

Cover & Pitch



YZE

SETTING

"LOOP — Every solution is a lie"

YZE · All levels · Campaign (4-8 sessions) · English

LOOP

Every solution is a lie.

> **[CONTENT WARNING]** > This setting contains themes of cosmic horror, loss of reality, identity paradoxes, and erasure of consciousness. Characters will gradually lose the certainty of knowing who they are, in which node, at what point in time, and with which memories. This is not an action setting: it is a setting of traumatic discovery.

Pitch - For the Game Master

The loop.

Since the third iteration, the word has seeped into everyday language like an oil slick spreading across water: it spreads, it glints, it has no clean edges. The first invasion killed four billion people in eighteen days. The machine was activated. Time was rewound. The second invasion killed three billion. We had learned. The machine was activated. Time was rewound. The third invasion killed two billion. We had learned more. The machine was activated. We are now in the fourth iteration. We have learned even more.

And still, they return.

The revelation your players must discover for themselves: the Quantum Instruction, the technology that allows time travel, emits a signal into spacetime. That signal is exactly what the Resonants are tracking. Every time humanity activates the machine to correct its mistake, it sends out another beacon. It says: *we are here, we exist, come.* The solution is the problem. The rescue is the lure. And for three iterations now, no one has had the courage to shut it down.

The tone is systemic doubt. No clean heroism, no obvious victory. *Dark* (the series), *Annihilation* (the film), *Arrival* (the film); those works understand that the deepest fear is not death, but incomprehension. The Resonants do not hate you. They do not understand that they are hurting you. And that is much worse.

<!-- [LAYOUT: PAGE 2 - Dark blue-grey background, stylized map of Earth 2157 with node markers. Text in two columns. Faction boxes in distinct blocks.] -->

The World (Iteration N)

Earth, 2157 - After the third known iteration

From the outside, the Earth of 2157 looks like a planet of organized survival. The great metropolises have been rebuilt according to emergency doctrine: modular structures, integrated bunkers, evacuation systems. Every public building can become a shelter within forty seconds. Every inhabitant has received basic defense training. Order rules. Fear does too, but no one names it.

From the inside, it is something else. The population is split into two invisible but absolute categories: those who remember, and those who forgot. The first have crossed more than one iteration with their memories intact. The second are the other nine billion people, living the same life from the beginning without knowing they have already lived it, already panicked, already watched their loved ones be absorbed.

The Loopers

No one knows exactly why some people keep their memories from one iteration to the next. The dominant theory speaks of a natural sensitivity to quantum coherence, a kind of immunity to erasure. Loopers recognize one another through subtle signs: a phrasing too precise about an event that has not happened yet, a gaze that does not flinch when others discover a new catastrophe, the way they look at the sky at the exact moment the first probes detect the Resonants' arrival.

There may be three hundred thousand of them worldwide. Perhaps fewer. They form clandestine networks, pass information between iterations, and try to build a collective memory of the loop. Some are exhausted. Some are broken. Some have become something humanity does not yet have a word for.

The Architects of the Return

An unofficial but immensely powerful faction, the Architects control the seven QI Terminals scattered across the planet. These terminals are the activation nodes of the temporal machine, the true levers of iteration. Every Terminal is guarded by an elite military unit, protected by automatic erasure protocols in case of intrusion, and officially listed as "level-5 climate research infrastructure."

The Architects sincerely believe the loop can be won. That through enough iterations, enough learning, enough perfected defenses, they will find the combination that pushes the invasion back for good. They still do not understand, or refuse to accept, that every Terminal activation is a new invitation.

The Pact of Silence

The governments know. Not every detail, not the full truth about the Resonants, but enough. An unsigned, unwritten treaty, circulating only in the trained memories of thirty-two planetary decision-makers, states that no information about previous iterations must ever be made public. The official reason is preserving social cohesion. The real reason is that no one knows how to explain to ten billion people that they have already died at least once.

> **[GM ADVICE]** The surrounding paranoia is your ally. The PCs are Loopers. They know things the others do not. Lean into isolation: when you know and the others do not, you eventually start doubting what you know yourself.

<!-- [LAYOUT: PAGE 3 - Deep black background with translucent geometric silhouettes of Resonants. Stat blocks in columns. Hostile and strange atmosphere.] -->

The Extraterrestrial Threat

The Resonants

They do not come from a planet. They come from a space the physicists of the Quantum Instruction call "the substrate," a layer of reality adjacent to time itself, where quantum signals accumulate like sediment. The Resonants evolved in that environment. They *are* of the substrate. What they are doing on Earth, they call, as far as anyone can guess, a harvest.

They do not destroy. They *absorb*. An absorbed human does not die immediately; they gradually become a relay, an amplifier for the QI signal, a living node in the Resonants' network. The experience of absorption, as described by the few early survivors, feels like being *reformatted*; the memories are still there, but organized differently, like a library where someone changed the shelving system.

What makes the Resonants truly terrifying is not their power. It is the mutual incomprehension. They do not know that humans suffer. They do not understand subjective consciousness, only the signal. When they absorb someone, they think they are offering a gift: integration into a much larger network. The fact that we resist confuses them. To them, our screams are static.

Their form varies depending on the temporal node. The same entity may appear as a column of geometric light in one node and as a nebulous mass of translucent membranes in another. Their true body, if "body" even means anything, exists in the substrate.

YZE Stat Blocks - The Resonants

<!-- [LAYOUT: Three stat blocks in columns, with distinct icons for each Resonant type.] -->

Resonant Collector *(Scout)*

Attribute	Value	Key Skill					
Strength (PHY)	4	-	Agility (AGI)	3	Dodge	3	Empathy (EMP)
	5	Manipulation	4	Armor	0	-	

****Resistance Points:**** PHY 4 / MEN 3 ****Initiative:**** D6+3 ****Fast action:**** Light absorption *(contact, target makes a MEN roll Danger 5 or loses 1 Mental point)* ****Slow action:**** Signal pulse *(all humans at short range make a Temporal Drift roll or gain 1 Drift point)* ****Special ability:**** *Signal seeker* - instinctively gravitates toward QI Terminals. Cannot be persuaded to move away from an active Terminal.

Resonant Weaver *(Builder)*

Attribute	Value	Key Skill					
Strength (PHY)	2	-	Agility (AGI)	1	-	Empathy (EMP)	8
	6	Manipulation	6	Armor	2	-	

****Resistance Points:**** PHY 2 / MEN 6 ****Initiative:**** D6+1 ****Fast action:**** Network *(targets two humans at short range, EMP roll Danger 7; on a failure, the two share their mental injuries until the end of the scene)* ****Slow action:**** Weave *(creates a permanent link between two absorbed victims; they feel each other's emotions even at a distance)* ****Special ability:**** *Node builder* - can stabilize a micro-temporal node (5m area) lasting 1D6 hours, scrambling Temporal Drift rolls within it.

Resonant Node *(Boss)*

Attribute	Value	Key Skill					
Strength (PHY)	6	Combat	5	Agility (AGI)	2	-	Empathy (EMP)
	10	Manipulation	8	Armor	4	-	

****Resistance Points:**** PHY 6 / MEN 8 ****Initiative:**** D6+2 ****Fast action:**** Substrate strike *(short range, PHY damage 2, ignores ordinary armor)* ****Slow action:**** Deep absorption *(EMP roll opposed by the target's EMP; on a failure, the target gains the ECHO condition immediately)* ****Special ability:**** *Drift* - can teleport between two known nodes once per combat. Its arrival creates a local temporal distortion: all humans present make an immediate Temporal Drift roll.

> ****[GM ADVICE]**** The Resonants do not flee and they do not attack in rage. They act with the quiet logic of an organism harvesting resources. They ignore insults, verbal threats, and warnings. That silence is more frightening than an aggressive response.

<!-- [LAYOUT: PAGE 4 - Structured background with faint node diagram. Rules in clearly separated blocks. Desynchronization table with progressive alert colors.] -->

Loop Mechanics (YZE House Rules)

> **[RULE - YZE Compatibility]** All mechanics on this page are added to the core YZE SRD without replacing it. Standard skills (Strength, Agility, Empathy, and their associated skills) function normally. The two new skills, **Temporal Drift** and **Quantum Interface**, are added to the existing list and linked to the Mental attribute.

Initiating a Temporal Rewind

To rewind time (create a new iteration), you need:

- Access to a QI Terminal** - The seven planetary terminals are militarized installations. Reaching one requires Stealth, Manipulation, or Combat rolls depending on the chosen approach.
- Quantum Interface roll** - Difficulty depends on the Terminal's condition:

Terminal State	Difficulty	Activation Time
Operational & secured	4 successes	10 minutes
Damaged	3 successes	30 minutes
Partially absorbed by a Resonant	5 successes	1D6 x 10 minutes

- Stress cost** - Every attempt, successful or not, inflicts 2 stress on all Loopers present. Non-Loopers lose consciousness for 1D6 hours after a successful rewind.

Node Creation

> **[RULE - Fundamental Principle]** Any time travel **creates** a node, it does not replace the previous timeline. The old line continues to exist as a stable node. There is no erasure, no classic paradox. Only branching.

The node network expands with every iteration. The Architects have mapped some of them. Most remain unknown. Every node has a unique identifier based on its date of creation and invasion state.

Simplified diagram:

```

  ````
 NODE 0 (Original iteration - Resonants win)
 ↳ NODE 1 (1st rewind - 4 billion dead)
 ↳ NODE 2 (2nd rewind - 3 billion dead)
 ↳ NODE 3 (3rd rewind - 2 billion dead)
 ↳ CURRENT NODE (4th iteration in progress)
 The PCs can travel laterally between nodes, not only by rewinding.

```

---

### Navigating Between Nodes

To travel between existing nodes (without creating a new iteration):

- Temporal Drift roll** against difficulty 3 (known node) or 5 (unknown node)
- Success**: you arrive in the targeted node, at a moment coherent with its state
- Failure**: you arrive in a random node; the GM rolls on the Node Types table (page 5)
- Critical failure (no successes, failed push)**: you arrive in a node, but with a 1D6-hour memory gap

---

### Desynchronization

Every journey between nodes (other than a full rewind) inflicts **1 Drift point** on each traveler.

The track runs from 0 to 6. At **6 points**, the **ECHO** condition becomes permanent.

> **[RULE - Desynchronization Table (D6)]** Roll whenever a traveler gains their 3rd, 4th, or 5th Drift point:

| D6     | Effect                                                                                                                                    |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1      | <b>Mnemonic slippage</b> - the PC remembers an event from another node as if it had just happened. They are unable to act for 1D6 rounds. |
| 2      | <b>Double presence</b> - the PC hears their own voice speaking a sentence they did not say. They are fragments from another node.         |
| 3      | <b>Physical anchoring</b> - the PC sees their hand briefly split in two. They make a MEN roll Danger 4 or gain 1 stress.                  |
| 4      | <b>Context inversion</b> - for 1 scene, the PC cannot distinguish nodes in their memories. They may confuse NPCs across iterations.       |
| 5      | <b>Pain echo</b> - the PC feels a wound they suffered in another node.                                                                    |
| PHY -1 | for one scene.                                                                                                                            |
| 6      | <b>Fractioned presence</b> - other people begin to glimpse a slightly different version of the PC. No one knows which one is "real."      |

---

### Node Memory

**Loopers** keep all their memories from every visited node. That is their strength and their curse.

**NPCs** (with rare exceptions) retain no memory of previous iterations. To them, each node is the only reality that has ever existed.

> **[GM ADVICE]** Cross-node memory is an extraordinary narrative resource. A Looper may know how a conversation is going to end before it begins. That can help, and it can also prevent them from truly listening to what the other person is saying in this specific node.

---

### New Conditions

**ECHO**: The PC exists simultaneously in two nodes. They receive impressions from the other node (sounds, images, emotions) at random moments. Mechanically: once per scene, the GM may impose a Drift distraction. If the PC ignores it, they make a MEN roll Danger 3 or lose 1 Mental point.

**ANCHORED**: The PC is stuck in one node. Their quantum identity is too anchored to move. They can no longer initiate travel between nodes while the condition lasts. The condition fades after 1D6 x 24 hours of complete rest in the same node, or after a successful Quantum Interface roll (difficulty 4).

---

<!-- [LAYOUT: PAGE 5 - Background with stylized map of a node network. Tables on lightly tinted backgrounds for contrast. Factions in distinct boxes.] -->

**Temporal Nodes**

**Node Types (D6)**

> **[RULE]** When the PCs arrive in an unknown node (after a failed Drift roll or deliberate exploration), roll on this table.

| D6 | Type                  | Description                                                                                                                                                                    |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | <b>Intact Node</b>    | The invasion has not started yet. Society functions normally. No one believes in the Resonants. The calm is almost unbearable.                                                 |
| 2  | <b>Besieged Node</b>  | The invasion is underway. Chaos, evacuations, active Resonants. The Architects are still operational.                                                                          |
| 3  | <b>Fallen Node</b>    | The Resonants control 80% of the population, transformed into a relay network. A few resistance pockets survive in areas without QI signal.                                    |
| 4  | <b>Resistant Node</b> | One faction has developed a counter-signal that repels the Resonants locally. But the counter-signal also disrupts travelers. Temporal Drift rolls are harder (+2 difficulty). |
| 5  | <b>Silence Node</b>   | No more Resonants. No more QI technology either; it has all been destroyed. Survivors live in a post-technological society. The peace here tastes like a graveyard.            |
| 6  | <b>Mirror Node</b>    | A PC from the group already exists in this node, but with different memories, a slightly altered personality, and potentially different loyalties. Only one version can leave. |

They know. Not all of them, but the leaders know that QI is the problem. Their solution is radical: destroy every Terminal, obliterate the technology, accept that the invasion in this node will be final so that it never happens again. They count their dead in billions and call them "the cost of final freedom." Silas Wren is their most feared enforcer.

#### The Archivists \*Documentation. Never action.\*

They know everything. They have archives reaching back to node 0. They have Dr. Kessim's encrypted files. They have testimonies from absorbed Resonants who retained a fragment of consciousness. And they do nothing. Their code is absolute: observe, document, never intervene. Their reason is that any intervention in the node network could create instabilities no one can predict. They may be right.

<!-- [LAYOUT: PAGE 6 - NPC portraits on the left, profiles on the right. Textured background. Compact stat blocks.] -->

**D20 Table of Node Anomalies**

<!-- [LAYOUT: Table in two columns to save space.] -->

| D20 | Anomaly                                                                                                                    |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | An object in your pocket does not exist in this node. You do not know why.                                                 |
| 2   | The building you were in within another node was never built here.                                                         |
| 3   | Someone dead in another node is alive here. They recognize you. You do not know whether you should tell them.              |
| 4   | Your native language has a slight phonetic drift here. You understand it, but you sound foreign.                           |
| 5   | Public records show your name tied to an event you did not take part in within this node.                                  |
| 6   | A Resonant you fled in another node seems to recognize you here as well.                                                   |
| 7   | The nearest QI Terminal in this node is in a state you have never seen, more advanced than it should be.                   |
| 8   | You run into a Looper you knew in another node, but here they do not recognize you. They carry fewer memories than you do. |
| 9   | A radio transmission contains a message you sent in another node. That message never reached its destination there.        |
| 10  | The sky has a slightly different color here. No one else seems to notice.                                                  |
| 11  | A technological artifact from this node is identical to something you saw among the Resonants in another node.             |
| 12  | You find a note written in your own hand, dated in this node's future.                                                     |
| 13  | The Architects in this node are led by someone you knew as a mere technician.                                              |
| 14  | An event you remember as a catastrophe is celebrated here as a victory.                                                    |
| 15  | Your own face appears on a wanted poster for a crime you did not commit in this node.                                      |
| 16  | The music of this node, all music, feels familiar, as if you had heard it in a recurring dream.                            |
| 17  | A child calls you by a first name you have never used. They seem to know you intimately.                                   |
| 18  | The sun rises two minutes earlier here. You are the only ones to notice.                                                   |
| 19  | You meet a version of yourself who became a Purifier. They give you an ultimatum.                                          |
| 20  | In this node, the invasion never began because the Architects made a decision you would never dare suggest to them.        |

**Inter-Node Factions**

#### The Memory Weavers \*Connection between all nodes.\*

They believe the only way to understand the loop is to create a collective memory across the entire node network. They map, archive, and connect Loopers across nodes. Their symbol is a red thread with no end. Their ultimate goal, creating a network consciousness able to "see" all nodes simultaneously, brings them dangerously close to what the Resonants themselves are doing.

#### The Purifiers \*Destroy QI technology at any cost.\*

## Key NPCs

> **[GM ADVICE]** These five characters can be encountered in almost any node, but their condition, loyalties, and knowledge vary. The same person may be an ally in one node and an enemy in another. This is intentional. Players should never be certain they are dealing with "the" version of an NPC.

---

### Dr. Yara Kessim - QI Engineer

**\*\*PHY 2 | MEN 5 | SOC 3\*\*** \*Key skills: Quantum Interface 5, Temporal Drift 3, Observation 4, Persuasion 3\* \*Usual condition: Exhausted (chronic stress)\*

Kessim is the unintended creator of the QI signal. It took her twenty years to understand what she had done. She is now trying to stop QI, but she knows that if she says it aloud, the Architects will eliminate her. Her encrypted files contain the proof. She hides them in different nodes with every iteration, hoping someone will eventually find them all.

**\*\*Variations by node:\*\***

- \*Intact Node\*: Officially works for the Architects, distant, hiding her doubts behind scientific rigor.
- \*Besieged Node\*: Desperate, ready to reveal everything, looking for PCs she can trust.
- \*Fallen Node\*: Partially absorbed, yet she resisted enough to keep her consciousness. She has access to priceless Resonant information, at the cost of profound mental instability.

---

### Commander Remi Thais - Head of the Architects of the Return

**\*\*PHY 4 | MEN 3 | SOC 4\*\*** \*Key skills: Combat 4, Command 5, Intimidation 4, Temporal Drift 2\* \*Usual condition: Anchored (to the idea that the loop can be won)\*

Thais is the man who pressed the button three times. He has no regrets. To him, every iteration is a lesson, every death an investment. He believes, deeply and viscerally, that the next rewind will be the last one needed. That certainty is both his strength and his blindness.

**\*\*Variations by node:\*\***

- \*Intact Node\*: In full preparation, confident, dismissing anyone who doubts his strategy.
- \*Resistant Node\*: Distrustful of the counter-signal, he sees it as an anomaly rather than a solution, but a temporary ally.
- \*Fallen Node\*: Broken but alive. He still refuses to admit the machine is the problem.

---

### Asha-7 - Veteran Looper

**\*\*PHY 3 | MEN 2 | SOC 3\*\*** \*Key skills: Temporal Drift 5, Stealth 4, Survival 4\* \*Permanent condition: ECHO (14 iterations, chronically reduced MEN)\*

The 7 in her self-chosen name is the number of times she survived a rewind. The seven after that were journeys between nodes. She remembers everything, which is also what is breaking her. She rarely sleeps, speaks little, and orients herself in spacetime better than any instrument. Her permanent ECHO condition means she hears her own voice from three different nodes at once.

**\*\*She is indispensable.\*\*** She is the only person to have mapped the node network from the inside, without instruments.

**\*\*Variations by node:\*\***

- \*Intact Node\*: In hiding, refusing to get involved in "yet another loop."

\*Besieged Node\*: Fighting, but mechanically, without emotion, as if she has seen this scene too many times already.

\*Silence Node\*: Relatively stable (less QI signal = less drift). The most functional version of Asha.

---

### The Eye - Resonant with Partial Consciousness

**\*\*PHY 1 | MEN 6 | SOC 2\*\*** \*Key skills: Quantum Interface 6, Temporal Drift 6, Observation 5\* \*Condition: Permanent ECHO (simultaneously in all nodes)\*

He/she/it is what remains of a human absorbed by a Resonant Node that was then disrupted by a loop anomaly. The human consciousness survived the absorption, fragile, distorted, but present. The Eye communicates in fragments: images, sensations, isolated words. It cannot lie. Its interface with the substrate is too direct. It does not always understand what it is seeing.

**\*\*Neither ally nor enemy.\*\*** It is trying to understand what it has become. The PCs are the first thing it has encountered that seems able to see both sides.

**\*\*Variations by node:\*\***

- \*Intact Node\*: Invisible, observing from afar, leaving traces inside QI systems.
- \*Fallen Node\*: More manifest, the Resonants in that node obey it partially, which unsettles everyone.
- \*Silence Node\*: Absent. Without QI signal, it has no anchor point through which to manifest.

---

### Silas Wren - Fanatical Purifier

**\*\*PHY 5 | MEN 3 | SOC 2\*\*** \*Key skills: Combat 5, Explosives 4, Survival 3, Intimidation 3\* \*Usual condition: Enraged (controlled)\*

Wren lost his family in node 1. And in node 2. And in node 3. He does not remember them in this node, but he knows they died, that they will die, that they will die again. He went from traumatized Looper to fanatical Purifier through a logic no one can truly refute: the only way to stop losing them is to destroy what keeps killing them over and over.

**\*\*Variations by node:\*\***

- \*Intact Node\*: Recruiting phase, persuasive, has not yet lost all nuance.
- \*Besieged Node\*: Ready to blow up QI Terminals even with people still inside.
- \*Fallen Node\*: He already carried out his plan. The Terminal is destroyed. The invasion is permanent. He had been waiting for that.

---

<!-- [LAYOUT: PAGE 7 - Clue chart in 3 levels with visual color progression (green -> orange -> red). Possible endings in distinct boxes.] -->

## The Revelation (GM Guide)

> **[REVELATION - For the GM Only]** The central truth should never be stated outright. It must be *discovered* by the players, through an accumulation of evidence, contradictions, and moments of sudden understanding. A player saying "oh shit, we're the ones calling them" is worth a thousand times more than an NPC explaining the same thing.

### How to Seed the Clues

### Level 1 - Iterations 1 to 2 \*(Surface)\*

\*The players are not looking for the cause yet. They are managing the emergency.\*

[ Clue | Source | How to present it | |-----|-----|-----| ]  
 The Resonants seem "drawn" to QI Terminals | Direct observation | A Resonant Collector always moves toward the Terminal even when other targets are available. | | Electromagnetic anomalies linger around Terminals even when powered down | Technical readings | An Architect technician mentions it as a curiosity. | | In areas without QI infrastructure, Resonants are less numerous | Field reports | A survivor from a remote region notes the relative absence of Resonants in rural zones without QI sensors. | | The Resonants seem to "hesitate" before absorbing humans far from Terminals | Combat | A PC notices that the Collector moves away from them to draw closer to the Terminal. |

### Level 2 - Iterations 3 to 5 \*(Middle)\*

\*The players are starting to ask questions. They are looking for patterns.\*

[ Clue | Source | How to present it | |-----|-----|-----| ]  
 In a Silence Node, the Resonants are gone, and all QI technology has been destroyed | Exploration | The survivors explain that a faction, identity unknown, destroyed everything. The calm feels impossible. | | Dr. Kessim has encrypted files marked "BEACON" | Data intrusion | A Quantum Interface roll to partially decrypt them reveals signal equations. | | The Eye reacts to QI Terminals as if they were something familiar | Interaction | It gestures toward the Terminals with attraction, as if toward something reassuring. | | Journals from earlier Loopers mention an "implausible correlation" | Archives | Documents recovered from the Archivists. The word "beacon" appears in the margins, crossed out. |

### Level 3 - Endgame \*(The truth)\*

\*The players have the pieces. They are missing the whole picture.\*

[ Clue | Source | How to present it | |-----|-----|-----| ]  
 The Eye's archives show that the Resonants "collect" QI signals like beacons | Communication with the Eye | Long Quantum Interface roll to access its archives. The images are constellations of signals, every QI Terminal shining like a star. | | The signal emitted by an activating QI Terminal is identical to the substrate's natural call signal | Kessim's technical data | Her full files contain the spectrographic comparison. The curves are identical. | | The Resonants do not know that humans suffer | The Eye, directly | "They think they are helping you. They think they are offering you what they have that is best. They do not understand no." |

### Three Possible Endings

> **[GM ADVICE]** No ending is "the right one." Each comes at a cost. The players' choice should emerge from what they have lived through in the nodes, not from an optimal calculation.

**\*\*A - Shut Down QI\*\*** Humanity destroys every Terminal. Without the beacon signal, the Resonants stop coming, gradually, over a few decades. Humanity survives, but without time travel. Every future mistake becomes final. The Loopers lose their ability to travel and slowly begin to lose their cross-node memories. The loop closes.

**\*\*B - The False Signal\*\*** Send a massive QI signal from an empty node, a sacrificed node, deliberately chosen, with no survivors. The Resonants follow the signal there. The node is erased. Humanity buys time, but how much? No one knows. And who decides which node is "empty"? Who decides its inhabitants count less?

**\*\*C - Communicate\*\*** Never attempted. The Eye is the only possible bridge. One PC must accept voluntary partial absorption to establish a stable interface with the Resonants. The experience is irreversible. They will become something between the Eye and a Looper, neither wholly human nor wholly Resonant. If contact is established, understanding becomes possible. The Resonants may learn to recognize human consciousness. But it takes time. And meanwhile, the invasion continues.

<!-- [LAYOUT: PAGE 8 - Intro scenario with visually distinct scene structure. Dice-roll boxes, Narrative timeline in the margin.] -->

## Introductory Scenario: "First Return"

### Context

\*Iteration 0 - Humanity has just lost for the first time.\*

The Resonants reached every continent in thirteen days. Governments no longer exist as such. The Architects of the Return have withdrawn into the Reykjavik QI Terminal, the only one still operational. They have seventy-two hours before the local Resonants locate it.

The PCs are Loopers, perhaps the only people able to understand what is happening, recruited in haste by the Architects.

\*\*The assigned mission:\*\* Retrieve Dr. Kessim's backup data from her Geneva laboratory, then return to Reykjavik for the rewind.

\*\*What the Architects do not say:\*\* They do not know exactly what those data contain. Thais believes they are additional access codes. In truth, they are the first proof of the QI-signal link.

---

### Scene 1 - The Geneva Extraction

\*\*Stake:\*\* Break into Kessim's laboratory, which has been partially absorbed by the Resonants.

The laboratory lies in the sub-levels of the European Society for Quantum Physics. The surface is under Resonant control, though not yet densely. Collectors patrol there. They seem drawn to the building's QI terminals, which makes them predictable.

\*\*Possible rolls:\*\*

- Stealth (difficulty 3) to avoid the Collectors
- Quantum Interface (difficulty 3) to access Kessim's archives
- Observation (difficulty 4) to notice that a Collector is \*waiting\* near the research terminal rather than patrolling

\*\*Partial revelation:\*\* While accessing the archives, a PC finds a file named `BEACON\_INITIAL\_CORRELATION.eqx`, encrypted, but its size suggests a massive comparative analysis. Kessim herself appears briefly on a security camera. She is still in the building, inside the isolation room on sub-level 3.

---

### Scene 2 - Kessim's Choice

\*\*Stake:\*\* Convince Dr. Kessim to come with them, or retrieve her data without her.

Kessim is alive, but in shock. She has understood something no one else has yet dared to formulate. She does not want to rewind time.

> \*If we start over, they come back. Don't you understand? They come back because of us. The Terminal, the signal, that's why they come.\*

She has partial proof. Not enough to convince Thais. Enough to convince the PCs if they make a Quantum Interface roll (difficulty 2) to understand the implications of what she shows them.

\*\*Possible rolls:\*\*

- Persuasion (difficulty 3) to convince her to come anyway, or to entrust them with her data
- Quantum Interface (difficulty 2) to understand the first signal/Resonant correlation
- Empathy (difficulty 3) to assess whether she is fit to travel

\*\*Complication:\*\* A Resonant Weaver enters the building through sub-level 1, drawn not by the humans, but by the research terminal. It has thirty minutes before it locates the isolation room.

---

### Scene 3 - The Rewind and the Unexpected Node

\*\*Stake:\*\* Reach Reykjavik, activate the Terminal, and survive the rewind.

The journey to Reykjavik aboard an Architect military aircraft unfolds under strain. Thais is on site. He wants to activate immediately. Kessim tries to talk to him. Thais does not listen. The PCs are caught in the middle.

\*\*The rewind:\*\* Collective Quantum Interface roll (difficulty 4, shared pool). The rewind succeeds.

\*\*The cliffhanger:\*\* They arrive in the past, but not in the node they expected. A new node has been created, slightly different from the node 1 they knew through the archives. The date is correct, but the state of the world shows small anomalies. And on the monitoring screen of the Reykjavik Terminal, one unexpected datum: a QI signal of unknown origin, already present \*before\* they arrived.

Someone, or something, has already activated a Terminal in this node.

---

<!-- [LAYOUT: PAGE 9 - Tables in compact two-column format. Neutral background, dense but airy text. Table headers in accent color.] -->

## Random Tables

### D12 Table - Events in the 24h After Arrival in a Node

| D12 | Event | |----|-----| | 1 | An NPC recognizes you. They say they met you in "the other world." They are a Looper. | | 2 | A QI Terminal in this node emits an unscheduled signal. The local Architects are panicking. | | 3 | A Resonant Collector follows you from a distance. It does not approach. It observes. | | 4 | You find a note left by a version of yourselves in this node, dated 48 hours ago. | | 5 | The radio broadcasts an encoded emergency message that only a Looper can decipher. | | 6 | A member of your group does not recognize this place. Their memories of this node differ from yours. | | 7 | The Purifiers have planted charges on a local Terminal. They are set to detonate tonight. | | 8 | Dr. Kessim of this node has been arrested by the Architects. The charge: disclosure of classified secrets. | | 9 | A child approaches you and gives you an object: a USB key engraved with the word "BEACON." | | 10 | The Resonants in this node behave differently. They seem to be \*waiting\* for something rather than harvesting. | | 11 | An Archivist contacts you. They know you came from another node. They do not want anything, only to document. | | 12 | Silas Wren of this node offers you an alliance. He has a plan. It is irreversible. |

---

### D8 Table - Quantum Anomalies in the Environment

| D8 | Anomaly | |----|-----| | 1 | Watches stop within 50 meters of an active Terminal. | | 2 | Shadows with no visible source appear on the walls, moving slightly against the expected direction. | | 3 | A frequency identical to the substrate can be heard throughout the building. | | 4 | Recent photographs show blurred silhouettes no one recognizes. | | 5 | Computer systems display data from another node for a few seconds before returning to normal. | | 6 | Gravity in one specific room is slightly different, perceptible but inexplicable. | | 7 | A mirror reflects an environment that is slightly different, not another node, but close. | | 8 | Every member of the group has the same dream that night. In the dream, they are the Resonants. |

---

### D6 Table - Resonant Reactions to the PCs

| D6 | Reaction | |----|-----| | 1 | **\*\*Absolute indifference\*\*** - The Resonants behave as if the PCs do not exist. More unsettling than hostility. | | 2 | **\*\*Curiosity\*\*** - A Collector approaches slowly, tilts a shape that resembles a head, then leaves. | | 3 | **\*\*Attraction\*\*** - The Resonants present gravitate toward the PC with the highest Temporal Drift. | | 4 | **\*\*Disruption\*\*** - One of the Resonants emits a signal resembling distress. The others move away. | | 5 | **\*\*Contact attempt\*\*** - A Resonant Weaver tries to create an empathic link with a PC (EMP vs EMP roll, no physical damage, but the PC receives images of the substrate for 1D6 hours). | | 6 | **\*\*Recognition\*\*** - One of the Resonants met you in another node. Its behavior changes almost imperceptibly, as if you are now a known variable in an equation. |

---

### D6 Table - Loop Memories Rising Back Up

| D6 | Fragment | |----|-----| | 1 | The way someone you lost laughed in another node. You had forgotten that detail. | | 2 | The exact smell of a place that no longer exists in this node. Powerful. Destabilizing. | | 3 | The absolute certainty that you have already spoken the sentence you are speaking now, word for word, in another context. | | 4 | A first name you have never used in this node, yet it is the first one that comes to mind in a dangerous situation. | | 5 | The physical memory of a wound you do not have in this node, a localized phantom pain. | | 6 | The certainty, without explanation, that the person in front of you will betray you in the next 24 hours. You have lived this already. |

---

<!-- [LAYOUT; PAGE 10 - Play aids on white or very light background, designed to be photocopied. Clear frames, space for handwritten notes. Summary of the rules in a compact but readable format.] -->

