

THE MISSING LINK

KEEPER'S MYSTERY GUIDE



THE MISSING LINK 1/51

Complexity: 8

Main Location: MYS·TERIO·US Outpost — Island Zero

Date: September 20XX

Contact: Commander Fletcher Payne (he/they)

OMEN-CLASS MONSTERS, assist MYS·TERIO·US in searching for a missing HALIMAW-CLASS MONSTER and their teen pilot. Immediately rendezvous with Commander Fletcher Payne, former Halimaw Pilot and Commander of the outpost on Island Zero. Investigate the facility and island, **WARNING:** engage with RIFT-CLASS MONSTERS only if necessary. HARBINGER-CLASS MONSTER has left evidence of possession of Halimaw and Pilot. Find the DOOR OF POWER and contain it before the Harbinger claims ASCENSION.

CONTENT WARNING: *Teenagers facing trauma, harm (possibly fatal) to teenagers, experimentation and experimentation on teenagers, genocide via bioweapon/biological warfare.*



Description

On September 13, 2000, the unthinkable happened. Scientists and engineers experimented on an ancient monster slumbering in the heart of an inactive volcano, deep under water. Awakened from its millennia-long sleep, the monster screamed and tore through reality with its power. In the wake of its anger, a permanent wound bleeds between worlds.

This interdimensional scar is an opening into a nightmare realm. Colossal rift monsters come through, each capable of destroying entire cities within hours. These monsters can only be stopped by other monsters like them. If even one gets through, it would mean the start of the apocalypse.

Island Zero is not on any maps, and it never will be. It is an island filled with larger than life monsters and the teenagers who are psychically connected to them. It is an island that is lush and full of life, but also fraught with peril.

Together, monsters and teens must use highly experimental technology to guard the boundaries of our world and push back all threats. They are part of a war that will never end. Together they are pilots and Halimaw.

Once a teen is connected to a Halimaw, they are forever changed. When the teens become adults, they change in unpredictable ways. All lose their ability to connect to their Halimaw, thus unable to pilot. Some show signs of mutations, new abilities or physical features that can't be explained by science. Very few even become rift monsters themselves, eventually growing colossal in size, losing most of their memories and the ability to speak.

Every few years there are new recruits, new youths who must take on this burden. Despite years of development and research, only teenagers are capable of connecting to the Halimaw and piloting them. There are no other physical indicators of a teen's ability to be a pilot, nothing within their DNA or social background that determines their capabilities. MYS·TERIO·US employs skilled psionics to walk through dreams and find teens that can emotionally connect to the Halimaw.

Thus, an organization was created to ensure pilots and Halimaw would protect the world. The Mechanized Youth Squad of Tactical Eschatological Research, Investigation and Operations, a branch of United Security (MYS·TERIO·US).

DIVISION has close ties with MYS·TERIO·US. One of the pilots and their Halimaw has gone missing and signs of the apocalypse are found. MYS·TERIO·US has turned to the DIVISION for help.

THE MISSING LINK

KEEPER'S MYSTERY GUIDE



THE MISSING LINK [2/5]

Beginning the Mystery

It takes several days for DIVISION's monstrous agents to reach Island Zero. The island is protected by spell-tech—holly people from all over the world who take shifts to chant unique prayers created for the Halimaw. Engineers keep an eye on void shields that protect the island and erase any evidence of its existence.

The PCs must pass several security checks and receive strict clearance before they are allowed to land on Island Zero. The jungle is teeming with alien life. Hidden within the foliage is a tunnel that leads them to the underground facility. Strange animals watch from the shadows.

Commander Fletcher Payne is there to greet DIVISION agents. Their massive physique is covered in mech-plating that resembles what the pilots wear during a skirmish. His dark skin is heavily scarred, and his eye patch has a protective rune stitched into it.

Establishing Questions

Ask each one to a different PC:

- ✿ **Fletcher Payne was the very first teen to pilot a Halimaw, but his mutation ended his piloting career.** You were there during their last mission—what did Payne protect you from? Why are you the only one who knows about their mutation?
- ✿ **One of you helped train one of the teen pilots.** Who are they, and why do you worry for them?

Custom Move: Hello, Little Monster

When you attempt to connect psychically to a Halimaw, say what vulnerable memory you offer to them, spend Darkness Tokens and roll.

ON AN 8-10 you drift into the consciousness of the Halimaw, your memories become one for a moment. Choose two:

- ✿ The Halimaw comforts and soothes you, clear one Condition
- ✿ The Halimaw opens their heart to you, gain a **Bond** with them
- ✿ The Halimaw reveals a truth to you, ask any one question about a **Key** you have, or uncover a **Key**

ON AN 11+ the Halimaw sees something in you that terrifies them, choose:

- ✿ Mark Ruin to allow the Harbinger within you to force them into compliance, and choose one from above
- ✿ Do nothing, the Halimaw will lash out in fear and anguish

ON A 7- you are about to connect to the Halimaw and see tantalizing visions. But then sirens go off and the entire facility goes into lock down. The Keeper will tell you what happens next.

Contact: Fletcher Payne (he/they)

Payne uses a cane to compensate for a noticeable limp, has a steady gaze that studies whoever speaks, and seems incapable of smiling. He tells dad jokes with a completely straight face.



Payne escorts the Omens and waves off security teams. The commander is grateful for DIVISION's assistance. He quickly explains what some of the PCs may already know. The pilots are special teens handpicked by professional psionics, and the monsters that connect to these pilots are called **Halimaw**.

There doesn't seem to be any discernible difference between the Halimaw and the rift monsters that wish to destroy the world. All these years, and MYS-TERIO-US still doesn't understand the attacks and why some monsters from the rift wish to help protect this world.

Payne's office is near the command deck. Windows on all sides flicker to reveal statistics and reports, updated every few minutes. From here, the PCs can see the hangar bay. Halimaw sleep in huge vats of an amber colored and translucent liquid that rejuvenates them. Enormous injector tubes are nearby, each tube housing a cockpit for the pilot. Hundreds of people work around the clock—scientists, engineers, mechanics, commanders, and Halimaw carers.

In the center of it all is a beating heart, 30 feet high. It glows strange colors in the dark, and the colors shift in response to the Omens. If pressed, Payne quickly explains that this is all that remains of his Halimaw, **Electra Rogue**. She sacrificed herself, forcefully ejecting Payne from the cockpit, to save an entire city. Most of her did not survive the fight against the rift monster, but her heart refused to die. She now protects the base with what little power she has left.

Payne and his team quickly fills in the Omens with what they know:

- ✿ **Luna Nakahara** is one of the youngest teens to be recruited as a pilot. She took well to the training and bonded almost immediately with her Halimaw, **Hydra Omicron**.
- ✿ **Hydra Omicron** is a unique Halimaw, their skin covered in eyes and a dozen wings of gold and amber covering their back. They unleash sound waves and light storms. With Luna's guidance, the two can use a special sword that channels this power.
- ✿ **The two were last seen preparing for their launch sequence.** Luna went on comms to deliver an ominous message before all scanners lost the pilot and Halimaw's signature: "The apocalypse comes. Together, we will remake this broken world."
- ✿ **Payne plays back the recording of the cockpit, and the agents recognize clear signs of possession.** A Harbinger is involved somehow. The video flickers for a moment, and when it comes back, there is no sign of either Nakahara or Hydra.

THE MISSING LINK

KEEPER'S MYSTERY GUIDE



THE MISSING LINK [3/5]

People of Interest

MALIKA CONNER *(she/her)*

Pilot. Bright eyes. Pale skin. Hair dyed an aggressive red. Uses a wheelchair. The eldest of the teen pilots. Speaks in an abrasive tone.

Malika has been a pilot longer than the others. She and her Halimaw **GARNET CYCLONE** consistently outperform other pilots, but Malika has difficulty getting along with anyone who isn't Luna. Garnet Cyclone is a beast type Halimaw, and has the appearance of a large black cat with sharp tentacles and teeth dripping acid. Garnet Cyclone is one of the few Halimaw that psychically connects to any pilot, but they prefer bonding with Malika.

Malika is deeply upset about Luna's disappearance and will rarely leave the simulation room as she fights through difficult emotions. Garnet Cyclone is showing similar signs of depression.

QUOTE: *I don't know what the Commander has told you, but I need to keep training. You're a distraction, and talking to you isn't going to get Luna back. Garnet Cyclone and I are going out to look for her, and I need to be at my best.*

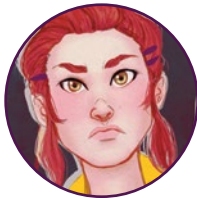
ASTERIO ROMANO *(he/him)*

Pilot. Easily spooked. Perpetually wide-eyed. Thin and fragile looking. Dark skin. Speaks in a soft voice.

Asterio is a pilot with inconsistent results. For the most part, Asterio barely meets the minimum requirement to continue piloting, but every so often he and his Halimaw **APOSTLE SOLAR** will synchronize past what the equipment can measure. Together, they can single-handedly defeat even the most ferocious monsters from beyond the rift.

Apostle Solar is a Titan-type Halimaw—they tower over all other rift monsters and possess incredible strength and speed. At full synchronization, Apostle Solar can move fast enough to break light speed.

QUOTE: *Uh, is this a test? Commander Payne likes having us go through random tests and I don't know if they told you, but I don't do well at tests. I should, I should go check in on Solar.*



CATALINA LEE *(she/her, he/him)*

Pilot. Naturally white hair that reaches past her waist. Dark skin. Always seen in his pilot gear. Speaks in a combination of sign language and psychic visuals. The youngest of the pilots. Catalina switches between masculine and feminine body language, to better express himself.

Catalina is often seen near Commander Payne or one of the other adults. He seems to have trouble getting along with the other pilots. Despite not training with the others, Catalina does well in combat and will often support the other pilots in ways that she cannot off the field.

AURORA COYOTE is an elemental Halimaw, embodying the raw fury and elegant precision of ice and fire. Aurora is one of the few Halimaw who can regenerate and share those regeneration powers with other Halimaw.

QUOTE: *[Catalina looks away but allows his mind to open up and reveal images of Luna and Catalina sitting together in friendly silence, watching their Halimaw regenerate.] Catalina signs, "LUNA HYDRA SOON FIND?"*

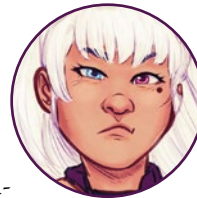
NATASHA ZAMORA *(she/her)*

Operations Director. Slicked back hair, dark skin. Old beat up leather jacket thrown over uniform, psionic-tech implants glow in both eyes. Serious at her job, but friendly and warm when off the clock. During a skirmish, Zamora issues orders, relays battle strategies, and keeps track of technicians monitoring the Halimaw.

Zamora is professional with the kids and pushes them hard to get past their fears and insecurities. But all the pilots come to her with their problems, and she's known as the Outpost Mom. When off duty she can be found counseling a pilot or drinking a beer with an older colleague.

Zamora is conflicted about the teens being pilots and fighting for all of humanity, so she pushes herself hard to care for them.

QUOTE: *I'm worried about Luna and Hydra. They were the heart of the team. They have a tendency to take risks, though. If someone took advantage of that, I'm going to make them pay.*



THE MISSING LINK

KEEPER'S MYSTERY GUIDE



THE MISSING LINK [4/5]

KAIYA ROSARIO (they/them)

Head scientist. Wears a lab coat over a bright dress. Goggles push up thick, curly hair. Dark skin, fat and round. Eyebrow perpetually raised, wide smile. Rosario oversees the care of the Halimaw, and helps create various tech to assist the Halimaw and their pilots.



Rosario was one of the first pilots on Island Zero. Their mutation randomly generates a new mirror clone of Rosario, who walks out of the interdimensional rift every so often.

Several of the clones are now fellow scientists. Each clone has their own distinct personality, but many of them enjoy working for the Outpost. Each one has a number. Currently, there are 24 clones. It was Rosario 03 who came up with the term Halimaw—the Tagalog word for monster—and helped improve pilot and Halimaw synchronization dramatically.

QUOTE: *Did you want to talk to Rosario Zero Zero? Uh yeah, “the original.” Buuuuut if it’s Halimaw info you’re after, I’m the clone you need to talk to. Rosario Zero Three at your service. Hm, but Rosario One Six gives great life advice if you need that, their shifts ends in an hour.*

SELENE NAKAHARA (she/they)

High priestess. Selene looks like an older version of Luna. The two siblings are tall, pale-skinned, with milky blue eyes. Selene shaves their head while Luna’s black hair reaches her shoulders. Selene is dressed in the long robes of a priestess. The only sign of their rank is a simple circlet upon their head.



Despite showing great promise, Selene refused to become a pilot. Instead, she used her potential to become the youngest high priestess. Her Halimaw, **SAKURA VANGUARD**, is an S-Class Psyker. They have moth-like features, their bioluminescent wings slowly change patterns every few seconds.

As high priestess, Selene oversees the rituals and prayers required to maintain the protective spell-tech. Selene also oversees care for the Halimaw and leads her team of psionics into battle. Sakura uses their formidable psychic energy to power much of the outpost’s spell-tech components and machines.

QUOTE: *I’m sorry that MYS·TERIO·US insisted you come to Island Zero, but I assure you that my psionics will find Luna soon. I, hmm. Sakura tells me I should be more polite, I apologize. Finding my sibling and her Halimaw is of the utmost importance, let us work together instead.*

The Interdimensional Rift

At any time during the investigation, the rift may tear open and huge monsters will attack Island Zero! This may occur as a result of a miss on a roll, but it can happen anytime it makes sense to raise the stakes or shake things up.

The PCs may assist as they like. If they wish to directly engage the rift monsters and assist the pilots, give each huge rift monster 4-5 **Conditions**. This is a good opportunity to build colossal monsters that directly reflect the PCs, or mirror aspects of What the Darkness Demands of them.

Don’t worry about how your PCs will measure up against these titans, they have their powers of darkness at their disposal. Your players will surprise you with the awesome plans they come up with. Let them have fun and encourage them to try to **GRASP KEYS** during the skirmish.

Locations

THE COMMAND DECK AND HANGAR BAY

Hundreds of people are busy at work, studying data and caring for the Halimaw. There is one Halimaw that refuses to connect to any pilot. *Who are they, and why do you recognize them?*

THE LABS

Engineers, mechanics, and psionics all work in harmony across open areas of research and study. *What big project is everyone working on?*

LIVING QUARTERS

The Living Quarters are more spacious and welcoming than one would expect. *What about the living quarters is beautiful?*

THE TREATMENT WARD

Former pilots struggling with their mutations and retired Halimaw are cared for here. You realize one of the Halimaw is a former pilot. *When they recognize you, what psychic flashback do you see?*

THE MONSTER GRAVEYARD

When a rift monster dies, it’s never pretty. The Outpost tries to increase the rate of decomposition, but some of these strange remains have been around for years. *Which of these fallen rift monsters embodies What the Darkness Demands of You?*

THE MISSING LINK

KEEPER'S MYSTERY GUIDE

THE MISSING LINK [5/5]



Keys of the Apocalypse

- ✿ signs of sabotage, barely perceived
- ✿ a mutation, desperately hidden
- ✿ evidence of false memories
- ✿ a secret facility that creates terrifying machines
- ✿ strength and abilities stolen from rift monsters
- ✿ an old autopsy report of someone who appears to still be alive
- ✿ messages from Luna that were never sent, they admit to deep-seated fears no one knew she had
- ✿ evidence that Hydra Omicron, Luna's Halimaw, was undergoing a violent evolution
- ✿ evidence of a pilot that no one remembers
- ✿ power from the rifts harnessed and the corruption that bleeds from it
- ✿ secret research to force more rifts to open around the world
- ✿ someone unlikely is psychically connected to the Queen of Monsters from across the rift
- ✿ a collection of Halimaw organs, their rift energy harvested in cruel ways
- ✿ contaminated rejuvenation fluid causes the Halimaw to hallucinate and lose control of their abilities
- ✿ painful psychic flashes that everyone in the outpost experiences at the same time
- ✿ failed attempts at fusing humans and rift monsters into something powerful, but uncontrollable
- ✿ detailed instructions on how to force the Halimaw to go berserk, killing their pilots is labeled as "acceptable collateral"
- ✿ a prayer virus meant to kill every psionic on Island Zero and beyond
- ✿ discarded clones of Luna and Hydra Omicron
- ✿ a rift monster that claims to be a former pilot
- ✿ a deadly weapon that only a human can wield—it can kill any Halimaw instantly, but is ineffective against rift monsters
- ✿ the undying remains of the first monster that created the inter-dimensional rift, and their growing power

Facets

- ✿ The Possession and Disappearance of Luna Nakahara and Hydra Omicron
- ✿ The Rift
- ✿ The Harbinger
- ✿ The Door of Power

Doomsday Clock (ticks: 8)

MOMENT

Something comes alive in the Monster Graveyard. It is searching, hungry, yearning, its life flickering and hanging by a thread.

- ✿ Who stumbles into the graveyard?

INTRIGUE

A throne made from the bones of rift monsters. The volcano rumbles, resisting what the Harbinger desires. "Soon you will have no choice, I'm afraid."

- ✿ What instruments and tech go haywire on Island Zero?

EVENT

The rift opens violently, contradicting predictions and patterns. The fauna and foliage of Island Zero begin to mutate wildly, and the pilots show similar mutations, years ahead of what is expected.

- ✿ Which one of the Omens shows similar signs of the mutation?

INTRIGUE

A rift monster trapped under cruel tools, given more power than it can handle. It tries to scream, but it has lost the ability to. A dispassionate voice speaks out, "My lord, soon the children will receive the same power, the psychic resonance will make sure of it."

- ✿ How is the power changing the rift monster?
- ✿ Who receives psychic feedback as a warning?

MOMENT

The sound of cracking glass, as loud as thunder. The huge vats of amber liquid that house the sleeping Halimaw crack and break. The outpost is soon flooded in the liquid.

- ✿ What is keeping the liquid from releasing the psychic dreams of the Halimaw?

EVENT

A rift monster comes through, its size and power far surpassing anything MYS-TERIO-US has seen before. The rift monster's screams tear through the island, causing earthquakes and eruptions.

- ✿ Which pilot and Halimaw attempt to face the rift monster alone?

INTRIGUE

Several rift monsters scream in silent agony, they are cruelly transformed against their will. A steely voice says, "There is no coming back from this, I am sorry, my children. This is the only way."

- ✿ Which one of the rift monsters resembles a PC?

THE DOOR OPENS

A new rift opens, larger than the first tear. It will soon consume the island. The psychic resonance causes rifts to open all over the world, an army of rift monsters come through.

- ✿ When the door opens, what happens to all the psychics of the world?
- ✿ What power or wisdom does the Harbinger take from beyond the door?

