

The Lightning Auction



Dungeon Master's edition

During the party's stormbound stay in Gale's End, the dead observatory rings its bronze transit bell. Reeve Maelin Rusk publicly deputizes the characters to secure the summit and keep the Tempest Eye seated. Before they can leave, Arct Vey produces a salvage charter and offers nearly twice Maelin's reward for the same lens. Tamsin Rill then sends a black-glass bidding token and a warning: Vey started the machinery himself. All three ask for an answer before the next bell.

OPENING READ-ALoud

You see Gale's End crouched beneath slate roofs as rain drives sideways through the torchlight. You hear a bronze bell toll from the abandoned observatory above the town, and every shutter on the main street opens at once. The air smells of wet peat and hot copper. A reeve in a red cloak, a merchant beneath a brass umbrella, and a masked rider each raise a different token toward you. Which summons do you answer before the bell sounds again?

Overview

Profile: One-shot for 4-5 characters of levels 7-9

Runtime: About 5 hours

Primary play: Investigation, hazardous ascent, faction bargaining, mechanical infiltration

Selected hook: hook-3 - The Lightning Auction

Rules scope: D&D SRD 5.1; all named creatures, hazards, and resolution procedures below are self-contained module mechanics.

For ninety years, the abandoned Zenith Orrery has bled lightning harmlessly through copper roots beneath Gale's End. It has now restarted its once-per-generation condensation cycle. At midnight it will form the **Tempest Eye**, a fist-sized stormglass lens that both governs the defenses and stores immense power.

Three factions claim it. Reeve **Maelin Rusk** needs the Eye left in place. Salvage factor **Arct Vey** means to extract and sell it under a dubious debt charter. Smuggler **Tamsin Rill** wants an open auction that will break Vey's monopoly. The characters can expose the charter, infiltrate the Orrery, and decide who-if anyone-may own a town's weather.

At a Glance

SCENE	MINS	CORE QUESTION
1. Three Offers, One Bell	35	Whose help-and whose suspicion-will the party earn?
2. The Clause in the Rain	40	Who restarted the Orrery, and is Vey's claim valid?
3. The Blackglass Switchback	50	Can the party reach the summit before the rivals?
4. The Sleeping Meridian	55	Can the defenses be bypassed without wrecking them?
5. The Chamber of Claims	50	Will evidence, force, or betrayal decide who reaches the Eye?
6. The Auction at Zenith	70	Who owns the Eye, and what will Gale's End sacrifice?

DM-Only Truth

- The Tempest Eye is not treasure installed inside the defense; it is the defense's removable governor.
- Arct Vey restarted the Orrery early with a stolen galvanic key. He expected to extract the Eye before Gale's End understood its function.
- Vey's debt charter grants salvage rights to abandoned movable goods, but Clause Seven excludes civic defenses and fixtures.

- The Eye can remain installed, be removed, or be divided into three weaker vanes. Division preserves partial protection but destroys its value as a unique lens.

Hook

During the party's stormbound stay in Gale's End, the dead observatory rings its bronze transit bell. Reeve Maelin Rusk publicly deputizes the characters to secure the summit and keep the Tempest Eye seated. Before they can leave, Arct Vey produces a salvage charter and offers nearly twice Maelin's reward for the same lens. Tamsin Rill then sends a black-glass bidding token and a warning: Vey started the machinery himself. All three ask for an answer before the next bell.

Stakes

- **Gale's End:** Removing the Eye leaves the settlement exposed to the next three major storms; roofs, terraces, and the eastern bridge will be at risk, not the wider world.
- **The party:** Each faction offers money, access, and future goodwill, but every agreement creates a witness and an expectation.
- **The highland pass:** The active machinery makes the summit route increasingly lethal and will close it after condensation.

• **Ownership:** A private buyer can monopolize portable weather control. Public custody protects the town but leaves its debt unresolved. Dividing the Eye shares power while weakening local protection.

• **Time:** The sixth bell opens the Final Discharge window in Scene 6. Earlier delays shorten that window; completing a resolution track triggers a controlled discharge before the deadline.

Factions

Reeve Maelin Rusk - Gale's End Council

- **Wants:** Keep the Eye installed and prove the town's infrastructure cannot be repossessed.
- **Fears:** Public knowledge that she used Vey's loans to rebuild after an avalanche.
- **Voice:** Short sentences; turns every promise into a duty. "A roof is not collateral while a child sleeps beneath it."
- **Offers:** 800 gp total, civic writs, two storm mantles, and testimony supporting lawful acts inside the Orrery.
- **Hides:** She removed Clause Seven from the council's public copy to conceal how recklessly she borrowed.
- **Moves if crossed:** Barricades the descent and appeals to townsfolk rather than attacking the party.

Factor Arct Vey - Brassweather Recovery

- **Wants:** Deliver the intact Eye to investors before his own debts come due.

- **Fears:** The galvanic key and full charter reaching a magistrate.
- **Voice:** Patient, exact, never raises his voice. "Price is merely consent that learned arithmetic."
- **Offers:** 1,500 gp total, cancellation of Maelin's notes, and safe passage through company lines.
- **Hides:** He restarted the Orrery and knows extraction will disable Gale's End's storm rods.
- **Moves if crossed:** Buys allies, blocks routes, and uses force only after declaring property seizure.

Tamsin Rill - The Kestrel Knot

- **Wants:** Force a public auction, expose Vey's charter, and sell access to the winning bidder.
- **Fears:** Becoming the monopolist she claims to oppose.
- **Voice:** Cheerful questions with knives behind them. "If no one may bid, is it ownership or theft?"
- **Offers:** 900 gp total, Vey's stolen charter addendum, a cliff route, and three thunder-silk lines.
- **Hides:** A foreign reservoir guild has promised her a private commission if it wins.
- **Moves if crossed:** Steals tools or evidence; she avoids killing residents and surrenders before her crew dies.

Faction Favor

Track each faction from -1 to +2, starting at 0; values cannot exceed those limits. A meaningful concession or fulfilled promise raises Favor by 1; public humiliation, theft, or betrayal lowers it by 1. Award each listed asset only once, even if Favor later falls and rises. Apply each listed complication once; recurring Scene 6 assistance or interference follows Faction actions.

FAVOR	TABLE EFFECT
-1	Apply that faction's specific complication below once.
0	It bargains but provides no free aid.
+1	It provides its specific asset below.
+2	Its leader also accepts one costly compromise in Scene 6 without a check.

FACTION	ASSET AT +1	COMPLICATION AT -1
Maelin	Two storm mantles and a keeper-authority seal; the seal suppresses one sentinel for 1 round.	At Gale Gate, her narrowed writ no longer authorizes the lift. Opening it costs one DC 14 tool or Arcana check; failure deals 7 (2d6) lightning damage but still opens it.

FACTION	ASSET AT +1	COMPLICATION AT -1
Vey	His sledge grants 2 progress in Scene 3 without a check; his extraction cradle grants one automatic extraction progress in Scene 6.	Add one Brassbound Enforcer to Scene 5, or have Vey begin Scene 6 contesting Hearth if combat would overtax the party.
Tamsin	Three thunder-silk lines and the exterior route into E; a line converts one Scene 3 setback into progress.	A runner steals the division settings from D. Recover them in Scene 5 or increase the three facet-scoring DCs in Scene 6 to 17.

Locations



Map key: use the keyed location descriptions on the following pages.

Player-Safe Location Key

The map shows only visible architecture, doors, stairs, elevation changes, and keys A-G. Secret maintenance ducts, faction starting positions, hazards, and the Eye's function remain in the text.

KEY	AREA	VISIBLE FEATURES
A	Gale Gate	Split bronze doors, bell pull, cliffside landing
B	Winch House	Cable drums, broken lift cage, sheltered workbench
C	Meridian Hall	Three concentric floor rings and a star-marked dais
D	Rain Archive	Brass drawers, weather cylinders, shattered skylight
E	North Gallery	Narrow catwalk around the open central shaft
F	Lens Chamber	Suspended glass sphere, three control stations
G	Lightning Crown	Roof platform, six copper vanes, central lens socket

Gale's End

A settlement of 230 people built into a west-facing bowl. Peat smoke, wet slate, and copper grounding straps define it. The **Galehouse Inn**, council archive, and eastern storm-rod terrace are the principal play areas.

The Blackglass Switchback

A 1.5-mile ascent across fused scree and three exposed traverses. Old copper wayposts offer safety only while connected. The smugglers' cliff route is faster but passes beneath the Orrery's discharge vanes.

The Zenith Orrery

A seven-area observatory built around a vertical axle. Every moving ring changes doors, cover, and sight lines; the keyed map presents stable architecture, while scene procedures describe motion. Ceilings are 20 feet high except in the 80-foot central shaft.

DM route and faction links: Scenes 1-2 take place in Gale's End, where Maelin supplies civic authority, Vey's clerk carries the charter, and Tamsin supplies its addendum. Scene 3 follows the Blackglass Switchback to A, with Vey's sledge and Tamsin's cliff route providing competing approaches. A opens into C and B; B's lift reaches the Zenith station in C. C connects to D and E, and its controlled door leads to F. Tamsin's exterior route enters E; the moving gallery rejoins C. Scene 4 covers these entrances, C, and D. Scene 5 takes place in F; its stair reaches G for Scene 6. Vey brings the extraction cradle to F, Tamsin's runners use E, and Maelin can speak through voice tubes in both F and G.

If Tamsin steals the division settings, her lead runner carries them in Scene 5 and returns them for restored Favor, a custody concession, or surrender.

Encounter Matrix

Baseline assumes **four level-8 characters**. For four level-7 characters, remove one enforcer or runner from each fight that includes them, use one sentinel in Scene 4, reduce remaining hostile hit points by 20% (round down), and reduce module save DCs by 1. These removals include the matrix's adjustment cues; do not apply them twice. For five level-9 characters, add one Gale Wisp to either Encounter 4 or 6, increase Vey's and the sentinels' hit points by 20% (round down), and announce one climax task each round whose DC rises by 1. Use baseline for other party sizes within the stated range, adjusting only if play demonstrates a need. Do not apply every increase to an unoptimized party.

1
ENCOUNTER: Three Offers, One Bell
TYPE AND INTENT: Social; establish leverage
BASELINE PRESSURE: Three incompatible contracts
NONCOMBAT EXIT: Refuse all and accept only the civic writ
ADJUSTMENT CUE: Shorten to one demand per NPC if time slips
2
ENCOUNTER: Ink Under Water
TYPE AND INTENT: Investigation/infiltration; expose the claim
BASELINE PRESSURE: Noll Dane steals the full charter
NONCOMBAT EXIT: Corner, bribe, or publicly identify him
ADJUSTMENT CUE: Remove the pursuit if Scene 1 ran long
3
ENCOUNTER: The Storm Takes the Path
TYPE AND INTENT: Hazard/rival race; spend resources
BASELINE PRESSURE: Wind, glass scree, company climbers
NONCOMBAT EXIT: Cooperate, detour, or bargain for rope
ADJUSTMENT CUE: Deal fixed damage instead of running initiative
4
ENCOUNTER: The Meridian Wakes
TYPE AND INTENT: Puzzle/combat; teach Orrery controls
BASELINE PRESSURE: 2 Stormglass Sentinels
NONCOMBAT EXIT: Align three rings or present a keeper's seal

ADJUSTMENT CUE: Use 1 sentinel for level 7; add 1 wisp for level 9
5
ENCOUNTER: Claims in the Glass
TYPE AND INTENT: Standoff; reveal the real cost
BASELINE PRESSURE: Vey, 2 brassbound enforcers, rival leverage
NONCOMBAT EXIT: Present Clause Seven, trade evidence, or share custody
ADJUSTMENT CUE: One rival arrives late if the party is depleted
6
ENCOUNTER: The Last Lot
TYPE AND INTENT: Multi-path climax
BASELINE PRESSURE: Ten-round discharge, faction actions
NONCOMBAT EXIT: Auction, preserve, divide, extract, or destroy
ADJUSTMENT CUE: Reduce required progress by 1 after a hard Scene 5

Timeline and Convergence Clock

Begin at **Tick 1** in Scene 1. Set the tick to the numbered scene when the party first enters it; revisiting an earlier scene never lowers the tick. These bells pace the expedition rather than measure real-world minutes. Severe delays mark **Lost Rounds**, not additional ticks. Track up to 4 Lost Rounds. Tick 6 and combat-round timing begin only when the party reaches the Crown in Scene 6; the discharge deadline is round **10 minus Lost Rounds**. Do not run intervening scenes against a combat countdown.

TICK	BELL AND CHANGE
1	Rousing: The transit bell wakes; faction offers begin.
2	Polarization: Metal objects hum; Vey moves his charter and key uphill.
3	Grounding: Lightning strikes the wayposts; the main switchback becomes hazardous.
4	Rotation: Meridian Hall turns; the Stormglass Sentinels awaken.
5	Condensation: The Eye becomes visible; removing it now will darken the town's rods.
6	Discharge: On entering Scene 6, the Lightning Crown opens; begin Final Discharge with its deadline at round 10 minus Lost Rounds.

Severe delays: Mark 1 Lost Round for each rest longer than 10 minutes, losing the Scene 2 pursuit, reaching 3 setbacks

in Scene 3, or retreating from the Orrery after Scene 4. A failed Scene 2 check can also impose a delay as stated there, but mark at most 1 Lost Round for the entire archive encounter. Announce each delay and the revised finale deadline. A character can negate a delay by expending a useful faction asset, such as a thunder-silk line securing a shortcut, or applying a specific clue to avoid the obstruction. Each distinct asset or clue can negate only one delay; using a clue does not erase its information or prevent later testimony.

Scenes

Scene 1: Three Offers, One Bell

READ-ALoud

You see rain stripe the Galehouse windows while three tokens rest on the same scarred table: a red council seal, a brass claim disk, and a black-glass feather. You hear the observatory bell fade above the roof and boots crowd the taproom floor. Wet wool and hot iron scent the close air. Who do you answer first?

Runtime: 35 minutes

Objective: Learn each claim and choose provisional allies.

Stakes: Early promises determine resources, interference, and who controls the public story.

Encounter 1: Three Offers, One Bell

Run three short bargaining rounds. In each round, one leader states a demand, one character may test or answer it, and a different faction interrupts.

1. **Maelin:** "Bring the Eye down only if the storm rods stay lit." She grants two storm mantles at Favor +1; each mantle can negate one instance of lightning damage to its wearer before burning out.

2. **Vey:** "Deliver intact movable salvage to my marked case." A character examining his disk finds its date freshly re-engraved with DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) or appropriate tool use. Failure still notices hot metal filings on his glove.

3. **Tamsin:** "Let every claimant bid where witnesses can hear." DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) reveals she cares more about breaking Vey's exclusive claim than maximizing price. On a failure, she openly admits she has stolen paperwork but demands a promise before sharing it.

Pressure: Townsfolk repeat any promise spoken loudly. A character who makes mutually exclusive promises gains +1 Favor with both factions now, then loses 1 with both when the contradiction becomes public in Scene 5.

Clues: Vey's altered claim disk points to recent tampering; Maelin knows the storm rods and Eye are connected; Tamsin names a charter addendum stored in the council archive. Any two establish that the dispute can be investigated before the climb.

Success: The party leaves with at least one faction asset and a clear lead to the archive.

Fail-forward: If they reject or antagonize everyone, Maelin still issues a narrow civic writ permitting entry to the Orrery; all Favor starts at -1, but no faction can lawfully bar the route.

Transition: A soaked clerk reports broken glass at the council archive as a hooded figure runs toward the storm-rod terrace.

Scene 2: The Clause in the Rain

READ-ALoud

You see archive papers plastered to the flooded floor beneath a broken skylight. You hear drawers slam in the rear stacks and water hiss against a fallen lantern. The room smells of lamp oil and fresh ink, and a muddy handprint marks the cabinet labeled "Civic Works." What do you secure or pursue first?

Runtime: 40 minutes

Objective: Recover the full charter and identify who restarted the Orrery.

Stakes: Evidence can end Vey's legal claim, but the thief is escaping with the cleanest copy.

Encounter 2: Ink Under Water

Noll Dane, Vey's reluctant clerk, flees with the charter through the rear stacks. Resolve the pursuit and salvage as **3 successes before 2 failures**; each character should use a distinct approach.

- **Catch Noll:** DC 14 Strength (Athletics) over shelving or Dexterity (Acrobatics) across the flooded floor.
- **Save the records:** DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) to sort seals from decoys; appropriate magic that dries, retrieves, or reveals writing earns a success without a check.
- **Corner him socially:** DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation). Mentioning Vey's forged date lowers the DC to 12.
- **Read the spill pattern:** DC 15 Wisdom (Perception or Survival) finds galvanic oil leading from Vey's warehouse to the summit trail.

On a failed check, choose one: take 7 (2d6) fire damage from the spreading oil flame; lose a faction token in the flood; or mark a severe delay. The archive is never destroyed wholesale.

What Noll knows: Vey ordered him to remove Clause Seven; Vey carried an old galvanic key uphill two nights ago; the Eye must remain seated for the eastern rods to function. Noll yields if promised safety or reduced blame.

Redundant evidence:

- **Clause Seven:** on Noll's copy; embossed inside the cabinet door; or quoted in Tamsin's addendum.

• **Vey restarted the Orrery:** Noll's testimony; galvanic oil trail; or the key's registration cylinder in Scene 4.

• **The Eye governs the rods:** Maelin's maintenance invoice; a water-damaged schematic; or the live model in Scene 4.

Success: Recover the full charter and choose whether Noll accompanies the party, returns to Maelin, or escapes.

Fail-forward: At 2 failures, Noll escapes with the sealed original, which reaches Vey. The party still recovers the legible phrase "excluding fixed engines of civic shelter" and the archive's other evidence. Mark the archive's severe delay if it has not already been marked. Vey's possession of the original raises the DC of the first Terms check directed at him in Scene 5 by 2, unless his claim has already been disproved. This replaces an abstract leverage score.

Transition: The third bell flashes every copper roof strap blue; the Blackglass Switchback is already closing under wind.

Scene 3: The Blackglass Switchback

READ-ALoud

You see the summit path shine like broken black mirrors above the last peat roofs. Copper wayposts groan as white arcs jump between them, and rain tastes metallic on your lips. A loaded company sledge climbs ahead, its runners scraping sparks from the stone. How will you cross the exposed slope?

Runtime: 50 minutes

Objective: Reach the Gale Gate with tools and allies intact.

Stakes: Failure costs resources and lets a rival choose the Orrery's first entry.

Encounter 3: The Storm Takes the Path

Resolve three traverses. The party needs **4 progress before 3 setbacks**. At each of the first two traverses, the first successful approach grants 1 progress and a second distinct successful approach grants 1 bonus progress; stop attempting once the party moves on. A failed check adds 1 setback, but another character may try a different approach. The sledge traverse grants 2 progress on a single success. No character can use the same skill twice during the encounter.

1. **Fused Scree:** Secure a route with DC 14 Strength (Athletics), Wisdom (Survival), or climber's tools. A setback deals 10 (3d6) slashing damage and breaks one mundane carried item chosen by its owner.
2. **Dead Waypost:** Reconnect it with DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Dexterity using suitable tools. A setback arcs to two nearby creatures, each taking 9 (2d8) lightning damage on a failed DC 14 Dexterity save, half on success.
3. **Sledge Traverse:** Pass, stop, or aid Vey's six climbers. Choose a shared plan: Charisma (Deception), Charisma (Persuasion), or Strength (Athletics). Each participating character makes the corresponding DC 15 check; at least

half must succeed to earn 2 progress. Failure adds 1 setback, and the party can attempt a different plan if it has not reached 3 setbacks. Open fighting instead uses two Brassbound Enforcers while the other climbers scatter; defeating or routing both, or moving the whole party beyond them, grants 2 progress. If the party already earned 4 progress on the earlier traverses, it reaches a sheltered bypass and may pass the sledge without another check.

Faction assets: Tamsin's thunder-silk lines turn one setback into progress. Maelin's mantles can absorb the Dead Waypost. Vey's cooperation bypasses the sledge traverse and grants its full 2 progress, but accepting it raises his Favor by 1.

Escalation: At 3 setbacks, the main path shears away. Everyone reaches the Gale Gate by a maintenance basket. Each character expends one remaining Hit Die without healing; a character with none remaining takes 7 bludgeoning damage instead. Mark one severe delay for the party.

Success: The party reaches the gate first and may choose A, B, or Tamsin's exterior route into E.

Fail-forward: They arrive after one rival; that faction occupies the safest entrance but cannot lock out the party.

Transition: The fourth bell sounds from inside the stone, and the building's concentric roofs begin to rotate.

Scene 4: The Sleeping Meridian

READ-ALoud

You see bronze rings turning across the hall floor, carrying desks and broken telescopes around a motionless star-marked dais. You hear gears strike beneath your boots and glass chimes answer from the dark balconies. The air smells of old grease and ozone; each rotation sends a warm tremor through the railings. Which route or mechanism do you approach first?

Runtime: 55 minutes

Objective: Align the Meridian Hall and open the Lens Chamber.

Stakes: Forced entry awakens defenses and can damage the evidence needed for a safe resolution.

Encounter 4: The Meridian Wakes

Place three ring stations 30 feet apart: **Hearth**, **Pass**, and **Zenith**. The door to F opens when all three point toward the central dais.

- A creature adjacent to a station can use an action to attempt DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation), Wisdom (Perception), or Dexterity with suitable tools.
- A success aligns that ring. A failure rotates the floor 90 degrees, moving every unsecured creature on it 15 feet and dealing 9 (2d8) lightning damage to the operator.

- The same skill cannot align consecutive stations. The water-damaged schematic from Scene 2 grants advantage on one attempt.

Two **Stormglass Sentinels** stand beside **Hearth** and **Pass**, each linked to that named ring; **Zenith** has no sentinel. At Tick 4 or later they are active when the party enters C. Roll initiative when they can reach an intruder or a character operates a station. A visible copper conductor connects each sentinel to its ring, revealing the shutdown method without a check. Sentinels clamp the nearest unrestrained intruder and drag captives away from stations; they do not pursue beyond C. Aligning a linked ring incapacitates its sentinel and releases its grapple. Aligned rings remain aligned despite later failed checks. Presenting Maelin's civic writ or keeper-authority seal within 30 feet costs an action and incapacitates one sentinel until the start of the presenter's next turn; this can be repeated. With one sentinel, link it to **Hearth**.

Alternative entries: From B, a DC 15 Dexterity check with appropriate tools repairs the lift and delivers the party beside **Zenith** in C. Failure still repairs it but deals 9 (2d8) lightning damage to the operator and alerts the sentinels. Maelin's unfavorable-Favor complication concerns unlocking the lift controls before this repair. From E, each crossing character makes two DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks. Both successes reach **Zenith**; the first failure ends that character's crossing, dropping them 20 feet into a safety net in C for 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. They can leave the net using 15 feet of movement. Neither entrance bypasses the door to F.

Maintenance bypass: Characters can instead use the loose bronze desk braces to jam the rings and open F's manual service latch. This requires 10 minutes of work from outside the sentinels' reach, no check, and one severe delay. The sentinels remain sealed in C; the party gains neither aligned rings nor control of internal doors. D remains accessible from E, so this route preserves access to the evidence.

Discoveries:

- A registration cylinder displays Vey's claim-disk pattern beside the restart time.
- A brass tabletop model visibly darkens every miniature town rod when its glass governor is removed.
- Three etched arcs show the Eye can be separated into **Hearth**, **Pass**, and **Venture** vanes; the final settings lie in D and F.

Success: Aligning all rings opens F, deactivates surviving sentinels, and grants the party control of internal doors.

Fail-forward: Destroying every sentinel present opens F through an emergency release, but the discharge begins with one setback. The etched division diagram in C is partially melted; the settings in D and F still provide the complete instructions without a check. This damage imposes no additional division DC increase.

Transition: The route into F opens, revealing a suspended spark contracting inside a clear sphere. Describe approaching lanterns only for factions still able to reach the party; allies accompany the party, while excluded or surrendered rivals remain where earlier choices left them.

Scene 5: The Chamber of Claims

READ-ALoud

You see a white spark pulse inside the suspended glass sphere, shrinking with every turn of three copper arms. The town's storm rods answer far below like struck tuning forks. Warm air smells of scorched dust, and two doorways face each other across the vibrating platform. What do you protect, reveal, or secure first?

Runtime: 50 minutes

Objective: Control access to the Eye and establish the terms of the final decision.

Stakes: Violence can shatter the controls; unchecked rivals can carry the Eye away at discharge.

Encounter 5: Claims in the Glass

Unless earlier choices prevent it, Arct Vey enters with two **Brassbound Enforcers**, and Tamsin enters from the opposite route with two **Kestrel Runners**. Allied groups arrive with the party; dead, captured, routed, or excluded opponents do not reappear or regain hit points. A delayed group arrives after the Terms exchange. Maelin speaks through the chamber's copper voice tube and sends no fighters. Run claims only for leaders present or able to communicate. If no rival remains, use the exchanges to establish custody and examine the controls, then continue to Scene 6.

Run the standoff in three exchanges before initiative:

- 1. Claim:** Each faction states what it owns. Showing the sealed original of Clause Seven removes Vey's lawful pretext without a check. With another copy, Noll's testimony, or the embossed cabinet wording, DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) does the same. Failure leaves Vey publicly disputing authenticity; it does not remove the evidence or block negotiations.
- 2. Cost:** Activating the tabletop echo or demonstrating the half-drawn Eye proves extraction will darken Gale's End without a check. Confronted with the registration cylinder as well, Vey admits prior knowledge. His enforcers lower their weapons and refuse further seizure orders unless attacked.
- 3. Terms:** The party proposes custody, auction rules, division, or removal to each relevant leader. At Favor +2, a leader accepts one costly compromise consistent with its concession point. Otherwise make one DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion, Deception, or Intimidation) check per leader, reduced by 2 for each distinct piece of leverage offered, to a minimum of DC 10. Success secures that leader's agreement; failure leaves it uncommitted and permits

another proposal only if the party changes the price, evidence, or custody terms. Refusal alone does not trigger combat. Violence, an attempted seizure, or a declared attack does.

If fighting begins, mark the three control surfaces and warn the players about ricochets. When an attacker within 5 feet of a surface misses a creature with an attack total of 10 or higher, mark one control strike. After three strikes, add one starting setback to Scene 6; further strikes cause no additional starting setbacks. This damage does not disable a Crown station. A creature can use an action and succeed on DC 14 Strength (Athletics) to move an adjacent unwilling combatant 10 feet away from a control; a willing creature needs no check. Vey and his enforcers block access to the Eye, while Tamsin's runners snare carriers and withdraw toward E. Vey surrenders below 35 hit points if his charter has been disproved. Tamsin surrenders when either runner falls.

The Eye's visible proof: Drawing the lens halfway from its socket immediately extinguishes one-third of the miniature town rods and produces a dark gap in the storm below. Reinserting it restores them. No check is required.

Success: The party enters Scene 6 with agreed bidding rules or uncontested access to two of three control stations.

Fail-forward: A rival reaches the Crown first with the extraction cradle, but the party retains at least one faction asset or decisive clue.

Transition: The glass sphere opens like an iris, lifting the completed Tempest Eye toward the roof as the sixth bell begins.

Scene 6: The Auction at Zenith

READ-ALoud

You see the roof split into six copper petals beneath a churning black sky. The sixth bell continues without fading while lightning crawls across the new glass lens at the platform's center. Rain needles your face, and hot copper scents the air around three control stations. What do you bring to the socket or the controls first?

Runtime: 70 minutes

Objective: Resolve ownership and configure the final discharge.

Stakes: The decision determines Gale's End's protection, the factions' power, and whether the party can descend safely.

Encounter 6: The Last Lot

Begin **Final Discharge** at round 1, with a deadline of **round 10 minus Lost Rounds**. Announce the deadline and display a round marker. The Crown is a circular platform, 90 feet across, with the Eye at its center. Hearth, Pass, and Venture stand equally spaced around it, each 30 feet from the Eye. The stair from F opens beside Hearth; the voice tube is usable from any station. Place surviving allies with the party and each active rival beside one station. A rival that won Scene 5 chooses first and has the cradle; otherwise the party chooses two initially uncontested stations.

Each round begins with the count-20 event, before any creature acts regardless of its initiative roll. Creatures then act in initiative order; count-10 faction effects occur before creatures tied at 10. If the current round is the deadline, resolve Discharge instead of that round's ordinary event. Completing a track earlier immediately triggers its controlled discharge and ends this encounter; do not continue hazards or interference after success.

Position and equipment: An action secures or releases a rope at a station; a secured creature can move within 10 feet of it. Forced movement beyond the roof edge allows a DC 14 Dexterity save to catch the lip; success leaves the creature hanging, and climbing back costs 15 feet of movement. Failure drops it 20 feet onto E for 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage; the stair back to G is 60 feet away along the gallery. A damaged or unavailable extraction cradle can be replaced by the socket's removable padded tray with one action, without a check or progress. Custody documents and claim tokens can be replaced by a marked scrap or witnessed spoken declaration; loss of a token never blocks a track.

ROUND	EVENT
1-3	Open Crown: Unsecured creatures on G must succeed on DC 14 Strength saves or move 10 feet toward the nearest roof edge.
4-6	Forked Bolts: First resolve zones marked last round: creatures inside take 13 (3d8) lightning damage, half with a DC 15 Dexterity save. Then mark two visible 10-foot-radius zones, one at the Eye and one at the next station in Hearth-Pass-Venture order. They strike at the next round's start; mark their boundaries before anyone moves.
7-9	Glass Rain: Resolve any pending bolts first. Moving more than 15 feet on G during a turn deals 7 (2d6) slashing damage once that turn. An action clears a permanent 5-foot-wide, 30-foot-long route from the character's position; movement entirely along cleared routes causes no damage.
ROUND	EVENT
Deadline	Discharge: Replace the ordinary round event and cancel pending bolts. If no track is complete, the Eye ejects into the pass, Gale's End loses protection, and everyone

ROUND	EVENT
	on G takes 22 (4d10) lightning damage, half with a DC 15 Constitution save. End the encounter and use Fail-forward.

Climax procedure:

- Record the chosen track's individual tasks. Each task grants its listed progress once; repeated successes cannot substitute for unfinished tasks. Unless specified otherwise, a task costs one action within 5 feet of its location. Failed task checks, saves, and attack rolls add one setback. Successful work remains complete despite later failures.
- Retry unfinished tasks while their location is usable, but the same character cannot retry the same task on consecutive turns. Help follows the normal combat action and applies to ability checks, not saving throws. Automatic tasks still cost an action unless an auction benefit explicitly completes them.
- A contested station cannot be used for tasks. An adjacent character can clear it with an action: move the interfering creature at least 10 feet away, incapacitate it, present decisive evidence that defeats its stated objection, or succeed on DC 15 Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), or Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation). These respectively displace the blocker, disengage its tool, or obtain its cooperation. Failure costs the action but adds no setback. Once cleared, that faction cannot contest the same station through the end of the next round.
- A spell, distinct piece of leverage, or expended valuable asset that directly solves a task can complete it automatically; state the task and cost before expenditure. Each source grants at most one progress. Existing faction assets complete only their stated tasks.
- Switching tracks with fewer than 3 progress costs nothing. With 3 or more progress, no new-track task can be attempted until the next round; the deadline does not change, and this switching round causes no inactivity setback. Retain only identical completed work: a seated Eye can serve Keep, intact extraction can serve Sell or Take, and broken clamps can serve Take or Destroy. Bargaining transfers only if its terms satisfy the new outcome. Scored facets cannot serve an intact sale; a shattered Eye cannot be restored by switching tracks.
- Each station has AC 16, 20 HP, and immunity to lightning, poison, and psychic damage. At 0 HP it becomes disabled and adds one setback; completed work is retained. An adjacent character can restore it to 10 HP with an action and DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Dexterity with tools. Failure adds one setback. Contested stations are blocked, not disabled.

The Three-Round Auction

If the party calls for bids, run one exchange during each of rounds 1-3; one character's action conducts it while others can work on the machinery. An unattempted exchange earns no safeguard. Each success earns one **safeguard**. With a replacement bond included in the winning package, two safeguards complete **Sell the Eye Safely's** bargaining task; all three also complete its claim-token grounding task. Safeguards do not create money or add unaccepted terms. If fewer than two are earned, the party can still secure the private binding bid described in that track. Maelin bids through the voice tube; Tamsin represents the reservoir buyer and uses her Favor for its concessions. Unavailable factions cannot bid.

1. Right to Sell

PROCEDURE: Obtain Maelin's consent, or combine Clause Seven with a proposed civic mandate and DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) before witnesses. Clause Seven excludes Vey's claim but does not itself authorize a sale.

SUCCESS: 1 safeguard; witnesses accept the party's authority to offer the stated custody terms.

FAILURE: The auction continues without civic authorization. If Vey remains active, he contests Hearth on round 4 unless the party resolves his objection first.

2. Conditions

PROCEDURE: Name one bidder and demand its improved package with DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation); automatic at that bidder's Favor +2.

SUCCESS: 1 safeguard; that bidder accepts its improved terms.

FAILURE: 1 setback; the bidder retains its opening package.

3. Hammer

PROCEDURE: Choose an available package and secure two witnesses with DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or Intelligence (Investigation). Party members and Maelin over the tube can witness.

SUCCESS: 1 safeguard; the named buyer accepts the recorded terms.

FAILURE: The party still chooses the package, but its terms remain an unsecured public promise and this exchange earns no safeguard.

BIDDER	OPENING PACKAGE	IMPROVED PACKAGE AFTER EXCHANGE 2
Maelin	800 gp; the Eye stays seated under council custody.	Public civic trust, outside audit, and half the promised reward paid immediately.
Vey	1,500 gp and cancellation of Gale's End's debt; intact extraction.	2,000 gp, cancelled debt, and a bonded replacement governor due before the third storm.

BIDDER	OPENING PACKAGE	IMPROVED PACKAGE AFTER EXCHANGE 2
Tamsin's reservoir buyer	2,200 gp; intact extraction at dawn.	Choose either Venture alone for 1,000 gp, leaving Hearth and Pass in the highlands, or the original 2,200 gp intact purchase plus a bonded replacement governor due before the third storm.

Maelin's offer can win even when it is not the richest: the party chooses after Exchange 3. Breaking a public highest-bid promise lowers Favor by 1 with each losing bidder; it does not force a player decision. Maelin's improved package retains her 800 gp total, with 400 gp paid immediately. Auction cash replaces that buyer's initial hiring reward; replacement bonds and debt cancellation are additional obligations, not deductions from the quoted cash.

Package to track: Either Maelin package uses **Keep the Eye**. The reservoir buyer's Venture-only package uses **Divide the Eye**. An intact package with an accepted replacement bond uses **Sell the Eye Safely**. An intact package without that bond uses **Take or Destroy It**, choosing taken, unless the party negotiates the missing bond during the safe-sale bargaining task. Tell players the protection consequence before accepting a package. The reservoir buyer's dawn condition concerns handover: extraction and any bypass happen now, with the Eye held in witnessed custody until dawn. A funded replacement bond obliges the buyer to pay for a permanent governor in addition to the purchase price; it does not automatically install one.

Keep the Eye - 4 progress before 3 setbacks

- Seat the Eye at the central socket: DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or appropriate magic; 1 progress.
- Ground Hearth at its station: DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) or Dexterity with tools; 1 progress.
- Carry the civic seal or substitute custody marker through Hearth's arc: an action at Hearth and DC 14 Constitution save; 1 progress. Failure adds a setback but does not destroy the marker.
- Secure public custody at the voice tube: DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion); 1 progress, automatic with Maelin at Favor +2 and Clause Seven displayed. A witnessed agreement naming the council and an outside custodian also works if Maelin refuses; the same DC resolves the witnesses' acceptance.
- **Completed:** Gale's End retains full protection; Vey's debt remains a political problem, not a weather catastrophe.

Sell the Eye Safely - 5 progress before 3 setbacks

- At the voice tube, record an intact purchase with a funded replacement bond and at least two auction safeguards: 1 bargaining progress. Alternatively, obtain that binding package from an available intact buyer with one action and

DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Deception), adding the bond to its cash offer without changing the cash amount. Deception can conceal the party's leverage, but cannot substitute an imaginary buyer or nonexistent funding.

- Configure the temporary bypass at Hearth and Pass: one DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) or Dexterity check with tools at each station; 1 progress each. The station plates show the bypass connections without a discovery check.
- Once both bypass connections work, extract into Vey's cradle or the padded socket tray at the Eye: DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand); 1 progress. Vey's favorable-Favor asset makes this task automatic but still costs an action.
- Ground the buyer's claim token at Venture: DC 14 Constitution save; 1 progress. This task is already complete if all three auction safeguards were earned for this bonded intact package.
- **Completed:** The Eye leaves intact; Gale's End has partial protection for one season and a funded obligation for a permanent replacement before the third storm. Pay the actual agreed cash amount. If the buyer reneges, the party's witnesses and charter evidence support recovery, but a failed replacement remains a future problem.

Divide the Eye - 6 progress before 3 setbacks

- Score Hearth, Pass, and Venture facets: one DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) or Dexterity check with suitable tools at each named station; 1 progress each. Use DC 17 if Tamsin's stolen settings remain unrecovered. The surviving instructions in F allow attempts even if C's diagram was destroyed.
- After all facets are scored, turn Hearth and Pass together: two characters each spend an action at the respective station and make DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks; 1 progress per successful station. Both operators must act in the same round. If only one succeeds, its progress remains; on a later round that operator can spend an action holding the successful ring while the other retries.
- Speak the custody compact at the voice tube, naming a recipient for each vane: DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion); 1 progress, automatic if all three faction leaders are at Favor +1 or better. Recipients can instead be the council, a neutral caravan shrine, or consenting party custodians; an absent or hostile faction does not veto division.
- **Completed:** Gale's End keeps the Hearth vane for partial protection; Pass can shield caravans; Venture can power a portable device. No piece can command the whole system.

Take or Destroy It - 4 progress before 3 setbacks

- Break the three clamps at the central socket: each takes one action and DC 15 Strength (Athletics), one successful melee weapon attack against AC 16, or appropriate magic; 1 progress per clamp. These attack options break a clamp on a hit regardless of damage and replace the action's normal

attacks.

- After all clamps are broken, take the Eye with one action and DC 16 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Dexterity with suitable tools; 1 progress. On failure it remains in the socket's catch tray.
- To destroy it instead, reduce the released Eye to 0 HP using normal attacks or spells. It has AC 16, 20 HP, and immunity to lightning, poison, and psychic damage. Damage accumulates; a hit does not automatically shatter it. Destroying it grants the fourth progress. A missed attack adds one setback; a damaging hit counts as advancing the track for inactivity even if the Eye survives.
- **Completed-taken:** The holder escapes with an immensely valuable lens; Gale's End's next three storms cause costly local damage unless the party later replaces it.
- **Completed-destroyed:** No faction gains a monopoly. The Crown safely vents this storm, but the town must evacuate its eastern terrace before the next one.

Setbacks: Start with the setbacks expressly carried from Scenes 4 and 5; Lost Rounds shorten the deadline instead. Add one setback for each failed track check, save, or attack, each station newly disabled, and each completed round after round 3 with no progress or damage toward destroying the Eye. Do not count the same failure twice. At 3 setbacks, immediately reset setbacks to 1, place one Gale Wisp at an unoccupied roof edge, and reduce the deadline by 1, but never earlier than the start of the next round. Announce the new deadline. The wisp first acts at count 10 of the next round, attacking the Eye's carrier or otherwise the nearest operator; it dissipates when discharge resolves. Repeat this threshold whenever reached. The headings' "before 3 setbacks" indicate escalation thresholds, not permanent track failure. Completing all tasks triggers controlled discharge immediately, cancels pending hazards, and prevents further setbacks.

Faction actions: At count 10, each available leader chooses its faction effect instead of making attacks or using another action that round; its escorts act normally. At Favor +1 or better, the leader grants advantage on one related ability check made before the next count 10. At Favor -1, an active leader contests one station: Vey favors Hearth to prevent grounding, Tamsin favors Venture to influence custody, and Maelin disputes removal through the voice tube at Hearth. Physical opponents must be within 5 feet of the station; Maelin's objection can be cleared by decisive leverage, a Charisma check, or a Strength or Dexterity check overriding the disputed control under Climax procedure step 3. She is in town and cannot be attacked from G. A cleared objection follows step 3's respite. Leaders at Favor 0 provide no mechanical aid or interference. Dead, absent, surrendered, or incapacitated leaders do not contest; honor agreements secured in Scene 5. No faction fights to the death for the Eye.

Success: Complete a track and narrate who holds each component when the lightning clears.

Fail-forward: On an incomplete track, the Eye ejects into the pass. The party chooses which faction sees its landing point; that creates an immediate pursuit after the one-shot, while Gale's End begins an organized evacuation.

Exit: The Crown locks as a sheltered stair opens to Gale's End. Resolve payment, testimony, and faction consequences before the party descends.

Resolution Paths

The Civic Trust

The Eye remains installed under a charter naming the council, observatory keeper, and one outside witness. Maelin pays 800 gp and publicly admits the debt concealment. Vey withdraws if Clause Seven survived; otherwise he begins litigation. Gale's End remains fully protected.

The Witnessed Sale

Use this resolution when Sell the Eye Safely is completed. Record the actual accepted cash bid, debt terms, and replacement bond; there is no minimum auction yield. The cash pays the agreed reward, while the buyer separately funds a permanent governor under its bond. The buyer receives the Eye only after the bypass works; a dawn handover remains in witnessed custody until then. Gale's End has partial protection for one season. An unbonded intact purchase instead has The Clean Theft's weather consequences, even if its sale was public. Maelin's seated purchase uses The Civic Trust; a Venture-only purchase uses The Three Vanes. If Tamsin's network remains involved, it carries news of the witnessed terms through the highlands.

The Three Vanes

Hearth stays with Gale's End, Pass goes to a neutral caravan shrine or Tamsin's network, and Venture may satisfy Vey's investors. The town's protection is reduced but functional. All three factions gain something they can defend publicly, making this the most stable compromise.

The Clean Theft

One claimant or the party escapes with the intact Eye. Gale's End survives tonight but must evacuate its eastern terrace before future storms. The thief gains a powerful bargaining object and two determined enemies. Payment comes only from the benefiting faction.

No One Owns the Weather

Destroying the Eye prevents monopoly and safely vents the current charge. Maelin orders an evacuation and uses the exposed charter to demand regional aid. Vey's company fractures; Tamsin celebrates publicly and privately confronts the material cost of her slogan.

Rewards and Consequences

- Pay the contracted reward only from factions whose central demand was substantially honored. A winning auction package replaces that buyer's earlier cash reward; do not pay both. Replacement bonds and debt cancellation remain separate obligations.
- If two factions' demands were reconciled and both reward contracts remain in force, each pays half its agreed cash offer, using the final auction amount where applicable. Do not halve a replacement bond or debt cancellation. A bidder's improved package applies only if actually accepted.
- Each character may retain one **dormant stormglass sliver** as a narrative trophy. Until a later module defines it, it has no magical rules effect.
- Saving Noll, preserving the archive, or preventing deaths earns Gale's End's hospitality regardless of who owns the Eye.

Compact Reference Appendix

DC and Consequence Ladder

DIFFICULTY	DC	USE HERE	TYPICAL CONSEQUENCE
Pressured but favorable	12-14	Leverage-backed talks, visible routes	Time, position, or 7 damage
Standard expedition risk	15	Orrery controls, contested claims	Clock pressure, 9-13 damage, lost asset
Severe precision	16	Dividing or extracting the Eye	Setback plus changed battlefield

The module's checks, saves, damage, and creature profiles are bespoke procedures that use the SRD's normal combat-action framework. Rule: Actions in Combat

Clue Ledger

CONCLUSION	SOURCE 1	SOURCE 2	SOURCE 3
Vey restarted the Orrery	Noll's testimony	Galvanic oil trail	Registration cylinder in C
The claim excludes the Eye	Full Clause Seven	Cabinet embossing	Tamsin's addendum
Removing the Eye darkens the rods	Maintenance invoice	Tabletop model	Half-drawn Eye in F
The Eye can be divided	Etched arcs in C	Settings in D	Three stations in F/G

NPC Quick Lines

NPC	DEFAULT MOVE	CONCESSION POINT
Maelin Rusk	Invokes civic duty and witnesses	Admits her concealed borrowing to keep protection public
Arct Vey	Converts every claim into a price	Accepts Venture vane plus proof his investors can sell it
Tamsin Rill	Demands open bidding and steals leverage	Accepts neutral custody of Pass if Vey loses exclusivity
Noll Dane	Runs, apologizes, then produces records	Testifies if guaranteed safety from Vey

Custom Creature Profiles

These are complete module-specific combat profiles; they do not reproduce an external monster entry. Use the listed fixed HP. Unlisted saving throws and checks use the corresponding ability modifier. Initiative uses Dexterity; attacks target one creature unless stated otherwise. Multiattack and named attacks cost an action; recharge abilities begin available and roll their recharge die at the start of the creature's turn. Reactions are limited to one until the start of its next turn. All profiles have ordinary sight and hearing, with no unlisted special senses, resistances, or traits. Humanoids speak Common; sentinels understand Common but cannot speak; wisps understand Auran but do not negotiate. Use milestone advancement rather than XP awards; these bespoke profiles have no assigned challenge ratings.

Stormglass Sentinel - Medium construct

AC 18; HP 78; Speed 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4), DEX 10 (+0), CON 18 (+4), INT 6 (-2), WIS 12 (+1), CHA 5 (-3)

Saves: Str +7, Con +7, Wis +4; **Perception** +4; **Passive Perception** 14

Resistances/Immunities: Immune to lightning and poison damage; immune to exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, and unconscious. Condition terminology follows the SRD. Rule: Conditions

Multiattack: Two clamps. **Clamp:** +7 to hit, reach 10 ft.; 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15) if the sentinel has no creature grappled.

Grounding Arc (Recharge 5-6; Action): Each creature in a line 20 feet long and 5 feet wide originating from the sentinel makes a DC 15 Dexterity save, taking 22 (4d10) lightning damage on a failure or half on success.

Ring-Bound: The sentinel becomes incapacitated while its linked Meridian ring is correctly aligned.

Brassbound Enforcer - Medium humanoid

AC 16; HP 58; Speed 30 ft.

STR 18 (+4), DEX 12 (+1), CON 16 (+3), INT 10 (+0), WIS 12 (+1), CHA 10 (+0)

Saves: Str +6, Con +5; **Athletics** +6, **Perception** +3; **Passive Perception** 13

Multiattack: Two shock batons. **Shock Baton:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft.; 8 (1d8+4) bludgeoning plus 3 (1d6) lightning damage.

Brace (Reaction): When an attack hits the enforcer or an effect would forcibly move it, it braces. Against a triggering attack, increase its AC by 2 for that attack, potentially causing a miss. Reduce forced movement from the triggering effect by up to 10 feet.

Morale: Withdraws when Vey surrenders or both enforcers fall below half hit points.

Kestrel Runner - Medium humanoid

AC 15; HP 44; Speed 35 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR 11 (+0), DEX 18 (+4), CON 14 (+2), INT 12 (+1), WIS 13 (+1), CHA 14 (+2)

Saves: Dex +6, Wis +3; **Acrobatics** +6, **Stealth** +6, **Perception** +3; **Passive Perception** 13

Multiattack: Two hooked blades. **Hooked Blade:** +6 to hit, reach 5 ft.; 8 (1d8+4) slashing damage.

Thunder-Silk Snare (Recharge 5-6): One creature within 30 feet makes a DC 14 Dexterity save or becomes restrained until it or an adjacent creature uses an action to cut or loosen the line (AC 12; 10 HP).

Skirmisher (Reaction): After a creature misses the runner with an attack, the runner moves up to 10 feet without provoking opportunity attacks from that creature.

Gale Wisp - Small elemental

AC 15; HP 32; Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR 6 (-2), DEX 18 (+4), CON 14 (+2), INT 7 (-2), WIS 14 (+2), CHA 9 (-1)

Saves: Dex +7, Wis +5; **Perception** +5; **Passive Perception** 15

Resistances/Immunities: Resistant to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage; immune to lightning damage and the grappled, prone, and restrained conditions.

Arc (Action): Ranged spell attack, +7 to hit, range 60 ft., one creature; 13 (3d8) lightning damage.

Pressure Drop (Recharge 6): Creatures within 15 feet make DC 15 Strength saves or move 15 feet toward the wisp and fall prone.

Arct Vey, Salvage Factor - Medium humanoid

AC 17; HP 105; Speed 30 ft.

STR 20 (+5), DEX 12 (+1), CON 16 (+3), INT 15 (+2), WIS 14 (+2), CHA 16 (+3)

Saves: Str +8, Con +6, Wis +5, Cha +6; **Athletics** +8, **Insight** +5, **Persuasion** +6; **Passive Perception** 12

Multiattack: Two claim-hammer attacks. **Claim-Hammer:** +8 to hit, reach 5 ft.; 10 (1d10+5) bludgeoning plus 4 (1d8) lightning damage.

Purchased Advantage (3/Day; Reaction): After a creature within 60 feet that Arct can see rolls an attack, ability check, or saving throw, but before its outcome is announced, Arct adds or subtracts 1d6. The creature must hear and understand him, and he must name an established debt, payment, or promise involving it. This is a bespoke distraction ability, not a spell.

Extraction Order (Recharge 5-6; Action): One allied enforcer within 60 feet that hears Arct can use its reaction to move up to its speed and make one Shock Baton attack. This movement provokes opportunity attacks normally.

Morale: Surrenders below 35 HP if his charter is disproved; otherwise retreats below 20 HP.

Tamsin Rill in combat: Use every statistic, attack, sense, language, and reaction in the Kestrel Runner profile, except HP 72, Charisma 18 (+4), Charisma saves +4, and all Charisma checks +7. Replace its recharging Thunder-Silk Snare with two uses per adventure of the same action and DC; her carried snares do not recharge. She surrenders rather than attack after either accompanying runner falls. If she has no runners, she surrenders below 36 HP.

Pacing Cuts

- **Running 20 minutes late:** Noll yields after one success in Scene 2; bypass the sledge confrontation in Scene 3 and award its 2 progress.
- **Running 40 minutes late:** In Scene 4, the first aligned ring suppresses all sentinels and opens F. In Scene 5, summarize Claim and Cost using only evidence already discovered, then begin at Terms.
- **Party depleted:** A favorable faction expends one unused asset to provide a 10-minute breather: each character may spend up to two Hit Dice to heal. This grants no other short-rest benefits and marks no Lost Round. If reducing finale progress as suggested in the Encounter Matrix, mark one physical task complete at the start and explain which ally performed it; never omit custody or replacement-bond requirements.
- **Party dominant:** Begin Scene 6 normally and add a Gale Wisp at count 10 of round 4, unless the level adjustment already adds one there. Do not inflate every DC.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

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