

Ten Candles: Aurora Australis

by [Justin Alexander](#)

October 31st, 2016

Earlier this year I reviewed Stephen Dewey's [Ten Candles](#). Since then, it has easily become my most-played and most-demanded game of 2016. Everyone who experiences it falls in love with it. I want to help keep boosting the signal for this wonderful game, so as a special Halloween treat I'm offering a new module for the game. (For those unfamiliar with the game, each module offers a unique initial scenario. The game comes with 25 modules included, most of which can easily be used over and over again with radically different results each time.)



Dr. McMannus had said that there was something wrong with the *aurora australis*. That's why he'd come down to Antarctica – to study fluctuations in the electromagnetic field of the planet. He'd taken a [snowcat](#) out onto the ice when the Dark came. You haven't seen him since.

Your satellite uplinks went down when the Sun went out, but you were able to hear the world fall apart through the scratchy audio of your shortwave radios. There's been some sort of interference (and it's been getting worse), and when you're trying to stay positive you can mostly convince yourself that's why you've lost contact with everyone else, their signals vanishing into the night one by one.

All that's left now is the harsh glare of the camp's spotlights and the endless, icy expanse which surrounds you in every direction. Here, at least, the Darkness is not absolute: From time to time, the spectral arcs of the aurora still dance green and crimson across the sky above, casting their strange hues across the scintillating snows below.

Someone has activated a navigational beacon at Paradise Harbor. It might be that evacuation ship they kept promising to send. But this morning you also picked up a second signal, this one from Dr. McMannus' snowcat. What you're hearing doesn't make a lot of sense, but it's possible he's still alive out there.

Areas of Note: [pod habitats](#), prefab storage containers, snowcat hanger, radio tower, science lab, the endless fields of ice

Goal: Cross the ice and investigate the radio signals



Ten Candles: Apocalypse Dark

[by Justin Alexander](#)

November 7th, 2016

The world ended awhile ago. At least, the world as you knew it: Famine and drought created desperation. Governments crumbled. Cities turned into wastelands. Marauders roamed the countryside.

But you survived. And you weren't alone. You and a small group of others formed a compound. You secured it. You rebuilt your own little corner of civilization and for the first time in a long time each year was a little better than the last.

Then the darkness came. Those on watch that night said that the stars swam before their eyes. The moon winked out. The sun never rose. The scavenged solar panels became worthless silicate, of course. It was decided that the gas for the generators would be conserved, but that changed when They came.

Your friends. Your family. Those you saved and those who have saved you. One by one they've been taken by something out there in the dark. Now only a handful of you remain. The walls haven't kept you safe, but they're the only defense you have. Can they be reinforced? Or would it be better to abandon them and hole up in one of the buildings? You'll figure it out. After all, if the Apocalypse couldn't kill you, then you can find a way to survive this, too.

Areas of Note: Ramparts, the locked armory, barracks, the cornfields, the solarium

Goal: Hold the fort



Ten Candles: The Dig - 1939

[by Justin Alexander](#)

November 16th, 2016

In 1868 Frederick August Klein discovered the [Mesha Stelae](#) at the site of ancient Dibon. One of the stelae told of the anger of Chemosh, god of Moab, who returned to his people in a time of trouble in order to overthrow the Israelites who had oppressed them. The other told of the bleak artifact which Chemosh – the squamous, aquatic destroyer who had raped the goddess Ishtar and pillaged her flesh; who had feasted upon the flesh of children given as *molk* fire sacrifices in the valley of Topheth; whose blood flowed through the abominations of the children of Ammon – left behind to crush the Jews if they should ever threaten his people again.

When the Bani Hamida – the local Bedouin tribe – discovered that the stelae had been recovered they seized them. When the Ottomans ordered them to be turned over to the German consulate, they heated the stelae in a fire, threw cold water upon them, and broke them into pieces with boulders.

Fortunately, just before their destruction, Charles Simon Clermont-Ganneau – the noted French orientalist and archaeologist – had managed to obtain papier-mâché impressions of the stelae. So deeply disturbed was he by the content of the second stele, however, that he secreted it away, reporting only the existence of the first to the wider world in a paper written for the *Revue de l'Instruction Publique*. (He might not have done even so much if George Grove of the Palestine Exploration Fund had not announced the find in a letter to the *The Times*.)



The second stele was recovered by the Ahnenerbe in 1936. After it was translated in early 1937, Heinrich Himmler decreed that the recovery of the artifact it described was of the utmost importance. A number of subsequent investigations – following the clues contained in the ancient stele – were undertaken.

It is now the summer of 1939. As Nazi agents of the SS, you have been hand-chosen to lead an archaeological expedition into the Middle East and conduct a dig near the ancient city of D'Khesh where it is believed the artifact was interred. Upon arrival in the region, you obtained the necessary permits, organized a crew of native diggers (mongrel half-breeds and the like), established your site, and commenced work.

Initial results have been promising, but the telegrams coming from Berlin have grown increasingly urgent and demanding. It seems that there is some great undertaking afoot in Germany, and the bane of Chemosh would be of untold benefit to the ultimate undertaking of the Aryan race.

Areas of Note: Officers' tents, native labor encampment, the latrine, vehicle pool, supply tent, the dig site, the acacia tree, the endless dunes of sand, the seal of black stone, the crypt beneath

Goal: Retrieve the bane of Chemosh

Special Note: The scenario starts normally, but when the vault of Chemosh is breached the Sun, Stars, and Moon are blotted out by the Dark. Shortly thereafter, They will arrive.



Ten Candles: Cretaceous Resort

[by Justin Alexander](#)

January 2nd, 2018

Ten days ago you were visiting Cretaceous Resort, an amazing island theme park where genetic scientists have recreated dinosaurs out of the ancient past. You were on the last legs of a glorious vacation viewing the majestic glory and alien cunning of perennial favorites like T-Rex, triceratops, and the raptors, alongside other species which have become household names only because Cretaceous Resort has summoned them back among the living, like the *Chilesaurus*, the “Frankenstein dinosaur” which provides a missing link between *Stegosaurus* and the carnivorous dinosaurs.



But that’s when the sun was swallowed up and the dark miasma spread across the sky. The charter flight from the mainland never showed up and you were stuck. Things weren’t too bad here on the island. Tension hung in the air as reports trickled in over the radio, but any incipient panic was mollified with complimentary mimosas.

Until They came.

There was a period of chaos then. It’s not clear who first let the dinosaurs out of the paddocks. Maybe They did it. But now the strange, fluted cries of the unnatural creatures echo out there in the Dark.

You and a few other resort visitors – perhaps with the help of some of the staff – have holed up in one of the tourist areas. You believe that similar enclaves also survived, although you’re not sure how many of them are still holding out.

Areas of Note: visitor’s center, resort hotel, rest area, supply shed, security bunker, boat docks, breeding labs, research lab, hatching facility, the aviary, nesting grounds, dinosaur graveyard

Goal: Get to either the security bunker or the boat docks. Survive.



Ten Candles: Between the Stars

[by Justin Alexander](#)

January 8th, 2018



It was a kind of death when you volunteered, but it was also the promise of new life: A unique life. A life unlike any that had been lived before.

It wasn't supposed to be like this.

You were supposed to be placed into cryosleep, loaded onto the *ICS Ultima Thule*, and sent hurtling across the void to the first nearby, habitable planet discovered by the Artemis satellite network. You were part of the maintenance team, scheduled to be periodically awakened over the course of the centuries-long voyage to make sure that the ship was still operating properly.

The first two maintenance wakes passed normally.

The third... didn't.

The stars are missing. Everything outside of the ship is a blank, empty void.

Actually, you're not even sure it's a wake. The internal chronometer is screwed up and the beacon from Earth has gone dead. The onboard computer responds to queries with some garbled nonsense that looks like Aramaic had a baby with Ethiopic Ge'ez, and the voicebox produces nothing but modulated static.

The scans are running. Maybe you're where you're supposed to be. Maybe there'll be a hunk of rock nearby, or an entire planetary system. Or maybe you're lost. Off course. Slipped into the cracks between the stars.

But whatever the problem is, it's on you to fix it. You're all alone out here.

You hope.

Areas of Note: bridge, cryochambers, supply caverns, galley, engine room, AI core, the shuttles *Copernicus* and *Kepler*, Jefferies tubes, antenna array, hydrogen collector

Goal: Find your new home

Special: The first appearance of Them should happen shortly after the scenario begins. You might also choose to start this scenario from the maintenance team awaking from cryosleep, allowing them to discover their predicament. Alternatively, the scenario could be tweaked so that the PCs are just normal colonists who awaken onboard the ship, unscheduled, and discover most or all of the other cryo-chambers broken open and empty. The mystery of what They have done with the other colonists would be resolved through play.

Ten Candles: Magic Academy

[by Justin Alexander](#)

January 15th, 2018



It was only a couple of months ago that you climbed the heliport mooring mast atop the Empire State Building and boarded the invisible dirigible that took you to the Academy for Sorcerers, Wizardesses, and Assorted Practitioners of the Magical Arts.

You didn't know what you were getting into when you took that strange standardized test in the fourth grade; the one everyone else in the class (including the teacher!) seemed to have forgotten about by the next day. And you weren't really sure what it meant when the *invitationis litteras* arrived in the mail, sealed with the sigil of the dragon's eye in green ink.

But it has been, if you'll pardon the pun and for lack of a better word... *magical*.



You've begun your study of the five elements, the twelve mystic ciphers, the seven esoteric elixirs. You've learned the use of the curcurbit, ambix, the nineteen *tebie* needles, and mercuric cinnabar.

The Academy itself was a never-ending puzzle box that slowly unfolded itself before your seven senses. Even when you think you've learned its every nook and cranny, there's another new marvel for you to discover.

You love it so much here that you elected to stay through the holiday break this year. Maybe that was a mistake, because that's when the Dark came. The teachers tried to penetrate its mysteries, but they met with little success. But then the Headmaster vanished and They came.



No one's quite certain what's happening beyond the Academy grounds now. You've lost contact with everything beyond the Styxian Moat. For a time, it seemed as if the Academy — protected by lights lit eternal and fueled by ley lines — was a bastion, but something else has become clear now: *The magic is dying.*

Areas of Note: dormitory quads, Ulama ballcourt, the crystal ball chandelier, headmaster's office, the old druid stones, caverns subterrene, auditorium stella, Elysian gardens

Goal: Revivify the magic, slip forth this mortal coil, and seek sanctuary beyond the Dark

