



THE SIXTH KEY

FOR PLAYERS WHO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK
A HOUSE 6 DESIGNS PRODUCTION

SAME-ROOM COOPERATIVE MYSTERY

SABLE BASIN RECOVERY FILE / HM-07

The Hollow Meridian

AN OPENING FOLIO

Do not enter alone. Do not trust north.

FOR 2-4 KEYHOLDERS · 90-120 MINUTES · HOSTLESS

The cylinder in the dust



RECOVERY

04:13 / no tracks

MATERIAL

Blackened brass

ORIGIN

Undetermined

CUSTODY

Unbroken

At 04:13, beneath a sky clear enough to make every star look cut from glass, a survey crew found a brass cylinder standing upright in the dust of Sable Basin. There were no tracks leading to it and no disturbed soil beneath it.

The cylinder bore no maker's mark. Its outer rings were warm despite the cold desert air. Inside were four instruments, a field map darkened at the edges, and one strip of recording wire.

RECOVERY TECH / FIELD STATEMENT

"The stars were reflected in every brass ring except one. When I touched that ring, something inside knocked once."

Pressed into black wax: DO NOT ENTER ALONE.

Eighteen days earlier

The expedition expected to remain below for seventy-two hours. Venn scheduled radio checks at dawn and midnight. Vale logged every response. Rook measured every meter of recording wire. By the fourth night, the measurements no longer agreed.

DAY 01

The Venn Expedition establishes camp at the sealed shaft.

TRANSCRIPTION / FINAL CLEAR SIGNAL

"A sky below."

Venn field channel / 11:46

DAY 04

A circular stone threshold is recorded beneath the basin. No known road reaches it.

DAY 11

The team reports that their bearings no longer agree, even when read side by side.

DAY 18

Final radio transmission: 'We have found a sky below.' The signal ends at 11:46.

DAY 36

The courier cylinder appears seventeen miles from the sealed shaft.

The camp was intact. The expedition was not there.

Four people entered Sable Basin



THE VENN EXPEDITION / PRIVATE CARTOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Their assignment was modest on paper: chart the exposed shaft, verify the age of the stonework, and determine why ordinary navigation failed within the basin.

What survived is stranger than a disappearance. Each member's final account places the others somewhere different. Each describes the same walls. Each sounds certain.

No account has been proven false.

The following profiles are cleared for opening-session use.

The cartographers



EXPEDITION LEAD / CELESTIAL CARTOGRAPHER

Dr. Amabel Venn

Disciplined, persuasive and accustomed to being obeyed. Venn assembled the survey after finding evidence that Sable Basin had been mapped long before its rediscovery.

FIELD NOTE

Her first rule is written twice in the recovered folio: keep every instrument within sight.



COORDINATE THEORIST

Celia Wren

Fast, exact and impatient with assumptions. Wren was Venn's most promising student before missing data in the expedition briefing fractured their trust.

FIELD NOTE

She underlined one question until the paper tore: What if the map is correct and the witness is moving?

The instruments and the signal



FIELD ENGINEER

Tomas Rook

Warm, direct and relentlessly practical. Rook designed the expedition housings and joined partly to protect his younger sister, Celia—and partly because he could not leave an impossible machine alone.

FIELD NOTE

His measurements disagree with one another. His handwriting does not.



SIGNAL RECORDER / COURIER SPECIALIST

Jonah Vale

Observant, humane and newest to the team. Vale was ordered to remain outside the first gate, maintaining the recording wire and the team's only route back to daylight.

FIELD NOTE

The recovered cylinder is his. The camp record contains no evidence that he returned with it.

The Meridian Instruments



01 Starglass

Reveals light and star-points hidden from ordinary sight.

02 Meridian Needle

Returns a bearing by touch. It has never indicated geographic north.

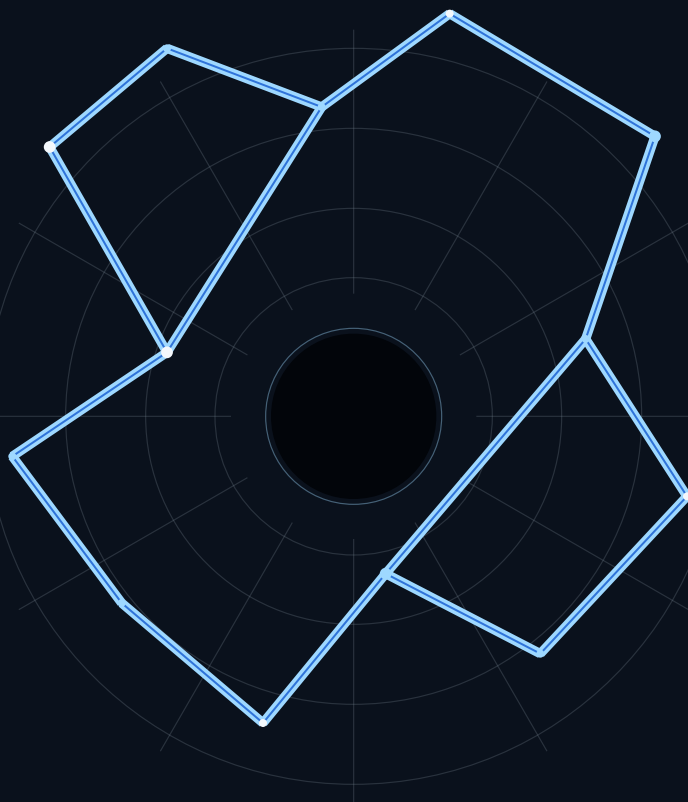
03 Echo Dial

Separates tones, impacts and recorded voices from the same signal.

04 Chronolabe

Layers a moment into several readable positions through moving rings.

A map that refuses north



COMPOSITE OF FOUR FIELD SKETCHES / NOT TO SCALE

CONFIRMED IRREGULARITIES

- 01 All four sketches describe the same chamber.
- 02 None places the entrance on the same wall.
- 03 Measured distances remain internally consistent.
- 04 Every conventional bearing changes after dark.

Venn's margin note: 'Direction is a promise this place does not keep.'

The original chart is sealed. This reconstruction contains no navigational solution.

Before the gate is opened

01

Gather 2-4 Keyholders

Everyone must be physically present in the same room.

02

Prepare one shared screen

A TV, laptop or large tablet will display the sanctuary.

03

Keep one phone per player

Each phone will become a different Meridian Instrument.

04

Enable sound and haptics

Some information will be heard or felt privately.

FIELD CONDUCT

This mystery is hostless. Read marked passages aloud. Keep devices on the table unless instructed. Move slowly when handling another Keyholder's instrument. If anyone needs to pause, the Meridian waits.

Remote entry is unavailable. The Meridian requires everyone present.

Place the four phones around the same table.



THE SIXTH KEY

FOR PLAYERS WHO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.
A HOUSE & DESIGNS PRODUCTION

THE CHRONICLE ENDS

THE GATE OF FALSE NORTH

The Room Begins

The cylinder ticks—not like a clock, but like someone counting from the other side.

Do not enter alone. Do not trust north.

Return to the Room screen. Claim one Meridian Instrument and wait for the gate.

THE SIXTH KEY / THE HOLLOW MERIDIAN