



TALES OF MAR DE ORO

QUICKSTART

THE SAN TELMO INCIDENT

A complete introduction for players and Game Masters

SEA • SKY • FAITH • EMPIRE • DISCOVERY

ANNO 7202 POST SUNDERING



TALES OF MAR DE ORO

Quickstart

The San Telmo Incident

Sea. Sky. Faith. Empire. Discovery.

What this book is

A system-neutral introduction to Mar de Oro, six ready characters, an optional quick-resolution bridge, and a complete one-session adventure for one Game Master and four to six players.

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Setting Aeon Campaign Setting
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This is a work of collaborative fiction. All nations, persons, and events are imaginary.
Use with the roleplaying system of your choice, or the optional quick-resolution bridge in this book.

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Welcome to Mar de Oro

Imagine a warm sea between greater continents, close enough to tempt every power and far enough to let secrets fester. That is the stage.

Mar de Oro is a chain of colonial islands at the warm centre of a larger world. Across the eastern ocean stand the Old Crownlands: ancient kingdoms, rival courts, cathedrals, counting houses, arsenals, reform movements, and hungry flags. In the Golden Sea, their ambitions meet free ports, local communities, plantation economies, hidden routes, and discoveries that no institution fully understands.

The world believes it lives in an age of faith and sail. It is wrong in a wonderful way. Priests, engineers, scholars, and prodigies touch the same underlying order through different traditions. Airships rise on Éterlumin. Signals travel through tuned devices. Old chambers answer patterns that modern science can barely describe.

The wonder does not disappear when understanding arrives. It becomes stranger, more beautiful, and more dangerous.

The Five Pillars

Sea: ships, harbours, storms, trade, and distance.
Sky: early flight, fragile lift, and military advantage.
Faith: institutions interpreting wonders they do not own.
Empire: law, extraction, resistance, and contested authority.
Discovery: evidence that changes who can explain the world.

A Mar de Oro Story

A routine problem reveals wider pressure. A ship arrives late. A signal tower misses its call. A clerk notices the wrong seal. A worker disappears after reporting an impossible reading. The crew acts, and every action creates leverage, witnesses, enemies, obligations, or new questions.

Your characters matter because they choose, risk, suffer, adapt, and earn the right to be taken seriously in a world that was moving before they arrived.

What Happens in Play

What characters do

Investigate disturbances and contradictory accounts.
Cross political, legal, religious, and social boundaries.
Negotiate with institutions while protecting people caught between them.
Travel through dangerous seas, skies, ports, plantations, and hard country.
Decide who controls discoveries that can alter the balance of the Golden Sea.

The central play rhythm

1

Pressure

A practical problem is already moving.

2

Investigation

Clues create access, context, and leverage.

3

Factions

Interested powers act on their own agendas.

4

Choice

No solution protects every person and principle.

5

Consequence

The world changes and remembers the decision.

What success looks like

Information that changes the crew's options.
Position before a faction can react.
Authority, access, or permission.
A person protected or persuaded.
Time bought before a clock advances.
A consequence redirected rather than erased.

Tone and Table Safety

Mar de Oro can be adventurous, romantic, political, unsettling, or all four. Agree on the proportions before play.

Content in the setting

Colonial rule and exploitation
Forced labour and coercion
Disappearance and imprisonment
Religious and political pressure
Industrial injury and Source-related body horror

Lines and veils

A line removes content from the game. A veil allows it to exist only off-screen. Ask for both before play, revisit them without penalty, and treat changes as ordinary table maintenance.

Use a pause or open-door tool. Anyone may stop, rewind, fade out, or step away without defending the request.

The responsibility principle

Cruelty should create a decision, witness, responsibility, or consequence. If it exists only as atmosphere, remove it. The setting's weight comes from what characters choose to protect, expose, conceal, repair, or refuse to become.

Adjust tone without breaking the setting

Swashbuckling

Faster action, clearer villains, brighter victories.

Political

Leverage, public narrative, law, and divided loyalties.

Uncanny

Signals, resonance, old systems, and controlled unease.

The Golden Sea



Canula Prime and its surrounding regions sit where sea routes, plantation wealth, naval power, and older field systems intersect. The quickstart takes place at San Telmo, an inland estate reached from the port of Boca Serena.

Scale and travel

The Mar de Oro is large enough for weather, politics, and distance to matter. Travel is measured in tides, watches, road conditions, convoy schedules, and access rights. Even air travel depends on lift quality, calibration, crew endurance, and safe landing ground.

The Continental Powers

People are shaped by nations, faiths, classes, and local life. These entries describe public impressions, not biological traits or moral absolutes.

Valdegracia

Public identity: An old crown, formal hierarchy, deep ritual life, and a strong instinct that institutions are legitimate until proven otherwise.

Why it is here: Canula Prime lies under Valdegracian dominion. Crown agents claim jurisdiction over San Telmo and any evidence recovered there.

Duchy of Heller

Public identity: A martial and technically ambitious duchy founded by survivors of the Compañero expeditions. Proud, practical, and protective of its autonomy.

Why it is here: Heller answers Valdegracia in war but guards its own interests. Its engineers and envoys fear becoming useful scapegoats.

Albion

Public identity: A competitive island power known for speed, lateral thinking, naval intelligence, and an acute dislike of condescension.

Why it is here: Albion seeks technical fragments and political leverage without triggering open war before it has an advantage.

Stroomdijk

Public identity: A merchant republic whose pragmatism, contracts, and counting houses can conceal coercion behind respectable procedure.

Why it is here: Its exemptions, carriers, and warehouse networks touch nearly every profitable route in the Golden Sea.

Powers of the Golden Sea

Luminore

Public identity: A reforming centre of print, style, scholarship, and confidence in its own refinement.

Why it is here: Its scholars, missionaries, and commercial interests compete to define what new knowledge means.

Volkharov

Public identity: A society formed by catastrophic loss, stubborn reconstruction, networks of obligation, and an aesthetic of endurance.

Why it is here: Volkharovian specialists are valued in medicine, hard travel, engineering, and disciplined recovery.

Solarian Church

Public identity: The dominant religious institution of the Codex tradition, with ritual authority, archives, hospitals, missions, and courts.

Why it is here: Church offices seek the right to classify the San Telmo event and control the moral language around it.

Colonial-born communities

Public identity: Layered, hybrid, improvised, and skilled at reading the assumptions of people from different powers.

Why it is here: Dockworkers, guides, pilots, artisans, families, and free-port networks know the Golden Sea as lived territory rather than a map of claims.

What people are not

No nation is a single personality. A Valdegracian may distrust hierarchy; an Albion officer may be painfully conventional; a Heller engineer may fear experimentation; a Church servant may be the strongest defender of inconvenient truth. Use culture to create formation, expectation, and tension, never a cage.

Weapons

Flintlock muskets and pistols, sabres, boarding weapons, field guns, and disciplined volleys. Reload time, smoke, distance, and morale matter.

Ships

Sailing vessels dominate sea travel. Airships combine wooden hulls, internal lift systems, sails, propellers, and specialised sky-keels.

Signals

Flags, lamps, relay posts, sealed letters, coded schedules, and tuned devices move information. Delay and interception shape politics.

Medicine

Surgeons understand anatomy, infection, shock, splinting, and practical care unevenly. Field exposure creates symptoms no doctrine fully explains.

Law

Jurisdiction depends on crown, charter, church, port, ship, emergency writ, and who can enforce the document in hand.

Class

Titles, uniforms, literacy, trade, property, and personal networks determine who is heard. Colonial life also creates gaps between authorities.

Faith

The sacred is lived through burial, vows, rites, calendars, conscience, and institutions. Discovery does not make belief foolish.

Travel

Heat, rain, mosquitoes, roads, reefs, storms, supplies, pilots, and permission can matter as much as combat.

Fortera and Éterlumin

Fortera

Fortera is the underlying field behind rites, powered arts, resonance, and many effects that cultures describe in different languages. Most people do not know that these traditions belong to one order.

Éterlumin

Éterlumin is a responsive gas and physical carrier of Fortera in the present age. It enables lift, signalling, instruments, and military systems. It is rare, strategically vital, and difficult to keep calibrated.

What refinement actually does

Refinement does not create permanent purity. It slows Éterlumin's inevitable degradation through controlled Fortera reactivation and calibration. Refineries and shipboard systems keep a batch useful for longer, but no grade remains stable forever, even in a sealed container.

How grades are judged

- Rate of degradation
- Remaining service life
- Calibration quality
- Response under expected load
- Suitability for lift, signalling, instruments, or storage

What makes it dangerous

Pressure, volatility, heat, burns, rupture, unstable resonance, and miscalibration. Éterlumin is not naturally poisonous, and it does not form crystals. Danger is often greatest near disturbed Source systems or badly controlled equipment.

Player Knowledge and Technology

Most people know

Airships require trained crews and calibrated lift systems.
Éterlumin ages and must be inspected.
Source zones are dangerous and poorly understood.
Different traditions can produce similar wonders.
Official reports are shaped by jurisdiction and reputation.

Most people do not know

Why Fortera and Éterlumin belong to one deeper system.
Who built the oldest responsive chambers.
Why some structures listen, repeat, or correct patterns.
Whether modern institutions can safely reproduce what they find.

The player-character difference

Players may understand that the setting has a science-fiction spine. Characters begin inside older categories: miracle, heresy, natural philosophy, resonance, sacred trust, engineering, or forbidden practice. Let those interpretations matter. Discovery should change relationships and responsibilities before it settles vocabulary.

Walk quietly. Listen well.

The signal is older than you and deeper than you.

Ready-to-Play Crew

Choose four to six characters. Each is system-neutral and includes a role, strengths, a burden, a bond, equipment, and conversion suggestions.

1

Greta Valen
Heller engineer

Table role: Systems, calibration, repair

2

Tomás Aranda
Valdegracian officer

Table role: Command, law, firearms

3

Marisol Venn
Free-port broker

Table role: Leverage, contacts, documents

4

Ivo Soria
Frontier guide

Table role: Terrain, tracking, local trust

5

Sister Ana Cordero
Solarian investigator

Table role: Archives, inquiry, authority

6

Dr. Nadia Volenka
Shipboard surgeon

Table role: Medicine, composure, evidence

Shared premise

You have been assembled as an emergency inspection and rescue crew. A scheduled signal from San Telmo failed. Emilio Resa, an engineer who reported abnormal readings, is missing. Each of you has a reason to find him before official authority turns the incident into a sealed report.

Greta Valen

HELLER ENGINEER

Repair what can be repaired. Name what cannot.

Public background

You were trained in Valldeila's naval workshops and sent to Canula Prime because you can read a failing lift assembly by sound. Emilio Resa once published a correction that kept your career from ending with another person's mistake.

Three strengths

- Field calibration and pressure systems
- Rapid repair under dangerous conditions
- Technical authority with crews and workshops

Burden

You approved a shortcut during a rushed refit. An apprentice survived, but not unchanged. You now hesitate when speed and safety become enemies.

Bond

You owe Resa for defending the truth when procedure preferred a scapegoat.

Why you stay

You believe the San Telmo readings could prove that Heller engineers are not responsible for the failure. You also know proof can become a weapon.

Personal question

When does professional loyalty become complicity?

Equipment and conversion

Equipment: Tool roll, calibration key, pressure goggles, work coat, pistol, notebook, two sealed gauges.
Suggestions: 5e Artificer; PF2e Inventor or Alchemist; FitD Leech.

At the table: Ask what the machine is doing before asking how to stop it.

Tomás Aranda

VALDEGRACIAN OFFICER

Authority is meaningful only when someone accepts responsibility for it.

Public background

You serve the crown in Canula Prime and have been given temporary command of the inspection party. Your papers open gates. A sealed secondary order authorises seizure of any strategic device recovered below San Telmo.

Three strengths

- Command, discipline, and controlled violence
- Protocol, jurisdiction, and military access
- Firearms, defence, and reading a chain of command

Burden

You have carried out lawful orders that later proved convenient rather than just. You still believe institutions can be better than the people hiding inside them.

Bond

The crew is under your protection once you accept command.

Why you stay

You need to prove that authority can mean responsibility rather than ownership.

Personal question

Will you obey the sealed order after learning why it was written?

Equipment and conversion

Equipment: Officer's coat, sabre, pistol, field glass, emergency writ, signal whistle, sealed order.
Suggestions: 5e Fighter; PF2e Fighter with Marshal flavour; FitD Cutter.

At the table: State what your authority can do, then decide whether using it will help.

Marisol Venn

FREE-PORT BROKER

Every document has an owner. Every owner has a fear.

Public background

You were raised between docks, counting rooms, and crews that spoke several languages badly and understood one another perfectly. You recognise the San Telmo shipment code as part of an exempt route you once used for Stroomdijk cargo.

Three strengths

- Contacts, bargains, and reading motives
- Documents, seals, ledgers, and commercial routes
- Creating options where official procedure offers none

Burden

You carried a sealed cargo without asking what was inside. People disappeared at the destination. You have never learned whether your work helped cause it.

Bond

Luz Varela once hid your younger brother from a violent debt collector.

Why you stay

You owe the workers more than money, and you know the difference.

Personal question

What truth are you still tempted to trade?

Equipment and conversion

Equipment: Ledger book, seal kit, concealed purse, small pistol, dock contacts, copy of an exemption clause.
Suggestions: 5e Rogue; PF2e Investigator or Rogue; FitD Slide or Spider.

At the table: Find out who benefits from the current explanation.

Ivo Soria

FRONTIER GUIDE

A road is a promise made by whoever expects to use it.

Public background

You are colonial-born and know the inland tracks around San Telmo better than the officials who claim the land. Workers came to you after the first signal failure. You promised not to bring soldiers along the hidden drainage route.

Three strengths

- Tracking, terrain, weather, and quiet movement
- Local relationships and reading fear
- Finding routes that maps and officials ignore

Burden

You once guided a survey team to a place local families asked you to avoid. The survey became a claim, and the claim became armed possession.

Bond

Ordinary people are not evidence to be collected and handed over.

Why you stay

You stay because the estate families will face the consequences after every foreign expert leaves.

Personal question

Can you keep your promise when the crew needs the route?

Equipment and conversion

Equipment: Long gun, machete, field cord, water skin, medical herbs, route sketch, worker token.
Suggestions: 5e Ranger; PF2e Ranger; FitD Hound.

At the table: Ask who uses a path, who watches it, and what entering it declares.

Sister Ana Cordero

SOLARIAN INVESTIGATOR

Truth is sacred even when the institution fears its shape.

Public background

You serve a reform-minded office of the Solarian Church and have authority to gather testimony, inspect records, and establish whether a site requires quarantine. Your superior sent a classification before you had seen the evidence.

Three strengths

- Archives, ritual knowledge, and formal inquiry
- Interviewing witnesses without surrendering authority
- Recognising when doctrine is being used to hide procedure

Burden

You protected an earlier inquiry by sealing it. The witnesses survived, but the institution learned nothing and repeated the same mistake elsewhere.

Bond

Conscience is not disobedience simply because procedure arrives first.

Why you stay

You remain to keep frightened people from being classified out of their own story.

Personal question

Can your faith survive an answer your office cannot name?

Equipment and conversion

Equipment: Codex, inquiry seal, lamp, medical stole, pistol, archive satchel, blank testimony forms.
Suggestions: 5e Cleric or Investigator-style Rogue; PF2e Cleric or Investigator; FitD Whisper or Spider.

At the table: Ask what the rite protects, and who benefits from calling something forbidden.

Dr. Nadia Volenka

SHIPBOARD SURGEON

A witness in your care is a patient, not property.

Public background

You served aboard merchant and naval vessels before taking work in the Golden Sea. The injured workers show pressure burns, tremor, and disorientation. Their lungs are clear. Someone is calling it poison because poison is easier to quarantine than a responsive system.

Three strengths

- Medicine, triage, and controlled emergency care
- Observation, anatomy, and distinguishing cause from story
- Composure when other people need permission to panic

Burden

You treated an earlier resonance injury and concealed one persistent symptom to keep the patient out of Church custody.

Bond

No wounded person becomes evidence while under your care.

Why you stay

You stay because Resa may be alive and because the official diagnosis is being written before the examination.

Personal question

What will you conceal to protect a patient, and who pays for that silence?

Equipment and conversion

Equipment: Surgical roll, medicines, respirator cloth, lantern, pistol, pressure-burn salve, patient tags.
Suggestions: 5e medicine-focused Rogue or Cleric; PF2e Investigator with Medic; FitD Leech.

At the table: Describe symptoms precisely. Refuse explanations that do not fit the body.

Crew Bonds and Starting Position

Choose two shared bonds

One of you saved another during a failed crossing.
 Two of you know the same official is lying, but for different reasons.
 A worker at San Telmo helped your crew before the adventure began.
 You share custody of a document that could embarrass a powerful office.
 One character has authority; another knows why using it openly would be dangerous.

Starting position

The crew reaches the San Telmo road at late afternoon. A wagon carrying injured workers has been stopped by a crown patrol. The estate signal has failed twice. Smoke rises from the laboratory yard, but the plantation house displays a white flag of controlled emergency.

Choose the crew's mandate

Official inspection
 Medical relief
 Technical assistance
 Private rescue
 Recovery of missing records

One thing each character knows

Greta: the signal failure does not match ordinary lift equipment damage.
 Tomás: the quarantine order was signed before the reported accident.
 Marisol: the shipment code belongs to an exempt route used by Stroombdijk carriers.
 Ivo: workers use an older drainage track that bypasses the main gate.
 Ana: Church offices opened an inquiry before receiving a formal report.
 Nadia: the injured show pressure and resonance trauma, not poisoning.

Resolution Guidance

Universal procedure

Establish intent: what is the character trying to change?
 Name the risk: body, time, secrecy, authority, trust, evidence, or stability.
 Roll only when uncertainty matters.
 On success, grant information, position, time, authority, access, or protection.
 On failure, move the world. Do not erase the route forward.

Optional 2d6 quick bridge

Rate a relevant strength as 0 untrained, +1 capable, or +2 expert. Roll 2d6 plus the rating.

10+ clean success.
 7-9 success with a cost, reduced effect, delay, exposure, or choice.
 6 or less the GM makes a move and the situation changes.

Help from another character grants +1 once when the helper accepts the same risk.

Conditions

Use three broad conditions when a system does not already provide harm rules:

Strained: tired, shaken, exposed, or overextended.
 Wounded: an injury or impairment that changes available action.
 Broken: unable to continue without rescue, treatment, surrender, or major sacrifice.

Recovery requires safety, time, care, or a specific remedy in the fiction.

Convert the pressure, not every number

The system should answer how costly the next choice is. The adventure should answer why it matters. Preserve threats to body, ship, reputation, secrecy, authority, Source stability, and freedom of action. A failed investigation roll changes who controls a clue, how much it costs, or which clock advances. It never deletes the clue needed to continue.

Quick Rules

Clocks

Segmented trackers for developing pressure. Advance when a named trigger occurs, not merely because a roll fails.

Leverage

Information, authority, debt, access, proof, or protection that changes what another party can reasonably refuse.

Clues

Essential facts appear through at least three routes. Failure changes cost, ownership, or timing.

Faction moves

When ignored or pressured, factions act off-screen according to what they want and fear.

Consequences

Make them concrete: who acted, what changed, and what the crew must now answer.

Éterlumin instability

Show warning before harm: warmth, pressure, repeated sound, venting, drifting gas, or instrument disagreement.

Ship or estate danger

Attack systems, access, crew, position, and time before simply reducing hit points.

Authority

A seal may be real while jurisdiction remains contested. Ask who can enforce the order here.



TALES OF MAR DE ORO

THE SAN TELMO INCIDENT

GAME MASTER DOSSIER

*The door is locked. Emilio Resa is behind it.
The chamber is listening.*

Restricted material for the Game Master.
Clocks, clues, faction agendas, endings, and continuation begin on the next page.

STOP HERE IF YOU ARE PLAYING A CHARACTER

Adventure at a Glance

Premise

San Telmo's scheduled signal has failed. A wagon of injured workers is stopped on the road. Estate officials call it a controlled industrial accident. Emilio Resa, the engineer who reported abnormal Source-zone behaviour, is missing. The crew must enter the estate, discover what happened, find Resa, prevent escalation, and decide who receives the truth.

Session length

Designed for one session of three to five hours. For a shorter session, begin at the estate gate and combine Scenes 2 and 3. For two sessions, let the crew investigate Boca Serena before travelling inland.

Adventure objectives

Determine what happened
Protect or locate witnesses
Find Emilio Resa
Prevent uncontrolled escalation
Decide custody, proof, access, and public account

Five-scene spine



Do not hold the climax

When the players reach the chamber, let it answer. Move unused clues and faction pressure into escape, inquiry, retaliation, or the final custody decision.

Truths and Cast

What actually happened

- Estate records were altered and a concealed shaft was reopened.
- Emilio Resa entered the chamber to stop a second calibration pulse.
- San Telmo is a worked Source chamber serving as a listening and maintenance access point.
- It is connected through older field geometry to the true inland Source, but it is not the full Source complex.
- Modern calibration housings forced it to reconcile incompatible reference signals.
- No faction fully understands the complete system.

What it is not

Not a crystal deposit
 Not naturally poisonous gas
 Not a simple machine that can be owned safely
 Not proof that one faith or nation has the complete explanation
 Not a monster encounter that requires killing something

Emilio Resa

Engineer inside the chamber. Wants time, proof, and protection. Fears being made the sole culprit for work others funded.

Luz Varela

Workers' representative. Wants injured people treated, missing kin found, and the official story prevented from erasing them.

Admiral Esteban Calderón

Crown commander. Wants custody, containment, and a clean chain of authority. Fears Canula Prime becoming a foreign battlefield.

Elias Wren

Albion operative posing as a commercial surveyor. Wants copied readings and technical fragments without open confrontation.

Sister Verena Solis

Solarian examiner. Wants quarantine and classification. Fears a public event that no approved doctrine can explain.

Joren Falk

Heller envoy. Wants witnesses and proof protected while preventing Heller from becoming Valdegracia's scapegoat.

Factions in Motion

Faction	Wants	Fears	First move
Valdegracian authority	Jurisdiction, custody, controlled report	Foreign possession and public disorder	Cordon the estate and seize documents
Heller representatives	Truth, witnesses, technical survival	Being blamed for a public rupture	Protect people and copy proof quietly
Albion Bureau cell	Leverage and technical fragments	Open war before advantage is secured	Approach a character through a false ally
Solarian offices	Classification authority and moral control	An event doctrine cannot contain	Order quarantine, inquiry, and silence
Workers and families	Safety, wages, missing kin, no more experiments	Erasure from the official account	Bring testimony, hide witnesses, sabotage access

Relationship moves

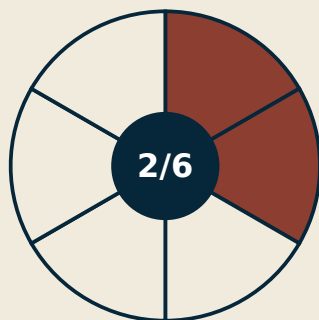
Protect a witness: a faction offers a better witness in exchange for silence.

Accuse an official publicly: someone lower in the chain disappears before testifying.

Trust a document: the seal is real, but the authority behind it is contested.

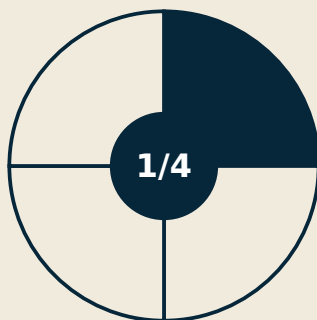
Repair the chamber: the faction that funded the damage claims ownership of the repair.

Clocks, Clues, and the Hard Choice



Chamber Answers Authority Seizes Site

Advance for violence, forced calibration, prolonged delay below, or incompatible signals. At 6, pressure finds an uncontrolled outlet and physical evidence changes form.



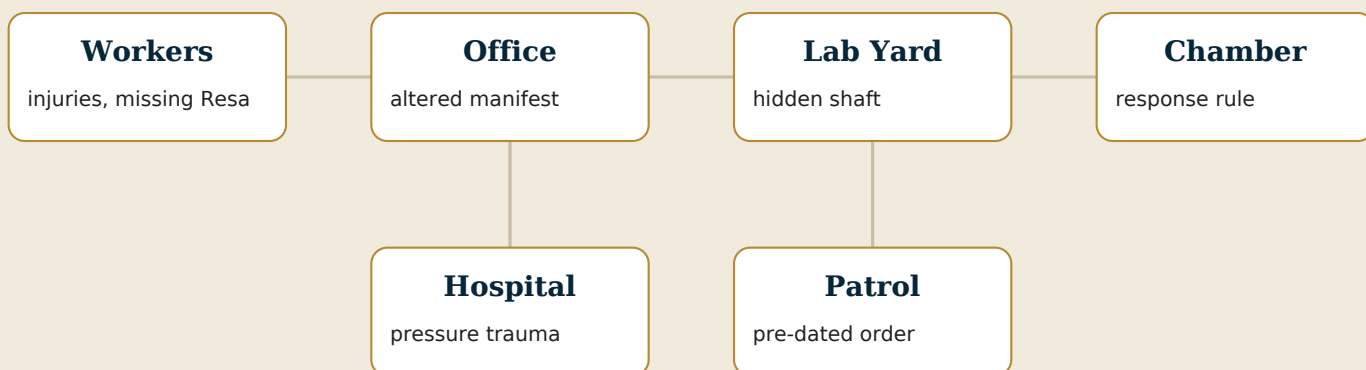
Advance when the crew acts publicly, refuses lawful orders without leverage, or lets factions arrive first. At 4, the estate is sealed and people become property of procedure.

Hard choice

The crew can stabilise the chamber quickly by surrendering Resa's notes and control panel to the first authority with enough equipment.

Or they can preserve independent proof and give Resa time to extract himself, accepting greater instability and a harder escape.

Clue Web



Three-route rule

Every essential fact appears in at least three places. Resa's location can be learned from workers, his missing badge, or the maintenance log. Altered records appear in the manifest, broken seal, or clerk testimony. The chamber's listening behaviour appears in repeated knocks, instrument traces, or Resa's note.

Scene 1: Arrival Under Authority

Read aloud

The road to San Telmo is blocked by a wagon, six injured workers, and twelve soldiers who have formed a cordon facing the wrong direction. Beyond them, the plantation house flies a white flag. Smoke rises from the laboratory yard. No bell is sounding.

Visible problem

The patrol refuses entry without countersigned authority.
The injured need treatment. Estate officials insist the situation is controlled.

Hidden pressure

The quarantine order predates the accident. Someone expected an emergency and wants the site closed before witnesses leave.

Useful places and clues

Injured wagon: pressure burns, no poison
Patrol desk: pre-dated order and missing name
Road verge: worker token marking the drainage track
Estate gate: foreman repeats a prepared explanation

Useful outcomes

Gain lawful entry
Move the injured to safety
Learn Resa is missing
Identify the older drainage route
Put a patrol sergeant in the crew's debt

GM moves

Separate the crew from a witness
Advance Authority Seizes Site after a public confrontation
Offer entry in exchange for surrendering weapons or documents
Let an injured worker whisper that the pipes answered

Scene 2: The Missing Account

Read aloud

Inside the estate, work continues badly. Cane carts stand where they were abandoned. The office ledger is open to a page written twice. Every person you question looks first toward the laboratory yard.

Visible problem

The crew must establish what happened and where Resa went before records, people, or equipment are moved.

Hidden pressure

The estate is not merely covering an accident. It is trying to preserve a repeatable result and decide which authority owns it.

Useful places and clues

Office: altered manifest and broken seal
 Workers' quarters: Luz's testimony
 Medical room: pressure trauma and erased patient name
 Laboratory yard: one missing cylinder and duplicated gauge
 Foreman's pocket: brass key receipt signed by an outside office

Useful outcomes

Prove the records were altered
 Gain worker cooperation
 Learn the hidden shaft was reopened
 Identify the missing cylinder
 Discover three factions knew about the test

GM moves

Move a witness before questioning is complete
 Have Elias Wren offer a useful document for a private promise
 Let Sister Verena demand immediate quarantine
 Advance Chamber Answers when equipment is tested carelessly

Scene 3: The Estate Below

Read aloud

The shaft air is warm and dry. Brass pipework has been bolted across stone older than the plantation. Somewhere below, three knocks sound. A heartbeat later, the pipe beside you repeats them.

Visible problem

Reach Resa through maintenance galleries, locked valves, and unstable equipment without turning the chamber's response into a rupture.

Hidden pressure

The system is listening and attempting calibration. Every strong signal becomes something it may answer.

Useful places and clues

Maintenance gallery: Resa's discarded coat and note
 Valve room: one housing from Heller, one unmarked Albion copy
 Pressure line: gas moving against the physical slope
 Stone geometry: older channels beneath modern brass
 Drainage exit: route for evacuation or smuggling evidence

Useful outcomes

Establish safe venting
 Contact Resa through repeated knocks
 Disable the second pulse housing
 Create an evacuation route
 Preserve proof without carrying unstable gas

GM moves

Show warning before harm
 Offer a fast route that sacrifices evidence
 Make loud violence advance both clocks
 Let a character's familiar rhythm be repeated by the chamber

Scene 4: The Chamber Answers

Read aloud

The inner door opens on a circular room of stone and brass. Éterlumin hangs as a pale distortion inside clear lines. Emilio Resa is alive behind the control frame, one hand burned and the other holding a lever in place. The chamber repeats the crew's footsteps six heartbeats late.

Visible problem

Extract Resa, stabilise or redirect the chamber, and decide how much evidence to preserve while pressure rises.

Hidden pressure

The chamber cannot reconcile two reference patterns. It is not hostile. It will keep answering the strongest signal until the contradiction is removed, isolated, or given an outlet.

Useful places and clues

Resa: explains the two pulses and asks for time
Control frame: safe vent, fast shutdown, or data preservation
Older stone channels: response moves through geometry, not just pipe
Clear line: no crystal, no toxin, calibrated gas under pressure
Drainage tunnel: narrow escape with limited cargo

Useful outcomes

Rescue Resa
Stabilise without surrendering all proof
Separate the incompatible housings
Record a repeatable warning pattern
Choose what must be abandoned

GM moves

Make a memory, sound, or rhythm partially physical
Burn equipment instead of people when possible
Force a choice between time and independent proof
At 6/6, vent pressure through the estate and change the site permanently

Scene 5: Who Controls the Truth?

Read aloud

By the time you reach the yard, every flag has arrived. Crown soldiers form a second cordon. A Heller envoy stands with the workers. A Church examiner carries a sealed case. The commercial surveyor is no longer pretending to be surprised.

Visible problem

Leave the estate with people and proof, then decide custody, access, and the public account before the strongest claimant sets the frame.

Hidden pressure

There is no neutral handoff. Every choice protects someone, empowers someone, and leaves another danger active.

Useful places and clues

Calderón offers lawful protection in exchange for complete custody
Falk offers safe conduct but cannot openly defy Valdegracia
Wren offers copied evidence and a hidden route
Verena offers medical sanctuary under quarantine
Luz demands workers remain subjects of the story, not collateral

Useful outcomes

Divide evidence among incompatible holders
Create a third route through public copying
Secure Resa without surrendering access
Protect workers and witnesses
Name a public account the crew can live with

GM moves

Show the cost before demanding the choice
Let denied factions act immediately but concretely
Do not turn the ending into a final persuasion roll
Record custody, proof, access, and public authority separately

Endings and Continuity

Record four facts. These matter more than a single declared victory.

Custody of Resa

Crew protection
Valdegracian authority
Heller safe conduct
Church quarantine
Resa escapes

Control of proof

One complete archive
Fragmented among factions
Destroyed except testimony
Publicly copied
Hidden by the crew

Access to San Telmo

Crown cordon
Worker-controlled route
Heller technical custody
Church containment
No stable access

Public account & convening authority

Public account
Industrial negligence; foreign sabotage; religious quarantine;
worker uprising; or truth remains contested.

Convening authority
Crown office; Heller command; Church inquiry; joint mandate;
or no recognised authority.

Record who can call the conference, issue emergency orders,
or speak for Canula Prime.

Continuation into Shadows of the Compañeros

The San Telmo Incident is Adventure Zero. Shadows of the Compañeros is Campaign One. Carry forward custody, proof, access, public account, and convening authority. Do not force one canonical ending. The next campaign begins because San Telmo leaves the island exposed, divided, and valuable to every power in the Golden Sea.

System Conversion Notes

D&D Fifth Edition

Use DC 12 for routine pressure, 15 for serious uncertainty, and 18 for severe or specialist challenges. Treat the chamber as an environmental hazard and social conflict, not a hit-point monster. Use exhaustion or conditions for overdraw and resonance strain.

Pathfinder Second Edition

Use level-appropriate DCs and a simple or complex hazard for the chamber. Drained, Fatigued, Frightened, and Sickened can model strain, pressure, and disorientation. Preserve multiple investigation routes and degrees of success.

Blades / Forged in the Dark

Use position and effect. Clocks are native: Chamber Answers 6, Authority Seizes Site 4. Resisting a consequence does not erase the fictional change; it reduces or redirects the cost. Treat evidence and access as assets or claims.

Other systems

Translate the threat to body, time, secrecy, authority, reputation, or stability. Use the optional 2d6 bridge when a table wants to play immediately without preparing full statistics.

Damaged Shipment Manifest

SAN TELMO ESTATE - INBOUND MANIFEST

Entry	Declared cargo	Units	Recorded weight	Note
A-17	Refinery service tools	4 crates	412 lb	Received
B-04	Calibration housings	2 crates	268 lb	One seal replaced
C-12	Éterlumin cylinders, service grade	6	1,164 lb	Only five present
D-02	Pressure gauges and valves	1 crate	94 lb	Weight should be 131 lb
E-09	Medical stores	2 cases	86 lb	Transferred to workers' ward

Clerk's private mark: The C-12 code belongs to a bilateral exemption route. The listed cylinder weight matches a recently calibrated batch, but the five cylinders at San Telmo weigh less than the declaration. One cylinder or its contents has been removed.

The official copy ends here. A second hand has added: 'Ask who ordered the night convoy.'

Emergency Quarantine Order

By authority of the Crown Office of Canula Prime

The San Telmo estate, laboratory yard, associated roads, personnel, instruments, correspondence, and recoverable material are placed under temporary emergency jurisdiction pending technical and ecclesiastical review. No person or object may depart without countersigned release.

Irregularity: the order bears a time stamp six hours earlier than the estate's reported accident.

Witness Statement and Calibration Note

Statement of Luz Varela

I heard the first knock after midday. Three knocks from below, then the same three from the pipe beside me. Don Emilio told the foreman to stop the pulse. The foreman said the governor's office wanted a repeatable result.

The floor warmed. The gauges disagreed with one another. Gas moved through the clear line against the slope. Don Emilio took the brass key and went below. The guards locked the door after him.

They keep calling it poison. It was not poison. My brother's hands burned where he touched the valve, but he could breathe.

Resa's calibration note

Refinement slows degradation. It does not stop it. Sealed does not mean stable.

Grade by loss rate, remaining service life, calibration quality, and response under load. Do not call the pale batch pure. It is merely late in its failure.

The chamber is not producing a signal. It is answering one. The second pulse introduced a reference it cannot reconcile with the first.

Do not pulse again.

GM interpretation

Luz is accurate but did not see who delivered the second calibration housing.

The foreman acted under pressure from the Project Custodian's office, not from scientific confidence.

Resa's note establishes the correct Éterlumin model and the chamber's listening behaviour.

The missing cylinder contains no special crystal or toxin. Its calibrated gas was used to drive the second pulse.

The phrase 'reference it cannot reconcile' foreshadows later Source behaviour without explaining the full system.

San Telmo GM Map

Estate approach, concealed shaft, and the chamber complex below



Quick Reference

Before play

Choose lines and veils
 Select four to six pregens
 Choose the crew's mandate
 Start Chamber Answers at 2/6
 Start Authority Seizes Site at 1/4

During investigation

Put every essential clue in three places
 Failure changes cost or control
 Let factions act when ignored
 Show warnings before harm
 Ask what the crew is protecting

Chamber warning ladder

Warm metal and delayed echoes
 Vents move against the slope
 The chamber repeats names or rhythms
 Objects tremble in conflicting patterns
 A partial answer becomes physical
 Pressure finds an uncontrolled outlet

Final decision

Who has Resa?
 Who has the proof?
 Who controls access?
 What does the public hear?
 Which faction was denied and what does it do next?

The five-line session review

Which faction gained most?
 Which faction was ignored, and what did it do off-screen?
 Which clock became visible?
 What clue or witness changed hands?
 What choice will matter even if every roll succeeded?

What to Read Next

The quickstart is the entry point. The larger line expands outward without changing the core play loop.

Player's Handbook

Character creation, homelands, callings, bonds, burdens, equipment, ships, travel, and system conversion notes.

Game Master's Guide

Setting secrets, factions, Source chambers, Éterlumin economy, airship conflict, campaign procedures, and the complete Canula Prime toolkit.

Shadows of the Compañeros

Campaign One. Continue directly from San Telmo with the ending your table created.

GM Tools

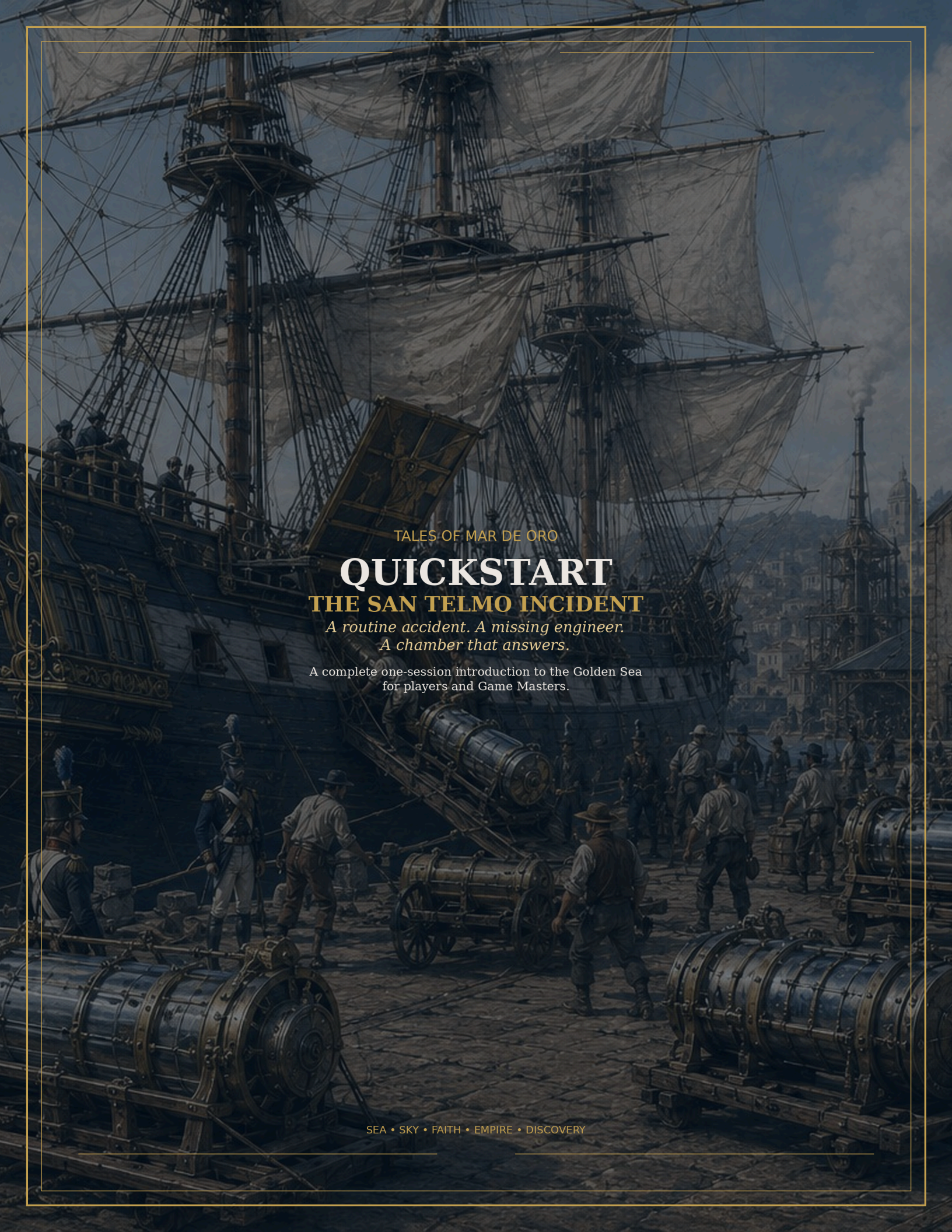
Clocks, objectives, faction moves, clue webs, hard choices, scene structure, consequence planning, pacing, and leverage.

Mar de Oro Website

Player-safe lore, maps, visual references, downloads, GM material, and the Session Creator.

Quickstart completion checklist

Characters chosen ☐ Safety agreed ☐ Crew mandate chosen ☐ Clocks prepared ☐ Handouts separated ☐ Ending record ready ☐



TALES OF MAR DE ORO

QUICKSTART

THE SAN TELMO INCIDENT

*A routine accident. A missing engineer.
A chamber that answers.*

A complete one-session introduction to the Golden Sea
for players and Game Masters.

SEA • SKY • FAITH • EMPIRE • DISCOVERY