

Arc 2 Seq 3 | Mini-Game

Setup

- **Context:** Automation is offline; the Technician must perform **manual moderation** to prevent reactor cascade.
- **Environment:** Reactor bay half-flooded with mist and radiant heat. Three **moderator vessels** are arranged in a semi-circle around a sealed containment pit. Each vessel emits a low pulse of light through rising steam.
- **Player role:** Manually grasp and insert the control rods through a rhythmic hand-feed mechanic (hold = advance; release = halt).
- **Companions:** Technician provides calm procedural rhythm; the Cultist murmurs counter-rhythmic encouragements that grow stranger as the sequence progresses.

Phase 1 – Initialization (Rod A)

- The Technician calibrates the first gate to demonstrate procedure.
- Environment noise is loud but stable; visible heat shimmer only mild.
- Player learns the tactile pattern — *press/hold to slide, release to control pace*.
- The hum of the reactor matches the **player's heartbeat**; subtle vibration confirms correct tempo.
- **Success:** Rod seats cleanly; indicator light turns green, reactor pitch steadies.
- **Failure:** Rod snags halfway; small alarm tone, minimal consequence.

“**Technician (focused but calm):** “Good. Keep the rhythm steady; the machine listens to consistency.”

Tension low, clarity high — the player gains confidence.

Phase 2 – Intrusion Begins (Rod B)

- As **Reactor A powers down**, its constant roar fades out, unexpectedly exposing a deep **frequency under-hum** — the **artifact's pacification field** bleeding through

containment.

- A **blinding white flare** floods the chamber, scattering reflections across the mist; the hum drops an octave but grows louder.
- The Technician's voice loses volume, muffled yet perfectly in tempo:

“Ease... catch... ease...”

- The **Cultist's voice** slices through, crisp and metallic, carrying faint reverb-tails:

“Let it move. Don't fight the flow.”

- Visibility warps with periodic overexposure pulses; shadows ripple out of sync.
- Player struggles to preserve rhythm as dual voices overlap — restraint versus surrender.
- **Success:** Two rods harmonize; reactor field stabilizes in pale amber glow.
- **Minor failure:** Over-insertion triggers vapor burst and minor camera bloom distortion but remains controllable.

Tension rises — something unseen begins to seep into the physical world.

Phase 3 – Full Artifact Intrusion (Rod C)

- The **artifact field surges**, twisting perception. Lights and motion start to **accelerate and decelerate unevenly**.
- Steam trails elongate; drips reverse direction for split seconds before snapping forward again.
- **Audio:**
 - Technician's words stretch and echo, pitch dropping whenever time feels slow.
 - Hum remains the same no matter what the shift in the Technician's pitch
 - Cultist's whispers multiply, shifting locations in stereo space—“You can't fight what *is...*”— perfectly on beat with the distortion.
- **Player challenge:**
 - Keep the rod moving at a *steady manual rhythm*, even as the world misleads their sense of timing.
 - The game's actual timing window stays constant; visual and audio cues drift to simulate psychic interference.
- **Success:** Containment field collapses neatly; overexposure drains to cool white; true real-time perception returns with a heavy exhale from the system.
- **Failure:** A sudden “snap-back” compresses time, causing camera jolt and screen haze. Reactor stabilizes, but residual shimmer hints the field wasn't completely purged.

Tension peaks — success feels uneasy, as if something larger noticed the intrusion.

Completion & Reaction

- The chamber settles under soft blue light from the seated rods.
- The **Technician** sags against a console, catching breath:

“We did it... barely.”

- The **Cultist**, transfixed:

“It sang with us.”

- Steam clears to reveal containment glass glowing faintly from within — a subtle pulse that almost matches the player’s tempo.
- Scene ends as the next system prompt signals **Gate Network Reactivation**, bridging into the following act.

Revision #14

Created 2026-01-06 10:54:22 UTC by Mike

Updated 2026-01-14 10:14:19 UTC by Mike