

A Threl Starter Module & Playtest Package

Version: 2.1 — MVP Canon-Corrected

Status: Playtest Protocol

Authority: Minimum Viable Dabar (MVP) System — Approved Canon

Setting: [[The Ashenfold District]] — abandoned residential ward at the edge of a Scriptorum-City

Reference: The Prodigal Dungeon (Module 00)

This document follows the Threl Rules & Mechanics Master Reference. Earlier procedures that conflict with that reference are superseded.

I. Adventure Background

The party enters **The Ashenfold District** — an abandoned residential ward at the edge of a Scriptorum-City. Eleven years ago, Aldric Vael died and left the district to his son Caeden, who stopped maintaining the Dabar columns. The Lattice has degraded, shadows fall at wrong angles, and a persistent low hum haunts the streets.

A pack of Stridor-Wolves (Fray-corrupted) now stalks the perimeter. The party must investigate the district, confront the corruption, and decide whether restoration is possible.

***Note:** This playtest module is set in the Ashenfold District, the canonical location from The Prodigal Dungeon. GMs should reference The Prodigal Dungeon for full context.*

II. GM Playtest Objectives

- 1 Test the **MVP Phrase card system** during encounters. Use prepared Phrase cards and their printed values; do not recalculate glyph totals or exact DCR.
- 2 Track **Strain accumulation** across a three-encounter session using the six-box Strain Track from 0 to 6.
- 3 Observe the **Personal Condition** result when a player reaches 5 Strain and then fails or attempts a risky Phrase, or when a player declares **Force It** at 6 Strain.

- 4 Test the ordinary-play **single +2 Fray modifier** in a location the GM designates as Frayed. Do not apply the Ashenfold World Drift Score, Anchor modifiers, Vertical Friction, or other environmental modifiers to ordinary Phrases.
 - 5 Optionally, run a separate design-layer trial of the Ashenfold's World Drift Score +3. Record it separately; do not combine it with the ordinary MVP encounter results.
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III. Encounter: The Stuttering Pack

Three Stridor-Wolves attack the party as they explore the district's outskirts.

Mechanics

Flicker: While Flicker is active, the wolves' forms stutter between coherent positions. Define the creature entry's exact targeting penalty before play and use that one effect consistently.

MVP Resolution:

- Players use prepared Phrase cards. Resolve each Phrase with its printed Strain cost, printed DC, printed effect, and printed Failure Echo.
- A Phrase suppresses Flicker only if its **printed effect** explicitly anchors, names, defines, or stabilizes a target. A theological tag alone does not grant a bonus or suppress Flicker.
- The **Witness** tag may guide the direction of a Failure Echo toward exposed truth, preserved evidence, or community visibility. It does not modify the roll.
- On a successful qualifying Phrase, apply the card's printed effect. If the card explicitly says that Flicker is suppressed, suppress it for the duration stated on that card.
- On a failed Phrase, use that card's printed Failure Echo. Do not replace the card's Failure Echo with a universal "Flicker remains" result.
- On a natural 1, apply the Failure Echo and add a minor narrative complication. Do not roll on a separate Backlash table.

Ashenfold Ordinary-Play Procedure

Use the Phrase card's printed DC. If the GM designates the current location as **Frayed**, the GM may raise that printed DC by +2. Do not add the Ashenfold World Drift Score, Anchor modifiers, Major-Working Multiplier, Ritual Interference, or Linguistic Friction to an ordinary Phrase.

Optional Design-Layer Trial

If the purpose of the playtest is specifically to test World Drift Score, run that trial as a separate advanced procedure. The Ashenfold's design-layer World Drift Score is **+3**, but it is not an ordinary-play casting modifier. Record its effects separately from MVP encounter results and do not combine it with the single +2 Fray modifier.

IV. The Column Intersection Ritual

The party reaches the intersection of four stone pillars at the heart of the Ashenfold. Each pillar carries a complete five-tier Dabar column. They are intact, complete, and silent.

Partial Stabilization — Site-Bound Maintenance Rite

The column intersection recognizes a fixed legacy maintenance rite. It is not an improvised Dabar Phrase and cannot be reproduced away from the Ashenfold columns. Its listed DCs and consequences are module-specific and replace the ordinary Phrase procedure for this rite.

Action 1 — Declare Intent (The Moral Seal)

- The player states aloud in character what they are asking the columns to do and why.
- There is no skill check and no wrong answer. The act of speaking intent into silence is the mechanic.

Action 2 — First Formula (DC 13 Wisdom [Religion]; proficiency applies; no check for ordained priests)

- Available formulae: RUH (presence/breath), DUR (endure/stand), QAD (holy/set apart).
- **Success:** One pillar resonates — Divine Gold light appears for a moment.
- **Failure:** The speaker marks **1 Strain**. An ally may attempt the action instead. Do not use a separate Backlash table.

Action 3 — Second Formula (DC 13 Wisdom [Religion])

- Available formulae: SATH (witness), TAM (whole/complete), GAL (wind/rushing).
- **Success:** Two more pillars resonate. The wounded Static Stalker, if present, must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become Frightened for 1 minute and retreat.
- **Failure:** The speaker marks **1 Strain**. An ally may attempt the action instead. Do not use a separate Backlash table.

What Partial Stabilization Does:

- Three pillars glow. The fourth remains dark. Restoration is possible but incomplete.
- The Tuning Codex is still needed. Caeden is still in the estate.

Player Handout: The MVP Dabar Loop

Dabar is not magic or a free-form energy source. A Phrase is a truthful, bounded declaration made through the quantum-harmonic interface with the Lattice.

Cast a Prepared Phrase

- 6 Choose a prepared Phrase from the MVP Phrase Card Index or your character sheet and state your intent in one sentence.
- 7 Mark the Phrase’s **printed Strain cost**: Minor 1, Major 2, or Consequential 3. Do not calculate glyph Strain at the table.
- 8 Roll once: d20 + the normal relevant casting modifier against the Phrase’s printed DC.
- 9 In a Frayed location, the GM may raise the printed DC by +2. Do not stack other environmental modifiers.
- 10 On success, the Phrase’s printed effect resolves. On a total at least 5 above the DC or a natural 20, the GM may add a beneficial narrative detail.
- 11 On failure, use the Phrase’s printed **Failure Echo**. On a natural 1, also add a minor narrative complication.

Six-Box Strain Track

Your Dabar pressure is temporary. Start at 0 unless a specific approved module rule says otherwise.

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Filled Boxes	State	Effect
0–2	Clear	No additional effect.
3–4	Pressured	Gain a visible Fray tell or minor narrative complication.
5	Unstable	The next failed or risky Phrase creates a Personal Condition .

Filled Boxes	State	Effect
6	Overflow	No safe casting; you may choose Force It .

Force It

At **6 Strain**, before rolling, you may declare **Force It**.

- The Phrase resolves as stated. If the card says Force It is guaranteed, it succeeds automatically; otherwise, roll normally.
- You create one **Personal Condition** even if the Phrase succeeds.
- If the act materially changes the location, the GM creates one **Local Condition**.
- Do not change Campaign Ripple Drift numerically unless the module explicitly assigns a value.
- You cannot use another Phrase until your Strain is reduced.

Recovery

Action	Benefit
Short Rest (10 minutes)	Clear 2 Strain.
Long Rest (8 hours)	Clear all Strain.
Personal Conditions	Do not clear automatically. Resolve through a restorative act, divine intervention, downtime, or narrative milestone.

Strain is temporary pressure. A Personal Condition is a persistent consequence. They are not the same resource.

Theological Tags

A Phrase's tag guides the direction of its consequence; it does not modify the roll or automatically unlock an effect.

Tag	Consequence Direction
Mercy / Chesed	Restoration, reconciliation, surrender
Peace / Shalom	Stabilization and prevention of escalation
Judgment	Decisive result with collateral or irreversible risk

Tag	Consequence Direction
Grace	Restoration after vulnerability or sacrifice
Mystery	Uncertainty, incomplete knowledge, interpretation
Witness	Truth preserved, but the caster or community exposed

Playtest Feedback Form

Please summarize notes on the following after the session:

- 12 Did the **Phrase card system** feel intuitive? (Yes/No)
- 13 Did **Strain** feel like a meaningful tactical resource? (Yes/No)
- 14 Did **Failure Echoes** create engaging consequences?
- 15 Did **Personal Conditions** add narrative weight to risk?
- 16 Did anyone use **Force It**? What was the result?
- 17 Which **Theological Tag** felt most or least useful as a consequence guide?
- 18 How did the ordinary-play **+2 Fray modifier**, if used, affect play?
- 19 If the optional World Drift trial was run, how did it differ from ordinary MVP casting?
- 20 Did the Partial Stabilization rite feel clear and thematic?
- 21 Narrative feedback: Did the Ashenfold's atmosphere — wrong shadows and low hum — come through?

GM Metrics

Metric	Value
Number of ordinary MVP Phrase checks invoked	_____
Number of site-bound rite checks invoked	_____
Number of Failure Echoes triggered	_____
Number of Personal Conditions created	_____
Number of Local Conditions created	_____

Metric	Value
Number of Force It declarations	_____
Number of +2 Fray modifiers applied	_____
Optional World Drift trial run?	Yes / No
Module outcome (Full / Partial / Compromise / Abandonment)	_____
Campaign Ripple Drift applied at module end	_____

Session #: _____
Date: _____
Players (names/roles): _____
Duration: _____

“The world has fallen. The light still burns. Will you carry it?”

— Ironveil Press

Reference

[1]: </home/ubuntu/upload/Rules&MechanicsMasterReferencei.txt> — *The Threl* — Canon Rules & Mechanics Master Reference, Version 1.0, updated 2026-08-30.