

THUNDERSCAPE™

THE WORLD OF ADEN



THUNDERSCAPE NIGHTS 02

Mission of Mercy

PATHEFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE



THE WORLD OF ADEN ORIGINALLY CREATED BY SHANE LACY HENSLEY

Thunderscape Nights 2:

MISSION OF MERCY

Written by Ryan Boudwin & Shawn Carman



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THUNDERSCAPE

THE WORLD OF ADEN

Thunderscape Nights 2: Mission of Mercy

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MISSION OF MERCY

A 2ND LEVEL ADVENTURE FOR THUNDERSCAPE CHARACTERS

Mission of Mercy is an adventure designed for low-level characters who have been passingly introduced to the world of Aden, perhaps by the previous module in the Thunderscape Nights series, or perhaps by another adventure of the GM's own creation. Regardless, it makes some assumptions that the characters are at least somewhat familiar with basic concepts concerning life in Aden, primarily the Darkfall and, to a lesser extent, the political situation in the nation of Yzeem.

The primary theme of Mission of Mercy is desperation. Everyone involved in the adventure as it is written is desperate to achieve their overall goal, many of which are contradictory to one another. The characters will be presented with a choice as to whom they should help. The simple answer, the "right" answer if such a thing exists, is to honor their word and fulfill the task for which they were hired. Another, perhaps more profitable and certainly safer option may be to give the prize to another party, avoiding violence and perhaps gaining valuable allies in the process. But then, player characters rarely make simple choices, do they?

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Ramila Cythin, a young girl of sixteen, is dying. With her father Ulmari away from their small village, bringing their wares to the great markets of Balaquim, she foolishly ventured outside the village stockade near dusk and was attacked by nocturnals just outside the gates. The local guardsmen managed to fight them off and drag the beaten and bleeding Ramila back behind the safety of the walls, but the local healer's efforts to bring her back to consciousness have been in vain, because Ramila's heart itself has been damaged by the Darkfall.

Hoping beyond hope that there was time to still save her, the healer sent a letter to the girl's father Ulmari in Balaquim explaining the situation. Unfortunately, Ulmari was injured in a raid shortly before arriving in Balaquim and is in no condition to complete the dangerous journey back home. He has found a dealer who can sell him the mechemagical heart his daughter needs to survive. Unfortunately for him, the heart he seeks to buy had previously been sold to Horus Kithbane, a golemoid pirate captain in Rook's Roost desperately clinging to life, before it was stolen back and offered for sale again by the unscrupulous merchant. Horus and his men will do anything to get it back, because while the heart is not overwhelmingly expensive, those with the skill to craft them are rare and there are few available.

- SCENE ONE - THE PRICE OF LIFE

The PCs begin the adventure in Balaquim, the capital of the nation of Yzeem. How they arrived there is a matter for each GM to determine based on the background of his campaign. Perhaps they came here as

sailors, traders or caravan guardsmen. Yzeem could be their homeland. The characters may already be familiar with one another or, if this is the inaugural adventure in a new campaign, they may unite for the purposes of a job. Regardless of whether as a group or individually, the characters get word that there is an old man looking for adventurers willing to brave the risks of the plains outside the city for good coin. Word on the street is that the man has embraced the cliché and set up in a local tavern to interview potentially interested groups. Nevertheless, most people say that the pay is good if one isn't afraid of a little danger.

As you enter the inn, the stench of stale sweat and cheap liquor assaults your nostrils. You step over a drunk passed out near the doorway and make your way towards the common room. Your inquiries quickly bring you over to a darker corner, where an old man with his head wrapped in a bandage and his arm wrapped in a sling motions for you to join him. As you approach, you see his crutch propped up against his chair. It is obvious he is in a great deal of pain.

"Thank you for coming. I am Ulmari Cythin. I have need of someone with your talents, someone who isn't afraid of stepping out of the city gates. I need a small parcel delivered as quickly as possible to my village to the northeast of here. Unfortunately I am not in a fit state to make the delivery myself. I am willing to compensate you appropriately for the risks involved, but you must move quickly."

Ulmari is hesitant to give many details until the PCs have agreed to take the delivery. He offers them half of the carpets his caravan has brought down to Balaquim. He hasn't been well enough to get them sold yet, but they are of good quality and if the characters are interested, they should fetch a nice price on the market (the GM may determine a suitable level of reward based on the needs of the campaign, but at least 500 crests per party member is recommended). If asked about his injuries, he explains that his caravan was ambushed by nocturnals just before they arrived at the city. If the PCs insist on knowing what they would be carrying, he will explain about his daughter's situation. Once the PCs have accepted his task, he continues:

"Thank you. My daughter was attacked by nocturnals and is hovering on the edge of death. The healers have done what they can, but her heart has been grievously wounded by the Darkfall. I need you to deliver a mechemagical heart to replace it before the corruption spreads and I lose my daughter forever." He takes out a small pouch of gems and empties them onto the table. "You will need to find a merchant known as Razeem in the market district. He has a reputation for trafficking in mechemagic items, you understand. Tell him I sent you. He will know what you are there for. These gems should cover his fee."

Ulmari is a very private man. He is a bit uncomfortable involving strangers, but doesn't really have a choice. He doesn't want to be pitied and reacts negatively to any such display, although sincere sympathy is recognized and appreciated. The only way the PCs will reach the village in time is if they can catch up to the northbound Thunder Train that has already left Balaquim a matter of hours beforehand. He explains that after they acquire the parcel, the PCs will need to travel north along the Life River about a hundred miles on a fast steamboat until they arrive at the small town of Cyir, then march east about twenty miles until they arrive at the thunder train station. Ulmari has already booked the steamboat for the PCs.

"Once you begin your march, you must move quickly and not stop, under any circumstances. That area is infested with nocturnals. I pray you will arrive before dark, or you may not arrive at all. You must hurry and avoid any possible delays. Time is running out for my dear Ramila!"

In addition to the fee he is willing to pay, Ulmari offers the party two cure light wound potions to help them complete their march. If the PCs are able to make it to the train station in time, the well-defended thunder train will take them the majority of the way to Ulmari's village through some extremely dangerous territory.

- SCENE TWO - FINDING RAZEEM

The PCs now need to find Razeem, who is actually a fence specializing in moving stolen mechatmagical items. He recently bought the heart from a local burglar that lifted it from a vessel in port. If the PCs ask a guard or a reputable merchant, it will require a DC 20 Knowledge(Local) or Gather information check to find Razeem's location. If they instead ask a barkeep or anyone else who might have ties to the criminal underworld, the DC drops to 10. Each failed check causes an hour's delay. Once they find Razeem, read the following:

You travel to the edge of the market district, just inside the city. There you find a very tired donkey still hitched to a small enclosed wagon, painted with yellow and decorated with red script. A fat older human man with a long full beard stands next to the open doors of the back of his cart. Mechanical arms and other various gadgets hang on display. He looks up at you as you come closer, and says, "Welcome, welcome! Come and see the latest in mechatmagical technology! Razeem has the best prices you'll find anywhere!"

If the PCs mention Ulmari's name, Razeem will pull the heart out from the back of his cart and allow the PCs to inspect it. Once the PCs produce the gems as payment, Razeem will make a big show of examining the gems, and then claim the gems are flawed and therefore are insufficient payment, and demand 200 additional gold to close the deal, hoping his bluff will help him increase his profit. If the PCs call him on his lie, he will try to get them to lower their voices and offer to just take the gems. If the PCs are able to haggle well, the lowest price he will take voluntarily is half of the gems Ulmari provided, and he will only take that if he doesn't know there are more to be had.

Razeem's stats are below in the event that things turn violent, though Razeem is anxious to avoid a fight if possible. If pressed, Razeem will fire both his pistols first before switching to his dagger, feinting where possible to be able to use his sneak attack. Guards will arrive after 10 rounds to break up the melee. If Razeem is still alive at that point he will flee, as he has no wish to be caught with stolen property. If he is reduced to 5 hitpoints or less, he will flee for his life.

Razeem

Male Old Human Expert 4/Rogue 2 - CR 2 - XP 600

NE Medium humanoid

Init +5; Senses -; Perception +11

Defense

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 21 (6d8-6)

Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +6;

Defensive Abilities evasion

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork dagger +6 (1d4-3/19-20)

Ranged 2 pistols +6 (1d8, 19-20, range 30 ft)

Special Attacks sneak attack (1d6+1 bleed)



Statistics

Str 5, Dex 13, Con 9, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 15

Base Atk +4; CMB +1; CMD 11

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +12, Bluff +14, Sense Motive +11, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (local) +12, Disable Device +11, Sleight of Hand +10, Perception +11

Languages Eastern Common, Jurakti

SQ trapfinding, rogue talent (bleeding attacks)

Combat Gear masterwork chain shirt, masterwork dagger, two flintlock pistols; **Other Gear** masterwork thieves tools

Special Abilities

Bleed Attacks (Ex): Razeem can cause living opponents to bleed by hitting them with a sneak attack. This attack causes the target to take 1 additional point of damage each round for each die of the rogue's sneak attack (e.g., 4d6 equals 4 points of bleed). Bleeding creatures take that amount of damage every round at the start of each of their turns. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 15 Heal check or the application of any effect that heals hit point damage. Bleeding damage from this ability does not stack with itself. Bleeding damage bypasses any damage reduction the creature might possess.

- SCENE THREE - ON THE RIVER & BEYOND

After they deal with Razeem, the PCs are able to quickly find the steamboat waiting by the docks. Ulmari has prepaid them and they are anxious to get underway. The vessel is fairly small, with a crew of two (a pair of goreaux), room for eight passengers and is powered by two propellers driven by a manite-powered steam engine. It is light and fast. The crew is fairly reclusive and is very reluctant to say much of anything. They are actually smugglers trying to keep a low profile. The crew is confident their craft is fast enough to elude any nocturnals.

After a few hours of traveling, the sun sets and the boat continues in the darkness. One of the crew lights a bull's eye lantern that he uses to navigate his craft. About halfway through the night, have any PCs that are awake on the deck make a Perception check (DC 23) to spot a pair of nocturnals (wearing the form of crocodiles, a very common fear of those who dwell near the river's edge) before they jump from shallow water onto the boat and attack. If they succeed on this check allow them to act in the surprise round. The crew will stay out of the way and will leave the fighting to the PCs. For a party of 6 PCs add one more crocodile.



Crocodiles (x2)

Corrupted Young Crocodiles - CR 4 - XP 600

N Medium animal

Init +3; Senses darkvision; **Perception** +8

Defense

AC 17, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 14 (+3 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 16 (3d8+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2 (+4 vs mind affecting effects, disease, poison)

DR 5/Magic

Offense

Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.; **sprint**

Melee bite +3 (1d6+2 plus grab) and tail slap -2 (1d10)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks death roll (1d8+4 plus trip)

Statistics

Str 15, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Base Atk +2; CMB +7 (+11 grapple); CMD 18 (22 vs. trip)

Feats Skill Focus (Perception, Stealth)

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +9 (+17 in water), Swim +12; **Racial Modifiers** +8 on Stealth in water

SQ hold breath, Hide in Plain Sight (Ex)

Special Abilities

Death Roll (Ex): When grappling a foe of its size or smaller, a crocodile can perform a death roll upon making a successful grapple check. As it clings to its foe, it tucks in its legs and rolls rapidly, twisting and wrenching its victim. The crocodile inflicts its bite damage and knocks the creature prone. If successful, the crocodile maintains its grapple.

Hold Breath (Ex): A crocodile can hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to 4 times its Constitution score before it risks drowning.

Sprint (Ex): Once per minute a crocodile may sprint, increasing its land speed to 40 feet for 1 round.

After the encounter with the nocturnals, the boat is able to make it to Cyir without further incident, arriving just before dawn (assuming no delays up to this point). There is quite a bit of vegetation just next to the river that soon gives way to an empty desert after a few miles. As soon as Cyir's stockade is in sight, the ship heaves to the east bank just long enough for the PCs to get off. They will refuse any requests to go all the way to Cyir itself. The crew is rather shaken by the crocodile attack during the night and is anxious to return to Balaquim as soon as possible. Their fear of the nocturnals common to this area makes them very reluctant to stay put for long. Use their fear to show the PCs the urgency of completing their march before dark, and to go as fast as they can.

To arrive at the thunder train station, the PCs will need to travel for 12 hours at a normal marching speed. They can either do a forced march or hustle for part of this time to complete the march. At nightfall, a Perception check (DC 16) will reveal a pair of cacklers off in the distance behind them, stalking them and creeping ever closer to the party. They begin roughly 300 feet away. A Knowledge check (DC 12) using a suitable specialty (Arcana or Nature might be suitable, or even Local if the GM wishes) will inform the party that a pair of cacklers, while dangerous, is a manageable problem. If more gather, however, they could become a threat that cannot easily be overcome, and so the party may wish to deal with them before that happens.



Cackler

CE Medium Monstrous Humanoid - CR 2 - XP 600

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +6

Aura Cackle (30 feet)

Defense

AC 15, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 19 (3d10+3)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Offense

Speed 40 ft.

Melee Claw x2 +5 x2 (1d4+2)

Statistics

Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 15

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Ability Focus (Cackle), Improved Initiative

Skills Acrobatics +8, Climb +8, Intimidate +8, Perception +6

Special Abilities

Cackle (Su): A cackler's constant cackling is laced with madness and terror. All enemies within 30 feet of the Cackler must make a DC 15 Will save, and those who fail are Shaken by the terrible laughter as long as they remain within the aura. Those who succeed are immune to this cackler's cackle for twenty-four hours.

Environment any

Organization pack (4-9), troupe (10-20), horde (21-100)

Treasure standard

- SCENE FOUR - THE LAST LEG

When the PCs complete their march, read the following:

Off in the distance, you see a few lanterns hanging over a stockade wall as a few sentries march back and forth. You realize that you are nearly at the thunder train station you are looking for! Looking back, you see another larger group of nocturnals coming closer. Breaking into a run, you approach the gates and hail the guards. They open the outer portcullis and allow you inside before quickly closing it again, leaving you trapped in the gatehouse. Guards watch you through the murder holes above, pistols at the ready. A sergeant barks orders and you hear gunfire as musketeers open fire on the nocturnals just outside. Denied their prize, the surviving nocturnals flee back into the darkness.

Shortly thereafter, a pair of guards approaches the inner portcullis. They ask the PCs what brings them to the area and demand each of the PCs approach for inspection. Once they are satisfied that none of them are nocturnals, they open the portcullis and welcome the PCs to the town. The PCs have about an hour to make any purchases or get something to eat before the thunder train approaches.

You hear signal whistles all around you. The garrison quickly assembles near a large gate on the south side of town, a line of riflemen taking up position behind a line of swordsmen. The gate opens and an enormous thunder train pulls in to the station, its battlements lined with Urbanan Iron Guards on high alert. The gates are quickly closed as soon as the train clears and pulls to a stop. One of the officers calls out in alarm and the troops on the ground open fire on the back of the thunder train. After the smoke clears, you see that two large nocturnals that had been clinging to the bottom of the last train car are laying in a pile of dark blood and gore.

The garrison completes their inspection of the train and the players are allowed to pay their passage of 5 gold apiece and board the train. The conductor leads them to a half-filled freight car, with nothing more comfortable than a few crates to sit on. There are no passenger cars on this particular train. The PCs have done what they can, and now they can relax and await the end of their journey. The air is quite stuffy and the inside of the train is uncomfortably warm. Finally, the characters should feel safe, with Urbana's soldiers defending the train against any nocturnals.

After four hours, the train stops again to take on additional cargo. The door to the car opens and two more passengers enter the car. One of them is a savage looking reddish-furred Jurak, the other a small goreaux. A metal golem follows the pair shortly thereafter. They wait for the conductor to leave, and watch the PCs for a moment. After the train gets moving again, the goreaux steps forward.

"You've gotten far enough. I know who you are. That heart you are carrying belongs to Horus Kithbane, and you'll be handing that over now. He paid for it fair and square, and that filthy merchant had it stolen back to sell again. Greedy little beggar." He points to

the enormous Jurak next to him. "There's no need for Vorag here to indulge his darker side if you cooperate."

If the PCs avoid violence and try to negotiate, the goreaux is willing to explain that the heart had been stolen after it was already paid for and on its way to Rook's Roost. If asked his name he will identify himself as Gred Vixec of Rook's Roost. If the PCs push for compensation and succeed on a DC 22 Diplomacy check, he will offer them 150 gold each as a gesture of goodwill. Otherwise they will try to take it by force.



Gred Vixec

Goreaux Mechemage 4 - CR 3 - XP 800

N Small humanoid (goblin)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision; **Perception** +4

Defense

AC 16, **touch** 16, **flat-footed** 14 (+2 Dex, +4 Mage Armor); +4 vs constructs

hp 22 (4d6+4)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee dagger +0 (1d4-2)

Ranged scattergun +4 (3d4, x3, range 20 ft, BP)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks

4 – 0 Everheat Rune

5 – 1st Enrage Constructs, Mage Armor, Mend Construct x2, Shield

3 – 2nd Detonate Golem, Stoke the Flame, Reloading Hands

Enchantment, evocation, illusion are forbidden

Statistics

Str 6, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 20, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +0 **CMD** 11

Feats Inspiring Mechamagic (minion loyalty +1), Improved Initiative

Skills Knowledge(Arcana) +12, Knowledge(Engineering) +12, Knowledge(Local) +12, Disable Device +9, Spellcraft +12, Use Magic Device +6

Tactics

Before Combat: Gred will cast Mage Armor before entering the train (already included in his stats).

During Combat: Gred will attempt to avoid melee and let his golem do the fighting for him. He will use Enrage Constructs to get started, will target any PCs with implants with Stoke the Flame. If the PCs are using ranged weapons he will cast Shield to defend himself, Mend Construct to heal his golem, and will use Detonate Golem if his golem falls. He will use his scattergun from range when possible and reload with the Reloading Hands spell. If Vorag is reduced to less than 10 hp and his minion and Vorag have both fallen, he will surrender.



Shank, Metal Golem Minion

N Medium construct

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, darkvision; **Perception** +7

Defense

AC 14, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 13 (+2 Natural Armor, +1 Reinforced, +1 Dex)

hp 44 (4d6+4)

Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** +1

DR 1/adamantine

Offense

Speed 25 ft.

Melee 2 slams +6 (1d6+3)

Ranged Throw Anything +5

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Statistics

Str 16, Dex 12, Con --, Int --, Wis 11, Cha 1

Base Atk +3; CMB +5 CMD 15

Skills Perception +7

SQ Construct Traits, Link, Share Spells

Writs Swift, Mighty, Reinforced, Agile, Heaving



Vorag the Destroyer

Jurak Barbarian 3 - CR 2 - XP 600

CN Medium humanoid (human, orc)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6

Defense

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, -2 rage)

hp 40 (3d12+15)

Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +3 (+4 vs disease)

Defensive Abilities trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk greataxe +9 (1d12+7/×3)

Ranged mwk musket +5 (1d10)

Special Attacks rage (10 rounds/day), rage powers (intimidating glare)

Tactics

During Combat Vorag uses intimidating glare each round, attacking first, then focusing his glare upon the uninjured.

Base Statistics

When not raging, Vorag's statistics are AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; hp 34; Fort +5, Will+1; Melee masterwork greataxe +7 (1d12+4/×3); Ranged masterwork sling +5 (1d4+3); Str 17, Con 14; CMB +6; Skills Climb +5, Intimidate +12, Swim +3.

Statistics

Str 21, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12

Base Atk +3; CMB +8; CMD 17

Feats Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack

Skills Climb +7, Intimidate +14, Perception +6, Survival +6, Swim +5

Languages Common, Orc

SQ fast movement, orc blood, weapon familiarity, Blood Frenzy (+2 to damage against anyone who has dealt damage to them in the last 3 rounds), wastelander

Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds, potion of lesser restoration, potion of shield; Other Gear masterwork chainmail, masterwork greataxe, masterwork musket with 10 bullets, climber's kit, 250 gp

Tactics

Before Combat: Vorag will stay close to Gred.

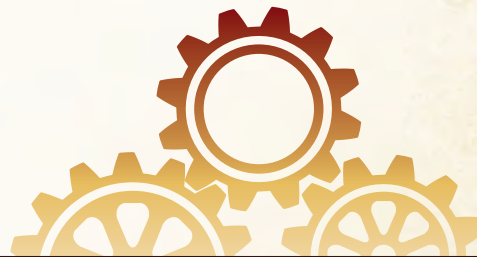
During Combat: Vorag will immediately charge into melee and rage, and will try to keep any melee PCs from getting near Gred. If Gred falls and Vorag is reduced to less than 10 hp, he will surrender.

EPILOGUE

Assuming that the characters remain aboard and that nothing additional happens, the train arrives at the Cythin's small village. Or, to be more accurate, the train passes by the village, or at least within sight of it. Such an insignificant settlement is of no interest to the crew of the Thunder Train, and they have no intention of stopping. The characters will have to jump off the train on their own, which may prove more interesting than they imagine if the Iron Guard mistake them for deserters. (The members of the Iron Guard consider desertion an offense worthy of on-the-spot execution.)

If the PCs still have the mechamagical heart, once they arrive in the town, the healer is waiting at the train station to greet them and will insist that they hurry to the Cythin residence. The healer and a local mechamage will perform the transplant, and Ramila will be saved. She quickly recovers her strength and defying expectations is able to return to her normal life within only a week. The PCs gain the trust of this village, who will take risks to protect them if needed. The village has a small stockade and could serve well as a base for the PCs to operate from in the future if they desire. Her father, Ulmari, will also become an ally for the future, and his trade contacts in Balaquim could prove very useful. Ulmari will not be well enough to return to the village for at least two weeks, unfortunately. It seems that Ramila got her iron constitution from her mother's side of the family.

If the PCs gave up the heart and still went to the village, the healer is still there waiting to greet them. He will tell the PCs that the damage to Ramila's heart is worsening, and if they have no other solution then Ramila will not survive much longer; a day or two at the most. What's worse, many in the village worry that the wound may have corrupted her, and there is a vocal and growing minority that insists she be killed to end a threat to the village. If the PCs protest, the village elders will refuse to allow Ramila to stay in her current condition, but with a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check can be persuaded to allow the PCs to leave with Ramila if they will take the responsibility for her.



A Corrupted Heart

What if the villagers are correct? It is possible that Ramila's injury is not merely physical, but spiritual as well. Even if her heart is removed and replaced with the mechamagical counterpart, what if her corrupted heart continues to live without her? Such a thing would obviously be cursed and potentially extremely dangerous. It's possible the villagers, fearful of destroying it, might hire the characters to take it somewhere else. Chucking it into the Skar seems like a good idea, but of course there's quite a bit of travel between the village and the Skar. Who knows what horrible things the corrupted heart might do to the characters before they made it there?

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