fauth too.



Above: the "wood demon"

Rodriquez continues driving like mad with it holding on, and has to be talked down. Mai wants to make a deal with it, not feeling that it's empathic emanations of wanting to absorb pain and fear are that bad. They discuss it, but Mai makes an executive decision that "Twiggy" is coming along.

They argue about whether the malevolent nature of the Fae beings, feeding as they do on negative feelings, amount to "evil" or not, as they continue on.

End of the Line

Eventually, continuing down the path, they reach the Mega-fuath. They gawk at it for a moment.



Above: the mega-fuath.

Math goes wild, grabs a bomb, and charges forward, as the thing opens it's maw to consume him. Meanwhile Mai forces a massive dose of blue lotus on Mr. Jones. Benny helps Math by exchanging sight perspectives empathically, and guides him back to the van using dimension walk, the creature confused by the lack of Math to eat, and the bomb left in his place. Rodriguez orders Math out of the van, claiming he's going to drive it into the thing with the bombs.

Mai uses the generated empathic power from Jones to fire a super-powerful bullet into the thing, creating a massive rent into which Rodriguez drives the van. Benny creates another portal, and Math runs into it to save Rodriguez. Together they haul each other back through the portal, which closes just as the bombs explode, destroying the mega-fuath (and Jones with it in the van).

The world starts collapsing as Math had predicted it would; but Mai, predictably, claims credit maniacally. Leo has to talk her down from delusions of grandeur, and talk of leaving to live in the Fae Realms.

Leaving the Pumping Facility

They collect themselves, Beta Three having stayed back to watch over Jacob and Bull, etc. who did not go in the van to the fight, and Zeb asks them where they stand now with respect to staying out of the Green Man's way.

Others ask Bull if they can get a ride with him.

Zeb agrees to deliver six empathic power crystals per month if the team stays out of Fae business. Mai thinks this is too little in her somewhat delirious state, but Leo reminds her they're lucky to be walking out of this situation.

Bull offers them drugs, and Mai asks for ones to make her forget things. Everyone gets in the van, and they drive off into the late night.

Back to Base

The group takes a trip to the Craft Bar, where Bull and Math are given briefings, and then back to the base for more. Axe shows Bull the ogre, and they discuss whether all legends have some basis in reality or not.

Later, after some rest, Mai proposes that they kidnap one of the snake people. While discussing empathic power crystals, Mai thinks for a moment about Nina, and a plan starts to form around going back to the DBC to see if they can nab Nina there. They go to find Spenser to get him and the book to go to the DBC. He agrees to the plan, provided he gets some time to ask the Tall Ones about other paths to other proto-dimensions.

Spenser reveals that he's got a corpse of one of the things from under Union Memorial Cemetery on ice. Also it's Panix's turn with the book. But the ground bones of the thing under the cemetery can help them open portals (hence why he kept one). They decide they do want the book, and rather than wait for Panix to turn up back at the Citadel, they'll go track her down at the KAM temple where her new group studies.

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