

# JULINDA'S GAUNTLET



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 5TH LEVEL  
BY WILLIAM BUCHANAN







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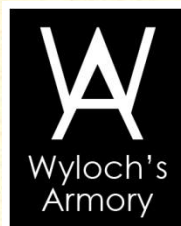
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# INTRODUCTION

## Overview

Put simply, this dungeon is one large puzzle built around the premise of time travel. Many PC interactions are a direct result of the party dealing with the actions of their past or future selves.

## Adventure Hook

Julinda the gnome mage has always been a bit off. She is a chronomancer who has become obsessed with achieving the reliable and reproducible technology of time travel, in the interest of returning to select parts of history and influencing their outcome to her pleasing; perhaps to avert a war, or to head off the enslavement of her people, or prevent the death of a loved one. Those who know her were aware of her ambitions, and now worry that they are coming to fruition, as she hasn't been seen in several months. And so, they have implored the PCs to seek her out...

## Dungeon Notes

### Entrance

Julinda found a natural tunnel high up the cliff-face of the nearby mountain range. It ended deep in the heart of the mountain, where she began to excavate and build. In the interest of security, she constructed an elaborate recursive series of rooms. This gauntlet serves as the entrance to her laboratory proper, the nature of which is ultimately revealed to be a time machine.

### Dressing

Unless otherwise noted:

Monsters carry no treasure.

The floors and ceiling are of gray slate, and the walls are of neatly arranged stone block.

All dungeon features are generally in very good repair. This is the active, working laboratory of Julinda the chronomancer.

### Random Encounters

There are no random encounters in Julinda's lair. The adventure has been specifically designed to be run in a single four to six hour session.

### Special Note

Effort should be made to maintain the mystery of this place. After the PCs activate the device in Room 6, it is best to let the players themselves naturally realize what is going on, as opposed to making Int or Wis checks. All of the minor anomalies that they cause or have already caused will start to become apparent.

The adventure is, unfortunately, written in a fairly linear ("railroad") manner in order to help prevent paradoxes; the fun will come in the players realizing their impact on their own past selves.

However, one twist for the DM to consider using is that if a paradox is somehow created, time and space are ripped asunder, and the party is thrown into the Astral Plane, perhaps commencing an epic adventure to restore order to the Material Plane (or whatever plane this adventure was set in).



# FIRST TIME THROUGH

## Room 1

- *This chamber is notable for a large brass hemisphere attached to the ceiling, polished smooth and throwing back warped reflections at you.*
- *Etched into green marble on the floor is the image of an hourglass.*
- *Four pillars are set symmetrically about the room.*

**Symbol** This is the symbol of Cyndor, the god of time.

**Hemisphere** This device is essentially a security camera. It is concerned with the volume of the room. If anything is physically present in or absent from the room (including the secret alcove but excluding the stairs in Room 2), there is a slight humming sound and the alarm is active. Once empty again, the humming stops and the alarm is no longer active.

**West Secret Door** This is actually a 10 foot slab of wall which slides in place, such that there is only access to Room 2 or Room 7 at any one time. It does project an aura to *detect magic*, but cannot be moved by physical or magical means, and can only change position as described in Room 2.

**North Secret Door** DC22 Perception check to detect broken grout lines. In the alcove beyond is a black stone pedestal upon which a *timesight wand* (see Appendix) is clamped. There are three locked iron clamps. Magical attempts to open them have a 50% chance to fail. They can also be picked (DC18 each). Any single failed attempt causes a *ray of frost* (17th level) to be cast from the warded pedestal, and any unlocked clamps re-close and re-lock.



## Room 2

- *The corridor ends at a polished gleaming iron door with no handle or keyhole.*
- *Protruding from the west wall is a 1 inch thick iron bar.*

**Door** Locked. Can only be unlocked via the pole below. Easily swings open once unlocked.

**Pole** The pole can be pushed into and out of the wall, but is long enough that it cannot be totally removed (due to impeding on the opposite wall). If the alarm in Room 1 is active, it is locked in place, and will not budge. Otherwise, upon pushing it inward any amount, a spring-loaded mechanism activates and it rapidly recedes into the wall, starting the timer on the trap (see Room 7). Then, there a flash of white light from the room above and the wall at the top of the stairs quickly grinds over, sealing the party in this corridor. Lastly, there is a loud click and the metal door eeks open.

## Room 3

This room is roughly 200 feet in height.

- *This large square room seems to have no ceiling. The walls simply reach upward and after only 20 feet or so become obscured in pure darkness.*
- *In each corner of the room is a plate of thick glass covering a recessed section of the floor. In each of these four cells resides a disgusting ooze, their bulk occasionally slamming against the glass in vain attempts to reach you.*
- *In the middle of the far wall is another pristine iron door.*

**North Door** This door does has lever-style handle, and is unlocked but extremely hot due to the lava in Room 4 beyond. Touching it without protection deals 1d10 fire damage (save Con for half).

**Oozes** There are two gray oozes, one ochre jelly, and one black pudding. When the time seems right (such as when the players open the north door), several chunks of rock suddenly fall into the room from the darkness above, breaking 1d4 random glass panels to free one or more oozes (the cause will become clear later on). They also strike one random PC for 1d10 bludgeoning damage (save Dex for half).



## Room 4

- *Beyond the doorway is a hellscape. This appears to be a natural cave tunnel.*
- *Instead of a floor, there is a pool of lava. Occasionally a bubble builds and bursts, spraying the walls and ceiling with glowing yellow and orange and filling your nostrils with fragrant sulfur. The heat is almost unbearable.*

**Ekkri** Just as the players attempt to take any action, the beating of wings is heard from the darkness above, and Ekkri suddenly appears behind them. See the roleplaying tips in the Appendix for this encounter, but ultimately, Ekkri must carry and fly each PC to Room 5.

## Room 5

- *The lava tunnel turns vertical just around the corner.*
- *Some thirty feet upwards the tunnel ends as a hole providing access to a large cave.*

Ekkri will fly each PC up to the ledge.

- *On a marble dais in the middle of this cave is delicate looking device. It appears to be a single sheet of fabric stretched in a spiral manner across wooden ribs which protrude radially from a central post, very similar to a Da Vinci's helicopter.*
- *Set into the southern wall is another iron door.*

**Door** Locked (pick DC18).

**Cave Walls** There is a narrow tunnel plugged with small rocks which is a burrow route for a Bulette (MM 34), which at the DM's discretion might burst into the room and attack, depending on the pace of the session so far.

**Device** This device is magically linked to the spiral staircase just beyond room 3 (second time through). Whatever is done to this device will manifest on that staircase in a voodoo-doll like manner (see Room 3, second time through for more detail).

## Room 6

- *This chamber has random shapes of ivory inlaid in the floor.*
- *To the south are three enormous pistons, frozen at varying elevations. Separating you and them is an intimidating mesh of grating; thick black iron bars cross-hatched together so densely such that one can barely fit a hand through.*
- *In the middle of the room is an ornate capstan adorned with pulsing cyan runes.*

**Grating** The grating is extremely strong and cannot be damaged by physical means or affected by magic of sixth level or lower.

**Pistons** These are 10' in diameter, occupying the full width of the "corridor" beyond the grating.

**Capstan** Turning the capstan causes the massive pistons to start churning, and within seconds the room fills with white sparks before everything goes black. This device transports the players back in time several hours. At that time, they were in Room 1. Therefore, that is where they arrive. Go to "Second Time Through" below.





# SECOND TIME THROUGH

## Room 1

The PCs have been thrown backward in time, arriving several hours ago. It is best to let the players figure this out naturally, as opposed to allowing Int or Wis checks, etc.

- *The blackness begins to clear, and reality begins to form around you.*
- *You immediately recognize the brass hemisphere in the ceiling above you. A split second later, your attention is jolted to one end of the room. A section of the wall slides over to seal off an open stairway, revealing a different passageway.*

**Ekkri** See the roleplaying tips in the Appendix for Ekkri's behavior here.

## Room 7

- *This seems to be a long plain hallway which turns north after about 30 feet.*

This is true.

- *The corridor goes another 30 feet and ends at what appears to be the bottom landing of a stone spiral stairway.*

**Trap** At the moment a PC walks past this location, a spike shoots from the east wall, dealing 2d10 piercing damage (save Dex for half). This is a mechanically delayed trap, triggered by the pole from Room 2.

**Stairway** This is a very long spiral stairway, ascending a total vertical distance of about 200 feet.



## Room 3

- *Finally, you reach the topmost step. Through an elaborately carved archway you see a large square room, a ceiling of natural black rock 20 feet above, riddled with stalactites.*
- *There is no floor; it seems to be a pit into absolute nothingness.*
- *In the middle of the north and east walls are two more archways, each accessible by a narrow natural T-shaped bridge of black rock connecting all three.*

**Archways** Embedded in the crest of each is a 500 gp black pearl, which is removable on a DC20 Dex check using thieves' tools (failure means the pearl is destroyed).

**Stalactites** Some of these are actually dark mantles (MM46), which attack as soon as anyone moves to the center of the bridge. At some point during the battle, provide the following flavor detail:

- *Suddenly some of the rock gives way. You are able to steady yourself, but a chunk of the bridge has fallen away.*

This accounts for the random falling rocks earlier in Room 3.

**Eastern Archway** If the PCs do not first engage Ekkri in Room 8, passage beyond this archway is either impossible (because that reality cannot yet exist) or creates a temporal paradox.

## Room 8

- *In this small chamber is an 8' cube cage. A birdlike humanoid held within gives a start upon seeing you enter.*

**Cage** Locked, pick DC15.

**Ekkri** See the roleplaying tips in the Appendix for this encounter.



## Room 9

**Stairway** This stairway descends about 150 feet. When the PCs are halfway down, recall what they did with the device in Room 5. If they didn't touch it, nothing happens. If they rotated it, the stairs suddenly begin rotating, perhaps countering or accelerating their progress. Consider other effects as well; for example, if they lit the device on fire, then the stairway becomes engulfed in flame, or if they tore some of the fabric, then some of the steps crumble and collapse. When they arrive at the bottom:

- *From the base of the stairway, you see ahead of you three massive gleaming brass cylinders pumping away.*
- *To the left, instead of a wall is a lattice of thick iron bars. However, you have barely turned your head to see it before there is a brief blinding flash of white light.*

**Flash** The players just witnessed their past selves activate the time shift device in Room 6.

**Pistons** These are 10 feet in diameter, and stroke from floor to ceiling in a repeating but offset pattern. It requires a DC18 Acrobatics check to successfully jump all three to the safe floor beyond. Failure means 3d10 crushing damage as the piston strikes the ceiling. However, a DC15 Intelligence check will reveal the pattern, thus lowering the Acrobatics check (for all party members) to DC12.

- *The pistons continue churning away behind you. You are at the foot of yet another spiral stairway, this one headed upward again.*

## Room 10

- *The spiral stairway ends and you face a corridor that runs 30 feet. You hardly have a second to observe anything else, as a group of figures are walking towards you. You immediately recognize them...as yourselves.*

**Party** This the party's future selves, having just subdued Julinda. The DM will roleplay them, and should take the opportunity to mimic the actual players' speech and mannerisms, but in a manner that is in good fun and not mean-spirited. From this conversation, the "future" party will need to somehow impart information to the current party: "read her face."

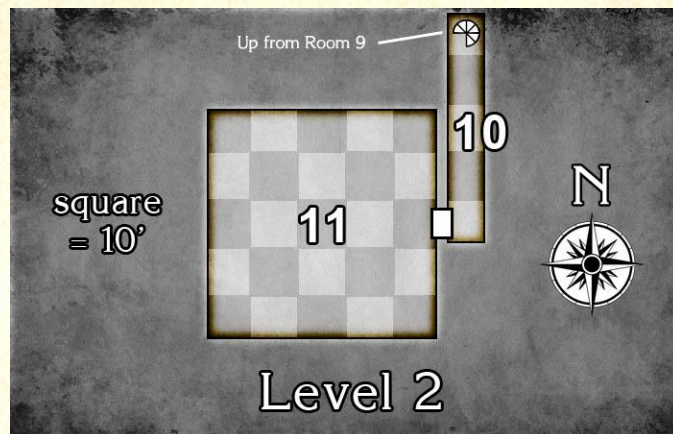
## Room 11

- *This large room is unlike anything you've ever seen.*
- *The walls are lined with buzzing coils and strange sculptures of wrought iron piping. Mounted on one wall are two clocks, both indicating the current time.*
- *The floor is a green grating of indiscernible material which occasionally pulses with light in random patches.*
- *In the center of the room is a cluster of panels riddled with hundreds of buttons and knobs, no two the same.*
- *Interacting with the apparatus is a female gnome in dark blue robes, her face covered with tattoos of the same hue. She gives a start upon your entrance.*

**Panel** The room is essentially a time machine. When activated, it causes time to move in reverse at an accelerating pace everywhere on the plane except within this room. The clock on the right will begin to move backwards, faster and faster. Entering the correct code will stop it, and cause time outside the room to begin moving forward again, although the two clocks will now be out of sync.

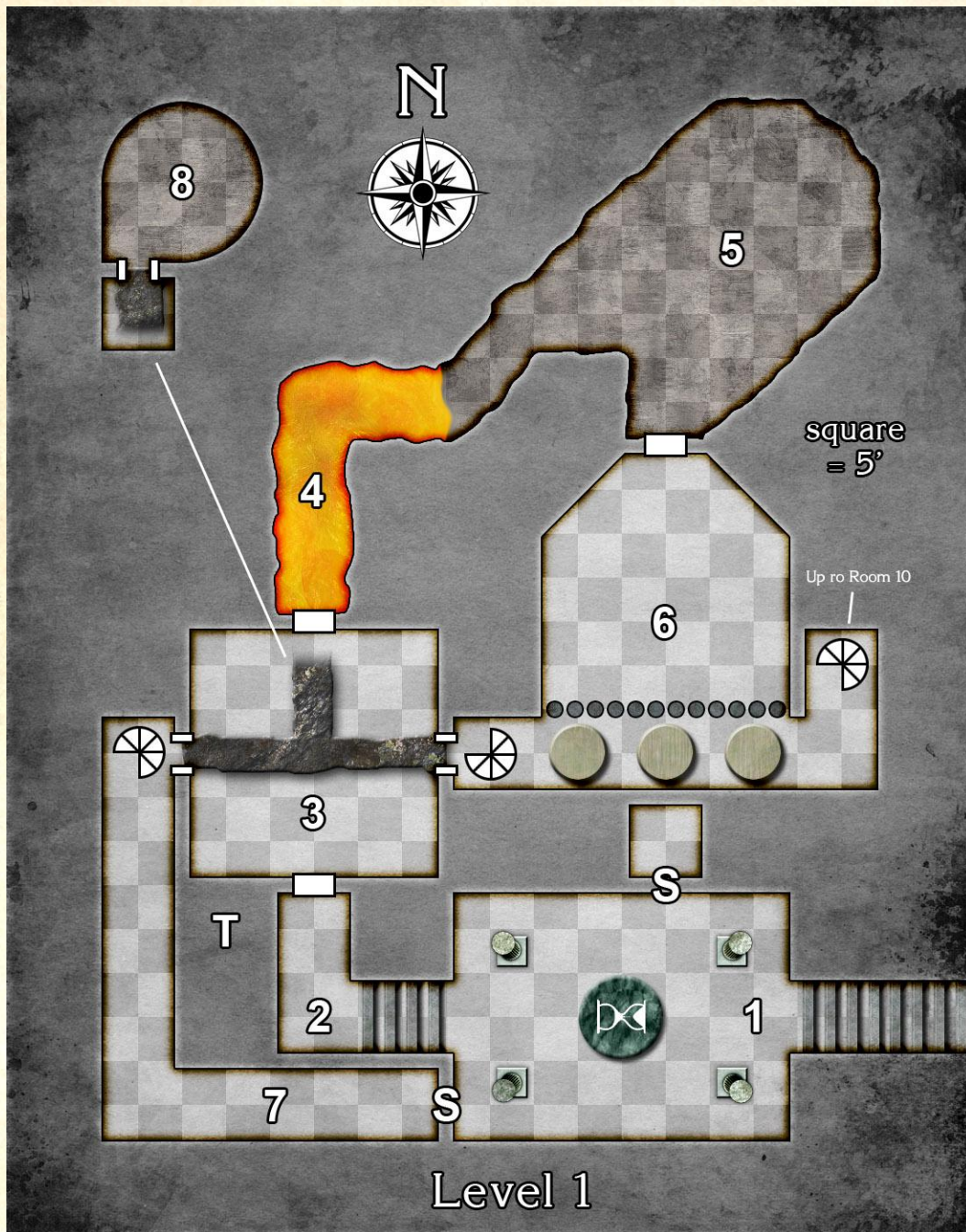
**Julinda** See the Appendix for roleplaying tips. The tattoos on her face can be deciphered to reveal the correct control panel sequence to halt the machine.

**Exit** Here is a final puzzle; a test of memory, of logic, and of role-playing. As soon as the party steps foot into Room 10 again, they are in the past, and they will encounter themselves coming in to confront Julinda. The PCs must be sure to re-enact whatever the DM did earlier during their meeting in Room 10, or else create a temporal paradox, destroying this plane and hurling them into the astral plane.





# MAP





# APPENDIX

## New Magic Items

### Timesight Wand

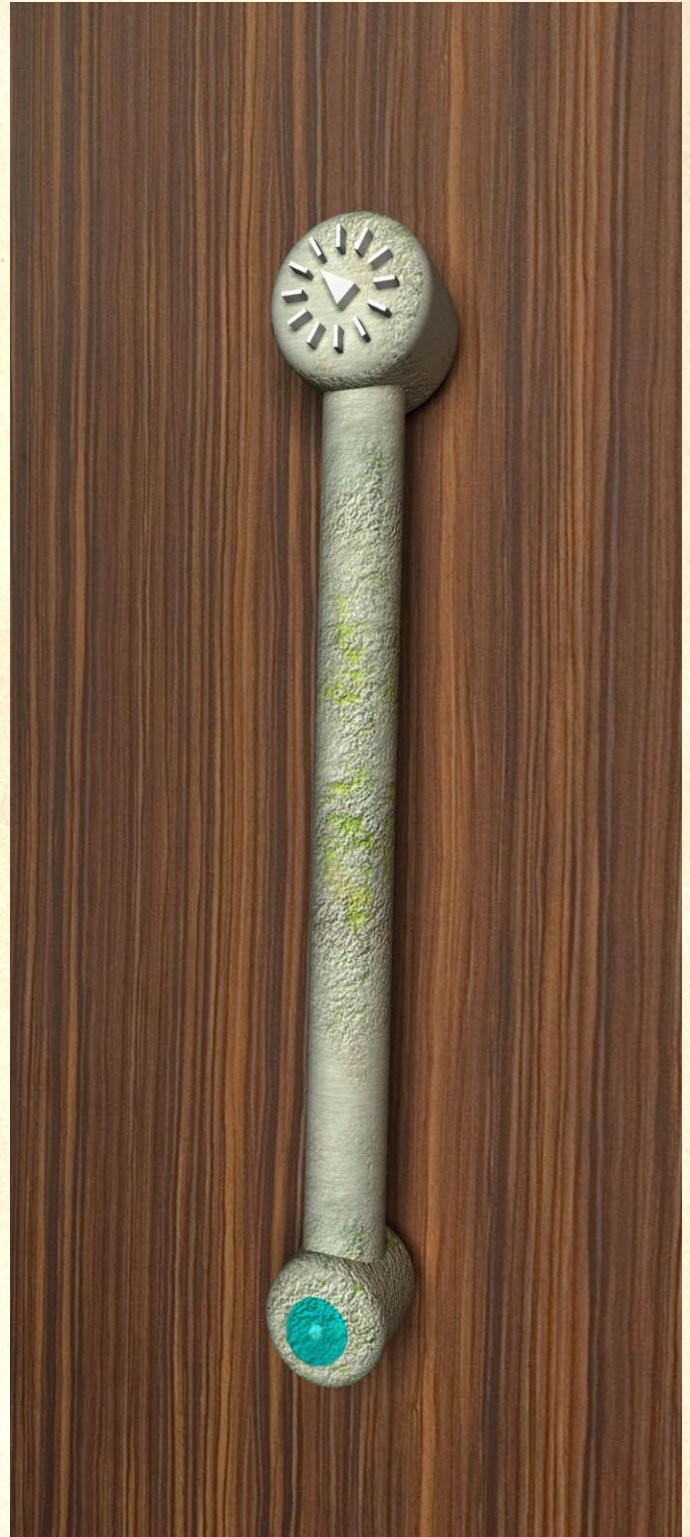
*Wand, very rare (requires attunement by an arcane spellcaster)*

This wand has 1 charge, and regains that charge daily at dawn. It is activated by twisting the dial at its end, pointing it at any sentient creature, and then speaking the name of Cyndor. If you expend the charge, roll 1d20. On a 1, the wand explodes and warps the minds of all within a 50 foot radius, lowering the victims' Wisdom by 2d4 points (treat this as a curse). Otherwise, the wand's user receives a rapid vision detailing the most important moments of that creature's life up to the present, as well as from the present to the end of its life assuming that user would take no action to intervene in those events (in other words, the user now has the power to either change or leave intact that creature's fate).

### Dust of Single Stasis

*Wondrous item, very rare*

When this pouch of crystalline dust is thrown upon a creature Large or smaller, time stops for that creature. The effect lasts 2d4 rounds or until the wand is used again. For the duration, that creature is frozen in time, which means it can take no action, and nothing can influence it in any way (examples: it cannot be cut because a blade rending the flesh requires some passage of time; the effect of any poison is paused because blood flow is stopped, etc). The target will not remember anything that occurs while in status. Its body cannot be moved by any force (e.g. - if it was midair when targeted, it will remain midair and then complete its fall with original momentum). It cannot be harmed, and any spells targeting it will fail. Any magical effects currently affecting it are paused. The sole exception to any of the above is the use of a *wish* spell, which can override any or all of these limitations.





## Notable NPCs

### Ekkri

#### Level 4 NG Aarakocra Ranger

On a patrol, Ekkri took note of Julina's excavation activities, but was caught while investigating. He woke up in this cell and has been here for weeks, being kept alive for unknown reasons (in truth Julinda might simply not have the heart to kill him; she's a mad scientist, not a murderer). He is of a swashbuckling good-nature.

#### Room 4, First Time Through

Ekkri appears, and offers to help the players by flying them one-by-one through Room 4 into Room 5. He will behave as if this is the first time he is meeting the party, especially if the "future" party told him to do so. He will state that he came here on a simple treasure seeking expedition but is now lost. He offers to help in return for escort to the exit.

#### Room 1, Second Time Through

When it comes obvious that the party has been returned to the entrance, Ekkri will thank the party for their escort and leave on a good terms as previously discussed, an ally made. He is also willing to carry any message the PCs might have for the outside world.

#### Room 8, Second Time Through

This encounter is actually the first time that Ekkri has met the party. In return for his freedom and escort to the exit, he will offer to help the party in whatever way he can. The party should realize from their experience in Room 4 that they need to ask Ekkri to fly downwards and help them get to Room 5. Ekkri is perfectly willing to help. If the party deliberately fails to engage him in this manner, they cannot pass beyond the eastern archway in Room 3; there seems to be an invisible wall of some sort, although in truth there is no magic at all. Rather, time and space do not yet exist beyond that archway because they could not possibly be in this room without having first sent Ekkri to help their past selves beyond Room 4.

### Julinda

#### Neutral Gnome Mage (MM347)

Equipped with three batches of *dust of single stasis*.

When the PCs enter the laboratory, she will scurry to the panels and start the machine. Considering her inability to kill Ekkri, the PCs might try to tap into the good that clearly still lives in her, and sway her from this dangerous project. However, though once she might have been saved, she is now too far into this project, and the lure of power has driven her near mad.

Julinda has a craze in her eyes. She believes that party was sent here by the Sulindal academies to stop her, which may very well be true. In any case, she will ultimately press the button to start the machine, and then likely initiate combat.

If killed, Julinda's journey ends in her laboratory.

If subdued, she cannot be persuaded to leave with the PCs. She understands that if she leaves this room, a paradox is created, which again will threaten the fabric of existence. However, she might attempt to start the machine again when the party leaves and the "past" party enters, establishing an infinite loop.

