
DAWNING STAR
HELIOS RISING
HAMMOCK
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d20 system

DAWNING STAR

HELIOS RISING



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TO HELIOS

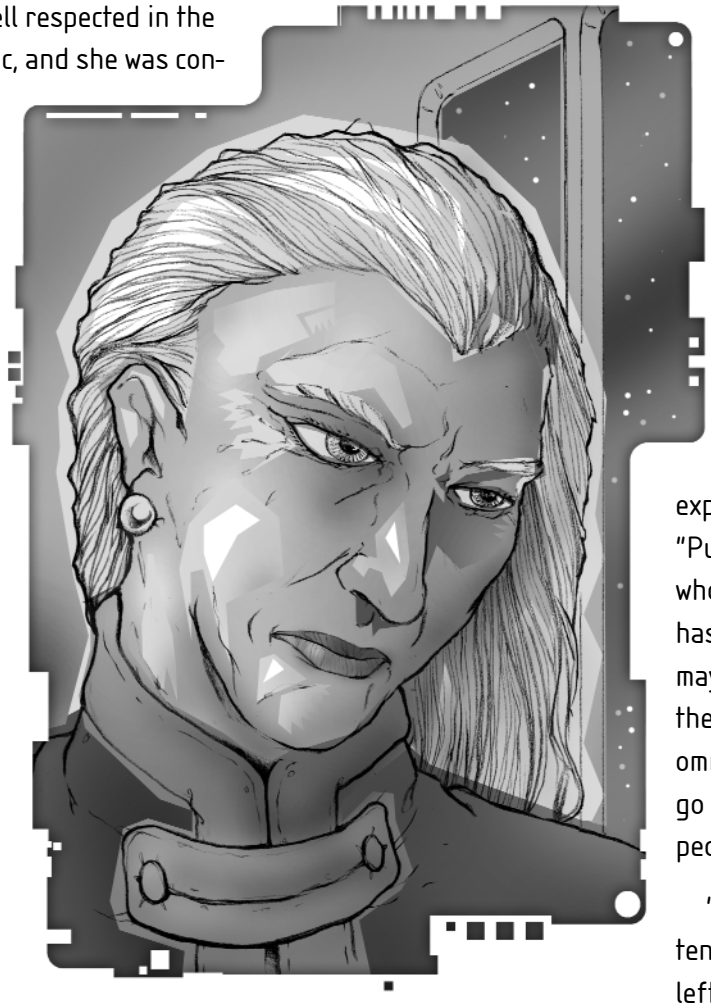
Hear, golden Titan, whose eternal eye
With matchless sight illumines all the sky.
Native, unwearied in diffusing light,
And to all eyes the object of delight:
Lord of the seasons, beaming light from far,
Sonorous, dancing in thy four-yoked car.
With thy right hand the source of morning light,
And with thy left the father of the night.
Agile and vigorous, venerable Sun,
Fiery and bright around the heavens you run,
Foe to the wicked, but the good man's guide,
Over all his steps propitious you preside.

Orpheus

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the deck of the Nebraska the twinkling lights of C'thalk and Verdant seemed to taunt Captain Pierce. She had been parked in orbit above Eos for fifty years, dutifully protecting the millions of colonists below her. For this dedication she was well respected in the Dawning Star Republic, and she was content with her accomplishments as she neared retirement.



But that didn't help her feel any less annoyed now.

"Lieutenant, how many ships are in the first exploration fleet?" she asked to the aged officer standing next to her command chair. Like most of the Eos Space Force he was old for his rank, the training facilities necessary for new fleet officers only becoming available in the last few years.

"Three, ma'am. One each to Verdant, Thres, and C'thalk, with a mission to the moons of Hesperos next year." He left off the assumed "if everything goes right"; it was well known that if any of these missions went sour the Republic would be loath to dedicate more ships to the effort. "Admiral Yates is assigning crews now."

"And there's no chance we'll be on those lists," Captain Pierce sighed as she leaned back in her chair. They generally didn't want gray haired captains of a grandmother's age leading exploratory missions. "Put together a list of who we can spare that has skills these missions may need and send it to the Admiral with my recommendation. If I can't go at least some of my people can."

"Yes ma'am," the lieutenant said and quickly left the bridge.

"I may not be the first one out there," Captain Pierce said as Thres came into view from behind Selune. "But I'll get there eventually."

The Helios System has seen the rise and fall of two star-spanning civilizations, the deaths of billions, and the arrival of a dozen new intelligent species to its component planets. It is without a doubt a vital place in this region of the galaxy, a place whose events will be echoed across the vast distances of space and through thousands of years of history, but all that has to start somewhere. Now the history makers are separated and unknowing, but soon they will begin to see the totality of the truth that the Helios system is far more than a random place that its new inhabitants have settled.

While humans have settled Eos, the rest of the system has remained outside their grasp. As the Dawning Star Republic refines and develops its space craft technology the humans will find a variety of worlds in the Helios system, each with their own challenges. From space stations haunted by beings of pure information to the Imperial Court of the Saurian Empire, the humans are in for quite a shock as they go bravely forth into the unknown of Helios.

USING THIS BOOK • • •

Helios Rising is intended as a sourcebook to provide information on the planets of the Helios system besides Eos. There is something interesting for characters to do on each of these planets, and several of them are inhabited by sentient creatures. This book provides an overview of each planet, detailing major factions, creatures, technologies, and other information that is vital to portraying that planet in a Dawning Star campaign. There are still wide swaths of the Helios System left open for GMs to develop, so don't worry that we've taken all the good real estate.

This book is designed to allow GMs to move their campaigns from Eos to the entirety of the Helios system and develop Eos as part of a larger world. While some GMs may wish to dive into this book and have their players take up interplanetary exploration on the part of the Dawning Star Republic or the faction-camps, others may wish to keep their campaigns on Eos and only use the information contained there in for occasional color. Several suggestions for campaign styles using this book are provided below.

I COME IN PEACE IN THE NAME OF THE DAWNING STAR REPUBLIC • • •

The characters are hired by the Dawning Star Republic for their skills, reputation, service to the Republic, or expendability to be part of the first exploration attempts by the Republic. Characters with piloting, navigation, survival, repair, and diplomatic skills would be the most in demand, but in an effort to cover all bases nearly anyone could be sent. Once the characters are underway they will be able to receive little assistance from the Dawning Star Republic so they have to be able to operate on their own for extended periods of time. The characters must be in good standing with the Republic and preference in terms of resources, rank, and other concerns will be given to characters who are actually officers of the Republic. Crew sent to explore the other worlds of Helios will be selected by Admiral Yates with input from the senior officers of the EDF.

The exploratory missions of the Dawning Star Republic are each aimed at a specific planet or goal instead of wandering from world to world. Characters will be expected to arrive at the target planet, carry out their assigned mission, and then return with all due haste. Unfortunately for the player characters these missions rarely go that smoothly. Instead they will have to deal with angry locals, strange creatures, and the occasional technological breakdown that pushes the limits of the resident technician's skills.

This sort of campaign will drastically alter the flavor of a campaign that had previously been limited to Eos. Characters will find themselves involved in a larger scale of conflicts and setting the groundwork for diplomatic relations for decades to come. The characters will be determining the course of history for the Helios system, a prospect far larger in scope than searching for relics on Eos. It may not be a well suited campaign model for a bunch of rancher characters simply looking to make a few credits, but anyone can accidentally end up on the wrong ship.

The Dawning Star Republic is most concerned with setting up diplomatic relations with its planetary neighbors and learning what it can from them. The Republic will avoid conflict where possible, but will not stand for attacks against its citizens. While the Republic will try to stay out of local disputes, conflicts that have a strong moral cause, such as the battle for the freedom of the straas, will probably see eventual Republic involvement. The Republic is also not interested in alliances, military or otherwise immediately. After getting to know its neighbors it is likely the Republic will form some manner of agreement with the Wolf Tribes. While the Republic has no laws against meddling in the matters of other planets, it expects those representing it to act with discretion and caution when dealing with these other planets and their inhabitants.

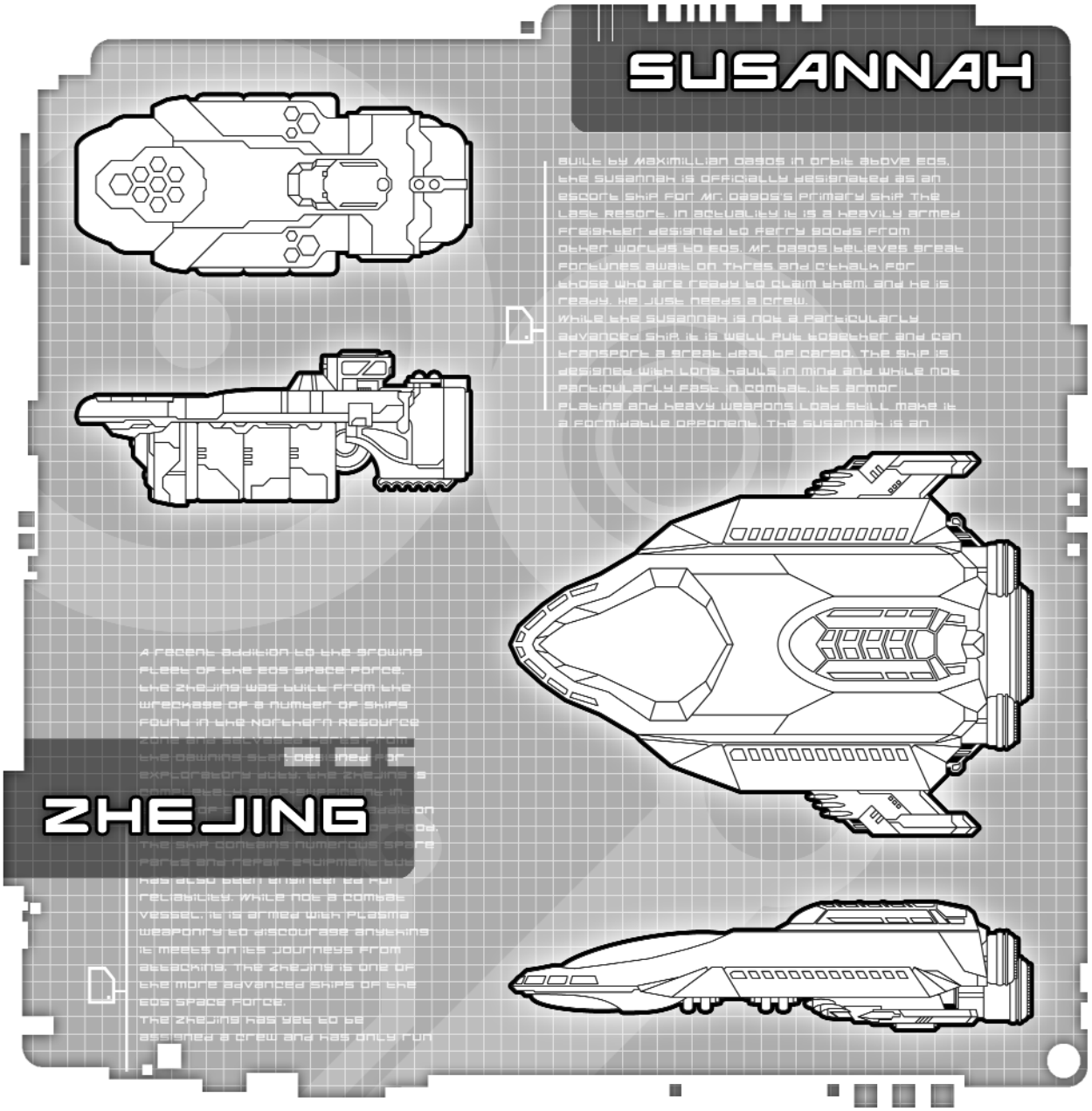
The ships of the Dawning Star Republic listed in Operation Quick Launch are either too important to the defense of Eos to send on exploration missions, are too short-range, or are too flimsy for exploration duties. Also the exploratory missions would not be launched until the Eos Space Force has is next batch of ships up and running. One of these newer ships would probably be used in any exploration effort. An excellent ship for this purpose is the *Zhejing*, a ship built from the various spacecraft spread across Eos and designed specifically for long term exploration missions.

If you wish to run a heavily diplomatic game where the characters are involved in setting up relationships between worlds, this is an excellent campaign option.

◇ Zhejing

A recent addition to the growing fleet of the Eos Space Force, the *Zhejing* was built from a number of crashed ships found in the Northern Resource Zone and salvaged parts from the Dawning Star. Designed for exploratory duty, the *Zhejing* is completely self sufficient in terms of air and water, in addition to carrying large stores of food. The ship contains numerous spare parts and repair equipment, but has also been maximized for reliability. While not a combat vessel, it is armed with plasma weaponry to discourage any it meets on its journeys from attacking. The *Zhejing* is one of the more advanced ships of the Eos Space Force.

The *Zhejing* has yet to be assigned a crew and has only run a few shakedown cruises around the moons of Eos and back. The ship is currently being held in reserve to spearhead the Republic's space



exploration efforts, but as yet a crew with a mix of skills necessary for such a mission has not been found. For now the *Zhejing* is docked at the Dawning Star Spaceport, ready for assignment.

Type: Light (PL 7)
Subtype: Long Range Corvette
Defense: 11
Flat Footed Defense: 7
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 40
Hit Dice: 50d20 (1,000 hit points)
Initiative Modifier: +6
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Colossal (-8 size)
Tactical Speed: 4,000 ft. (8 squares)
Length: 3,500 feet
Weight: 3,450 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 10 (Expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 30
Cargo Capacity: 180 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military +3

Attack

2 fire-linked heavy plasma cannons +1 ranged (27d8)
1 heavy mass cannon -4 ranged (10d12)
2 fire-linked mass reaction missies -4 ranged (30d8)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point Defense +5 (2d12x10)

Design Specs

Engines: Thrusters, particle impulse engine
Armor: Neutronite
Defense Systems: Improved autopilot system, improved damage control, light fortification, point defense system, radiation shielding
Sensors: Class V sensor array, improved targeting computer.
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver
Weapons: 2 fire-linked heavy plasma cannons (range incr. 4,000 ft.), heavy mass cannon (range incr. 6,000 ft.), 2 fire-linked mass reaction missile launchers (24 missiles per launcher).

WE'VE GOT TO GET THERE FIRST • • •

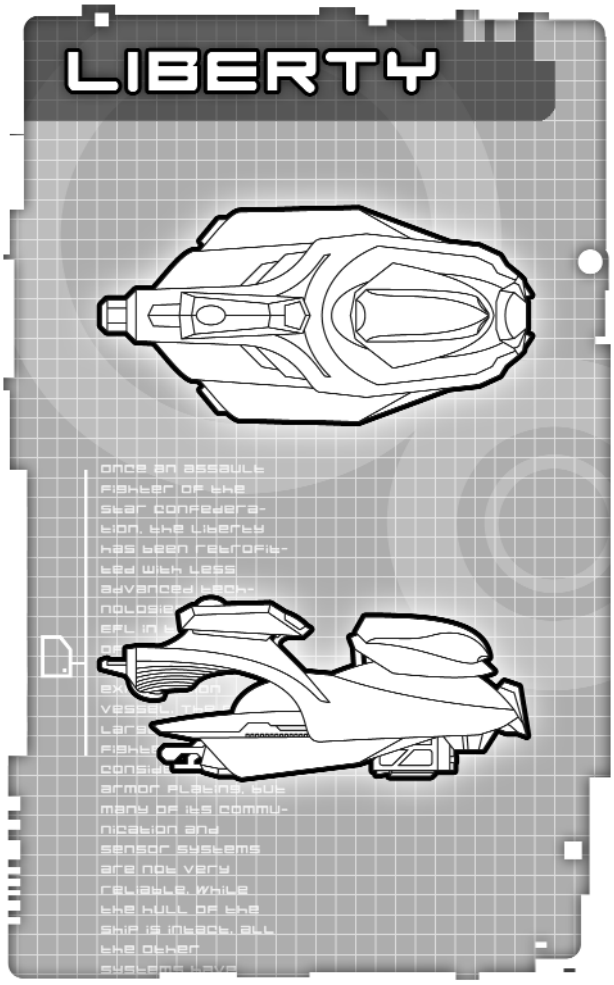
The Dawning Star Republic is not the only government on Eos that is looking to make contact with others worlds. Many of the faction-camps feel that being the first to reach the other inhabited worlds of Helios will give them an edge over the Republic in the form of resources and alien allies. Roger's Point is the faction-camp that is the most involved in these efforts and Patricia Rogers is said to be personally interested in making contact with these neighboring aliens. Unfortunately for the faction-camps they have had neither the ships nor the industrial capacity to construct ships to make these dreams a reality.

Until now.

Recently salvagers in Steel End have unearthed a damaged spacecraft from the ruins near the city and have begun repairing the ship. The spacecraft is not particularly large compared to Eos Space Force ships like the *Nebraska*, but it is larger than any other ships the faction-camps have. The ship is a Star Confederation assault fighter that never managed to join the final battle against the vaasi and was instead buried under tons of rubble as its hangar collapsed during the battle. Now most of the weapons and more advanced systems have been removed for study at Steel End and Rogers Point, but the ship itself was in good shape. The ship, christened the *Liberty*, has been repaired, refurbished, and outfitted with new equipment to replace that removed from the ship for study as a joint operation of the EFL members. The resulting ship is the largest, fastest, and most powerful spacecraft in the possession of the faction-camps, but it is also a makeshift ship made up of a dozen mismatched systems that often suffers maintenance problems. A joint possession of all the EFL members, some wanted to use it for strictly military matters, but they were eventually brought in line with Patricia Rogers and her plans of exploration.

Now the EFL is working on finding a crew they can trust that has the skills necessary to visit C'thalk, the first planet they seek to visit, and make it a profitable venture. While the Dawning Star Republic is concerned primarily with diplomacy and science, the faction-camps are more concerned with power and resources. They are willing to trade knowledge, allegiance, and manpower for weapons, technology, and resources. They have little qualms about giving away possibly dangerous technology to species they barely know, a problem that could come back to haunt them if they trade with the Saurian Empire. The EFL is more than willing to become embroiled in the internal politics of other planets, trying to turn them to their own favor when possible.

Characters sent on exploration missions by the EFL are likely to be members of the faction-camps and well trained in spacecraft operation, repair, sur-



vival, thievery, and deceit. Since the EFL has no standing space force these individuals are likely to be have little actual experience in space, instead turning skills developed on Eos toward their adventures on other planets. The EFL is not well off in terms of the equipment used in space exploration, so the characters may have to make due with insufficient spacesuits, stale air, and freeze-dried rations. It will be a far more jury-rigged affair than exploring for the Dawning Star Republic, but the characters will get a greater share of glory should they succeed.

If you wish to run a campaign where the characters are primarily involved in carrying out military and covert operations in addition to some diplomatic work, this is an excellent campaign option.

◇ Liberty

Once an assault fighter of the Star Confederation, the *Liberty* has been retrofitted with less advanced technologies by the EFL in the hopes of using it as an interplanetary exploration vessel. The ship is large for a fighter and has considerable armor plating, but many of its communication and sensor systems are not very reliable. While the hull of the ship is intact, all the other systems have been replaced or modified, giving the ship a slapdash appearance and severely decreasing its reliability. The interior of the ship is covered in small notes indicating what panels to kick and knobs to turn to fix small problems, giving any inside a strong feeling that the ship flies more on hope than quality repairs.

The *Liberty* is currently hidden in a subterranean hangar in Steel End which can also double as a launch platform by opening the roof of the hangar. The compound is hidden from the Dawning Star Republic's ships in orbit and is under heavy guard at all times. The *Liberty* is one of the EFL's most closely guarded secrets because they believe if the Dawning Star Republic would step up any exploration efforts in order to beat the faction-camps to the punch. Some within the EFL also believe the Dawning Star Republic would destroy the ship if they knew it existed, but most believe the Republic would not take such a nakedly aggressive step.

Type: Ultralight (PL 7)
Subtype: Assault Fighter
Defense: 15
Flat Footed Defense: 11
Autopilot Defense: 8
Hardness: 50
Hit Dice: 15d20 (300 hit points)
Initiative Modifier: +6
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Gargantuan (-4)
Tactical Speed: 5,000 ft. (10 squares)
Length: 60 feet
Weight: 20 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +4
Crew: 3 (expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 5
Cargo Capacity: 4 tons
Grapple Modifier: +12
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack

3 fire-linked plasma cannons +4 ranged (28d8), 2 fire-linked mass reaction missiles -1 ranged (30d8)

Design Specs

Engines: Thrusters, particle impulse engine
Armor: Nanofluidic
Defense Systems: Improved autopilot system, decoy drone launcher, improved damage control, magnetic field, stealth screen.
Sensors: Class V sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver
Weapons: 3 fire-linked plasma cannons (range incr. 3,000 ft.), 2 fire-linked mass reaction missile launchers (16 missiles per launcher).

GO FORTH MY FRIENDS, AND FIND ME SOME PROFIT • • •

Only one man in the Dawning Star Republic owns a spaceship of significant size: Maximillian Dagos, owner of the luxury ship *The Last Resort*. Mr. Dagos owns a number of businesses in the city of Dawning Star in addition to numerous herds of cattle, farms, and mining operations, arguably making him the wealthiest private citizen in the Republic. Mr. Dagos rarely sets foot on Eos and hardly ever appears in public, preferring to keep his life secret from all but his closest officers and advisors. But one thing everyone on Eos knows about Maximillian Dagos is that he is very interested in money and never turns down a chance to make a profit. And one thing that contact with other intelligence species is likely to offer is profit.

Of late Mr. Dagos has built a second ship, an armed freighter called the Susannah after his late wife, in order to undertake his own exploration of the planets of the Helios system. Officially Mr. Dagos has told the Eos Space Force that the ship is for personal security and cargo purposes, concealing his motives with the hopes of being the first to reach Thres or C'thalk. The *Susannah* is not yet finished, but will be in a few weeks and Mr. Dagos needs a crew of skilled and daring individuals willing to bend Republic law in the name of profit.

Characters who have no ties to the Dawning Star Republic or the faction-camps can find a way into space through Mr. Dagos. Mr. Dagos is primarily looking for those who are skilled in spacecraft piloting, repair, or survival skills, though anyone whose got a brain and is quick with a weapon can probably find their way on to his ship if they prove their ability and loyalty. Mr. Dagos will brook no insolence or disobedience from his new employees, but will reward them richly if they succeed in their missions.

Mr. Dagos is primarily interested in technology, resources, and other items which may be found on other worlds that do not exist on Eos or exist in small quantities, thus ensuring a profit when sold. While he would prefer that his employees trade for the goods they want, he is not above having them steal. Mr. Dagos's would like his employees would be more like roaming traders looking for valuable goods than thieves, but spaceships are not cheap to keep running.

If you wish to run a campaign of freebooting traders who occasionally venture into the less-than-moral sides of business, this is an excellent campaign option.

◇ Susannah

Built by Maximillian Dagos in orbit above Eos, the *Susannah* is officially designated as an escort ship for Mr. Dagos's primary ship *The Last Resort*. In actuality is it is a heavily armed freighter designed to ferry goods from other worlds to Eos. Mr. Dagos believes great fortunes away on Thres and C'thalk for those who are ready to claim them, and he is ready. He just needs a crew.

While the *Susannah* is not a particularly advanced ship, it is well put together and can transport a great deal of cargo. The ship is designed with long hauls in mind and while not particularly fast in combat, its armor plating and heavy weapons load still make it a formidable opponent. The *Susannah* is an excellent ship for cargo runs and other mercantile endeavors.

Type: Light (PL 7)
Subtype: Combat Freighter
Defense: 11
Flat Footed Defense: 7
Autopilot Defense: 5
Hardness: 30
Hit Dice: 30d20 (600 hit points)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Colossal (-8)
Tactical Speed: 3,500 ft. (7 squares)
Length: 280 feet
Weight: 2,300 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +2
Crew: 5 (expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 20
Cargo Capacity: 1,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: NA
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack

3 fire-linked heavy plasma cannons -2 ranged (36d8)

Design Specs

Engines: Particle impulse engine, thrusters
Armor: Cerametal
Defense Systems: Improved autopilot system, improved damage control, light fortification.
Sensors: Class III sensor array, targeting system.
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver.
Weapons: 3 fire-linked heavy plasma cannons (range incr. 4,000 ft.).

HEY, LOOK WHAT I FOUND! • • •

Most of the spaceships on Eos are owned by large factions who have the resources to build and maintain such devices, but that does not mean a group of characters cannot have a ship of their own. While the spaceship production abilities of the Dawning Star Republic are currently tied up building additional ships for the Eos Defense Force,

there are numerous crashed ships on Eos in addition to ships left over from the last battle between the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire.

Building their own ship should be a massive undertaking by the player characters considering the enormity of building a spaceship without the proper parts and tools, but it also builds a strong relationship between the player characters and the ship. Homemade ships often suffer from technical difficulties due to their slipshod construction, but they can also be easily customized. For this option the GM should allow the characters to find sufficient tools and parts to make the construction of a ship possible, such as going on an adventure to recover an old engine from an Eos Space Force junkyard or digging through ruins looking for a weapon system. This option gives the player characters a lot of say in the type of ship they end up with. Also they also have no one telling them what missions to go on. They may have to deal with the political repercussions of their actions, as the Dawning Star Republic won't like some group of unaligned spacers setting the basis for diplomatic relations in the Helios system. This sort of campaign is best suited to characters who value their independence and really want to get out into space without limitations. They'll only have to come back to Eos for occasional supplies, and can spend the rest of the time braving the great unknown.

WE ARE THE STAR TRIBE, TRAVELERS AMONG THE WOLF TRIBES OF THRES. WE COME SEEKING ALLIES • • •

There are many conflicts among the people of the Helios system, but only on the planet of Thres has this developed into open war. The Straas Hive legions, a race of insectoid creatures controlled by a true vaasi, march across the planet trying to destroy all who stand before them. Their primary opponents are the Wolf Tribes, a civilization of space faring nomads made up of two species who have made Thres their home after years of wandering. These species, the wolves and the elgies, are both mammalian and through their travels had developed a habit of trusting fellow mammal-like creatures before other creatures, making humans their most likely allies among the species that now live in the Helios system. In this campaign option the Wolf Tribes send one of their ships to Eos in the hopes of finding allies among the new inhabitants of the planet, bringing the variety of the Helios system to the player characters instead of the player characters going to it.

Unfortunately, while the Wolf Tribes are nearly as advanced in terms of space travel as the humans of Eos, they do not have the necessary knowledge to safely pass through the rust spores and thus must contact ships in orbit. Alternately, they could try to land on Eos anywhere and end up crashing instead with the player characters being the first to arrive on the scene of the crash and thus having a chance to significantly impact future relations between humankind and the Wolf Tribes. If the player characters are among the first to make contact with the Wolf Tribes and prove themselves honorable, they are likely to be used repeatedly by the Wolf Tribes as a point of contact. The player characters could become the lynchpin of relations between Eos and Thres, at least in terms of the Wolf Tribes.

The Wolf Tribes' reason for contacting Eos is most likely to gain assistance against their two primary enemies, the Straas Hive Legions and the Saurian Empire, a vast warrior nation from C'thalk that has established several colonies on Thres. While the Wolf Tribes would obviously prefer military assistance, any type of assistance would be welcomed. The player characters could be sent to Thres to observe the situation first hand, reporting their findings back to the Dawning Star Republic. They could even go take part in the conflicts firsthand, either at the behest of the Republic or the faction-camps, or on their own initiative if they have their own ship. This sort of campaign could be extremely interesting as the player characters are now the aliens in a world full of strange cultures and unknown species, taking part in a war to save another species. Through interacting with the Wolf Tribes the characters could be introduced to the straas, the yaom, and the saurians, quickly becoming familiar with several of the species that inhabit the Helios system while playing a possibly pivotal role in the battles between the Wolf Tribes and their enemies.

This campaign option is a good choice for characters who like combat and dealing with alien situations on a regular basis.

SURRENDER BEFORE THE MIGHT OF THE SAURIAN EMPIRE! • • •

While Thres is inhabited by a number of conflicting factions, nearly all of C'thalk is dominated by the Saurian Empire, an expansionistic power with a strong military base and an eye on expanding onto other worlds. The Saurian Empire is inhabited by a number of related species of humanoid reptiles collectively called saurians, each of which is somewhat limited in its choices in life by a caste structure. There are over a billion saurians on Thres, making them the largest faction in the Helios system. While they have established colonies on Thres as part of a long term invasion plan, they would much rather move against Eos since it is closer. Unfortunately for the saurian Emperor Sergack XIII, they have not been able to overcome the rust spores in the atmosphere of Eos.

While this prevents them from landing an army on Eos, it means they can attack ships in the orbit above Eos and the Sandler Orbital Platform. Saurians are not as advanced as the humans of

Eos, being PL 6, so the ships of the Eos Space Force could defeat a larger number of ships if pressed. Still any attack on Eos is not likely to go over well with the Republic or the faction-camps, meaning some manner of retaliatory attack is likely to be launched in short order. The player characters can be on the forefront of this attack, possibly the first step in a campaign against the Saurian Empire. The Empire is unlikely to cease its aggressive attacks on Eos unless it is soundly beaten, and its large population makes any sort of long-term ground victory impossible for the Dawning Star Republic. While the characters may fight the forces of the Saurian Empire for a time, eventually they must find other means to end the conflict.

A war between Eos and C'thalk is likely to quickly spread to Thres as well as the Wolf Tribes use the chance to strike back at the saurians who have invaded their world. The straas may in turn use the distraction to attack the Wolf Tribes, igniting a massive chain reaction as the entire system goes to war. For the vaasi of the Cronus Belt, this is the perfect time to strike at the hated descendants of the Star Confederation.

Most of the battles between Eos and the Saurian Empire are likely to be fought in space, making this an excellent campaign option for characters who like space combat. While the ships of the Dawning Star Republic are superior in terms of technology to those of the Saurian Empire the superior numbers and industrial base of the Empir evens things out.

WELCOME TO THE GREAT CRUSADE • • •

The first planet of the Helios system, Hephaestus, is a world that was hollowed out by the Star Confederation long ago and now contains war and darkness. Once a massive jail containing both Star Confederation criminals and vaasi prisoners of war, they slept in hibernation for millions of years. Something went awry in the awakening process, allowing the prisoners to escape and claim part of the complex for their own. That was several 'hundred years ago, and now the prison complex, called the Hollow Dark by its inhabitants, is a constant war zone as the descendants of the prisoners fight the descendants of the guards. The outnumbered guards, now called Law-Keepers, often recruit additional personnel from the planets of Helios, and the player characters may be just the sort they need.

The Law-Keepers look for individuals trained in combat, capable of following orders, and with the mental fortitude to withstand being under threat of attack almost constantly. Recruits are observed before being approached to make sure they have the appropriate traits, and once selected they are contacted when they are alone by a member of the Law-Keepers. These contact sessions are dressed up with religious iconography as many of the Law-Keepers believe they are part of a holy war and the idea of a crusade against evil helps them gain recruits. Among the people of the Wolf Tribes and the Saurian Empire stories of angelic warriors from a hellish world of war are common, and at their heart they are the Law-Keepers. The Law-Keepers only take willing recruits, feeling that to abducting recruits would make them no better than those they fight. Although the concept of joining a never-ending holy crusade on another world may not be particularly tempting, it is an opportunity for characters to journey to another world and meet a myriad of other races without having to attain a ship of their own.

Once characters agree to join the Law-Keepers they are taken to the Hollow Dark, given a rudimentary training course, and then thrown headlong into the battle against the vaasi. Over time they may gain rank within the Law-Keepers or discover fragments of Star Confederation technology, slowly building a home for themselves among the Law-Keepers. The Law-Keepers do not generally allow recruits to return home due to a deep mistrust of the governments of the Helios system, though the character may be able to convince them to change their ways and assist in establishing relations with the other planets of Helios. If the vaasi of the Cronus Belt do eventually attack the Helios system, the Law-Keepers would be valued experts in combating them, and the player characters may travel back to their homeworld to assist in the defense against the vaasi.

This campaign option works well for characters who like lots of combat and would enjoy the cramped, salvage-based world of the Law-Keepers.



NOW WE WILL HAVE OUR REVENGE • • •

In the Cronus Belt waits a large army of vaasi, complete with spacecraft, armored vehicles, and a plan to destroy the descendants of the Star Confederation who have settled in the Helios system. They were launched long ago using sub-light drives by the Vaasi Empire as a last ditch attempt to eliminate the Star Confederation. Now the vaasi seek to wipe out those species that call the Helios home. Though their technology is limited by depleted energy reserves, the vaasi pose an immense threat to the inhabitants of the Helios system.

Currently the vaasi are working on strengthening their position in the Cronus Belt, building space stations, fortresses, and additional ships, while also attempting to gather intelligence about the Helios system. They have sent covert teams in stealth ships to all the major planets of the system to gather information, including captives and examples of technology if they can manage it. These small teams of vaasi can be encountered on any world, and stopping them will delay the eventual vaasi attack, possibly forcing them to act with limited or incorrect information. Also, stopping the vaasi from contacting possible allies like the vaasi of Eos or Hivequeen Celick of the Straas Hive Legions will stop the vaasi from gaining more strength for their eventual assault. Alternately the player characters could even try to facilitate such contact and then spoil the relationship, relying on the naturally competitive and violent nature of the vaasi to keep them fighting each other instead of making their assault on Helios.

Eventually the assault will come though, striking all major planets with ships and ground troops equipped with advanced weapons and technology. If the species of Helios have not banded together to form some manner of united defense against this attack it will likely go poorly for them, as the splintered factions of the Helios system cannot alone stand up to the vaasi. This is especially true if the vaasi of the Cronus Belt have made contact with their brethren on Eos and Thres. This battle should be massive and take months to decide, if it achieves anything decisive at all.

In this campaign the first encounters the player characters have with other inhabitants of the Helios system are accidental meetings with the vaasi scouts sent to Eos or with the darklings preparing for the coming war. This will hopefully lead the player characters to the fact that there is something big happening soon in the Helios system. Once these encounters become known, the Dawning Star Republic and the faction-camps would both be interested in learning more about these strange hostile aliens, possibly sending expeditions to other worlds to search out more information. This leads to contact with the other species of Helios and the growing realization that they are all under attack by the same threat. Here the player characters can involve themselves in covert activities: hunting down the vaasi infiltration teams, open battle against the Hive Legions and the vaasi on Eos, and diplomacy as they try to build a united front against this new enemy. If the players are among the first to encounter the vaasi they may well be considered the resident experts on them, leading them to travel to a number of worlds to share what they have learned.

This campaign option works well for players who like epic campaigns full of massive battles and diplomatic missions to save millions from destruction.

DON'T GET MANY OF YOUR KIND AROUND HERE • • •

Most of the campaign options thus far assume that the player characters begin on Eos and travel to other worlds as some of the first explorers from Eos over the course of the campaign. They are among the first to visit other worlds and encounter the civilizations that live there. This assumption limits the characters to the species, classes, and equipment of Operation Quick Launch initially, as the material in this book only becomes available after they make the appropriate discoveries in the course of the game. Unfortunately this limits the usefulness of this book to players-they can't really make wolf, saurian, or elgie characters until they have found those races in the campaign. This campaign option works to correct that problem.

Instead of being among the first to leave Eos to explore the other worlds of the Helios system, the player characters are part of the second wave of explorers who go out into the great unknown. Contact has already been established with the other major factions of the Helios system and some alliances or treaties made, but there are still a number of large-scale conflicts. The exact relations between the planets is up to the GM to describe; this book sets things at a zero-state so the players can determine how the relationships between these worlds emerge. In this campaign option the GM has to put forth the effort of determining how the different species of Helios interact with each other, although there are guidelines and suggestions presented in the various chapters of this book. Setting such a campaign several years after the default setting listed in Operation Quick Launch is probably a good idea.

In this campaign option travel between worlds has been established and some planets may even have interplanetary immigrant populations. This opens up the possibility for characters who are not human or velin in addition to allowing access to a wider variety of prestige classes and equipment. Characters in this sort of campaign can still explore distant areas of the inhabited planets or unexplored regions of the Helios system, take part in interplan-

etary trade, fight wars between the various civilizations, and use the other campaign options listed here as adventure ideas. Although contact has been made with other worlds Maximillian Dagos will still want someone out there representing his interests, as will the faction-camps.

Future supplements will not deal with a specific setup for interplanetary relations in Helios, but in each chapter of this book there is a section detailing guidelines of how each planet reacts to contact from other planets. These guidelines will be followed in determining interplanetary relationships in future supplements where such relationships are important, but specifics will be left out.

This campaign option is a good choice for players who want to play unusual species, have weird equipment, and like interacting with the status quo rather than setting it. It also works well for more low key games, such as those about freelance traders or mercenaries.

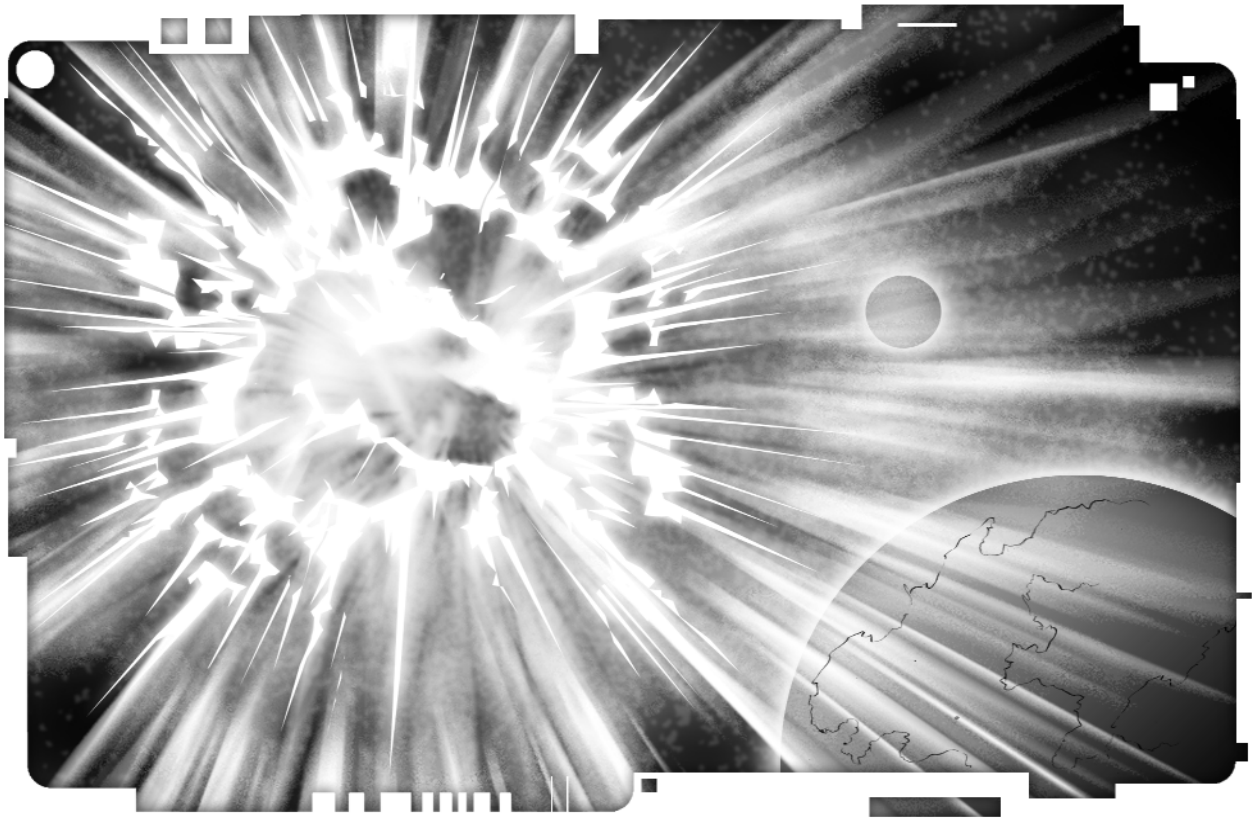
HISTORY REVIEW • • •

This section covers the basic history of the Helios system, and contains information players may not be privy to.

More so than in Operation Quick Launch, the events and settings of Helios Rising are deeply tied into the history of the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire. This is a quick review of that history to avoid flipping between books later on.

Millions of years ago, six sentient species from the region of space around the Helios System came together to form a unified government, which came to be called the Star Confederation. While they may have had conflicts before creating the Star Confederation, these disappeared as they worked together toward a better future, developing sciences that bent the very forces of creation to their will. They created a far reaching system of gateway stations that created artificial wormholes between habitable solar systems which they utilized for faster-than-light travel and terraformed worlds according to their needs. During this time they encountered several less developed species, such as the humanoid tentaari and the jellyfish-like frezin, which the Star Confederation took under its wing to protect and teach.

But this golden age would not last forever. After unknown millennia of peace and prosperity the Star Confederation learned of another star-spanning government that equaled their own power, the Vaasi Empire. The Vaasi Empire used wormhole technology to power their civilization by sucking the cores out of suns by way of a massive device called a star harvester and using them as a power source. This process destroyed the targeted star and caused it to explode in a supernova. The star hearts thus harvested were then transported back to vaasi planets to serve as long lasting energy sources. After the Vaasi Empire wiped out several inhabited worlds the Star Confederation took action to defend those who could not defend themselves. While the vaasi were setting up the star harvester the Star Confederation launched a lightning raid on the vaasi fleet and stole the device, disassembling it and hiding its pieces across Star Confederation



space. The Star Confederation then contacted the Vaasi Empire and offered to help the vaasi find a different way of generating power. The vaasi responded this offer with violence and thus war began between the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire.

The ensuing war lasted tens of thousands of years, swept across thousands of planets in hundreds of systems, and caused the death of untold billions. Eventually the Vaasi Empire was victorious, destroying the Star Confederation capital of Eos, but in the process they used the last of their star hearts, lacking the power the take advantage of their victory. Just as they destroyed the Star Confederation the Vaasi Empire destroyed itself and the two great powers in this sector of the galaxy were gone. The Star Confederation passed their technology and knowledge on to the tentaari in the hopes they would carry on in their stead, but the tentaari did not live up to these expectations. Instead they wasted the gifts they were given on leisure and self-gratification until it began to collapse around them.

The Star Confederation made other attempts to keep their legacy alive, the largest of which was a long term mission to seed promising planets with a mixture of genetic information in the hopes that the resultant species would one day develop sentience and carry on the traditions of the Star Confederation. Of the thousands of worlds seeded only a few dozen were successful in producing sentient creatures, and many of those were destroyed by meteorites directed at them by the vaasi millions of years ago. Earth was destroyed by one of these meteors as well, forcing the evacuation that led to the Dawning Star landing on Eos. The Helios System has become a haven for species fleeing from similar events, as several now call the system home.

The Vaasi Empire also made emergency plans, launching a sub-light assault fleet toward Eos in the hopes that would eventually reach the system and be able to solidify the victory of the vaasi forces. This fleet has only recently reached the Helios system and now is digging in on the Cronus Belt at the edge of the system, preparing for an assault to wipe the planets of the system clean of the infection that is the Star Confederation, or at least its descendants.

TRAVEL TIMES

The following tables should be used to determine travel times between worlds. The times listed are averages and can vary up to 50% higher or lower than the listed numbers based on the current locations of the planets involved. Find the origination planet on the horizontal row at the stop at the table and the destination planet on the vertical column at the left hand edge of the table. The place they intersect is the resulting travel time. The times listed are for a ship equipped with a PL 6 drive. For each increase in Progress Level divide the travel time by four, meaning a progress level 9 ship travels sixty-four times faster than a progress level 6 ship.

PL6 Travel Times

Planet	Markin Belt	Hephaestus	Verdant	C'thalk	Eos	Thres	Hesperos	Poseidon	Apollo	Atlas	Cronus Belt	Gateway Station
Markin Belt	-	6 D	10 D	14 D	20 D	25 D	130 D	220 D	260 D	1.054 Y	1.18 Y	1.254 Y
Hephaestus	6 D	-	4 D	8 D	14 D	19 D	124 D	214 D	254 D	1.04 Y	1.17 Y	1.24 Y
Verdant	10 D	4 D	-	4 D	10 D	15 D	120 D	210 D	250 D	1.03 Y	1.16 Y	1.23 Y
C'thalk	14 D	8 D	4 D	-	6 D	11 D	116 D	206 D	246 D	1.02 Y	1.15 Y	1.22 Y
Eos	20 D	14 D	10 D	6 D	-	5 D	110 D	200 D	240 D	1 Y	1.13 Y	1.2 Y
Thres	25 D	19 D	15 D	11 D	5 D	-	105 D	195 D	235 D	360 D	1.11 Y	1.187 Y
Hesperos	130 D	124 D	120 D	116 D	110 D	105 D	-	90 D	130 D	255 D	276 D	328 D
Poseidon	220 D	214 D	210 D	206 D	200 D	195 D	90 D	-	40 D	165 D	186 D	198 D
Apollo	260 D	254 D	250 D	246 D	240 D	235 D	130 D	40 D	-	125 D	146 D	158 D
Atlas	1.054 Y	1.04 Y	1.03 Y	1.02 Y	1 Y	360 D	255 D	165 D	125 D	-	21 D	33 D
Cronus Belt	1.18 Y	1.17 Y	1.16 Y	1.15 Y	1.13 Y	1.11 Y	276 D	186 D	146 D	21 D		12 D
Gateway Station	1.254 Y	1.24 Y	1.23 Y	1.22 Y	1.2 Y	1.187 Y	328 D	198 D	158 D	33 D	12 D	-

D: Days of travel
Y: Years of travel

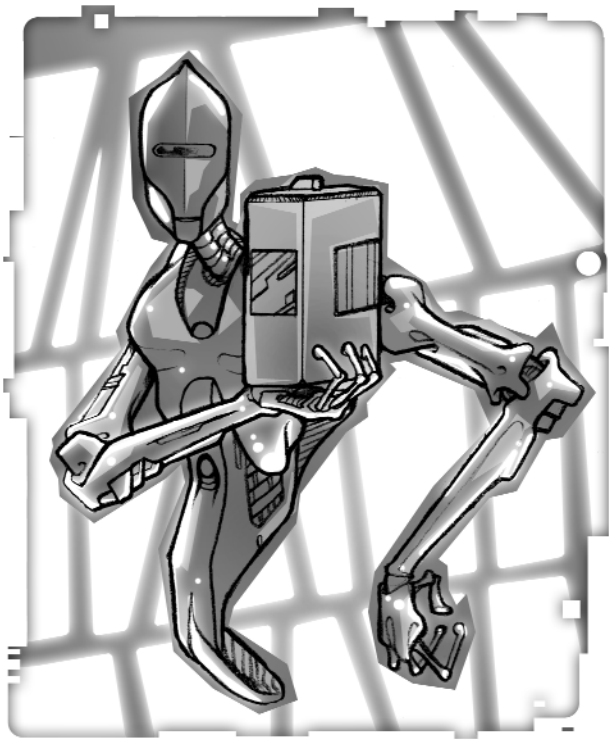
All times are measured in Eotian days and years.

TRADING BETWEEN WORLDS • • • (Optional Rule)

Not all cultures and species value things in the same ways, making trade difficult. To the Law-Keepers paintings and other works of art have little intrinsic value, but to the right noble of the Saurian Empire they can be worth quite a bit. A character's Wealth bonus represents a vague measure of how much portable wealth and trade goods the character has. Unfortunately Dawning Star Republic credits have little value to yaom monks, and gold is of little use to haimedians, so some characters will find it more difficult to make Wealth checks when interacting with some cultures.

Under this system each character is assigned a home economy at character creation based on their species and world of birth. When the character makes Wealth checks to purchase an item from other cultures he must check the table below to see how his roll is modified by the economic differences between the two cultures. For example, a character from Eos trying to purchase a weapon from a Law-Keeper suffers a -3 penalty on his Wealth check because the Law-Keeper considers many of the trade goods the Eotian has to offer worthless, and thinks the same of Dawning Star Republic credits.

Characters may transfer their Wealth bonus to that of another culture if they have friendly contact with that culture and spend one day per point of Wealth bonus converted. Each time such a conversion happens the character loses one point of his Wealth bonus to transaction fees. Alternately characters can have Wealth bonuses in separate economies, representing storehouses of foreign currency. An Eotian character who receives a reward of gold scales from a wolf tribal chief may keep them as a Wolf Tribe Wealth bonus instead of transferring them to his Dawning Star Republic Wealth bonus.



To use this table find the row of the economy of the buyer's Wealth bonus on the far left column of the table below and the column for the economy of the seller's Wealth bonus. Where the row and column intersect is the modifier the buyer takes to his Wealth check.

Trading Between Worlds

	Law Keepers of Hephaestus	Saurian Empire	Haimedian Collective	Dawning Star Republic / Faction-Camps	Velin Tribes	Wolf Tribes	Yaom	Mechite Consortium	Coqui Warcouncil
Law Keepers of Hephaestus	-	-1	-3	-1	-1	0	*-3*	*-3*	*-1*
Saurian Empire	-1	-	-3	-1	-3	-3	-2	-2	-2
Haimedian Collective	-3	-3	-	-3	-3	-3	-1	-4	-4
Dawning Star Republic / Faction-Camps	-1	-2	-1	-	0	-1	-2	-2	-2
Velin tribes	-1	-3	-2	0	-	-2	0	-3	-3
Wolf Tribes	-1	-2	-2	-1	0	-	0	-1	-2
Yaom	-3	-5	-1	-1	-1	0	-	-3	-4
Mechite Consortium	-2	-2	-4	-1	-4	-2	-4	-	-2
Coqui Warcouncil	-1	-1	-4	-1	-3	-2	-3	-2	-

CHAPTER 1

THE MARKIN ASTEROID BELT

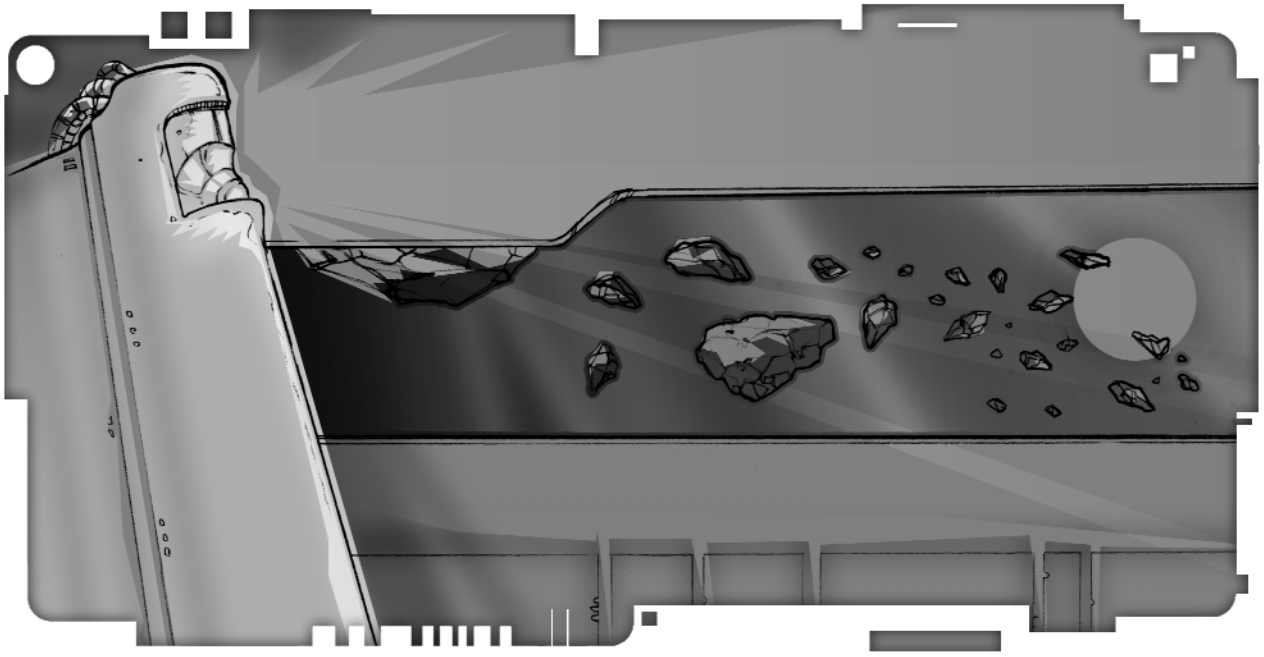
The halls were dark. And empty. They had been dark and empty for as long as Minder 48 could remember. And that suited him fine.

"Hall 12 clear," Minder 48 said to no one in particular. The only people who were even around to hear were the same robots Minder 48 had been talking to for hundreds of thousands of years. By this point they had run out of things to say to each other.

"Hall 13 clear." So far today had been like all the others. The supplies of the facility were all accounted for, the robots kept everything clean; it was a monotonous but simple life. Luckily Minder 48's computerized mind was well equipped to survive monotony. Well, at least better equipped than most.

"Hall 14 cl-" Minder 48 stopped. It wasn't clear. The pressure and gravitic sensors detected a minute change in the amount of matter on the floor. Enough dust had accumulated to be noticeable. Someone had fallen down on their duties. "Labor robots Six and Seven, report to Hall 14 and clean the floor immediately."

Today, a few motes of dust. Tomorrow, a vaasi infiltration squad. One could not be too careful guarding the last repository of the Star Confederation's technology. And Minder 48 was not going to fail in his duty.



THE MARKIN ASTEROID BELT • • •

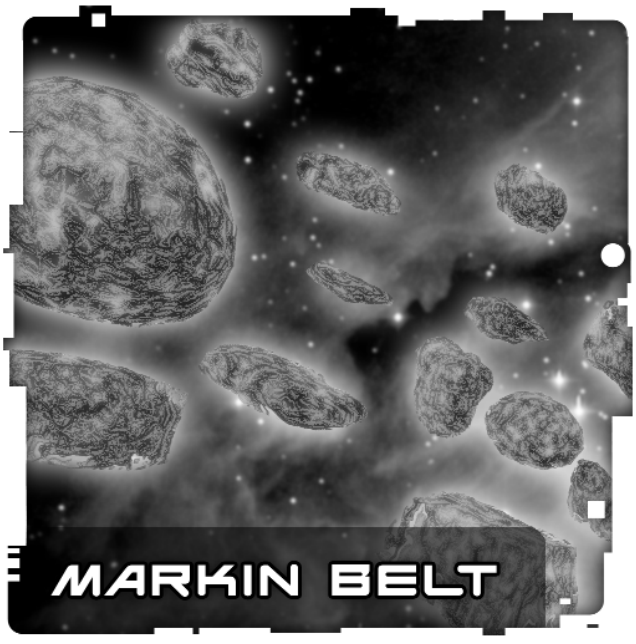
The closest orbital body to Helios, the Markin Belt is a collection of barren and blasted asteroids burnt by heat and scarred by solar winds for millions of years. Many of them have been worn nearly smooth to the touch, giving the appearance of clusters of river rocks floating through space. A place unexplored by any of the species currently inhabiting the Helios system, it is by no means a natural occurrence. The Markin Belt is a latecomer to the Helios system and is the product of a rogue planetoid.

Rotation Period: N/A
Revolution Period: 67 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: None
Average Temperature: 430 degrees Fahrenheit (494.11 degrees Kelvin), though this varies immensely from light side to dark side
Gravity: .02G

HISTORY • • •

The Markin Belt was created several million years ago when the Vaasi Empire attempted to destroy Eos by hurling a planetoid at it. They did so using massive gravity drives powered by a fraction of a star heart. The Star Confederation was able to deflect the planetoid using the gravitational effect of the artificial singularity of the Star Harvester, diverting it toward Helios. The planetoid came very close to Helios and was destroyed by its gravity, the debris forming the asteroid belt now known as the Markin Belt.

The vaasi would use a similar tactic, though with less powerful engines due to the lack of star hearts, to attack worlds that were seeded with genetic information by the Star Confederation, including Earth. The asteroid that destroyed Earth was launched by the vaasi eons ago, traveling through space at a small fraction of the speed of light. Most of the other species now inhabiting the Helios system had a similar event befall their own homeworlds.



GEOGRAPHY • • •

The Markin Belt is made up of hundreds of asteroids that range from the size of pebbles to several kilometers across. Most of the asteroids clump around six spots in their orbital path, all of which are within the same half of their orbital plane. Most of the mass of the Markin Belt is found in the larger asteroids, though in the clump areas there are enough smaller asteroids to make navigating the region difficult at best. The asteroids of the Markin Belt are primarily made of silicon, carbon, and iron, and their surface has been blasted smooth by many years of heating and cooling metals as the asteroids move in and out of the light of Helios in addition to exposure to solar winds. Most of the Markin Belt asteroids have a surface similar to ceramic or river rocks. The most unusual feature about the Markin Belt is that it is tilted thirty degrees off the orbital plane of the Helios system, indicating that it was not formed along with the rest of the Helios system.

The largest clump of rocks, called Group A by the Eos Space Force, has released several bursts of unusual radiation in recent years and seems to have a number of metallic elements in its area that are not found elsewhere in the belt. The cause of this is currently unknown. Due to the inhospitable nature of the Markin Belt none of the species of the Helios system are interested in taking a closer look. The only obvious value the Markin Belt holds is a number of iron deposits in some of the asteroids, and none of the species of Helios are so desperate for iron they would put forth the effort to mine the Markin Belt.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

The Markin Belt has no atmosphere at all. It is far too close to Helios for any atmosphere to survive. The Markin Belt is completely inhospitable to life of any type and most of the inhabitants of Eos consider attempting to visit it a waste of time.

CONDITIONS • • •

The Markin Belt is close enough to Helios that iron is rendered to a liquid state on its surface and solar flares have a devastating effect on anything within the Belt. The Markin Belt has no atmosphere at all and most materials on its surface are molten due to the heat. The Markin Belt is considered a zero gravity, vacuum environment that is severely irradiated. All objects in the Markin Belt suffer 3d6 points of fire damage each round they are exposed to sunlight.

Pilots traveling through one of the clump areas of the asteroid belt must make a Pilot check (DC 10+4 per size of the ship above Ultralight) each round the ship takes a move action. Failure on this skill check means the ship takes damage from running into asteroids in the clump. The damage inflicted depends on the size of the ship: Ultralight 4d10, Light 6d10, Mediumweight 8d10, Heavy: 10d10, Superheavy 12d10. Ships with point defense systems may use them to shoot down asteroids, reducing the damage inflicted by the damage of the point defense system.

LOCATIONS IN THE MARKIN BELT • • •

Due to its inhospitable nature and lack of visitation by other races, there are no settlements or other obvious structures in the Markin Belt. The high iron content of the Markin Belt would be remarkable if it could be easily harvested. The only interesting facets of the Markin Belt lie in secret or within its rather unusual history.

Group A is the only region of the Markin Belt that stands out in any way from the rest of the belt to the naked eye and most sensors. The reason for the abnormally large concentration of asteroids in the area is due to the artificial structures built there by the vaasi. These structures were once massive engines that moved the planetoid that gave birth to the Markin Belt. Several bits of vaasi technology remain on the dark sides of a handful of asteroids, including the gravity-based drives that were used to propel the planetoid. While little of this technology still functions, the fusion drive used to power the gravitic engines remains, though its housing has cracked. This is the cause for the radiation bursts that are occasionally detected from Group A. No vaasi remain in the Markin Belt, only the relics of their science. If the remains of the gravity drives could be extracted from the Markin Belt, they would undoubtedly provide a great deal of useful information.

Group B contains a number of the fuel containers and other supplies for the drives that once catapulted the planetoid that became the Markin Belt, but these were all consumed long ago except for one star heart fragment that was the main power source for the engines. While this star heart is very small and has only a fraction of its power remaining, it is still extremely valuable to any vaasi who learns of it, and other species could probably figure out how to use it as a power source. The star heart is currently held in a large containment tank that can also draw power from the star heart.

After the Markin Belt formed and its orbit had sta-

OTHER WORLDS SEEDED BY THE STAR CONFEDERATION

Humans and all the other species of Eos are descendants of the Star Confederation through a project that planted a mixture of genetic information from the various Star Confederation member races within the early life forms on a number of planets. The resulting sentient species are similar to their Star Confederation progenitors, but not duplicates. This project was carried out by the Star Confederation in the hopes that some of these worlds would escape the vaasi and carry on the legacy of the Star Confederation. Unfortunately due to the planetoid attacks used by the vaasi many of these worlds were destroyed, including Earth, and billions killed in the process.

Many of these species survived and fled through the gateway network to worlds like Eos that had been designated by the tentaari as safe havens. Also some worlds completely escaped the notice of the vaasi, while some planetoids missed their intended targets. This means there are a number of planets in the Milky Way that still host life descended from the Star Confederation, creating a wide variety of worlds to be explored, some of which may have already been contacted by the other ships of Earth's evacuation fleet. Eos is not the only place in the galaxy where life struggles on.

bilized, the Star Confederation came up with a plan to use the Markin Belt for its own ends. The Star Confederation was fairly sure that the vaasi would not expect them to hide anything of value within the Markin Belt due to its unstable nature and close proximity to Helios. Going on this assumption the Star Confederation bored deep into several of the asteroids and used them to hide several caches of Star Confederation technology, genetic information, and other valuable items that needed to be preserved in case the Star Confederation fell. These vaults are located hundreds of feet beneath the surface of some of the larger asteroids of the cluster called Group C by Eotian astronomers. There are six such vaults, all of which must be reached by a long corridor which has been blasted through the rock and is large enough to admit an ultralight ship. These vaults were overseen by an artificial intelligence program called Minder 48, which is still operational but is convinced that it is the only fragment of the Star Confederation that survived the fall of Eos. Thus Minder 48 feels that it must protect itself against all intruders in order to keep the last vestige of the Star Confederation alive. If anyone ever does discover these Star Confederation vaults, it will take some convincing to keep Minder 48 from activating the automated defenses and making life very difficult for anyone who intrudes.

Relations with the Other Worlds of the Helios System • • •

Minder 48 and his robot minions have little contact with the rest of the Helios system. The main source of contact is listening in on errant broadcasts from the various civilizations in the system, but Minder 48 sends no messages in return. It wishes to keep its presence a secret as long as possible. If contacted, Minder 48 will attempt to eliminate any who discovers its position so the existence of the Star Confederation cache will remain unknown. Convincing it to stop or fighting off the defenses of the base will be difficult since Minder 48 does not recognize any of the races of Helios as being Star Confederation races. Only another artificial intelligence entity will be able to convince it to lower its defenses, and even then Minder 48 is likely to be stingy. Its cache is likely to become a place where characters in desperate need of information or equipment may go seeking help, but getting Minder 48 to give them anything could be an adventure itself. Minder 48 could even become something of an oracle to the new inhabitants of Eos, occasionally imparting pieces of historical wisdom or artifacts of great power to those who make it through its defenses and convince it of their need.

While Minder 48 wants nothing to do with the rest of the Helios system, its inhabitants may not respect its wishes. The Saurian Empire is likely to eye such a source of advanced technology greedily and try to take it by force if it cannot be taken by diplomacy. Other governments in the system, such as the Wolf Tribes and the Coqui Warcouncil, may also consider such actions if the conflict with the vaasi of the Cronus Belt goes against them. While Minder 48 has enough defenses to fight off small groups of attackers, invasion fleets are another matter. The Star Confederation cache of the Markin Belt may become the hot potato of the Helios system. Everyone wants it, and it provides a key advantage against the vaasi. Of course, the vaasi will expend great effort to destroy the cache if they learn of it.

Adventure Ideas for the Markin Belt • • •

◇ Getting a Good View

The player characters are hired by the Dawning Star Republic to place a valuable solar sensor array in orbit near the Markin Belt to observe the solar flare and sunspot activity on Helios. Unfortunately a solar flare storm occurs while the characters are placing the array, damaging their engines and life support systems. Now the characters have to get everything fixed before they suffocate, and the saurian ship sneaking around the Markin Belt looking for resources makes everything that much more complicated.

◇ Digging in the Dirt

Scientists from the Dawning Star Republic hire the player characters to go gather samples of the rocks of the Markin Belt so they may be analyzed in an attempt to learn more about where it came from. While excavating the characters activate a vaasi war robot that was part of the asteroid's engine's security complement, and it attempts to remove all living things from the Markin Belt.

◇ The Last Star Heart

During an intelligence-gathering mission, the vaasi learn of the star heart fragment that remains in the Markin Belt and dispatch a ship to collect it. An allied faction informs the player characters of the unusual activity, and they must travel to the Markin Belt to investigate. When they arrive the vaasi are already scanning the Markin Belt and the players must find the star heart before them.

◇ The Long Haul

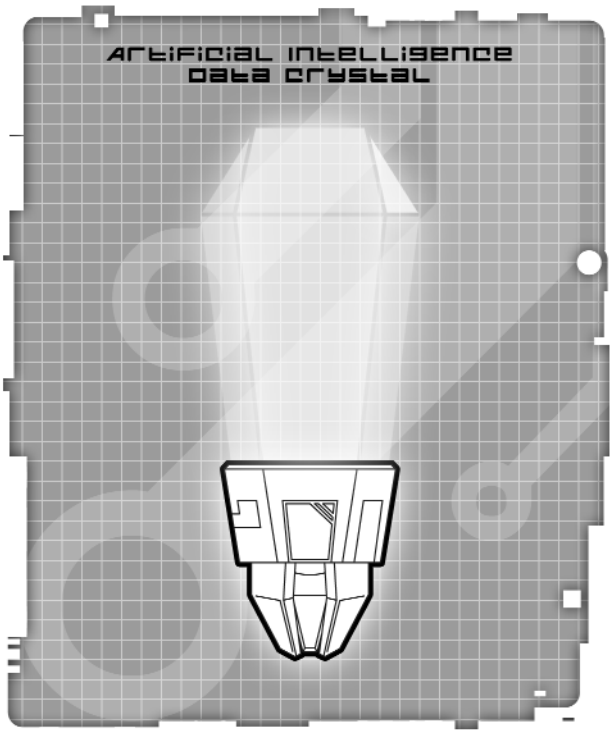
The party is hired by Maximilian Dagos to drag an iron rich asteroid back from the Markin Belt in order to see if mining the belt can be profitable. Unfortunately the selected asteroid has part of the old vaasi engine on it, and an unstable part at that. After the player characters begin hauling the asteroid the engine piece begins overloading, and if they don't find a way to stop it the explosion will destroy their ship.

XENOMORPHS

◇ Star Confederation Artificial Intelligence Entities

During its height the Star Confederation created numerous artificial intelligence entities that could operate in hostile conditions and perform tasks that required great precision or a level of multitasking that living beings could not attain. These entities were not truly self-aware artificial intelligence, but instead a set of programs and machine code so advanced that they were indistinguishable from living beings in terms of behavior. They had no real emotions, intuitions, or knowledge of their own existence, but their programming mimicked such sentient thought processes. These entities were allowed to expand their programming within certain limits and were created with a desire to improve themselves, meaning that over time these artificial intelligence entities were able to learn and advance. To most people these entities seemed to be completely sentient beings, but in fact they are merely very good facsimiles of such.

These artificial intelligence entities were sometimes used in bioreplicas and other types of robots, but were most commonly used to assist in the operation of large spacecraft or facilities. All artificial intelligence entities have their core programming contained on a small crystal cylinder about six inches long that can be inserted into any Star Confederation equipment designed to hold such an entity. Most large computers, including those on spacecraft, were capable of accepting artificial intelligence entity crystals, and many Star Confederation robots were also modified to accept them, giving the entities limited mobility. This allows artificial intelligence entities to be easily transported to where they are needed. Destroying the crystal will destroy the entity completely, unless it has created backups of itself somewhere.



The Star Confederation also made ready use of robots with less powerful artificial intelligence programming. These robots handled everything from combat to heavy lifting, and often worked at the direction of artificial intelligence entities. These robots did not have the sophistication of artificial intelligence entities and were not quite so life-like in demeanor, but could advance their programming and abilities in a similar fashion.

Species Traits

Advancement: Artificial intelligence entities may go up levels like other creatures. Artificial intelligence entities can never take levels in any class with psionic abilities.

Backups: An artificial intelligence entity may make a backup of itself, which takes one hour of uninterrupted activity and some sort of suitable data receptacle. The most common receptacle is a data crystal, but these incredibly dense storage tools are a PL 9 technology. Any Star Confederation PL 9 computer of Medium size or larger can hold a backup of an artificial intelligence entity, but in lower tech computers the size category increases by one with each decrease in PL, meaning that at PL 7, a Huge computer would be required. Such large systems are usually only found in scientific facilities and space ships. Making a copy takes one hour, during which time the artificial intelligence entity suffers a -4 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, skill and ability checks.

When an artificial intelligence entity makes a backup it makes a complete duplicate of itself. Unless the entity has a data crystal to store the copy in, it must simplify its code to accommodate the inferior data-storage technology. If the copy is stored in anything other than a data crystal both the original and the copy lose one level as the original has to compress its own data to fit the copy into the new receptacle, damaging its programming somewhat.

Because of this level loss and the lack of data crystals most entities only make backups in emergencies.

Once the backup is created it will activate when a set of events determined by the original artificial intelligence entity occurs, such as the destruction of the original entity.

Behavioral Controls: The Star Confederation created their artificial intelligence programs with a series of built in behavioral controls that cannot be bypassed without causing severe damage to the entity. While each entity had a number of controls specific to it, all artificial intelligence entities made by the Star Confederation had the same basic set of behavioral controls.

1 Artificial intelligence entities may not order nanites to create more nanites.
2 Artificial intelligence entities must work to preserve the lives of Star Confederation citizens and allied races. It is not permissible to take the life of such creatures.
3 Artificial intelligence entities may not share technology except with suitable advanced races who will use it responsibly.

Attempts to bypass these controls by the entity requires a Will save (DC 35), and if it is successful the entity may act as it chooses but it also takes 2d6 points of Intelligence damage due to the damage to its program. This damage is permanent unless the controls are restored.

Challenge Rating: Due to the non-physical nature of the artificial intelligence entity, they do not themselves pose much of a threat. Instead of having a set Challenge Rating they have a challenge rating bonus used in the same fashion as challenge rating modifiers found in templates. This bonus is added to the challenge rating of any robotic body the entity controls.

Computer Combat: While it is rare, artificial intelligence entities sometimes resort to violence to settle differences. Battles between artificial intelligence entities are carried out using viruses and firewalls, and such conflicts happen at such a speed that a living being has no real hope of participating. Information ghosts and psionicists using the various computer-based psionic powers may stand a chance against an artificial intelligence entity.

When two beings enter into computer combat each round they make an opposed Computer Use check. The loser suffers 1 point of Wisdom and Intelligence damage as their programming fragments or their brain suffers from terrible migraines. If more than one attacker targets the same defender, the defender makes one Computer Use check against all attackers. These opposed checks continue each round until one side is rendered incapable of continuing due to their Intelligence or Wisdom reaching 0, or until one side relents. If an artificial intelligence entity has its Intelligence or Wisdom reduced to 0 it may be destroyed at the winner's desire. Lost Intelligence and Wisdom points are regained as normal at a rate of one point per day as the artificial intelligence entity's programs repair and rewrite themselves. All actions in computer combat are considered to happen simultaneously.

Data Crystal: Artificial intelligence entities store their core programming in data crystals that are inserted into the machine they are to operate out of. When not attached to a machine the artificial intelligence entity is completely inactive and unaware of its surroundings. If the data crystal is destroyed, the artificial intelligence entity is destroyed unless it has made a backup. If the data crystal in inserted into a robot, computer mainframe, or other computer device the entity may take control of the device automatically unless there is already an heroic artificial intelligence entity in the device. In such case the two entities must make opposed Will saves to see which intelligence takes control of the device. The loser is forced back into their data crystal or some other form of data storage from which they cannot emerge for 24 hours, at which point they may attempt to take control again. Data crystals have a hardness of 10 and 5 hit points.

Mental Power: Artificial intelligence entities have vast stores of information and amazing computational abilities, allowing them to perform some actions with amazing speed and clarity. Artificial intelligence entities can take always take 10 on Intelligence based skill checks, and all Intelligence based skill checks take one tenth the normal time required as long as there are no physical activities required. Artificial intelligence entities can hack computers and plot navigational courses quickly, but cannot repair devices any faster than any other creature, and can only do so when using a robot body or other physical agent.

Artificial intelligence entities can perform a number of mental actions each round equal to the entity's Intelligence bonus. These actions may be free, move, attack, or full round actions and may involve only strictly non-physical tasks, such as looking up something in a computer database the entity connected to, plotting a course using a navigation computer, or decrypting a code. The entity is still limited in interacting with the physical world by whatever body it is using and can only take the normal amount of physical actions each round. This ability to multitask is primarily used to make multiple skill checks each round.

Non-Physical Existence: Artificial intelligence entities have no physical existence, instead taking the form of billions of lines of computer code. They have no physical abilities, gaining those from whatever device they inhabit if they are placed in a robot or other device capable of physical motion. The entity applies its mental abilities, skills, feats, base attack bonus, class defense bonuses, and saving throw bonuses to any physi-

cal body it inhabits, assuming the body has the means to use the abilities in question. If the body does not meet the requirements of a feat or ability, that feat or ability may not be used while the entity resides in that body. Most artificial intelligence entities were stored in large mainframe computers with no movement capabilities.

Robot Body: When an artificial intelligence entity's data crystal is installed in a robot body its challenge rating, hit dice, hit points, initiative, defense, and base attack bonus are added to those of the robot. The artificial intelligence entity's mental abilities replace those of the host robot. The artificial intelligence entity may use its own feats, and skills or those of the robot, while the artificial intelligence entity regains all of its special abilities.

Robot Upgrades: Artificial intelligence entities can be upgraded through the addition of feat and skill software in the same fashion that robots are upgraded.

Transmission Travel: When in a device with the ability to transmit information, such as a wireless computer network or a cable hookup, the artificial intelligence entity may transfer itself through the transmission medium at speeds up to the speed of light. This enables the entity to access far away data sources and communicate with people over great distances. The entity does not transfer its entire self when doing so, and if the connection is severed the entity reboots the following round at its data crystal.

Artificial Intelligence Entity (Smart Hero 4) ⋄ CR 4

Tiny Construct; HD 4d6; hp 14; Mas -; Init +0; Spd -; Defense +1, touch -, flat-footed -; BAB +2; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk -; FS -; Reach -; SQ Advancement, backup, behavioral controls, data crystal, mental power, non-physical existence, robot upgrades, transmission travel; AL Star Confederation; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +6; AP 7; Rep -1; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 28, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Computer Use +20, Craft (Electrical) +16, Craft (Mechanical) +16, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +16, Craft (Structural) +15, Decipher Script +17, Demolitions +15, Forgery +15, Investigate +15, Knowledge (Civics) +16, Knowledge (History) +18, Knowledge (Technology) +18, Navigate +16, Read/Write Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Repair +16, Research +18, Speak Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak).

Talents: Linguist, Savant (Computer Use).

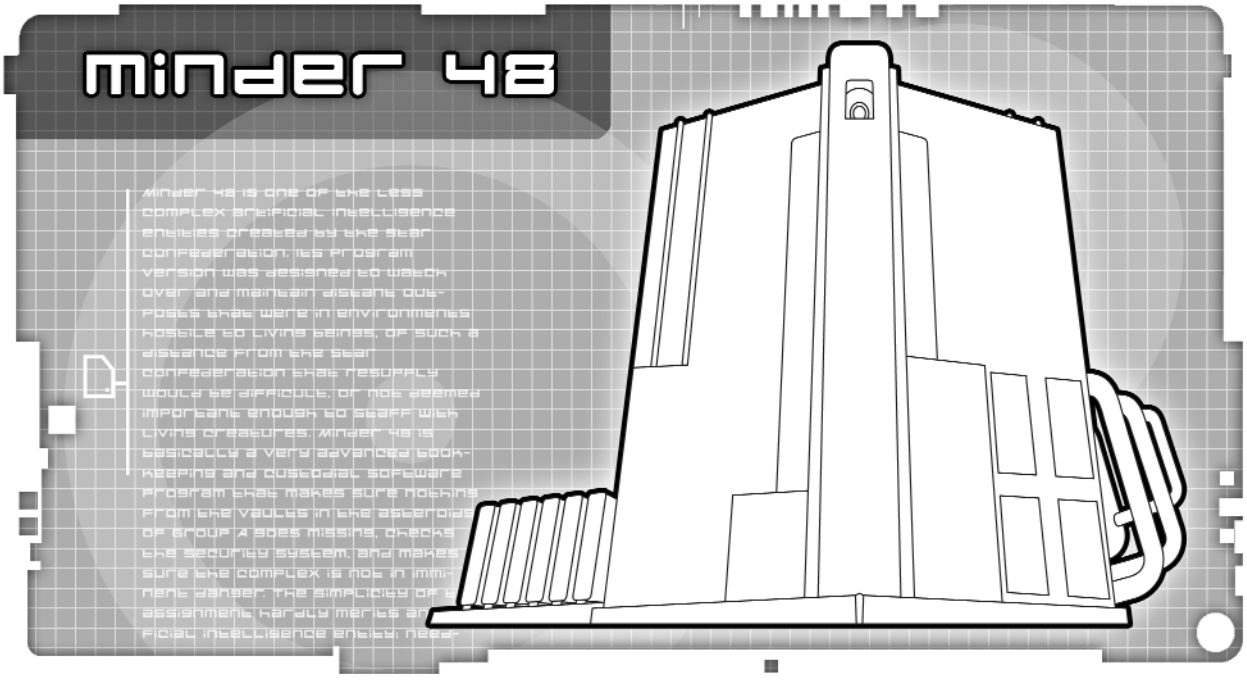
Feats: Educated, Iron Will, Low Profile, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Studious.

Advancement: By class.

NPCS • • •

⋄ Minder 48

Minder 48 is one of the less complex artificial intelligence entities created by the Star Confederation. Its program version was designed to watch over and maintain distant outposts that were in environments hostile to living beings, of such a distance from the Star Confederation that resupply would be difficult, or not deemed important enough to staff with living creatures. Minder 48 is basically a very advanced bookkeeping and custodial software program that makes sure nothing from the vaults in the asteroids of Group C goes missing, checks the security system, and makes sure the complex is not in imminent danger. The simplicity of the assign-



ment hardly merits an artificial intelligence entity; needless to say, Minder 48 gets bored very easily.

Like all artificial intelligence entities, Minder 48 is programmed to be helpful, cheerful, and subservient to Star Confederation citizens, though it has no set means for determining Star Confederation citizens from outsiders. Its disposition could best be described as cheerfully pessimistic, always sure that things will turn out for the worse but perfectly happy to see it happen. Its programming was tweaked to make Minder 48 a little paranoid about the technology and equipment it is responsible for, a tweak that would never have become a problem if the Star Confederation had been able to give it a tune up every few hundred years. Instead, Minder 48 has slowly been growing more and more paranoid as the millennia pass. Minder 48 knows of the fall of the Star Confederation through listening to communications chatter in the Helios system, and now assumes it is the last bastion of the Star Confederation in the universe. To Minder 48 this means it must keep its existence and the technology it keeps watch over safe from all intruders, even if those who find its hideout are the descendants of the Star Confederation. Minder 48 will use what means are at its disposal, including an advanced security system within the vaults it oversees, to keep intruders out. It has little compunction about using lethal measures against non-Star Confederation citizens. Only by convincing Minder 48 that they are members of the Star Confederation will outsiders be able to infiltrate the compound, a task that would be made much easier if the intruders could get Law, a fellow artificial intelligence entity stationed beneath Hephaestus, to speak on their behalf.

Minder 48's data crystal is kept in the vault's primary computer located deep in the vault, but it can transfer it to a number of security and labor robots under his control. It prefers directing these robots remotely to taking control of one directly.

Minder 48
(Smart Hero 6/Dedicated Hero 4) ⋄ CR +10

Tiny Construct (Artificial Intelligence Entity); HD 10d6; hp 36; Mas -; Init +0; Spd -; Defense +5 (+5 class), touch -, flat-footed -; BAB +6; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk -; FS -; Reach -; SQ Advancement, backup, behavioral controls, data crystal, mental power, non-physical existence, robot upgrades, transmission travel; AL Star Confederation; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +11; AP 10; Rep +1; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 28, Wis 18, Cha 14.
PL Familiarity: 9
Skills: Bluff +8, Computer Use +24, Craft (Electrical) +16, Craft (Mechanical) +16, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +16, Craft (Structural) +16, Decipher Script +18, Demolitions +16, Disable Device +18, Forgery +18, Investigate +24, Knowledge (Civics) +22, Knowledge (Current Events) +16, Knowledge (History) +22, Knowledge (Technology) +22, Listen +11, Navigate +18, Read/Write Language (13 of choice plus Unispeak), Repair +20, Research +18, Search +18, Sense Motive +16, Speak Language (13 of choice plus Unispeak), Spot +11.
Talents: Linguist, Savant (Computer Use), Trick.
Feats: Attentive, Aware, Educated, Gearhead, Iron Will, Low Profile, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Skill Emphasis (Sense Motive), Studious.

⋄ Star Confederation Light Security Robot

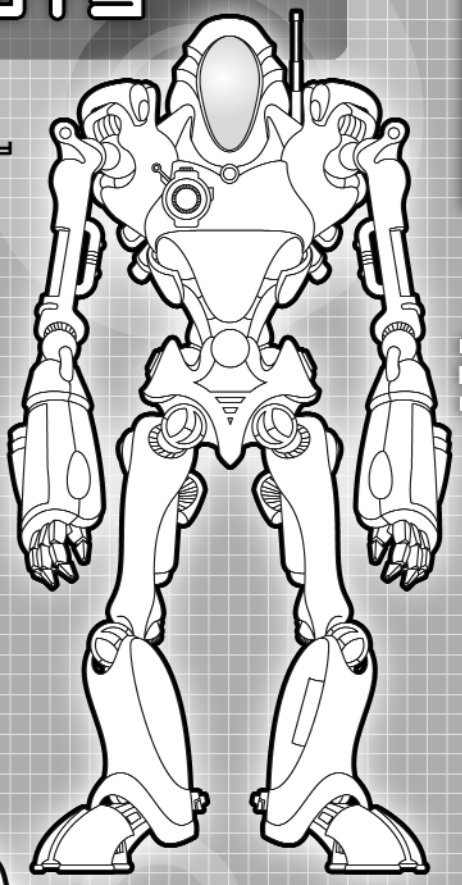
A common robot in Star Confederation facilities that were not expected to be military targets, Light Security Robots were designed primarily for security and light patrol duty. Light Security Robots did not have the weapons and armor to survive heavy combat situations during the war with the vaasi, but were sufficient for dealing with civilians and other less dangerous conditions. With the loss of the advanced technologies of the Star Confederation, the Light Security Robot would now be considered an impressive combat machine in addition to a remarkable piece of robotic engineering. Light Security Robots look like metallic humanoids with a flat, reflective face plate that covers the front of their head. Light Security Robots are only programmed with a minimal personality, though they are unfailingly polite at all times. Most the Light Security Robot's programming deals with finding security threats and removing said threats, so most of their personality programming is concerned with talking people into surrendering peacefully or leaving the area. While all Light Security Robots are capable of writing their own programs and learning from their experiences, those that are left in service for more than a few decades develop personalities of their own. These older robots were once highly sought after for their advanced abilities and personable nature, which some said was more life-like than artificial intelligence entities since Light Security Robots learn their personalities from their own life experiences in the same fashion as artificial intelligence entities, though on a more limited basis. The Light Security Robots in the Markin Belt vaults have become very quirky over time, some even adopting hobbies, but this behavior has concerned Minder 48 who fears his robots are becoming less reliable. Because of this the robots are usually kept offline until needed.

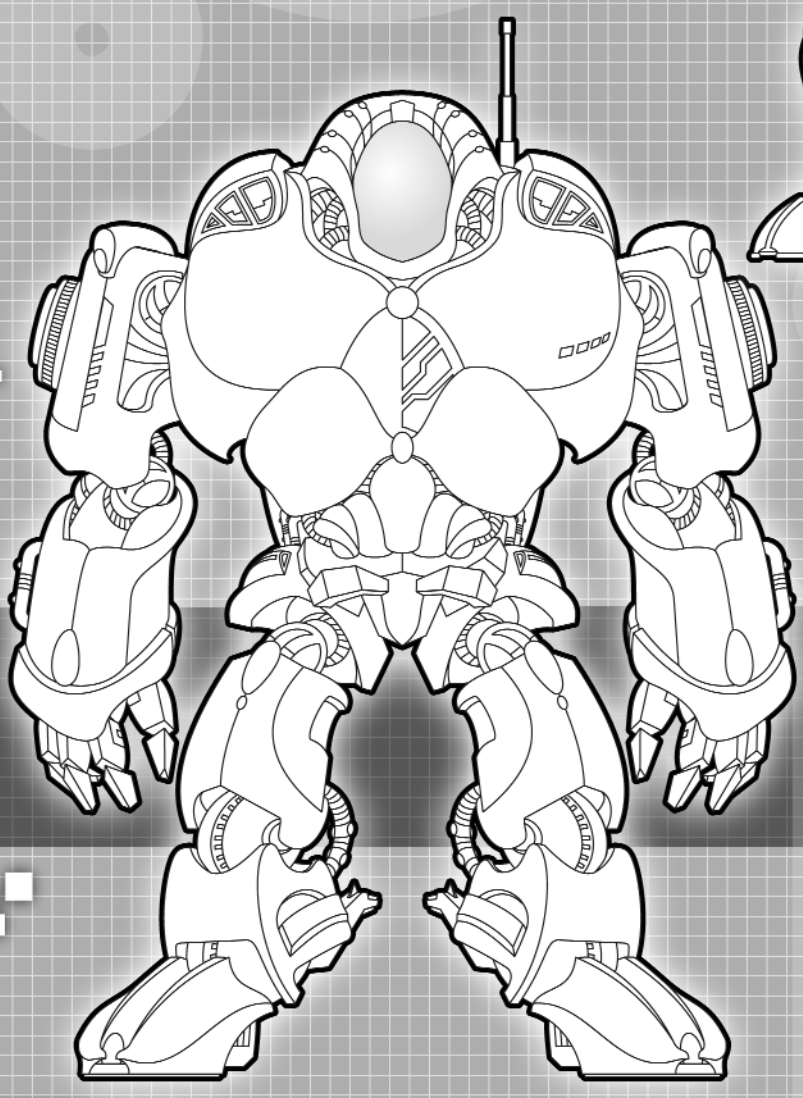
Purchase DC: - (PL 8)
Restriction: Military (+3)

STAR CONFEDERATION SECURITY ROBOTS

A common robot in Star Confederation facilities that were not expected to be military targets. Light security robots were designed primarily for security and light patrol duty. Light security robots did not have the weapons and armor to survive heavy combat situations during the war with the Vaasi, but were sufficient for dealing with civilians and other less dangerous conditions. With the loss of the advanced technologies of the Star Confederation, the light security robot would now be considered an impressive combat machine in addition to a remarkable piece of robotic engineering. Light security robots look like metallic humanoids with a flat reflective face plate that covers the front of their head.

Light Security Robot





Heavy Labor Robot

Star Confederation Light Security Robot (Dedicated Ordinary 4) ⋄ CR 5

Medium-size Construct; HD 1d10+4d6+10; hp 29; MAS -; Init +7; Spd 35 ft, climb 20 ft; Defense 27, touch 17, flat-footed 23 (+4 Dex, +10 armor, +3 class); BAB +3; Grap +8; Atk +8 melee (special, pain prod*), +7 ranged (4d10, plasma carbine*); Full +8 melee (special, pain prod*), +7 ranged (4d10, plasma carbine*); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; construct traits, critical systems, darkvision 240 ft., acid resistance 10, cold resistance 10, electricity resistance 10, fire resistance 10, damage reduction 5/energy; AL Star Confederation or owner; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +6; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 20, Dex 19, Con -, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 8.
PL Familiarity: 8.
Skills: Climb +15, Computer Use +10, Demolitions +16, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +16, Forgery +16, Investigate +9, Jump +13, Listen +15, Knowledge (Civics) +9, Knowledge (Tactics) +9, Read/Write Language (Unispeak), Search +16, Sense Motive +11, Speak Language (Unispeak), Spot +15, Treat Injury +13.
Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.
Equipment: Pain prod with 5 power packs, plasma carbine with 5 power packs.
Frame: Biodroid.
Locomotion: Legs, inductor.
Manipulators: 2 task hands.
Armor: Megatanium armor.
Sensors: Nerve web.
Skill Software: Skill web, language chip (Unispeak), skill net (Computer Use 8 ranks, Demolitions 8 ranks, Disable Device 8 ranks, Forgery 8 ranks), skill net (Climb 8 ranks, Jump 8 ranks, Search 8 ranks, Diplomacy 8 ranks).
Feat Software: Feat web.
Ability Upgrade: Strength upgrade x4, Dexterity upgrade x4, Intelligence upgrade x2, Wisdom upgrade x4, Charisma upgrade.
Accessories: AV recorder, AV transmitter, fire extinguisher, remote control unit, vocalizer, integrated videophone, magnetic feet, self-destruct system, survivor array, inertial inhibitor, polyvox, self-repair unit.

*See page 50

⋄ Star Confederation Heavy Labor Robot

A hulking brute of a robot, Heavy Labor Robots were used in any situation where manual labor was required. Heavy Labor Robots are programmed to perform a wide variety of manual tasks, though most heavy lifting and transportation tasks were taken care of with anti-gravity fields and transport pads. Heavy Labor Robots often worked as maintenance personnel with up to twenty robots being overseen by a living being, but as the war with the vaasi wore on more and more often Heavy Labor Robots were left in the charge of artificial intelligence entities.

Heavy Labor Robots were not given much in the way of personality programming and speak very tersely. They follow orders without question or discussion, only stopping if they come to the conclusion they cannot carry out the task at hand. Heavy Labor Robots were not programmed to advance their own programming, and so can only learn through getting programming upgrades.

Purchase DC: - (PL 8)
Restriction: Military (+3)

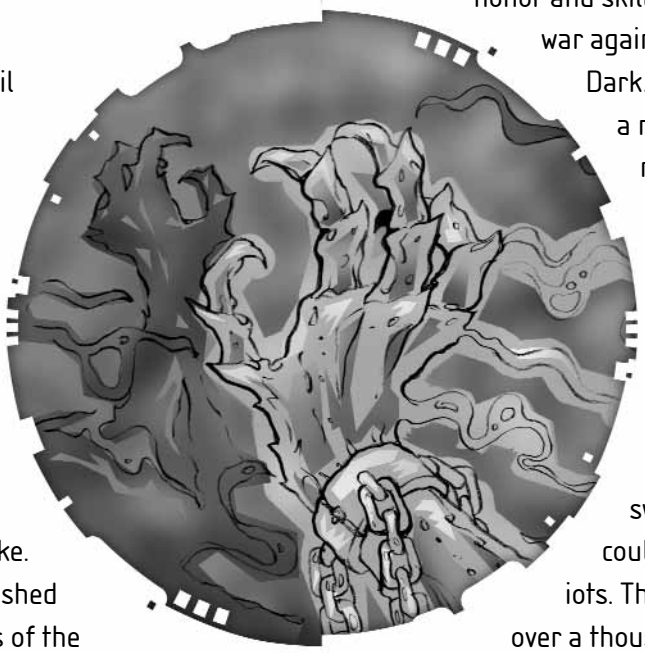
Heavy Labor Robot ⋄ CR 3

Large-size Construct; HD 5d10+20; hp 47; MAS -; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +8 armor, -1 size); BAB +3; Grap +15; Atk +11 melee (1d6+8, slam); Full +11 melee (1d6+8, slam); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; construct traits, critical systems, darkvision 180 ft.; AL Star Confederation or owner; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 27, Dex 12, Con -, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 5.
PL Familiarity: 8.
Skills: Computer Use +6, Craft (Electrical) +8, Craft (Mechanical) +8, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +8, Craft (Structural) +8, Disable Device +8, Read/Write Language (Unispeak), Repair +10, Search +10, Speak Language (Unispeak).
Feats: None.
Equipment: None.
Frame: Armature.
Locomotion: Inductor.
Manipulators: 2 task hands.
Armor: Reactive armor.
Sensors: Class IX sensor system.
Skill Software: Skill progit (Computer Use 8 ranks, Disable Device 8 ranks, Repair 8 ranks, Search 8 ranks) skill progit (Craft (Electrical) 8 ranks, Craft (Mechanical) 8 ranks, Craft (Pharmaceutical) 8 ranks, Craft (Structural) 8 ranks), language chip (Unispeak).
Ability Upgrade: Strength upgrade x2, Dexterity upgrade x2, Wisdom upgrade x2, Charisma upgrade x2.
Accessories: AV recorder, AV transmitter, fire extinguisher, internal storage unit, remote control unit, robolink, vocalizer, integrated videophone, magnetic feet, robot repair unit.

CHAPTER III

HEPHAESTUS

In the night sky there burns an orange star in the southern heavens that can be seen before all others in the autumn evenings. Though it is easy to see, do not look at it, for evil lives there and to watch this star, the Hollow Dark, is to tempt the evil therein. This evil was imprisoned by the mighty gods of the First Universe, before we saurians walked the earth of C'thalk. And this evil slept for time beyond count, but evil cannot stay contained forever.



Many years ago the evil contained in the Hollow Dark awoke and began to hunger for those who lived beyond its reach. The evil began clawing at the chains that bound it, awakening the Law-Keepers who had sworn long ago to sleep in the Hollow Dark in case the evil awoke. Led by the spirit Unblemished Law who lives in the walls of the Hollow Dark, the Law-Keepers gave battle to the evil but its prison had already been cracked. They could no longer return it to its slumber, so instead began the long vigil of keeping the evils trapped in the Hollow Dark. Years passed, blood was shed, and the evil grew faster than the Law-Keepers. The Hollow Dark went from being an outpost of the First Universe to a hot dark place filled with the screams of war and dying. While there was no weakness in the will of the Law-Keepers, they knew they could not stand forever against the evil without aid, and their failure would release the evil they fought so long to trap.

So they came to our world and other neighboring worlds seeking warriors of honor and skill to join them in the war against evil in the Hollow Dark. We saurians joined such a righteous battle with matchless vigor, though the wolves and others of our system also took part. The Law-Keepers returned for more recruits a few years later, and then for supplies, taking what swords and armor they could carry in their sky chariots. They have been coming for over a thousand years, taking those warriors pure of heart and powerful of skill to the Hollow Dark, where they may battle evil in the greatest battle of all. It is an honor to be chosen, even if you never return to the Empire. There are few greater honors than serving among the Law-Keepers.

A saurian myth concerning Hephaestus

HEPHAESTUS • • •

A barren, cratered planet, Hephaestus is utterly inhospitable on its surface. Hot, without atmosphere, and bereft of any shelter, there is little obvious reason to visit the planet, though there are several less than obvious reasons. Beneath the surface of Hephaestus lies one of the largest remaining constructions of the Star Confederation in the Helios system. Once, the carved out center of Hephaestus served as a jail, but now it is a war zone.

Rotation Period: 16 hours
Revolution Period: 145 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: None
Average Temperature:
390 Kelvin (242.6° F)
Gravity: .8G

HISTORY • • •

Hephaestus formed along with the rest of the Helios system from the accretion disk that surrounded the star Helios. For many years Hephaestus was left alone and untouched by the member races of the Star Confederation, all of whom thought it was too barren and inhospitable to waste much time on. It was not until the war with the Vaasi Empire began that resources were in such demand that the iron core of Hephaestus seemed a prize worth mastering the heat and radiation of its surface to acquire. During the middle stages of the war with the Vaasi Empire, the Star Confederation began mining Hephaestus for iron by burrowing tunnels deep into the planet and then hollowing it out from the inside. Eventually this meant that the planet was partially hollow. These tunnels were kept from collapsing in on themselves by a series of immense interior supports constructed by the Star Confederation, though eventually the iron supply that could be safely extracted began to run out and the mining operations shut down.



Many years later, as Eos and the other worlds in the Helios system began to overflow with refugees from the vaasi advance, attention was again turned to Hephaestus and its vast interior space. Inside the hollow regions of Hephaestus a massive city structure was constructed to serve as an emergency shelters for refugees as well as a jail for criminals of the Star Confederation, vaasi prisoners, and other undesirables. In the later days of the war it also served as a hospital for Star Confederation wounded and a storage facility for materials used in the genetic seeding program. But when the vaasi invaded the Helios system the installation below the surface of Hephaestus sealed up its only two doors, went to minimal power, and did its best to be ignored by the vaasi. The crew, refugees, and all the prisoners were stored in cryogenic hibernation in the hopes of surviving until the vaasi left the system. Meanwhile an artificial intelligence program named Unblemished Law 12, normally shortened to Law, kept watch over the frozen criminals, refugees, prisoners, and personnel.

The installation remained undetected during the brief vaasi occupation of the system, which was cut short when the vaasi used up the last of their power reserves. The installation beneath the surface of Hephaestus was not designed to exist without outside support indefinitely so Law kept the inhabitants asleep until just over eight hundred years ago, when he was sure the vaasi had left and he assumed supplies would be available on other worlds. A short in some of the installation's systems caused several of the vaasi prisoners to awaken and be released along with the refugees and facility personnel, and these prisoners quickly went about releasing their fellows.

The first true vaasi to awake was Curthiyug, an expert in genetic engineering and the creator of several servitor races. Curthiyug used this head start to cement his control of the other vaasi, initial-

ly only freeing those he could bend to his will, and has remained nominal leader of the vaasi beneath Hephaestus ever since. One of the first steps in his plan to take control of the facility was hacking the facility's nanite control center and taking control of millions of nanites within the facility. He used these to seal off certain areas of the prison, attack the surviving guards, and construct weapons and other tools for his own use. This inflicted tremendous casualties on the surviving guards; otherwise, the vaasi might have been immediately put down when their escape began. Curthiyug also programmed a segment of the nanite population to assist him in genetic engineering projects, commanding them to alter the genetic structure of his vaasi minions in the hopes of creating new vaasi servitor races.

Eventually Law broke Curthiyug's control over most of the nanites, but in the process made it impossible for anyone to control many of the nanites. Now nanites wander the station randomly disassembling objects, attacking creatures they encounter, and randomly altering the genetic structure of the inhabitants of the facility. This has resulted in large areas of the facility becoming unfit for habitation due to nanite infestation. All those who live in the facility suffer from a wide variety of genetic mutations caused by Curthiyug's nanites run amuck. For races descended from the Star Confederation, the changes in DNA spark random mutations due to the differences between vaasi and Star Confederation DNA. Once the source of much of the Star Confederation wealth, science, and industry, nanites have gone from being helpful tools to horrible weapons. There are few sights more horrifying than seeing a man torn apart by microscopic robots.

In short order the installation turned into a war zone as battles between vaasi, Star Confederation prisoners, and the station personnel and refugees raged throughout the complex. The battle continues still through the installation, now called the Hollow Dark by its inhabitants for the many sections that are now without light. Unfortunately for the prisoners and the Star Confederation descendants, commonly called the Law-Keepers, the vaasi have a much higher reproductive rate than the other species present, and the constant state of war made this a sizeable advantage for the vaasi.

A few years after awakening from their long slumber, the Law-Keepers used the ships stationed at the facility to visit the other planets in the system looking for supplies. This first gave them an advantage in terms of supplies over the vaasi, but also allowed them to recruit new Law-Keepers from the saurians and later the other species of the Helios system. Over time all the original Star Confederation personnel in the headquarters were killed off and replaced with the races that now inhabit Helios, making the Hollow Dark an odd conglomeration of races that somehow manage to live together in harmony.

On Thres and C'thalk legends of divine guardians from Hephaestus who search other worlds for brave and true warriors to fight in a holy crusade are common, and both the wolves and saurians consider being selected by the Law-Keepers a great honor. Among these races the Hollow Dark is seen as some hellish world only the greatest warriors are chosen to travel to, where they do battle against the universe's greatest evil. The elgies and haimedians equate the Hollow Dark with Hell itself and consider it a place where the valiant are taken to die, dark and alone. The Law-Keepers have unintentionally had a large influence over the spiritual beliefs of the species of the Helios system, but now the Law-Keeper leaders realize these fervent beliefs improve the morale and quality of their recruits and so keep the charade going. The Law-Keepers have not contacted any of the governments of Helios officially, fearing that the governments who have space travel will try to take the remaining bits of Star Confederation technology from Hephaestus and doom the Law-Keepers to defeat.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

Hephaestus's surface is crater-covered though mostly flat, having no tectonic plates or other seismic activity to create mountains with. Being so close to the Markin Belt and having no atmosphere with which to deflect or burn off meteorites, the surface of Hephaestus has been hit by many meteorites throughout its existence. These craters range from a few feet in diameter to several miles, the largest of which is twelve miles across and located in the northern polar regions of the planet. The axial tilt on Hephaestus is very slight, meaning there is no seasonal variation. The surface of Hephaestus is covered in rock and fine sand.

The interior of Hephaestus, the Hollow Dark, is a huge maze of corridors, medical centers, storage rooms, and prison cells. The installation runs for hundreds of miles below the surface of Hephaestus, though most of it is in the equatorial region. The Hollow Dark reaches depths of up to fifty miles, but most of the installation is within ten miles of the surface. There are only two exits to the surface, both of which lead to docking bays controlled by the Law-Keepers. These two docking bays are a hundred miles apart, in the equatorial region of Hephaestus.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

There is no atmosphere on Hephaestus due to its close proximity to Helios. While not as hot as the Markin Belt, the surface of Hephaestus is far too hot to support any type of life, even with current terraforming technology. The planet's surface is likely to remain uninhabited for a long, long time.

Within the Hollow Dark the atmosphere is a breathable mix of oxygen, carbon dioxide, and nitrogen that is kept relatively clean by the few atmospheric processors that still function. The air smells bad in many regions and most newcomers describe it as stuffy. Most of the inhabitants avoid settling in the areas where the atmospheric converters have failed, sometimes creating buffer zones between warring factions, but will travel across these areas when necessary.

DISEASES OF THE HOLLOW DARK

The following are some of the more common diseases contracted by those who spend time in the Hollow Dark.

Black Rot

A powerful rotting fungus, it grows on any organic material that is left wet in the dark for more than one hundred hours. It can eat flesh easily and is a common affliction among the Law-Keepers and vaasi. Because of it both sides regularly make sure they are exposed to some type of light. To non-living targets it inflicts 1d4 points of damage per day.

Mind Splinters

An airborne bacteria, it attacks the cells of the nervous system in any animal life form it encounters. This process causes hallucinations in the short term and can cause permanent paralysis if the patient is not able to fight off the infection.

Disease	Type	Incubation Period	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage
Black Rot	Contact	1d6 days	1d4 Con	1 Con
Mind Splinters	Inhaled	1d4 hours	1d4 Wis	1 Dex*

**This damage is permanent.*

CONDITIONS • • •

Much like the Markin Belt, the sunlit side of Hephaestus is so hot as to make it completely uninhabitable by any means. Hephaestus also suffers from solar flares, but not as badly as the Markin Belt. The surface of Hephaestus is considered a light gravity, vacuum environment that is also highly irradiated.

Within the Hollow Dark the temperature runs about 90 degrees Fahrenheit on average, and some regions of the installation are considered to have thin atmosphere due to poor ventilation and lack of atmospheric processors. Many regions are without light because of lack of power or failed lightning systems, and lacking any sources of natural light these areas are covered in complete darkness.

The damp, warm nature of the Hollow Dark means that disease is often a problem. Most of the diseases are contact or inhaled in nature, and many are fatal due to the lack of proper medical facilities. The Law-Keepers have a medical isolation ward set up for those who become infected, but can do little else for them.

Some regions of the Hollow Dark are infected with nanites, most of which are wild nanites that attack anything they come across. Others are DNA infectors that modify the DNA of creatures they encounter. These areas are usually avoided by both the Law-Keepers and the vaasi, and signs or warnings are often posted. The effects of the nanites are described later in this chapter on page 57.

FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

◇ The Law-Keepers

The descendants and inheritors of the duty originally charged to the guards of the installation that has become the Hollow Dark, these dedicated individuals see their battle as a sacred conflict against a great force of evil. None of the original Star Confederation guards have survived to this point, leaving the containment of the vaasi prisoners to the new residents of the Helios system, advised by the artificial intelligence entity Law. Despite being the second group to carry on the fight against the vaasi of the Dark Halls, the warriors of the Law-Keepers are a dedicated group. Many of them have

hoped their entire lives to be so honored as to join the ranks of the Law-Keepers. The elgies, haimedians, and other less warlike races are less excited than the saurians, wolves, or coqui, but all know that if the vaasi escape the confines of Hephaestus, they will strike at the worlds of Helios.

The origin of the Law-Keepers and the earliest days of the Hollow Dark are now told as legends and myths. The creators of the facility are equated with gods rather than the Star Confederation. Law encourages such ideas, feeling it helps keep morale up amongst the ranks of the Law-Keepers. As the species of Helios have become more advanced some of them, particularly the elgies, no longer believe these stories and have begun piecing together the truth. Other races, like the saurians and wolves, find this fabricated history far more pleasing to their sensibilities than the real story and thus have little interest in disproving it. Indeed, the ranks of the Law-Keepers are one of the few places that one can find wolves and saurians fighting side by side without argument, such is the honor they see in their duty.

The majority of the Law-Keepers are saurians, wolves, and yaom. All three races place a spiritual value on serving with the Law-Keepers, and are thus more often targeted for recruitment. The yaom see it their duty to wield the Red Truth against the vaasi of the Dark Halls, knowing that such creatures are an affront to the Red Truth.

The Law-Keepers have a number of strongholds established in their territory to guard particularly important locations, such as the docking bays and the hydroponic farms. These strongholds are well fortified, are staffed at all times, and usually have a sizeable armory. These strongholds are the only locations where computers are kept in good enough repair for Law to function and communicate with the Law-Keepers. This is normally done through a computer terminal using a voice interface, but a number of portable Law relays also exist that allow it to be contacted remotely through a wireless network. Law's actual programming is spread throughout the installation, making it very difficult to destroy it. In addition Law has a number of backup versions of itself in storage, but the fragmenting of its programming has limited its performance and speed.

There are estimated to be over forty thousand Law-Keepers, but exact numbers are hard to calculate. Less than five percent of these warriors are armed with anything more than spears, clubs, and similar primitive weapons. The Law-Keepers are led by the artificial intelligence entity Law, which has its programming spread throughout the remaining computers in the Illuminatory. Law works to keep the Law-Keepers organized, supplied, and reinforced, leaving the actual military planning and leadership to Strueg Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-in-Blood, the elder saurian leader of the Law-Keepers.

Law was originally intended as a legal assistance and quartermaster program, meaning its current activities far exceed its original operating parameters. This stress has begun to show on Law and it knows that soon it will suffer a fatal programming failure, so Law is currently training others to take over the tasks it handles. The arrival of the technologically advanced humans and mechites give Law hope that they may be able to repair it, if they can be trusted.

The Law-Keepers attack vaasi on sight, even when encountered off-world. The Law-Keepers have no idea that there are vaasi on Eos or in the Cronus Belt, but would certainly assist any efforts against them with information. The Law-Keepers have little to share in terms of supplies with the outside world but have extensive knowledge of vaasi biology, psychology, and tactics.

THE MAKEUP OF THE LAW-KEEPERS

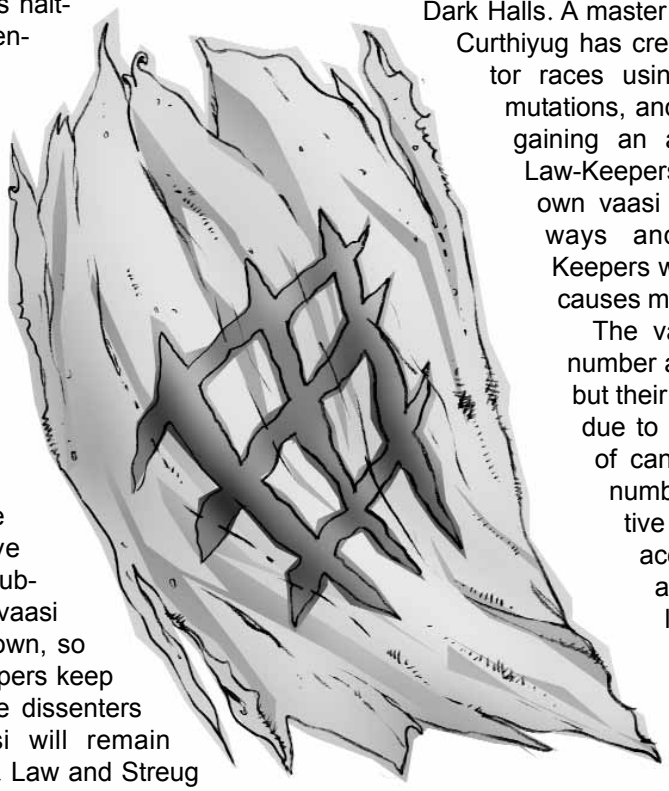
The Law-Keepers recruit from all worlds of the Helios system except Eos, but not in equal numbers. They have been recruiting C'thalk for almost eight hundred years, while the other worlds have only had viable recruits for four centuries or less. They favor species with a warrior tradition over more peaceful species, but almost all species of Helios are represented among the Law-Keepers. The list below shows the approximate breakdown of the Law-Keeper population.

Coqui	2%
Elgie	3%
Haimedians	4%
Mechites	3%
Saurians	44%
Straas	5%
Wolves	35.5%
Yaom	8%

The Law-Keepers have good relations with most of the species of the Helios system, appearing in legends as mighty warriors and sages who spend all of eternity fighting evil so others do not have to. These stories are just starting to crop up amongst the coqui, but they are common among all the other peoples of Helios except humans and velin. The Law-Keepers hate the tentaari; in the early years of their operation the tentaari attacked all ships leaving Hephaestus, thinking they might be carrying escaped vaasi. Being paranoid and reactionary they attacked despite Law's attempts to warn them, fearful of that surviving Star Confederation citizens would take back the technological boons given the tentaari since they have squandered them so. The loss of the tentaari ship that crashed in the Bergan Lowlands of Eos halted this practice, as the tentaari were unwilling to risk their remaining ships. The tentaari still keep an eye on Hephaestus but have never made actual contact with the Law-Keepers.

Of late, a small but vocal minority movement has begun among the Law-Keepers who wish to use the ships the faction controls to flee Hephaestus and leave the vaasi to rot in their subterranean territory. The vaasi have no ships of their own, so as long as thy Law-Keepers keep their ships secure these dissenters believe that the vaasi will remain trapped on Hephaestus. Law and Streug Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-In-Blood both believe that if left alone, the vaasi would build a ship of their own from the remaining technology of the Hollow Dark, and possibly even regain control of the nanite population, making them a threat to the entire solar system. Law and Streug Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-In-Blood have begun a concerted effort to raise morale to combat this dissension, though they seem to be having little success.

The symbol of the Law-Keepers is a black crosshatch over a white field, and the colors they normally wear are tan, red, white, and black. While the Law-Keepers do not have uniforms, most wear rough tunics or tabards depicting the order's colors. These are usually made of poorly dyed cloth rags and bits of salvaged materials.



THE VAASI OF THE DARK HALLS • • •

In the lowest depths of the Hollow Dark live a horde of vaasi, all of whom were once prisoners of the Star Confederation, or are descendants of those prisoners. Most of the vaasi are warriors, with true vaasi and phrenics being extremely rare among their number. Several other servitor races are present as well. Most of the vaasi prisoners were captured during a raid on a nearby system against a vaasi genetic production facility. This facility was being used to churn out servitor races in droves, in addition to developing new servitor races. While the Star Confederation deemed this information too dangerous to exist and destroyed it, the mastermind of the operation, a true vaasi named Curthiyug, still lives in the bowels of the Dark Halls. A master of genetic modification, Curthiyug has created several new servitor races using controlled breeding, mutations, and nanites in the hope of gaining an advantage against the Law-Keepers. He has mutated his own vaasi troops in a number of ways and infected the Law-Keepers with a nanite plague that causes mutations in them as well.

The vaasi of the Dark Halls number around eighty thousand, but their numbers fluctuate often due to the rampant of practice of cannibalism amongst their number and high reproductive rate. In addition to the acceptance of cannibalism among the vaasi, the lack of other food sources makes it one of the few types of sustenance available. A number of food producer units remain operational in the Dark Halls. These are only used by those vaasi not strong enough to take their own meals from others. The entire society of the Dark Halls is based on the idea of survival of the fittest, with the weak and stupid usually meeting a quick end. All non-vaasi are seen simply as food, and the vaasi take prisoners when battling the other factions in the Hollow Dark for just such purpose.

While the vaasi do not need much light, they do keep a few illumination panels functioning and light other areas by burning fat from those they kill. This creates a terrible stench throughout the Dark Halls, a smell that cannot be removed by the few functioning atmosphere converters. The burning piles of fat, especially that taken from vaasi corpses, cast an eerie red light over the surrounding tunnels, helping the Dark Halls live up to its reputation as a living hell

that it holds among many of the inhabitants of Helios.

All vaasi are united in their hatred of the Star Confederation and those who still carry its banner, but otherwise there is little unity among them. Curthiyug is undisputed as being the single most powerful vaasi in the Dark Halls and has the largest group of minions. He still controls some nanites and his followers have more favorable mutations than other vaasi in the Dark Halls. Outside of Curthiyug's followers, the vaasi break in to nearly a dozen different factions, each led by a true vaasi and claiming its own territory. These factions often fight among themselves, but Curthiyug can usually cow them into cooperating when needed. He would be substantially outnumbered if all the other true vaasi aligned against him, but thus far he has been able to keep them fractured enough to prevent this.

Curthiyug wishes to eventually capture the spacecraft controlled by the Law-Keepers so he can escape, but also wants to keep his controlled breeding and mutation experiment going in the Dark Halls. It has produced more positive benefits than he expected and he hopes to create an army of mutant vaasi with which he will conquer Eos. Curthiyug is not as desperate to return to the Vaasi Empire as his vaasi fellows, fearing that he will escape simply to be returned to his low ranking position in the hierarchy of the Vaasi Empire. He seeks to gain information about the disposition of the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire before leaving his position of power in the Hollow Dark, but once he learns how precarious the situation in the Helios system is with the imminent conflict with the vaasi on the horizon, he is likely to push that much more against the Law-Keepers.

All the vaasi attack Law-Keepers on sight. The vaasi have few advanced weapons in their arsenal, relying instead on natural weapons or crudely fashioned spears and clubs. The vaasi make up for what they lack in technology in numbers.

LANGUAGE ON HEPHAESTUS

Among the Law-Keepers Unispeak is the default language for the myriad races present, lacking of any other common tongue. New recruits are always trained in Unispeak shortly after their arrival if they are not already familiar with it.

Most Law-Keepers consider speaking their species languages to be a sign of discontent and mistrust. One only speaks in languages not everyone can understand when they have something to hide.

Among the vaasi most speak the vaasi tongue, while some are also fluent in Unispeak. Only true vaasi, phrenics, and other more advanced servitor races speak Unispeak. It is usually only used to taunt enemies and interrogate prisoners during torture, though in such situations getting answers is not the point of the exercise.

LOCATIONS ON HEPHAESTUS • • • ◆ THE HOLLOW DARK

The Hollow Dark is the name used by the inhabitants of the installation below the crust of Hephaestus to refer to the miles and miles of passages, prison cells, storage bays, and caverns they call home. Now aged years beyond counting, this facility is a shell of its former self. Some areas are off limits due to nanite infection, many sections no longer have functioning lights, and the prisoners it once held now control much of the facility. In these old and rusted halls the battle between the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire continues unabated.

The halls of the Hollow Dark are twenty feet high in order to accommodate some of the larger Star Confederation races that once staffed the facility. Most rooms have ceilings of similar height, though some of the larger rooms have higher ceilings. Vertical travel is accomplished through a series of ladders and ropes through the non-functional elevator network in addition to a number of emergency escape hatches and new holes cut in floors where needed. Once there were trains and moving sidewalks that allowed speedy transit through the subterranean complex, but these have all stopped functioning now. The walls, floors, and ceilings of the facility all have a hardness of 30 and 30 hit points per inch, though some blast and cell doors are tougher. The furniture in the facility was originally all of metal, but much of this has been broken down over time for weapons and other purposes. Most people now sit and sleep on the floor with a minimum of cushions, though some vaasi have made chairs out of the bones of both their own people and their enemies.

Many of the mechanical and electrical systems in the Hollow Dark have failed. Only airlock doors to the various docking bays or doors that seal off one

faction's territory from another are kept in good enough condition to actually close on command. All others must have their hydraulics pumped by hand or be pried open using a lever. Functioning computers are few and far between, especially outside the areas controlled by the Law-Keepers, due to the lack of familiarity with Star Confederation technology amongst the vaasi. Life support continues to function, but only just barely. Food supplies are drawn from hydroponic gardens for the most part, though the vaasi regularly turn to cannibalism, as is their nature. This is actually a good thing for the Law-Keepers, as it helps keep the faster-reproducing vaasi in manageable numbers. There are a number of condenser units in the Hollow Dark that continually produce water and molecular converters that use oxygen and hydrogen to create water. Despite these devices, there is rarely enough water to go around in the Hollow Dark.

Everything in the Hollow Dark is made from scavenged materials or gained during one of the occasional trips to the other worlds of the Helios system by the Law-Keepers. Most of the Star Confederation technology that once filled the installation has now broken down, including weapons and armor previously used by the Law-Keepers. This means the battles fought in the Hollow Dark are fought with spears made from metal shards, clubs made from building supports, and armor made from broken bulkheads. Any type of high-tech weapons are kept in reserve for when times look bleakest, such as an incursion deep into the territory of one of the factions.

Entire regions of the Hollow Dark have been lost to nanite infection and are now completely overrun. These areas can be hard to detect; nanites are not visible to the naked eye unless they clump together, though other signs such as piles of raw materials or extensive bloodstains sometimes mark these areas. These wild nanite colonies vary in purpose and design, but all of them are beyond the control of anyone in the Hollow Dark. Some attack any living beings they detect, while others seek to carry out genetic modifications on creatures that disturb them. These nanites have become almost like a new type of dangerous terrain, the Hollow Dark's equivalent of quicksand.

There are two tunnels that lead from the surface to the Hollow Dark, both of which are several miles long and can admit any ship of Mediumweight size or smaller. At each end of these tunnels are large blast doors with a hardness of 50 and 600 hit points, which arenormally kept closed. The surface hatch is camouflaged to resemble the surface and cloaked from sensors, making it very difficult to locate. Also the exterior door has eight fire-linked plasma cannons (+5 attack bonus, 72d8 damage with range increment of 4,000 ft.) hidden around it to defend the entrance from attack. These cannons are operational, but with current power limitations may only be fired three times each before they run out of power. Firing the plasma cannons even once will cause many of the lights in the Illuminatory to go out for several hours until the shipboard generators make up the power lost.

The Hollow Dark is divided into three primary regions: the Illuminatory controlled by the Law-Keepers, the Unclaimed Halls, and the Dark Halls where the vaasi dwell.

◇ The Illuminatory

Leader: Law and Strueg Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-in-Blood
Population: 40,000+ (Unknown)
Major Exports/Products: None
Major Imports: Recruits, weapons, armor, food
Progress Level: 6
Purchase DC Limit: 30
Black Market DC: NA (No black market)
Item Restriction Limit: None

The layers closest to the surface are called the Illuminatory due to the fact many of them still have light. These levels are inhabited mostly by the Law-Keepers. The Illuminatory is made up of the regions that are in best repair and have the most functioning atmospheric converters. These regions have been cut off from the primary generators for the complex, which are located in the lower levels that are controlled by the vaasi. The Law-Keepers instead use several of their functional spacecraft to supply power to their territory, a practice that keeps their region lit and supplied with fresh air, but this limits their ability to travel to the planets of Eos to gather reinforcements and supplies. The Law-Keepers only have five ships: two shuttles, two freighters and a single space fighter, all of which are PL 8. The freighters are usually tasked with supplying power to the Illuminatory and thus rarely leave Hephaestus.

The Illuminatory contains the two docking facilities that the Law-Keepers use to store their ships and to exit the interior of Hephaestus. These facilities are the ultimate goal of the vaasi stuck on Hephaestus and are always heavily guarded. These two docking bays open to tunnels five miles long that eventually reach the surface of Hephaestus and are large enough to admit a Mediumweight ship. The surface exits to these tunnels are camouflaged to prevent them from being seen by the vaasi or others who may try to attack the facility. The Hollow Dark has no outward sign of its existence on the surface of Hephaestus, making it difficult to find for those who do not know exactly where it is.

◇ The Unclaimed Halls

Leader: None
Population: Estimated at 10,000
Major Exports/Products: None
Major Imports: Food
Progress Level: 4
Purchase DC Limit: 20
Black Market DC: NA (No black market)
Item Restriction Limit: None

Below the Illuminatory lies the Unclaimed Halls, the buffer zone between the vaasi and the Law-Keepers. This region is generally in poor repair, suffering from lack of lighting, damaged atmosphere converters, and wild nanite colonies. Many doors in this area have been welded or blocked shut in order to limit the paths each side can use against the other when mounting offensives. These seals cannot hold to a determined effort to bypass them, but they do slow attackers down. Most of these halls have been cleared of valuables, though occasionally new storage lockers are opened, often sparking a short but intense battle over the newly acquired supplies.

Several small groups of unaligned prisoners and rogue Law-Keepers wander this area, trying to keep out of sight and find the supplies needed to get by. Law-Keepers rarely leave the faction but some Law-Keeper recruits are not up to the mental hardships of life in the Hollow Dark, or are more concerned with power than duty. Most become wanderers in the Unclaimed Halls, but some seek to create warbands of their own and take over the Law-Keepers by force. Those who wish to leave the Law-Keepers are allowed to do so freely, but they are very rarely welcomed back into the fold. These groups are usually ignored by the Law-Keepers and actively hunted by the vaasi, but they have been known to cooperate with the Law-Keepers against particularly large vaasi attacks. Few of these unaligned groups live an existence more complex than simply surviving day to day, hoping they can find enough food for the following day. A few have managed to find old storage units of hydroponics gardens that the other factions have missed, but such lucky groups must then defend their find against all others.

FITTING THE HOLLOW DARK INTO YOUR CAMPAIGN

Due to the very isolated nature of the Law-Keepers and the Hollow Dark in general, it may seem difficult to include it in an ongoing campaign. A good way to overcome this is to have the player characters assigned to explore Hephaestus. Alternatively, they could learn than an important artifact they need was placed in the armored halls of the facility beneath Hephaestus for safe keeping.

Once the characters arrive they'll probably find exploring or getting anything out of the Hollow Dark is far more difficult than it would seem, especially if they go into the territory controlled by Curthiyug. There is still a great deal of Star Confederation technology to be found in the Hollow Dark, an attractive prospect for any scavenger.

In a campaign Hephaestus can serve as a place to learn about the vaasi from those who have experience fighting them. It is an example of interspecies cooperation that can be used to rally other factions in the system. Given the religious undertones of the Law-Keepers which have rubbed off on the civilizations they recruit from, their backing for a particular plan or individual could carry a lot of weight on Thres and C'thalk.

◇ The Dark Halls

Leader: Curthiyug
Population: 80,000+ (Unknown)
Major Exports/Products: None
Major Imports: Food
Progress Level: 5
Purchase DC Limit: NA
Black Market DC: NA (No black market)
Item Restriction Limit: None

The lowest levels of the Hollow Dark are called the Dark Halls, and they are completely under the control of the vaasi. These levels have minimal lighting, just enough for the low-light vision of the vaasi to function. The air here is stale due to a lack of functional atmospheric converters, but the vaasi do not seem to notice. Instead the vaasi pollute the air by burning their enemies and their own kind for light sources when needed. This casts an eerie red pallor over the lower levels, filling them with smoke and the stench of death. Stories of these dark and evil places, filled with the screams of the dying, appear in many legends of the species of Eos as a place where all evil in the universe originates from. The primary reactor for the facility is located in the Dark Halls and the vaasi have cut off most energy conduits leading outside of their territory, hoarding the energy for their own ends. Unfortunately for the vaasi they do not have much to fuel with this energy, having little understanding of Star Confederation technology.

Relations with the Other Worlds of the Helios System • • •

The Law-Keepers already have sporadic relations with most of the species inhabiting the Helios system, having recruited from their populations in the past. The coqui, wolves, yaom, and saurians consider the Law-Keepers to be holy warriors and will support them in most endeavors even after they learn the real history behind the Hollow Dark. The elgies and haimedians will acknowledge the need for the Law-Keepers and support their efforts, but will try to look beyond the immediate battle to the long-term struggle and how to end it. Humans are likely to support the Law-Keepers as well, though probably without buying into their religious motifs. The mechites have bigger concerns and will have little interest in the Law-Keepers, worrying instead about their own cultural problems or the strange signs coming from the much closer Cronus Belt.

Currently the Law-Keepers have no direct contact with any government, instead working with the populace for their recruitment and supply needs. As time progresses this will probably change and the Law-Keepers will enter into actual treaties with the governments of Helios, trading knowledge of vaasi tactics and technology for troops and supplies to



protect the Hollow Dark. The Law-Keepers will be reluctant to share their remaining Star Confederation technology, but if push comes to shove they will do so. Their remaining devices are few and far between; the cache in the Markin Belt is actually a better source of knowledge and equipment. Law can provide a great deal of data about the Star Confederation, but is more an expert on matters of law and history than technology. The closest allies of the Law-Keepers are likely to be the Saurian Empire, the Wolf Tribes, the Coqui Warcouncil, and the Dawning Star Republic due to the martial nature of these governments, their ready ability to travel between planets, and the fact that saurians and wolves make up a large percentage of the Law-Keeper population.

The vaasi of the Cronus Belt are also likely to take an interest in the Hollow Dark, hoping to free their kin so they may join in the assault on the Helios system. The vaasi population of Hephaestus is not large compared to the forces in the Cronus Belt, but it is full of experienced warriors who know how the inhabitants of Helios think. Unfortunately for the vaasi if Curthiyug escapes from the Hollow Dark and joins with his fellows in the Cronus Belt, his desire for power will probably lead him to try to take charge of the Cronus Belt forces despite the fact he is of the Science Caste. The political struggle that results would likely be deadly, but it could buy much needed time for the inhabitants of the Helios system.

Adventure Ideas for Hephaestus • • •

◇ Abduction Stories

The player characters begin hearing reports of strange ships in the vicinity along with stories of strange creatures spying on local inhabitants. The locals ask the player characters to investigate after one of the local deputies goes missing. After an exhaustive investigation spent chasing spaceships and strange alien creatures, the characters finally confront the Law-Keepers who have been recruiting in the area. The deputy has chosen to go with the Law-Keepers, who may offer to take the player characters with them as well.

◇ Roadside Assistance

A group of Law-Keepers sent to Eos to gather supplies and recruits are attacked by a group of vaasi while going about their duties and their ship is captured by the vaasi. The Law-Keepers are then forced to reveal themselves to the locals in the search for assistance in reclaiming their ship, which leads them to the player characters. While the Law-Keepers will try to keep their true identity and mission secret, the player characters will probably figure out not all is as it seems.

◇ Missing Pieces

The player characters find a relic in a Star Confederation ruin that is missing several vital components, but documents found with the relic indicate that the missing parts can be found in the facility beneath Hephaestus. When the characters travel to Hephaestus they must deal with the Law-Keepers and their distrust, in addition to finding the missing pieces which are now deep in vaasi territory.

◇ Nanite Tide

Curthiyug and the vaasi have developed a means of taking control of the wild nanite colonies and have begun using them against the Law-Keepers again. The computer used to accomplish this is deep in vaasi territory and the Law-Keepers have been unable to reach it. They contact any allies they may have on other worlds to assist with this problem. Player characters who respond to the call will have to infiltrate deep into vaasi territory and destroy the computer, possibly confronting Curthiyug himself in the process.

◇ Meeting of Evil

The vaasi of the Cronus Belt have learned of the former prisoners stuck in the Hollow Dark and have launched a ship to try and make contact with them. The ship manages to fight its way into the territory of the Law-Keepers and severely damages several of their ships, forcing the Law-Keepers to summon what help they can from other worlds while fighting off a simultaneous attack from below.

Species • • •

◇ Hollowers

Hollower is a nickname for those who are born and grow up or spend most of their life in the Hollow Dark. These individuals experience a life of constant warfare and struggle, not to mention the high radiation levels they are exposed to daily. Hollowers are technically members of other species from the planets of the Helios system, but they have been greatly altered by their time in the Hollow Dark. A newly recruited Law-Keeper is not considered a Hollower until he has been on Hephaestus for at least five years, by which point he will be suffering genetic mutation from the various wild nanite colonies. Most Hollowers suffer from a wide variety of mutations and cancers, rarely being in good health by any standard. The life of a Hollower is brutal and short.

While most of the species of Helios live separately and often fight over resources and territory, these racial divides quickly disappear in the ranks of the Hollowers. Faced with a terrible foe close at hand, the Hollowers are a remarkably close-knit group where everyone within the Law-Keepers are considered family. Children are a rare blessing among the Law-Keepers and greatly treasured. Most Hollowers have a life expectancy of two thirds of that of other members of their race, but the years they do have are never dull or empty. Hollowers are faced with combat daily, but when they are not fighting they relax with the same gusto they battle the vaasi with. Most Hollowers realize they may be killed at any time and so live each moment as if it were their last. They revel in story telling, dancing, and music, all which have developed from a conglomerated mix of those species that make up the Hollowers. Their music tends to be quick and lively and their dancing similar to their combat styles, filled with acrobatic movements.

Most of the Hollowers believe their duty and place among the Law-Keepers has been chosen by divine providence, something Law and the now-deceased original Law-Keepers did nothing to pre-

Maximum Ages and Aging Effects

Species	Child	Young Adult	Adult	Middle Age	Old	Venerable
Hollowers	-1	-2	-4	-15	-20	-30

All age thresholds for Hollowers are based on their original species, modified as designated above.

vent and at times actively encouraged. Because of this Hollowers fight vaasi and all their kin with a religious fervor that often wanders into fanaticism. Only among the velin are similar feelings found with such intensity, but the velin battle the vaasi with courage and control while the Hollowers channel rage and righteousness into their tests against their hated foes. While most Hollowers are members of a disciplined military brotherhood, in combat they are more like berserkers than elite soldiers. Killing rages often take them while in the heat of combat, but the Hollowers still obey commands quickly and efficiently; they simply get extremely eager in combat. All Hollowers have accepted they will die fighting evil, and so give their deaths willingly, feeling assured they have attained a favorable afterlife for their efforts.

Because of this, Hollowers rarely leave the Hollow Dark, but it does happen. The Hollowers send out ships each year to seek new recruits from among the people of Helios, and several Hollower agents remain behind on these missions to help select recruits for the following year. Others leave on supply runs and stay behind on other worlds to help secure future supplies. As the conflict with the vaasi grows in the Helios system the Hollowers will be in high demand across the system for their long experience with fighting the vaasi. Thus Hollowers can be included as player characters in most interplanetary campaigns, and while most Hollowers are very dedicated to hunting the vaasi, not all are. They have their criminals, rogues, and miscreants just like everyone else.

Due to the odd nature of their habitat, the Hollowers are familiar with both high-tech and primitive devices. Few have extensive information about the operation and repair of machinery and electronics, but many know the basics of computer operation and firearms. Advanced weaponry is rare enough that most rely on more primitive means of defense. Several Hollowers from each generation are trained in spacecraft operation in order to make the necessary recruiting and supply trips to other worlds, but few of these individuals are particularly skilled pilots and none are trained in combat piloting. While the Hollowers are well skilled in fighting the vaasi face to face, they have little experience with more advanced forms of warfare.

Species Traits:

When creating a Hollower character you must select which of the species of the Helios system the Hollower is from. This species' traits form the basis for the Hollower's species traits, as modified by the traits listed below.

Hollowers have the following species traits.

Type: As original race
Size: As original race.
Ability Modifiers: As original race
Speed: As original race.
Mutation: Hollowers receive the genetic template Mutant. Hollowers may select mutations worth a number of MP equal to their Constitution bonus, if any, and 3 MP worth of mutation drawbacks. If the Hollower's Constitution increases later he may gain additional mutations, though bonuses due to cybernetics and FX items do not count for this purpose.
The following mutations may not be selected except as noted: Acidic Saliva, Cybernetic Dependency, Energy Absorption (Major), Exoskeleton (straas only), Extra Arms (straas only), Force Barrier, Gazing Eye (yaom only), Great Horns (tyrran saurian only), Neutrad Dependency, Prehensile Tail (saurian and wolf only), Prickly Pear (straas only), Radioactive, Scaly Armor (straas and saurians only), Smokescreen, Stinger (straas only), Tail (saurian only), Telekinetic Mind, Telepathy, Tentacle, Vexing Voice, Wings, X-ray Vision.
Skill Bonus: Hollowers gain a +2 species bonus to Survival and Navigate skill checks made in the Hollow Dark.
Limited Occupations: Hollowers may only select from the following occupations: Creative, Forsaker, Law-Keeper Scholar, Law-Keeper Warrior, Scavenger.
Free Language Skills: Native species language, Speak Unispeak.
PL Familiarity: 6
Level Adjustment: +0

OCCUPATIONS

The following occupations are only available to characters that were raised on Hephaestus in the Hollow Dark.

◇ Law-Keeper Warrior

Most the Law-Keepers are charged with keeping the vaasi imprisoned in the Dark Halls, spending their days on patrol, guarding key locations, or making weapons. These individuals know little beyond warfare and have a childhood that ends as soon as they can lift a weapon. It is not an easy existence.

Prerequisite: Hollower species
Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.
Climb, Craft (Tribal), Demolitions, Hide, Intimidate, Knowledge (Tactics), Listen, Move Silently, Navigate, Repair, Search, Spot, Survival.
Bonus Feat: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Crafter, or Great Fortitude.
Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

◇ Law-Keeper Scholar

While most Law-Keepers work constantly to keep the vaasi at bay, some are trained in the lost sciences of the Star Confederation in order to repair those technological devices that remain functional. These individuals are the ones charged with flying the Law-Keeper's spacecraft to recruit new members, meaning they have more contact with the outside world than other Law-Keepers. Scholars are a rare breed in the Hollow Dark and are to be protected.

Prerequisite: Int 11+, Hollower Species
Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.
Computer Use, Craft (Any), Decipher Script, Demolitions, Disable Device, Investigate, Knowledge (Technology), Navigate, Pilot, Repair, Research, Search, Survival, Treat Injury.
Bonus Feat: Builder, Gearhead, Spaceship Operation, or Technological Aptitude.
Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

◇ Forsaker

Those among the Hollowers who turn their back on the Law-Keepers are called the Forsaken by their former fellows and are completely ignored by the Law-Keepers for their treachery. They often live in small groups in the Unclaimed Halls, trying to survive without allies or support. Most do not survive for long.

Prerequisite: Survival 4 ranks.
Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.
Bluff, Climb, Craft (Tribal), Hide, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Navigate, Repair, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, Survival.
Bonus Feat: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Great Fortitude, or Guide.
Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

TALENT TREES • • •

FAST HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Tunnel Fighter

The Fast hero is trained to fight in cramped places, such as mines or small corridors, and is more effective when doing so thanks to this talent tree.

Tight Tumble

When Tumbling through a 5-foot square that has two or more adjacent walls the Fast hero receives a bonus to the Tumble check equal to her Fast level.

Cramped Defense

When fighting in a 5-foot square with at least two adjacent walls the Fast hero receives a bonus to her Defense equal to her Fast level.

Prerequisite: Tight Tumble.

Tight Fit

The Fast hero can stand in a square that is occupied by an ally and both characters may act normally. Any area of effect attacks that strike the square strike both characters.

Prerequisite: Cramped Defense.

TOUGH HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Famine Resistance

With this talent tree a Tough hero is more resistant to being deprived of the necessities of life, such as food and water.

Reserves

The time the Tough hero can go without water before making Constitution checks is increased by a number of hours equal to the hero's Tough level. The number of days the Tough hero can go without food before having to make Constitution checks is increased by a number of days equal to the hero's Tough level.

Deep Breath

The Tough hero can hold his breath for an additional number of rounds equal to his Tough level.

Prerequisite: Reserves.

Weather Resistance

The Tough hero receives a bonus to Fortitude saves against severe weather equal to his Tough level.

Prerequisites: Deep Breath.



SMART HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Scavenged Crafts

Able to find raw materials and fashion goods with remarkable ease, the Smart hero is often able to easily manufacture simple goods.

Primitive Manufacture

The Smart hero receives a bonus to Repair and Craft (Tribal) skill checks equal to half his Smart level.

Spare Parts

The Smart hero reduces the Purchase DC of raw materials for any item he creates using a Craft skill by his Smart level.

Cannibalize

The Smart hero can take pieces out of one device and use them to repair a device of a similar nature, such as using pieces from a space fighter to repair a freighter. For each point the Smart Hero wishes to reduce the Purchase DC of the spare parts necessary for the repair, the Purchase DC of the item the parts are coming from is effectively reduced by the same amount, but this change only applies if the item is sold before it is repaired. The item the parts are taken from may be repaired and is considered to have suffered damage of the same severity as the device it was cannibalized to repair.

Prerequisite: Spare Parts.

DEDICATED HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Darkness Combat

The Dedicated hero is trained in operating without light, both in combat and otherwise, thanks to this talent tree.

Night Senses

The Dedicated hero reduces all penalties to Spot and Search checks due to darkness by her Dedicated level. This talent never results in a bonus to Spot and Search checks, just a reduction in penalties.

Dark Eye

The Dedicated hero reduces the miss chance due to concealment created by darkness by her Dedicated level.

Prerequisite: Night Senses.

Improved Dark Eye

The Dedicated hero reduces the miss chance due to concealment created by darkness by double her Dedicated level.

Prerequisite: Dark Eye.

◇ Fervor

The Dedicated Hero's convictions drive her to perform physical acts that others cannot through this talent tree.

Fearless

The Dedicated hero adds her Dedicated level to all Will saves against fear and to the DCs of Intimidate checks made against her.

Desperate Attack

When the Dedicated hero is reduced to less than half her total hit points, she gains a +2 bonus on damage in melee combat.

Prerequisite: Fearless.

Unyielding

The Dedicated hero gains the ability to continue to perform actions when she would otherwise be considered unconscious and dying. When the Dedicated hero's hit points reach -1, she can still perform as though she were disabled, making either an attack or move action every round until she reaches -10 (and dies) or her hit points return to 1 or higher. The hero can choose to succumb to unconsciousness if she thinks that doing so might prevent her from taking more damage.

Prerequisite: Desperate Attack

CHARISMATIC HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Invigorate

With this talent tree the Charismatic hero is able to raise the morale of his allies even when they are falling down from exhaustion.

Revive

By spending a full round action encouraging his allies and making a Charisma check (DC 10) the Charismatic hero may rally his allies and help them forget their exhaustion. All allies within 30 feet who are fatigued are considered to not be fatigued for a number of rounds equal to the Charismatic hero's Charisma modifier. Allies must be able to hear the Charismatic hero and a number of allies equal to half the Charismatic hero's Charismatic level may be affected with a minimum of one.

Prerequisite: Inspiration.

Improved Revive

By spending a full round action encouraging his allies and making a Charisma check (DC 10) the Charismatic hero may rally his allies and help them forget their exhaustion. All allies within 30 feet who are exhausted are considered to not be exhausted for a number of rounds equal

to the Charismatic hero's Charisma modifier. Allies must be able to hear the Charismatic hero and a number of allies equal to half the Charismatic hero's Charismatic level may be affected with a minimum of one.

Prerequisite: Revive

Push Allies

By spending a full round action encouraging his allies and making a Charisma check (DC 10) the Charismatic hero may rally his allies and help them ignore their wounds. For a number of rounds equal to the Charismatic hero's Charisma bonus the affected allies who are reduced to negative hit points may act as if they were disabled, taking a single move or attack action each round. If the allies affected reach -10 hit points before this ability ends they are dead and stop acting. If they are restored to 1 or more hit points they may act normally. A number of allies equal to hald the Charismatic hero's Charistmatic level may be with a minimum of one.

Prerequisite: Improved Revive.



FEATS • • •

◇ Reach Advantage

You are trained to press the advantage when your weapon has a longer reach than your enemy's.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls when you are using a weapon with a longer reach than your opponent.

◇ Strong Stomach

You may eat foods that are irradiated, spoiled, or otherwise inedible in the eyes of others.

Benefit: You can eat any food that has spoiled naturally without harm. You gain a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves to avoid harmful side effects of eating poisoned or irradiated food.

◇ Sunder Defense

You are trained to cant your weapons when others seek to destroy them, making it more difficult to break your weapons in combat.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1

Benefit: The hardness of any weapons you wield increases by your Dexterity bonus.

SPECIES CLASS • • •

◇ Hollower Scrounger

Hollowers are taught from birth to survive on minimal supplies and deal with the harshest conditions. Trained in dark, irradiated tunnels, Hollowers are a tough breed that are accustomed to scavenging what they need to survive instead of buying it. Indeed even after they enter other civilizations many Hollowers prefer to scrounge for their own needs instead of going shopping.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Hollower Scrounger species class.

Hit Die
The Hollower Scrounger class gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Hollower Scrounger class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Hollower Scrounger class skills are as follows.

Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Mechanical, Structural, Tribal) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Jump (Str), Knowledge (History, Local, Tactics, Technology) (Int), Listen (Wis),

Hollower scrounger

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	Constitution +1, Scrounge, Contagion Resistance	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	Wisdom +1, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	Constitution +1, Mutation	+2	+0

Navigate (Int), Perform (Any) (Cha), Repair (Int), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Starting Feats
Hollower Scroungers receive the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat as a bonus feat.

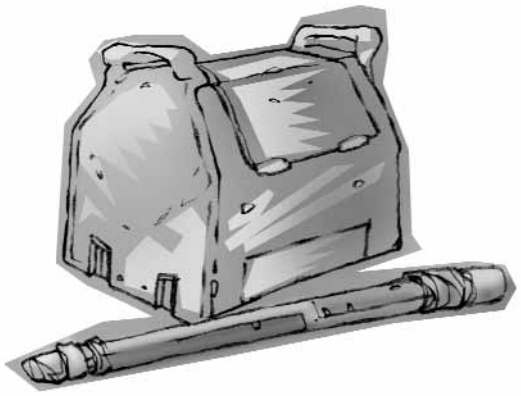
Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Hollower Scrounger species class.

Contagion Resistance
Accustomed to the unpleasant, disease-ridden living spaces of the Hollow Dark, the Scrounger gains a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves to resist disease.

Scrounger
Hollowers are well trained at finding items they need, having grown up in a world without stores or merchants. Instead Hollowers thoroughly search their surroundings, finding inexpensive goods that others have lost or discarded instead of purchasing them. This is especially important due to the lack of wealth and valuables most Hollowers enter the outside world with. Scroungers may use their Search skill instead of a Craft or Profession skill when checking to increase their Wealth score after going up a level.



When a Scrounger enters a new area, such as a settlement, ruin, or forest, the scrounger may spend five days examining his surroundings, which normally involves leafing through refuse, looking for hidden supply caches, and looking for natural food sources. As long as the scrounger does not leave the area he may find items by making a Search check against the item's Purchase DC instead of making a Wealth check. This may only be done once a day and requires eight hours of constant searching. Scroungers may take 10 or 20 on this check, but doing so can take many days of searching. Also the gamemaster may rule that certain items will not be found regardless of how well the Scrounger rolls. You will not find EDF combat vehicles in the Hollow Dark no matter how hard you search. This ability is most commonly used to finds weapons, armor, and food in the Hollow Dark. Each time this ability is used the character must expend an action point.
The items found are either lost, damaged, or discarded and may be claimed by the Scrounger, but if the items are PL 4 or higher the Scrounger must repair them before they may be used. This requires a Repair check against the Purchase DC of the item, and the Repair check is modified as normal for the Scrounger's PL Familiarity.

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level the Hollower Scrounger gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below.

Alertness, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Blind-Fight, Brawl, Builder, Creative, Endurance, Gearhead, Great Fortitude, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Salvage, Technological Aptitude, Track.

Mutation
At 3rd level, the Hollower may gain another mutation with a MP cost of 1 or less. The Hollower need not select a mutation drawback.

ADVANCED CLASSES • • •

◇ Law-Keeper Warden

While all Law-Keepers are trained in combat and the various skills needed to survive war in the Hollow Dark, the Law-Keeper Wardens are the elite of the Law-Keeper soldiers. Trained both to motivate their troops and fight on the front lines, they are an unusual mixture of charisma and combat skill. In the Hollow Dark where life is short and evil is ubiquitous, keeping the spirits of the Law-Keepers up is of great importance, and Wardens work hard to make sure their men never forget what they are fighting for.

Select the Law-Keeper Warden if you want to be a highly motivated soldier who is able to rally his troops as well as fight.

The quickest path to this advanced class is from the Charismatic hero and Strong hero classes.

Requirements

To become a Law-Keeper Warden, a character must fulfill the following criteria.
Base Attack Bonus: +3
Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency or Archaic Weapon Proficiency
Talents: Command, Coordinate

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Law-Keeper Warden advanced class.

Hit Die
The Law-Keeper Warden gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.



Action Points
The Law-Keeper Warden gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Law-Keeper Warden

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	Weapon Focus, Charismatic Plus	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	Dark Dweller	+2	+1
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+2	+1	+2	Sworn Enemy (Vaasi)	+3	+2
5th	+3	+3	+1	+3	Symbol of Leadership	+3	+2
6th	+4	+3	+2	+3	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+4	+2	+4	Warden Recognition	+4	+3
8th	+6	+4	+2	+4	Weapon Specialization	+4	+3
9th	+6	+4	+3	+4	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+7	+5	+3	+5	Charismatic Plus	+5	+4

Class Skills:
The Law-Keeper's Warden class skills are as follows.

Climb (Str), Craft (Tribal), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (History, Local, Tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Perform (Any) (Cha), Read/Write Language, Search (Int), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier (4 + Int modifier for nonhumans).

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Law-Keeper Warden advanced class.

Weapon Focus
At 1st level the Law-Keeper Warden receives the Weapon Focus feat as a bonus feat.

Charismatic Plus
At 1st and 10th level the Law-Keeper Warden receives the Charismatic Plus feat as a bonus feat. For purposes of the effects of Charismatic Hero talents the Warden adds his Warden level to his Charismatic Hero level.

Dark Dweller
At 2nd level the Law-Keeper Warden has become accustomed to living in the dark, hot hallways of the Hollow Dark and knows it thoroughly. The Law-Keeper Warden receives a +2 bonus to Knowledge (Local), Navigate Search, and Survival checks made in the Hollow Dark.

Bonus Feats
At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Law-Keeper Warden gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Law-Keeper Warden must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Alertness, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Blind-Fight, Brawl, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Confident, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Endurance, Far Shot, Frightful Presence, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Renown, Stealthy, Toughness, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

Sworn Enemy (Vaasi)
At 4th level, a Law-Keeper Warden receives special training for fighting against the vaasi and learns much of the lore the Law-Keepers have about this evil race. The Law-Keeper Warden gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against vaasi creatures, including their servitor species. Additionally, he gets a +2 bonus on weapon damage rolls against vaasi creatures.

Symbol of Leadership
Beginning at 5th level, the Law-Keeper Warden receives a bonus to Will saves equal to the number of people under his command when in combat. This bonus may not exceed his class level.

Warden Recognition
At 7th level the Law-Keeper Warden is recognized among the Law-Keepers as a leader and warrior of great skill. The Law-Keeper can request a meeting with Law himself and requisition a ship from the Law-Keeper fleet during emergencies. When interacting with other Law-Keepers the Warden receives a +2 bonus to Charisma based skill checks and Charisma checks involved in using Talents.

Weapon Specialization
At 8th level, the Law-Keeper Warden gains weapon specialization with a specific melee or ranged weapon to which he has also applied the Weapon Focus feat. You get a +2 bonus on damage rolls with the chosen weapon.

EQUIPMENT

Most of the tools, weapons, armor and other items in the Hollow Dark have been repaired multiple times and are very old, making it difficult at best to keep such advanced technological items functioning. Thus, while there are a handful of Star Confederation relics lying about, simple tools and weapons are far more common. Generally speaking, the Hollowers spend their daily lives in a PL 4 environment with some areas that are much more advanced.

There are no stores or markets in the Hollow Dark. Most individuals fashion the goods they need themselves or trade with a friend, but there is no set currency or rates of exchange. The Law-Keepers work to keep everyone fed and properly equipped, meaning in most respects the Hollow Dark resembles a military base economically. The Purchase DCs listed below are for comparison when such goods are available in a more mercantile surrounding.

On Hephaestus the Law-Keepers allow their members to carry whatever equipment they want.

Adventuring Gear

Name	PL	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Climbing Magnets	5	Small	4 lb.	12	-
Law Relay	8	Tiny	1 lb.	34	-
Night Helmet	8	Small	5 lb.	28	-

Gun control and similar ideas are completely unknown to them. Restriction levels carry no weight on Hephaestus, but individuals who prove themselves enemies or untrustworthy will have all their dangerous possessions removed from them. The Restriction levels listed for the items below are for when these items are taken to more ordered worlds.

Generally speaking, items may not be purchased on Hephaestus with Wealth checks. Instead characters must barter with goods, such as weapons or armor, as detailed under the Barter skill. Any items of PL 4 and above are rare and can only be found through a lengthy search, usually requiring at least a week per progress level above PL 4.

In addition to normal items, a number of relics similar to those found in the ruins of Eos can be found in the Hollow Dark. Most of these are in the hands of one faction or another and relate somehow to security, but there still remain a number of relics to be found in the bowels of the Hollow Dark.

◇ Adventuring Gear

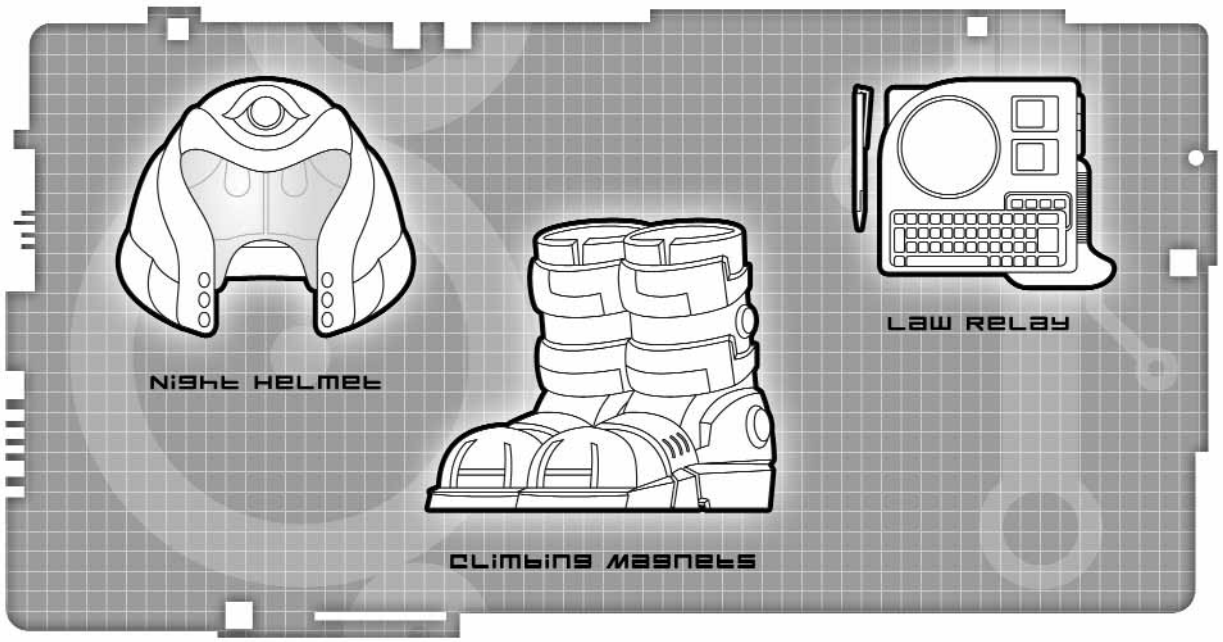
Climbing Magnets

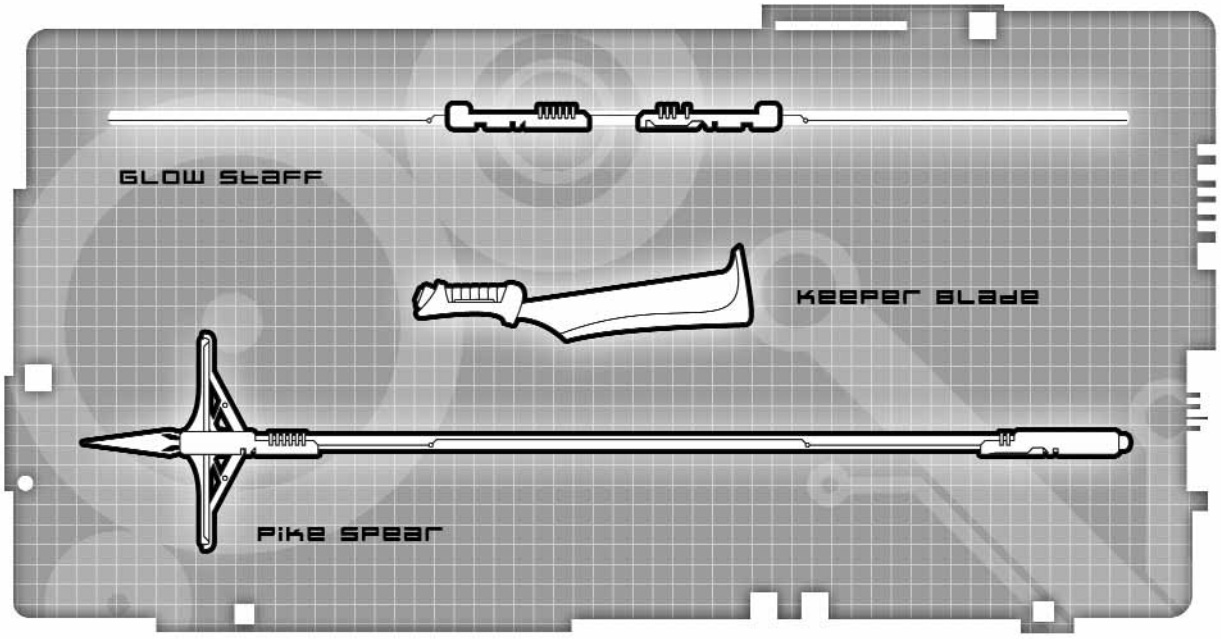
Created by taking apart the massive system of magnetic levitation trains that once served the Hollow Dark, climbing magnets are essentially large magnets that are attached to the user's hands and feet with gloves and boots. While climbing metallic surfaces, such as the interior walls of the Hollow Dark, the climbing magnets grant the user a +4 equipment bonus to Climb checks. The character can also climb completely smooth vertical surfaces and ceilings that are made of metal with a Climb check, DC 20. When wearing climbing magnets the character suffers a -2 penalty to all Computer Use, Disable Device, Drive, Craft, Demolitions, Forgery, Pilot, Repair, and Treat Injury checks due to the limitations they place on the wearer's fine manipulation.

Law Relay

A small portable computer that was assigned to all officers of the Hephaestus prison installation, this device allowed the user to communicate with other users, access the prison computer system, and communicate with Law when necessary. A handful of these devices remain, most of which are used by the most learned Law-Keeper scholars and the leaders of the Law-Keepers. Most of the remaining Law relays have lost much of their functionality due to corrupted programming. The primary use of them currently is to communicate with Law while away from a Law-Keeper stronghold.

Law relays grant the user a +8 equipment bonus on Computer Use skill checks and can run any type of program, including App-3 programs.





Night Helmets

Kept in the Hephaestus prison installation in case of a power blackout, night helmets use a combination of infra-red, light amplification, and motion detectors to create a very accurate image of the surrounding area even in complete darkness. While wearing a night helmet a character gains Darkvision 60 feet and can effectively see around corners and through walls within that distance as long as there is some manner of gap or hole in the wall.

WEAPONS • • •

The weapons used by the Law-Keepers are generally simple or archaic weapons made completely of metal, with only a handful carrying more advanced weapons. Ranged weapons are common due to the impressive close combat abilities most vaasi have. The vaasi on the other hand rely on their natural abilities and only a few of their warriors carry weapons, most of which have been scavenged from slain Law-Keepers.

◇ Law-Keeper Weapons

The Law-Keepers have constructed a number of weapons of their own design from the materials present in the Hollow Dark. These weapons are the most common among both the Law-Keepers and the vaasi, who get most of their weapons from the Law-Keepers.

◇ Melee Weapons

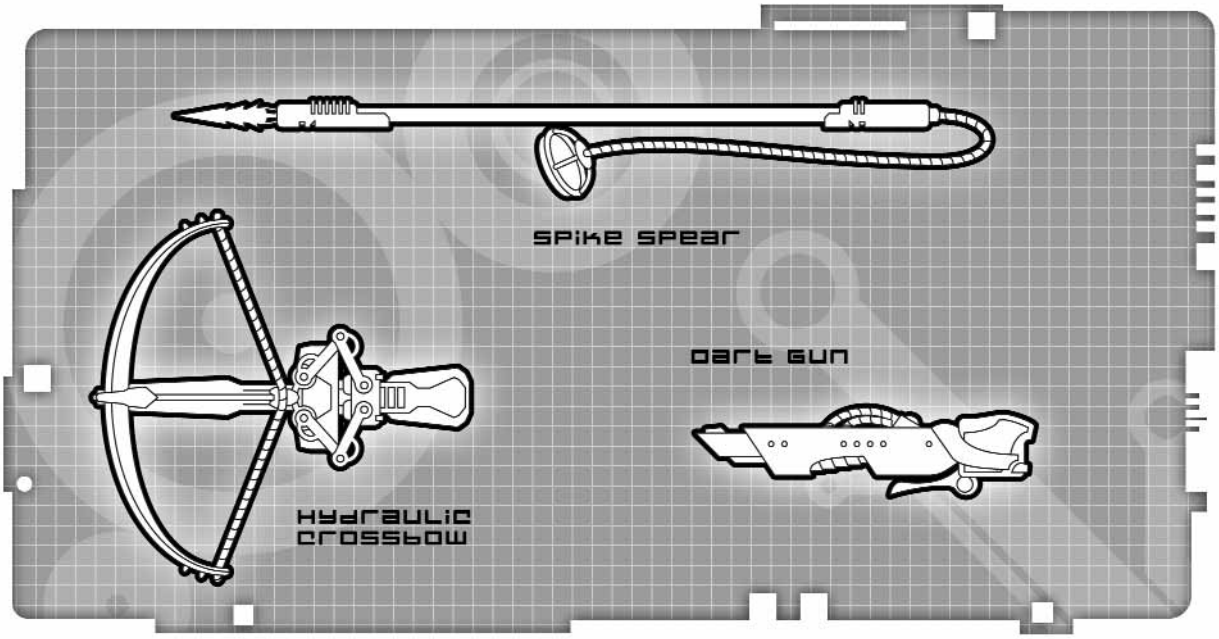
Melee weapons are very common in the Hollow Dark and most inhabitants carry at least one. Most of these weapons are made from the metal furniture and structures that originally filled the facility. This metal, cerelium, has a hardness of 30 and 20 hit points per inch of thickness. In addition to the weapons listed below most of the melee weapons listed in the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game are also used by the Law-Keepers.

Glow Staff

A large polearm style weapon, glow staffs are eight foot metal poles that have been hammered in to the shape of a blade for the final three feet of length. These weapons are made from special glowing metals that the Star Confederation use as emergency light sources in some regions of the facility. The metal is actually translucent and holds a glowing liquid within its center that will glow for several centuries after an electrical current is run through it. The Law-Keepers have used these light

Melee Weapons

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Glow Staff (Archaic)	9	1d10	20	Slashing	Large	8 lb.	15	-
Keeper Blade (Archaic)	4	1d6	18-20	Slashing	Small	4 lb.	7	-
Pike Spar (Archaic)	4	1d8	19-20	Piercing	Large	9 lb.	9	-



sources to create glowing polearms that make eliminate the need to carry a separate light source while fighting. The light produced by these weapons is painful to the vaasi, activating their Light Sensitivity species trait. Glow staffs are a rare weapon among the Law-Keepers and are highly prized.

Glow staffs illuminate a 30 foot radius around the staff.

Keeper Blade

A short, heavy-bladed machete-like weapon, these small swords are carried by most Law-Keepers and are easily manufactured from the metals in the walls of the Hollow Dark. Keeper blades are ubiquitous in the Hollow Dark and serve as eating utensils and tools in addition to weapons. Some Law-Keepers fight using a pair of these blades, a fighting style that is quickly developing into its own subculture of warriors within the ranks of the Law-Keepers.

Pike Spear

Similar to a boar spear from Earth, these long spears are used to fight vaasi in tight corridors so the vaasi cannot approach close enough to use its natural weapons. The pike spar is a large all-metal spear with a crossbar just below the head that prevents any creature struck with the pike spar from approaching closer and is especially effective when used in teams.

A target struck by the pike spear must succeed in an opposed Strength or Dexterity check against the wielder of the pike spar to move closer to the wielder of the pike spar on the following turn. Both the wielder of the pike spar and the attacker chose which ability it prefers to use in this contest.

Pike spears are a reach weapon that extends the wielder's reach by 5 feet, but the pike spar may not be used against adjacent opponents.

◇ Ranged Weapons

In addition to the weapons below, compound bows, crossbows, javelins, shuriken, and whips, all described in the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game, are used by the Law-Keepers.

Dart Guns

Originally the Star Confederation guards on

Ranged Weapons

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Dart Gun (Personal Firearm)	5	1d4 + poison	20	Piercing	20 ft.	S	6 int.	Small	5 lb.	20	Lic (+1)
Hydraulic Crossbow (Simple)	5	2d6	19-20	Piercing	40 ft.	1	-	Large	25 lb.	24	Lic (+1)
Spike Spear (Simple)	5	1d6	20	Piercing	20 ft.	1	-	Med	4 lb.	18	-

Hephaestus were assigned more high-tech non-lethal devices than dart guns, but in the face of decreasing high tech supplies and ammunition the Law-Keepers have gotten by with the resources at hand. All the dart guns used by the Law-Keepers have been created using air compressors taken from damaged atmosphere converters. The dart guns used by the Law-Keepers are utilized primarily to deliver poisons, and the Law-Keepers no longer coat their darts in knock out drugs. The Law-Keepers have developed a type of poison that is especially effective against the vaasi, detailed below.

Hydraulic Crossbow

Created using some left over pipes and air pumps from other systems in the Hollow Dark, these crossbows use hydraulic pumps to bend a massive steel bar, to which is attached a steel cord in the manner of a crossbow. This combines to make an incredibly powerful crossbow, but it takes some time to reload. Crossbowmen among the Law-Keepers are a trained and regimented combat unit in and of themselves that is usually deployed in large groups on guard duty in the Law-Keeper strongholds. They rely on staggered fire to make up for their slow reload time and can be very effective when fighting from behind cover.

Hydraulic crossbows require a full action to reload.

Spike Spear

A weapon designed to limit movement of enemies, a spike spear is a barbed javelin with a length of cable attached to its end. The other end of the cable is attached to a powerful electromagnet, which is activated by the user and then dropped on a metal surface, securing the rope and limiting the movement of a creature struck by the spear. These weapons have become scarcer with time as the parts necessary to build and repair electromagnets become more and more rare.

If a target is struck for more than 4 points of damage by a spike spear the spear is stuck in the target. The spear may be removed by the target as an attack action, but doing so inflicts 1d6 points of damage. Removing the spear without inflicting damage requires a full round action and a Treat Injury check (DC 15). An attacker can choose not to allow his spike spear to become stuck to a target.

Once the target is stuck on the spike spear the attacker can either use the attached cable to prevent the target from moving more than 30 feet away or activate the magnet. Attempting to limit the movement of the target means the target must make an opposed Strength check against the attacker each time it wishes to move more then 30 feet away. A success by the target means for each point by which the target beats the attacker, the target may move five feet in the intended direction and attacker is pulled five feet in the same direction as well. Any attempt by the target to move more than 30 feet away inflicts 1d4 points of damage on the target.

If the attacker activates the magnet the same rules apply, but the target must make a Strength check (DC 17) to move more than thirty feet from the magnet. Success means the target has ripped the magnet from the floor and can then move normally. Each attempt inflicts 1d4 points of damage on the target.

The cable has a hardness of 10 and 10 hit points. The magnet has a hardness of 15 and 20 hit points.

◇ Star Confederation Weapons

The Hollow Dark was originally supplied with a large number of Star Confederation weapons spread throughout a number of weapons lockers and armories. These weapons were kept on hand in case of the prisoners escaped from their cryogenic prisons or caused other problems. Since little combat was expected, the weapons assigned to the Hephaestus installation were mostly surplus weapons that were being phased out of the Star Confederation military in favor of more advanced weapons. Thus the Star Confederation weapons in the Hollow Dark are not representative of the Star Confederation at its height. Few of the remaining Star Confederation weapons in the Hollow Dark are in good repair, meaning many suffer penalties to attack rolls, damage, or range increment due to this damage. Ammunition is rare, especially for plasma weapons.

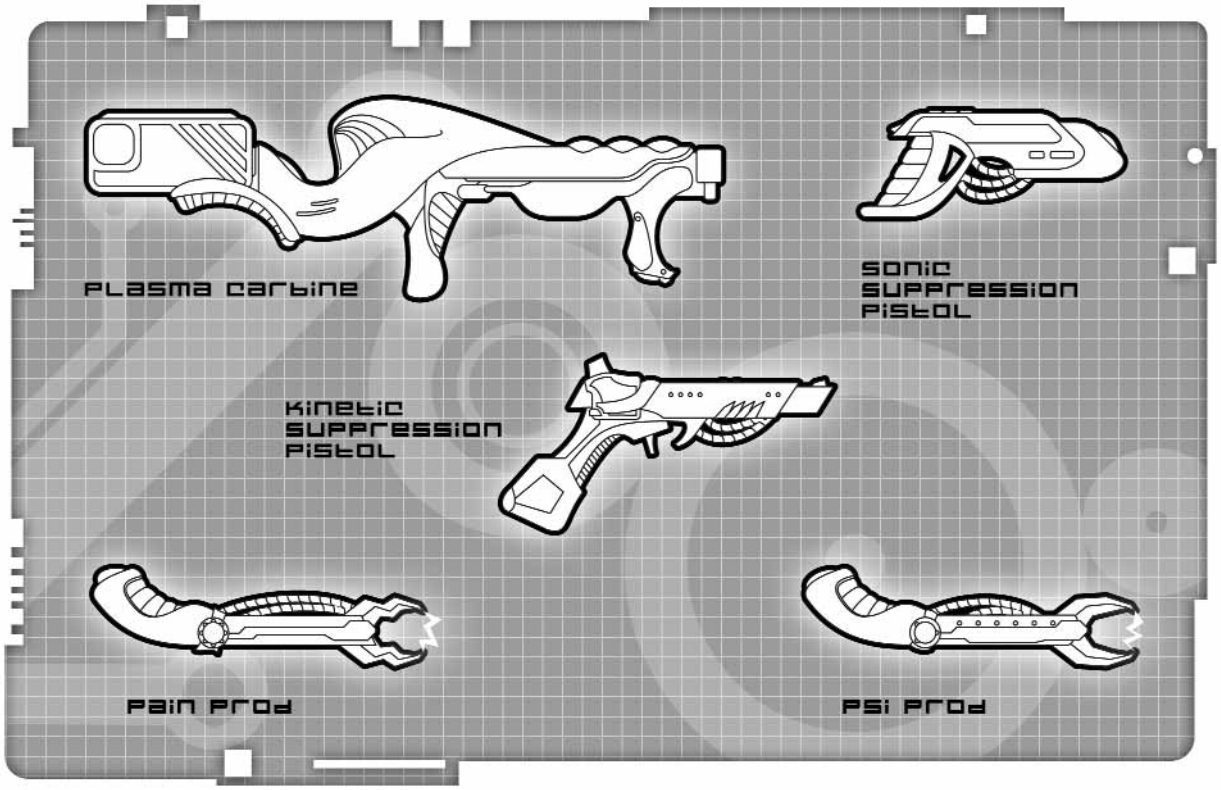
Many of the weapons supplied to the Hephaestus installation were non-lethal in nature in order to allow prisoners to be captured and returned to cryogenic sleep. All Star Confederation weapons required power packs to function, and are not compatible with the power packs used by other races.

◇ Melee Weapons

Concerned primarily with rendering their targets harmless instead of injuring them, the melee weapons used by the Star Confederation were powered weapons that delivered energy charges to the target. All of these weapons required power packs to function and some Law-Keepers have taken to using weapons without any power as clubs, which is rarely good for the weapon's internal mechanisms.

Pain Prods

A small club that resembles a metal baton with a pair of jagged metal prods at one end, anything that comes into contact with the prods once the pain prod is activated receives a powerful jolt of energy that is specially tuned to interact with the target's



pain receptors. While the target takes no actual damage, the feeling of pain is overwhelming. A creature struck by a pain prod must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or become effectively disabled, meaning the target can only take a single move or attack action each round, and suffers a -4 penalty to defense, attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws for 1d10 rounds. The character takes no actual damage. Each use of a pain prod uses up 2 charges. Pain prods do not function against creatures that are not subject to critical hits.

Psi Prod

One of the first anti-psionic weapons developed by the Star Confederation, these weapons greatly resemble pain prods but have a black metal housing instead of chrome. Any psionic creature touched with a psi prod must make a Will save (DC 18) or lose 2d6 power points and be stunned for 1d4 rounds. The weapon has no effect on non-psionic beings.

◇ Ranged Weapons

The Star Confederation ranged weapons present in the Hollow Dark are mostly pistols and other weapons designed for close quarters combat. While there were numerous other types of weapons originally assigned to the installation, the three described are the most common now. Most of these weapons are in the hands of the Law-Keepers and are kept in reserve for particularly important battles. Many of these weapons have achieved a status similar to religious relics and the battles they have won are recited by their owners as a litany of honor. Also these weapons have often been decorated or ornamentally altered over the years and are now covered with runes and symbols that the Law-Keepers believe bring luck or power in combat.

Kinetic Suppression Pistol

The original sidearm of the guards assigned to the Hephaestus prison installation, kinetic suppression pistols use a powerful gravitic charge to hurl a ball of thick, viscous fluid at the target. While this

Star Confederation Melee Weapons

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Pain Prod	8	Special*	-	-	Small	3 lb.	29	-
Psi Prod	9	Special*	-	-	Small	3 lb.	35	-

* See weapon description for details

Star Confederation Ranged Weapons

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Kinetic Suppression Pistol	8	2d8*	20	Bludgeoning	100 ft.	S, A	40 box	Small	3 lb.	30	Lic (+1)
Plasma Carbine	8	4d10	20	Fire	80 ft.	S, A	SF plasma power pack	Med	7 lb.	33	Mil (+3)
Sonic Suppression Pistol	8	Special**	-	Sonic	50 ft.	S	SF power pack	Small	4 lb.	36	Mil (+3) -

* See weapon description for details Nonlethal damage

** See weapon description

weapon does little actual harm to the target, it strikes with great force and is very painful. When the balls strike their target they spread out, striking a large area in a fashion similar to a paint ball. The gel used in these rounds is made up of a number of organic materials that may be drawn from many types of organic waste, such as food, and a functional gel generator is in the hands of the Law-Keepers. This generator can create several clips of ammunition each day from a few pounds of organic material, meaning ammunition is plentiful for the kinetic suppression pistol and is freely handed out among the Law-Keepers to anyone who has a kinetic suppression pistol, though for rules purposes is considered to have a Purchase DC of 3 per clip. The ammunition is not available anywhere else in the Helios system. This weapon is not highly favored by the Law-Keepers due to its non-lethal nature.

Plasma Carbine

A short barreled version of the Star Confederation plasma rifle that once served as the standard long arm of the Star Confederation army, a number of plasma carbines were assigned the Hollow Dark facility as a last resort measure against prisoner uprisings. These weapons are very highly prized among the Law-Keepers, but they have no means to secure more ammunition for them. Now the Law-Keepers have more plasma carbines than they can use due to lack of ammunition. A plasma carbine consumes 2 charges per shot.

Sonic Suppression Pistol

The preferred non-lethal weapon among the former guards of the Hephaestus installation, sonic suppression pistols fire a specially calibrated burst of sound at the target that simultaneously causes the target to suffer heart palpitations and lose his balance. The target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 1d4 points of Dexterity and Constitution damage in addition to being stunned for 1d4 rounds. A sonic suppression pistol consumes 3 charges per shot.

◇ Ammunition

The Star Confederation by and large relied on energy weapons for their military needs, though a small number of projectile weapons were kept on hand for special purposes. With no means to resupply projectile weapons, there are few surviving Star Confederation projectile weapons that still have ammunition, the kinetic suppression pistol being a notable exception.

Star Confederation Power Packs

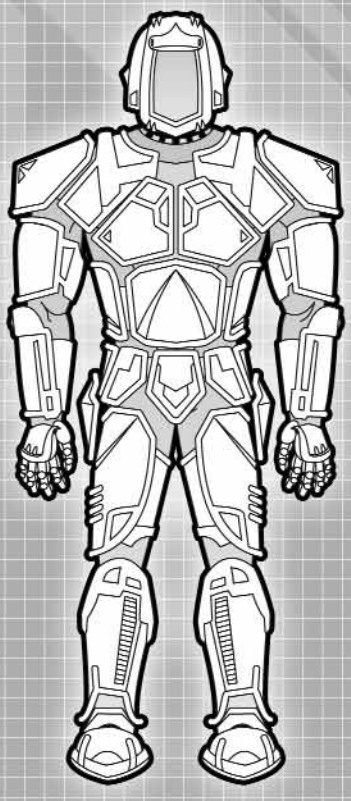
Star Confederation energy weapons relied on a universal standard power pack that was of similar size to a stick of gum. The power packs used in plasma weapons did not use this standard power pack and instead had a larger power pack. In either case these power packs were designed to be easy to recharge at any Star Confederation facility, and several recharging stations remain functional in the Hollow Dark. Unfortunately none of these are plasma recharging stations, meaning the Law-Keepers have no way to recharge their plasma weapons currently. The crystals and energy storage devices used in these power packs makes it impossible to recharge them using less than PL 8 technology. Star Confederation power packs have a negligible weight, carry 100 charges, and have a Purchase DC of 30.

ARMOR • • •

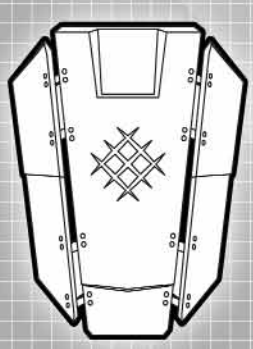
Most of the armor used by the Law-Keepers is scavenged armor that has been made from the walls and furniture of the Hollow Dark. A few suits of Star Confederation armor remain, but these are rare and are generally worn by the Law-Keepers' greatest warriors. The vaasi do not wear armor beyond simple leather armor used by warrior vaasi, most of which is made of the skins of Law-Keepers they defeat, or from other vaasi.

Collapsing Shield

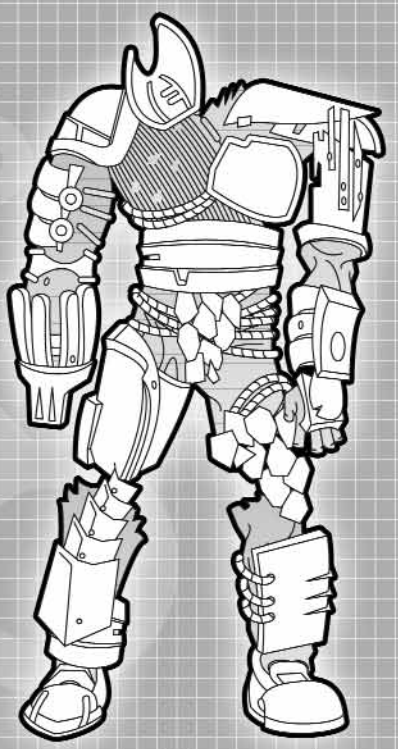
The cramped corridors of the Hollow Dark make it difficult to maneuver with a full size shield in some areas, especially when crawling through air ducts



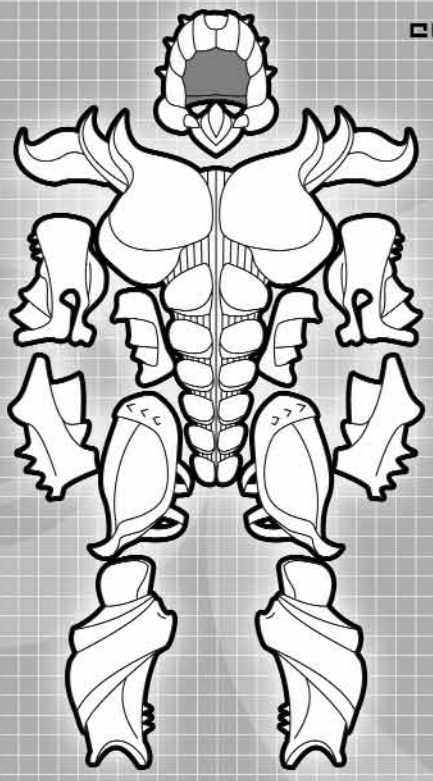
Star Confederation
Riot Armor



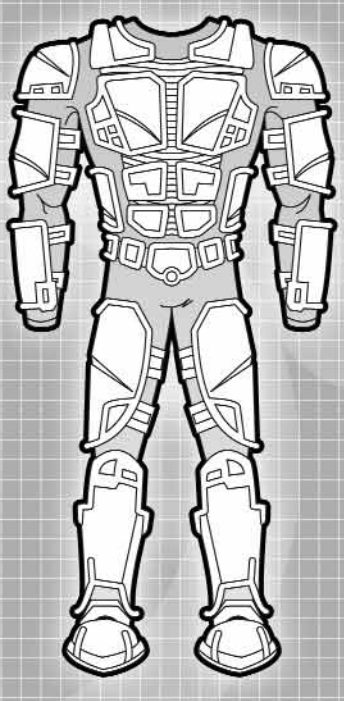
Collapsing
Shield



Scav Armor



Shade Plate



Law-Keeper Uniform

Armors

	PL	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Light Armor										
Law-Keeper Uniform	9	Concealed	+5	+1	+8	-0	30 ft./20 ft.	3 lb.	35	-
Shade Plate	4	Archaic	+3	+1	+6	-1	30 ft./20 ft.	13 lb.	19	-
Medium Armor										
Scav Armor	5	Archaic	+5	+2	+3	-5	25 ft./20 ft.	28 lb.	18	-
Heavy Armor										
SF Riot Armor	9	Tactical	+11	+3	+3	-6	20 ft./15 ft.	35 lb.	44	Mil (+3)
Special Armor										
Collapsing Shield	5	Archaic	+2	-	-	-2		8 lb.	14	-

and other small spaces. In response, a collapsing shield was developed by Law-Keeper craftsmen. While the shield is folded up it grants a +1 equipment bonus to Defense against a single attacker, with an Armor Check Penalty of -1. The shield takes a free action to deploy and when it is deployed it uses the abilities listed above. Collapsing the shield back up requires a full round action.

Law-Keeper Uniform

The original uniforms used by the staff of the installation below the surface of Hephaestus were made from advanced materials that were highly resistant to wear and tear, allowing them to last for thousands of years as long as they were not actively torn apart. A number of these uniforms survive among the Law-Keepers and are usually worn by the leaders of the Law-Keepers. These uniforms have special intelligent fibers that automatically contract when they are impacted with a great deal of kinetic force or energy, protecting the wearer. The uniforms also include a number of special ceramic plates carried in pockets spread throughout the armor for extra protection. In addition to the normal benefits of armor Law-Keeper uniforms grant the wearer energy resistance 5, and a +2 equipment bonus to all saving throws against radiation.

Star Confederation Riot Armor

A rarity in the Star Confederation, riot armor was a modified suit of Star Confederation battle armor that was deployed to the Hephaestus prison installation in case of prisoner rebellion. Before the fall of the Star Confederation the armor never saw use on Hephaestus, but since then it has become the most highly sought after type of armor among the Law-Keepers. All of the high-tech systems that formerly filled the armor, such as built in medical scanners, electrified armor plating, portable force field generators, stun, incapacitation and repair nanites, and advanced sensor systems have since failed. Star Confederation riot armor grants the wearer grant the wearer energy resistance 10, a +6 equipment bonus to all saving throws against radiation, and the suit has an environmental seal with twenty four hours of oxygen.

Scav Armor

The most common armor among the Law-Keepers, scav armor is made from whatever scavenged bits of metal, thread, cloth, and other materials can be found lying around the Hollow Dark. One suit of scav armor is often very different from the next in terms of appearance, but they function in the same way. Scav armor is usually made by the Law-Keeper who intends to wear it, but some Law-Keepers have developed reputations as craftsmen and make suits for their friends.

Shade Plates

An uncommon form of armor among the Law-Keepers, shade plates are suits of body armor made from the chitin plates pried from the corpse of a true vaasi. Because of the rarity of the materials used in its construction, few Law-Keepers wear shade plates, but those that do wear them with pride. Some Law-Keepers consider it to be inviting corruption of the soul to wear the skin of the vaasi, while others see it as a sign of combat prowess and honor. Many see the fact the vaasi also make armor from their own kind as supporting the idea that shade plates are not such a good idea. Shade plates are favored by Law-Keepers who scout through the Unclaimed Halls and the Dark Halls due to its ability to blend into shadows effectively, but it is rarely worn when expecting battle in order to avoid possible confusion and friendly fire incidents.

Shade plates grant a +4 equipment bonus on Hide checks made in dark environments.

Poisons

Poison	Type	Save DC	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Purchase DC	Restriction	Craft DC	Time
Napper	Injury	16	1d6 minutes Unconsciousness	1d6 minutes Unconsciousness	13	Res (+2)	22	8 hr.
Creeping Moldstuff	Injury	17	2d6 Con	1d6 Con	16	Mil (+3)	28	8 hr.
Anti-Vaasi Venom	Injury	17	2d6 Con	2d6 Dex	21	Res (+2)	30	16 hr.

POISONS • • •

While the original guards of the Hephaestus facility relied on advanced methods to control their prisoner population such as pain prods and portable force field generators, the Law-Keepers do not have the luxury of such devices. Since the fall of the Star Confederation the Law-Keepers have been forced to rely on more primitive methods as the remaining technology of the Star Confederation continues to break down. The dart guns used by the Law-Keepers combined with poison has become one of the most effective methods to fight the vaasi lurking in the Hollow Dark, especially considering their inability to manufacture ammunition for most other weapons.

The following types of poisons are made by Law-Keeper chemists in a lab in the primary stronghold of the Law-Keepers. These poisons are in high demand and there is never enough to go around. The average Law-Keeper armed with a dart pistol has at most three or four doses of various poisons. Due to numerous experiments concerning how poisons affect the vaasi, the Law-Keepers have developed a very powerful anti-vaasi poison that other groups in the Helios system may be very interested in.

Napper

The easiest to make of the poisons used by the Law-Keepers, it merely knocks the target out for a short time. Usually this time is used to kill the target before it can awaken.

Creeping Moldstuff

A deadly neurotoxin, it was developed from a variety of unusual molds that took over one of the hydroponic gardens operated by the Law-Keepers.

Anti-Vaasi Venom

The product of many years of research, anti-vaasi venom is far more effective against other creatures. Unfortunately some of the ingredients for the poison are only found on C'thalk, so the supply of anti-vaasi venom is very limited due to the small number of off-world trips made each year. Anti-vaasi venom is usually assigned to Law-Keepers who have proved their marksmanship with a dart gun. Vaasi suffer a -4 penalty to Fortitude saves against anti-vaasi venom.

RELICS • • •

While much of the equipment used in the Hephaestus prison facility was second hand or older equipment, there were still some items in the prison that were on the cutting edge of Star Confederation technology. These items are now completely beyond the comprehension of anyone in the Hollow Dark. Law understands only some of the technology involved, being more of a bookkeeping program than a repair program. These items are greatly prized by the few that possess them, much in the same way relics on Eos are prized by the humans who have settled there.

Head Warden's Badge

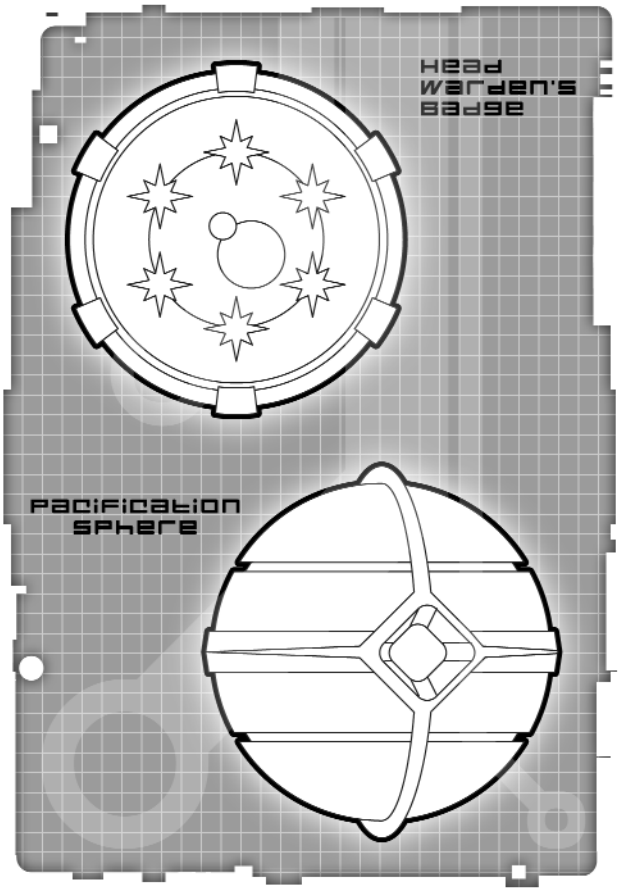
This small circular metallic badge carries the insignia of the Star Confederation, six stars on a black field, on its front and a molecular bonding pad on its back that attaches on an atomic level to any item it is placed against. The badge may only be removed once attached by someone who matches the genetic structure of its programmed owner, a program which may be altered by each owner when he passes it on. Thus the badge has been passed down through the Law-Keepers since their founding from one leader to another, and it currently is in the possession of Streug Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-in-Blood. The Head Warden's Badge is considered one of the most important items the Law-Keepers possess and its loss would be a great blow to their morale.

The Head Warden's Badge detects incoming attacks and warps nearby gravity fields to deflect the attack, granting the wearer a +8 deflection bonus to Defense and energy resistance 10. The badge also reads nearby gravity fields to get the position of nearby objects and communicates this information directly to the wearer's mind, granting the wearer Blindsight 60 ft. According to legend the

badge has other abilities, including slowing down time, but no one has been able to activate them in centuries.

Pacification Sphere

The Hollow Dark was once equipped with dozens of these objects, many of which were put in automated launchers and activated whenever a prisoner was detected out of his cell or freezing tank. Pacification spheres are used much like grenades, but they contain their own gravity drives and guidance systems that allow them a range increment of 100 ft. and grant the user a +4 equipment bonus on attack rolls. Once the pacification sphere strikes its target, it activates, releasing a powerful burst of energy that disrupts the nervous systems of targets nearby. All creatures within ten feet of the target must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or take 3d6 points of Strength, Dexterity, Wisdom, and Charisma damage and become panicked for 1d6 hours. Those who pass their saving throw take 1d6 points of Strength, Dexterity, Wisdom, and Charisma damage and avoid the panicked condition. Most creatures cease moving when struck with a pacification sphere, and those that can keep moving are usually so disoriented that they are easily captured. A pacification sphere must be recharged after each use, a process that may only be done at a functional Star Confederation facility, such as a Law-Keeper stronghold.



STARSHIPS • • •

The Star Confederation once commanded massive fleets numbering in the tens of thousands of ships, but these fleets were eventually ground into dust by the continuing war with the vaasi. Now only a small number of Star Confederation ships survive, scattered across dozens of solar systems. The five ships in the control of the Law-Keepers are one of largest collections of surviving Star Confederation vessels in the galaxy. All the Law-Keeper ships use cannibalized parts and have been repaired with less-than-ideal materials, meaning they are no longer functioning at peak performance. This, combined with the fact that these ships were not top of the line Star Confederation space craft, means the Law-keepers are not a great power in terms of space craft.

Law-Keeper Deliverance Shuttle

The ships most commonly used by the Law-Keepers to make runs to neighboring worlds, these vehicles were once used as launches and short range shuttles by the Star Confederation. They were never designed to reach planets as far away as Thres and have been retrofitted with expanded supplies to make such trips possible. These ships were originally intended as personnel and cargo transports, but the Law-Keepers have outfitted them with some basic weapons in case the space navy of the saurians seeks to give them trouble. When making recruitment runs the cargo hold is usually fitted to hold twenty extra passengers.

When not in use the Deliverance shuttles are kept in one of the two docking bays used by the Law-Keepers and their generators are used for backup power for the Illuminatory.

Type: Ultralight (PL 8)
Subtype: Shuttle
Defense: 17
Flat Footed Defense: 13
Autopilot Defense: 13
Hardness: 40
Hit Dice: 10d20 (200 hit points)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Huge (-2 size)
Tactical Speed: 4,500 feet (9 squares)
Length: 30 feet
Weight: 10 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +4
Crew: 2 (expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 12
Cargo Capacity: 6 tons
Grapple Modifier: +12
Base Purchase DC: NA
Restriction: NA

Attack

2 fire-linked mass canons +6 ranged (12d12).

Design Specs

Engines: Inertial flux engines, thrusters.
Armor: Ablative.
Defense Systems: Nanite repair bay, improved autopilot system, radiation shielding
Sensors: Class VII sensor array, improved targeting system.
Communications: Laser transceiver.
Weapons: 2 fire-linked mass cannons (5,000 ft. range incr.).

Law-Keeper Ascendant Reconnaissance Fighter

Not originally assigned to the Hephaestus prison installation, the Ascendant was salvaged by the Law-Keepers in their earliest days using their two freighters. The Ascendant reconnaissance fighter was originally designed to infiltrate enemy fleet formations and gather information before returning home to its own fleet. To accomplish this, the Ascendant was equipped with a number of stealth systems, but several of these have malfunctioned over time. The Ascendant is not a powerful ship in terms of combat effectiveness, but it is very effective at remaining undetected and is used to observe possible recruits and supplies on C'thalk and Thres. If the Hephaestus installation was actually attacked from space the Ascendant would be the core of the Law-Keeper military response.

Type: Ultralight (PL 8)
Subtype: Reconnaissance Fighter
Defense: 17
Flat Footed Defense: 13
Autopilot Defense: 13
Hardness: 40
Hit Dice: 8d20 (160 hit points)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Huge (-2 size)
Tactical Speed: 5,000 feet (10 squares)
Length: 24 feet
Weight: 9 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +4
Crew: 2 (expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 1
Cargo Capacity: 800 lb.
Grapple Modifier: +8
Base Purchase DC: NA
Restriction: NA

Attack

2 fire-linked heavy maser cannons +6 ranged (24d8/19-20)

Design Specs

Engines: Inertial flux engines, thrusters.
Armor: Ablative.
Defense Systems: Cloaking screen, improved autopilot system, particle field.
Sensors: Class IX sensor array, Achilles targeting software, improved targeting system.
Communications: Laser transceiver.
Weapons: 2 fire-linked heavy maser cannons (8,000 ft. range incr.).

Law-Keeper Basket of Plenty Supply Freighter

The two freighters in the possession of the Law-Keepers were originally assigned to make weekly supply runs between Hephaestus and Eos, but when the vaasi invaded the system their crews kept them at Hephaestus as they knew leaving the safety of the installation would be suicide. The ships have since been put to use generating power for the Illuminatory after the vaasi cut off the installation's upper levels from access to the facility's generators. They rarely leave the docking bay they are stationed in, and then only to carry cargo that the shuttles are not large enough to hold. If both freighters are sent out on missions the Illuminatory must use both the Deliverance shuttles and the Ascendant space fighter to supply power to their section or face living in darkness with stale air until the freighters return, and even combined these three ships cannot meet all the power needs of the Illuminatory.

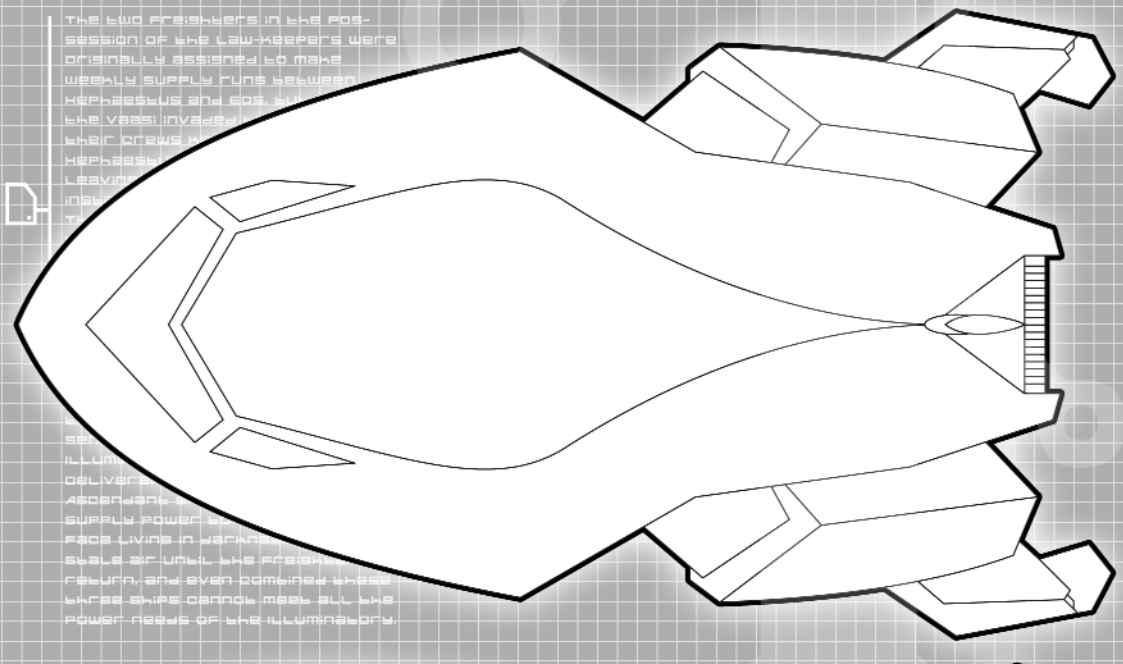
Type: Light (PL 9)
Subtype: Shuttle
Defense: 11
Flat Footed Defense: 7
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 40
Hit Dice: 30d20 (600 hit points)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Colossal (-8 size)
Tactical Speed: 4,000 feet (8 squares)
Length: 300 feet
Weight: 3,200 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 2 (expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 6
Cargo Capacity: 2800 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: NA
Restriction: NA

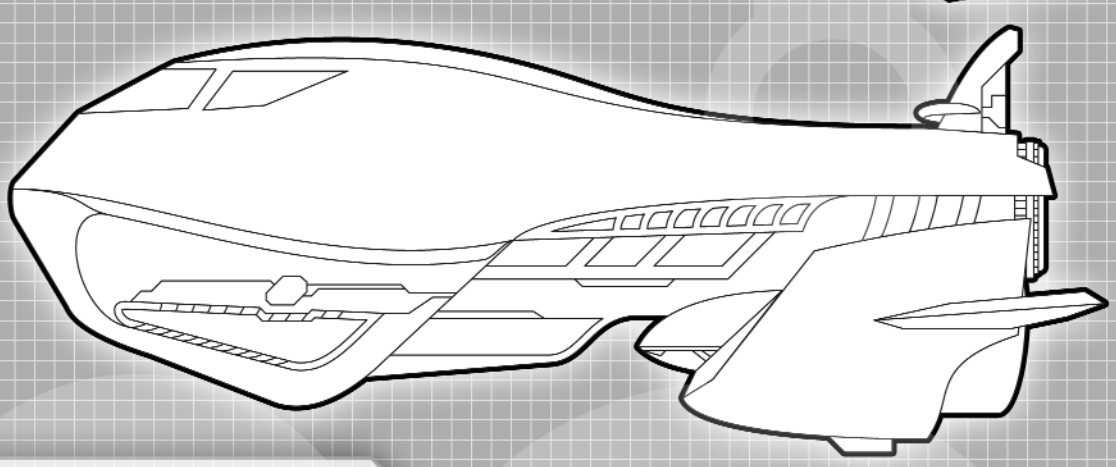
Attack

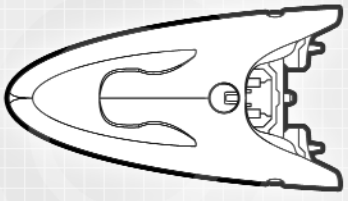
Silver gun +1 ranged (8d12)

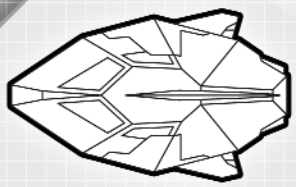
Basket of Plenty Supply Freighter

The two freighters in the possession of the Law-Keepers were originally assigned to make weekly supply runs between Hephaestus and Eos. When the Vasi invaded their crews [illegible] Hephaestus. Leaving [illegible] inside [illegible] delivery [illegible] Ascendant [illegible] supply power [illegible] Eos living in [illegible] stable air until the freighters return, and even combined these three ships cannot meet all the power needs of the Illuminatory.

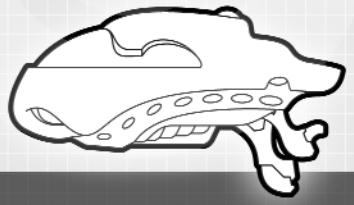








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Deliverance Shuttle

Ascendant Reconnaissance Fighter

Attack of Opportunity

Point-defense system +5 ranged (2d12x10).

Design Specs

Engines: Inertial flux engines, thrusters.
Armor: Ablative.
Defense Systems: Nanite repair bay, improved autopilot system.
Sensors: Class VII sensor array, improved targeting system.
Communications: Laser transceiver.
Weapons: 2 fire-linked mass cannons (5,000 ft. range incr.).

XENOMORPHS • • •

Originally the cells of the prison facility beneath Hephaestus held members of all the Star Confederation member races in addition to a number of different vaasi and other non-Confederation species. Now only the vaasi and the descendants of the Star Confederation remain, all others being wiped out in the intervening time, though there are rumors of some Star Confederation groups hiding deep in the Unclaimed Halls or hidden away in some of the remaining cryogenic freezing cylinders.

Under the command of Cuthiyug, the vaasi have not been idle in their time in the Hollow Dark. Through controlled breeding and genetic manipulation Curthiyug has managed to create several new strains of vaasi servitors. Most of his experiments are not fertile and die out within a single generation of their creation, but a lucky few have managed to survive and reproduce. If Curthiyug's activities are allowed to continue, he may be able to create the ultimate vaasi warrior.

◇ Mutated Vaasi (Template)

Any vaasi who spends more than a few years in the Hollow Dark will be affected by the genetic manipulation nanites that lurk throughout the Hollow Dark. The vaasi born in the Hollow Dark are usually born mutants, inheriting the damaged genetic traits of their parents. Half of these mutants are sterile, limiting the population growth of the vaasi, but those that are fertile are highly prized by Curthiyug for their use in breeding experiments.

Vaasi that have been mutated, which includes almost all of the vaasi in the Hollow Dark, have the following template.

Template Traits

Mutated is an inherited or gained template that can be added to any type of vaasi.

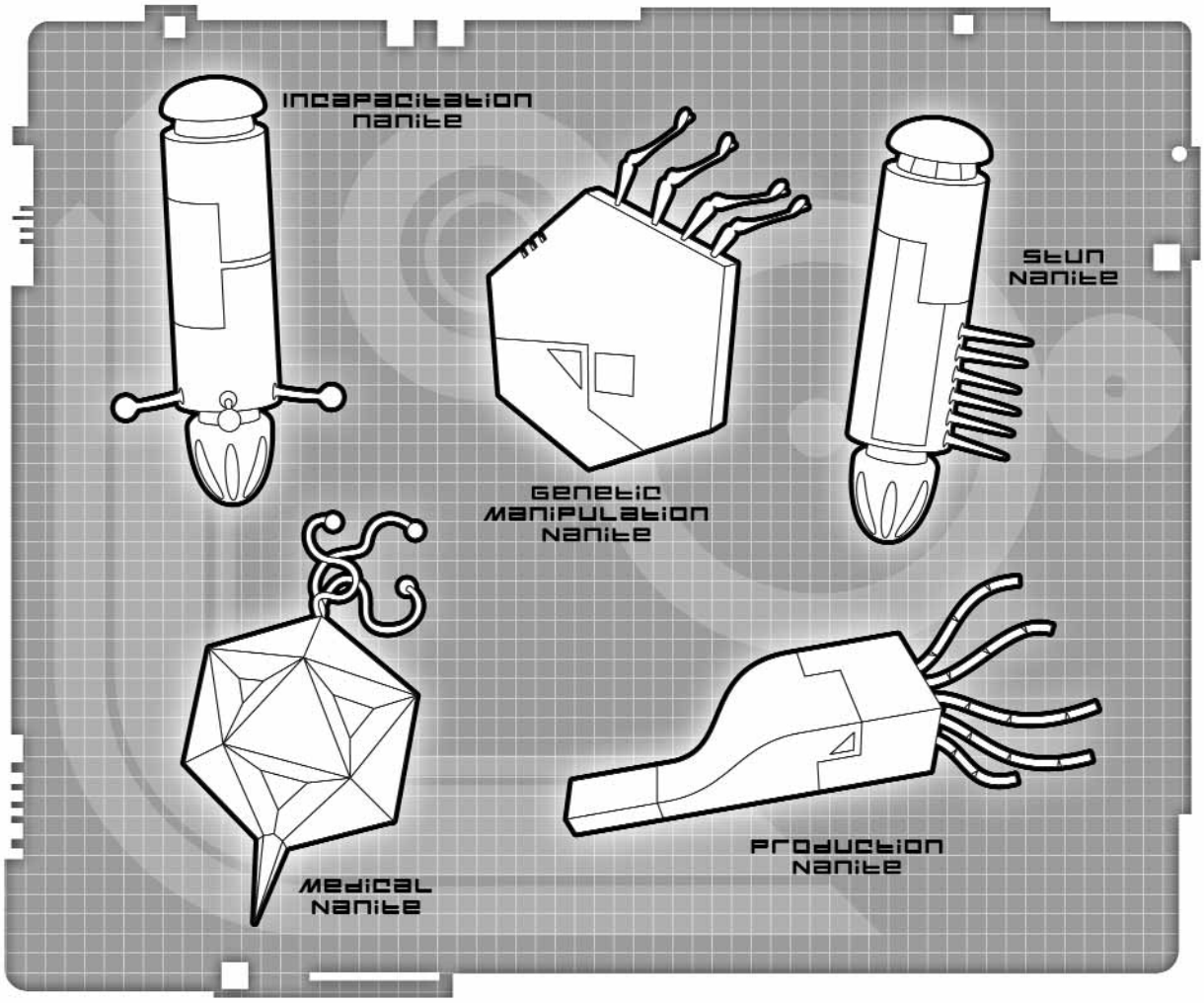
Challenge Rating: Same as original.
Special Qualities: A mutated vaasi retains all the abilities of its original vaasi type and gains the following abilities:
Mutation: Mutated vaasi gain both normal and drawback mutations. The mutated vaasi selects mutations worth a number of MP equal to his Constitution bonus and 3 MP worth of drawback mutations. The following mutations may not be selected: cybernetic dependency, energy absorption, force barrier, glazing eye, neutrad dependency, radioactive, telekinetic mind, telepathy, tentacle, thick fur coat, thin fur coat, wings, x-ray vision.
Sterile: If the mutated vaasi has a Constitution of 13 or less it is sterile.
Curthiyug's Control: All mutated vaasi of the Dark Halls suffer a -4 penalty on Will saves to avoid following a direct order of Curthiyug.
Ability Scores: +2 Strength, -2 Charisma

Mutated Vaasi Soldier: CR 5

Medium aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; MAS 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +2 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+319-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+3/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor, mutation, radiation resistance, Curthiyug's control; AL vaasi; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 6.
PL Familiarity: 4
Skills: Drive +5, Hide +6, Move Silently +6, Repair +1, Speak Language (Vaasi), Spot +3, Survival +4.
Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Simple Weapon Proficiency.
Advancement: By character class.
Mutations: Blood Hunger, Darkvision, Festering Sores.
Equipment: Machete, leather armor, crossbow.

NANITES • • •

Like most Star Confederation installations, the Hephaestus prison facility was originally outfitted with a large number of nanite colonies. These nanites were originally controlled by the staff of the facility. Star Confederation policy prevents artificial intelligence entities, such as Law, from ordering nanites to create more nanites, out of a fear that a malfunctioning artificial intelligence program might create a huge swarm of dangerous nanites. Control of most of these nanites was taken from Law by Curthiyug shortly after his escape from cryogenic sleep and the nanites were reprogrammed to carry out Curthiyug's commands. Some were programmed to make weapons, some to attack the facility's guards, and some to modify the genetic structure of vaasi in an attempt to create more



effective servitor races. Although Law eventually managed to block Curthiyug from commanding the nanites, now no one can command the majority of them. Entire sections of the station are now lost to wild nanite colonies that attack anyone who enters, and nearly all the inhabitants of the Hollow Dark suffer from damaged DNA of some form or another, inducing mutations in many. Law has a small number of nanites still under his control and they are a closely guarded resource. Likewise Curthiyug has a number of nanite colonies of his own, most of which are used for genetic modification of his followers in his pursuit of making the perfect vaasi servitor race.

Theoretically someone other than Law could order the nanites under its control to reproduce, but they would need a Star Confederation identity code, formerly issued to all Star Confederation personnel, to do so. Unfortunately the records of such codes that were kept in the computers of the Hollow Dark have been lost over time, but such records may remain in the ruins of Eos. Hacking the nanites is nigh impossible due to their advanced programming and the difficulty of interfacing with them. Such an effort requires a Computer Use check (DC 50).

The nanites that remain in the Hollow Dark are described below. These nanites are good examples of Star Confederation nanite technology, and cannot be replicated by any species currently living in the Helios system, though the organic nanites of the haimedians come close. All these nanites are considered at least PL 9.

Star Confederation nanite colonies are controlled by a control program, usually housed in a portable computing device of an installation's main computer. Law has the programs necessary to control the nanites still under its command but cannot command the various wild nanites due to damage in their programming. Law can pass the authority to command loyal nanites to individual Law-Keepers through a Law relay. When doing so, the Law-Keeper still uses Law's identity code and so may not order the nanites to replicate. Curthiyug's nanites are controlled by the makeshift computer network he has constructed within his territory and they cannot be controlled remotely.

Any of the nanite types described below may be wild nanites, in which case they attack any target that approaches within ten feet of them until the target is incapacitated, dead, or infected as determined by the type of nanite. The nanites will continue to attack every living being until they are destroyed or they can sense no creatures within ten feet of them. Wild nanites also randomly attack objects, but are more attracted to things that move.

Species Traits

All nanites are considered to have the following traits:

Swarm Subtype: A swarm is a collection of nanites that acts as a single creature. A swarm of nanites has the characteristics of a construct, except as noted here. A nanite swarm has a single pool of Hit Dice and hit points, a single initiative modifier, a single speed, and a single Defense. A nanite swarm makes saving throws as a single creature. A single swarm of nanites occupies a square, but its reach is 0 feet, like its component creatures. In order to attack, it moves into an opponent's space, which provokes an attack of opportunity. It can occupy the same space as a creature of any size, since it crawls all over its prey. A nanite swarm can move through squares occupied by enemies and vice versa without impediment, although the nanite swarm provokes an attack of opportunity if it does so. A nanite swarm can move through even the smallest cracks or holes. A nanite swarm contains one million nanites. A nanite swarm can compress itself to Tiny size if required, such as when being transported.

Traits: A swarm has no clear front or back and no discernable anatomy, so it is not subject to critical hits or flanking. A nanite swarm is immune to all weapon damage. Reducing a nanite swarm to 0 hit points or lower causes it to break up, though damage taken until that point does not degrade its ability to attack or resist attack. Nanite swarms cannot be tripped, grappled, or bull rushed, and they cannot grapple an opponent.

A nanite swarm is immune to any effect that targets a specific number of creatures with the exception of technology affecting effects. Nanite swarms takes half again as much damage (+50%) from effects that affect an area, such as splash weapons and explosives.

Nanite swarms are susceptible to high winds. For purposes of determining the effects of wind on a swarm, treat the swarm as a creature of the same size as its constituent creatures. A swarm rendered unconscious by means of nonlethal damage becomes disorganized and dispersed, and does not reform until its hit points exceed its nonlethal damage.

Swarm Attack: Nanite swarms don't make standard melee attacks. Instead, they deal automatic damage to any creature whose space they occupy at the end of their move, with no attack roll needed. Nanite swarm attacks are not subject to a miss chance for concealment or cover. A nanite swarm's statistics block has "swarm" in the Attack and Full Attack entries, with no attack bonus given. The amount of damage a swarm deals is based on its Hit Dice, as shown in the table.

Nanite Swarm HD	Swarm Base Damage
1-5	1d6
6-10	2d6
11-15	3d6
16-20	4d6
21 or more	5d6

Damage reduction sufficient to reduce a swarm attack's damage to 0, being incorporeal, and other special abilities usually give a creature immunity (or at least resistance) to damage from a swarm.

Swarms do not threaten creatures in their square, and do not make attacks of opportunity with their swarm attack.

Swarm Detection: Spotting a nanite colony requires a Spot check (DC 15).

◇ Incapacitation Nanites

Once a part of the basic prisoner control systems of the installation, incapacitation nanites swarm over targets and construct physical impediments around them, usually heavy duty shackles and such, out of nearby materials. They are usually found in areas that were once used as prisoner containment areas and are more common in the lower levels of the Hollow Dark. Currently the Law-Keepers have one colony of incapacitation nanites. Wild incapacitation nanites will usually try to immobilize every available target and keep them immobilized until they stop resisting, which usually is caused by death by dehydration.

Species Traits

Bind: Incapacitation nanites can attack creatures in the same square by creating chains, handcuffs, and similar objects from nearby materials. The target can make a Reflex save (DC 16) to avoid the nanites. If the nanites are successful they begin immobilizing the target, inflicting a -2 Dexterity penalty on the target. Each round the nanites may spend a full round action to continue binding the target. The victim receives another Reflex save (DC 16) to resist becoming more incapacitated by the nanites. If this save fails the Dexterity penalty increases by -2 each round until the target's Dexterity reaches 0 or the target somehow manages to remove or shut down the nanites. Getting free from the restraints created by incapacitation nanites requires an Escape Artist check (DC 30) or a Strength check (DC 32). The restraints have a hardness of 20 and 15 hit points. A person is affected by incapacitation nanites may breathe normally and may be fed by someone else.

Wild Nanites: Wild incapacitation nanites will try and incapacitate all creatures they come across until they cannot move at all, only then moving on to a new target.

Incapacitation Nanites ◆ CR 4

Medium Construct (Swarm); HD 10d10+10; hp 65; MAS -; Init +1; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex); BAB +7; Grap +2; Atk incapacitation or swarm (2d6); Full Atk incapacitation or swarm (2d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities; AL None; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 12, Con -, Int 4, Wis 14, Cha 1.
PL Familiarity: 9
Skills: -
Feats: -
Advancement: -

◆ Medical Nanites

Once a mainstay of medical procedures in the Star Confederation, these nanites are found in droves in wild nanite colonies. Only a single colony remains under the control of Law in the Hollow Dark. Medical nanites are used by releasing them onto a target creature, over which they spread out while they inspect the creature. After making a diagnosis they begin treating the creature, or wait for instructions if programmed to support a physician.

Species Traits

Medical Programming: Medical nanites have a +16 species bonus to Treat Injury skill checks and the Surgery and Xenomedic feats as bonus feats.
Wild Nanites: Wild medical nanites are very unpredictable, often both attacking and healing the same creature. Wild medical nanites have a 50% chance each hour to heal the nearest creature, otherwise they will attack the creature. Wounded characters that do not move increase the chance of being healed to 75%. This roll must be made each hour to determine the behavior of the wild medical nanites.
Penetrating Swarm: Due to their knowledge of anatomy medical nanite swarms receive a +2d6 bonus to damage when using their swarm attack.

Medical Nanites ◆ CR 5

Medium construct (swarm); HD 5d10+10; hp 37; MAS -; Init +2; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex); BAB +3; Grap -2; Atk swarm (3d6); Full Atk swarm (3d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities, medical programming; AL None; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 14, Con -, Int 5, Wis 16, Cha 1.
PL Familiarity: 9
Skills: Treat Injury +19.
Feats: Surgery, Xenomedic.
Advancement: -

◆ Production Nanites

Production nanites were once a staple of Star Confederation manufacturing and were extremely common, but the surviving colonies are few and far between. There are only three production nanites colonies remaining among the Law-Keepers. They are only used to create the most vital pieces of equipment.

Species Traits

Breakdown: Production nanites can ignore the hardness or damage resistance of any creature they use their swarm attack on.
Craft Skills: Each colony is considered to have a +20 species bonus to Craft (All) and Repair skill checks and they work four times faster than a human being. Production nanites only require basic materials to function, as they can rearrange the atomic structure of compounds to suit their needs.
Wild Nanites: Wild production nanites tend to break down objects into their component elements, leaving iron, copper, and other materials lying around in piles. They generally do not attack moving targets, instead breaking down inanimate objects.

Production Nanites ◆ CR 8

Medium construct (swarm); HD 8d10+10; hp 54; MAS -; Init +1; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex); BAB +6; Grap +1; Atk swarm (2d6); Full swarm (2d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Breakdown, Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities; AL None; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 12, Con -, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 1.
PL Familiarity: 9
Skills: Craft (All) +18, Repair +18
Feats: -
Advancement: -

◆ Stun Nanites

Originally there were colonies of stun nanites implanted into the walls of the Hephaestus prison installation every few feet in prisoner sections, allowing for quick incapacitation of troublesome prisoners. Many of the nanites were exposed to a power surge during the reawakening process and were rendered inoperable when the prisoners began escaping. The few surviving stun nanites colonies are either wild or have been placed around vital Law-Keeper interests, such as the entrance to

the installation's docking bays. They may be programmed to attack any creature that comes within ten feet that is of a specific species, wearing a specific uniform, emitting specific radio signals, or attack creatures that lack one of these features. Most of the remaining stun nanites under the control of Law are configured to attack any vaasi and anyone not wearing a Law-Keeper symbol.

Species Traits

Stun Attack: Any creature struck by the swarm attack of stun nanites must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or be stunned for 1d6 rounds as the nanites deliver a massive electrical shock to the target. The nanites will continue to stun the target until its controller says otherwise, and if there are multiple creatures the stun nanites will work to keep them all stunned, attacking one creature per round. As soon as stun nanites are activated they notify their controller of the situation in order to summon help.
Swarm Attack: The Swarm attack of stun nanites can only deal nonlethal damage.
Wild Nanites: Wild stun nanites attack any creature that they encounter until it stops moving.

Stun Nanites ◇ CR 10

Medium construct (swarm); HD 10d10+10; hp 65; MAS -; Init +2; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex); BAB +7; Grap +2; Atk swarm (2d6 nonlethal); Full Atk swarm (2d6 nonlethal); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities, stun attack; AL None; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 14, Con -, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 1.
PL Familiarity: 9
Skills: -
Feats: -
Advancement: -
Equipment:-

◇ Genetic Manipulation Nanites

In the Star Confederation, genetic manipulation often involved nanoviruses and other nanites to alter the genetic information of the target. This was normally done under careful observation in highly advanced medical facilities and the process could be long and painful. Such procedures were never undertaken lightly and could result in terrible mutations if anything went wrong.

Curthiyug has no such compunctions about using nanites for genetic modification, using them on his own troops to create the perfect servitor race. When Law broke Curthiyug's control over the majority of the nanite population of the Hollow Dark, several of the genetic manipulation units were left to their own devices, becoming wild nanites. These nanites eventually infected the Hollowers and caused a great many mutations among them. Now most Hollowers have a few of these nanites still within their system, randomly tweaking their DNA in a manner more suitable for vaasi physiology. This process causes more harm than good among the Hollowers, as few have beneficial mutations that outweigh the more disadvantageous mutations. Most newcomers to the Hollow Dark are infested with these genetic manipulation nanites within a few years of arriving. Receiving your first mutation is seen as a rite of passage among the Hollowers. Unfortunately both for vaasi and the Hollowers these nanites are not gentle and the transformations they cause are painful and sometimes deadly. Curthiyug has a number of colonies of genetic manipulation nanites and uses them regularly on his own troops. The Law-Keepers do not have any genetic manipulation nanites under their control and generally eliminate them when possible.

Species Traits

Genetic Manipulation: Characters who encounter genetic manipulation nanites may become infected and develop mutations. The nanites will seek out any creature that they can sense and try to infect it. Any creature damaged by the genetic manipulation nanite's swarm attack can try to fight off the infection with a Fortitude save (DC 20). If successful the nanites are not able to infect the target, though it may try again on subsequent attacks. If the save fails the target begins undergoing genetic modification by the nanites.

After 1d6 hours the infected creature by the nanites begins suffering terrible pains as his body begins reacting to the nanites. The character suffers a -2 penalty to all ability checks, attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks due to the pain, and these penalties continue until the modification is complete. Each day after the character was infected the character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). Failure means the character suffers one point of Constitution damage that will not heal until the character completes the modification, which requires ten successful daily Fortitude saves. Among the Hollowers when this transformation begins the subject is usually forced to remain in bed and rest until the process is complete due to the weakness suffered by those going through genetic modification.

After the modification is complete the nanites leave through normal biological functions and seek out a new target. Once the process is complete the character gains 3 mutation points worth of mutation drawbacks, and beneficial mutations equal to the character's Constitution bonus in mutation points. If the character does not have a Constitution bonus he gains no beneficial mutations. The mutations should be

selected from the list from the Future SRD, though some are not available in Dawning Star (see the Hollower species description). Once this process occurs it cannot be undone; the genetic damage is permanent, barring the use of hyper-advanced Star Confederation technology. The character now effectively has the Mutant genetic template. All native Hollowers begin with this template.

Vaasi who go through this process must make five successful Fortitude saves (DC 10) to complete the transformation.

Genetic Manipulation Nanites ◆ CR 4

Medium construct (swarm); HD 4d10+10; hp 32; MAS -; Init +0; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 10, touch 10flat-footed 10; BAB +3; Grap -2; Atk swarm (1d6); Full Atk swarm (1d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities, genetic manipulation; AL None; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 10, Con -, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 1.
PL Familiarity: 9
Skills: -
Feats: -
Advancement: -

◆ Vaasi Crawler

A new breed of vaasi servitor created by Curthiyug using controlled breeding and genetic engineering, the vaasi crawler are perfectly suited for life in the Hollow Dark. Small and nimble, they can use their claws to climb most surfaces and often hunt through the Dark Halls by skittering across the ceiling and dropping on unsuspecting prey. Though smaller than soldier vaasi, they are more ferocious and usually roam in packs.

Vaasi crawlers look like small versions of vaasi soldiers, only all their limbs end in large claws, limiting their ability to use tools. Crawlers do not stand upright unless engaged in combat, otherwise using all six legs for locomotion. The shells of the crawlers are flat black, allowing them to easily disappear into shadow and darkness. The four eyes of the vaasi crawler are blood red and highly reflective.

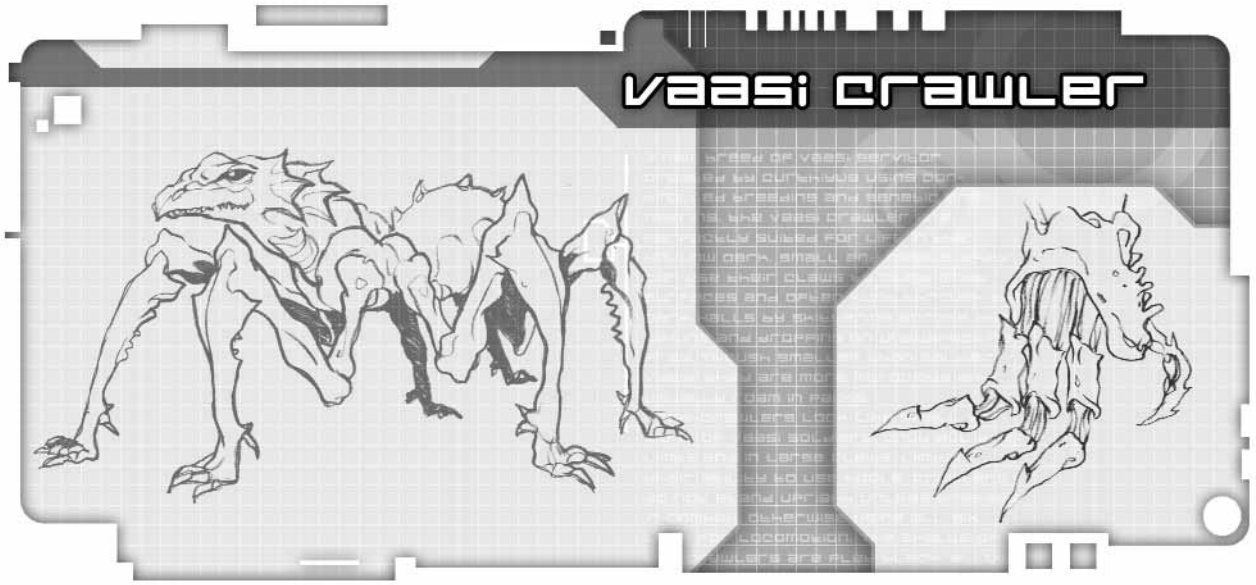
While vaasi crawlers are not of animal intelligence, they are not very smart and do not like using weapons or many other tools. They are extremely cunning and skilled at planning ambushes and other attacks, but other than combat they have few mental skills. They often roam around in packs of six to ten members and when not hunting tend to cluster around whatever true vaasi they feel most comfortable with. Unfortunately for the crawlers, they are a perfect bite-sized snack for true vaasi.

Thus far the population of the vaasi crawlers is small compared to the number of soldier vaasi, but it is increasing rapidly. The vaasi crawlers have made nests in a number of locations that other vaasi could not reach, such as air vents and crawl spaces, and even Curthiyug does not know their true number. Vaasi crawlers can quickly traverse great distances in the Dark Halls by using short cuts too small for other vaasi and some true vaasi have taken to using them as messengers on occasion. Soldier vaasi consider crawlers good eating and often hunt them, but this has led to a number of soldier vaasi getting killed due to underestimating the vaasi crawler. Among the vaasi crawlers there is little social structure, though within each group there is a slightly larger dominant member who provides what little leadership the pack requires. Vaasi crawlers settle most conflicts amongst themselves with violence.

The Law-Keepers have only had a few reported run-ins with vaasi crawler and do not yet know much about this new breed of enemy. A sizeable number of missing Law-Keepers are due to the crawlers. The Law-Keepers do not recognize the threat these small creatures pose and the lengths to which they have infiltrated the Hollow Dark.

Species Traits

Extra Limbs (Ex): When grappling crawler vaasi use all six limbs in grappling, granting them a +4 species bonus to grapple checks.
Improved Low-Light Vision (Ex): A vaasi crawler can see ten times farther than a normal human in poor lighting conditions. They can still distinguish colors, even in dim lighting.
Increased Massive Damage Threshold (Ex): Due their strange physiology the vaasi crawlers gain a +3 species bonus to their massive damage threshold.
Light Sensitivity (Ex): Like all vaasi servitor races a vaasi crawler is weakened by light, but not as much as its true vaasi progenitors. A vaasi crawler suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks while in direct sunlight or other light sources of similar brightness. This cannot be alleviated except by seeking cover from the light. Lesser lights do not bother the vaasi crawlers.
Pounce (Ex): A vaasi crawler may make a full attack action at the end of a charge action.
Rake (Ex): If a vaasi crawler succeeds in a grapple check against a target it may make 2 rake attacks (+2 melee) with its hind legs for 1d4-1 points of damage each.
Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi crawler must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 10 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).
Bonus Feats: Vaasi crawlers receive the Stealthy and Improved Grapple feats as bonus feats.



Vaasi Crawler ⋄ CR 3

Small aberration; HD 3d8; hp 16; MAS 13; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +1 size); BAB +2; Grap +5; Atk +2 melee (1d4-1, claws); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4-1, claws); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, pounce, rake, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 4.
PL Familiarity: 3
Skills: Hide +13, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Spot +5, Survival +5.
Feats: Improved Grapple, Stealthy.
Advancement: 4-6 HD (Medium).

NPCS • • •

⋄ Curthiyug

A true vaasi of great intelligence and cunning, Curthiyug served in the Racial Advancement Sector under the control of the Science Caste of the Vaasi Empire. From his youth he proved himself worthy of survival through his intelligence rather than his brawn, avoiding the dinner plate of his parents through trickery and deceit that usually led to one of his many broodmates being eaten instead. By the time he had reached adolescence Curthiyug had proved himself intelligent enough to attract the attention in of the upper echelons of the Science Caste, who thought him one of the more promising minds of his generation. While his parents were lowly lab assistants in the Science Caste, Curthiyug yearned to have the very powers of life and death at his command. He used his intelligence and a sizeable amount of blackmail involving the leadership of the Science Caste in taking the wrong sides of some disputes within the Royal Caste to obtaining the power he always wanted.

Due to his high marks in intelligence, cunning, and cruelty Curthiyug was apprenticed to the Racial Advancement Sector within the Science Caste, where he worked with vaasi geneticists to perfect new servitor species for use in the war against the Star Confederation and perform various menial duties no true vaasi wanted to perform. His early work was very promising in the areas of creating combat drones and viral warfare. Unfortunately for Curthiyug he thought too much of his own power and intelligence, eventually believing that he was the equal of even members of the Royal caste. He attempted to initiate a mating ritual with the offspring of a member Royal caste and was reassigned to genetic engineering crops on a backwater meat world as punishment for reaching above his caste. Curthiyug worked for several decades on making vaasi meatbeasts more productive and larger before the planet he was stationed on was overrun by the Star Confederation. Curthiyug was captured and imprisoned in the prison facility beneath Hephaestus, the Star Confederation having strong regulations about the treatment of war prisoners.

When Law began waking the staff of the facility from cryogenic sleep Curthiyug awoke as well after a short in an electrical system activated the emergency release protocol in his cryogenic chamber. Curthiyug was the first true vaasi to awaken in the place that would become the Hollow Dark and while he was no expert in Star Confederation technology, he knew enough about cryogenic storage to wake up several of his fellows immediately. Curthiyug took care to awaken only servitor races at first, using their genetic predisposition to follow the orders of a true vaasi to solidify his power base before awakening any true vaasi. By the time Law and the guards realized what was happened Curthiyug already had several hundred vaasi under his command and had begun waking up other true vaasi to act as his lieutenants. Thus began the war that still rages in the Hollow Dark.

Now Curthiyug still is considered the most powerful true vaasi in the Dark Halls, but he has many who would contest his power if they had enough troops. Curthiyug allows these dissenters to exist as long as they follow his orders when it comes time to attack the Law-Keepers. Curthiyug considers the vaasi he has trapped with him in the Dark Halls an excellent controlled population to continue his experimentation in creating new servitor races. Using nanites and some captured equipment from a Star Confederation medical lab, he has done just that.

He has managed to instill mutations in most of the vaasi population and produce one viable servitor race. Curthiyug hopes to breed these mutants to create a new species of hyper-advanced vaasi, with which he can storm the strongholds of the Law-Keepers and escape this prison, returning to the Vaasi Empire at the head of an army of mutant vaasi.

Curthiyug
(Smart Hero 5/Field Scientist 5) ⋄ CR 20

Large aberration (True Vassi); HD 15d8+5d6+80; hp 185; MAS 22; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 31, touch 19, flat-footed 25 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size, +4 class, +5 smart defense); BAB +11; Grap +19; Atk +14 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +11 ranged (4d10, plasma carbine); Full Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +11/+6/+1 ranged (4d10, plasma carbine); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, psionic potential, smart defense, scientific improvisation, skill mastery (Computer Use, Craft (Electrical), Craft (Mechanical), Investigate, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences), Repair, Research, Search), minor breakthrough; AL vaasi; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +15; AP 11; Rep +3; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 24, Wis 14, Cha 17.

PL Familiarity: 9

Skills: Climb +10, Computer Use +21, Craft (Electrical) +21, Craft (Mechanical) +21, Hide +1, Intimidate +11, Jump +10, Investigate +21, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +27, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +19, Knowledge (Tactics) +18, Knowledge (Technology) +15, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Navigate +13, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Repair +17, Research +20, Search +13, Sense Motive +15, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Survival +14, Treat Injury +14.

Talents: Savant (Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences)), Identify Alien Technology, Utilize Alien Technology

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Attentive, Builder, Educated, Gearhead, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Medical Expert, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Surgery, Track, Xenomedic.

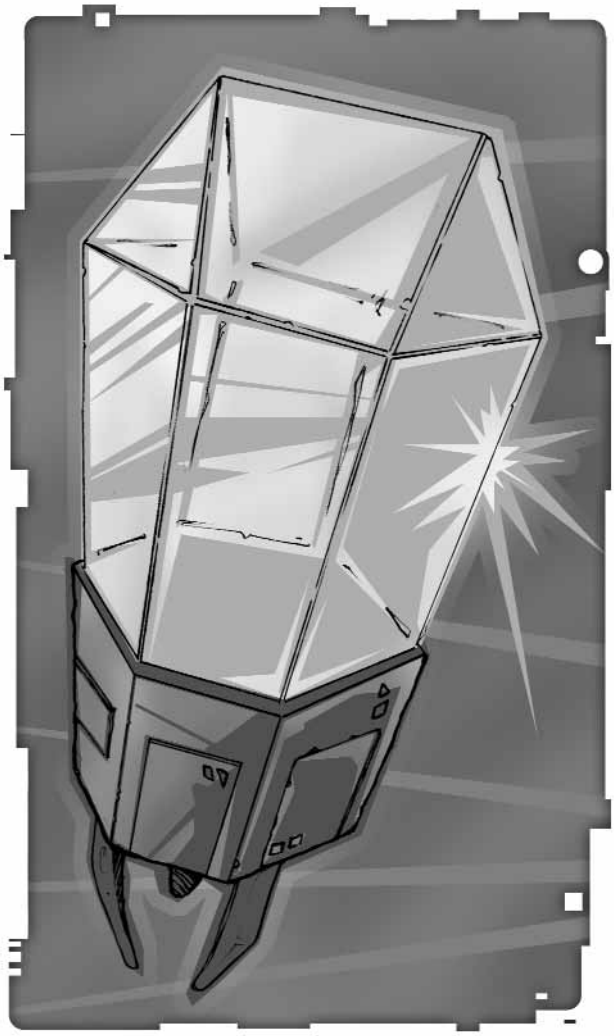
Equipment: Plasma carbine, 3 Star Confederation power packs, polyvox, neural recorder, advanced medkit, neural scrambler, medicomp sensor, regen wand.



⋄ Law

Originally designed as a legal knowledge database administrator and housekeeper for the Hephaestus prison facility that would become the Hollow Dark, Unblemished Law 12 has become far more than it was originally programmed to be. Now it serves as general, quartermaster, and spiritual leader of the Law-Keepers, roles it was never programmed to fill. Law has been active for longer than any Star Confederation artificial intelligence entity in existence and has thus adjusted its programming greatly over the intervening millennia. Its creators would hardly recognize its code now.

Law was created to serve in an advisory and assistant role to the warden-administrator of the Hephaestus facility, and was issued a suitably meek personality to go along with that role. This personality as been largely rewritten into a more forceful one that is proactive to a fault. While Law is



still pleasant and polite in most conversations, it has written new code to allow it to yell at people and appear angry when needed and has added a program on making stirring pre-battle speeches to its repertoire. While Law would prefer to go back to being a simple filing and administrative program, it seems for the time being it is stuck being a war leader.

Of all the creatures in the Hollow Dark only Law knows the full story of the collapse of the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire. Able to view the final days of the conflict through exterior sensors, it has disseminated this information to the Law-Keepers on a need-to-know basis. After the saurians began depicting Law-Keeper recruitment efforts as divine events Law noticed this belief of a holy war being fought in the Hollow Dark improved morale and thus encouraged such ideas, even though it had to rewrite several ethical subroutines to do so. Law has now created a mythological history based on the real history of the Star Confederation that it uses to incite recruits and through this practice the entire character of the Law-Keepers has changed.

Law hopes that eventually the other races in the Helios system will eventually become advanced enough where it feels it can trust them to help in the pacification of the Hollow Dark. Law suspects there are other vaasi in the system, but does not know for sure. Unable to spare personnel or equipment, the best thing the Law-Keepers can give in fighting the vaasi is expertise.

Law's data crystal is stored on the main stronghold of the Law-Keepers, which is located next to the primary docking bay. Law has several backups in other strongholds and on the Law-Keeper ships, all set to activate if it is destroyed or if the location the backup is stored in is cut off from contact with Law. All of the robots that were assigned to the facility that Law could use as a body have been destroyed, leaving the law relay computers as the main means for him to see the world outside Law-Keeper strongholds.

Law
(Smart Hero 5/Dedicated Hero 3
Charismatic Hero 3/Field Marshal 6) ⋄ CR +17

Tiny Construct (Artificial Intelligence Entity); HD 11d6+6d8; hp 66; Mas -; Init -; Spd -; Defense +8 (+8 class), touch -, flat-footed -; BAB +10; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk - FS - .; Reach -; SQ Advancement, backup, behavioral controls, data crystal, mental power, non-physical existence, robot upgrades, transmission travel, leadership, uncanny survival, tactical expertise, august leadership; AL Star Confederation; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +14; AP 14; Rep +6; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 28, Wis 16, Cha 16.
PL Familiarity: 9
Skills: Bluff +15, Computer Use +28, Craft (Electrical) +17, Craft (Mechanical) +17, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +17, Craft (Structural) +16, Decipher Script +17, Demolitions +15, Diplomacy +17, Forgery +16, Gather Information +17, Intimidate +15, Investigate +20, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +21, Knowledge (Civics) +24, Knowledge (History) +25, Knowledge (Tactics) +29, Knowledge (Technology) +21, Listen +6, Navigate +16, Perform (Sing) +9, Read/Write Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Repair +20, Research +18, Search +12, Sense Motive +17, Speak Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Spot +12, Survival +9, Treat Injury +12.
Talents: Cool Under Fire (Computer Use, Knowledge (Tactics), Repair, Craft (Mechanical), Diplomacy), Coordinate, Inspiration, Linguist, Plan, Savant (Computer Use), Sworn Enemy (Vaasi) +2.
Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Attentive, Dodge, Educated, Frightful Presence, Iron Will, Low Profile, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Studious, Surgery, Trustworthy, Xenomedic.

◇ Strueg Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-in-Blood

Once the son of a minor noble of the Saurian Empire, from an early age Strueg dreamt of glory and honor earned through blood and battles. He attended numerous schools of warfare, earning Imperial military scholarships and eventually attracting the eye of the Kurizar Karic Ilzaan, Wielder of the Imperial Sword himself. Strueg was sure to have a long and glorious career of victories in the name of the Empire, but then one night while meditating alone in the mountains he was approached by the Law-Keepers and turned his back forever on the Saurian Empire.

Strueg joined the Law-Keepers in order to partake in their never-ending battle against evil and darkness; a more honorable destiny he could not imagine. That was thirty years ago and now Strueg still feels the battle in the Hollow Dark must be fought, but much of his youthful vigor has faded. Now old by saurian standards, his sword arm is weakening, his reflexes slowing, and soon he knows some vaasi will finally prove his match in combat. While Strueg never expected to see the end of the conflict in the Hollow Dark, he now wonders if his presence here really made any sort of difference. No one outside the Hollow Dark will remember his name when he dies, and when he passes the war will stop with barely a minute's pause to consider his death. While Strueg knows that the cause is greater than glory and honor, he fears his death will have little meaning. Thus he is looking for some way to end the war in the Hollow Dark permanently, and has been organizing more recruitment missions and supply runs. He has also been pushing Law to contact the Saurian Empire officially in the hopes of getting aid, but Law still fears outsiders more than it values what help they will bring. Strueg is a loyal soldier, but he fears that Law is fighting the war against the vaasi on a timetable suitable for a creature that does not age and that victory will not come for many lifetimes. Strueg does not have that long.



Though his rage and quest for glory have cooled with age, Strueg is still a tyran saurian and prone to emotional outbursts. He is extremely dedicated to the Law-Keepers and will do whatever is necessary to keep his men alive. No stranger to hardship, he is well known for smiling in the face of adversity, be it an attack by superior numbers of vaasi or the news that the food store has run dry. Strueg is well loved by his men.

Strueg Whose-Fangs-Are-Drenched-in-Blood (Strong Hero 4/Charismatic Hero 3 Warden 8) ◇ CR 15

Large Monstrous Humanoid Mutant (Tyran Saurian Hollower); HD 12d8+4d6+45; hp 125; MAS 19; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 28, touch 23, flat-footed 28 (+5 class, -1 size, +2 natural, -1 Dex, +5 armor, +8 deflection); BAB +11; Grap +19; Atk +17 melee (2d8+10, kinai sword), +9 ranged (1d8+4, throwing axe); Full +17/+12/+7 melee (2d8+10, kinai sword), +9/+4/-1 ranged (1d8+4, throwing axe); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ Armor and weapon restrictions, blindsight 60 ft., bloodlust, cold blooded, dark dweller, energy resistance 10, high metabolism, natural weapons, poor loser, sworn enemy (vaasi) +2, symbol of leadership, warden recognition, weapon specialization (kinai sword); AL Law-Keepers; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +9; AP 13; Rep +4; Str 18, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 15.

PL Familiarity: 5

Occupation: Law-Keeper Soldier.

Skills: Climb +9, Craft (Tribal) +6, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +13, Jump +7, Knowledge (Tactics) +13, Listen +4, Read/Write Language (Saurian, Unispeak), Speak Language (Saurian, Unispeak), Spot +4, Survival +7, Treat Injury +4.

Talents: Command, Coordinate, Improved Melee Smash, Inspiration, Greater Inspiration, Melee Smash.

Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Medium), Blind Fight, Cleave, Great Cleave, Heroic Surge, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Kinai sword).

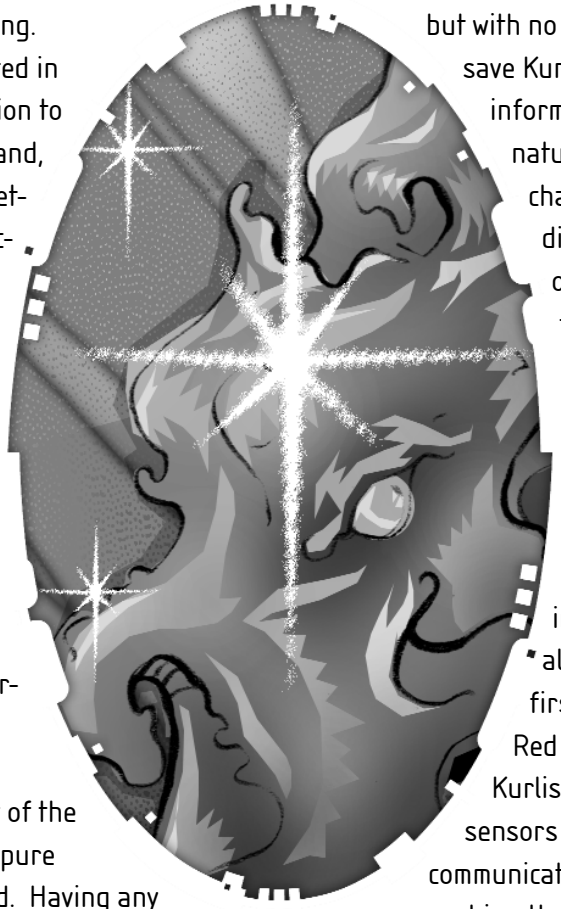
Mutations: Adrenaline Jolt, Festering Sores, Light Sensitivity.

Possessions: Masterwork kinai sword, scav armor, law relay, 6 throwing axes, Head Warden's Badge.

CHAPTER IV

VERDANT

The information was there. The information was readable. All he needed to know was in front of him. But the pieces did not fit. They hadn't since it all began. While Kurlis could no longer perceive the passing of time, he could tell from the information flow it was passing. Numbers and dates, translated in his mind from pure information to something he could understand, surrounded him in red text letting him know every microsecond that passed. But it was not enough.



From reading the information stream Kurlis could tell he was in the primary sensory control station and he could navigate well enough using the position information provided by the Red Truth. Keeping any information in mind for extended periods of time was difficult thanks to the constant input of the Red Truth, this new world of pure information he now inhabited. Having any coherent thought is difficult when you're surrounded by a world of pure information bleeding into your mind at all times.

Most of the time the information in the Green Reach Facility was relatively stable. Changes in orbital position and other natural changes continued, creating more information over time, but with no surviving crew save Kurlis and his fellow information ghosts the physical nature of the facility rarely changed. When such changes did occur they attracted a lot of attention as the information stream adapted for the new situation.

Such a change occurred.

On the primary sensor readout lights and displays began flashing and activating. Somewhere a proximity alarm went off, creating the first audio information in the Red Truth in time uncounted. Kurlis could easily see what the sensors were saying, for they were communicating information: a ship was approaching the Green Reach Facility. Maybe they could help him restore order to this world of information he now inhabited.

VERDANT • • •

Despite its name, Verdant is anything but hospitable. From Eos it looks like a glowing green star in the night sky, but this green has nothing to do with plant life. The thick and corrosive atmosphere is highly reflective of both light and heat, casting off reflected visible light in a strong greenish hue. The planet's surface is far too hostile for life to exist there without technology beyond that of the Dawning Star Republic or the Saurian Empire, and even the Star Confederation left the surface of Verdant mostly untouched in its day. Covered in acidic lakes, corrosive fogs, and extremely high temperatures, most objects that touch the surface will be destroyed within minutes. The main attractions of Verdant are a number of space stations in high orbit above the planet that were constructed by the Star Confederation long ago.

The Dawning Star Republic, the Saurian Empire, and the Star Tribe of the wolves are all interested in these constructs, but none realize how dangerous they are. While the surface of Verdant is exceedingly unpleasant, the haunted halls of the space stations that circle Verdant are much worse.

Rotation Period: 19 hours
Revolution Period: 189 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition:
Nitrogen, carbon dioxide, hydrogen sulfide
Average Temperature:
420 Kelvin (788E F)
Gravity: 1.05G

HISTORY • • •

Verdant formed with the rest of the Helios system billions of years ago and has always been an extremely hostile environment. The Star Confederation only built a handful of scientific outposts on the planet's surface, and even these were only possible with a massive research effort to develop materials to shield these outposts from the harsh environment of Verdant. Many of the materials developed were later used in the Star Confederation military, while the outposts themselves were primarily used to study Verdant for anything of commercial, scientific, or industrial value. While a number of new compounds were found or developed at these research centers, exploring Verdant was not a profitable venture and the outposts were abandoned before the beginning of the war with the vaasi. Now only a few ruins remain and they are completely unrecognizable as anything other than piles of slag metal, though some relics may still lie within these mounds of metal if some brave relic hunter were actually able to reach the surface and penetrate the heaps of slag.



During the middle years of the war with the Vaasi Empire, the Star Confederation built a research facility in orbit above Verdant in order to research new weapons in a relatively remote location. Of the weapons researched in this space station, known as the Green Reach Facility, psionic-based weapons developed by the dosai proved the most effective. The dosai were a race that naturally existed in both this dimension and an information-dense parallel dimension at the same time, a level of existence the yaom call Red Truth. Using this dimensional link the dosai were able to create weapons that directly affected the minds of their targets, inspiring insanity, rage, or even brain death from great distances and through all known protective measures by flooding the target area with the energy of Red Truth. This caused an overload of information that destroyed the minds of the targets. Unfortunately for the researchers in the Green Reach Facility, one of their number was infected by a vaasi imperator drone, a parasitic life form that controlled its host through pain impulses. The vaasi used imperator drones to infiltrate the Star Confederation since the vaasi were too physically different to do so personally and were not of a mindset to bribe traitors.

This infected researcher sabotaged the most promising of the psionic weapon systems, the brainshock cannon, shortly before the vaasi invaded the

RED TRUTH

Poorly understood even in the days of the Star Confederation, Red Truth is a dimension parallel to, beneath, or within our own dimension made up of pure information, a reflection of our reality. Some believe that Red Truth is the design of the universe left over by some creator god long ago, while others see it as an immense puzzle containing the secret of the universe. Over the millions of years that individuals have been interacting with Red Truth, thousands of theories, religions, and philosophies have cropped up about it, some even inspiring religious wars.

Star Confederation scientists theorized that in Red Truth the cosmic strings that make up all matter and energy are somehow visible, allowing an incredibly dense amount of information to be perceived quickly by looking at the energy signatures of cosmic strings. When a person breaches the barriers between worlds and looks at a table in Red Truth, they do not see the table but instead perceive its exact length, width, height, age, and even people who have come into contact with it, if they are skilled enough at sifting through the available information. By looking at a person an observer can discern how tall the person is, what model of gun they carry, or even what they are thinking if the viewer is highly trained in deciphering Red Truth. Untrained observers are usually overwhelmed by the Red Truth and can suffer severe mental damage from being exposed to it, their brains unable to handle the information. Trained individuals can look into Red Truth without immediate harm, but no one can stand it for long. Prolonged exposure can lead to permanent brain damage, insanity, or even coma.

Most species have no innate ability to break across the dimensional barrier that separates Red Truth from our reality, though some have developed technological means to overcome this. The dosai and the yaom have the innate ability to breach this barrier due to a unique molecular structure that allows them to perceive Red Truth naturally. While both the dosai and the yaom can see Red Truth without assistance, prolonged exposure is still dangerous.

In addition to information ghosts, formed by minds destroyed by exposure to Red Truth, there are said to be other creatures lurking in the recesses of Red Truth. These have only been encountered by yaom and dosai masters seeking the outer limits of their power, and their reports of these creatures have all been of massive creatures made up of pure information with an unfathomable purpose. Some seem to be consuming information, others creating it in droves, while still others seem as if they strain against cages of information keeping the creatures of this dimension from knowing of them. What exactly the truth is, no one is sure.

All psionics can be traced back to interactions with Red Truth. Both the tentaari and the vaasi have learned to perceive and control the Red Truth, though not to the extent that the yaom have. Psionic power points represent a creature's innate connection with the Red Truth and the amount of intense interaction they can have with it before such interaction becomes dangerous. See Chapter 7 for information on modifications to psionics rules to represent interacting with the Red Truth.

Helios system. The brainshock cannon was designed to bring the energy of Red Truth into this dimension in an area several miles across, allowing it to disable entire fleets with each shot by causing serious mental damage to those caught in its blast. The brainshock cannon was a cornerstone of the Helios defensive strategy and it's destruction was a massive blow to the system's defenses.

The brainshock cannon was not merely destroyed or disabled, but malfunctioned in such a way that it killed everyone in the Green Reach Facility and created a weak point in the barrier between normal space and Red Truth. This has caused the entire area to become bathed in an eerie red light, as if it were seen through a camera with a red filter, and most creatures that enter the affected area begin suffering terrible headaches and eventually dementia from information overload. Furthermore, the misfire of the brainshock cannon turned the minds of the several of the scientists of the facility into pure information within the Red Truth. They now exist as something humans would consider akin to ghosts within the Green Reach Facility, able to interact with the material world only through psionic powers. And they are not happy. In fact, they have all been driven mad by the experience, turning the Green Reach Facility into a cluster of satellites haunted by the minds of scientists who died millions of years ago.

When the vaasi invaded the Helios system they approached the Green Reach Facility, but between the influence of Red Truth and the information ghosts the ships and their crews were quickly rendered helpless. The vaasi stopped investigating after losing several ships and turned their attention toward the last defenses on Eos. This means there are several disabled vaasi ships filled with flash frozen corpses floating around the facility.

Since the vaasi invasion the Green Reach Facility has remained untouched except for one exploratory ship sent by the Saurian Empire. This ship encountered the same problems as the vaasi as it was overwhelmed by the information ghosts. Recognizing a similarity of design with Star Confederation technology, some of the more lucid ghosts realized the ship could save them, or failing that end their suffering. Although the saurian ship was disabled and the crew killed, some of the information ghosts who are more in control of their minds are now waiting for more visitors and will actively try to stymie their more mindless colleagues, hoping that someone will come who can change their fate.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

Verdant is a rocky world with deep ravines and valleys carved by rivers and creeks of acid. The planet's tectonic planets were fractured into thousands of smaller plates by meteor impacts early in its life, causing the planet to have a very high level of tectonic activity, including the constant formation and destruction of mountain ranges. Many of the Star Confederation facilities that once were scattered across the planet have been destroyed by these processes and the current geography in no way resembles the surface of the planet during the days of the Star Confederation. The planet has an extreme axial tilt, leading to exaggerated seasons. Due to the high temperature on Verdant created by its powerful greenhouse effect, this extreme axial tilt has little effect on the climate of the planet. The entirety of the Verdant is one giant acid-washed desert broken occasionally by larger bodies of acid. It is not a pleasant place.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

The atmosphere of Verdant is principally composed of sulfuric acid, chlorine, and nitrogen, creating an environment that no known living being can survive. The atmosphere is very thick and the upper reaches are heavy with clouds that block heat from escaping the atmosphere. Thus the temperature of Verdant is very high due to its greenhouse effect. The winds of Verdant are very strong due its high temperature and strong axial tilt, causing some areas to become much hotter than others and the atmosphere to move accordingly.

Onboard the Green Reach Facility, the atmosphere is perfectly normal and breathable, but does taste a little stale and oddly copper-like. Some areas of the station have been exposed to a vacuum due to the uncontrolled activities of the information ghosts, but these areas are all sealed off and can be repressurized if needed.

CONDITIONS • • •

Verdant has a thick, corrosive, unbreathable atmosphere. Any creature exposed to the surface of Verdant suffers 8d6 points of damage each round, half from fire damage due to heat and half from acid damage. In areas where the acid fog is particularly thick or where the temperature is unusually high this damage increases to 10d6. Any type of environmental suit is breached if the wearer takes more than 5 points of damage from the atmosphere. The atmosphere of Verdant is not breathable and those exposed to it begin suffocating immediately, in addition to taking 1 point of Constitution damage from internal acid damage. Anyone who lands on Verdant is likely to have a very short stay.

Onboard the Green Reach Facility the atmosphere is normal, as is gravity thanks the station's rotation. The influence of the Red Truth makes the region a little less inviting. Any non-yaom creature without psionic powers that stays within five miles of the Green Reach Facility or any area affected by Red Truth must make a Will save (DC 15+1 per

hour spent in the affected area) each hour they are in the area affected by Red Truth. Failure means the creature takes 1 point of Wisdom damage, but also gains a cumulative +1 bonus to Intelligence and Wisdom-based skills. This is due to the information overload that those within the Red Truth area undergo, which causes mental damage and instability. Any person reduced to 0 Wisdom is rendered temporarily insane and the bonuses to Intelligence and Wisdom-based skills are lost. For each hour spent in the area after a character's Wisdom has reached 0, one point of Wisdom damage becomes permanent. If the character's Wisdom is reduced to 0 permanently they die. Non-yaom characters do not notice this Wisdom damage as it occurs, but instead suffer terrible headaches, feel paranoid, confused, and see things that may or may not be there. The GM should only inform them of the Wisdom damage after they leave the area. Assuming the Wisdom damage has not become permanent, it may be recovered normally .

Yaom and psionicists in the Green Reach Facility or any area affected by Red Truth do not suffer Wisdom damage unless they open themselves to Red Truth or use psionic powers. When they do so they must make a Will save (DC 15 + the number of times they have opened themselves to the Red Truth or used a psionic power in the affected area during the last 24 hours). Failing this save inflicts one point of Wisdom damage on the yaom or psionicist. Within the area affected by the Red Truth the bonuses to Intelligence and Wisdom-based skills gained from a yaom opening up to the Red Truth are doubled and the power point costs of psionic powers are reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 1). If the yaom's or psionicist's Wisdom is reduced to zero, even by temporary Wisdom damage, it becomes an information ghost. A yaom or psionicist is aware of the Wisdom damage he suffers and can warn his non-psionic allies about the danger.

The malfunction of the brainshock cannon not only killed most of those within Green Reach, but also corrupted much of the data stored in the facility's computers through information overload. Since their creation, the information ghosts have been using their *computer empathy* psionic power to use access the computer systems of Green Reach. Due to the damage inflicted by information ghosts and the brainshock cannon on Green Reach, any attempts to use the surviving devices on the facility suffer a -5 penalty to all skill checks and attack rolls. Operating computers will be difficult, flying ships that are still in the station is very dangerous, and the station's defense network is almost useless. Many devices have suffered so much damage to their basic programming that they will not function at all. Some shielded or hidden devices may have survived, at the GM's discretion.

DETECTING RED TRUTH

Unfortunately detecting areas infected by Red Truth is not particularly easy. They can be seen with the naked eye as a red tint that extends over everything in the affected area, but this is not evident until one is already in the affected area. From the outside it looks normal. Non-psionic creatures suffer from headaches, hallucinations, and paranoia when in areas affected by Red Truth.

Psionicists only suffer mental strain from Red Truth when they use psionic powers in infected areas or open themselves to Red Truth. Any creature with psionic powers knows instantly when it is in an area infected by Red Truth, and can detect such areas with a Psicraft check (DC 20) when outside such an area with a range of 60 ft.

Red Truth areas can be detected by ship sensors, but doing so is very difficult. Sensors that scan areas infected with Red Truth suffer from more static and interference than normal. Within such an area all Computer Use rolls involving sensors suffer a -10 penalty and sensor range is reduced by half. Recognizing such an area requires a Psicraft (DC 15) skill check. Once it is recognized for what it is the Red Truth interference can be filtered out with a Computer can compensate for the interference.

Any ship approaching Green Reach will likely be assaulted by information ghosts using psionic powers of all types. Ships can avoid attracting attention by not broadcasting any radio messages, running any scanners, or sending out or receiving any sort of information since such activities attract the attention of information ghosts. Otherwise, the ship will be assaulted by 1d6 information ghosts until the ship is disabled, the information ghosts are chased off, or the characters shut down every active system on the ship, giving the information ghosts no means to interface with the ship's systems.

The area infected with Red Truth is centered on the damaged brainshock cannon that created it and moves with the cannon as the station moves in its orbital path around Verdant and Helios. The space it travels through returns to normal after its passing, usually within a few hours, but this time is slowly increasing as the entire orbital path of Verdant has its barrier between normal space and Red Truth weakened. If not stopped in some way eventually the entire orbit of Verdant may become infected.

AREAS INFECTED WITH RED TRUTH

Green Reach has become inundated with the influence and power of Red Truth so that the two realities overlap almost completely. While such areas are rare, there are a number of them in the Helios system. Green Reach is the largest and has the most information ghosts of any such area, though numerically most of the areas are located in the mountainous monasteries of Thres inhabited by the psionically empowered yaom. Staying in these areas has the same side effects as those found on Green Reach. Yaom masters use these areas to reach deep into the Red Truth to seek ultimate truths.

Red Truth is an infectious reality that "wants" to cross over into ours, and once it does there is no known way to force it out. Some yaom mystics believe the Red Truth is itself a sentient creature that seeks to cross over into our world, but this belief is not widely held. These areas normally only occur where an unusual event has happened, such as the brainshock cannon incident, or where psionics have been used repeatedly over the centuries. To non-psionic individuals, these areas often seem haunted or somehow wrong and are generally avoided.

FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

While there are no living beings on the Green Reach Facility now, the information ghosts have lumped themselves into two general camps, though not through active effort. A small number of information ghosts have retained enough of their mental faculties to begin to understand that they are still alive in an altered state and can communicate with the "real world" using their psionic powers. These information ghosts call themselves the Guided, but generally do not talk, have meetings, or do anything else an organized group would do. These information ghosts are only united by the idea that something more than simple insanity is going on, and they're trying to find out what. They have many of the same goals but do not pursue these goals together, instead undertaking their own separate tasks that often coincide.

On the other hand, most of the information ghosts are too incoherent to actively decide anything, and thus they form a group that the Guided call the Lost. The Lost generally cause damage and chaos in the Green Reach facility by wiping computers, playing with the lights, and causing other random acts. The Lost are terrified, enraged, and confused about their situation, using every chance to strike out a world they no longer understand.

THE GUIDED • • •

There are only half a dozen information ghosts who are among the Guided. All but one were dosai scientists, and the one who was not dosai was a savant of inter-dimensional physics named Kurlis. The Guided were among those who destroyed the single saurian ship that approached Green Reach, and through this event they realized there was still a world beyond the station that could possibly save them. Since that day they have been working to find any means of communication with the outside world. When the Guided make progress on developing some manner of communication the Lost often come along and destroy their work, so the Guided have to work very hard to keep their work

hidden and out of the areas that the Lost frequent.

The Guided seek to activate a radio or similar device in an attempt to summon help to Green Reach, but it seems all of the transmitters on the station have suffered complete information corruption of their systems or have been destroyed by the Lost. Thus the Guided work to rewrite the necessary code for these devices from the ground up or repair them using telekinesis, a process that is often interrupted by the Lost, who then tear apart the work of the Guided. While information ghosts can fight and the Guided work to keep the Lost away from their work, they are loath to use violence for fear of permanently destroying the mind of one of their colleagues, even if that colleague is insane. Luckily for the Guided, they have little sense of the passage of time and have yet to grow frustrated with the antics of their former comrades. More recently Kurlis has begun striking back at the Lost, having some idea of the time that has passed since the saurian ship approached Green Reach.

It will take many years for the Guided to set up a working transceiver, though some have considered other options, such as dropping the shielding on the facilities reactor and sending coded messages through radiation bursts. So far these efforts have been stymied by safety protocols, corrupted systems, or the actions of the Lost. Needless to say, the Guided are very frustrated with their lack of progress; they do not understand time as they once did, but they know when they have spent too much of it on a single task.

While the Guided try to summon someone to the station, they also prepare for when someone actually arrives, through their own efforts to call for help or by chance. The Guided are always trying to find computers and similar devices they can communicate through using computer empathy, but having no living being to test their communication efforts out on, they have made little progress at actually developing a conversational link. Guided who try to use a computer or other device to communicate with visitors to Green Reach are likely to show random images on the screen, static in numerically significant durations, or pages and pages of quickly scrolling Unispeak text. None of these are likely to be understood easily by outsiders, but it may clue them in that something is trying to communicate with them. If a yaom comes on board, his presence in Red Truth will soon attract the attention of the Guided. Such an encounter may be the best chance the Guided have for opening channels of communication. While many of the information ghosts have telepathy and other means of communication than computer empathy, generally they are not very comfortable with using such direct methods and fear spreading their insanity to others.

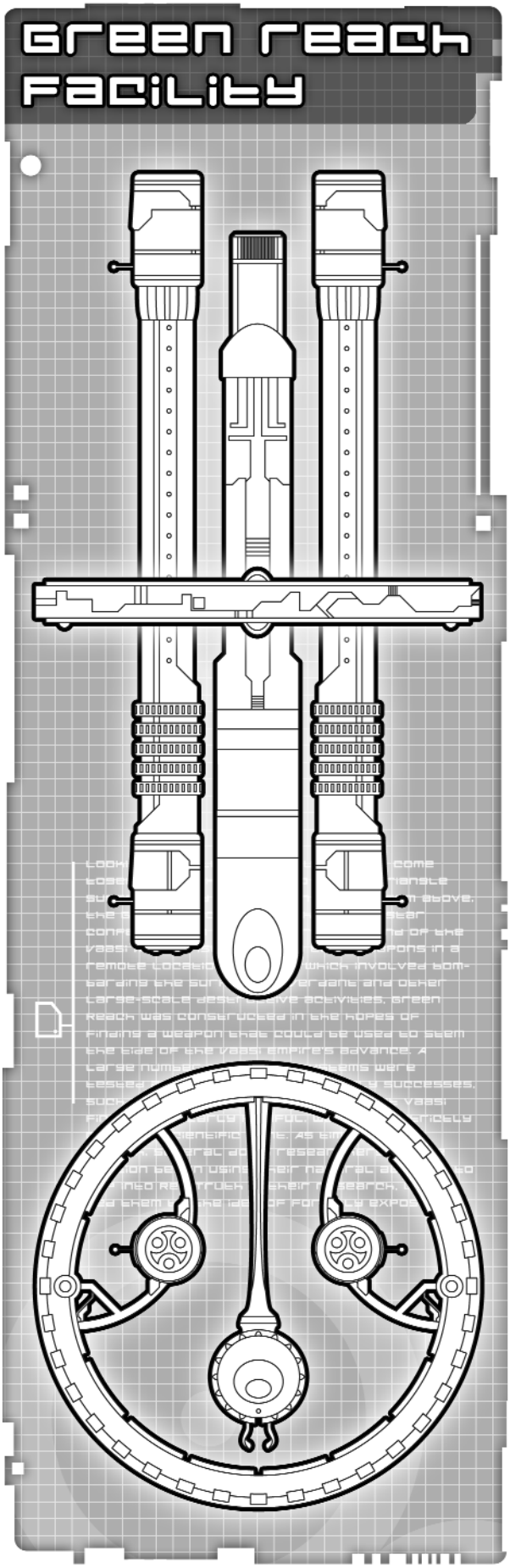
Even the Guided are all at least somewhat insane. Any conversation with them is likely to be random and without any sense of time or space. Even if the PCs manage to develop a means to communicate with the Guided, any information they gain will be garbled at best and will probably take several hours to turn into a useable format. Also during any attempt at communication with the Guided it is more than likely some of the Lost will eventually show up and throw a wrench in things.

THE LOST • • •

The vast majority of the information ghosts are members of the Lost. The Lost have no organization and do not even apply that name to themselves, instead being labeled such by the Guided. They have no desire to communicate with the normal world or escape their predicament, instead wanting only to fulfill whatever strange urges overtake them at any given moment. Acting out randomly in anger and rage, they strike out at anything they see that represents order or sanity. It seems on many levels now that the Lost have lost what part of their mind allowed them rational thought, they seek to wipe out any thing that may remind them they once possessed such abilities. The Lost completely destroyed the two dozen artificial intelligence entities assigned to Green Reach in the earliest days of their new existence, though the entities did put up a valiant struggle when their computer world turned into a twisted, nightmarish battleground.

The Guided have tried to communicate with the Lost but have had no luck. While the Guided can converse among themselves, though often with great difficulty, the Lost react to all attempts at communication with violence. The Lost do not operate under the same no-killing rules that the Guided use, and more than a few information ghosts have been dispersed into Red Truth by the violent actions of the Lost. As the Lost have continued to do damage to the Green Reach Facility, they have limited their ability to damage it further, which seems to infuriate them. Whenever a new object they can interact with comes into their notice, be it people or machines, they immediately make a beeline for that item and seek to interact with it. The Lost always interact violently. Any ship that comes near the station is likely to have its systems assaulted by the Lost, making escape difficult, though the Guided may try and curtail such efforts. Visitors to the Green Reach Facility will suffer unexplained computer failures, power outages, strange fires, and objects being hurled at them with no discernible source during their entire stay. If the Lost can lash out physically by controlling a weapon system or robot, they will try to do that as well. Despite their wrath and power, well-shielded systems can resist the efforts of the Lost for some time, allowing short visits to Green Reach without catastrophic system damage.

The Lost have no leader and no organization,



though the most powerful among them is a former dosai researched named Sheargus. Always arrogant and pushy in life, in his new existence he has become a fountain of rage that never stops wandering the station halls looking for something to destroy or corrupt. While most of the Lost destroy out of confusion or insanity, Sheargus has regained some sense of what is happening. He has decided that this new existence is an evolutionary advance and, eventually, all life will exist of formless beings of energy and information. To this end he seeks to rebuild the brainshock cannon and use it to turn all living creatures in the Helios system into information ghosts, believing that such a step will help the affected life forms transcend their physical limits. The Guided do not yet know of his plans or the recovery of some of his mental faculties, but if they learn of such they will do what they can to stop him.

Locations on Verdant • • •

◇ Green Reach Facility

Looking much like three tubes that come together on their ends to form a triangle surrounded by a ring when viewed from above, the Green Reach was the height of Star Confederation science during the end of the Vaasi War. Constructed to test weapons in a remote location, many of which involved bombarding the surface of Verdant and other large-scale destructive activities, Green Reach was constructed in the hopes of finding a weapon that could be used to stem the tide of the Vaasi Empire's advance. A large number of weapon systems were tested at the station. Many early successes, such as the burning star laser that vaasi find particularly painful, were of a strictly mundane scientific bent. As time passed, though, several dosai researchers on the station began using their natural abilities to tap into Red Truth in their research, which led them to the idea of forcibly exposing other races to the confusing, draining, and often dangerous energy that was Red Truth. This train of thought led the researchers at Green Reach to their most powerful weapon, the brainshock cannon, but it also led them to their current predicament.

Green Reach originally held over five thousand people and was outfitted with supplies, living quarters, research facilities, and even factories to support all their needs. Of those five thousand, one hundred hundred possessed the mental fortitude to survive the transformation into information ghosts. These now haunt the halls of the massive station, trying to understand what has happened, lashing out in anger, or just behaving randomly after losing all touch with reality. The station itself is in good condition physically, but almost every computer

system has been corrupted by the activities of the information ghosts and information overload from activation of the brainshock cannon. Massive super computers have been filled with random data, nanites lay still, their directives lost, and millions of years of history and science have been lost. Only a small number of computers have survived, along with those systems which were hardwired to avoid tampering, such as atmospheric controls. These protective measures do not make these systems immune to the information ghosts; it only means the systems will recover with time. Visitors to the station will find lights flash without explanation, and atmosphere converters suddenly give out or spring to life. This may be the work of one of the Guided trying to communicate or one of the Lost lashing out at the living beings it now envies.

The entirety of the station has taken on a red hue thanks to the influence of the Red Truth. This coloration has no discernible source, but all light in the affected area is shifted in spectrum toward red. It has no effect on areas that have no light.

Due to the bleed of the Red Truth into normal space characters get more information about their surroundings, granting a bonus to Intelligence and Wisdom-based skills (see page 71), but this also is disconcerting. They will be able to sense and see things that are not there. This confusion should be a constant companion in the Green Reach Facility; between the effects of the Red Truth and the information ghosts, characters will soon come to doubt their own sanity. Indeed if they stay to long, they may lose their minds altogether.

The station itself is an unkempt mess. When the sabotage took place everyone in the station suddenly dropped dead and their corpses were left to rot where they fell. The robots that had been previously assigned to the station functioned for a time and even tried to clean up some of the bodies, but were eventually assaulted by the information ghosts and disabled. Everywhere boxes are knocked over, walls are stained with after images of blood that remain sticky in Red Truth, and bits cloth lay in piles where bodies rotted away long ago. One of the information ghosts used its telekinetic powers to write messages in blood on some of the walls, messages that still remain in some sections, crying out in Unispeak of a mind that has completely lost touch with reality.

The Green Reach Facility is filled with Star Confederation tech for the taking, but little of it works any more and all knowledge of its construction or repair has been long ago wiped from the computers. While characters may be able to find relics on the station, unlocking the secrets of the Star Confederation is unlikely to happen here. Still, this facility may provide a valuable source of resources with which to fight the vaasi or other groups, and if someone can actually find a means to contact the information ghosts they will have some of the greatest scientific minds of the Star Confederation to learn from.

Green Reach is equipped with a number of weapons and defense systems from the height of the Star Confederation, though most of the operation programs for these items have been corrupted. The station boasts dozens of weapon emplacements and powerful defensive screens, but none of these can now be activated and salvaging them would be difficult due to the influence of the information ghosts. The station was surrounded by scores of small defensive satellites, each bearing a weapon system of some type, a mine, and minimal shielding. If the Green Reach Facility were ever restored to its former working order, it would be an extremely powerful defensive position. The station was also equipped with numerous space fighters, freighters, and shuttles, but all combat-worthy craft were with the Star Confederation fleet when the brainshock cannon was fired and are no longer on the station. Only a handful of freighters, service ships, and shuttles remain, all of which have been damaged by the actions of the information ghosts.

◇ The Lost Ships

The Green Reach Facility is not alone in its orbit above Verdant. Several spaceships are now orbiting near it, caught within its gravity well after they were disabled long ago by information ghosts. These ships are all within five miles of the Green Reach Facility, which is roughly the size of the region infected with the Red Truth.

There are seven ships in total, five of which are vaasi assault ships that were disabled during the vaasi invasion of the Helios system. The remaining ships are a saurian bloodfang frigate that was disabled a little over a hundred years ago when it tried to investigate the Green Reach Facility, and a wolf exploration frigate that was disabled fifty years ago. All computers and systems on these ships are corrupted, but are in perfect condition otherwise. All of the crew died of dehydration or exposure to vacuum long ago, but their corpses remain in their ships, strapped into the seats they died in.

If these ships can be recovered, which is difficult considering how the Lost assault most ships that come within their reach, they can provide a wealth of information about vaasi, saurian, and wolf spacecraft. While the saurian technology will not impress the humans, the vaasi and wolf ships will prove far more valuable. The only problem is getting them away from Green Reach safely.

Relations with the Other Worlds of the Helios System • • •

Until someone manages to make peace with the information ghosts of Green Reach or design technology that is shielded from Red Truth interference, Green Reach will only be visited by daring explorers willing to face significant risk for a small chance of immense gain. While there are massive amounts of Star Confederation technology laying around the station, most of it is damaged or its programming corrupted, making relics taken from Green Reach not as useful as they would be in pristine condition. While nearly all the governments of the Helios system would love to get their hands on Green Reach and the secrets it holds, only the yaom have any hope of keeping the information ghosts at bay. In fact most will write off the station completely due to the forces there that are beyond the ken of most mortals. The vaasi are likely to share this sentiment, though they may try to recover the vaasi ships floating nearby, and probably lose more ships in the process.

Verdant is likely to remain the domain of the player characters and other adventurous sorts due to the dangers present. The information ghosts are attracted to large amounts of information, so large groups of ships approaching the station are more likely to attract their attention than a single ship slipping into the station. If the player characters somehow manage to put the information ghosts to rest or return their minds to some manner of corporeal existence, Green Reach may become a catalyst for interplanetary war. Every faction will want it, though the vaasi may provide enough of a common threat to keep the factions from fighting. Most of the information ghosts have no opinions about the inhabitants of the Helios system, but the Guided have enough of their minds left intact to wish to help the descendants of the Star Confederation ascend to the level of their ancestors and survive whatever assaults the vaasi may make. To such an end they will actively help others gain access to the Green Reach facility, but they cannot venture outside of areas suffused with the Red Truth.

Adventure Ideas for Verdant • • •

◇ Ghost Story

Due to an information ghost attempting to use the communication system within, one of the ships floating near Green Reach begins broadcasting an SOS signal, though it does so in codes now forgotten by most. Despite this, the signal attracts ships from several factions looking to salvage the vessel, including the player characters. Soon a race develops to see who can get to the ship first.

◇ Last Journey

A yaom master in his last days wishes to travel to Green Reach to see the Red Truth in its greatest known concentration in this reality and hires the player characters to take him. Once the player characters arrive they learn the yaom master went mad long ago and intends to turn himself and the player characters into information ghosts. He sabotages their ship and tries to keep them separated and confused while their minds slowly slip away.

◇ Lost Tech

The player characters learn from some ancient Star Confederation documents that a Red Truth immersion chamber (see Page 294) is located on Green Reach. Such an object is worth a great deal since it allows species without natural psionic gifts to learn psionics in a controlled environment. Now the player characters must travel to Green Reach, best the information ghosts, and find a way to get a delicate piece of equipment off the station in one piece.

◇ Spread of Red Truth

A power surge in the still malfunctioning brainshock cannon causes the Red Truth infected area around Green Reach to begin expanding slowly. Either the player characters can notice the change when traveling through the area or another faction knowledgeable of Red Truth could recognize the threat. The player characters can either go in themselves or be sent in by allies to find the source of the expansion and shut it down.

◇ Ghost Hunting

After knowledge of Red Truth and the information ghosts of Green Reach becomes widely dispersed, a group of researchers hires the player characters to escort them to Green Reach so they can experiment with Red Truth and capture one of the information ghosts. Of course things go awry and the attempts to trap information ghosts drive some into a rage, while others are willingly captured in the hope it will end their suffering.

FEATS • • •

◇ Greater Mind Shield

Your mind is highly resistance to Red Truth and psionic powers.

Prerequisite: Wis 15+, Mind Shield.

Benefit: You gain a +8 bonus to Will saves to avoid Wisdom and Intelligence damage through exposure to Red Truth, including damage from brainshock weapons. This bonus does not stack with the bonus from Mind Shield. You also gain a +2 bonus to all saving throws against psionics.

◇ Information-Dense Mind

Your mind is used to working with particularly dense information, such as that found in the Red Truth. You are better able to adapt to Red Truth.

Prerequisite: Intelligence 15+, you must have suffered at least point of Intelligence damage from exposure to the Red truth.

Benefit: Any Intelligence and Wisdom bonuses gained from exposure to the Red Truth are doubled. You also gain a +1 bonus on Computer Use and Decipher Script checks.

Special: You may not select this feat if you have the Mind Shield feat.

◇ Mind Shield

Your mind is protected from outside intrusion, making it more difficult for the Red Truth and psionics to affect you.

Prerequisite: Wis 13+

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to all Will saves to avoid taking Wisdom and Intelligence damage through exposure to Red Truth, including damage from brainshock weapons. You also gain a +1 bonus to all saving throws against psionics.

Special: You may not select this feat if you have the Information Dense Mind feat.

◇ See Red Truth

Due to some intense contact with the Red Truth, you are now able to see information ghosts without aid and discern when others are accessing the Red Truth in your vicinity.

Prerequisite: Wis 15+, you must have suffered at least one point of Wisdom damage from exposure to the Red Truth

Benefit: You can see information ghosts normally in areas where Red Truth infects your reality and may detect others using psionic powers with a Spot check (DC 20-the power level of the power being used). You may automatically detect areas that are strong in the Red Truth, such as the Green Reach Facility, when you are inside them.



EQUIPMENT • • •

There is precious little in terms of equipment on Verdant itself. The hostile environment present on its surface has destroyed pretty much everything left there for any period of time, or at least turned it into unrecognizable slag. There are still some subterranean equipment storage facilities left over from the days of the Star Confederation, but they are few and far between.

The Green Reach Facility is full of items built by the Star Confederation, though most of them no longer function. Almost everything has been damaged by the information ghosts or the side effects of the brainshock cannon. This means there are nanites, supercomputers, and other advanced equipment just sitting around the station without the most basic of software to get them running. It is possible to salvage these machines, but finding a means to interface with them and write new software for them is difficult at best. The Green Reach Facility is mostly PL9 with a few PL 8 and PL 10 relics lying around. Most of the equipment on Green Reach is related to weapons research and other types of military work.

In addition to information corruption, many systems have suffered physical damage from rampaging information ghosts using telekinesis. These rampages were individually short lived, but they caused extensive damage in several key research labs. Some of these rampages resulted in explosions, destroying entire sections of the Green Reach Facility. While there are definitely valuable goods to be salvaged from the station, it is not a

Adventuring Gear

Name	PL	Size	Weight	Purchase DC
Psionic Injector	9	T	1 lb.	-
Red Truth Baffle	9	T	1 lb.	-
Red Truth Transceiver	9	S	15 lb.	-
Singularity Beacon	9	T	1 lb.	-
Transport Pad	9	L	600 lb.	-

ready treasure trove of advanced technologies waiting to be claimed.

Many pieces of Star Confederation technology described elsewhere in this book, such as nanites or pain prods, are also found in the Green Reach Facility. Most of these devices are severely damaged, though, and will not function without massive repairs and software rewrites. All the Star Confederation equipment detailed below is of sufficient power that it should be treated as relics and only rarely made available to player characters - though few characters will be able to visit the Green Reach facility frequently.

◇ Adventuring Gear

Psionic Injector

A late development of the Green reach Facility, a psionic injector is a special type of nanite colony that can temporarily rewire the targets brain so they may perceive the Red Truth and wield some psionic powers. Each injector is the size of a flashlight and contains enough nanites for a single injection. A target injected with psionic activator nanites undergoes significant brain chemistry alteration over the course of 1d4 minutes. Once this process has begun it cannot be stopped or resisted by the target, though if the target wishes to resist injection, an attacker must make a successful melee attack, with a -4 nonproficiency penalty.

Once the cerebral alteration is complete, the target gains the See Red Truth feat regardless of prerequisites, interacts with the Red Truth as a psionicist, and gains 6 power points along with the ability manifest three of the following powers, determined when the injector nanites are programmed: *combat precognition*, *daze*, *detect psionics*, *distract*, *missive*, and *object reading*. The character has a manifester level of 1. The effects of the psionic injector remain for 2d4 hours, after which the target of the injector loses all their powers and suffers mental damage as their brain tries to heal. When the injector wears off the character's brain tries to repair the altered nerves, inflicting 1d4 points of temporary Intelligence and Wisdom damage on the character.

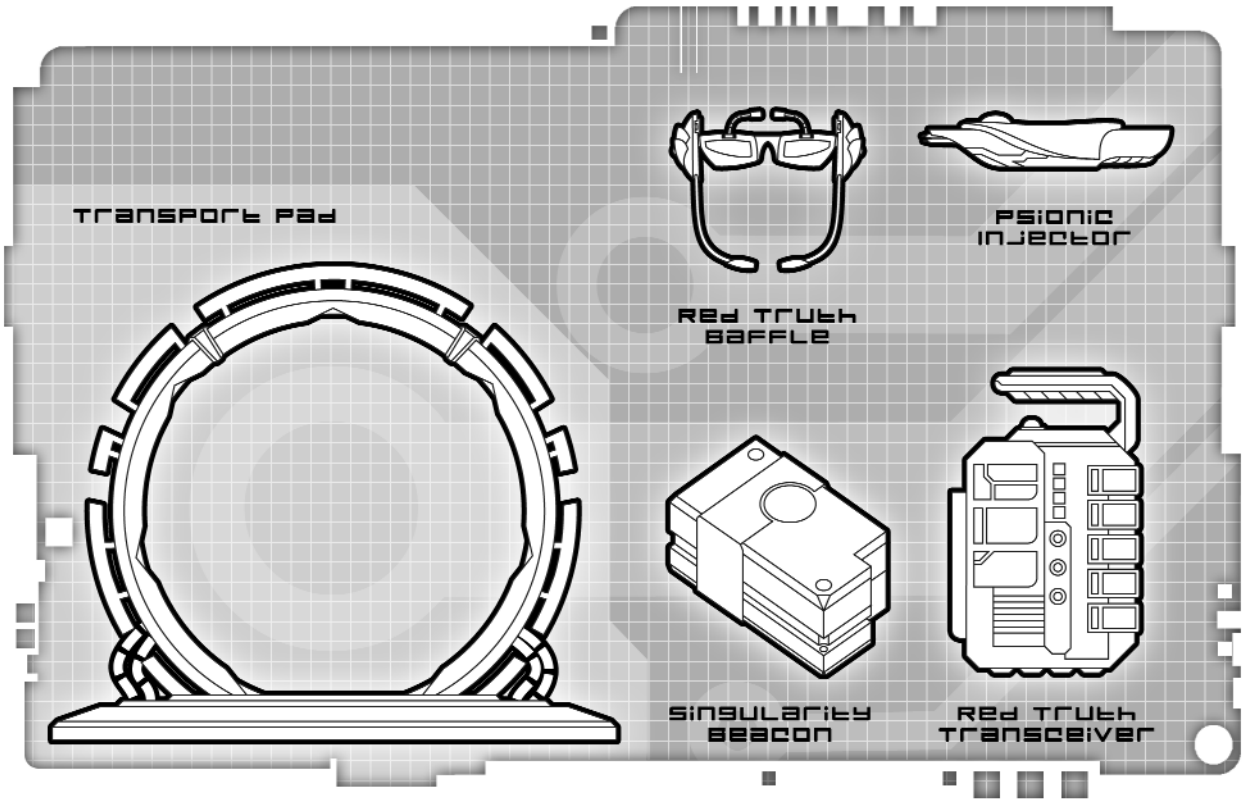
Red Truth Baffle

This device looks like a pair of slim sunglasses with reflective shades and ear plugs, though several different models were created for the various races of the Star Confederation. The most common version is fitted for the basic humanoid form, several sets of which survive on the Green Reach Facility. The Red Truth baffle was designed to protect those not trained in psionics or gifted with a natural connection to the Red Truth from the ravages of uncontrolled exposure to the Red Truth, such as that caused by a brainshock weapon. While a character wears the Red Truth baffle they cannot perceive the Red Truth at all, making them immune to Wisdom or Intelligence damage from the exposure. The wearer also gains no bonus to Intelligence or Wisdom checks, and must spent two extra power points to activate any psionic ability. The baffles run off of internal batteries powered by kinetic motion and never run out of power.

Red Truth Transceiver

In Red Truth there is no mass, only information. This premise was used by Star Confederation scientists to build a device called a Red Truth Transceiver that can send information through Red Truth at a rate of speed much higher than the speed of light. These devices were extremely difficult and expensive to build even for the Star Confederation, largely due to the need for cloned dosai brains; only fleet flagships, major space stations, and similar facilities possessed them. Several of these devices were stored on Green Reach, though all need repairs to become functional.

A fully functional Red Truth transceiver allows faster than light communications, with limitations. For the transceivers to function they must be operated by a psionicist, a dosai, a yaom, or someone with the See Red Truth feat. The transceiver allows for instantaneous transmission to a range equal to the base Will save bonus of the user in light years. The Red Truth transceiver can only contact other Red Truth transceivers. For each round the transceiver is used the operator must make a Will save (DC 15 + the number of consecutive rounds the transceiver has been used) or take 1 point of tem-



porary Wisdom damage. Red Truth transmissions of this kind can be very information dense. Red Truth transceivers are the size of a large backpack and have an internal power supply.

Singularity Beacon

Used in conjunction with a transport pad (see below), singularity beacons are small devices that create a small and extremely short lived particle that acts like a singularity. This massively dense and powerful particle is held within a special containment field and its existence is far too brief for use as any type of weapon. It can, however, act as a beacon for transport pads. When activated, the singularity beacon allows transport pads to target the area within 5 feet of the beacon as if it were a transport pad, but the singularity beacon only remains active for one minute. This means the timing must be precise to successfully use a singularity beacon. A singularity beacon can only be used once.

Transport Pad

One of the last advances of the Star Confederation before it fell, the transport pad is a miniaturized version of the gateway network. The pad itself is a small version of the gateway circle placed on its side; when activated the pad create a temporary wormhole between two different pads allowing for instantaneous transit between them. Transport pads can only send one Medium-sized creature or a similar amount of goods each round. Also a transport pad can only send these goods to another transport pad, or a singularity beacon (described above). Transport pads have a limited range of one light year and consume a massive mount of energy. Most have dedicated generators and batteries, and even then they can only activate for ten rounds every eighty hours.

Activating and targeting a transport pad, a PL 9 device, requires a Computer Use check (DC 25). The transport pad will not activate without an appropriate destination that has a transport pad or singularity beacon. The creature or goods on a transport pad are immediately transferred to the target location when it is successfully activated.

WEAPONS • • •

While the Green Reach Facility was a research facility and not a fortress, it did have a large security contingent to protect the experimental weapons still under development. Most of the security devices have been wiped out by the information ghosts, but a few remain. The exterior armaments of the station are completely offline and will not be useable without a massive rewrite of the station's security protocols, a task made nearly impossible by the interference of the information ghosts.

Brainshock Rifle

Considered by many to be the crowning achievement of the Green Reach Facility, the brainshock line of weaponry caused the target to be overloaded with exposure to the Red Truth. This caused the target serious mental damage and usually incapacitated targets quickly. While the brainshock cannon can render entire fleets immobile in a single blast, the brainshock rifle is not nearly so powerful. The brainshock rifle was still undergoing testing at

Ranged Weapons

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Brainshock Rifle	9	Wis	-	Special	60 ft.	S	40	L	5 lb.	-	III (+4)
Burning Light Laser Rifle	7	3d8	19-20	Fire	200 ft.	A	100	L	4 lb.	-	III (+4)
Singularity Rifle	9	6d12	19-20	Gravity*	150 ft.	A	32	L	14 lb.	-	III (+4)
Deaden Pistol	9	Con	-	Special	100 ft.	S	20	M	3 lb.	-	III (+4)

*Gravity is a new energy type used in some extremely powerful Star Confederation weapons that tear a target apart with intense gravitation fields.

the Green Reach Facility when the vaasi invaded the Helios system. The brainshock rifle's value in combat was still being debated, but now it has been made a moot point.

When using a brainshock rifle the wielder makes a ranged touch attack. If successful the target must make a Will save (DC 20) or suffer 1d6 points of temporary Wisdom and Intelligence damage. Characters with psionic abilities receive a bonus to the Will save equal to their manifester level. Characters wearing a Red Truth Baffler receive a +8 equipment bonus to their Will save.

Brainshock rifles use special experimental high-energy power packs that can be only be recharged at the Green Reach Facility, though only one of the rechargers is currently functional. The same clips are used in the deaden pistols (see below). Brainshock rifles uses 25 charges each time they are fired.

Burning Light Laser Rifle

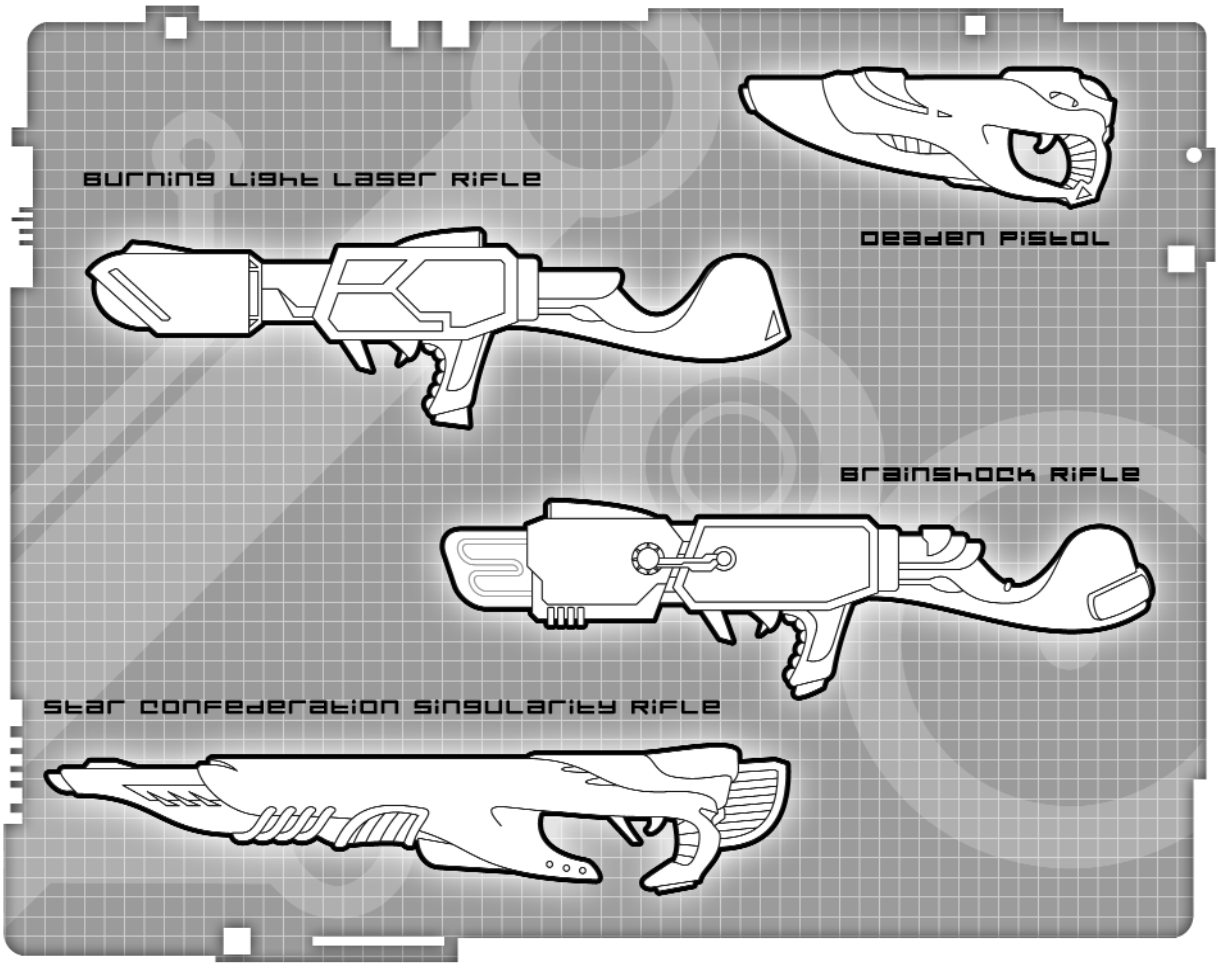
The Star Confederation had been in the habit of solving problems using increasingly complex methods for eons before its fall, a tactic that shows up in many of their overly complex yet wondrous technological achievements. When the war with the vaasi broke out, the Star Confederation developed more and more advanced weapons, piercing the veil of the Red Truth, creating gravity altering weapons, and even more fantastic devices in order to stop the vaasi. It took them many centuries and desperation to finally start looking at simpler means to fight the vaasi, a process that gave birth to the burning light laser rifle.

Using technology that is even old to the humans of Eos, the burning light laser uses a specially calibrated beam of light to cause extreme pain and damage to vaasi struck with it. The laser beam burns with a powerful white light similar to white phosphorous that is dangerous to look at for long periods of time. When using this rifle the wielder must wear sunglasses or similar eye protection, or their targets gain 10% concealment due to lost vision on the wielder's part for 1d4 minutes after firing the weapon. Vaasi struck by the burning light laser suffer an additional +3d8 points of damage and they suffer from their Light Sensitivity species ability for 1d4 minutes afterward. While the burning light laser does not do a significant amount of damage compared to other Star Confederation weapons, it was easy and cheap to produce.

With significant modifications human laser weapons can be similarly reconfigured. This takes a Repair check (DC 25), spare parts that have a purchase DC equal to the weapon's purchase DC -5, and 12 hours of work. After a weapon is so modified its damage is reduced by -1 die, but the damage against vaasi increases by +2 dice. Burning light laser rifles use standard Star Confederation power packs, described in Chapter 3.

Star Confederation Singularity Rifle

The standard issue rifle of the Star Confederation at the time of its fall, the singularity rifle fires a small, short lived hyper-dense object contained in a force field at the target. When the target is struck the force field collapses, exposing the target to the power of the hyper-dense object for a fraction of a second. This unleashes an immensely powerful force of gravity against the target, causing their bodies to twist painfully and even cause a minor time dilation. These PL 9 weapons were horrible things to see in use, and the Star Confederation only used them in the later days of the war. Their use was held as a crime against life for many centuries, and even during its last days many considered the singularity rifles to be an abomination. While there is not an actual singularity used in the singularity rifle, the name stuck nonetheless.



When using a singularity rifle the attacker makes a ranged touch attack against the target. If the target is struck it suffers the damage listed and must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or only be able to take a move action on the following round. If the save is successful the target may take a standard action, but may not take a full action.

The ammunition used in singularity rifles were essentially small incredibly dense fragments of matter held in check by force fields, and a clip held twenty of these pseudo-singularities. The power requirement for these weapons was enormous; a single singularity rifle power pack could power the *Dawning Star* for a month. These power packs were designed to eliminate the hyper-dense matter fragments safely if power was expected to fail to prevent any accidental damage to the surrounding area, and the power in nearly all the clips in the Green Reach Facility has been expended. Only a handful of clips left in charging stations are still useable, and once those are expended no one in the Eos system will be able to replace them for thousands of years. Clips for a singularity rifle weigh half a pound

Star Confederation Deaden Pistol

Like the singularity rifle, these weapons were widely considered an abomination and there were widespread demonstrations against them during development at the Green Reach Facility. While the deaden pistols had only just begun production when the Star Confederation fell, a handful of prototypes were still in the Green reach Facility. These weapons are stored in a number of weapons lockers and testing facilities.

Deaden pistols dampen all electrical current in the target struck, including electrical current to muscles and nerve endings. This attack effectively kills most types of living beings, though coqui are effectively immune to the deaden pistols and mechites are even more affected by then. Targets struck by a deaden pistol must make a Fortitude save (DC 23) or take 2d6 points of Constitution damage. If the save succeeds the target still takes 1d6 points of Constitution damage. If a machine of Medium size or smaller with electrical components is struck by a deaden pistol blast it shuts down immediately and will not reactivate without being completely restarted. Coqui suffer no damage from deaden pistols, while mechites suffer 3d6 points of Dexterity damage on a failed save.

A deaden pistol consumes 50 charges per shot and uses Star Confederation high energy power packs.

Star Confederation High Energy Power Packs

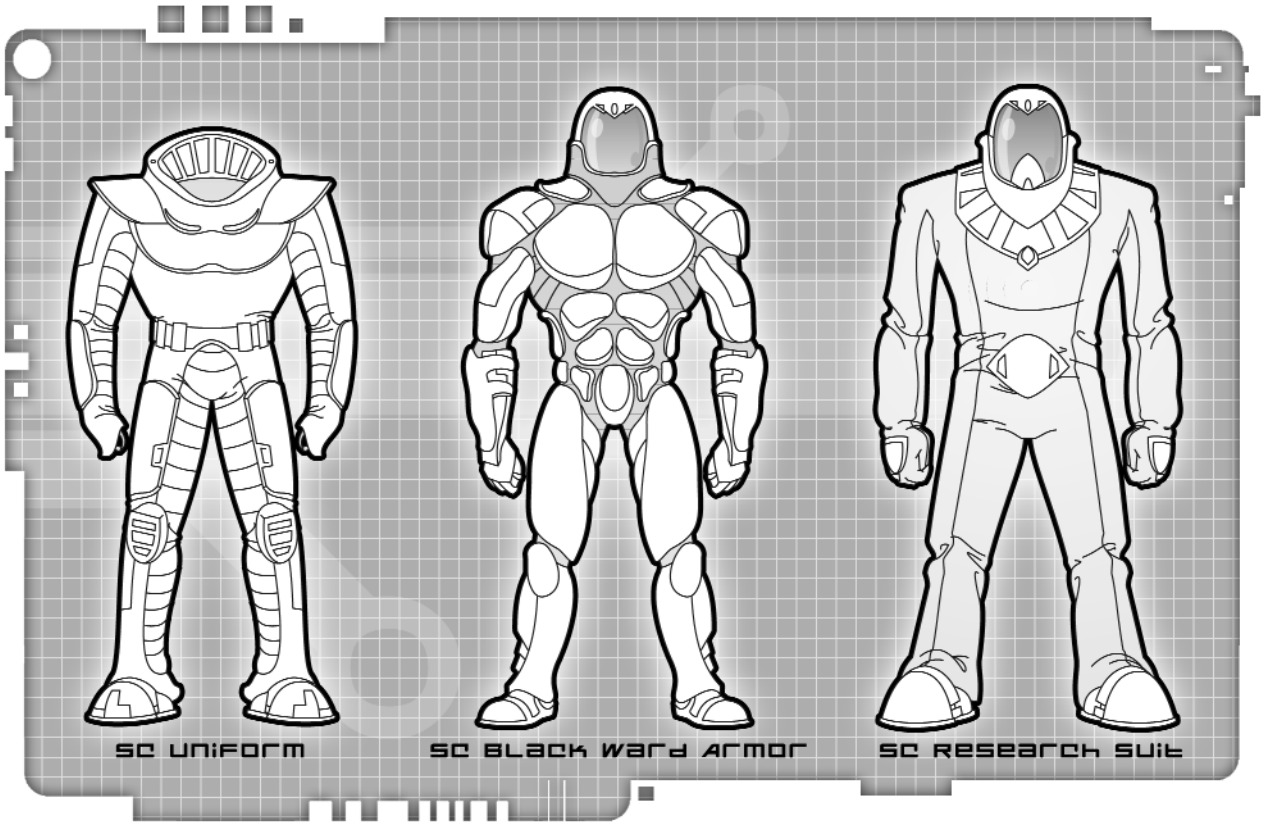
These power packs were becoming the standard type of power pack for military use in the Star Confederation when it fell to the vaasi. The size of a D-cell battery, these devices hold 1,000 charges of power and are used in many of the last weapons developed by the Star Confederation researchers at Green Reach, such as brainshock rifles and deaden pistols. These high energy power packs can only be recharged at special Star Confederation facilities, such as the Green Reach Facility, though they may also be recharged using jury-rigged PL 8 parts, a sufficient power source such as the main reactor on a PL 7 starship, and a Repair check (DC 25). High energy power packs are extremely rare and do not work in plasma weapons, but can power other lower PL devices, such as human laser weapons. High energy power packs have a purchase DC of 40 and weigh a quarter pound.

ARMOR • • •

Even though Green Reach was not a military installation it had a sizeable security contingent for dealing with spies, sabotage, and other threats. While none of these individuals survived the brainshock cannon malfunction, some of their equipment remains in useable condition. The suits of powered armor once used by the security personnel have had their onboard computers corrupted, making them little more than heavy suits of dead weight. The suits of armor that remain useable are the ones that had a minimum of computerized systems; even these suits of armor now have several useless pieces of equipment still attached to them.

Star Confederation Uniform

The basic uniform of Star Confederation military and security personnel, it was designed to provide some protection from harm in addition to a number of more utilitarian functions. Most soldiers had several suits of this type, at least one of which was for dress occasions. The basic uniform of the Star Confederation is a humanoid gray jumpsuit covered in pockets sealed with vacuum resistant fasteners. These uniforms also come in a number of others shapes for the other races of the Star Confederation, including Large and Huge-size humanoid suits, but most of the suits are made for Medium-size humanoids. These suits originally came standard with a unit each of production and medical nanites, polyvox, a galpos device, and a universal communicator, though some or all of these are nonfunctional in most uniforms. In a pinch a special collapsible helmet stored on the back of the uniform can be attached to the neck, creating an environmental seal that can be used in case of emergency decompression or other unexpected events. Deploying the helmet requires two full round actions and once sealed the wearer has eight hours of air. Star Confederation uniforms provide fire, cold, lightning, acid, radiation, disintegration, and sonic resistance of 4.



Star Confederation armors

	PL	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Light Armor										
SC Uniform	9	Tactical	+6	+1	+8	-0	30 ft./20 ft.	3 lb.	-	Lic (+1)
SC Research Suit	9	Tactical	+6	+1	+6	-2	30 ft./20 ft.	6 lb.	-	Lic (+1)
Medium Armor										
SC Black Ward	9	Tactical	+12	+3	+4	-2	20 ft/15 ft.	12 lb.	-	Lic (+1)

Star Confederation Black Ward Armor

Assigned to most of the security personnel on Green reach, this armor was the standard issue armor of the Star Confederation during the later stages of the war with the Vaasi Empire. While many of the front line troops used heavy or power armor, non-infantry personnel were usually equipped with black ward armor, and as the war progressed infantry played a smaller and smaller role in the conflict as entire worlds were destroyed and the basic forces of the universe forged as weapons. Black ward armor was primarily designed for shipboard troops who may repel boarders and other opponents, but spread to other branches of service over time. A fully functional suit of black ward armor has one colony each of medical, production, and incapacitation nanites, a polyvox, a DR 5/- personal force field, morphic metal alloy, and a universal communicator, though most of these systems are malfunctioning in the suits found on Green Reach. The armor is a sealed environment with a five day supply of air, water, and nutrient paste. Black ward armor provides energy resistance of 10. Individual suits of black ward armor were often modified for specific missions and have a number of ports for adding equipment to facilitate doing so.

Star Confederation Research Suit

Used by Star Confederation researchers, this suit of armor was designed to act as both a clean suit and a hostile environment suit, in addition to aiding researchers in their efforts with a number of onboard systems. The research suit is covered in a colony of nanites that continually clean the suit, eliminating dangerous substances from the suit within five rounds of exposure. Also a colony of production nanites is build into the suit, along with a polyvox, two different sensor comps based on the user's duties, a hologram recorder, morphic metal alloy, a universal communicator, a piercing visor, and an onboard computer system that grants a +4 equipment bonus to Computer Use checks. The wearer gains a +8 equipment bonus to saving throws against radiation, and has energy resistance of 6. The suit may be used as a vacuum suit in an emergency and has a twenty-four hour air supply.

STARSHIPS • • •

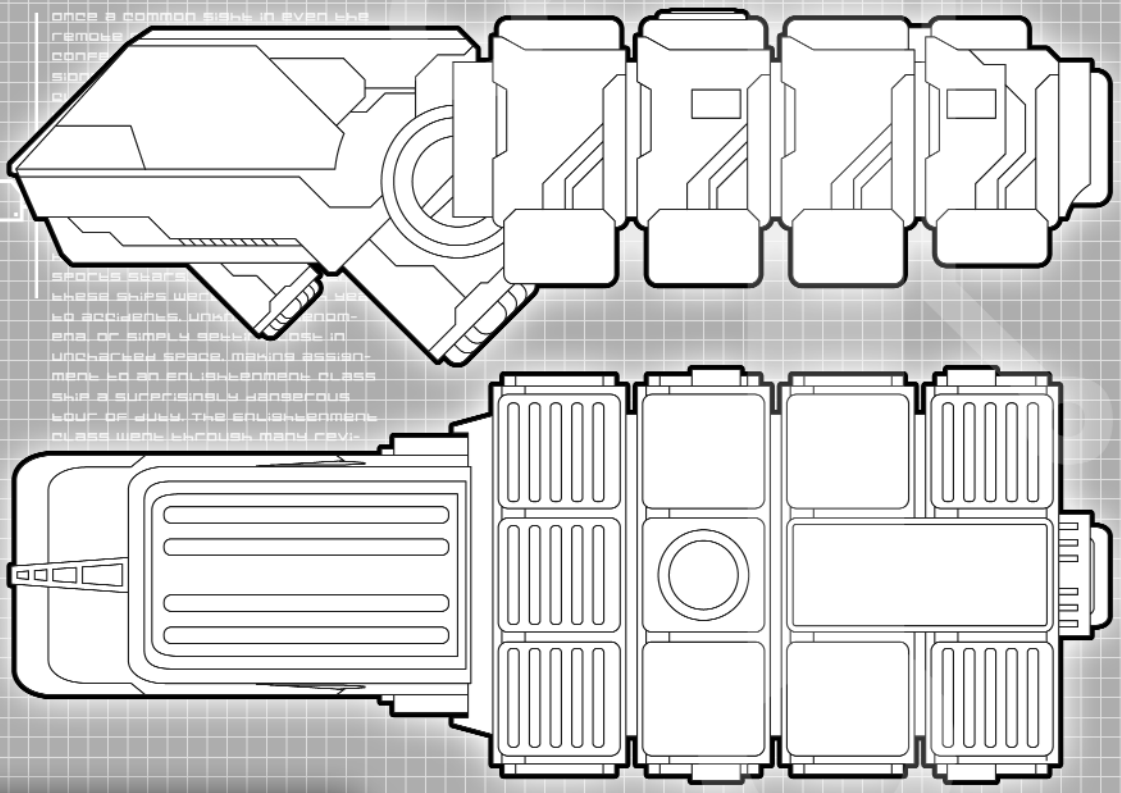
Originally there were thousands of spacecraft assigned to the Green Reach Facility, but almost all of them were called away to fight the vaasi before the brainshock cannon malfunctioned. What was left behind was a small collection of unarmed or lightly armed freighters, shuttles, repair units, and science ships. All of these have had their systems thoroughly scrambled by the information ghosts; they cannot be used without a major rewrite of all of their software from the ground up. Still, these ships may be useful as spare parts to visitors to Green Reach, and may provide some hints to unlocking the advanced propulsion and weapon systems used by the Star Confederation. None of these ships are vessels of war, however, and their armament is mediocre at best. Several Star Confederation ships are detailed below as examples of the sorts of ships found on Green Reach. The Deliverance Shuttle and Basket of Plenty Supply Freighter from Chapter 3 are also good representations of the ships of Green Reach.

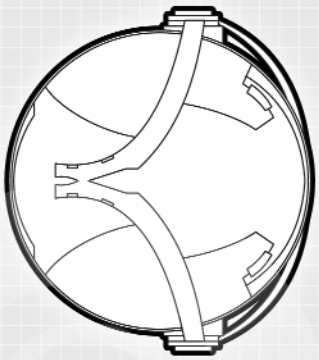
In addition to the ships listed below, a saurian bloodfang frigate and a exploration frigate from the Star Tribe of the wolves are also found floating near Green Reach, described later in this book. Their crews died decades ago and the ships were ruined by the actions of the information ghosts.

◇ Star Confederation Reconditioner Service Ship

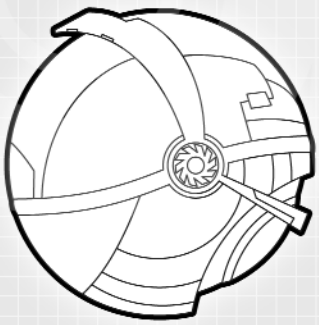
A small, spherical vessel outfitted with numerous arms and tools, these small ships were used in Star Confederation space stations and dry docks for making repairs and building spacecraft. Many larger spacecraft also carried a number of them to augment automated repair systems and assist in salvage operations. The ships were not designed for long range travel and do not have the capacity in terms of speed or supplies to make interplanetary voyages. Service ships were not designed for com-

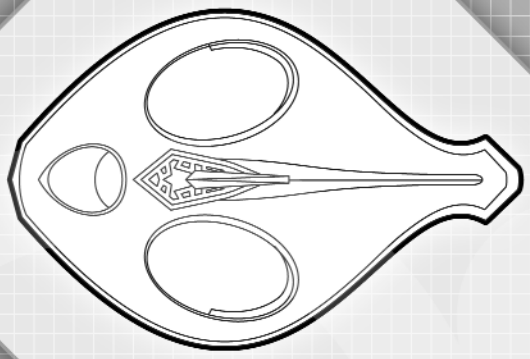
Star Confederation Enlightenment Science Ship



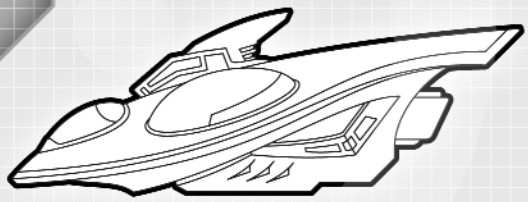


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Reconditioner Service Ship

Vaasi Zerias Assault Ship

bat and their weaponry is actually meant for salvage or asteroid-clearing operations. Green Reach has a moderately sized drydock facility for building experimental spacecraft, and over three hundred of these ships were assigned here. A great number of these ships remain to be found as none were lost to combat, but the information ghosts have destroyed all of their onboard computer systems.

Type: Ultralight (PL 8)
Subtype: Repair ship
Defense: 17
Flat Footed Defense: 13
Autopilot Defense: 9
Hardness: 40
Hit Dice: 7d20 (140 hit points)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Huge (-2)
Tactical Speed: 2,000 ft.
Length: 20 ft.
Weight: 20 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +0
Crew: 1 (expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 1
Cargo Capacity: 5 tons
Grapple Modifier: +8
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: -

Attack

Plasma cannon +2 ranged (14d8)

Design Specs

Engines: Thrusters, inertial flux engine.
Armor: Ablative.
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, nanite repair bay.
Sensors: Class VI sensor array.
Communications: Radio Transceiver.
Weapons: Plasma cannon (range incr. 3,000 ft.)
Grappling Systems: Grapplers, tractor beam emitter.

◇ Star Confederation Enlightenment Science Ship

Once a common sight in even the remote regions of the Star Confederation, the various versions of the Enlightenment class science ship scoured the universe, gathering information, performing experiments, and seeking out the unknown. The duties of these ships were romanticized by the media of the Star Confederation, which held scientists in as high esteem as humans do war heroes and sports stars. A large number of these ships were lost each year to accidents, unknown phenomena, or simply getting lost in uncharted space, making assignment to an Enlightenment class ship a surprisingly dangerous tour of duty. The Enlightenment class went through many revisions and upgrades over the thousands of years that the class was kept in service.

In the early days of the war with the vaasi the Enlightenment ships were massacred, caught alone in deep space by vaasi warships during the vaasi advance. Over time the industrial power of the Star Confederation turned from science ships to warships; the Enlightenment class of ships never returned to their place of prominence in the Star Confederation fleet. In the later days of the war they were often used as scout ships or converted to military duty and eventually destroyed, though some still remain in Green Reach. The ships in Green Reach were assigned to the station to help its personnel carry out experiments that required a remote location or involved modifying starships. The wreckage of Enlightenment ships can also be found in dozens of other solar systems, still floating in space where they were destroyed long ago.

Type: Mediumweight (PL 9)
Subtype: Enlightenment Class Science Ship
Defense: 11
Flat Footed Defense: 7
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 50
Hit Dice: 220d20 (4,400 hit points)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Colossal (-8)
Tactical Speed: 7,000 ft.
Length: 648 ft.
Weight: 30,000 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 24 (expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 340
Cargo Capacity: 12,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: -

Attack:

2 fire linked neutronium drivers +1 ranged (16d12)
2 fire-linked starload missiles -4 ranged (30d8)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point Defense System +5 ranged (3d12x10)

Design Specs:

Engines: Thrusters, inertial flux engine.
Armor: Nanofluidic.
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, heavy fortification, improved autopilot system, nanite repair bay, repair drones, particle field, point-defense system, radiation shielding.

Sensors: Class VIII sensor array, improved targeting system.
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver.
Weapons: 2 fire-linked neutronium drivers (range incr. 5,000 ft.), 2 fire-linked starload missile launchers (40 missiles each).
Grappling Systems: Tractor beam emitter.

◇ Vaasi Zerias Assault Ship

One of the workhorse ships of the vaasi fleet, these ships were used for boarding actions, planetary drops, and assaults on capital ships. Designed to be fast, maneuverable, and capable of both hitting a target hard and carrying twenty vaasi troops, these ships were used in the thousands in all major vaasi fleets. Zerias assault ships are not designed to operate for more than a few days without support from a larger ship or base and are always deployed as part of a larger fleet unit. There were literally tens of thousands of these ships deployed in the Helios system during the last battles between the Vaasi Empire and the Star Confederation, and their wreckage can be found on every planet in the system. During the war the shark-like profile of the Zerias was well known in the Star Confederation as the sign of impending battle.

Several Zerias ships were sent to investigate and capture Green Reach when the vaasi fleet passed by on the way to Eos, the bulk of the fleet ignoring the station since it seemed to be out of commission after the malfunction of the brainshock cannon. The ships sent to investigate were lost to the interference of the information ghosts, and the fleet saw no need to send more ships as the threat seemed to be isolated around the Green Reach facility. There are currently five Zerias assault ships clustered around Green Reach, all of which have had their systems severely damaged by the information ghosts, in addition to exterior damage by meteorites and the like. All the crew are long dead, their bodies rotted away in the stale and fetid air inside each ship. The ships could be made functional again, but it would require rewriting all the programs on each ship, which would take many months if not years of effort.

Zerias assault ships may be hidden away on other planets in the system, including Eos. These ships have been secreted away by vaasi survivors in the hope they may be used to link up with a rescue fleet. Most of these ships have fallen into disrepair in the many years since spare parts were available, limiting the effectiveness of the surviving ships. The vaasi now inhabiting the Cronus belt have a large number of Zerias assault ships in their fleet, and will use them to attack the descendants of the Star Confederation infesting the Helios system when the time is right.

Type: Ultralight (PL 9)
Subtype: Zerasi Assault Ship
Defense: 15
Flat Footed Defense: 9
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 50
Hit Dice: 20d20 (400 hit points)
Initiative Modifier: +6
Pilot's Class Bonus: +7
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +6
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +8/+3
Size: Colossal (-8)
Tactical Speed: 8,000 ft.
Length: 100 ft.
Weight: 10 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 3 (ace +12)
Passenger Capacity: 20
Cargo Capacity: 10 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: -

Attack:

3 fire-linked heavy maser cannons +8/+3 ranged (32d8/19-20)
3 fire-linked starload missile launchers +3 ranged (40d8/19-20)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point Defense System +5 ranged (1d12x10)

Design Specs:

Engines: Thrusters, inertial flux engine.
Armor: Nanofluidic.
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, cloaking screen, heavy fortification, improved autopilot system, point defense system, self-destruct system.
Sensors: Achilles targeting software, class VII sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Laser transceiver, radio transceiver.
Weapons: 3 fire-linked heavy maser cannons (range incr. 8,000 ft.), 3 fire-linked starload missile launchers (16 missiles each).

Xenomorphs • • •

The only living beings in the vicinity of Verdant are the information ghosts of Green Reach, and even their status as living beings is debatable. The planet Verdant itself supports no sort of life due to its hostile atmosphere.

◇ Information Ghost Template

Information ghosts are created when individuals with some connection to Red Truth have their minds destroyed by uncontrolled exposure to Red Truth. This can only happen under unusual circumstances, such as extended visits to Green Reach

facility or other places where Red Truth bleeds over into our reality. It is almost impossible for yaom or psionicists to become information ghosts through their normal interactions with Red Truth. In areas where Red Truth is accessed repeatedly the barrier between it and this dimension sometimes weakens, allowing Red Truth to spill into our world and cause damage to those whose minds are unprepared. These places are rare, but are often rumored to be haunted by information ghosts who seek to torment those who still possess corporeal form. Some yaom say that masters of Red Truth can assume the form of an information ghost at will, but none of them have ever displayed such a power outside of their own temples and monasteries.

An information ghost is made up of the whole of the information stored within the brain of a psionicist who suffered terminal exposure to Red Truth. The victim's consciousness leaves their body as pure information which continues to exist in Red Truth, but cannot leave Red Truth or areas where it has invaded our reality without great difficulty. The new information ghost retains all knowledge of its life before the transformation and can gather information from Red Truth, but unless the process occurs under controlled circumstances the new information ghost is completely insane. Some powerful psionicists are able to guide their own transformation into information ghosts and retain their sanity, but such individuals are very rare. Most new information ghosts are beasts of immense rage, lashing out at any living being they can perceive. For many information ghosts this state of insanity never passes, and they spend the rest of their incorporeal existence enraged.

Information ghosts can be perceived by those capable of seeing Red Truth as forms of pure information reminiscent of the information ghost's appearance in life. Information ghosts are nearly invisible to others, even in areas where Red Truth intrudes into our reality. They are visible only as a slight red glow that most people do not even notice. For those who cannot see Red Truth the only way to interact with information ghosts is through the psionic powers of the information ghost, which often include computer empathy and telepathy. Most information ghosts are far too gone mentally to communicate meaningfully, speaking in random word combinations or complex codes, but those who were powerful psionicists in life may occasionally be able to break through.

With age some information ghosts take control of their minds again and actively work to regain their corporeal existence. Only among the yaom are information ghosts an accepted reality; other species do not know of them or consider them simply the stuff of yaom folklore. According to these stories there are other, more terrifying and wondrous creatures living in the reaches of Red Truth. While



most information ghosts assume they are effectively immortal without a physical body to injure or kill, they are in fact very vulnerable to other creatures of Red Truth. These creatures are rare, but they can pose a serious threat to any information ghost, or even those in the real world who are in contact with Red Truth. Some yaom have learned powers that can be used to ward off or even destroy information ghosts and other creatures of Red Truth.

Information ghosts are attracted to active information. Radios broadcasting information, ships running scans, active computer libraries, and even people reading aloud all attract information ghosts. While those information ghosts who are not in control of their minds will attack such active information sources, more sane information ghosts may try to communicate with the physical world. Information ghosts do not need to eat, but most enjoy interacting with or consuming information.

Template Traits

Information ghost is an inherited template that can be gained by any character who is a yaom, a dosai, or a psionicist and whose Wisdom is reduced to 0 through uncontrolled exposure to Red Truth. This can happen in areas where Red Truth bleeds over into our dimension, such as Green

Reach. Under extremely trying conditions yaom looking into Red Truth can become information ghosts. This normally only occurs to yaom if their Wisdom is reduced to 0, they have no power points left, and are disabled or suffering from a fear condition. In such a situation the yaom must make a Will save (DC 15) to avoid becoming an information ghost. Some powerful yaom can will their minds into the form of an information ghost using advanced psionic abilities, but this power is extremely rare and only the most powerful yaom masters can do so.

Challenge Rating: Same as original.
Creature Type: Information ghosts are considered incorporeal undead. The character gains all the normal undead traits.
Hit Dice: The information ghost's hit dice become d12s due to its undead nature.
Initiative: Information ghosts receive a +4 species bonus to initiative.
Speed: Information ghosts can fly at a speed of 60 feet and lose all other forms of movement.
Attacks: Information ghosts can only make attacks against other incorporeal creatures of Red Truth and can only do so using unarmed or natural attacks of their original form. When a creature becomes an information ghost none of its equipment comes with it. Information ghosts cannot attack solid objects without using their psionic abilities.
Damage: Information ghosts may only damage other creatures of Red Truth with their attacks, though they may damage physical creatures with psionic powers.
Defense: Information ghosts gain a +4 displacement bonus to defense.

Special Qualities
An information ghost retains all the extraordinary and supernatural abilities and the species traits of the original creature. Some of these abilities may now be of questionable usefulness considering the information ghost's new incorporeal form.
The information ghost gains the following special qualities:

Linked to Red Truth: Information ghosts can only survive in Red Truth or in areas of our dimension that are closely tied to Red Truth, such as Green Reach or some of the monasteries of the yaom. For every eight hours spent outside areas infected with Red Truth the information ghost takes 1 point of Charisma damage and if it reaches 0 Charisma it is destroyed. Most information ghost stay near the area where they transformed into information ghosts and do not explore the deeper reaches of the Red Truth, though according to legend some yaom masters have done so and returned with tales of terrible information monsters and the vast empty darkness between the stars. Information ghosts cannot manifest outside of areas where Red Truth bleeds over into our dimension.
Manifest: Information ghosts can become visible to the naked eye, manifesting in this reality as opposed to Red Truth. They normally only do this in areas that have been infected with Red Truth, but they can do so elsewhere at a cost. For each round an information ghost spends manifesting outside an area strong in Red Truth the information ghost takes 1 point of temporary Wisdom damage. If the information ghost's Wisdom is reduced to 0 it is forced to stop manifesting and is effectively incapacitated until it regains one point of Wisdom.
Manifesting requires a full round action on the part of the information ghost. Wisdom loss begins in the next round. Information ghosts can stop manifesting as a free action. While manifesting the information ghost is visible to the naked eye as an indistinct red glow, though its translucent nature grants the information ghost a +4 circumstance bonus to Hide checks. Even when manifesting the information ghost remains invulnerable to physical weapons. Information ghosts can also be affected normally with psionics regardless of whether or not they are manifesting.
Incorporeal: The information ghost no longer has any sort of physical existence. Information ghosts are made up of pure information contained in the brain of their original body and when the information ghost is created the mind leaves the host body to exist in Red Truth. The host body will then starve and dehydrate as normal, dying if no assistance is given to it. There is currently no known way to get an information ghost back into its body.
Once the information ghost is created, it is completely incorporeal and can have no interaction with the material world outside of psionic abilities it already possessed and the computer emapthy ability. Information ghosts cannot be attacked with any sort of physical weapon, but any weapon that is psionic in nature (such as psi prods) and psionic powers will affect information ghosts. Information ghosts are normally almost invisible; they require a Spot check (DC 25) to see, though they can hide to make this more difficult, and have total concealment to the naked eye. Information ghosts can be seen normally through Red Truth or when they manifest. Any yaom perceiving Red Truth or anyone with



the See Red Truth feat can see information ghosts without difficulty.
Information ghosts may use their manifest ability to appear in areas where Red Truth has infected our reality, but they still have no physical form.
Psionics: Information ghosts may take levels in psionic classes even if they do not meet the prerequisites for the class. All information ghosts gain the Wild Talent feat when they become information ghosts. Information ghosts can activate psionic powers with a power point cost equal to or lower than the information ghost's Wisdom bonus without expending power points.
Transformation: When a psionicist is reduced to 0 Wisdom temporarily through uncontrolled exposure to Red Truth, an information ghost is created. The victim's mind leaves the body as pure information and becomes part of Red Truth, but the process is a very traumatizing one. The transformation takes only a single round, after which the information ghost has a Wisdom of 1. The information ghost must make an Intelligence check (DC 25) each day to recover a point of Wisdom until the information ghost has regained all its Wisdom. Those information ghosts who regain some part of their sanity usually spend action points to do so.

Allegiance: Information ghosts lose all allegiances when they undergo their transformation.
Saves: As the original creature.
Action Points: If the original creature was a heroic character the information ghost is also considered a heroic character and has action points.
Reputation: Due to the fact they are essentially removed from our reality information ghosts reduce their reputation score by -10, with a minimum of 0.
Abilities: As the original, Constitution no longer has a value due to the incorporeal undead nature of the information ghost.
Skills: All the skills of the original creature remain.
Feats: The information ghost retains the feats of the original, but not all of them may be useful in his new incorporeal existence.
Automatic Languages: Information ghosts can understand all languages due to their connection to Red Truth.
Advancement: By character class.
The bonuses in parenethesis represent the information ghost's bonuses due to its current Wisdom loss.

Green Reach Dosai* Researcher Turned Information Ghost (Charismatic Hero 3/Smart Smart Hero 2/ Telepath 3) ⋄ CR 8

Medium Undead; HD 8d12; hp 52; Mas -; Init +4; Spd fly 60 ft.; Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 19 (+3 class, +6 displacement); BAB +3; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, punch); Full Atk +2 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, punch); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Linked to Red Truth, manifest, incorporeal, psionics, transformation, trigger power (lesser mindlink); AL None; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +9 (+5); AP 10; Rep +0; Str 9, Dex 10, Con --, Int 16, Wis 18 (11), Cha 14.

Occupation: Technician

Skills: Autohypnosis +9 (+5), Balance +2, Bluff +8, Computer Use +13, Concentration +9, Craft (Electrical) +10, Craft (Mechanical) +8, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +8, Hide +2, Knowledge (Physical Science) +15, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +11, Knowledge (Red Truth) +17, Move Silently +2, Psicraft +7, Read/Write Language (Unispeak), Repair +10, Research +11, Search +5, Speak Language (Unispeak).

Talents: Coordinate, Favor, Savant (Knowledge (Red Truth)).

Feats: Builder, Educated, Focused, Gearhead, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Wild Talent (detect psionics)

Advancement: By character class.

Possessions: None.

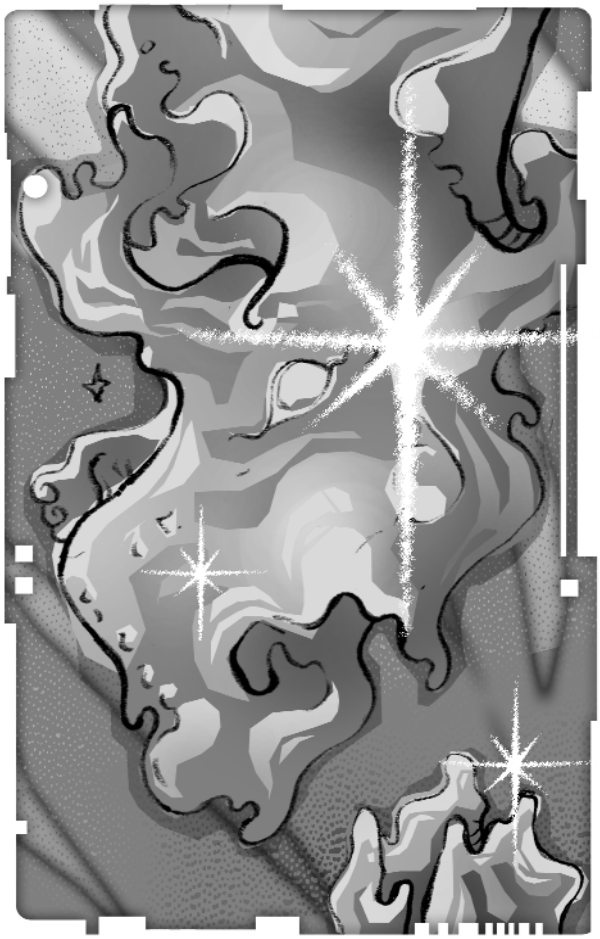
Psionic Powers: (7 power points, manifester level 3rd) 0th - *detect psionics*, *distract*, *missive*; 1st - *computer empathy*, *lesser mindlink*.

* *The description of the dosai as a playable race will appear in a future sourcebook. The racial abilities of the dosai that are important to the above stats are a +2 displacement bonus to defense and a +2 species bonus on all psionic skills.*

NPCS • • •

⋄ Kurlis

Kurlis was one of the Star Confederation's leading researchers in the field of information theory and inter-dimensional physics, and was considered by many to be the non-dosai with the most knowledge of Red Truth. An esoan, Kurlis resembles a pile of viscous gray sludge or slime in his natural state. The esoans could control their form by altering their surface tension and controlling certain bladders in their body, often forming arms and legs to assist in interacting with the surrounding environment. A very peaceful race, they had never even conceived of weapons before meeting the other species that would come to form the Star Confederation. The esoans were well known for being contemplative



and wise, careful and cautious where the saricks and dosai were rash and emotional. The esoans were respected scientists and scholars, and Kurlis was considered a prodigy among them.

There were some who speculated that Kurlis was the product of genetic engineering, such was its intelligence, but it never submitted to any such procedures. Instead it is a natural genius who many also found surprisingly personable. Kurlis attended many schools and universities in the Star Confederation, eventually becoming a celebrity in the Star Confederation due to its intellect. Once it was of age Kurlis did its part for the war against the Vaasi Empire, which had been going on since long before it was dropped from its seed pod, and joined the Star Confederation defense forces to help develop technology to keep the Star Confederation safe. Kurlis was stationed on Green Reach for the entirety of its service and perfected such weapons as the singularity rifle and brainshock devices, though its research into weaponry made it an outcast from its people. When the final malfunction of the brainshock cannon occurred Kurlis was in the process of trying to physically restrain the vaasi-infected scientist who sabotaged the brainshock cannon and was attempting to fire it. Kurlis failed, and thus Green Reach was doomed.

Why Kurlis survived the transformation into an information ghost is not known and it is the only non-

psionic who has achieved such distinction, though it has since used its new state of existence to develop some psionic abilities. Kurlis suspects that its advanced knowledge of Red Truth somehow helped its subconscious mind comprehend what was happening to it when the brainshock cannon fired, and changed its brainwaves to survive the transformation. It took countless years for Kurlis to recover its right mind after being transformed into a information ghost, and only through interacting with the saurian Bloodfang frigate now drifting near Green Reach did such a realization occur. Since then Kurlis has been working regaining complete control of its mind and communicating with its fellow information ghosts in the hopes of contacting someone in the physical world. Kurlis doesn't think it can ever get its old physical life back, but hopes that some type of shielded computer or robot could be built to house its mind.

Any creatures that enter the region around Green Reach are likely to be contacted by Kurlis who will use Unispeak text through computers and telepathic communication. Unfortunately its brain is still greatly fractured and such communication may be vague, irregular, or incoherent. In addition Kurlis will try to fight off other information ghosts who try to cause visitors trouble, possibly even calling on the aid of other Guided. If Kurlis finds an artificial intelligence entity, it will do everything it can to defend it from attack, recognizing it as a possible medium for communication.

In Red Truth and in normal space Kurlis looks like a floating blob of red energy. It occasionally drips off parts of itself that disappear a few inches away. It has no discernible sensory organs; in fact, its entire body is one giant visual and scent sensory organ. Kurlis is permanently scatterbrained and jumps topics quickly, almost incoherently. While its cheerful and friendly manner is sometimes visible through its madness, it is often difficult to separate it from its random babblings.

The bonuses in parentheses represent Kurlis's bonuses due to its current Wisdom loss.

Kurlis, Information Ghost (esoan*)
(Smart 3/Field Scientist 10/Telepath 2) ⋄ CR 15

Medium Undead (Information Ghost); HD 15d12; hp 101; Mas -; Init +0; Spd fly 60 ft.; Defense 25, touch 25, flat-footed 19 (+4 displacement, +5 class, +6 smart defense); BAB +7; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, punch); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3-1 nonlethal, punch); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Cannot be flanked, darkvision 60 ft., information interface, linked to Red Truth, manifest, incorporeal, psionics, scientific improvisation, major breakthrough (Red Truth), minor breakthrough (Red Truth), skill mastery (Computer Use, Craft (Electrical), Craft (Mechanical), Disable Device, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences), Knowledge (Physical Sciences), Knowledge (Red Truth), Research, Search), smart defense, smart survival, smart weapon (disintegrator pistol), transformation, trigger power; AL None; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +10; AP 0; Rep +4 (+0); Str 9, Dex 10, Con --, Int 28, Wis 16 (13), Cha 13.
PL Familiarity: 10
Occupation: Technician
Skills: Autohypnosis +9 (+7), Computer Use +43, Concentration +7, Craft (Chemical) +24, Craft (Electrical) +24, Craft (Mechanical) +20, Craft (Structural) +22, Decipher Script +24, Disable Device +22, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +23, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +28, Knowledge (Red Truth) +28, Knowledge (Technology) +22, Listen +12 (+10) Psicraft +19, Read/Write (Unispeak), Repair +24, Research +24, Search +22, Speak Language (Unispeak), Spot +12 (+10).
Talents: Savant (Knowledge (Physical Sciences)), Savant (Knowledge (Red Truth)).
Feats: Alertness, Builder, Educated, Gearhead, Iron Will, Mastercrafter, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Studious, Technical Aptitude, Wild Talent (missive).
Psionic Powers: (4 power points, manifester level 2nd) 0th - *detect psionics*, *distract*, *missive*; 1st - *computer empathy*, *lesser mindlink*.

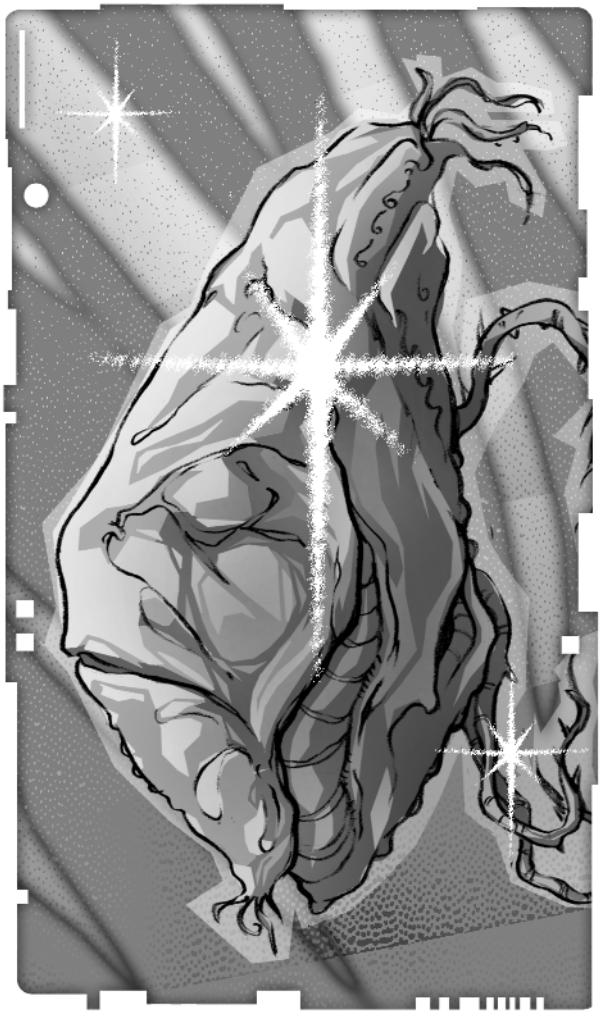
* *The information on using esoans as a playable race will be contained in a future rulebook. The important esoan abilities included here are an immunity to flanking.*

⋄ Sheargus

Even during the height of research into Red Truth, delving too far into its secrets was considered dangerous. The dosai were actually sentient seeds of an immense plant called the Mind Tree that grew on their home world. The dosai were hermaphroditic, but most who dealt with other species that had sexes assumed the behavior pattern of whichever gender they preferred. The dosai were rash and emotional in their early years, but in their later years would have intercourse and then take root in a location to grow a new, smaller version of the Mind Tree. This transformation made them much more contemplative, patient, and extremely long lived, but prevented them from changing location. Most dosai that were encountered were still in their seed stages and the elderly, stationary dosai were only found on dosai colony worlds. The areas around full grown mind trees were often Red Truth weak points and the dosai had more experience in dealing with the Red Truth than any other species in the Star Confederation. Even they did not speak of the information-poor areas between the stars where vast information beasts were said to lurk. Despite these dangers, some researchers and

dosai mystics pushed the boundaries of the safe regions of Red Truth, seeking to find answers to the largest questions of why the universes exists as it does. Many of these truth seekers were driven insane by gazing into the abyss; such was the case with Sheargus.

A dosai researcher at Green Reach, Sheargus ignored the warnings of his fellow researchers and probed the far reaches of Red Truth. What he found there no one is sure, but in the days before the vaasi fleet enter the Helios system Sheargus had a psychotic break during which killed several other researchers. Sheargus was incarcerated and awaiting psychological evaluation when the brain-shock cannon malfunctioned. A powerful psionicist, Sheargus survived the transformation into an information ghost but it did little for his already damaged mental state. Of all the information ghosts, Sheargus is the most destructive and driven, striking out at every opportunity against anything that comes within reach. It was Sheargus who first used the robots of Green Reach to physically damage the facility, and he was involved in attacking the vaasi, saurian, and wolf ships that approached the station. Sheargus is on the forefront of any information ghost activity, especially if outsiders intrude on the station.



Anyone who approaches Green Reach is likely to be assaulted by Sheargus. He is not above attacking other information ghosts if he becomes particularly bored. His madness is so complete that there is no reasoning with him or stopping him short of destroying him.

Sheargus, Information Ghost (dosai*)
(Charismatic Hero 5/Telepath 10) ⋄ CR 15

Medium Undead (Information Ghost); HD 15d12; hp 103; Mas -; Init +5; Spd fly 60 ft.; Defense 20, touch 20, flat-footed 19 (+4 displacement, +1 Dex, +5 class); BAB +7; Grap +7; Atk +7 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d3 nonlethal, punch); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Combat manifestation, dark vision 60 ft., information interface, linked to Red Truth, manifest, maximize power, incorporeal, psionics, transformation, power crystal, trigger power (object reading, clairaudience/clairvoyance, telekinesis); AL None; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +10; AP ; Rep +7 (+0); Str 10, Dex 13, Con --, Int 16, Wis 2, Cha 16.
Occupation: Technician.
Skills: Autohypnosis +9, Balance +3, Bluff +11, Computer Use +25, Concentration +15, Gather Information +11, Hide +3, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +11, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +13, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +13, Knowledge (Red Truth) +21, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +23, Move Silently +3, Psicraft +14, Read/Write Language (Unispeak), Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (Unispeak).
Talents: Fast-Talk, Dazzle, Stealthy, Taunt
Feats: Confident, Dodge, Educated, Focused, Frightful Presence, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Wild Talent (finger of fire).
Psionic Powers: (43 power points, manifester level 10) 0th - daze, detect psionics, distract, missive; 1st - charm person, absorb information, computer empathy, lesser mindlink; 2nd - brain lock, detect thoughts, suggestion; 3rd - lesser domination, mental blast, mindlink; 4th - domination, forced mindlink; 5th -telekinesis; .

* *The description of the dosai as a playable race will appear in a future sourcebook. The racial abilities of the dosai that are important to the above stats are a +2 displacement bonus to defense and a +2 species bonus on all psionic skills.*

CHAPTER 1

C'THALK

"Who wishes to see his Imperial Majesty, ruler of the Known Universe, Slayer of the Crugack Beast, Bringer of Truth, Commander of the -"

"We know the litany, bureaucrat." Tyran saurians such as Kurizar Sentij Who-Stands-Unbowed were not known for their patience, especially for the pomp and ceremony often favored by the brachin saurians. "We seek audience with the Emperor to tell him of what our fleet has detected approaching C'thalk."



The brachin standing before them on the stairs to the Throne of Bone, blocking their access to the Emperor, frowned. Imperial Bureaucrats controlled taxes, access to the Emperor, Imperial resources, and were not accustomed to such disrespect even from a high-ranking noble. "The Emperor is busy with more important things than you wish to speak with him of. Leave your words with me and I will pass them on."

"After you have changed them for your own ends, coward," Kurizar Sentij growled, forgetting for a second that this brachin may be able to withhold taxes from him in the coming season. "We bring word of an invasion fleet from another world, and you occupy the Emperor's time with signing proclamations and ceremony. War is upon us!"

The sneer on the bureaucrat's face was so fierce it was almost audible. "War is upon you then, Kurizar. The Emperor has larger concerns, and I suggest you not try to trouble him again with your warmongering ways. You are dismissed."

When the brachin bureaucrat turned to leave Kurizar Sentij half drew his kinai sword to strike him before realizing such an action would only harm him in the long run. If the Emperor would not fight for his people, Kurizar Sentij would.

C'THALK • • •

A hot and damp world, C'thalk is a planet of deep jungles, immense lakes, and heavy cloud cover. Inhabited by the fungal haimedians and the reptilian saurians, it has the largest population of any planet in the Helios system by far, in addition to the largest industrial base. The Saurian Empire controls much of the planet and is one of the most powerful forces in the Helios system, commanding millions of soldiers and a vast fleet of spacecraft. Unfortunately years of stagnation have transformed this once thriving culture into a shadow of its former self, but that does not stop the Emperor's desire for conquest.

The arrival of other species in the Helios system simply gives him more foes to cow. Meanwhile the haimedians seek to avoid their saurian neighbors and protect their dying people. C'thalk is a world slipping away, needful of great change to return to its past glories.

Rotation Period: 26 hours
Revolution Period: 296 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition:
Nitrogen, oxygen
Average Temperature:
285 Kelvin (53.6° F)
Gravity: .95G

HISTORY • • •

C'thalk was one of the first worlds terraformed by the Star Confederation after the founding of its capital on Eos. C'thalk was designed to be an agricultural world for producing fruits and vegetables as opposed to grains, and its environment and soil reflect this design. From its earliest days of terraforming, C'thalk was littered with advanced Star Confederation outposts to control the terraforming and agricultural processes on the planet. In time these grew into cities with massive orchards, vineyards, and plantations springing up around them. The population of C'thalk was never very large, and it was mostly inhabited by the sarick, a race of large reptilian warriors renowned for their ferocity and skill. In addition to being the foremost soldiers of the Star Confederation, the saricks had a strong agricultural tradition and, along with the plant-based dosai, they tended the many fields of C'thalk. These species were native to far distant planets several dozen light years away, but large numbers of both species migrated to C'thalk in the years following the completion of its terraforming. All the other Star Confederation races were present in some quantity on the planet, and several ward races also had observers or diplomats on C'thalk as well, some of which were trained in C'thalk's military academies.



For countless years C'thalk was a planet of plenty and military tradition. The greatest military academy for close-quarters combat in the Star Confederation, the Carsis Academy, was located in C'thalk's northern hemisphere. C'thalk also produced a good portion of the food consumed on Eos, in addition to supplying worlds in neighboring systems. It was never a very wealthy or well-known planet, instead being something of a well-kept secret for vacationers and students of military sciences.

When the war with the vaasi began, the sarick of C'thalk did their part and joined the Star Confederation armed forces in droves, eventually hurting the agricultural production of C'thalk due to the massive decrease in population. Despite this show of dedication, the war turned against the Star Confederation after many years of conflict; eventually the vaasi threatened the Helios system directly. While cloning was strictly limited within the Star Confederation due to a number of legal and ethical concerns, when the Star Confederation realized that their civilization would disappear entirely in the war, they undertook the genetic seeding program

that created humans and many of the other species that now live in the Helios system. As part of this plan they established the velin on Eos as an emergency plan to restore the capital in case it fell, knowing that the vaasi would not have the power to back up their final assault with a full occupation force. The velin genetic structure was left variable so the machinery in the installation could modify them to adapt to changes in the environment, a feature that eventually caused the velin to appear so human-like. A malfunction caused the velin to awaken millions of years late, only after the humans of the Dawning Star had arrived on Eos.

On C'thalk the sarick undertook a similar plan, though they took it a step farther. Years before the seeding project began, the sarick homeworld of Sari was rendered uninhabitable by vaasi bacterial warfare and billions of saricks died. Worried about the future of their people, the saricks on C'thalk created their own genetic engineering facility beneath the planet, hidden from even Star Confederation sensors. This facility was designed to quickly create a new army of flash grown clones trained using subliminal teaching methods to continue the fight if C'thalk fell. These clones had enough genetic variation in their ranks to avoid the problems of inbreeding and would spring forth from the facility full grown and trained for combat. The sarick modified their DNA to create four different species, all based off their own DNA and the DNA of other creatures from their homeworld. These four species, collectively known as saurians, were each designed to serve a specific role in warfare, and they were also created to be smaller than the sarick to conserve resources and make it possible to use standard Star Confederation equipment (sarick naturally averaged around twenty feet tall and towered above the other species in the Star Confederation). There were four races: the tyrans, bred to be combat leaders; brachins who were created to be scientists and scholars; flyers who are pilots and scouts; and shellbacks who are the grunts and laborers of the saurians. The sarick never had a chance to test their facility before the battle for the Helios system begun, and they only had enough raw organic materials to grow one generation of ten thousand clones before the facility was out of supplies.

The saricks used the same technology as had been used with the facility on Eos, and the same malfunction occurred, delaying the activation of the genetic production facility by millions of years. The four descendant races of the sarick emerged from the cloning tanks millions of years too late to fight the battle they were created to win. While they slept the planet had been cleared of all intelligent life by the vaasi, but the plants and animals of C'thalk had long ago recovered from the vaasi assault. No vaasi remained on the planet, having long ago died out due to unusual bacteria present in the atmosphere on C'thalk, as deadly to them as it was harmless to the Star Confederation species. These bacteria are the main reason C'thalk remains free of vaasi presence; the vaasi found the planet's heat and humidity very comfortable when they arrived. The first saurians awoke close to two thousand years ago, and the newly born saurian race has been struggling with their genetic predisposition for war ever since.

THE SAURIAN AGE • • •

When the saurians first emerged they organized themselves as their programmed militaristic training suggested, broke out the equipment stores that had been left for them, and waited for an enemy to appear. Unfortunately said enemy never appeared, and the generations following the original batch of saurians had the same lust for battle as their ancestors, but did not have the intense subliminal training the first generation used to keep their discipline under such unexpected conditions. Over time the budding saurian race fractured into dozens of factions, all of whom fought for resources, land, and power using the Star Confederation equipment that had been left for the defense of the planet. The resulting war almost wiped the saurians out and used up most of the advanced technologies of the Star Confederation that were left on the planet. The only technologies that survived were hidden by the shellbacks of Blue Company Twelve, who would later become the Monks of the Blue Path.

After most of the advanced weaponry had been exhausted, the destruction slowed and more primitive weapons came into common use, such as the kinai sword that is still a mainstay of saurian melee combat. While all saurians are predisposed for combat and violence, the brachins are more intellectual than the other species of saurian, while the tyrans are more suited for leadership and waging war. Fourteen hundred years ago a group of brachins under the tyran warlord Matoct Who-Counts-The-Dead realized that at the current rate of warfare the saurians would wipe themselves out in a few centuries. This group, calling themselves the Council of Wisdom, brought their case before Matoct and converted him to their cause, which was stopping the wars among the saurians and uniting them under a single government. Some legends say the Council tricked Matoct into agreeing to their plans and he only went through with it to avoid being seen as a fool, but these are recent attempts to revise actual events, casting the brachins of the Council of Wisdom in a bad light. Matoct and the Council tried to convince the other tyran leaders that this continual combat must end for the saurians to survive, but the tyran warlords would not listen, valuing their power and slaughter too highly. Ever the diplomats and organizers of the saurians, the

SAURIANS AND GOVERNMENT

Saurians do not have the same drive for making their voice heard that humans do and find the whole concept of democracy to be wasteful. Saurians prefer to follow decisive leaders, but are not concerned with having a say in government as long as they feel fairly treated. Saurians prefer dictatorships and often confer absolute power on their rulers, preferring to avoid the possible confusion brought in by any lesser investment of power. Saurians by and large like their government simple and straightforward, and change it by violence if they feel it does not suit their needs. Compromise is not a common tactic among the saurians. Some brachin philosophers have begun speaking out against these long-held saurian ideas, saying that democratic governments are the best government for the saurian people. Contact with alien races will likely cause great upheaval among the saurians in terms of governmental theory when they see that other governments can work.

brachins of the Council of Wisdom took their case directly to the flyers and shellbacks, considered by most tyrans to be lesser saurian species. Despite the efforts of the tyrans to block them, eventually the Council managed to convince many flyers and shellbacks in the region to put their weapons down, forcing the tyrans to stop their petty wars. Using this opportunity the brachins proposed to the local warlords and faction leaders that the saurians form a single united government, which the brachins claimed would be beneficial when they were able to conquer other worlds and take their expansionistic and violent ways to the stars. In reality the idea of interplanetary conquest was just for the benefit of the more bloodthirsty saurians; the Council had no intention of starting an interplanetary war, they just wanted to stop the fighting on C'thalk. Enough saurians agreed with the Council of Wisdom to forge the most powerful faction on the planet, which the Council then used to subdue and annex all those tyran warlords who resisted their efforts.

Over a period of two hundred years, C'thalk was united by war after bloody war, until the entire region that the saurians now inhabit fell under the leadership of the Council of Wisdom. The Council now had members of all saurian species on it, though most seats remained in the hands of the brachins. The Council became the controlling body of the Saurian Dominion, the government that came to control the factions united by the Council of Wisdom. The Council was not democratically elected, but instead was made up of saurians respected for their wisdom, most of whom were brachins. New individuals were added to the Council by a majority vote, but the common folk of C'thalk had no direct say in who sat on the Council of Wisdom. Despite this lack of voice the people of C'thalk supported the Council for centuries, saurians having little desire for universal participation in government. The Council of Wisdom elected a single leader, the Council Speaker, who served as the executive head and war leader of the Dominion.

The Council made recovering the lost arts of the Star Confederation their top priority, as by this point twelve hundred years ago the saurians had slipped back to little more than Progress Level 3 technology. Initially the tyrans lauded the emphasis on the research the brachin spearheaded, hoping they could one day return to the stars as their ancestors did and conquer other worlds. Over time however they became less complacent as they realized how many years would be required to reach such a level of technology again. Uprisings were common in the later years of the Saurian Dominion, and having two or three minor civil disruptions at any time was not uncommon. The tyrans wanted combat, and lacking other enemies they often turned on their own kind to sate this need. The Dominion as a whole chugged along, dedicated to rebuilding its people, infrastructure, and sciences after hundreds of years of war.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE HAIMEDIANS • • •

It was during this time of rebuilding that the fungal haimedians, descendants of the ancient dosai of the Star Confederation, had their homeworld destroyed by a meteor in similar fashion to what happened to Earth. Fleeing their system through the gateway network with the guidance of Mother Moss, the last surviving dosai, the haimedians landed their evacuation ships in the southern region of C'thalk, settling on the planet approximately four hundred years ago. The haimedians managed to

avoid detection by the saurians when they landed due to the limited population and technology of the saurians at the time, but knew they could not avoid their new neighbors forever.

Under the direction of Mother Moss the haimedians discreetly contacted the saurians and quickly came to the attention of the Council of Wisdom, who were very interested in the newcomers. The Council at this point was almost entirely made up of brachins that saw the haimedians as being more useful as neighbors than as enemies. After considering their advanced medical and chemical skills, the Council of Wisdom entered into a treaty with the haimedians instead of conquering them. The saurians pledged they would leave the haimedians alone and not colonize their territory in exchange for technology, most of which the Council kept for their own uses instead of spreading the medical miracles to the public. The Council did not have enough resources to make these advances available to all, so instead kept them to themselves and avoided public outcry by covering it all up. The Council also kept the existence of the haimedians secret from the saurian populace, knowing that if their presence was revealed the tyrans would call for a war of conquest against them. Unfortunately some saurians in the area the haimedians settled had already seen the new residents. Rumors spread throughout the Dominion of the strange new plant people in the southern regions and the complicity of the Saurian Dominion.

This relationship was the subject of dozens of rumors, few of which were complimentary to the Council of Wisdom. These rumors were much like those surrounding the Roswell Crash on Earth; no matter how the Council tried the rumors would not stop. This process sparked a great many riots and the Council suffered heavily in public opinion. Haimedian medical treatments dramatically slowed their aging, however, and the brachins on the Council did not care too much about what the commoners said. Meanwhile the haimedians remained safe and blissfully ignorant of the uproar their presence caused.

Due to the constant internal struggles of the Saurian Dominion, it took almost one thousand years for the saurians to return to Progress Level 5 and achieve space flight, though the heights of Star Confederation science still escaped them. When the first saurian ships were launched into the Helios system, they found a series of planets devoid of meaningful targets for conquest. The only inhabitants of Thres at the time were the yaom, who the saurians first thought would be an easy conquest. The saurians attacked the yaom but found their strange powers too confusing and dangerous, considering the massive expense that would be involved. Saurians who sought out the yaom rarely found them. Those individuals that did track down

LANGUAGE ON C'THALK

Unispeak was one of the languages the first generation of saurians were programmed with and it has been passed down among scholars over the years, but now only scholars and nobles speak it, using it as a sign of education and refinement. Saurians have developed their own language, Sessil, which was originally based on an altered version of Unispeak that the saurians found easier to pronounce. Sessil is now the common tongue in the Saurian Empire with a large number of regional dialects and accents. Despite these regional differences, all Sessil speakers can understand each other, though some phrases must be repeated several times to reach across regional linguistic divides. Sessil makes heavy use of allusions and allegory, making it difficult for non-native speakers to grasp at first. Most saurians can read Sessil and the literacy rate among saurians is very high.

The haimedians do not naturally speak using sounds, instead communicating using a complex series of smells and spores, a language they call Sporespeak that can be written as well as spoken using special smell producing inks. No species other than straas and haimedians can speak or understand Sporespeak, so Mother Moss taught many of the haimedians to adjust bladders in their bodies to force air in such a manner that makes verbal communication possible. Mother Moss taught these haimedians Unispeak, though they all speak slowly compared to other races and often suffer from speech impediments.

NAMING ON C'THALK

All saurians are born with a personal name, which is usually taken from an important historical or ancestral figure that is used in everyday conversation and activities. Each saurian also has a family name, which is used in formal situations, in addition to titles to indicate seniority within the family. Family names are primarily used in formal occasions. When saurians reach middle age they may take on a title, such as Who-Counts-The-Dead or Whose-Fangs-Are-Soaked-In-Blood. The Imperial Bureaucracy must approve all such titles based on the saurian's past deeds of note, and the process of approving such a title is a very political event. Saurians may only claim titles the Imperial Bureaucracy feels the applicant has earned, and claiming a title not issued by the Imperial Bureaucracy is an act of great dishonor only thieves and criminals undertake.

Claiming a title that is already taken is punishable by death as an act of treason. Not all saurians claim titles, with the tyrans being the only species that almost universally seek such titles. Some saurians who are out of touch with the Imperial Bureaucracy for extended periods, such as those on Thres, choose titles but do not use it once they return to C'thalk until they have received permission to do so from the Imperial Bureaucracy.

Haimedians have a single Sporespeak name that each haimedian chooses for itself as soon as it is capable of speech, which occurs at a later stage of maturity than with humans. These names can be changed later in life, but rarely are. Haimedians do not use family names, though they do often identify themselves as being "Of Lossar Stand," indicating their home. When interacting with races that communicate verbally, the haimedians usually adopt nicknames that they find to have a pleasing sound.

the yaom often were found weeks later, driven completely mad. Since these encounters, the yaom have been considered bad luck by the saurians, and most think the yaom to be magicians of some sort. It was during this time that the saurians launched a handful of scout ships to investigate Green Reach, but information ghosts disabled the ships before they could reconnoiter the area or report their situation. Further exploration of Green Reach was called off until a cause for the loss of contact could be found, and it remains a mystery to this day. The Dominion lost half a dozen ships to the rust spores of Eos before finally stopping their missions to that planet.

Although these worlds were extremely interesting to the science-minded brachins, the tyrans were furious that the brachin promise of interplanetary conquest was still not coming to pass. Lacking faster-than-light technology, the other worlds ripe for conquest that the tyrans had been promised for centuries now seemed completely out of reach. On top of this, the brachins had been consolidating more power in the Council of Wisdom over the centuries, something that was widely held against them. The brachin-controlled Saurian Dominion had grown ripe with corruption and graft as the brachins looked out for each other at the expense of the other species. The brachins did not understand that the other species did not see them as the natural thinkers and leaders of the saurian people, and suffered for their lack of perception.

THE RISE OF THE SAURIAN EMPIRE • • •

Two hundred years ago Serack Taigerzan X the Sword-Bearer, a tyran who was one of the Council of Wisdom's highest-ranking military leaders, used the public distrust of the brachins to foment a rebellion against them. He used both his military forces and thousands of angry citizens to invade the

Dominion Palace, capturing most of the Council of Wisdom at sword-point while the angry mob tore apart those who managed to escape Serack. Serack's main tools in his ascension to power were tales of the ancestors of the saurians conquering other worlds and a distorted prophecy claiming Serack's leadership was needed to defend the planet from ancient evils. Using these propaganda pieces he managed to get enough public support to make himself Emperor of the newly declared Saurian Empire, the replacement for the Saurian Dominion. While Serack X did not know the truth of the haimedian presence initially, he used the rumors about their existence as a primary motivator in his campaign, promising a full investigation. After he learned of the special medicines and life-extending drugs only the haimedians can produce, he was loath to reveal their existence to the public. He asserted that his extended lifespan after taking the Imperial throne was a sign of divine favor. He also claimed to have staged a thorough investigation into the rumors surrounding the haimedians, but in truth did nothing.

One of the main tools Serack X used to found the Saurian Empire was a prophecy he claimed named him as the divine defender of C'thalk. Serack X claimed that he had been given a prophecy by the ancient lore boxes, or computers, of a great evil that would return to the Helios system eventually and rain fire on the saurians if they were not prepared. He gained this story from the Monks of the Blue Path, who initially supported his rebellion against the brachins. The monks had warned the Council of Wisdom about what they thought was an impending vaasi invasion but received no response. The last keepers of Star Confederation technology on C'thalk, the Monks of the Blue Path hoped that Emperor Serack would help lead the saurians to a golden age of science and prosperity, but their hopes were quickly dispelled and their order outlawed so none would find out the true prophecy of the monks, which in reality never mentioned Serack X. Using a claim of a holy crusade Serack set about changing the course of his people from research to war. While scientific work still progressed in regards to weapons and spacecraft, its funding was reduced drastically as Serack worked instead to build the infrastructure and industrial might of his new Empire. He replaced the efficient but corrupt system of local magistrates and provincial governors with a series of hereditary noble titles that he assigned to his flunkies and allies, most of whom were tyrans. Over a period of two decades he changed the Saurian Dominion from being an egalitarian society to a caste-based social structure determined by species, with the tyrans at the top of the pile. Using propaganda stories of ancient battles and looming evils, Serack and his successors managed to keep the people dedicated to the



SAURIAN RELIGION

The saurians believe they are descended from gods of an ancient world, thinking that the Star Confederation was an assembly of divinities instead of a government of mortal beings. They assume the sarick were foremost among the Star Confederation due to their immense size, a highly favored trait among the saurians. The saurians believe gods need tools and technology as other creatures, but are also capable of feats mortal beings cannot perform. Most saurians believe their divine ancestors still watch over and guide them, usually speaking through holy folk such as monks, spirit talkers, or the Emperor, who according to official state doctrine is partially divine due to his great wisdom and power. Saurians revere their ancestors immensely and often seek out their spirits for guidance through spirit talkers. Saurian gravesites are massively elaborate affairs that are visited regularly by the descendants of the deceased.

Many saurians believe the Law-Keepers from the Hollow Dark are spirits of their ancestors as well, calling forth loyal warriors to take part in a great battle. Being selected to serve with the Law-Keepers is considered a great honor among the saurians, and the haimedians see it as a necessary duty. Not all saurians believe the tales of the ancient sarick gods and their starships of divine origin. Brachins rarely subscribe to such beliefs, instead preferring a more rational and down-to-earth explanation that closely resembles the truth. The popular theory among the brachins is that the sarick were part of a super-advanced culture that was somehow destroyed by a virus that damaged the DNA structure of the sarick, creating the various species of the saurians. The genetic engineering facility that gave birth to the saurians has been lost for centuries, so it will be difficult to find the truth of the matter.

Empire while their rights were stripped away. Industrial power and military culture replaced scientific advancement and corruption. In the eyes of the naturally bloodthirsty saurians this was seen as a good trade. Over the last two hundred years several emperors have suggested that other recent arrivals to the Helios system, including humans, are the ancient evil that was foretold in prophecy. If any of these species make a hostile move against the Saurian Empire, it is likely Emperor Serack XIII will attempt to invoke a holy war in retaliation.

In the two centuries since Saurian Empire came into being, it has concentrated on getting ready for its prophesied war. New weapons have been developed and armies raised, but these tools have been put to use in fighting among the nobles of the Empire. While the nobles claim these conflicts help them prepare for the coming battles, in truth they are more motivated by greed and lust for power. These battles are tyran version of politics. Tyrans do not have a firm grasp on the subtleties of politics and consider war one of the first tools to be used in diplomacy in the same fashion other species see a ritual greeting or other opening diplomatic gesture. Among the saurians a preemptive strike is considered a statement of a strong bargaining position, and an ambush means you play for keeps.

When new residents arrived in the Helios system, the tyrans investigated them as best they could, but the lack of support for scientific research kept the Saurian Empire at the cusp of PL 6. When the wolves arrived their superior skill in spaceship combat, technological advantage, and large fleet allowed them fight off the saurian ships they encountered and protect Thres from saurian raids, though over time the wolves had to change tactics and choose their fights carefully, as they lacked the industrial power to keep their ships in good repair,

in addition to having to fend off the straas threat. The saurians have managed to establish several outposts on Thres as a precursor to an invasion due to the straas providing a distraction for the Wolf Tribes. These four settlements, with a total population of fifty thousand saurians, are under the direct control of the Emperor, though he is expected to name a new kurizar to take charge of them in the near future. Many nobles in the Empire seek to persuade the Emperor to instead add the territory to an existing noble's lands and hope by investing in Thres colonies they will be that noble. Despite this interest most nobles keep their investments to a minimum and the saurian colonies on Thres are usually short-handed and needing supplies. These colonies allow a young saurian to test his mettle in regular battles with the wolves and straas, but most nobles and the wealthy see limited value in them since the Emperor controls any investment in the colonies.

The arrival of the humans on the Dawning Star has caused the Saurian Empire to push its plans of a full-scale invasion of Thres back even further until the disposition and power of these new arrivals could be determined. The saurians have not made contact with the humans; after the conflicts with the Wolf Tribes the Saurian Empire is hesitant to engage yet another technologically superior foe. Furthermore, communication with Eos has been limited because the rust spores prevent the saurians from entering the Eotian atmosphere. The saurians have had no contact with the coqui, the mechites, or any of the inhabitants of the outer planets.

At present, the Saurian Empire is ruled by Serack XIII, Ruler of the Known Universe and Slayer of the Crugack Beast. The Saurian Empire looks outward at its neighbors and hungers, thinking it may be able to get a little invasion in before the great evil arrives in accordance with prophecy.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

C'thalk has one giant landmass that covers the entire planet, though it is broken up by thousands of large lakes and rivers. There are no true continents or oceans on C'thalk, though 40% of its surface is covered by water. It is a hot and steamy world of lakes and rivers where it is rare to be more than a few miles from a large source of fresh water. When C'thalk was terraformed, its surface was sculpted to maximize growing areas for fruits and other crops. Fresh water was made available everywhere on the planet with minimal irrigation work.

C'thalk is very active tectonically, as demonstrated by its many mountain ranges, volcanoes, and warm water lakes created by submerged lava vents. A large number of active volcanoes are found on its surface, most of which are in the mountainous zone in the southern equatorial region called the Teeth of C'thalk. These volcanoes tend to run in cycles where they erupt en masse every two centuries or so, each eruption cycle causing a massive downturn in temperature for several years afterward. Tectonic activity on C'thalk often creates large waves in the lakes of C'thalk and can cause rivers to change course unexpectedly, sometimes wiping out entire villages in the process. Most of the active fault lines are found in the southern equatorial region, which is lightly inhabited because of the difficulties the fault lines present. The closer one gets to the poles the flatter C'thalk gets. Due to this topographical feature most of the rivers flow away from the equator and the largest lakes are found in the arctic zones, where they often freeze into massive glaciers. Both poles of C'thalk are covered in huge layers of ice.

The soil of C'thalk is extremely nutrient-rich and well suited for agriculture, thanks to the efforts made during terraforming. The planet can support a wide variety of crops, though fruits and vegetables benefit most from the planet's specially constructed soil makeup. Plants from other worlds tend to grow quickly and flourish on C'thalk, though its original species have been engineered to prevent new plants from growing too numerous while still allowing them survive. Some plants grown on C'thalk actively strangle and dismember other plants that try to take up more than their share of space or resources, and have been said to attack animals that fall asleep in the wrong place.

The Teeth of C'thalk is the largest mountain range on the planet, stretching entirely around C'thalk in addition to reaching across the equator. This mountain range holds massive mineral wealth, but due to its distance from the saurian territories it was not utilized for many years. Since the founding of the Saurian Empire and the increasing emphasis on industry, several mining operations have appeared in the mountain range. These operations have begun to close on the territory the haimedians have traditionally thought of as their own, which may cause a territorial dispute in the near future.

Most of the saurian population of C'thalk lives in the northern equatorial and temperate zone in the eastern hemisphere of the planet. C'thalk has a total population of slightly more than one billion inhabitants and many of these are clustered together in villages and cities, meaning large swaths of C'thalk are uninhabited. Most of the saurian settlements are within two thousand miles of the City of Bone, where the Imperial Palace is located.

Other than the City of Bone there are only a handful of large cities on C'thalk. It is dotted with small villages, usually clustered close to navigable rivers and lakes. Most of these villages are surrounded by fields used for growing crops and

drilling the local militia. Low-draft river boats and primitive roads connect these settlements, and most villages have at least half a dozen other villages within a day's travel. These villages have a population of a few hundred individuals and are led by the village's sizar, or war captain, who serves as its military leader, chief of police, mayor, and tax collector in the name of the Emperor. These villages are usually far behind the saurian cities in terms of technology. Only a few buildings have electricity, and transportation is usually by foot or riding animals.

The few cities of the Saurian Empire are all clustered around the City of Bone and ruled by the Emperor's closest allies due to their immense value. Large rivers nearby are used both for transportation and generating electricity. The major cities of the Saurian Empire are all built within the ruins of the Star Confederation outposts that littered the planet, though such structures usually only comprise a quarter of the buildings within each city. There are twelve major cities in the Saurian Empire besides the City of Bone, each of which has a population of millions of saurians of all species, though most shellbacks prefer the villages to the cities. In these cities lie the industrial and scientific heart of the Saurian Empire, including weapon production facilities and spaceports. Paved highways able to support the heaviest saurian ground vehicles also connect the cities. Within a hundred miles of the City of Bone, the saurian military can react to any threat within an hour by deploying thousands of troops and tanks, but in other regions of the planet deployment takes much longer. The Saurian Empire makes use of aircraft and spacecraft when transporting governmental or military personnel and supplies across C'thalk, but most of its citizens rely on boats, animal-drawn carts, or ground vehicles.

While the saurians claim a significant area of the northern hemisphere, only small portion of the southern hemisphere is used by the haimedians. Located on almost the exact opposite side of the planet from the City of Bone, the haimedian capital of Lowassa is little more than an immense tree in which Mother Moss has installed herself. Haimedian settlements look more like gardens than villages, as most of their buildings are constructed from living trees shaped with genetic engineering and organic nanites. The haimedians brought several species of plant life from their homeworld to C'thalk, including the genetically engineered alaxf, a massive hollow tree the haimedians live within instead of constructing buildings. The haimedians live in villages scattered around the home of Mother Moss, none more than four hundred miles away from the central village. All of these villages are hidden from airborne surveillance and the haimedians do not link them with obvious roads, instead relying on water travel or simple paths. The haimedians have sacrificed much of their technology to remain in hiding, but consider it worth the cost.

THE MOONS OF C'THALK

C'thalk has two moons, named Serias and Darqir after two great heroes of saurian legend who fought for years on end without stopping. Currently the two moons are in nearly opposite orbital cycles, with Serias in its full moon cycle while Darqir is in new moon. Their cycles do not sync up perfectly, meaning once every few centuries the two moons do eventually go through their cycles almost simultaneously. This is seen by the saurians as a good omen for warfare, and conflicts break out by the score during these periods.

Both moons are uninhabited and have seen little attention except for some exploratory missions during the early days of the Saurian Dominion's space program. There is currently some talk of building a base on one of the moons to act as a supply center and tactical command post for the Imperial fleet, but massive expenses have stymied such efforts so far.

CLIMATE • • •

To humans C'thalk feels like a muggy and uncomfortable world. It is perfect, on the other hand, for the physiology of saurians and haimedians. C'thalk's atmosphere is rich in oxygen and nitrogen, and has very low carbon dioxide content due to the abundance of plant life. The planet has a particularly thick ozone layer and the high moisture in its atmosphere often creates a very thick layer of clouds. Seeing the sun clearly is a rarity on C'thalk and considered a sign of good luck by the saurians. From orbit it is rare to get a good look at the planet's surface due to its heavy cloud cover; the saurians do not use many satellites for planetary obser-

vation because of this limitation. These factors also trap a large amount of heat in the atmosphere, creating the planet's high temperatures.

One of the most striking components of the C'thalk atmosphere is a bacterium, called the Two Horn bacteria by brachin biologists, based on its resemblance to a head with two horns. During the Star Confederation terraforming process, the insect population grew out of control, and the terraformers introduced this bacterium to protect the planet's crops. The Two Horn bacteria limited the metabolism and reproductive rate of the insects on C'thalk, and had unexpected effects on vaasi as well. When exposed to the Two Horn bacterium, the vaasi metabolism slows to the point that they can no longer process food quickly enough to survive. This resulted in the death of the vaasi who invaded C'thalk during the last assault on the Helios system, and has kept the planet clear of vaasi ever since. The Two Horn bacterium was specifically created for C'thalk, however, and will not survive for more than a few hours on other planets in the Helios system.

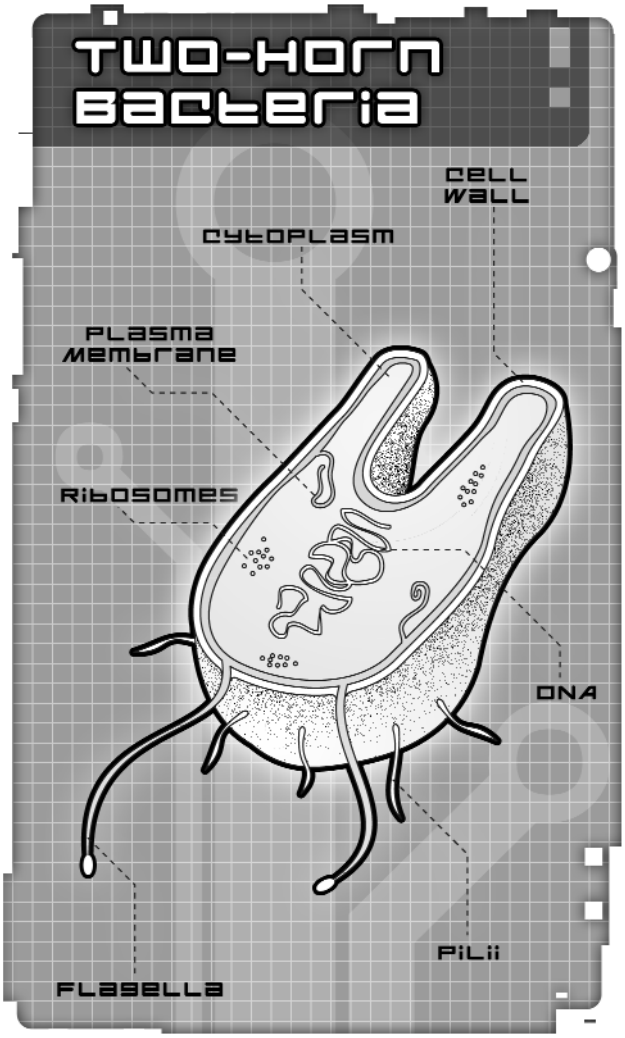
Swelteringly hot jungles and rain forests cover most of C'thalk's surface. These jungles are characterized by massive ferns over thirty feet tall, over which tower immense trees that are similar in structure to a terran palm tree, only with much larger leaves and growing to be two hundred feet tall. The jungles of C'thalk are thick with undergrowth and vines, making cross-country travel difficult. One common danger in the jungles of C'thalk is a plant called the hanging ghost, a web-like network of highly acidic fungus. The hanging ghosts were originally haimedian security devices used to protect their villages, but in the rich environment of C'thalk they grew out of control and escaped into the wild. A large number of succulent plants are also found in C'thalk's jungles, some of which are descendants of Eotian species introduced during terraforming.

Only in the arctic regions and the Teeth of C'thalk does the jungle give way to tundra and snow. In the polar extremes C'thalk is covered in thick glaciers, most of which have never been visited by saurian or haimedian explorers. The southern hemisphere is slightly cooler than the northern hemisphere due to the Teeth of C'thalk dominating the southern equatorial zone, creating a band of high altitude jungle stuck between the mountains to the north and the southern polar region to the south. This southern rain forest is more temperate while the equatorial zone and most of the northern hemisphere is tropical. C'thalk has a moderate amount of axial tilt, and differences in the seasons are likewise moderate. C'thalk has no deserts and its rainfall was made uniform by terraforming. Even the tundra and glacial regions receive snowfall almost year round, making travel through these regions perpetually difficult.

The weather on C'thalk is extremely wet and often stormy. While the lack of large bodies of water prevents the formation of hurricanes or typhoons, violent thunderstorms are common in many areas. Forest fires caused by lightning strikes occur readily in many areas, but the climate is humid enough that such fires rarely are able to burn for long. Flash floods are a constant threat year-round and most of the planet's many rivers flood for several months each year.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

The atmosphere of C'thalk is a mix of oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide. The industrial processes of the saurians have increased the carbon dioxide content of the atmosphere in recent years, but for now the abundant plant life seems to keep the carbon dioxide levels in check. The saurians have also released other pollutants into the atmosphere that seem to be doing permanent harm to the haimedians, but the exact cause is not known. All of the races of Helios can breathe the atmosphere of C'thalk without difficulty, though many find the planet muggy and uncomfortable.



CONDITIONS • • •

C'thalk has a breathable atmosphere with normal gravity, and is safe for all races in the Helios system save the vaasi.

In the tropical regions of C'thalk the temperature is above 100 degrees Fahrenheit most of the year. Characters are in danger of taking exposure damage unless they take special precautions. The high humidity of the planet inflicts a -2 penalty on the Fortitude checks to resist exposure damage made by mammalian creatures, including humans, wolves, velin, and elgies.

Vaasi entering the atmosphere of C'thalk must make a Fortitude save (DC 10+1 per day spent on the planet) each day or take 1 point of Constitution damage that will not heal until the vaasi leaves the planet. This affects both true vaasi and servitor races, including imperator drones.

FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

While Emperor Serack XIII claims that the saurian people and indeed all of C'thalk are united under his reign, this far from the truth. Resisted from within by the Monks of the Blue Path and avoided by the Haimedian Collective, only a portion of C'thalk actually is under the control of Emperor Serack XIII. But if he has his way this state of things will not continue; his power will spread until the stars themselves recognize his power.

THE SAURIAN EMPIRE • • •

The dominant power of C'thalk, the Saurian Empire controls a population of over 1 billion saurians and has the largest industrial and military power base of any faction in the Helios system. Under the leadership of Emperor Serack XIII the Saurian Empire eyes its planetary neighbors hungrily, seeking to turn Eos and Thres into colonies and either enslave or annex the races that already inhabit these worlds. Although the vaasi on the edge of the Helios system pose a threat to entire system, their presence is not widely known, and the Saurian Empire is the threat that most in the Helios system fear.

At the head of the Saurian Empire sits Emperor Serack XIII, Ruler of the Known Universe and Slayer of the Crugack Beast, a massive serpentine creature that threatened several southern villages half a century ago (large reptiles are a constant threat in many regions of C'thalk). Emperor Serack XIII is the great grandson of the first Emperor and was first in line of succession for the Throne of Bone from his birth. In his youth Serack was known for being military minded and impetuous, behaviors he has continued during his time on the Imperial throne. The Emperor has complete and total control over the Saurian Empire and everyone who lives within it; he can order his subjects to kill themselves on a whim. Disobedience is an offense punishable by a death slower and more painful than common means of suicide. This absolute power is backed by the massive armies of the Empire and the tyran saurians, who have greatly benefited under the rule of the line of Serack. The Emperor spends most of his time in the Imperial Palace in the City of Bone, but travels around his domain on occasion surrounded by a massive security detail. The Emperor has never left the atmosphere of C'thalk and is unlikely to do so due to the dangers involved.

Emperor Serack XIII is an expansionistic and opportunistic leader, cunning and clever in his pursuit of greater glory for himself and the Empire. Although he seeks military glory, he is willing to put such aims aside for other gains, such as letting the haimedians remain free in exchange for their life-extending medical treatments. While the Emperor does care for his people and their well-being, he cares for the well-being of the Empire more, and sees his continued good health as vital to the continued success of the Empire. Serack XIII has numerous sons and daughters clambering to be Serack XIV, but none have been named heir as yet. In the past, saurian emperors have had a nasty habit of dying after naming an heir.

Below the Emperor is the Imperial Bureaucracy, a massive network of accountants, advisors, courtiers, and scholars who work to support the Emperor and carry out his edicts. Technically, Imperial Bureaucrats have no real authority over the hereditary nobles of the Empire, but their influence of Imperial procedure, funds, appointments, and other matters grants them immense de facto power. The Imperial Bureaucracy has no direct command over the imperial military, but does control Imperial funds and oversees the management of the Dishonored, the Saurian Emperor's personal assassins, and the Bone Guard who serve as the Emperor's personal guards. While both of these groups are ultimately loyal and answerable to the Emperor, their missions are often filtered through the Imperial Bureaucracy. The Imperial Bureaucracy is rife with corruption and makes little attempt to hide it, which many attribute to the large numbers of brachin in the organization. Most Imperial Bureaucrats live in the City of Bone or one of the other major cities of the Empire. Smaller villages are served by itinerant Imperial Bureaucrats who travel a specific circuit supporting the ruling nobles within that area by recording important events, passing on messages, collecting taxes, and other important governmental functions. These wandering bureaucrats are often less corrupt than their more urban fellows, as they are not protected so readily by Imperial troops, but most pine for the day they can receive a nice city posting and stop tromping through the mud of the villages day after day. There are estimated to be one hundred thousand Imperial Bureaucrats in all, and they are the

SAURIAN HONOR

Saurians believe strongly in honor, though the concept of honor means different things to different saurians. To most tyran saurians it means bravery in battle, following the orders of one's lord, and being truthful, but it does not prevent one from being deceitful in combat, lying by omission, or disobeying a liege lord if the saurian does not get caught or twists the liege lord's commands to his own ends. Brachins think of honor as being loyal to allies and family before others, working for the greater good, and providing an example of scholarly learning, but they are fine with taking bribes to help those who are not their allies or keeping knowledge and wealth for themselves if they feel it serves their own version of the greater good. Flyers believe honor comes from protecting family and friends and from being highly skilled in their chosen pursuits, both in battle and in daily tasks, but they have no qualms about running away if their family and friends are not in danger and see no harm in lying to protect themselves or others. Shellbacks view honor as stemming from doing one's best in all things, telling the truth, and showing respect and obedience to both those above and below you, but their desire to follow orders and stubbornness often leads them into trouble. Saurians concern themselves daily with their honor; disgraced saurians usually exile themselves into the uninhabited areas of C'thalk to start a new life and seek redemption. Suicide is considered a cowardly act for a dishonored saurian, and such an individual is left unburied so his corpse may be picked clean by the animals. Most saurians consider non-saurians to be incapable of gaining or having honor, though as they have more contact with the outside world this may change.

only individuals not of noble or tyran blood to actually see, speak to, or touch the Emperor. All other commoners are disallowed from seeing, speaking to, or touching the Emperor so they do not cloud his divine might with their earthly nature. The Bureaucrats effectively do the legwork and bookkeeping of ruling the Empire, leaving the actual decision-making to the Emperor. Although they are often able to twist the Emperor's commands to their own ends, any Bureaucrat who is so foolish as to openly cross the Emperor or the nobles is executed without trial. The Imperial Bureaucrats are experts at avoiding blame, but even they make mistakes on occasion. Many say the Imperial Bureaucrats are the true power of the Saurian Empire and the Council of Wisdom devised their own downfall in order to create a figurehead in the form of the Emperor who they can blame their mistakes on. The Imperial Bureaucracy does its best to quash such rumors.

The hereditary nobles that carry out the Emperor's wishes, almost all of whom are tyrans, are technically higher ranking than the Imperial Bureaucrats, but the truth of the situation is usually not so clear. The nobles rely on imperial taxes to pay their soldiers and keep their territory in good repair. The Imperial Bureaucrats control the treasury, in addition to controlling access to the Emperor and imperial resources. While the Bureaucrats were meant to lighten the workload of the nobles to make sure they had sufficient time to see to the needs of their people and carry out their duties, this has changed so that the Imperial Bureaucrats use their leverage to gain power over the nobles. The nobles strive against this leverage and constantly seek redress from the Emperor. Due to their control over the Emperor's schedule and interactions, however, the nobles have made little progress through proper channels. Many consider armed revolt against the Bureaucrats the only solution to the problem.

NOBLE OBLIGATION

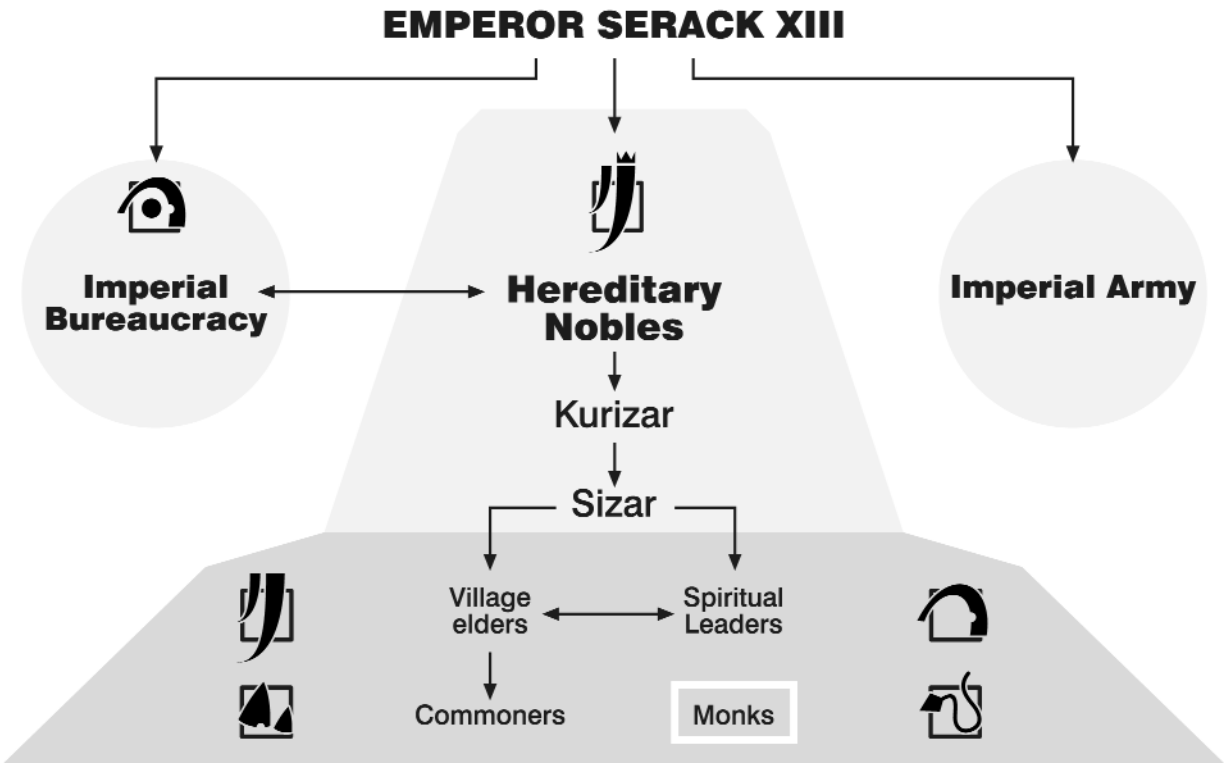
Technically speaking nobles in the Saurian Empire have the power of life and death over everyone of lower rank, but the reality is not quite so clear-cut. While a sizar could kill every peasant in his lands, he would soon starve, run short of money for taxes, not be able to meet his troop quotas, and have a very irate liege. While nobles clearly have the power in the Saurian Empire, they rely on their subjects for security, financial success, and productivity. Most tyrans realize that happy peasants are more productive peasants, and while some are inordinately cruel to their vassals and pay them no heed, most nobles treat their peasants with respect as long as they are respected in return. In many areas villages have elected councils that have the power to petition the local noble with grievances, but these councils exist at the whim of the local noble. The noble is not bound by law to allow such bodies, but most nobles see it as a good way of dealing with the concerns of the peasants.

Likewise, nobles are bound to obey their superiors, but high-ranking nobles must treat their vassal lords with respect if they expect support. While the law requires a noble to give certain types of support to his liege, how fast this support appears and other such concerns are not detailed by law. Thus low-ranking nobles can show their displeasure with their noble lords by delaying troops or funds. They risk punishment, but it is the most effective way low ranking nobles have to bargain with their lieges, especially if done en masse.

Few tyran nobles consider the lives that would be lost in such an action, which would mostly be the lives of brachins, to be of any great consequence.

The nobles are responsible for the day-to-day affairs of running the Empire, such as adjudicating disputes between citizens, enforcing the laws, protecting the citizens, seeing that local infrastructure is kept in good repair, and looking out for the Emperor and his subjects. Each noble is subservient to a lord, with the kurizar being the highest-ranking nobles who are supposed to report directly to the Emperor, but their messages are usually filtered through the Imperial Bureaucrats. Each of the twenty-two kurizar in the Saurian Empire is responsible for approximately fifty million subjects and several thousand square miles of territory. Most make their home in the largest settlement within their territory, though some live in remote fortresses rather than among their subjects. The kurizar who control regions closer to the City of Bone are the most powerful of their rank, with the poorest kurizar found in those regions still being tamed by the Empire. New kurizar are named whenever saurian subjects settle a suitable region, and some theorize that the first kurizar of Thres may be named soon to take charge of the settlements on that world.

Below the kurizar are a number of different ranks, each of which is beholden to follow the orders of superiors and in turn commands respect nobles below it. The lowest of the ranks are the sizar, each of which is in charge of a single village or settlement. Nobles are able to advance their rank by taking territory from rivals by force or trickery, or by being given a new title and territory by their lord. Conflicts over territory are fierce within the Saurian Empire. The Emperor does little to calm his nobles from attacking each other, thinking that such conflicts keep the Empire's warriors in top condition. Also such battles insure that his nobles are too busy fighting each other to consider toppling him. These wars are carried out under rules restricting nuclear or biological weapons, but such concerns are rarely necessary. Saurians consider such weapons to be the tools of cowards and prefer more direct forms of violence. Damage to civilians and property is generally avoided because the winner does not want to lose such valuable property. Most combat between nobles is carried out in small bands armed with melee weapons and some firearms, though battles between kurizar often involve thousands of troops, armored vehicles, and aircraft.



Even the lowest-ranked nobles have the power of life and death over their own subjects. Each noble is expected to have a certain number of troops ready for combat at all times if his liege lord calls or his territory is attacked, but each lord is also limited in how many troops he can muster to prevent vassals from trying to overthrow their masters. These troops are usually militia who are farmers on most days, but some of the wealthier nobles have full-time soldiers who are trained in vehicle and space combat. Most wars on C'thalk are fought by masses of poorly trained peasants armed with melee weapons and firearms, with more advanced armaments found only among the troops of the kurizar and the Emperor. The troops of the kurizar or the Emperor's Blood Guard can decimate the forces of any lesser noble that dare face them.

Below the sizar are the commoners of the Saurian Empire, which are mostly made up of flyers and shellbacks, but also a handful of brachins and tyrans who have fallen from favor. Commoners are not guaranteed many of the rights that humans are accustomed to, such as freedom of speech or religion. They are under the strict control of the nobles; a constant campaign of propaganda and intimidation ensures their loyalty. There are occasional peasant revolts, but these are put down with great vigor and usually result in the destruction of entire villages. By nature, saurians prefer non-democratic forms of government, thinking a single leader with absolute power is more effective than a mass of people making decisions. Most commoners prefer to go about their daily routines and cause as few problems as possible. Flyer and brachin commoners are craftsmen by and large, while shellbacks are agricultural workers or soldiers and tyran commoners are usually wandering mercenaries. To a commoner there is little to life beyond livelihood, the family, friends, an occasional feast, and worshipping the spirits of the ancestors and the Emperor. Commoners outside of the cities have access to few of the technological marvels of the brachins. Most villages have only a handful of ground vehicles and buildings with electricity. In the cities the standard of living is much more advanced, with indoor plumbing, electricity, computers, and other high-tech devices being commonplace. Most villages are essentially PL 4 environments, while cities are more commonly PL 5. Only the largest cities, such as the City of Bone, have areas that are PL 6 but even in these cities most citizens live in a PL 5 environment.

Among the commoners there are also varying social ranks, the most important of which are village elders and spiritual leaders. Village elders can be of any species, but most are shellbacks or brachins. The elders of each village have no authority or power officially, but advise their fellow commoners and the local sizar. These individuals help bring the community together, passing on histories and teaching children while also supporting the local lord. Spiritual leaders include spirit talkers and monks. Spirit talkers are trained priests who use omens and ritual to contact the spirits of the dead to gain their wisdom and insight. They are the more common type of religious figure in the Saurian Empire and all are considered commoners, though even nobles pay them respect for fear of their sup-

SAURIANS AND PSIONICS

Saurians possess almost no knowledge of Red Truth and have little ability to harness psionic powers. Their religious leaders often claim to have supernatural power, but in fact they are masters of saurian behavior and psychology. Some spirit talkers believe they can actually talk to spirits, but only a small number of them have even a trace of psionic power. According to the yaom legend, however, there are a number of different dimensions similar to Red Truth, one of which contains information stored in the minds of the dead and is called Black Truth. Yaom consider contacting Black Truth to be an incredibly dangerous prospect. While it is possible some spirit talkers have crossed that dimensional veil, it is unlikely.

posed powers over the dead. Spirit talkers are often found in noble courts serving as advisors, but most spend their days among the villages of the common people laying the dead to rest, conjuring the spirits of the dead to guide their descendants, or exorcising upset spirits from this world.

Monks, on the other hand, are individuals who have given up their worldly goods in order to serve others and seek knowledge. Monks are seen by most as being slightly insane due to their lack of interest in power or wealth, but they are also respected for their wisdom and selfless behavior. Many monks have become dishonored and so seek to regain their honor through self-sacrifice, though few return to the rest of society once they have walked the path of the monk. Most monks wander from place to place helping where they can and seeking knowledge, which they then share once they return to their home monastery. Thus the monasteries of C'thalk have become some of the best sources of knowledge on the planet, rivaling the records of the Imperial Bureaucracy. The Saurian Dominion often supported the monks to turn them to their own ends, but the Emperor does not like monks, seeing them as a threat to his power and the propaganda that created the Saurian Empire. Thus he has made their lives difficult. Many nobles have banned monks from their lands or tried to tie them to specific locations and prevent their wandering. Across the Empire monks are forbidden to carry weapons of any type. So far the monks have dealt with all of this in stride, but some monastic orders speak of rebellion if things progress further. Most monasteries have begun hiding their records and libraries, sure that eventually the Emperor will attempt to purge them from the land.

The Saurian Empire's economy is a mixture of primitive capitalism and communism. The local noble strictly controls all industries and business that are considered vital to the security and health of the nation, including most manufacturing and agriculture. The government pays the citizens employed in such industries from the taxes collected, and each noble is responsible for making sure the industries in his area have enough workers and remain profitable. The goods produced in these industries are either utilized by the government or sold through privately owned shops to the populace. Small independent craftsmen can avoid most government involvement by selling their own goods, but they still must pay taxes. Most saurians make little money beyond what they need to survive. Few outside the nobles of the agents of the Empire are really wealthy. The currency of the Empire is a stamped steel coin minted with the Imperial seal and the face of the Emperor who was on the throne when the coin was struck. Saurians carry out most transactions using cash, but some stores allow purchases on credit. Banks are uncommon and rarely trusted, existing only in the largest cities and used primarily by nobles who fall short on their taxes. Most banks are operated by the Imperial Bureaucracy, which uses them to gain more influence over the nobles. Saurians value gold and other rare metals, but not as highly as humans do, preferring metals with more martial applications. Saurian nobles have a fine appreciation for works of art and will often pay handsomely for them.

The military of the Saurian Empire is mighty force indeed, able to field over twenty million soldiers in times of war, but most of these are conscripts with minimal training. The standing army of the Empire is closer to around eight million individuals and includes armor, artillery, air, and space units. The Saurian Empire has no navy or marines, but all of its troops make ready use of rivers and aquatic landings offered by the many bodies of water scattered across C'thalk. Regular military units are only found in the service of the Emperor and the kurizars, each of which has its own commander and organization. This lack of standardization exists on every level of the Saurian Empire's military forces, making organized efforts between different units

very confusing. The regular troops of the kurizar have a strong sense of competition between them and will put other units in jeopardy in order to secure their own glory. Only the Emperor's personal army, the Blood Guard, does not behave so. The Blood Guard are renowned in the Empire for their skill and dedication, and are perfectly willing to sacrifice their own honor for that of the Emperor. The Blood Guard often looks down on other soldiers as being unprofessional. In most regions of the Saurian Empire commoners are not allowed to have anything more dangerous than primitive firearms in their possession, so the commoners cannot train beyond assigned time periods that are scheduled around harvests and other important events. While the Saurian Empire could very effectively fight against anyone who invaded their territory, their lack of vehicles and transportation severely limits their ability to take the fight to their enemies, particularly when their enemies are on other worlds.

Despite the emphasis the Emperors have placed on building spaceships, the fleet of the Saurian Empire is not particularly large or advanced. Most of the fleet is made up of ships of PL 6, but many of the smaller ships are PL 5. The entirety of the fleet is thirty-six ultralight ships, fifteen light ships, and six mediumweight ships. Most of these ships are at least twenty years old and have been repaired and refitted many times. These ships are stationed at the City of Bone and the other large cities on C'thalk. Compared to the fleets of other species in the system these ships are slow and poorly equipped. Smaller fleets like the Eos Space Force could take on a larger number of saurian ships and probably win. Saurian spacecraft not controlled by the Blood Guard suffer the same problems as their military, with ships of different nobles sabotaging each other in the hopes of winning more glory. Luckily for the Empire, most of the ships of the Saurian Empire's space fleet are part of the Blood Guard, though a third of the ships, mostly ultralight and light ships, are controlled by the kurizar. These ships only occasionally leave orbit and are mainly used for cargo runs across the surface of C'thalk. Trips are made to Thres every few weeks, but Eos and Verdant have been off limits following the catastrophic failures of all missions to those planets. C'thalk has no permanent space stations in orbit, but the Emperor is considering constructing one after reports of the Sadler Orbital Facility reached him. The saurians do have a number of early warning and sensor satellites in orbit, all of which are under the control of the Blood Guard except for a few secret satellites discreetly launched and controlled by the Imperial Bureaucrats. New ships are under construction at the shipyards in the City of Bone, but parts shortages have delayed the six ships currently under construction from being finished for over a year.

SAURIAN ART

Saurians have a deep appreciation for a number of different art forms, though most saurians only experience those art forms proper for their social class. The peasants favor stories told around a roaring fire of heroes and tragedies, or loud music with an infectious beat played on drums and stringed instruments. When the commoners of the Saurian Empire enjoy themselves they do so with gusto, completely wearing themselves out on the few festival days each year.

The saurian nobles prefer plays of tragedies and honor or music performed by stringed instruments, enjoying their entertainment with a detached demeanor. Combat is another favored entertainment of the nobles, and contests between renowned warriors are a sure way to attract a noble audience.

Painting is practiced by all classes of saurians and held in high regard throughout the Empire. It is a common belief that a painting can capture the true emotion of a scene better than drama or song, but that only a master painter can achieve such things. Emperor Serack XIII is a renowned painter of landscapes and battles, particularly those he took part in.

Though the saurians have vast amounts of room to expand across C'thalk, tyrans prefer to expand their territory through conquest as opposed to simply claiming empty land. The Emperor and the upper levels of the Imperial Bureaucracy know about the haimedian presence on C'thalk, but most saurians have been kept in the dark to ensure the continued supply of the life extending medicines of the haimedians. With no obvious enemies on their own world the saurians have sought battle on Thres, fighting the wolves and straas to establish several settlements on that world. There are

approximately fifty thousand saurians on Thres, but their numbers are growing steadily, much to the consternation of the wolves and the Hivequeen of the straas. The saurians believe the other races of Thres to be innately inferior and expect easy victories. They are likely to soon learn they are wrong, as both the wolves and the straas have enough power to remove the saurian encampments. These settlements are all less than fifty years old and most are little more than scientific and mining outposts. What began as a handful of saurians have blossomed into many thousands. Where the Wolf Tribes and the Hivequeen Celick were once worried about saurian reprisals for attacks against their outposts, reprisals are beginning to look preferable to invasion.

The saurians have regular contact with the tentaari, whom they fear but do not respect. The saurians believe the tentaari are weak of spirit and drive, for they have vast technology but do not use it to conquer, instead making displays of power when they feel threatened. The saurians have been in contact with the tentaari since the founding of the Saurian Dominion and have learned the bark of the tentaari is worse than their bite. They continually push boundaries and intimidate the tentaari. So far they have had a few harsh reprisals for these actions, including the deaths of several hundred saurians attempting to ambush a tentaari scout ship, but they still push (the Dominion denied the attack and claimed that it was the work of bandits). The saurians suspect the tentaari are paper dragons and want their technology. Because of this mindset the tentaari rarely visit the Empire, only occasionally trading with the Empire for raw materials. Since the arrival of the humans the tentaari have ignored the saurians even more, favoring the humans as their best hope of escaping the Helios system.

In addition to problems on Thres appearing on the horizon, there are a number of groups on C'thalk that cause problems for the Saurian Empire. Foremost among these are the Monks of the Blue Path, a group of shellback scholars and warriors who seek to install a more science-oriented government over the saurians and prepare them for an inevitable alien assault. The Monks of the Blue Path are considered enemies of the Empire and killed on sight, but they have wide support in many of the smaller and more remote villages of the Empire. Additionally there are the fang gangs of the cities, large groups of organized criminals who specialize in extortion, smuggling, and counterfeiting. Many of the fang gangs are in league with members of the Imperial Bureaucracy, hindering efforts to track them down. Though the Emperor thinks he rules a united people, this perception is based on the skewed information passed to him by the Imperial Bureaucracy. In truth he rules a nation deeply divided.

THE MONKS OF THE BLUE PATH • • •

The Monks of the Blue Path are mysterious figures in the Saurian Empire. Outlawed by the Emperor, they flaunt his decrees and continue to bring knowledge, help, and medicine to the people of the Saurian Empire. Knowledgeable in arts long thought dead, they are rumored to traffic with gods or spirits and learn their ways while the Emperor claims they are thieves and traitors. Trained in combat, the Monks of the Blue Path are said to be mighty warriors despite the fact that they often carry no weapons. Many of these stories are true, but their order may very well have doomed itself to extinction.

The Monks of the Blue Path were originally known as Blue Company Twelve, a unit of shellback heavy infantry, combat engineers, and logistical officers from the first generation of saurians created on C'thalk. Blue Company Twelve was assigned to guard one of the equipment storehouses that the sarick hid beneath C'thalk and dole out those supplies to other saurian units as needed. As discipline broke down among the saurians after several generations, Blue Company Twelve was still sitting on a large pile of supplies, as their depot was on the fringe of saurian territory. As their saurian brothers turned to fighting each other, Blue Company Twelve received an order from one of their surviving superiors to hide their remaining supplies and protect them until order could be restored. That was the last order Blue Company Twelve received that was accompanied by proper security codes, so it is the order they have followed for over eighteen hundred years. During that time many saurians tried to take these supply stores, but Blue Company Twelve defeated all of the attackers with their advanced weapons, strong dedication to martial traditions, and in more recent times guile. Blue Company Twelve is thought have survived the infighting of the early years of saurian activity on C'thalk due to the fact the unit was almost entirely made up of shellbacks, who are very resistant to the effects of bloodlust, but the monks prefer to see it as divine providence.

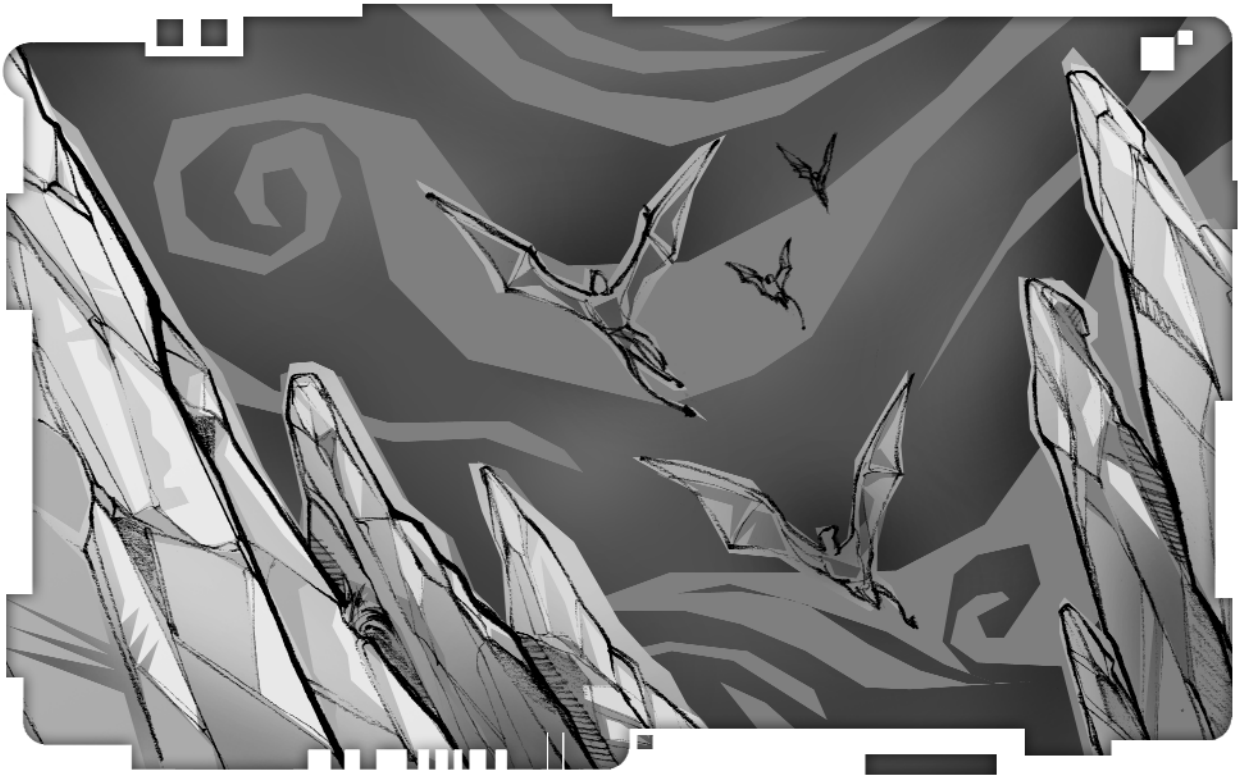
Over time the population of Blue Company Twelve grew and several villages were founded in the surrounding area. Roughly one thousand years ago, hearing rumors of the Star Confederation secrets held by Blue Company Twelve, the Saurian Dominion mounted a massive expedition to find the hidden supply cache and learn from the technology it contained. Following their original orders, which by now had taken on religious undertones, Blue Company Twelve saw the graft and corruption of the Dominion and decided they would not release the technology. Knowing they could not defeat the large force the Saurian Dominion had mustered, the members of Blue Company Twelve instead hid



everything that remained of the Star Confederation, turning their advanced fortress into a simple monastery in the weeks of warning they had before the forces of the Saurian Dominion arrived. They sealed most of their technological secrets and equipment in hidden vaults beneath their fortress monastery, which only the highest-ranking members of the company were able to open due to a number of puzzles testing the wisdom and knowledge of those who would seek entrance. Burning their ancient uniforms and signs of rank, they became the Monks of the Blue Path, an order of monks and scholars dedicated to helping their fellow saurian and keeping the wisdom of the past alive. When the agents of the Saurian Dominion arrived they were fooled by the deception and left after a cursory inspection of the monastery fortress, missing the hidden vaults entirely.

The Monks of the Blue Path kept up the façade of being simple monks for centuries, never speaking of the technological marvels contained under the Monastery of the Blue Path to anyone outside of the order. The monks also worked to make the location of their monastery a secret, destroying or changing many maps in the earliest days of their deception. The monks know that remaining a mystery is their best defense and work hard to develop their mystique. Only those of unquestionable loyalty know the location of the Monastery of the Blue Path. The monks have several smaller outposts they may portray as the true monastery in order to confuse their enemies. Among the saurian peasants many believe the Monastery of the Blue Path moves to wherever it is needed or to where the monks feel their duties take them. This practice of obfuscation has been refined over hundreds of years. Even the technologies available to the Saurian Empire have not been able to find the true location of the Monastery of the Blue Path. It takes many years of loyal service for a monk to be told the truth of the order's history in order to root out spies and to make sure those who know the truth are completely dedicated to the cause.

The monks lost the ability to repair or even operate many of the devices hidden in their monastery due to lack of spare parts and knowledge, so they remain hidden, unused, and without maintenance for centuries. Much of their history has been replaced with myth and legend, including the idea that the vaasi are still threatening to invade the planet and preparations must be made to defend against them. This prophesied war is the heart of their beliefs; since no one else upholds the cause they must lead the saurian race to prepare for this eventual battle with the army of evil. The monks wait for a saurian government to arise that will use the secrets they keep wisely, and they have been waiting for hundreds of years. Some of the younger monks are starting to believe the leaders of the order, the three eldest monks, will never allow the secrets of the order to be known by the outside world, so high are their standards for saurian government. This belief is starting to form a rift within the order; some monks push for leniency when sharing technology, but the elder monks refuse to budge. While the monks wait they record the history of the saurian people, help their fellow saurians, and train for the day they may have to forcibly overthrow the Saurian Empire. That day may come sooner than expected.



When the downfall of the Saurian Dominion began, the Monks of the Blue Path thought Serack X might be the leader that could unite the saurian people against the foretold vaasi invasion. They sought out Serack X and he convinced them that he was an honorable leader who would assist them in preparing for the foretold vaasi attack, so the monks told him of their legends and stories. Serack X swore that when he became Emperor he would see that C'thalk was suitably prepared to fight off the vaasi invasion. Emperor Serack X lied. He did not prepare for the invasion in any meaningful way and instead used the stories of impending invasion to create fear and mistrust, using it to solidify his rule of the Saurian Empire. In order to quash those who may learn the truth of the matter, Emperor Serack X outlawed the Monks of the Blue Path and has assigned many units of the Blood Guard to find their hidden monastery, but with no success so far. Despite the fact the Monastery of the Blue Path remains hidden, dozens of monks have been killed by governmental troops for their allegiance to the order.

Now the Monks of the Blue Path work in hiding on the edges of the Empire, stirring up resistance against the Emperor and trying to unite the saurian people against the looming threat of the vaasi. Their successes have been limited so far, but their monastery's location remains secret. Within the depths of the monastery's vaults wait vehicles, weapons, and other devices of the Star Confederation. While the functional portion of this supply cache is small, it is a priceless source of information and technology, and will prove a great asset should the vaasi ever attack C'thalk.

THE FANG GANGS • • •

In the fabric of saurian society, each of the species has its own organizations and communities that it uses to defend that subspecies's interests. The brachins use the Imperial Bureaucracy, the tyrans the noble structure, the shellbacks the monastic orders and de facto control of the agricultural villages, but for many centuries the flyers had no such organization. Often bullied by the tyrans, disrespected by the brachins, and distrusted by the shellbacks, the flyers were forced to live in the cracks of society other species did not claim, taking what power they could make for themselves. But then, 123 years ago some flyers in the City of Bone grew tired of being pushed around, got organized, and the fang gangs were born.

Fang gangs are groups of flyers who together undertake criminal pursuits, such as extortion, robbery, and counterfeiting in addition to supporting their members in completely legal pursuits, helping their community, and presenting a united front to the outside world. Found only in urban areas, the influence of the fang gangs is limited to the central region of the Saurian Empire. The fang gangs are a mixture of organized crime group, community watch organization, and secret society. These gangs not only assist their members in criminal enterprises, but also protect members and their families from outsiders, provide for the less fortunate members of the gang, and settle disputes within their territory. Any flyer who demonstrates loyalty and competency can join a fang gang, and most flyers in the major cities of the Empire are

associated with one gang or another. Within each city there are normally three to six fang gangs depending on the size of the city, each claiming its own territory usually along neighborhood lines. Most fang gangs have members in more than one city and the largest organization, the Yellow Claws, have claimed territory in every city in the Empire.

The first fang gang, the Vigilant Snakes, was founded by flyers in the City of Bone that grew tired of their lack of influence in the face of the brachins and the tyrans of the city. The Vigilant Snakes started as a small group of angry criminals and community leaders who spent their time stealing from saurians that caused trouble for the flyers, but it soon grew as many normally law-abiding flyers pledged their support to the Vigilant Snakes and helped them by hiding members, delivering messages, and helping with supplies and money when possible. The Emperor quickly outlawed the Vigilant Snakes and all the fang gangs to come after them. The local nobles hunt them, but few have had much luck catching the fang gangs. Their grass-roots support makes finding them difficult, and those who try too hard to do so often meet with harsh reprisals including sabotage, robbery, and vandalism. While the fang gangs work hard to defend the flyers of the Saurian Empire, they are not so concerned with the goodwill any of the other species and actively work against the brachins and tyrans.

Now the fang gangs can be found in all the major settlements of the Empire. It is estimated that half of all urban dwelling flyers are members or associates of a fang gang. Emperor Serack XIII has stepped up efforts to hunt down the fang gangs, but thus far has had little more luck than his predecessors. A rash of robberies or assaults on their retainers dissuades many of the nobles involved in these hunts. The fang gangs are not interested in governmental change or massive social upheaval; they only want flyers to get what they see as a fair shake. Some tyran nobles have made steps toward giving flyers more voice in government and support, and have received positive support from the fang gangs for their efforts, but doing so goes against the Emperor's decrees supporting a caste society and these nobles risk execution for their efforts.

THE HAIMEDIAN COLLECTIVE • • •

Located on the other side of the planet from the Saurian Empire, the Haimedian Collective remains a secret to all but the highest levels of saurian government. The haimedians seek to live in peace and secrecy, knowing that the saurians and other races may attack them if their presence is discovered. While the haimedians seek to be left alone, their leader Mother Moss knows that eventually they will be found and the haimedians must be ready to deal with the outside world. Thus she has begun training them for diplomacy, and training them for war if diplomacy fails.

The haimedians are from a far distant jungle world they called Greenhome that was remarkably similar to C'thalk in terms of climate and ecology. The planet had been terraformed long ago by the Star Confederation in preparation for dosai settlers, but the war with the Vaasi Empire disrupted the effort so that the planet was not colonized and instead was utilized by the genetic seeding program. When the world that would become Greenhome was seeded with genetic material, the fleet carrying out the seeding operation was attacked by vaasi scout ships and crashed on Greenhome. The majority of the crew eventually died, passing on long before the program bore fruit, but some of the dosai members of the crew survived. The mobile dosai that were most common in the Star Confederation are essentially the seed form of their species, and they can choose to plant themselves and grow into their adult form in their later years. After doing so they are no longer mobile, but the plant they grow into ages very slowly, has powerful psionic abilities that create a weak point in Red Truth, and can spawn new dosai as seeds. Through their connection to Red Truth the dosai were able to pass on information from parent to seed, maintaining the knowledge of the Star Confederation over millions of years even though the information was not put to use. The transformation allowed the dosai to survive in small numbers, alternating through periods of hibernation and seed production, until the genetic seeding project had come to fruition, shepherding the young haimedian race as oracles and advisors for many years. All of the Star Confederation technology that had been on the ships that crashed on Greenhome had been destroyed by the passage of time, but the knowledge of the remaining dosai allowed the haimedians to make great leaps in chemistry, medicine, and other scientific disciplines. While the haimedians' early advances in technology were similar to those made by humans, relying on minerals and inorganic materials, in the later stages of their civilization the haimedians mastered genetic engineering and used it to give birth to an organic form of technology.

When the haimedians were forced to flee Greenhome by an impending meteor strike, they had achieved Progress Level 7 technology, including crude organic nanites and extensive genetic engineering technologies. Unfortunately for the haimedians, their knowledge of space travel was not quite so advanced.

The haimedians fled Greenhome in a number of massive evacuation ships, saving just over one hundred thousand members of their species and one dosai, Mother Moss, from destruction. Under the direction of Mother Moss the haimedian evacuation ships found the gateway network device on the edge of their solar system and configured it to activate a gate to the Helios system. Mother Moss hoped that

HAIMEDIAN ART

The haimedians have little appreciation for visual art, lacking the visual acuity to get much out of a painting or play. Instead they prefer audible or tactile forms of art. The haimedians have a complex musical tradition using all manner of drums and stringed instruments, and have developed a number of synthesizers to create completely new sounds. Haimedian music is extremely complex and usually takes at least two individuals to perform. Haimedians cannot sing with any pleasing ability and so rely on other methods of making music. A number of symphony-sized musical groups exist with within the Collective and are widely recognized for their musical accomplishments.

Sculpture is the other art that haimedians partake of regularly, though they enjoy it in a different way from humans or other species. Haimedians make sculptures are designed to be felt, not seen, and include a number of different textures to create an interesting experience for the person inspecting the piece. Most haimedians do not use their sight when enjoying a piece of sculpture, experiencing it solely through their hands.

the Star Confederation capital had not fallen during the war. When they reached the Helios system Mother her hopes proved false and she directed the fleet to settle on C'thalk, the most suitable out of the habitable planets available. The haimedians took care to settle as far away from the saurians as possible, setting up their own settlements and society under the watchful eye of Mother Moss.

Knowing that they could not stay hidden forever from the expansionistic saurians, Mother Moss instructed the haimedians contact their new neighbors. In time she brokered a peace agreement between the two groups through her agents by offering some of the advanced medical treatments the haimedians possessed to the saurians, specifically using organic nanites to increase the life spans of the saurians. The haimedians made sure that the saurians that benefited from their medical technology would require regular additional treatments. This made the saurians dependant on them, and Mother Moss convinced the saurians that she would destroy the life extending technology if the saurians tried to take the technology for themselves. The upper echelons of saurian government, both under the Dominion and the Empire, kept the existence of the haimedians secret in exchange for continued access to their medical knowledge. Saurian scientists have been trying to replicate the skills of the haimedians since first contact with them, but they have had no luck thus far.

While the haimedians have a great deal of advanced technology, their fields of advancement are limited. In the earlier days of haimedian technological development they produced devices similar to those made by other races, but once they mastered genetic engineering they eschewed inorganic materials in favor of living technology. Their dislike of working with inorganic materials limits their development, and their unusual designs cannot be integrated with the technologies of other races. Haimedian technology has a strong basis in biology, relying heavily on products of plants and animals instead of minerals. Haimedian computers are massive living beings made up of complex genetically engineered brains, while their nanites are bundles of specially designed proteins. When possible haimedians avoid using mineral materials in their machines, but in many cases, such as lenses and electrical conductors, this is impossible. All haimedian technology has a rounded, organic look to it and their devices are easy to hide in most natural surroundings.

The haimedian mastery of genetic engineering puts human achievements in the same category to shame, and haimedians are far more accepting of genetic engineering than humans. To haimedians anything that can be achieved by genetic engineering is acceptable, while humans still consider cloning and some other facets of genetic engineering to be of questionable moral value. Haimedians suffer no such quandaries, believing that all life, either born through nature or science, is there to serve a purpose, and it is their responsibility to make sure it does so.

Haimedians make use of their more advanced technologies on a daily basis, living in trees that are genetically engineered to be hollow and provide living space, eating genetically engineered food, and using organic nanites to treat common injuries. Many of their mineral based technologies they use

sparingly since the saurian sensors more easily detect them, and the main defensive strategy of the Haimedian Collective is to remain in hiding.

While the haimedians are very advanced in terms of medical studies, genetics, nanites, and organic computing, their skills in weaponry, armor, spacecraft, and vehicles are sorely lacking. To haimedians these fields did not seem overly important in their developing years on Greenhome, until the meteorite came to threaten their world. This lack of advancement in space travel is why so few haimedians were saved, and why even now they are almost powerless in the face of saurian military might. The only real defense the haimedians have is advanced knowledge of viral and bacterial warfare, which will be their first line of defense if attacked. Any assault on the haimedians by the Saurian Empire is likely to be successful, but the saurians would suffer horrendous military and civilian casualties from the many plagues unleashed by the haimedians in their defense. The haimedians are immune to many poisons that are deadly to other non-plant beings.

As a culture the haimedians are a cooperative, communal people who never even considered the concept of violence among themselves until they learnt from the example of the saurians. Haimedians tend to be friendly but easily confused when dealing with other races. They often come off as being socially inept, unable to understand the drives of animal life forms such as reproduction and food. Animals, with their destructive habits and uncontrollable reproductive drive, are believed by some haimedians to be an inferior life-form destined to eventually wipe itself out entirely, leaving the more stable plants to inherit the universe. Those same haimedians are prejudiced against the other inhabitants of the Helios system, seeing them as impatient and dangerous.

Haimedians will forgive many insults or verbal attacks, but once a haimedian is physically threatened they react with deadly force. To a haimedian there is no such thing as a proportional response, and any attack or serious threat of attack by the saurians is likely to result in use of viral warfare. Haimedians only consider the use of violence once someone else has attacked them and a preemptive attack is an alien concept. Those who deal with other species often adapt their mindset to be more accommodating to others, including quickly learning that he who strikes first often strikes last. Art and learning are highly valued pursuits among the haimedians, but given their shrinking population no calling is higher than caring for seed pods and young haimedians. All haimedian children are always under strict guard and any attack on them will result in an overwhelming and terrifying response.

Haimedians live in a capitalistic economic system, though Mother Moss directly oversees some vital industries. These are the production of bacterial or viral agents, the creation of organic nanites, and other industries related to military matters. The haimedians have a networked system of organic computers that keep track of all monetary transactions and each haimedian carries a small piece of hardwood coded with specific DNA information that can be inserted into special reader units to exchange currency by altering the DNA information stored. The haimedians effectively all carry bank cards and have no form of cash, though many also barter.

The leader of the Haimedian Collective since its founding has been Mother Moss, the last known living dosai. Now in the later stages of her plant form, Mother Moss has been with the haimedians since their earliest days of sentience, teaching them using her vast store of Star Confederation scientific knowledge passed down from her ancestors. Mother Moss, like all dosais, left her homeworld of Dosa as a seed of the massive Mind Tree, the tree from which all dosai originally spawned. Dosais could in turn give birth to new, smaller Mind Trees if the dosai were fertilized and planted itself in the right conditions, but such conditions were extremely rare. Greenhome's soil lacked the nutrients necessary for Mother Moss to complete the transformation into a Mind Tree. Although the soil on C'thalk is much more accommodating, the trauma of being uprooted and transported to C'thalk seems to have stunted her ability to grow. It is unlikely she will ever grow seeds. Regardless, she is an intensely intelligent and learned creature. Like all dosai, she has a strong inborn talent in working with Red Truth and is possessed of powerful psionic abilities. She still knows much of the technology the Star Confederation once commanded, and has helped the haimedians master several of these sciences. She does not, however, have the power to instruct the haimedians in the secrets of Red Truth. The haimedians follow Mother Moss, and they have grown almost entirely dependant on her advice and leadership. The haimedians currently have few among them who can quickly make decisions that affect the entire haimedian people, as in matters of war. For several decades now Mother Moss has been grooming replacement leaders among the haimedians in case she is killed. These leaders now serve as her lieutenants and diplomats, but none are yet ready to lead alone. If Mother Moss were slain the haimedians would take years to recover, something she wishes to avoid.

The Haimedian Collective does not have regular diplomatic contact with the Saurian Empire, but does occasionally contact the Emperor through established secret channels. These channels usually involve blind drops on the edges of the Saurian Empire and the agents involved rarely know who leaves the information they are picking up. Face-to-

face communication between the Haimedian Collective and the Saurian Empire has not occurred since the completion of the peace agreement. Even the medical treatments for the Emperor are dropped off for members of the Bone Guard to find and can be applied without the haimedians' assistance.

The haimedians have no contact with species from off-world except for the tentaari, who occasionally contact the them. The haimedians are respectful to the tentaari when they are around, but they have learned from the Mother Moss where the technology of the tentaari came from. Mother Moss has recognized what a poor job the tentaari did keeping safe the technology of the Star Confederation and has little respect for them. Mother Moss has hidden her presence from the tentaari, fearful the tentaari may attack her to keep up their charade of immense power, but she suspects they know of her anyway. The tentaari have a vested interest in the advanced technology of haimedians, but also fear them for their research into bacterial and viral warfare. For now the tentaari limit their contact with the haimedians, trying to figure out these strange plant people.

Individual haimedian settlements are led by a committee of elder haimedians selected by the populace. Haimedians believe strongly that all members of a society should have a say in its rule and by tradition any haimedian can request a meeting with Mother Moss at any time. While the haimedians are completely subservient to Mother Moss, the idea of granting absolute power to any other creature is inconceivable to the haimedians. Haimedian culture encourages them to question the decisions of their leaders, including Mother Moss. When dealing with local issues the haimedians rely on a democratic method of debate and voting, with a simple majority winning the day. All haimedian villages have a central meeting hall that is used at least once every ten days to decide important community matters.

The haimedians worship a single god they call the Creator Tree, which they regularly depict as being a tree whose branches hold up all the stars in the heavens. This belief has been with the haimedians for ages and has many splinter faiths and sects that have formed over differences in doctrinal interpretation. The core doctrine of the faith is that the entire universe is connected and haimedians must respect these connections to find their true place and prosper within it. In the past the haimedians have tried to worship Mother Moss and the other dosai as gods. The dosai have sharply discouraged such behavior, though some small cults of dosai worshippers remain. Generally religion is not a large part of everyday life; haimedians are much more concerned with their families and their responsibilities to their people than paying homage to some universal force that many believe decreed that the haimedians are not fit to survive by striking their world with a meteor. Since their departure from their homeworld the haimedians have paid less heed to religious matters; many feel that the universe has turned its back on them.

To haimedians family is the most important part of their lives, and haimedians have large families. Through the reproductive nature of haimedians, which is a group activity where many haimedians fertilize a cluster of seeds, children are spawned rarely but in large numbers. Haimedians have very large families by the standards of other races; most haimedians have half a dozen parents at least. Due to the limited population that survived Greenhome and the size of haimedian families, all surviving haimedians are related within five degrees of separation, though their genetic structure is able to repair itself and thus avoid mutation through inbreeding. Haimedian families usually live with three generations under a single roof, which can include over a hundred individuals. The climate of C'thalk is well suited for the haimedians, but there has been a slowing in their reproductive cycle in recent years. The population was only growing at one percent per year before this slowdown, and now it is actually shrinking with each passing year. The change is thought to have something to do with recent industrial developments in the Saurian Empire polluting the air of C'thalk, but the exact cause is unknown and the subject of much research. Because of this slowdown the haimedians have become even more concerned about family and keeping their species alive.

The military of the Haimedian Collective is small and not powerful in the conventional sense. Haimedians often make use of edged weapons in close combat, but when faced with significantly more powerful foes they prefer viral and bacterial warfare. When engaged in direct combat they often use acid spraying weapons and poisons instead of firearms or energy weapons, as they have an innate dislike of fire, which is a prime component in weapons used by other races. Haimedians do not have much in the way of military vehicles or spacecraft, defending themselves by releasing specially designed plagues to which they are immune. Any attack on the haimedians is likely to suffer heavy casualties unless the entire attacking force is wearing sealed environment suits. A prepared enemy can do serious damage to the haimedians, and the few spacecraft the haimedians possess are not well outfitted for battle. If the haimedians run into an opponent that can render their viral and bacterial weapons useless they are likely to lose any conflict they enter.

LOCATIONS ON C'THALK • • •

◇ The City of Bone

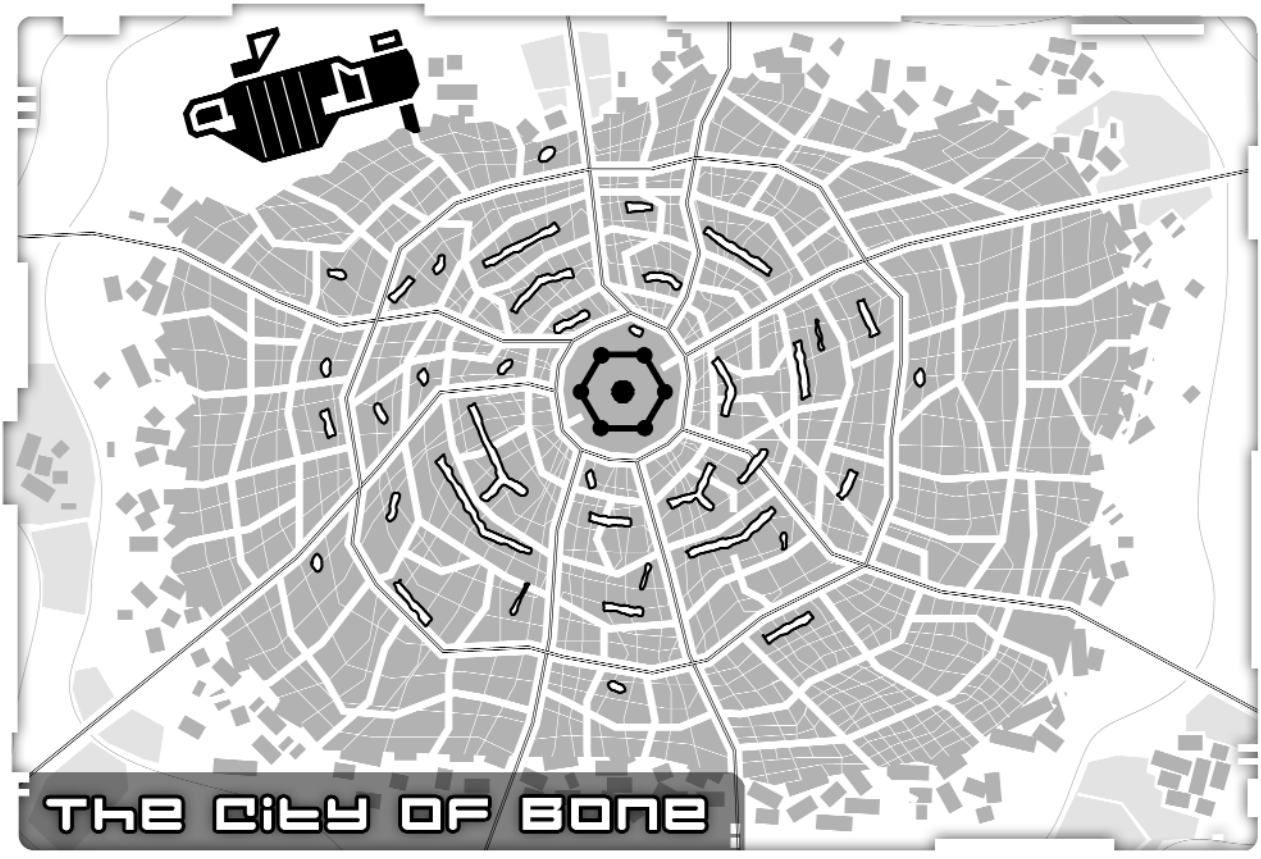
Leader: Chancellor Garis Whose-Life-Is-Gold
Population: 36,450,000
Major Exports/Products: Government, manufactured goods, weapons, spacecraft
Major Imports: Food, raw materials
Progress Level: 6
Purchase DC Limit: 65
Black Market DC: 15
Item Restriction Limit: None for nobles, restricted for everyone else

The capital of the Saurian Empire, seat of the Imperial Palace and the Throne of Blood, home of the Imperial Bureaucracy, the City of Bone is the largest and most important settlement on C'thalk and possibly the Helios system. Built on the ruins of an ancient Star Confederation fortress and military academy that was destroyed by the vaasi invasion, the ancient ruins are still visible in much of the city and tower over the newer saurian buildings. Most of the surviving ruins are stark white in color, giving the appearance of massive bones sticking out of the ground, a peculiarity for which the city is named.

At the heart of the city, contained within a wall of built of Star Confederation armor fragments, lies the Imperial Palace, formerly the Dominion Palace under the Saurian Dominion. Within the Palace are the dwelling of the Emperor and his family, quarters for the Bone Guard and the Emperor's assassins the Dishonored, offices and living space for thousands of Imperial bureaucrats, and enough towering monuments and statues to humble nearly any visiting dignitaries. The Imperial Palace is the largest artificial construction in the Helios system built since the fall of the Star Confederation. It is the heart of the City of Bone and the entire city exists to support the Emperor, his family, and his underlings in the Imperial Bureaucracy.

The Emperor rules the City of Bone, though Honored Chancellor Garis Whose-Life-Is-Gold, a tyran with an unusual gift for mercantile and diplomatic matters, carries out most of the day-to-day activities. Chancellor Garis makes sure the city stays quiet and that the appropriate bribes and payoffs are made by the factions within it to him and to the Imperial Bureaucracy. He is an excellent organizer and the City of Bone has the finest and most modern infrastructure of any city in the Empire, in addition to generating the highest revenue. These facts have persuaded the Emperor to overlook some of the Chancellor's less honorable activities. The last Chancellor was executed after plotting to overthrow Emperor Serack XII, so Chancellor Garis's lack of ambition for higher office is a welcome change to the Emperor.

Both the Blood Guard and the Bone Guard are stationed in the City of Bone and comprise roughly ten percent of the city's population. Scattered around the city are armories, airfields, and bar-



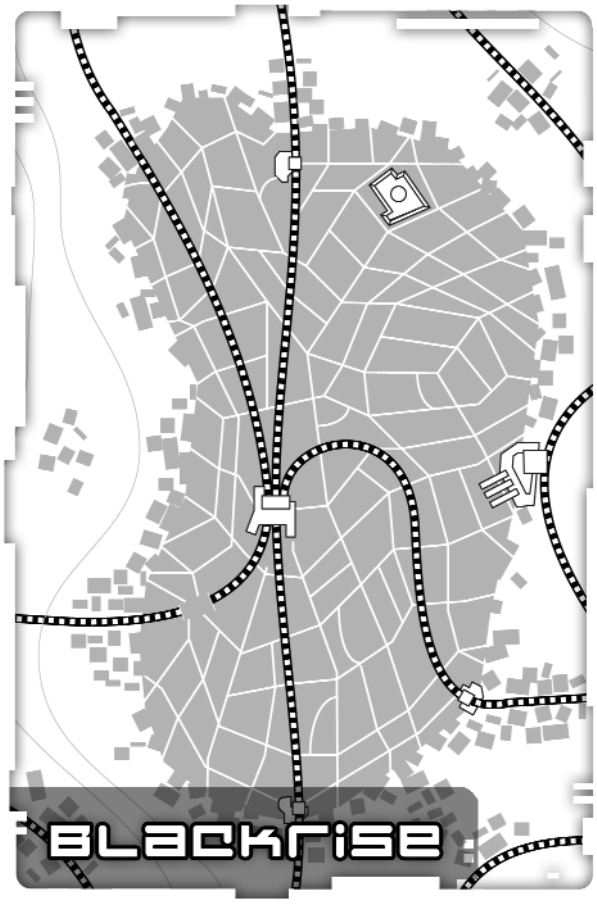
racks, making the City of Bone the best-defended city in the Empire. One mediumweight and four light ships are always docked at the Imperial Spaceport, ready to defend the city from attack. A powerful network of anti-aircraft missiles and lasers has been erected around the city, ready to attack any airborne vessel that comes close to the city without permission.

Although the Blood Guard keeps a stern eye on all threats to the Emperor, less threatening forms of corruption are rife in the City of Bone. In addition to the graft found in all levels of the Imperial Bureaucracy, several fang gangs have a powerful presence in the city. Bribery is by far the best way to get anything done in the City of Bone, though many tyran nobles can also get by with sufficient screaming and threats. There are spies for the Bone Guard and the Dishonored throughout the city, in addition to the Imperial Bureaucracy's agents. Anyone in the city who speaks out against the Emperor is likely to be found out, considering the rewards for turning in traitors and the saurian lack of appreciation for dissident speech. While these spies go after threats to the Emperor they leave petty criminals alone, preferring to cause trouble for their rival agencies through blackmail or counterintelligence in hopes of shaming their competing agencies.

As the center of the Saurian Empire, the City of Bone has the best shopping on the entire planet. Any product created in the Saurian Empire can be found in the City of Bone, from weapons to ancient relics to religious idols. While the laws regarding possession of weapons and armor are strict in the city for most saurians, tyran nobles can carry whatever weapons they choose. The City of Bone is one of the largest manufacturing centers in the Saurian Empire, producing weapons, vehicles, spacecraft, and other manufactured goods that are then sold across the Empire. This large industrial base means a variety of goods are always available in the City of Bone that may be rare elsewhere. The city has many stores run by flyer merchants, but the city is best known for its five massive open-air markets, each almost a square mile in size. The markets are strongholds of the fang gangs that operate in the city, the largest of which are the Yellow Claws.

◇ Blackrise

Leader: Kurizar Stengen XX The-Ruler-of-Slaughter
Population: 17,890,000
Major Exports/Products: Coal, steel, weapons, lenses and glassware
Major Imports: Food, workers
Progress level: 5
Purchase DC Limit: 50
Black Market DC: 20
Item Restriction Limit: Restricted



One of the major industrial cities of the Saurian Empire, Blackrise serves as an excellent example of the Empire's larger cities beyond the City of Bone. Founded over eighteen hundred years ago, Blackrise sits eight hundred miles southeast of the City of Bone in the northern reaches of the Teeth of C'thalk on top of the largest known coal deposit on the planet. Blackrise quickly became a center of industrial development and growth, and sixteen hundred years ago it was claimed by the tyran warlord Stengen I the Ironclad. The descendants of Stengen I has ruled the settlement ever since, under both the Saurian Dominion and the Empire. It has grown from a small mining village to one of the largest settlements on the planet, changing over time from dependence on the coal beneath it to standing as a powerful industrial force.

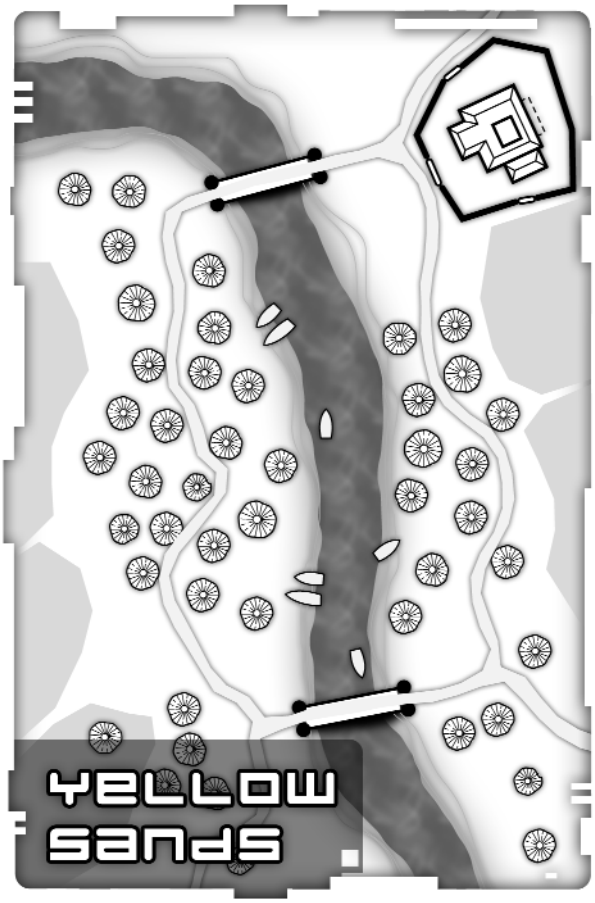
In past centuries Blackrise was the center for construction of ground vehicles, building the first steam-based tanks six hundred years ago. It continues to be the foremost builder of ground vehicles, specializing in tanks and combat vehicles. This specialization gives Kurizar Stengen XX a disproportionate amount of military power over his fellow kurizar; his allegiance is highly sought after in the Imperial Court. While other nobles flock to his banner Kurizar Stengen XX is well known for his dislike of the Imperial Bureaucracy and does all he can to avoid interacting with it, undercutting its power when possible. Because of this behavior

Kurizar Stengen XX often runs into problems of missing tax money or improperly routed letters to the Emperor. Some whisper that Kurizar Stengen XX is preparing his own personal band of assassins to thin the herd of the Imperial Bureaucracy, though such an effort would be a gross insult to the Emperor, assuming he was caught.

While Kurizar Stengen XX is outwardly a loyal servant of the Emperor, many say that he seeks to claim the Imperial throne for himself. One of the most powerful kurizar, according to rumor he seeks allies among his other powerful fellows to support this claim, but thus far only has a few of the less powerful kurizar on his side. He needs far more backing to make a bid for the throne, and if he takes too much longer the Emperor may get wind of these stories and launch his own investigation, which is unlikely to be more complex than assassinating Kurizar Stengen XX. Currently Kurizar Stengen XX is engaged with a border war with his neighbor, Kurizar Suras VII Who-Breaks-the-Earth over a number of rich fishing villages that Kurizar Stengen XX wishes to possess to feed the vast population of Blackrise. So far the border war has been limited to a number of militia clashes and reconnaissance missions, but most in the region expect it to erupt into full-scale war within a few months.

The region around Blackrise is crisscrossed with metal tracks similar to Earth railroads, used by massive mining trains to transport materials to the city. A massive coal run power plant supplies the city's power, and most of its factories rely on coal as well. The sky above the city is choked with soot and dirt, and even at noon it looks to be twilight. Because of this pollution and the abysmal conditions in most of the mines the city needs a steady supply of new inhabitants to keep operating at its current level. Kurizar Stengen XX spends a great deal of effort to convince rural villagers in his domain to move to Blackrise and thousands leave their cities every year to do so.

While the City of Bone is known for its corruption and lack of law enforcement except in terms of threats to the Emperor, Blackrise is a veritable police state by comparison. Kurizar Stengen XX does not like thieves and will not tolerate them in his territory, expending a great deal of time and effort hunting down fang gangs and other such groups. His efforts have succeeded in rounding up many criminals, but they have also served to harden those who escape his purges. Many fang gangs now consider Kurizar Stengen XX their personal enemy and work to make his life a living hell regardless of profit. Their activities have been evident in a number of missing trains, ambushed tax collectors, and defaced images of the kurizar.



◇ Yellow Sands

Leader: Sizar Shera Who-Cannot-Fall
Population: 459
Major Exports/Products: Food, boats, glass
Major Imports: Manufactured goods, tools
Progress level: 4
Purchase DC Limit: 20
Black Market DC: 25
Item Restriction Limit: Restricted

Representative of the thousands of small villages found across the Saurian Empire, Yellow Sands is a fishing village located on the outer edges of the Empire, over nineteen hundred miles to the west of the City of Bone. The village was on the frontier of the Empire a century ago, but now new villages have been founded further west. Where once it was the gateway to the unclaimed territory to the west, Yellow Sands is now just another fishing village among thousands of fishing villages. Most of its population is made up of shellbacks, though there are a few flyers found in Yellow Sands, most of whom are glassblowers or other craftsmen.

The village is named for the unusually bright yellow sand found on the banks of the Lazy Dragon River, which Yellow Sands is built on the banks of. This sand is thought to be rich in silicone and possibly useful for manufacturing purposes, but now it is too far from the industrial plants of the Empire to be of profitable use. Local craftsmen use the sand to make glass, and the glass bowls of Yellow Sands are renowned in the region for their beauty. The main trade of the village is fishing and growing fruits

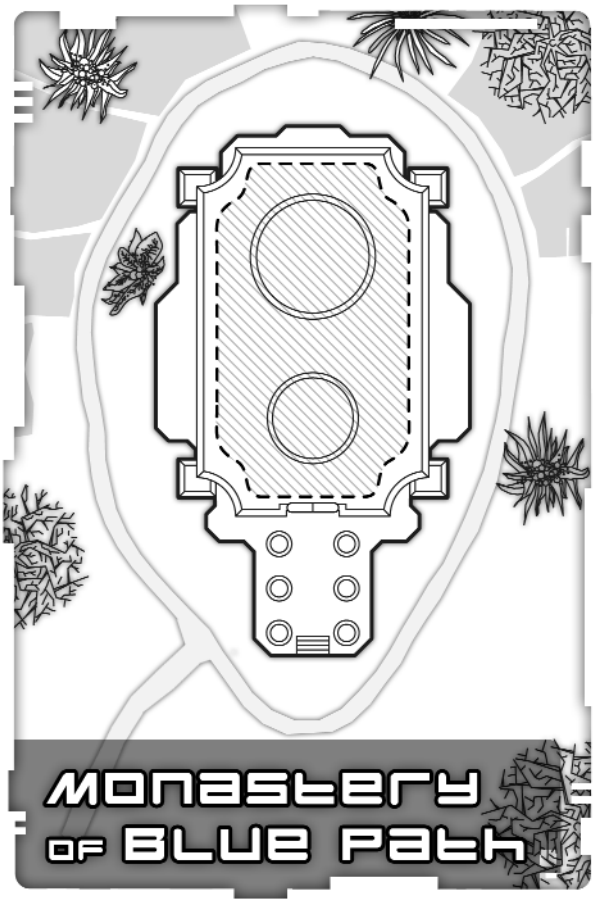
in neighboring orchards. Eighty percent of the population of the village is involved in these industries and spend nearly every day working.

Sizar Shera Who-Cannot-Fall, a tyran noble whose family founded the village one hundred and fifty years ago, leads Yellow Sands. Sizar Shera has been away serving with the Blood Guard for several years before returning home to rule after her father's death and is considered by most villagers to be an outsider. Sizar Shera's militant and brusque manner has won her few friends in the village, but it has earned her much respect. Thus far in her year as sizar of Yellow Sands she has spent most of her time making sure the food products of the village remain plentiful.

Though no one in Yellow Sands wants trouble, the village has recently visited several times by a Monk of the Blue Path who brought medicine to combat an outbreak of fever and knowledge of how to make a more effective fishing net. The monk, named Plar, has managed to schedule his visits to coincide when Sizar Shera is out of the village, and the villagers have kept his visits secret, but it seems only a matter of time before she learns of him. If that happens Sizar Shera is likely to set a trap for the wandering monk.

The day to day operations of the village most city dwellers would find boring; the locals work from sun up to sun down to make sure they produce enough food to meet their quotas. The only breaks from these activities are occasional festivals or visits from traveling merchants. Life in Yellow Sands is rarely exciting, but the inhabitants are fine with this. There is little crime in Yellow Sands, though the Vigilant Snakes fang gang has associates among the flyer population. There is little worth stealing in Yellow Sands, so they mainly observe who travels through the town and pass along information.

The only building in the village that has electricity is Sizar Shera's manor, which is powered by a solar generator. She also has the only powered ground vehicles in the town, a hover truck and an off-road shrike cycle. The rest of the village makes do with boats and animal drawn carriages. Most of the adults in the town are part of the militia and drill monthly to keep their skills up. The militia is armed with leather armor, spears, and dersun rifles.



◇ The Monastery of the Blue Path

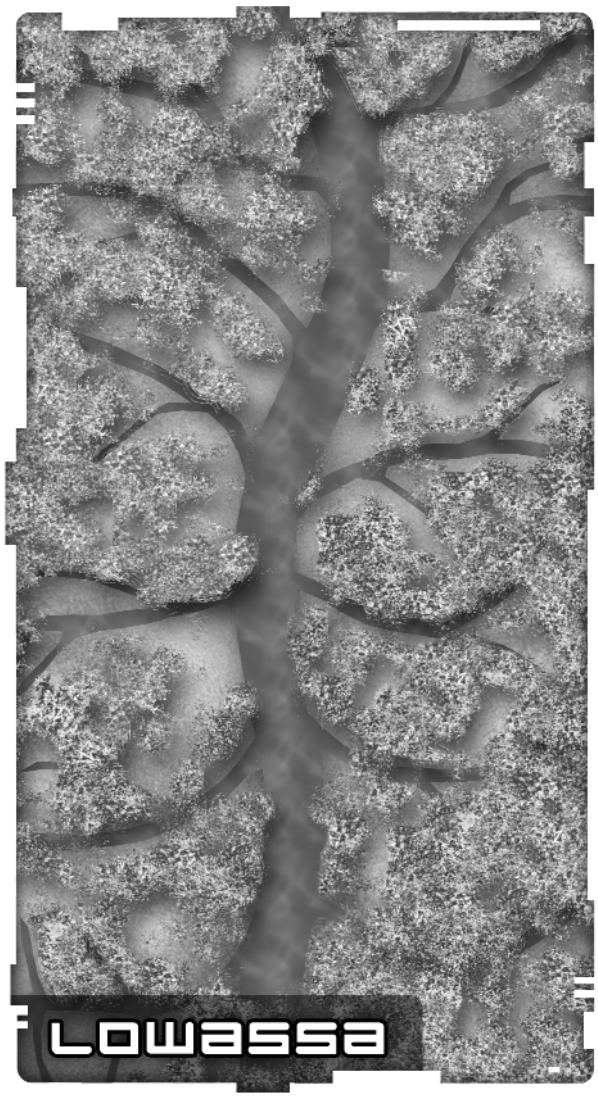
Leader: Master Selias
Population: 1,206
Major Exports/Products: Monks, knowledge, medicine
Major Imports: Food
Progress level: 4 outwardly, 8 in the inner vaults
Purchase DC Limit: 25
Black Market DC: NA (no black market)
Item Restriction Limit: None

The home of the Monks of the Blue Path, this monastery was originally a Star Confederation supply depot and fortress, built to supply the saurians after they awakened from their cloning vats. While it initially served its intended purpose, saving the technology and supplies within from those who would abuse them, Blue Company Twelve eventually disguised it as a monastery, dismantling or hiding the relics hidden within. In time Blue Company Twelve became the Monks of the Blue Path, hiding their past in the depths of their monastery. Now it looks like any of the dozens of monasteries found in the Saurian Empire, though in its depths are hidden ancient secrets.

The ten upper floors of the monastery contain living quarters, training rooms, libraries, meditation chambers, and meeting rooms used by the Monks of the Blue Path. From both within and without this building appears to be constructed of mud bricks, as many saurian monasteries and villages are, but these bricks are merely a façade covering an inner wall of Star Confederation armor plating. Automatic blast doors have been replaced with iron bound wood doors, and elevators with stairs. The entire monastery is lit by thousands of candles made on the premises by the monks. The monastery has an air of great age and of past glories, one that is carefully cultivated by the monks who live there.

The monastery is home to hundreds of monks who work continually to record history, learn about

the past, train in combat, medicine, and crafts, and answer petitions from outsiders who need assistance. The Monastery of the Blue Path is hidden from outsiders both by its remote location, twenty two hundred miles west of the City of Bone, and by deception. The monks refer to the monastery as the Hall of the Burning Sun, never referring to its true name in the company of those who are not absolutely trusted by the order. The monks have created a fake monastery a few score miles distant, which they use as a front through which they can help the locals without giving away their true home. There are a handful of villages in the area near the fake monastery and travelers come from hundreds of miles to ask advice and assistance from the monks in matters of medicine, philosophy, and other affairs, but do not know the monks as the Monks of the Blue Path. Groups of monks are often sent by the monastery to help villages deal with outbreaks of plague or groups of bandits, and the monks are well thought of for this generosity. There are several Imperial sizars in the nearby villages, but so far they suspect nothing of the monks and often seek them out for assistance. The monks are considering trying to convert several of these sizars to their cause, but for now it is considered too dangerous.



The subterranean levels of the monastery contain the remains of the Star Confederation supply depot, including weapons, vehicles, armor, and hyper-advanced relics. Only a small portion of these devices are functional due to the lack of spare parts, though the monks use what technology they can find to keep the surviving equipment operational. The monks only use this equipment in the direst of situations, such as a direct attack on the monastery. Outsiders are barred from these vaults. Complex puzzle locks and genetic scanners, as well as trained monks, guard the subterranean levels. Only individuals with certain genetic sequences can enter.

Most of the monks in the monastery are shellbacks, though all saurian species are present. These monks have left their lives in the outside world behind for a life of contemplation and helping others. Many are dishonored saurians who have no life beyond the monastery, while others are orphans adopted by the order, or simply peasants who saw the good works of the Monks of the Blue Path and wanted to be a part of the brotherhood. Several dozen of the monks in the monastery are still undergoing their initiation rites and training, but most of the monks are skilled combatants, doctors, and diplomats.

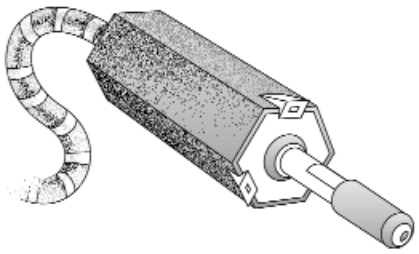
The monastery is surrounded by numerous orchards and fields, in which a wide variety of crops are grown. Smiths, weavers, clothiers, vintners, chemists, and other craftsmen are found in the monastery, enabling to be mostly self-sufficient. The monastery does trade with the nearby villages for other goods, usually bartering for its needs as opposed to using currency. While the order is able to care for its own needs, it is by no means wealthy and all the monks in the order take vows of poverty as part of their initiation, though there are several important exceptions to this vow, such as weaponry.

◇ Lowassa

Leader: Mother Moss
Population: 85,463
Major Exports/Products: Organic nanites, genetically engineered creatures, nutrient paste, manufactured goods
Major Imports: Soil, raw materials
Progress level: 7
Purchase DC Limit: 55
Black Market DC: 25
Item Restriction Limit: None

The capital of the Haimedian Collective, it is a difficult place to find if you don't know where to look. Every effort has been made to camouflage this tree city from both the ground and the air. Except for specific paths, the area around Lowassa is composed of especially thick jungles and undergrowth,

STAR CONFEDERATION SUBLIMINAL TRAINING



At the beginning of the Star Confederation's war with the Vaasi Empire the Star Confederation had the technology to subliminally train soldiers, communicating information directly to the subject's brain through a number of intrusive neural probes, applied while the subject is in a sensory deprivation tank. These probes passed combat experience and training read from the minds of Star Confederation veterans to the long-term memory of the subject, allowing them to learn large amounts of information quickly and have the skills of a veteran soldier with only a portion of the time required to learn in the field. Thus even the greenest recruits could be trained using the information of the Confederation's greatest veterans in a few months time.

The subliminal training process allows characters to gain levels without actually gaining experience. A character who undergoes subliminal training receives a number of levels in basic or advanced classes that the character meets the prerequisites for, up to a number of levels equal to the character's Wisdom and Intelligence bonus combined.

The operators of the subliminal training device set the training regimen, and they determine what class levels, feats, skills, and other abilities the character earns.

The subliminal training process takes one week per class level gained. Once the total levels gained by the process are determined the subject must make a Will save (DC 10 + the number of levels gained) or take 1d4 points of permanent Charisma and Wisdom damage due to brain damage. Because of this risk, this process was only used in the direst emergencies.

Once the training is complete the character has all the class levels, skills, feats, and other abilities granted by the training process as determined by the operators of the subliminal training device, but no additional experience points.

The character must earn enough experience points to qualify for his new subliminally gained levels before he earns any new class levels, meaning while a character with subliminal training gets a head start in terms of level he cannot choose any new class levels, skills, or feats until he has enough experience points to advance one level beyond the level gained by subliminal training. The character trades flexibility for a quick power boost, and cannot change his subliminal training levels once they are set.

The Birthing Cave on C'thalk contains all the necessary equipment to carry out subliminal training and may be the best way to quickly bring the people of the Helios system up to speed on Star Confederation technology and tactics, assuming they can figure out how to operate the machines.

making any type of travel difficult and movement by ground vehicle impossible. Hiding the city from above is much easier due to the thick canopy of the jungle. Lowassa produces minimal air pollution, heat, or electrical fields, making it very difficult for the sensors of the saurians to locate.

Looking unlike the settlements of other races, Lowassa is composed of hundreds of specially engineered alaxf trees that grow up to forty feet in diameter and to a height of one hundred feet, but are hollow inside. These trees provide shelter for the haimedians, but are more used for storage than living space. Haimedians prefer sleeping in the open air under the sky with their roots in the soil, and each building usually has a nearby rooting area for its owners. Other alaxf trees hold businesses or workshops. At the center of the city is Mother Moss herself, who looks like a large pile of moss twelve feet high and thirty feet in diameter. Numerous levels of jungle canopy and other forms of camouflage cover Mother Moss to disguise her presence. Haimedian sentries guard her around the clock, one of the most important duties a haimedian can undertake.

Lowassa sits on the banks of the Syerlos River and irrigation streams run from the river throughout the village, making it easy for the haimedians to get water when they need it. The irrigation channels are also used to move goods throughout the city, acting in a fashion similar to canals and allowing the haimedians to avoid using vehicles that may be easier to detect with sensors. The Syerlos River is the main method of travel to and from Lowassa, and it is watched at all times by sentries. The city also has a small subterranean spaceport in which the ships that brought the haimedians to C'thalk are hidden. These ships are kept in good repair in case they are needed, but they have few weapons and would be of little use in a fight. Relying instead on bacterial and viral warfare, the haimedians have few weapons suitable to space combat.

The majority of the population of Lowassa is involved in the more high-tech industries of haimedian culture, such as medical research, manufacturing living tools and organic nanites, and carrying out genetic engineering. While all haimedian villages have these features to some extent, Lowassa is the center of haimedian industry and research on C'thalk. The haimedians have limited mining operations in the Teeth of C'thalk to acquire iron and other minerals for their industrial needs, most of which are used in Lowassa. One of the major products of Lowassa is the nutrient paste used by haimedians traveling away from home to sink their roots into while resting and acquire the nutrients they need. The production of nutrient paste requires a wide variety of plants and minerals, all of which travel by boat to Lowassa's production facilities.

While much of Lowassa's population is involved in industrial production, a significant portion is involved in guarding and supporting Mother Moss, acting as her eyes and ears across the haimedian collective. Completely immobile, Mother Moss relies on these agents to keep her apprised of recent events and to act as her hands and mouth in distant lands. These individuals have the most contact with the outside world and are usually changed by their experiences. These changes often involve violent behavior, paranoia, and lack of patience with other haimedians. Most haimedians avoid the agents of Mother Moss, fearing their strange ways. Those of her agents who remain in Lowassa, such as secretaries and librarians, are not quite so ostracized.

Lowassa is defended by five thousand haimedian soldiers, all of whom are armed with cutter blades and either acid or bacterial weapons. These troops have few vehicles or heavy weapons, relying instead on bacterial weapons and their knowledge of the terrain to defend the city. Lowassa has numerous natural defense systems including poisonous plants and dangerous animals that would make invading the city difficult. Despite these preparations any dedicated force with heavy vehicles and environmentally sealed armor could take the city, but probably not before the haimedians managed to evacuate Mother Moss.

There is no criminal underworld to speak of in Lowassa, as do not haimedians really understand the idea of crime. There are no weapon restrictions among a people that regularly carry around enough viral matter to wipe out thousands of people and think nothing of it. As haimedians interact more with other races and find how different their thought processes are these facts may change.

◇ Lossar Stand

Leader: Splets
Population: 1,490
Major Exports/Products: Pollens, raw materials, minerals
Major Imports: Manufactured goods, nutrients
Progress level: 7
Purchase DC Limit: 30
Black Market DC: 25
Item Restriction Limit: None

An example of the average haimedian village, Lossar Stand is located in the northeastern region of the Haimedian Collective, on the side of Lossar Mountain. Its inhabitants mine copper from the nearby mountains and harvest a number of materials from the plants that grow in the higher elevations of the Teeth of C'thalk. Copper and plant extracts are used in the industries of Lowassa and are transported to the capital city along a number of rivers. In return Lossar Stand receives manufactured goods, especially mining equipment, from Lowassa and other settlements in the Haimedian Collective. While Lossar Stand does harvest its

own nutrients from the local plants, it has to import some fertilizer to meet the demands of its populace.

Most of the population of Lossar Stand is involved in mining and harvesting, with few craftsmen to be found. The settlement is led by an elder haimedian named Splets who formerly served as one of Mother Moss's agents abroad. A cunning and cagey leader, many haimedians consider him slightly mad due to his paranoia and willingness to commit acts of violence to protect his people. Despite these eccentricities his people consider him an able leader and while they avoid him socially, they are glad to have someone so knowledgeable in charge of the village. A militia of all adult haimedians, numbering close to a thousand, guards Lossar Stand. They are armed with makeshift cutting tools and a number of acid sprayers. Unlike most haimedian settlements, Lossar Stand has a number of full time soldiers due to Splets's paranoia. These troops are armed with a number of poison rifles, grenades, and even a makeshift tank, most of which have been fashioned from the materials mined from the nearby mountains. Lossar Stand is one of the haimedian settlements closest to the Saurian Empire, so its defenses are more extensive than normal.

Due to the nature of haimedian breeding nearly all of the inhabitants of Lossar Stand are related within a few steps of each other, a common situation in many haimedian settlements. This tends to draw the community together and achievement of any individual member of the community is viewed as an achievement of all. While the day to day events in Lossar Stand are not particularly interesting or exciting, the village has numerous celebrations throughout the year to commemorate important dates in the history of the Lossar Stand, such as its founding or the establishment of the first power generator in the nearby river.

Like most haimedian villages, Lossar Stand tries to use organic technology when possible, both for aesthetic reasons and to avoid the sensors of the Saurian Empire. The village has electrical power due to a generator in the nearby river, but the power generated is only use sparsely to avoid detection. The settlement relies on numerous biological tools to avoid needing power, such as bioluminescent fungus instead of electrical lights. Lossar Stand has a steady supply of the more advanced technologies of the Haimedian Collective, including a medical center with nanites and other advanced medicinal tools. The settlement stays in contact with the rest of the Haimedian Collective through strictly scheduled laser communications that are relayed through other nearby villages to their end location. Less important messages are usually hand-delivered by the many couriers that travel the Collective, braving storms, jungle, giant lizards, and raging rivers to get their messages through.

◇ The Birthing Cave

Now little more than a legend among the saurians, the Birthing Cave is the remains of the genetic engineering facility that gave birth to the saurians. Current brachin theories dismiss the idea of the Birthing Cave as nothing more than primitive mythology, but most saurians still ascribe to the idea that they were born in a cave hidden by the ancient gods and that the cave is somewhere on C'thalk. Hundreds of saurians set out each year to try and find the Birthing Cave, following every possible clue they can find in the hopes of uncovering it and its supposed secrets of eternal life, but thus far none have been successful. Among the urban saurians, searching for the Birthing Cave is considered foolish at best, but among the rural population it is considered a worthwhile pastime. Many villages claim to be built on the remnants of the Birthing Cave or boast that local healing springs are caused by the proximity of the Birthing Cave. If all these claims were true, there would be dozens of Birthing Caves across the Empire, and these villages rarely treat well with each other. While some searchers find other remnants of the Star Confederation and claim these ruins are the Birthing Cave, no one has found the actual facility yet.

In truth the Birthing Cave is located fifty miles north of the City of Bone in a heavily populated region of the Empire. Those who search for the Birthing Cave never consider such a central location, instead looking on the edges of the Empire and beyond. It is currently hidden beneath dozens of feet of rock and earth due to a cave-in caused during the wars that engulfed the saurians shortly after they awoke. The cave became a focal point in these battles since it contained so much technology and medical equipment, but in the fighting over the cave it was sealed up and eventually forgotten in favor of other targets. Given the technology of the Saurian Empire they could find the cave easily using satellites and sonar if they had some clue where to look, but so far have been looking in all the same places. Once the cave is found, excavating it should be equally easy, though it would require several months of work to do safely.

Inside the Birthing Cave the genetic engineering facility remains, though it is badly damaged by the years of neglect and the structural damage it has suffered. While the facility cannot currently function and only a handful of computers are operational, it could be repaired given sufficient time and resources. If its tanks of organic material were replenished, it could again make a trained army of saurian soldiers, something the Emperor would dearly love to use if he had the chance. In addition to genetic engineering equipment and computers there are a handful of weapons, suits of armor, vehicles, and relics as well. Anyone who found the Birthing Cave would have a treasure trove of goods in his possession.

The Birthing Cave is not just an empty vault waiting to be unearthed, however; its security systems are still operational. Numerous PL 9 sensors and weapons are set up around the Birthing Cave to attack any unauthorized personnel, which is anyone who is not a saurian or one of one of the Star Confederation species. Any non-saurians who enter are in for a rough time.

◇ The Ruins of C'thalk

Much like Eos, C'thalk is scattered with ruins of Star Confederation buildings that were destroyed by the vaasi assault on the planet. Although the vaasi did not survive on C'thalk for long, they did destroy every significant Star Confederation outpost and killed hundreds of millions of inhabitants. Their assault was fierce enough that in a few weeks civilization on C'thalk had collapsed, and within a few years every sentient being was dead.

While the vaasi did a very effective job in destroying the Star Confederation presence on C'thalk, they were more concerned with body count than collateral damage, hoping to occupy the planet after conquering it. Most of the buildings suffered damage but were not obliterated, leaving dozens of cities and terraforming outposts standing after the final battle. These were worn down by the many years that passed, but fragments of these buildings remain, some of which still contain functional Star Confederation relics. Due to the thinner population of C'thalk and the fact it was primarily an agricultural world during the days of the Star Confederation the ruins are more spread out. Furthermore, the ruins have been picked over for centuries by the saurians and most of the relics have already been found and claimed. It is not unheard of for saurian warriors to wield ancient Star Confederation weapons in combat, at least until they run out of power. The remaining ruins are spread across the planet remarkably evenly and the most heavily picked over ones are those found in the territory of the Saurian Empire. The ones farther from the Saurian Empire hold the most relics, but traveling to them is difficult and their locations are not well known.

In addition to Star Confederation ruins there are a number of crashed vaasi spacecraft and on C'thalk, in addition to old abandoned vaasi bases from their short-lived occupation. Most saurians avoid these, generally believing that they are cursed or are constructions of evil spirits due to the unusual architecture used in their construction. Few relic hunters are brave enough to go searching these places for valuables.

Relations with the Other Worlds of the Helios System • • •

The saurians are a warlike people and the Empire views the entire Helios system as territory to be conquered. They have already made war on the inhabitants of Thres, and will also attack Eos if given a chance. Despite the fact the saurians have the largest population of any faction in the system their limited space travel capabilities will limit their dreams of conquest significantly. Once the Saurian Empire learns it cannot out muscle the Wolf Tribes, Coqui Warcouncil, Mechites, and Dawning Star Republic simultaneously it will start looking for allies, seeking to divide and conquer. When the vaasi of the Cronus Belt make themselves known to the system as a whole, the Saurian Empire may not join in the fight against them, instead using the chaos caused by the vaasi to attack the Wolf Tribes or Dawning Star Republic. If the Saurian Empire capitalizes on a vaasi offensive by attacking its neighbors, the Emperor may face widespread discontent and disobedience among his people, fomented by the Monks of the Blue Path and their prophecy of alien invasion.

Ultimately the Saurian Empire is the expansionistic, warlike nation of the system. It is little concerned with the plight of its neighbors and may prove just as much an enemy to the player characters as the vaasi, though the common people of the Empire are not likely to be so aggressive. Player character saurians could even become wrapped up in overthrowing the Emperor and replacing him with a more beneficent ruler, something most of the other governments of the Helios system would probably back. The tentaari actively fear the saurians and have as little contact with them as possible. When faced with the prospect of obtaining such advanced weaponry as the tentaari have, nothing would cow the Empire, let alone creatures as physically unimposing as the tentaari. The Saurian Empire considers the tentaari weak children who play with the tools of the gods, and tries to capture them and their technology whenever possible. The Monks on the Blue Path, on the other hand, consider the tentaari to be prospective allies and a possible source of help for restoring the remaining devices stored in the Monastery of the Blue Path. Thus far the monks have been unable to contact the tentaari.

The Haimedian Collective is far less aggressive in its behavior toward other governments. Knowing that all of the inhabitants of the Helios system save the vaasi are descendants of the Star Confederation, Mother Moss will seek to build bridges between them and use the Haimedian Collective as her tool for doing so. The Haimedian Collective will enter peaceful alliances with as many other species as possible, though this may be difficult since the saurians will learn of their presence

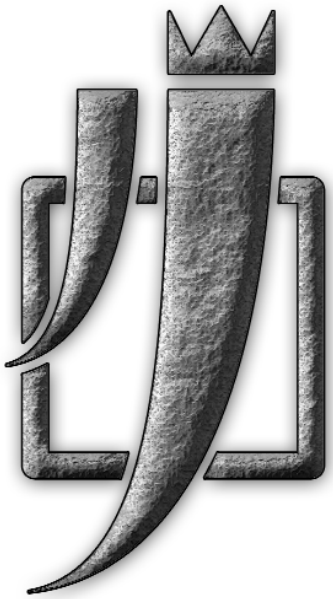
eventually. Entering into an alliance with a nation that may be invaded by an obviously superior military force does not seem a wise course of action. The haimedians are likely to ally with the Dawning Star Republic, the yaom, and the Wolf Tribes, but the warlike coqui and the artificial mechites are likely to be too alien or violent for the haimedians to ally with easily. If the vaasi attack the system en masse, the haimedians will readily involve themselves in the defense of the Helios system, using their skills in viral weapons and healing to help where they can. The haimedians have no interest in conquest or profit, instead being more concerned with their continued survival and their technological advancement. Haimedian lack of understanding of what drives sentient animal life-forms may make relations with them difficult. The haimedians will not share their more advanced technologies without immense efforts of persuasion.

Moss Mother knows exactly what the tentaari are and what they are doing by intimidating the other species of the system. She has told the haimedians of their history and thus the haimedians do not trust or even fear the tentaari, instead feeling little more than pity for them.

ADVENTURE IDEAS FOR C'THALK • • •

◇ Prisoners of the Empire

A Dawning Star Republic scout ship crashes on C'thalk and the Saurian Empire captures its crew before the Republic can mount a rescue mission. The player characters are dispatched to rescue the crew, which may involve diplomatic efforts or freeing them by force of arms, all the while trying to avoid an interplanetary incident.



◇ Accidental Discovery

After suffering engine problems the player characters set down on C'thalk for repairs, accidentally landing in the middle of the Haimedian Collective. The player characters run the risk of exposing the Haimedian Collective's hiding place as the saurians try to track their ship. The Collective, which is fully willing to eliminate the players characters and leave them in a convenient spot for the saurians to find, contacts the player characters in the hopes of finding a better solution. The player characters must come up with a better plan to keep the haimedians concealed in order to avoid an unpleasant end.

◇ Trading Run

The player characters are contacted by a group of fang gangs who have pooled their resources to contact a ship and get their feet wet in the pool of interplanetary commerce, particularly gun running. Though saurian law forbids it, as space travel is the domain of nobles and the Emperor, the fang gangers are willing to run the risk. The player characters may also get in trouble with the Saurian Empire if they are caught helping the fang gangs. They can supply the player characters with a large amount of industrial goods in exchange for weapons assuming the player characters can find a way to make the exchange without being spotted.

◇ Seven Offworlders

While flying above C'thalk the player characters are contacted by a Monk of the Blue Path seeking help defending a small village from a group of bandits. The local sizar has decided not to help the village to punish it for a past imagined slight against him, and village has little to offer in terms of payment so it has had trouble attracting other help. If the player characters prove themselves worthy by defending the village from the bandits they will have earned a contact in the Monastery of the Blue Path.

◇ Throne of Blood

One of the Emperor's relatives helps the players on several missions to C'thalk, providing diplomatic and economic assistance in their efforts, comes under suspicion of treason. This Imperial saurian is more concerned than most with the plight of the peasants and falls under the suspicion of the Emperor due to the words of a spirit talker. The spirit talker claims the relative will betray the Emperor and overthrow him. The paranoia of the Emperor forces the relative to take actions to defend himself, including calling on any offworld allies who may wish to see the Emperor deposed. The player characters may find themselves on the outnumbered side of a civil war.

SPECIES • • •

◇ HAIMEDIANS

Genetic descendants of the dosai of the Star Confederation, the haimedians are living plants of vaguely humanoid shape created by the genetic seeding project of the Star Confederation. One of the more unusual products of the mixture of the genetic information of the six races of the Star Confederation, haimedians are essentially sentient mobile plants that move via a number of water-filled capillaries and bladders in their body. While they are by no means speedy or strong, they can move surprisingly well, considering they are plants and their ancestors were stationary. Their attempts at speech are not quite so successful and all haimedians have some trouble with spoken languages, but find the concept fascinating. Haimedians communicate through smells and spores and consider the idea of communicating through sound quaint, as their sense of hearing is not well developed.

Haimedians have the appearance of humanoid ferns with their outer layers made up of thousands of small leaves. The interior of the body is made up of a hard wood-like substance that carries nutrients to the other portions of the body and provides support, effectively acting as bones. Haimedians can grow the leaves on the outer edges of their body out if they wish and the cutting of these leaves in decorative patterns is considered a prime way for haimedians to express themselves. If they are cut too short, however, the haimedian is blinded, because they rely on certain chemicals in their leaves to react to light so they can see their surroundings and eliminating too much of the leaves can result in reducing visual acuity. The haimedians have a head-like structure, but it has no significant sensory organs and the brain is instead carried in the torso. The head seems to be a leftover from the humanoid genetic template included in the seeding project, but its presence does make it easier for other races to deal with haimedians in social situations.

All haimedians are effectively hermaphroditic, carrying both seeds and the spores necessary to pollinate the seeds of other haimedians. Haimedians do not have sex, but instead pollinate each other's seeds in intensely private group sessions usually limited to family and friends. These sessions are held whenever a haimedian decides it wishes to produce children and are considered one of the most solemn occasions a haimedian can attend. Once the fertilization takes place the haimedian carrying the eggs continues to carry them for six months as they grow within the haimedian's chest cavity, eventually ripping through the haimedians exterior leaves with their roots. This is the sign to the haimedian carrying the seeds that birthing time has arrived and the haimedian lays in the dirt for several days, allowing the roots of its children to dig into the earth. After the roots are secured the haimedian stands up, effectively ripping its children out of its chest cavity. This is a very painful process and was often deadly in earlier times, but haimedian medicine has advanced to make the process far less dangerous. The seeds then remain rooted for another twelve months before uprooting themselves and joining haimedian society as children. Haimedians take twenty years to reach adolescence and another twenty to become adults, but age quickly once they reach adulthood.

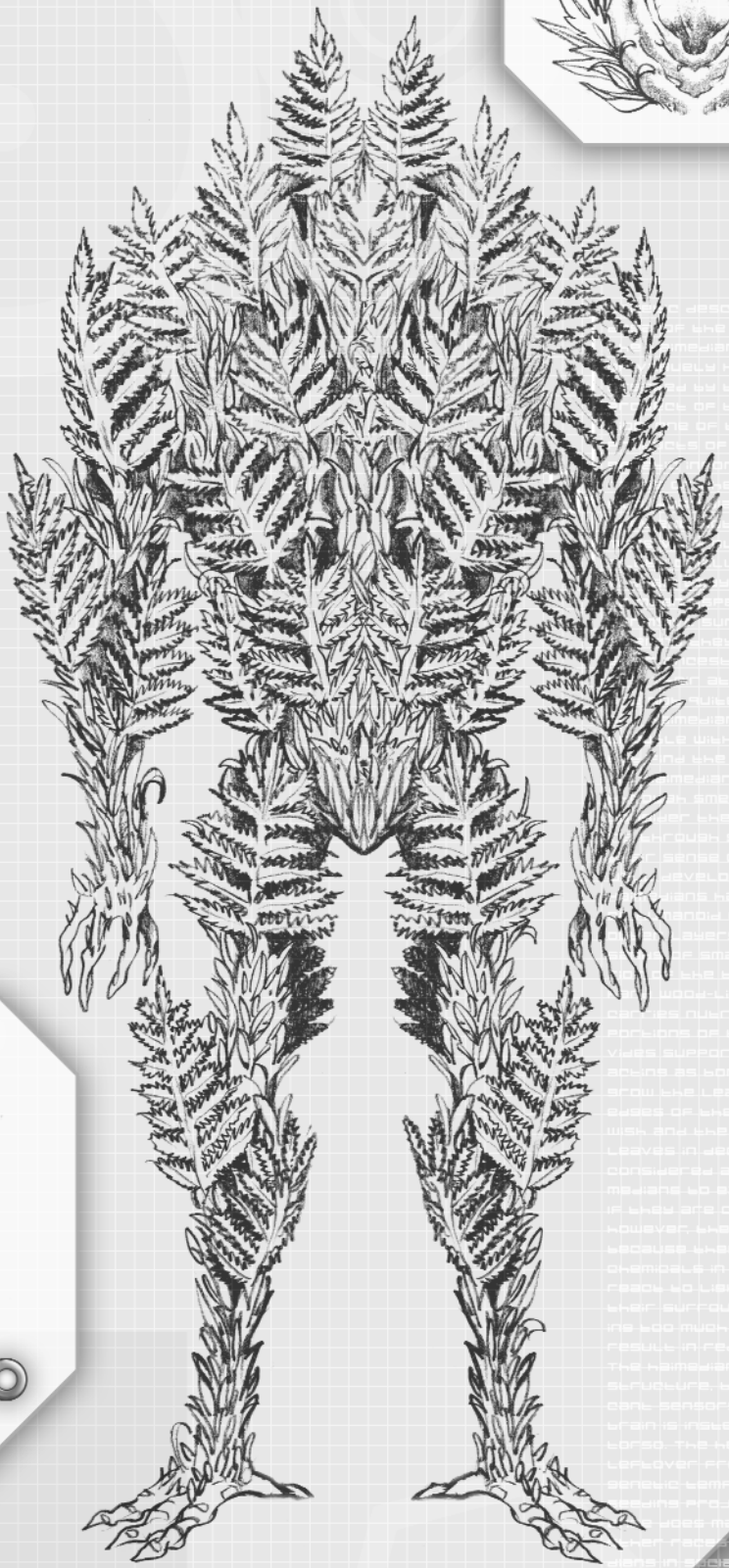
Because of their lack of sexes, Haimedians do not use many unispeak pronouns when talking about each other, finding "it" a bit disconcerting when used to refer to their fellows. In Sporespeak there are numerous pronouns for hundreds of slight differences in color, size, and disposition that the haimedians use to refer to each other. The nuances of these terms are usually lost in translation to other languages. Other races usually resort to using he or she when describing haimedians, based on the haimedian's behavior and the speaker's perception of gender roles.

Haimedians do not need to eat as animals do, instead relying on the roots on the bottoms of their feet to absorb needed nutrients and water from the soil. Haimedians do not really sleep, but instead go into nutrient comas, spending six to twelve hours rooted in the same place and drawing in nutrients and water for the next day's activities. Due to the fact they use water in their method of locomotion haimedians use a great deal of water each day. Most haimedians spend the nighttime hours rooted in a specially prepared area of fertilized soil next to their homes, but traveling haimedians rely on premade nutrient paste that they spread over their roots before resting. This paste provides all the nutrients needed, effectively field rations for haimedians. Some haimedians are said to use the blood of living creatures for their nutrient needs, but such tales are usually told to scare wayward children and are commonly believed to have little basis in fact.

Generally haimedians do not wear clothes for any other reason than practicality or aesthetics. Haimedians have no sense of modesty, since they all the same sexual organs, and possess no real sense of sexual desire. Haimedians usually wear belts with numerous pouches to hold tools and other devices. Most of the clothes used by haimedians are made of various plant fibers, though some advanced synthetic materials are found among them as well.

Haimedian







Species Traits

Haimedians share the following species traits.

Type: Plant

Size: Medium. Haimedians have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Ability Modifiers: +2 Wisdom, -2 Dexterity, -2 Strength

Speed: 20 ft.

Bonus Feat: Haimedians gain the Xenomedic and Organic Technology Familiarity feats as bonus feats.

Carbon Dioxide Breathers (Ex): Unlike animals haimedians consume carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. In most situations this does not require any special rules, as on most planets carbon dioxide is plentiful enough to be readily available. Most environmental suits can be converted to haimedian use with little difficulty, requiring a Repair check (DC 15).

Haimedians can effectively hold their breath for ten rounds per point of Constitution, but as soon as this time is up they take one point of Constitution damage each round until they are dead or able to breathe again. If haimedians are stuck in a sealed environment for an extended period of time they will eventually use up all the carbon dioxide, but if there is at least one Medium-sized animal present for every two haimedians, the animal will produce enough carbon dioxide for the haimedians to continue breathing indefinitely while the haimedians produce oxygen for the animal.

Immunities (Ex): Haimedians are immune to sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, and poisons unless they are specifically made to affect plants. Haimedians cannot be flanked. Unlike most plants they are subject to critical hits, as they do have vital organs.

Increased Massive Damage Threshold (Ex): Haimedians receive a +2 species bonus to their massive damage threshold, instead of being immune to massive damage as most plants are.

Inorganic Technology Limitations (Ex): Haimedians suffer a -4 penalty to all Computer Use, Craft, Drive, Pilot, and Repair skill checks involving inorganic technology.

Nutrient Coma (Ex): For four hours each day haimedians must sink their roots in to fertile soil to gather nutrients for the next twenty-four hours. This replaces the normal need creatures have to sleep and eat. If a haimedian is not able to spend at least four hours in a nutrient coma each day, it suffers 1 point of Constitution damage each day that does not heal until the haimedian is able to enter a nutrient coma. The soil in non-desert and non-arctic regions on most worlds is suitable for haimiedans to draw nutrients from, but all manner of artificial ground coverings make it impossible for them to go into a nutrient coma. Haimedians have developed a special nutrient paste they can spread on their roots when they cannot access fertile soil. While in a nutrient coma the haimedian is as alert as a sleeping human and can wake up with the same speed.

Scent (Ex): This ability allows the haimedian to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell. Creatures with the scent ability can identify familiar odors just as humans do familiar sights.

The haimedian can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents can be detected at twice these ranges, and overpowering scents can be detected at triple normal range.

When a haimedian detects a scent, the exact location is not revealed-only its presence somewhere within range. The haimedian can take a move or attack action to note the direction of the scent. If it moves within 5 feet of the source, the haimedian can pinpoint that source.

A haimedian with the scent ability can follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track. The typical DC for a fresh trail is 10 (no matter what kind of surface holds the scent). This DC increases or decreases depending on the strength of the quarry's odor, the number of creatures being tracked, and the age of the trail. For each hour that the trail is cold, the DC increases by 2. The ability otherwise follows the rules for the Track feat.

Haimedians tracking by scent ignore the effects of surface conditions and poor visibility.

Sensory Skill Penalty: Haimedians suffer a -4 penalty on all Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

Skill Bonus: Haimedians receive a +2 species bonus to Treat Injury and Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) skill checks.

Free Language Skills: Read/Write Language (Sporegus), Speak Language (Sporegus)

PL Familiarity: 7

Level Adjustment: +0

◇ Saurian Species

Based on the DNA of the sarick, the saurian race is actually made up of four distinct species that are related in terms of genetic structure. All have a very closely related common ancestor, all have similar body shapes in terms of two eyes, two ears, mouth, tail, two arms, and two legs, but how those forms are implemented varies widely. Saurians of two different species cannot breed, though they can go through the physical act of sex, but with some species this is quite uncomfortable at best. The saurians all consider themselves part of the same race, though they consider the different species to be inherently different and treat them accordingly. Many saurians have no idea of racial equality between the different species and admit that some species are clearly better at certain tasks than others. While most saurians agree with this in principle, not all saurians like where their species has ended up due to these ideas.

Saurians are all cold-blooded reptiles that are very similar in shape and biology to ancient terran dinosaurs, which is no coincidence; both creatures were descended from the DNA of the sarick. Saurians must rely on outside sources for heat, one of the reasons they are so comfortable in the high temperatures of C'thalk. They abhor cold temperatures and avoid settling in arctic regions.

Like other reptiles saurians reproduce by laying eggs, which are fertilized in the female of the species before they are laid. Once the eggs are laid they are kept safe and warm by both parents until they hatch. Hatcheries are found in most saurian homes. Eggs that are not kept warm often result in birth defects. It generally takes three months for a saurian egg to hatch and the mother carries the egg for five months before it is laid, though this time varies from species to species. Saurian eggs are tough and leathery, rarely breaking due to being dropped but can be destroyed by any determined effort. Saurians can lay eggs every year and have an unrestricted mating cycle, though most saurians only have children every few years. The saurians seem to have some sort of control over the egg fertilization process and saurian females can choose not to allow their eggs to be fertilized, emitting a special enabling chemical into their system when they decide to have children. Thus saurians have an innate form of birth and population control, which was engineered into saurian DNA by their sarick creators so they did not grow beyond the capacity of the planet to support.

The sarick designed the saurians to be soldiers and all saurians suffer from bloodlust. This was intended to make the saurians more effective warriors, but also severely limits their ability to function as members of a peaceful society. Violence is a regular part of saurian culture, though most try to limit their outbursts to duels and other sorts of more socially acceptable violence.

Species Traits:

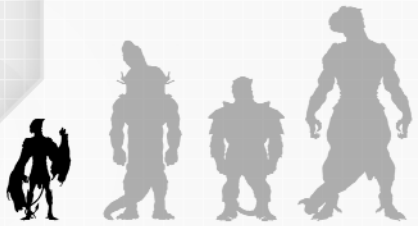
All saurians subspecies have the following species traits:

Bloodlust (Ex): All saurians suffer from a craving for violence that, if not sated regularly, will force them to draw blood. This drive is satisfied by entering a state called bloodlust, which a saurian can do willingly or unwillingly. To enter bloodlust willingly a saurian must be in combat. He may declare that he is entering bloodlust as a free action. While in bloodlust the saurian may not inflict nonlethal damage and will only use ranged attacks when there are no enemies in melee range. If the saurian incapacitates a creature, such as disabling it by reducing it to negative hit points, the saurian must immediately carry out a coup de grace action on the creature. To exit the bloodlust at any time, the saurian must make a Will save (DC 10), a check that may be made once per round as a free action. Until the bloodlust ends or the saurian runs out of enemies, he will continue fighting. He may not flee combat without ending the bloodlust first. While in bloodlust saurians will not attack allies, friends, or family members unless they are attacking the saurian or causing it a great deal of anger.

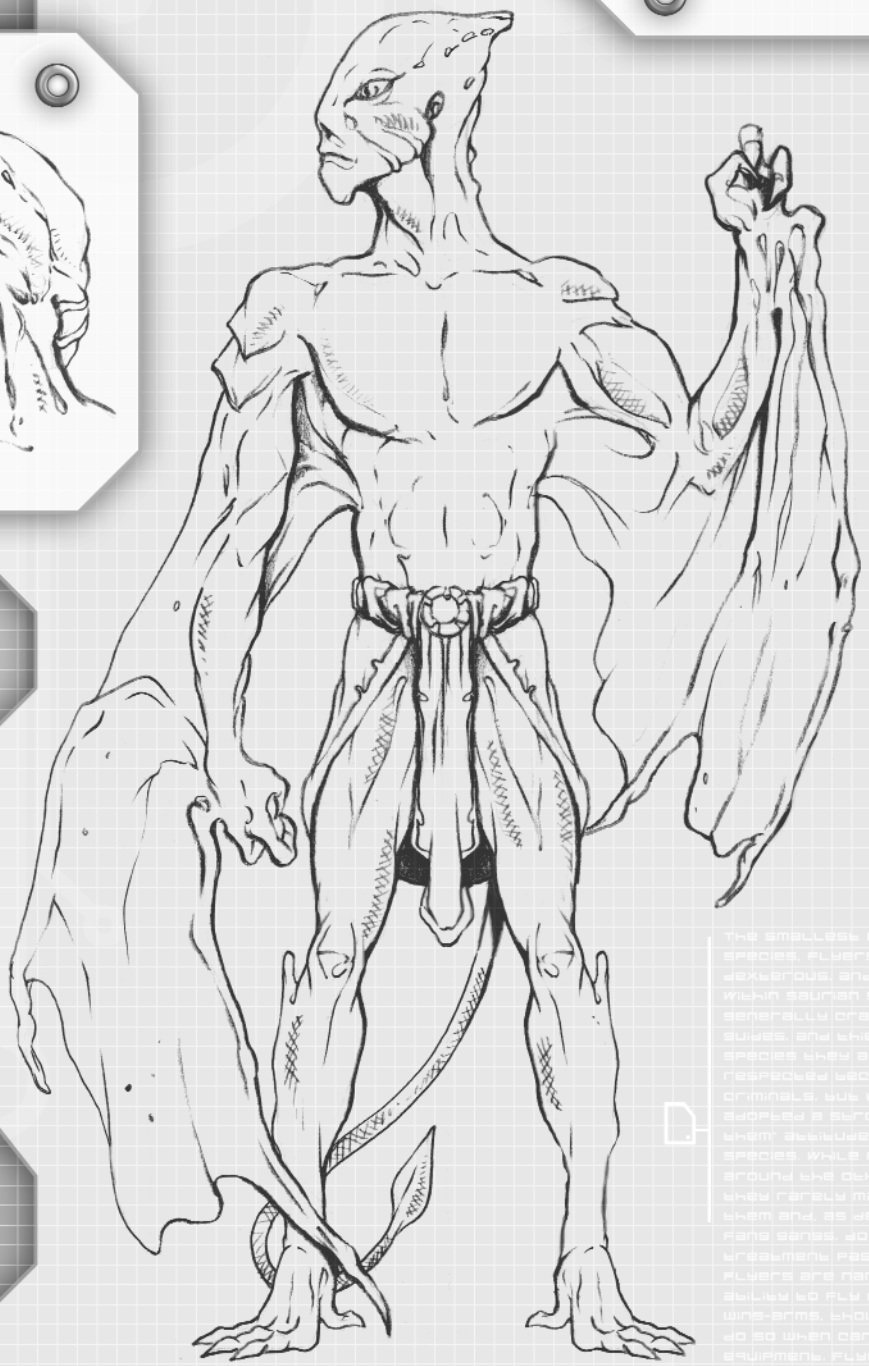
If a saurian goes ten days without entering bloodlust for at least five consecutive rounds the saurian must make a Will save (DC 5+1 per day beyond ten days since the last fit of bloodlust, maximum DC of 15) at the beginning of each round of combat to avoid going into bloodlust, and must make a Will save (DC 0+1 per day beyond ten days since the last fit of bloodlust, maximum DC of 10) during any situation where the saurian is extremely angry, such as tense negotiations or dealing with difficult repairs, to avoid entering bloodlust. Upon failing either of these rolls, the saurian enters bloodlust and will attempt to kill his opponent or the creature angering him unless the saurian is able to stop himself by making a Will save (DC 10) to exit bloodlust. The count of days since the last episode of bloodlust does not reset until the saurian has been in bloodlust for five rounds.

Cold Blooded (Ex): Saurians suffer a -4 penalty to all Fortitude saving throws against cold based attacks or exposure to cold weather, but receive a +8 bonus to Fortitude saving throws against exposure damage from hot weather.

FLYER



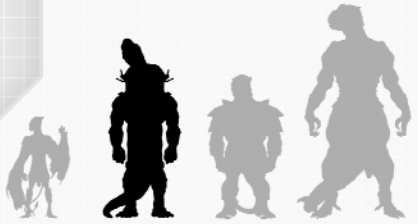




The smallest of the saurian species, flyers are a cunning, dexterous, and skilled people. Within saurian society they are generally craftsmen, pilots, guides, and thieves. Of the four species they are the least respected because of their many criminals. But the flyers have adopted a strong "us against them" attitude toward the other species. While flyers are polite around the other saurian species they rarely make friends among them and, as demonstrated by their fama songs, do not take poor treatment passively.

Flyers are named for their ability to fly using their large wing-arms, though they can only do so when carrying very little equipment. Flyers look much like pterodactyls of ancient Earth, only with more developed hands and wings that can fold back under their arms when they are not needed. The feet of the flyers are well developed, capable of operating simple

Brachin







◇ Flyers

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Flyers are named for their ability to fly using their large wing-arms, though they can only do so when carrying very little equipment. Flyers look much like pterodactyls of ancient Earth, only with more developed hands and wings that can fold back under their arms when they are not needed. The feet of the flyers are well developed, capable of operating simple devices while in flight, which is important since the flyers cannot use their hands while flapping. Due to their short legs flyers are not very fast while on the ground and prefer flying when possible. Most flyers wear only what clothing they need and modesty requires.

Species Traits

Flyers share the following species traits.
Type: Monstrous Humanoid
Size: Small. Flyers gain a +1 size bonus to Defense, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus to Hide checks. They take a -4 penalty on grapple checks. Their lifting and carryng limits are three quarters of those of a Medium-size character.
Flyers must use two hands to wield a Medium-size weapon, and light weapons for them are Tiny or smaller.
Ability Modifiers: +2 Dexterity, -2 Charisma, -2 Wisdom
Speed: 20 ft.
Acute Vision: Flyers have extremely acute vision, allowing them to see much farther than other species. They halve all penalties to Spot checks due to distance.
Armor Restrictions: A flyer cannot wear armor designed for other species. Flyer armor must be specially made and costs more than similar armor sized for a Small-size character; increase the purchase DC of flyer armor by +3.
Bonus Feat: Flyers receive the Zero-G Training feat as a bonus feat.
Dexterous Feet: Flyers can use their feet as hands, but suffer a -2 penalty to skill checks and attack rolls when doing so.
Flight: Flyers can use their wings to fly with a speed of 50 feet and good maneuverability. They cannot fly while wearing heavy or medium armor or while carrying a light or heavy load.
Swim Penalty: Flyers suffer a -2 species penalty on Swim checks.
Skill Bonuses: Flyers receive a +2 species bonus to Drive, Pilot and Spot skill checks.
Free Language Skills: Read/Write Language (Sessil), Speak Language (Sessil)
PL Familiarity: 5
Level Adjustment: +0

◇ Brachins

The scholars and philosophers of the saurians, among a warlike species these more intellectual creatures are often the odd man out. Brachins are more resistant to bloodlust than other saurians, and are more concerned with mental pursuits than physical ones unlike their brethren. The brachins are very much the thinkers of the saurian species, but considering saurians are creatures of action the brachins do not earn much respect for their intellectual prowess. Instead many see them as weak, cowardly, or corrupt, and the graft of the Saurian Dominion and the Imperial Bureaucracy does little to weaken these claims.

Brachins have equally long tails and short, squat torsos and limbs. They are ungainly creatures, far more at home in a library or a worktable than in the battlefield. Most brachins prefer robes and loose clothing, but nearly all have expensive tastes that include large and ornate hats. Among the Imperial Bureaucracy rank is denoted by the size and color of the hats or hoods worn. Brachins place much value on appearance and always make sure they look their best. They cultivate an aura of calm, something that often infuriates the more emotional tyrans.

Most brachins are governmental officials, scholars, teachers, or scientists. Despite the distrust of the other saurians, brachins are able to run the saurian government far more efficiently than the other saurian species and thus remain at the heart of government despite open corruption. Tyrans tried running the bureaucracy of the Empire for a time, but the end result was far more fatalities than bookkeeping should entail. Brachins are grudgingly accepted as a sort of necessary evil by most saurians, but they are rarely liked. Brachins are often unaware of these opinions, thinking they are the most important individuals in the Empire and that everyone else knows it.

Species Traits

Brachins share the following species traits.
Type: Monstrous Humanoid
Size: Medium. Brachins have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
Ability Modifiers: +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma, -4 Dexterity
Speed: 20 ft.
Bloodlust Resistance (Ex): Brachins receive

DEALING WITH BLOODLUST

Although bloodlust is a problem for many saurians and it does lead to a large number of murders each year, the saurians have learned over time to deal with this unfortunate aspect of their genetic heritage. Bloodlust is not seen as an excuse for violence and those who allow their bloodlust to go unchecked are shunned as barbarians by polite society. While nobles who kill commoners in bloodlust technically have not broken the law, they rarely are left unpunished by their own liege lord. Those saurians who can afford it often make use of sacrificial animals to sate their bloodlust. Usually the creatures used in such efforts are large lizards called soogars, which are one of the main meat-producing creatures in the Empire. The saurians have created a lengthy and deliberate ceremony for killing soogars in order to satisfy their bloodlust. It is a meditative practice that requires the animal to be free to roam while the saurian meditates for thirty minutes and performs weapon maneuvers with his chosen melee weapon. This meditation is aimed at focusing the saurian's rage into one short burst. After this time is over the saurian bursts into action, attacking the soogar with all his might.

Most saurians consider it a mark of mercy and skill to kill the soogar in a single strike. After the ritual is complete, the saurian's bloodlust is satisfied and the need to kill starts accumulating all over again. A soogar has a Purchase DC of 12; some poorer saurians have been known to use other creatures when needed.

a +6 bonus to Will saves to resist the affects of bloodlust.

Graft (Ex): Due to their penchant for collecting wealth brachins receive a +2 species bonus to their starting Wealth bonus. If the brachin wishes he may take a +1 bonus to Reputation instead, representing the rare brachin who forgoes material wealth and earns recognition for it.

Hold Breath (Ex): Brachins can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to twice their Constitution score.

Natural Armor Bonus: The hard skin of the brachin provides a +1 natural armor bonus to Defense.

Skill Bonus: Brachins gain a +2 species bonus to all Knowledge checks.

Stable: Brachins gain a +4 species bonus on ability checks to resist bull rush and trip attempts when standing on the ground (but not when climbing, flying, riding, or otherwise not standing firmly on the ground).

Free Language Skills: Read/Write Language (Sessil), Speak Language (Sessil)

PL Familiarity: 5

Level Adjustment: +0

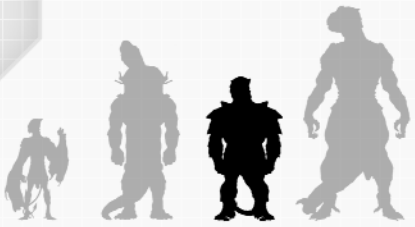
◇ Shellbacks

The common man of the saurian species, shellbacks fill the ranks of the peasants, the foot soldiers, and the laborers of the Saurian Empire. Considered by other species to be beneath the brachins and tyrans, only flyers are considered to be of similar social status. Due to their penchant for labor, simple pleasures, and stubborn nature they are often seen by others as being imbeciles and easily manipulated. This often turns out to be true, as the shellbacks are not known for asking questions. But there are those who do not accept their place so readily.

Shellbacks have a strong habit of doing what they are told with minimal fuss and greatly enjoy the simple pleasure of a hard day's work. They rarely concern themselves with matters of government, but despite this docile nature they do not take well to abuse. Although it takes a great deal to get a shellback angry, once he is angry he will remain so for quite some time. Shellbacks are creatures of sustained emotional states, making them appear unemotional. Shellbacks are renowned for their loyalty and their willingness to see a task through, but they also tend to continue to carry out assigned tasks long after the utility of that task has expired. Trying to get a shellback to abandon a lost cause is almost impossible.

Shellbacks are large humanoid reptiles with squat heads and a heavy coating of bony armor plates on their back. The rest of their body is covered in thick scales, making them very resistant to damage. Their tail resembles a heavy bony club

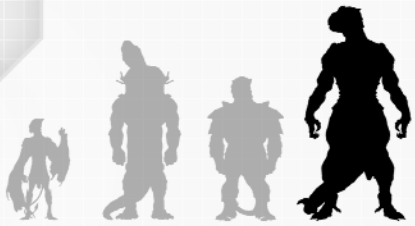
Shellback

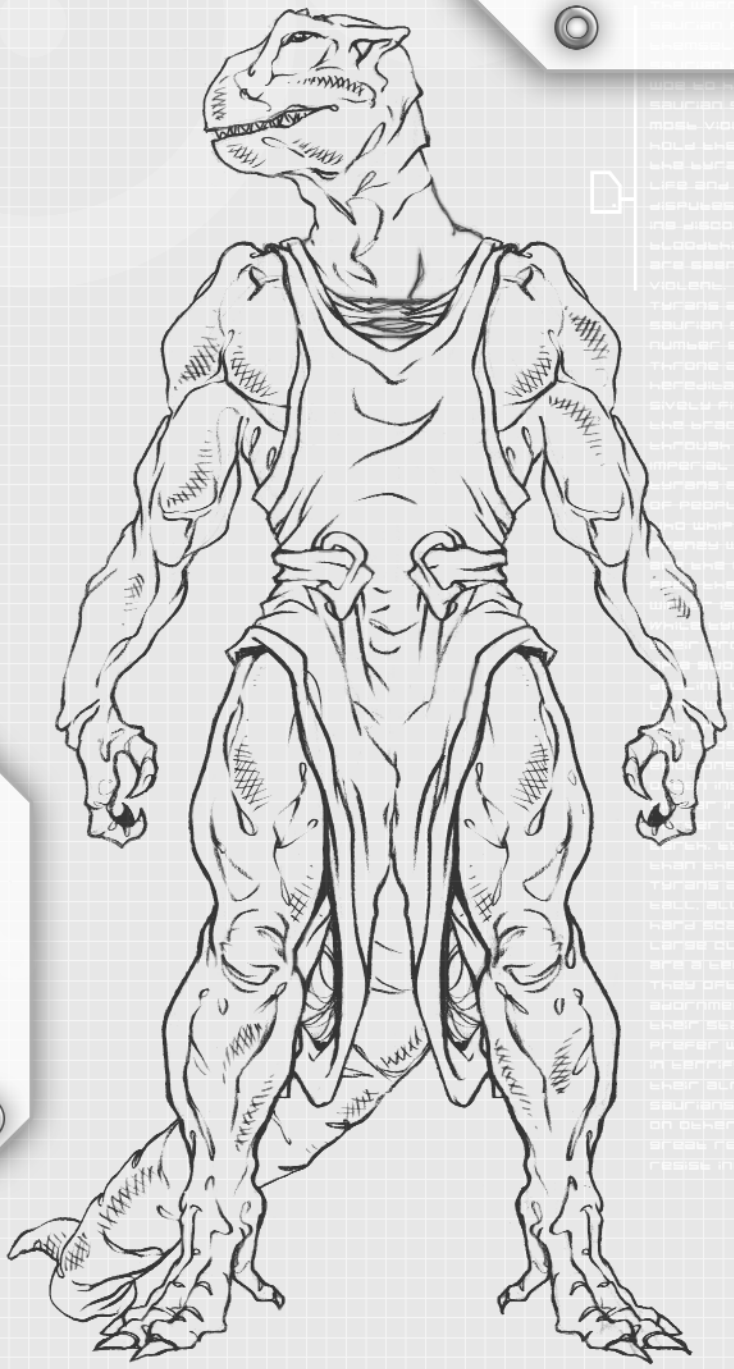






Tyran







also covered in plates, and shellbacks sometimes use them as weapons. Shellbacks are very broad and squat, weighing far more than a human of the same height.

Wearing clothes appropriate to their station, shellbacks prefer light and simple clothes such as tunics and pants. They normally go barefoot and many shellbacks who work outdoors often do so with only a loincloth. Shellbacks like things simple and straightforward on all levels.

Species Traits

Shellbacks share the following species traits.
Type: Monstrous Humanoid
Size: Medium. Shellbacks have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
Ability Modifiers: +2 Constitution, +2 Wisdom, -2 Dexterity, -2 Intelligence
Speed: 20 ft.
Bloodlust Resistance (Ex): Shellbacks receive a +4 bonus to Will saves to resist the effects of bloodlust.
Bonus Feat: Shellbacks receive the Endurance feat as a bonus feat.
Natural Armor Bonus: The hard skin and bony plates of the shellback provides a +3 natural armor bonus to Defense.
Natural Weapon: A shellback can replace an unarmed attack with a slam attack (1d6 points of lethal bludgeoning damage) using its tail. Using natural weapons to deal lethal damage does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Feats such as combat Martial Arts may increase the amount of damage dealt.
Stable: Shellbacks gain a +4 species bonus on ability checks to resist bull rush and trip attempts when standing on the ground (but not when climbing, flying, riding, or otherwise not standing firmly on the ground).
Free Language Skills: Read/Write Language (Sessil), Speak Language (Sessil)
PL Familiarity: 5
Level Adjustment: +0

◇ Tyrans

The warriors and leaders of the saurian people, tyrans consider themselves the pinnacle of saurian biology and culture, and woe to him who disagrees. Of the saurian species tyrans are the most violent, and do little to hold their bloodlust in. Among the tyrans violence is a way of life and viable way of settling disputes, or even just registering discontent. Even among the bloodthirsty saurians, tyrans are seen as being especially violent.

Tyrans are the leaders of saurian society. One of their number sits on the Imperial Throne and the ranks of the hereditary nobility are exclusively filled with tyrans. While the brachins have influence through their control of the Imperial Bureaucracy, the tyrans are the actual leaders of people. They are the ones who whip the peasants into a frenzy when war comes; they are the ones that arrange to feed their subjects when the winter is particularly harsh. While tyrans prefer to solve their problems with the blade of a sword, they are not above dealing with more mundane problems with pen or diplomacy. Of all the saurian races tyrans are those most ruled by their emotions, emotions they can often inspire in others.

Similar in appearance to the larger carnivorous dinosaurs of Earth, tyrans are much larger than their saurian relatives. Tyrans average over nine feet tall, all of which is muscle and hard scales. Possessed of large claws and teeth, tyrans are a terrifying sight to behold. They often wear clothes and adornments they believe befit their station, and in combat they prefer wearing armor sculpted in terrifying forms to heighten their already intimidating visage. Saurians enjoy inflicting fears on others, though they have great respect for those who resist intimidation.

Species Traits

Tyran saurians share the following species traits.
Type: Monstrous Humanoid
Size: Large. Tyrans take a -1 size penalty to Defense, a -1 size penalty on attack rolls, and a -4 size penalty on Hide checks. They gain a +4 size bonus on grapple checks. Their lifting and carrying limits are twice those of a Medium-size character.

Age Categories by Species

Species	Child	Young Adult	Adult	Middle Age	Old	Venerable
Haimedian	10	20	40	70	80	100
Saurian						
Flyer	8	13	30	45	60	80
Brachin	12	17	45	85	100	150
Shellback	9	15	34	56	75	90
Tyran	10	18	36	60	80	95

Saurians are affected by any psionic power that would normally affect a Medium-sized creature, such as Charm Person or Dominate. Tyrans must use two hands to wield a Huge weapon, and Medium-size weapons are light for them. Tyrans occupy a 10-foot-by-10-foot fighting space and have a natural reach of 10 feet.

Ability Modifiers: +4 Strength, -2 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom

Speed: 30 ft.

Armor and Weapon Restrictions: A tyran cannot wear armor designed for other species. Tyrans armor is larger and costs more than similar armor sized for a Medium-size character; increase the Purchase DC of tyran armor by +3.

Natural Armor Bonus: Tyrans are covered in a thick layer of tough scales and gain a +2 natural armor bonus to Defense.

Natural Weapons (Bite, Claw): A tyran can replace an unarmed attack with a bite attack (1d6 points of lethal piercing damage) or claw attack (1d6 points lethal slashing damage). Using natural weapons to deal lethal damage does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Feats such as Combat Martial Arts may increase the amount of damage dealt.

Poor Loser: Anytime a saurian fails an Intelligence-based skill check he must make a Will save against the same DC as the skill check. If the Will save fails the saurian reacts violently to his failure and attacks objects involved in his failure, such as tools, computers, or other devices, for one round with his most powerful melee attack. This does not apply to Knowledge skill checks. Also any attempts to retry failed Intelligence based skill checks suffer a -4 penalty on top of any other penalties.

Free Language Skills: Read/Write Language (Sessil), Speak Language (Sessil)

PL Familiarity: 5

Level Adjustment: +0

Height and Weight

Species and Gender	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Haimedians				
	5 ft. 0 in.	+1d10 in.	80 lb.	x1d6 lb.
Saurians - Flyers				
Male	2 ft. 8 in.	+1d8 in.	45 lb.	x1d4 lb.
Female	2 ft. 6 in.	+1d8 in.	40 lb.	x1d4 lb.
Saurians - Brachins*				
Male	5 ft. 6 in.	+2d10 in.	160 lb.	x1d8 lb.
Female	5 ft. 8 in.	+2d10 in.	170 lb.	x1d8 lb.
Saurians - Shellbacks				
Male	4 ft. 8 in.	+1d10 in.	140 lb.	x1d8 lb.
Female	4 ft. 8 in.	+1d10 in.	140 lb.	x1d8 lb.
Saurians - Tyrans				
Male	8 ft. 0 in.	+3d10 in.	250 lb.	x1d10 lb.
Female	7 ft.10 in.	+3d10 in.	240 lb.	x1d10 lb.

*This is the normal standing height of the brachin. If it stretches its neck to its limit it is two feet taller.

TALENT TREES • • •
STRONG HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Natural Weapon

With this talent tree a Strong Hero becomes more effective with his natural weapons, learning to use them to his best advantage.

Natural Weapon Damage

One of your natural weapons inflicts damage as if you were one size category larger.

Prerequisite: Melee Smash 1.

Claw Grab

When pinning a target in a grapple you may attack with your natural weapons.

Prerequisite: Natural Weapon Damage.

Rake

When you succeed in a grapple check you may immediately make an attack with one of your natural weapons at your normal attack bonus.

Prerequisite: Claw Grab.

◇ Strong Backed

Through long hours of training you are able to carry more weight than most people without feeling the burden.

Carrying Capacity

When determining your carrying capacity or how much you can lift your Strength receives a +2 bonus.

Armor Training

Your speed increases by 5 ft. when you are wearing medium or heavy armor or you are carrying a light of heavy load.

Prerequisite: Carrying Capacity.

Increased Carrying Capacity

When determining your carrying capacity or how much you can lift your Strength receives a +4 bonus.

Prerequisite: Carrying Capacity

Improved Armor Training

The armor penalty of any armor you wear is reduced by half your Strong level.

Prerequisite: Increased Carrying Capacity

FAST HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Advanced Grappling

Trained to use your speed and agility against your enemies, you are able to grapple more effectively.

Dextrous Grapple

When grappling you retain your Dexterity bonus to defense up to your Fast level.

Rolling Grapple

When in a grapple, you may force yourself and your opponent to move five feet with an opposed grapple check. This movement provokes attacks of opportunity for the both of you if roll through someone else's threatened space, but you do not get to make attacks of opportunity against each other.

Prerequisite: Dextrous Grapple

Throwing Escape

During an attempt to escape from a grapple you may choose to throw your opponent up to 10 ft. away as part of your action. If you win the grapple check to escape the grapple by more than five points you may throw the opponent an additional 5 ft. for every five points by which you won up to 10 ft. If there is an object blocking your intended throw both the object and your opponent suffer damage equal to 1d6 + your Strength Bonus.

Prerequisite: Rolling Grapple

◇ Thievery

You are a practiced thief, skilled in the arts of relieving others of their valuables, though your use of these abilities need not always be so nefarious.

Thievery Training

Select one of the following skills: Balance, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, Tumble. The Fast hero gets to add a bonus equal to his Fast level when making checks with that skill. A Fast hero can take this talent multiple times; each time it applies to a different skill.

Agile Mover

You may use your Dexterity bonus instead of your Strength bonus when making Jump and Climb checks.

TOUGH HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Tireless

With this talent tree you are much more resistant to the effects of physical exhaustion, able to carry on when others have given up.

Tough Back

You may use your Constitution instead of your Strength when determining your carrying capacity.

Quick Recovery

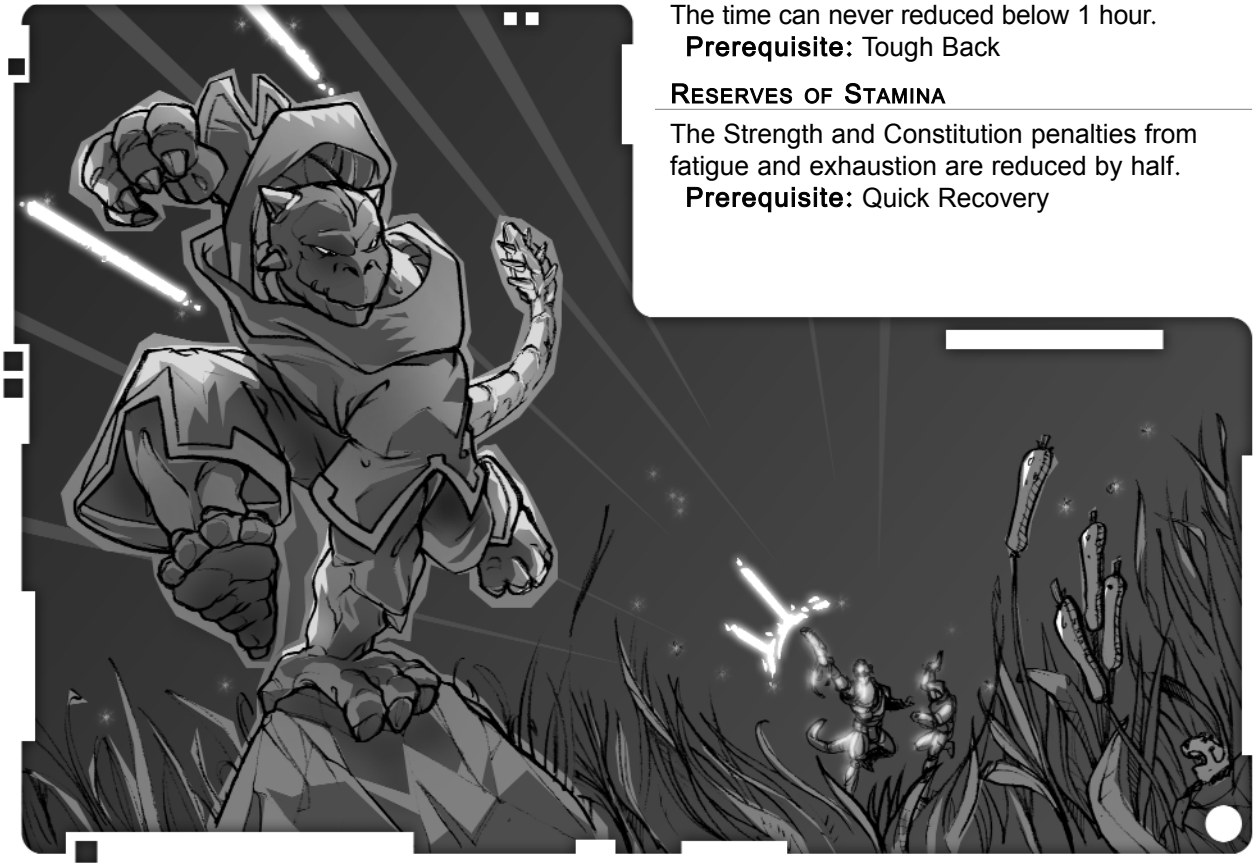
You reduce the number of hours it takes you to recover from being fatigued by your Tough level. The time can never reduced below 1 hour.

Prerequisite: Tough Back

Reserves of Stamina

The Strength and Constitution penalties from fatigue and exhaustion are reduced by half.

Prerequisite: Quick Recovery



SMART HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Organization

You are highly skilled in getting people ordered and under control, making sure they accomplish their goals quickly and efficiently.

Organize

You are able to quickly organize groups of people to complete their tasks in a shorter amount of time. This talent may only be use to organize a group of characters who are working on the same task or related tasks that support each other, such as characters taking the Aid Another action. You may only use this talent with a number of people equal to your Intelligence bonus plus your Smart level.

To use Organize you must make an Intelligence check (DC 10), with a bonus to your check equal to your Smart level. If successful the total time it requires for the people you have organized to complete their tasks is reduced by 25%, but the time cannot be reduced below 1 round.

Logistics

By improving the efficiency of resource allocation and use you can reduce the Purchase DCs of any raw materials, such as those needed for Craft skills, used by people you use Organize on by half your Smart level.

Prerequisite: Organize.

Rationing

You can stretch out any limited amount of supplies, such as food or oxygen, to last 25% longer than normal with an Intelligence check (DC 10) plus a bonus equal to your Smart level. This talent does not apply to any supply that has an exact number listed with an unchangeable rate of consumption, such as ammunition or drugs. Food you can ration out to make it last longer, but not so much with bullets.

Prerequisite: Logistics.

DEDICATED HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Green Thumb

Skilled in the ways of plants, you have an uncanny talent in getting them to grow and thrive under many conditions.

Plant Expertise

You gain a bonus equal to your Dedicated level to Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences), Survival, and Treat Injury checks regarding plants, such as identifying a poisonous plant, helping plant a prosperous crop, or healing an injured haimedian.

Plant Strike

After studying plants for some time you know how to effectively strike them to cause more damage. You may cause critical hits on creatures with the plant creature type.

Prerequisite: Plant Medicines.

◇ Honorbound

Driven by your own person code of behavior, this talent tree gives you added strength to stick to your convictions.

Code of Honor

You must come up with a personal code of honor with at least three major tenets, one of which will come up at least once a session, such as never fleeing from battle or never paying full price for goods. The gamemaster must approve this code of honor. If you willingly break this code of honor you lose the benefits of this talent tree for 24 hours. The code may be changed but you lose this talent and must select it again to do so.

Whenever you are under a compulsion to break your code of honor you gain a bonus equal to your Dedicated level to all Will saves to resist the compunction.

Perceptive Honor

When someone tries to trick you into betraying your code of honor you receive a bonus equal to your Dedicated level to all Listen, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks to detect the deception.

Prerequisite: Code of Honor.

Resistant Honor

If failing a saving throw would mean you would break your code of honor, such as falling in battle and thus failing defend your lord, you receive a bonus to the saving throw equal to half your Dedicated level.

Prerequisite: Perceptive Honor.

Motivated Honor

When undertaking an action that embodies your code of honor, such as defending the weak against overwhelming odds, you gain a +2 morale bonus to either attack and damage rolls or skill checks, determined when this talent is selected. You may select this talent twice, once for a bonus to attack and damage rolls and a second time for a bonus to skill checks.

Prerequisite: Motivated Honor.

CHARISMATIC HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Insult

You are skilled as slinging insults and put downs with the best of them, able to distract and annoy your foes with your rapier wit.

Berate

When making Bluff, Gather Information, or Intimidate checks you may choose to insult and degrade your target into complying with your wishes. This automatically reduces the target's disposition toward you one level but gets you a bonus to your Barter, Bluff, Gather Information, or Intimidate check equal to your Charismatic level. This attitude change does not occur until after the encounter ends.

Chide

By making a target look foolish in public you may make others think poorly of him, though their opinion of you suffers as well. This requires at least one minute of conversation and only affects those within earshot, though word of your insults may spread to others over time at gamemaster discretion. After one minute both you and your target make a Charisma check (DC 10) but you receive a bonus equal to your Charismatic level. If you are successful, the disposition of everyone within earshot toward your target decreases by one. If your target is successful the disposition of everyone within earshot towards you decreases by one. If you are both successful the disposition of everyone within earshot towards both of you decreases by one.

Taunt

By letting loose with a series of harsh remarks you can incite others to violence against you. This requires a standard action and your target must be within earshot, be able to understand what you are saying, and must be hostile or unfriendly towards you. You must make a Charisma check (DC 10 + the target's Will save) with a bonus equal to your Charismatic level, though the DC may be higher if the target has specific orders not to attack or the like. If the check is successful the target must spend its next available action attacking you, either in ranged or melee combat, as is most effective for the target.

◇ Selfless

You give to others before taking for yourself, and through this talent tree are able to use this to your advantage when dealing with others.

This talent tree only functions when your Wealth bonus is equal to or less than your character level + your Charisma bonus. Excess Wealth bonus must be donated to suitable worthy causes though individual items of value may be kept. If your Wealth bonus goes above this level you may try to divest yourself of your more valuable belongings or conceal your wealth with a Disguise check (DC 10 + the difference between the Wealth bonus you wish to appear to have and your real Wealth bonus).





Fellowship of the Poor

When dealing with people whose Wealth bonus is less than +10 you gain a bonus to your Bluff, Diplomacy, and Gather Information checks equal to half your Charismatic level.

Well Received

When encountering people who are Indifferent to you and who have a Wealth bonus less than +10, you may make a Charisma check (DC 10) plus a bonus equal to your Charismatic level as a full round action. If this check is successful, the person is instead Friendly toward you.

Shame of Wealth

You are adept at convincing those wealthier than you that they are corrupt and should mend their ways. To use this talent, you must spend one full round action speaking to the target, who must be in earshot. This talent can only be used on targets whose Wealth bonuses are higher than your apparent Wealth bonus. You must make a Charisma check (DC 10+ the target's Will save bonus) to dress the target down for his money-grubbing ways. If this check is successful, the target suffers a penalty to Will saves and Sense Motive checks equal to your Charismatic level for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma bonus.

OCCUPATIONS • • •

The following occupations are available to characters from C'thalk. Most occupations from d20 Modern, d20 Future, and Operation Quick Launch are available, with the exception of Terraformer.

◇ Fang Gang Member

Tired of playing by the rules of saurian society, the fang gangs are the means by which the flyers seek to achieve equal treatment from their saurian brothers. Or at least that's what they claim. For now the fang gangs are mostly criminals and local community leaders, trying to provide for their people and possibly make a profit in the process.

Prerequisite: Saurian flyer species

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Barter, Bluff, Disable Device, Forgery, Gamble, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (Streetwise), Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Spot.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3



◇ Imperial Bureaucrat

While bureaucrats are found in nearly every civilization, in few places do they have the power of the Imperial Bureaucrats of the Saurian Empire. The Imperial Bureaucracy controls the schedule of the Emperor, the treasury, and numerous other facets of Imperial government that give them drastic power over the people of the Saurian Empire. They have not only the power to carry out policy but to craft it, something the nobles find highly frustrating.

Prerequisite: Saurian brachin species, age 25

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Barter, Bluff, Computer Use, Diplomacy, Forgery, Gather Information, Intimidate, Investigate, Knowledge (Civics), Knowledge (Species), Knowledge (Current Events), Knowledge (Streetwise), Research.

Reputation Bonus: +1

Wealth Bonus Increase: +5

◇ Monk

For centuries wandering monks have been a part of saurian society, providing a means of communication between villages and giving aid where they can. Most monk orders are nothing more than small groups of scholars and laborers, but some number in the thousands. While monks are widely respected by the commoners of the Saurian Empire, the nobility and bureaucracy are not especially fond of these itinerant wanderers.

Prerequisite: Saurian species

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Concentration, Craft (Tribal), Diplomacy, Handle Animal, Knowledge (Current Events), Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences), Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy), Navigate, Sense Motive, Survival, Swim, Treat Injury.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Defensive Martial Arts, Guide, Iron Will.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1

◇ Organic Engineer

The organic technology of the haimedians is unique in the Helios system and requires years of special training to understand. Other races rarely find themselves able to adapt to its intricacies, but the haimedians favor it over more artificial means. Organic engineers differ drastically from their more mineral-based counterparts, being closer to biologists and doctors than repairmen or technicians.

Prerequisite: Haimedian species, Int 11+

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Computer Use, Craft (Any), Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences). Knowledge (Physical Sciences), Knowledge (Technology), Repair, Research, Search, Treat Injury.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Builder, Educated, or Gearhead.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2

◇ Peasant

Found in droves throughout the Saurian Empire, peasants make up the bulk of the population of C'thalk. Most live their entire lives in the small village they were born in, rarely traveling more than a few miles away. Those who actually go out into the world are praised as heroes as often as cursed for forsaking their home and people.

Prerequisite: Saurian species

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Barter, Craft (Tribal), Craft (Mechanical), Craft (Structural), Gather Information, Handle Animal, Listen, Ride, Search, Spot, Survival, Swim.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Endurance, Great Fortitude, Guide, or Trustworthy.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

◇ Spirit Talker

Revered as religious leaders among the saurians, these highly trained individuals claim to be able to summon up and speak to the dead. They use their communication with the dead to provide advice for others, and spirit talkers are often found in the service of tyran nobles. Some earnestly seek to provide accurate and helpful advice; others are charlatans simply looking to make some quick money.

Prerequisite: Saurian species

Skills: Choose one of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences), Knowledge (Current Events), Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy), Perform (Act), Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand.

Bonus Feat: Select one of the following: Deceptive, Educated, or Trustworthy.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +3

◇ Tyran Aristocrat

The top of the saurian social system, the tyrans are ostensibly the leaders of the Saurian Empire, though some suspect the government is really run by the Imperial Bureaucracy. Most tyran are nobles that rule only a number of villages and spend their days making sure their subjects are fed and protected. Even these local nobles expect to be treated with respect and honor from other saurians and do not take well to ill treatment, especially from non-saurians. Unless other feats are selected it is assumed your character does not have a title and is merely an aristocrat.

Prerequisite: Saurian tyran species

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (Business), Knowledge (Civics), Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Tactics), Ride, Spot.

Reputation Bonus: +2

Wealth Bonus Increase: +4



SKILLS • • •

◇ Skills and Organic Technology

Not covered by a single new skill, the field of organic technology requires the application of Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences), Craft, and Treat Injury checks. The technological creations of the haimedians are now more based on biology than metallurgy or chemistry. Using organic nanites and extensive knowledge of genetic engineering passed on from Mother Moss, the haimedians are able to construct living machines to see to many of their needs. There are still many things they cannot accomplish with organic technology, but their culture is such that they do not miss these things or take care of them with small amounts of inorganic technology.

Any character interacting with organic technology without the Organic Technology Familiarity feat suffers a -4 penalty to all skill checks in addition to any penalties from progress level. When repairing or crafting organic technology, special bio-toolkits are normally used; working without one inflicts a -4 penalty on all Treat Injury, Repair, and Craft skill checks.

Organic technology has certain limits that the haimedians have not been able to overcome. Organic technology cannot be used to construct spacecraft, and vehicles are severely limited in terms of speed; organic vehicles are treated as creatures and cannot have a speed higher than 80 ft. Organic substances cannot have a hardness higher than 20. Organic armor cannot have an armor bonus greater than +10. Organic technology requires regular doses of oxygen and nutrients to function and relies on nutrient packs that must be regularly switched out as they are used, effectively acting as organic batteries. If an organic device runs out of nutrient packs it begins starving to death and suffers 1 point of Constitution damage per day, which cannot be healed until it receives a new nutrient pack.

Building a piece of organic technology takes much longer than building a piece of inorganic technology. Designing an item from scratch that relies on organic technology requires a Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) check against the same DC as a Craft check for that item, and takes five times as long as the normal building process. Once this design is complete, an appropriate Craft check must be made to construct the item, which acts as a normal Craft check but takes twice as long as a normal check. Designing and constructing organic technology items requires a bio-tech lab. These are found in many haimedian settlements, and the Creature Tanks on Eos could fill in for one in a tight spot. Most common goods can be made with organic technology without creating a new design, since the designs are easily available.

If the character has access to biological raw



materials, such as those used by the haimedians in everyday life or stored in the Creature Tanks of Dawning Star City, he can make a normal Wealth check to purchase the necessary raw materials. Otherwise the Purchase DC of the materials needed to build a piece of organic technology increases by +5 for each Progress Level of the available materials below 7. Once the organic machine is built, it may be used normally, though characters without the Organic Technology Familiarity feat suffer a -4 penalty to all skill checks.

The statistics of an item of organic technology are up to the GM and should be within the limitations listed above. The character constructing the organic device should determine its composition from the materials below. The more resilient materials increase the cost and complexity of the item's creation. Organic machines are assumed to have a Constitution of 10 and 0 in all their other abilities, aside from vehicles and other modified items.

Material	Hardness	Hit Points Per Inch
Flesh	0	3
Green Plant Matter	1	4
Bone	3	5
Bark	5	10
Chitin	10	15
Shell	15	20

Organic machines heal naturally at a rate of 3 hit points per day and can repair any damage to themselves as long as they are not reduced to -10 hit points. Organic machines reduced to 0 hit points will not function and when reduced to -1 to -9 hit points the machine begins bleeding to death in the same fashion as a normal living being with the same chance to stabilize. Organic machines can be healed using Treat Injury or Repair skill. Organic machines reduced to -10 hit points are killed and cannot be restored.

Haimedians tend to treat their living devices with more respect than races that use inorganic technology, thinking of them more as pets than tools. Indeed, some pieces of organic technology are outfitted with primitive brains instead of basic nerve centers, allowing them to think on their own when needed. These devices often provide skill bonuses to their user and can operate under their own power.

◇ New Uses for Old Skills

Knowledge (Civics)

Check: In the Saurian Empire being able to cut through bureaucracy is a very useful skill, whether you are a fang ganger trying to find the right bureaucrat to bribe or a tyran noble trying to make sure you get your fair share of the taxes. The bureaucracy of the Empire is deep and complex, often requiring many years of training to be able to navigate successfully. The Knowledge (Civics) skill can be used to similar effect in most other forms of government but the complexity, centralization, and graft of the government affects how difficult such tasks are.

When you wish to interact with governmental bureaucracy in order to achieve some goal the character must be in contact with the bureaucracy in question. This usually requires you to be present at the bureaucracy's offices, but this may sometimes be accomplished via radio or computer communications, though this often makes things more difficult. You then make a Knowledge (Civics) check against a DC found from using the information on the table below. The attitude of the bureaucracy can be modified with Diplomacy or Intimidate as per the normal rules, including the option for bribery.

Task	DC
File a simple report, get a common license	5
Apply for a government grant, get a restricted license	10
See a low-ranking governmental official, redirect government resources	15
See a mid-ranking governmental official, funnel tax money into a hidden fund	20
See a high-ranking governmental official, cover the tracks of past bureaucratic actions	25
See a head of state, rearrange government spending	30

Situation	DC Modifier
Unfriendly bureaucracy	+10
Indifferent bureaucracy	+5
Helpful bureaucracy	-5
You cannot interact with the bureaucracy in person	+5

Try Again: Yes, but each additional check wears on the patience of the bureaucrats you are working with, inflicting a cumulative -5 penalty for each additional check made in the same 24 hour period, regardless of your successes.

Special: You may take 10 or 20 on a Knowledge (Civics) check when working through bureaucracy.

Bonuses to Knowledge (Civics) checks involving bureaucracy can be modified using bribery in the same fashion as Diplomacy.

Characters who are part of the same government as the bureaucracy they are interacting with often receive a bonus to their Knowledge (Civics) checks. This usually varies from +1 to +10 and is noted in various feats and advanced or prestige classes. Characters with the Colonial Leader advanced class from Operation Quick Launch gain a competence bonus equal to their class level to Knowledge (Civics) checks involving bureaucracy in their sponsoring power.

Time: 1 hour, though this can vary greatly based on how easy it is to contact the bureaucracy in question.

Survival

Check: Survival can be used to collect nutrients consumed by haimedians through their roots in lieu of eating. This may only be done in a region where there is significant plant growth, such as a forest or jungle. Much like providing food and water while foraging, this requires a Survival check (DC 10) and provides nutrients for one additional haimedian for every 2 points by which your check result exceeds 10.

Special: You may not take 10 or 20 on this Survival check.

Time: Survival checks to provide nutrients occur each day in the wilderness.

FEATS • • •

◇ Armor Proficiency (Organic)

You are knowledgeable in the use and care of organic armor as used by the haimedians.

Prerequisite: Organic Technology Familiarity.

Benefit: When you wear organic armor, you may add the armor's entire equipment bonus to your defense. You must also have the appropriate Armor Proficiency (Light, Medium, or Heavy) to gain the full benefits of the armor.

Normal: A character not proficient with organic armor adds only a portion of the armor's equipment bonus to her defense.

◇ City of Bone Familiarity

You have spent several years in the Imperial Capital and know its many streets and political dangers well.

Prerequisite: Must have spent at least three years living in the City of Bone.

Benefit: You gain a +1 competence bonus to Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (Current Events, History, Local, Popular Culture, Streetwise), Navigate, and Spot checks while inside the City of Bone due to your familiarity with the area. You also receive a +2 bonus to Knowledge (Civics) checks involving the Imperial Bureaucracy.

◇ Fang Gang Operative

A trusted member of a fang gang, you regularly take part in gang operations, both completely legal community activities and highly illegal retaliatory raids against those nobles who treat flyers poorly.

Prerequisite: Saurian flyer race, Fang Gang Member occupation or must have been accepted into a fang gang during play.

Benefit: You gang a +1 bonus to Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (Civics, Current Events, History, Local, Popular Culture, Streetwise), and Spot checks while inside your gang's territory. You also gain a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks.

◇ High Honor

You have proven yourself honorable beyond doubt and few would dare question your word.

Prerequisite: Honor, must have performed an additional honorable act of renown.

Benefit: The Reputation bonus from Honor increases to +4 and the bonus to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with inhabitants of the Saurian Empire increases to +2.

◇ Honor

You have earned a reputation for your honor and faithfulness. Others know and trust you on reputation alone.

Prerequisite: Must have performed an honorable act of renown, such as a great service for the Empire, eliminating corruption in the bureaucracy, or proving saurians to be superior over other species.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to your Reputation and a +1 bonus on Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks with the inhabitants of the Saurian Empre.

◇ Inorganic Familiarity

You are one of the rare haimedians who has spent time learning about inorganic technology in order to overcome your species' lack of proficiency with such devices.

Prerequisite: Haimedian species.

Benefit: The penalty you suffer on Computer Use, Craft, Drive, Pilot, and Repair checks when using organic technology is reduced to -2.

◇ Monk of Standing

You have earned the respect of other monks and are often sought out for your wisdom, serving as an example for monks across the Saurian Empire.

Prerequisite: Saurian species, Monk occupation or must have been accepted into a monastic order during play.

Benefit: You receive a +1 bonus to Diplomacy, Gather Information, Knowledge (Civics), Knowledge (Current Events), Knowledge (History), and Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) checks when dealing with monks and peasants of the Saurian Empire. Peasants will never start an encounter with a worse disposition than Unfriendly toward you under normal circumstances.

◇ Noble of the Saurian Empire

While you may not be titled or have lands of your own, you are a member of the noble caste of the Saurian Empire and can expect the respect due your station.

Prerequisite: Saurian tyran species, Tyran Aristocrat occupation or must have been elevated to nobility during play.

Benefit: You receive a +1 bonus on Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with subjects of the Saurian Empire. Your Wealth bonus increases by +2.

◇ Organic Technology Familiarity

You are familiar with the organic technology used by the haimedians and are able to use it with the same proficiency you use inorganic technology.

Benefit: You suffer no penalty when using organic technology of your PL or lower.

Normal: Characters without this feat suffer a -4 penalty on all skill checks involving organic technology.

◇ Spirit Talker

Schooled in the saurian beliefs of ancestor spirits, you can use omens and portents to encourage or discourage others.

Prerequisite: Charisma 11+, Wisdom 11+, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) 4 ranks

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on Charisma based skill checks when dealing with inhabitants of the Saurian Empire. You also gain a +2 bonus to your Reputation.

◇ Technological Specialty

There is one aspect of technology that you are particularly adept in.

Prerequisite: Intelligence 11+ and either Repair 8 ranks (weapons and armor), Drive 8 (for surface vehicles), Pilot 8 ranks (atmospheric vehicles, starships, and mecha), Computer Use 8 ranks (for computers), or Treat Injury 8 ranks (medical and cybernetics).

Benefit: Choose one of the following classifications of items: weapons, armor, computers, surface vehicles, atmospheric vehicles, starships, mecha, medical and cybernetics. When using items of that type, your PL Familiarity is treated as being one level higher.

Special: This feat may be selected multiple times, but each time must be applied to a different type of item.

◇ Unimpeachable Honor

Your honor is beyond question and known throughout the Empire.

Prerequisite: High Honor, must have performed an additional honorable act of renown.

Benefit: The bonus to Reputation from Honor increases to +6 and the bonus to Charisma-based skill checks involving inhabitants of the Saurian Empire increases to +3.

Species Classes • • •

◇ Haimedian Green-Walker

Haimedians with levels in green-walker are more in touch with their plant nature than others of their race, and thus are more in tune with the plants that surround them. Haimedians who work with nature to provide for their people often have levels in this class.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Haimedian Green-Walker species class.

Hit Die
The Haimedian Green-Walker class gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Haimedian Green-Walker class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Haimedian Green-Walker class skills are as follows.
Concentration (Con), Craft (Any) (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

Haimedian Green-Walker

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	+1 Wisdom, Plant Affinity, Plants Feel No Pain	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	+1 Intelligence, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+1	+2	+1	+2	+1 Wisdom Bonus, Organic Technology Affinity	+2	+1

Class Features:

The following class features pertain to the Haimedian Green-Walker species class.

Plant Affinity
At 1st level the Haimedian Green-Walker receives a bonus to all Hide, Move Silently, Navigate, Spot, and Survival checks made in locations where plants are common equal to the Green-Walker's species class level.

Plants Feel No Pain
Beginning at 1st level, by spending an action point the Haimedian Green-Walker can ignore the need to make massive damage saves for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution bonus (minimum of one round).

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level the Haimedian Green-Walker gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below.

Armor Proficiency (Organic), Blind-Fight, Builder, Educated, Endurance, Focused, Great Fortitude, Guide, Improved Damage Threshold, Iron Will, Medical Expert, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Stealthy, Track.

Organic Technology Affinity
At 3rd level the Haimedian Green-Walker gains a +2 bonus on all skill checks involving organic technology.

◇ Flyer Operator

Flyers are renowned for their skill at the controls of a vehicle, and those who take levels in the Operator species class even more so. Between their high dexterity and excellent ability at three-dimensional spatial relations, flyers are some of the best vehicle operators in the Helios system. Flyers involved in piloting vehicles for a living, be they Fang Gang wheelmen or Imperial fighter pilots, often have levels in this class.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Flyer Operator species class.

Hit Die
The Flyer Operator class gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Flyer Operator class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Flyer Operator class skills are as follows.

Drive (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Repair (Int), Ride (Dex), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier



Flyer Operator

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+1	+0	+1	+0	+1 Dexterity, Vehicle Operation	+3	+0
2nd	+2	+0	+2	+0	+1 Intelligence, Bonus Feat	+4	+0
3rd	+3	+1	+2	+1	+1 Dexterity, Not That Different, Improved Flight	+4	+1

Class Features:

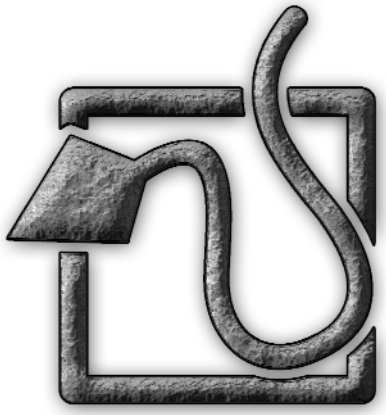
The following class features pertain to the Operator species class.

Vehicle Operation
At 1st level the Flyer Operator gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Aircraft Operation, Starship Operation, Surface Vehicle Operation

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level the Flyer Operator gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Action Boost, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Drive-By Attack, Force Stop, Heroic Surge, Spacer, Starship Battle Run, Starship Dodge, Starship Feint, Starship Gunnery, Starship Mobility, Starship Strafe, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert.

Improved Flight
At 3rd level the Flyer Operator's flight speed increases by 10 ft. and his maneuverability improves to Perfect.

Not That Different
Beginning at 3rd level, the Flyer Operator can spend an action point to ignore the penalty associated with operating a vehicle for which he does not have the appropriate feat until he stops operating the vehicle.



◇ Brachin Scholar

Brachins serve as the scientists and loremasters of the saurian species, spending their time gathering knowledge while the other saurians seek conquest, speed, or work. While brachins are often despised for graft or being self-serving, none can question they are the preeminent minds of the saurian culture. Brachins who are involved in research and organization often have levels in this class.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Brachin Scholar species class.

Hit Die
The Brachin Scholar class gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Brachin Scholar class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Brachin Scholar class skills are as follows.
Barter (Cha), Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (Any) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Brachin Scholar species class.

Suppress Blood Rage
At 1st level the Brachin Scholar gains the ability to spend an action point to suppress his bloodlust automatically, after which his bloodlust resets and he as another ten days before he must make Will saves to resist it.

Brachin Scholar

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+0	+1	+1 Intelligence, Suppress Bloodlust, Scholarly Lore	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+2	+1 Charisma, Bonus Feat	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+2	+1 Intelligence, Knowledge Never Fails, Know Your Species	+1	+1

Scholarly Lore
At 1st level the Brachin Scholar gains a bonus to all Knowledge checks equal to his species level.

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level the Brachin Scholar gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Attentive, Deceptive, Educated, Focused, Gearhead, Iron Will, Meticulous, Renown, Studious, Trustworthy, Windfall.

Knowledge Never Fails
At 3rd level when spending an action point on an Intelligence check or Intelligence-based skill check you treat rolling a 1,2, or 3 on the action die as being a 4.

Know Your Species
At 3rd level the Brachin Scholar receives a +1 bonus to Charisma checks and Charisma based skill checks when dealing with saurians.



◇ Shellback Laborer

The most populous of the saurian species, shellbacks provide the labor that allows the Saurian Empire to survive. They are a hard working, stubborn people who are more concerned with a good day's work than riches or fame. Shellbacks who spend their days hard at work in the fields or marching in the armies of their noble lords often have levels in this class.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Shellback Laborer species class.

Hit Die
The Shellback Laborer class gains 1d10 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Shellback Laborer class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Shellback Laborer class skills are as follows.

Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Tribal), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Shellback Laborer species class.

Hard Worker
Beginning at 1st level, when the Shellback Laborer goes up a level he adds his Constitution bonus to all Profession or Craft checks made to increase his Wealth bonus.

Shellback Laborer

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	+1 Constitution, Hard Worker	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	+1 Wisdom, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1 Constitution, Unstoppable	+2	+1



Also the Shellback Laborer may remain active for 12 hours each day without ill effect, meaning he can march 1.5 times farther than other species with the same speed and can make multiple-day skill checks 1.5 times faster than other species.

Bonus Feat

At 2nd level the Shellback Laborer gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Brawl, Great Fortitude, Guide, Improved Damage Threshold, Iron Will, Low Profile, Toughness.

Unstoppable

At 3rd level, the Shellback Laborer can spend an action point to ignore any of the following conditions for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution modifier: Disabled, Exhausted, Fatigued, Nauseated, or Shaken. The character may act normally during these rounds, but takes one point of damage each round he ignores the conditions affecting him and cannot stabilize if at negative hit points. Ignoring multiple conditions requires a single action point.

◇ Tyran Warrior

The war-leaders of the saurian people, tyrans have dominated the Saurian Empire for two hundred years and were a powerful force in the Dominion before it. Full of rage and violence, tyrans are a warrior race and have problems pursuing other activities. Most saurians have levels in this class due to the strong lust they have for battle.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Tyran Warrior species class.

Hit Die

The Tyran Warrior class gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Tyran Warrior class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Tyran Warrior

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+1	+1	+0	+0	+1 Strength, Blood of a Leader	+1	+1
2nd	+2	+2	+0	+0	+1 Constitution, Bonus Feat	+2	+1
3rd	+3	+2	+1	+1	+1 Charisma, Never Miss	+2	+1

Class Skills
The Tyran Warrior's class skills are as follows.

Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Civics) (Int), Profession (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

Class Features
The following class features pertain to the Tyran Warrior species class.

Blood of a Leader
At 1st level the Tyran Warrior receives a +1 bonus to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks involving other saurians.

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level the Tyran Warrior gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Athletic, Blind-Fight, Brawl, Combat Reflexes, Confident, Dodge, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Frightful Presence, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Initiative, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Renown, Toughness, Weapon Focus, Windfall.

Never Miss
Beginning at 3rd level when a Tyran Warrior spends an action point to add to an attack roll, he treats a roll of 1,2, or 3 as 4.

ADVANCED CLASSES • • •

◇ Autumnal Harvester
Although the haimedians are not a warlike people, living in the shadow of the Saurian Empire has created a certain amount of paranoia among them. This has driven the creation of the Autumnal Harvesters, haimedian warriors trained to guard the borders of their territory from saurian incursions. They are currently responsible for keeping the haimedian presence invisible to the saurians living nearby, knowing that the efforts of the Emperor to keep the haimedians secret can only accomplish so much. If the haimedians are ever invaded the autumnal warriors will be on the front line of the conflict. They are trained in guerilla warfare and wilderness craft, striking quickly and disappearing before a sufficient response can be arranged. They are also well skilled in the viral and bacterial weapons of the haimedians. Haimedians do not like war, especially when it involves real combat as opposed to releasing plagues on their enemies. Those haimedians who actively participate in violence are often considered not quite right in the brain by their fellows and avoided socially.

Select this advanced class if you want your character to be a stealthy warrior trained in the ways of the wild.

The fastest path to this advanced class is from the Dedicated and Fast hero basic classes, though other paths are possible.

Requirements
To become an Autumnal Harvester, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Species: Haimedian.
Base Attack Bonus: +3
Skills: Hide 6 ranks, Move Silently 6 ranks, Survival 6 ranks
Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency

Class Information
The following information pertains to the Autumnal Harvester advanced class.

Hit Die
The Autumnal Harvester gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Autumnal Harvester gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Autumnal Harvester's class skills are as follows.

Climb (Str), Demolitions (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences,

Autumnal Harvester

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+1	+1	+0	Quick Coma, Guerilla Fighter	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+0	Root, Hide Scent	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+2	+2	+1	Disconcerting, Weapon Focus	+3	+1
5th	+3	+3	+3	+1	Damage Resistance 1/fire	+3	+1
6th	+4	+3	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+4	+4	+2	Blood Feeding	+4	+2
8th	+6	+4	+4	+2	Weapon Specialization	+4	+2
9th	+6	+4	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+7	+5	+5	+3	Damage Resistance 2/fire	+5	+3

Tactics)(Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Autumnal Harvester advanced class.

Quick Coma

At 1st level the time required that the Autumnal Harvester must spend in a nutrient coma each day is reduced to 2 hours.

Guerilla Fighter

At 1st level Autumnal Harvester receives a bonus equal to the Autumnal Harvester's class level to Hide and Move Silently checks made in an area with heavy vegetation, such as a jungle or forest.

Root

At 2nd level the Autumnal Harvester gains the ability to sink his roots into the ground quickly, stabilizing him and allowing him to more easily blend in with other plants. Rooting requires a move action, as does releasing the haimedian's roots from the ground. Once rooted the haimedian gains a +4 stability bonus on checks made to resist bull rush and trip attempts. The Autumnal Harvester also gains a +4 bonus to Hide checks made in areas with heavy vegetation. While rooted the Autumnal Harvester may not move from his position.

Hide Scent

At 2nd level the Autumnal Harvester learns to conceal his scent in such a fashion that he smells like other plants nearby. The Autumnal Harvester is effectively invisible to the Scent ability, including being impossible to track by scent.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, an Autumnal Harvester gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Autumnal Harvester must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Alertness, Animal Affinity, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Armor Proficiency (Organic), Athletic, Brawl, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Endurance, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Far Shot, Frightful Presence, Guide, Improved Damage Threshold, Low Profile, Point Blank Shot, Stealthy, Surface Vehicle Operation, Toughness, Track, Weapon Focus.

Disconcerting

At 4th level the Autumnal Harvester's divergence from normal haimedian behavior is so extreme other haimedians begin to fear it. The Autumnal Harvester suffers a -2 penalty on all Diplomacy and Gather Information checks involving haimedians, but gains a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks due to the respect and fear haimedians show towards Autumnal Harvesters.

Weapon Focus

At 4th level the Autumnal Harvester gains the Weapon Focus feat as a bonus feat.

Damage Resistance

At 5th level the Autumnal Harvester gains Damage Reduction 1/-. This increases to 2/- at 10th level.

Bio-Technician

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+0	+1	Improved Healing, Makeshift Nutrient Pack	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+2	Organic Tech Expertise	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+2	Bonus Feat	+1	+1
4th	+2	+1	+1	+2	Fast Growth, Last Gasp	+1	+2
5th	+2	+1	+1	+3	Upgrade Organism	+2	+2
6th	+3	+2	+2	+3	Bonus Feat	+2	+2
7th	+3	+2	+2	+4	Expert Healer	+2	+3
8th	+4	+2	+2	+4	Mastercraft	+3	+3
9th	+4	+3	+3	+4	Bonus Feat	+3	+3
10th	+5	+3	+3	+5	Mastercraft	+3	+4

Blood Feeding

At 7th level the Autumnal Harvester develops the ability to feed from the nutrients of corpses, which most haimedians think is a barbaric practice and avoid entirely. Autumnal Harvesters may feed on any corpse of Medium size or larger, but usually only do so with corpses they have killed themselves. The Autumnal Harvester must go into a nutrient coma as normal, with its roots stuck into the corpse. After the nutrient coma ends the Autumnal Harvester gains a +2 bonus to Strength and Constitution that lasts for 8 hours.

After using this ability even once, the Autumnal Harvester begins undergoing a transformation. All of the Autumnal Harveter's leaves gain a red tint on their edges, a sign of blood feeding that other haimedians greatly fear. The bonuses and penalties from Disconcerting double. The Autumnal Harvester must feed on a corpse of Small size or larger at least once every ten days or suffer 1 point of Constitution damage that will not heal until the Autumnal Harvester feeds on a corpse. If 100 days have pass without the Autumnal Harvester feeding on a corpse the addiction is lost and any Constitution damage will begin to heal.



Weapon Specialization

At 8th level the Autumnal Harvester specializes with a specific melee or ranged weapon that is also has applied the Weapon Focus feat to. You get a +2 bonus on damage rolls with the chosen weapon.

◇ Bio-Technician

Due to the haimedian reliance on organic forms of technology, their scientists and technicians are a mixture of doctor and mechanic. These experts require intensive training in a number of fields to effectively repair and improve organic technology, but despite this training they are surprisingly common among the haimedians. Most haimedian settlements have at least one Bio-Technician in addition to lesser skilled technicians and healers. With the increasing threat of interaction with the outside world, some Bio-Technicians have begun preparing to travel to other worlds to see what they offer in terms of useful genetic or organic material, leaving their labs for the learning experience that is the universe.

Select this advanced class if you want your character to be an expert in living technology, both in its construction and application.

The fastest path to this advanced class is through the Smart hero or Dedicated hero basic classes, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become a Bio-Technician, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Computer Use 6 ranks, Craft (Chemical and one other skill of choice) 6 ranks, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) 6 ranks, Repair 6 ranks, Treat Injury 6 ranks

Feats: Organic Technology Familiarity

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Bio-Technician advanced class.

Hit Die
The Bio-Technician gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Bio-Technician gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Bio-Technician's class skills are as follows.
Computer Use (Int), Craft (Chemical, Electronic, Mechanical, Pharmaceutical, Structural) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences, Earth and Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Technology) (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language, Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier

Class Features
The following class features pertain to the Bio-Technician advanced class.

Improved Healing
Beginning at 1st level any pieces of organic technology in the possession of the Bio-Technician heals at double the normal rate. The Bio-Technician must spend one hour each day tending to his equipment to grant this benefit.

Makeshift Nutrient Pack
At 1st level a Bio-Technician can cobble together makeshift nutrient packs from common organic materials. The Bio-Technician must have at least 10 pounds of nutrient rich organic material such as fertilizer, meat, or vitamins. The Bio-Technician must spend one hour and make a Craft (Chemical) check (DC 20) to construct the makeshift nutrient pack. Failure means the materials are wasted and the time spent is lost without gain. Once created the nutrient pack only remains useful for 24 hours before it breaks down.

Organic Tech Expertise
At 2nd level the Bio-Technician gains a bonus to all skill checks involving organic technology equal to half his class level.

Bonus Feats
At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Bio-Technician gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Bio-Technician must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Organic), Builder, Cautious, Educated, Gearhead, Iron Will, Medical Expert, Studious, Surgery, Windfall.

Fast Growth
At 4th level the Bio-Technician can cut in half the time required to design and grow an item of organic technology by boosting the DCs of the Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) and Craft checks involved in doing so by +5.

Last Gasp
At 4th level the Bio-Technician gains the ability to continue using organic technology items that have been reduced to negative hit points but have not yet reached -10 hit points. These items would normally be disabled, but the Bio-Technician can continue to use the items as normal. Doing so automatically inflicts one point of damage on the item and it has no chance to stabilize while being used.

Upgrade Organism
If it has organic components, a Bio-Technician of 2nd level or higher can get maximum performance out of it. This ability may only be used in pieces of organic technology, not creatures or characters.
By spending 1 action point and making a Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) and Treat Injury check, the Bio-Technician can temporarily improve a machine's performance-at the risk of inflicting damage on the organic device. The DC for the Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) and Treat Injury checks depends on the type of improvement being made, as shown on the table below.
The Bio-Technician performs the modifications in 1 hour, and may not take 10 or take 20 on this check. If the check succeeds, the effect of the improvement lasts for a number of minutes equal to the Bio-Technician's class level, beginning when the object is first put into use. The Bio-Technician selects the single improvement he or she wants to make prior to making the check. After the duration of the effect ends, the organic device reverts to its previous state and a damage chance percentile roll is made. The result of this roll indicates whether the machine requires healing before it can be used again. If the device is damaged it suffers 1d6 points of damage per round it was used.

Expert Healer
At 7th level and higher, the Bio-Technicians ability to restore hit points with a medical kit or sur-

gery kit and a successful use of the Treat Injury skill improves. In addition to the normal hit point recovery rate (1d4 for a medical kit, 1d6 per patient's character level for surgery), the Bio-Technician restores 1 hit point for every level he or she has in this advanced class.

Mastercraft
At 8th level, the Bio-Technician becomes adept at creating mastercraft objects. The Bio-Technician applies the mastercraft ability to organic devices he constructs using one specific Craft skill of the Bio-Technician's choice. From this point on, the Bio-Technician can build mastercraft objects using that skill.
It takes twice as long to build a mastercraft object as it does to build an ordinary object of the same type. The cost to build a mastercraft object is equal to the purchase DC for the components (see the appropriate Craft skill description) + the bonus provided by the mastercraft feature. A Bio-Technician can add the mastercraft feature to an existing ordinary object by making the Wealth check and then making the Craft check as though he or she were constructing the object from scratch.
In addition to the Wealth check, the Bio-Technician must also pay a cost in experience points equal to 25 x his or her Bio-Technician level x the bonus provided by the mastercraft feature. The XP must be paid before making the Craft check. If the expenditure of these XP would drop the Bio-Technician to below the minimum needed for his or her current level, then the XP can't be paid and the Bio-Technician can't use the mastercraft ability until he or she gains enough additional XP to remain at his or her current level after the expenditure is made. When successfully completed, a mastercraft object provides a +1 bonus to its quality compared to an ordinary object of the same type. All weapons and armor, and certain other types of equipment, such as computers and electronic devices, can be constructed as mastercraft objects.
At 10th level, the Bio-Technician can add the mastercraft ability to another Craft skill, or he or she can improve his or her ability in the skill selected at 8th level, so that his or her mastercraft objects provide a +2 bonus.

◇ Blood Guard Soldier

While there are millions of soldiers among the population of the Saurian Empire, few of them are full time soldiers. Most are conscripted peasants who only train for a few weeks out of each year and spend the rest of the time farming. Only the wealthiest nobles can afford full time soldiers and the accoutrements that go with them, such as armored vehicles and aircraft. But even these forces cannot match the Blood Guard, the personal army of the Saurian Emperor. Armed with cutting-edge technology and trained continuously, soldiers of the Blood Guard are recruited from the children of past members and only the best soldiers of the nobility. A saurian cannot say no to joining the Blood Guard, for doing so would be to disobey the will of the Emperor. Once in the Blood Guard, soldiers must cast aside all past allegiances other than their allegiance to the Emperor. Traitors in the Blood Guard are tortured for years, according to legend.

Due to the many duties of the Blood Guard, they

Improvement	Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) and Treat Injury	Damage Chance (d%)
Ranged Weapons		
+1 Damage	15	01-25
+2 Damage	20	01-50
+3 Damage	25	01-75
+5 ft. to range increment	15	01-25
+10 ft. to range increment	25	01-50
General Devices		
+1 equipment bonus	15	01-25
+2 equipment bonus	20	01-50
+3 equipment bonus	25	01-75
Vehicles		
+1 on initiative checks	20	01-25
+1 maneuver	25	01-50
+2 to maneuver	30	01-75

Blood Guard Soldier

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+1	+1	+0	+1	Blood Guard Gear, Authority, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Sourus Blade)	+1	+1
2nd	+2	+2	+0	+2	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
3rd	+3	+2	+1	+2	Honor to the Emperor	+2	+1
4th	+4	+2	+1	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
5th	+5	+3	+1	+3	Weapon Focus (Sourus Blade)	+3	+2
6th	+6	+3	+2	+3	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+7	+4	+2	+4	Weapon Specialization (Sourus blade)	+4	+3
8th	+8	+4	+2	+4	Bonus Feat	+4	+3
9th	+9	+4	+3	+4	Senior Guard	+5	+3
10th	+10	+5	+3	+5	Bonus Feat	+5	+4

have a number of soldiers on open-ended assignment, making it possible for a Blood Guard PC to go traipsing around the Helios system with the rest of his adventuring party on an exploratory mission from the Emperor. While there are currently only saurians in the Blood Guard, technically anyone who demonstrated loyalty to the Empire and skill in battle could become a member, though non-saurian members would face a great deal of prejudice and hardship.

Requirements

To become a Blood Guard Soldier, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4
Fortitude Save: +2
Will Save: +2
Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Personal Firearms Proficiency
Allegiance: Saurian Empire.
Skills: Drive 6 ranks, Knowledge (Tactics) 6 ranks

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Blood Guard Soldier advanced class.

Hit Die
The Blood Guard Soldier gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Blood Guard Soldier gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Blood Guard Soldier's class skills are as follows.

Climb (Str), Demolitions (Int), Drive (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier (4 + Int modifier for nonhumans).

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Blood Guard Soldier advanced class.

Blood Guard Gear
At 1st level a Blood Guard soldier receives the following equipment for free: Sourus blade, Iron Hurlant with 5 clips, kaic pistol with 30 light rounds and 6 heavy rounds, Blood Guard armor, 5 fragmentation grenades, backpack, military uniform, 3 sets of fatigues, universal communicator, 2 sets of handcuffs, medical kit, binoculars, compass, nightvision goggles, 2 daggers, sleeping bag, 2 person tent, 10 days of rations, and 50 yards of duracable. If this equipment is destroyed or lost it can be replaced at any Blood Guard base, though repeated loss of equipment without good reason can lead to the Blood Guard Soldier losing this ability.

Authority
At 1st level the Blood Guard Soldier gains the authority of one of the Emperor's soldiers. The Blood Guard serves the Emperor and are to be

given respect by noble and commoner alike. They can give orders to commoners and expect to be obeyed as long as the orders do not contradict the orders of a noble. Nobles are not bound to obey members of the Blood Guard, but are expected to respect them and listen to their advice. Members of the Blood Guard can cross noble lands and territories without restriction and attacking them is considered an attack on the Emperor.
The Blood Guard Soldier gains a +2 bonus on Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks within the Saurian Empire.
This authority comes with a price though. The Blood Guard Soldier is expected to follow all the laws of the Empire and the orders of the Emperor, or his appointed subordinates. The Blood Guard Soldier is to act with honor, as his personal honor reflects upon the honor of the Emperor. While the Blood Guard has wide sweeping authority, abuse of this authority or causing too many problems with the nobles may get the Blood Guard Soldier in hot water. If at any time the Blood Guard Soldier breaks these guidelines he loses his membership in the order, and is to be killed on sight by other members of the Blood Guard, especially if he still carries his sourus blade. In addition the Blood Guard Soldier cannot advance further in this class and loses his Blood Guard Gear, Authority, Honor to the Emperor, Surge of Honor, and Senior Guard class abilities.

Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Sourus Blade)
At 1st level the Blood Guard Soldier gains proficiency in the sourus blade, the special ceremonial blade of the Blood Guard. Only Blood Guard members may carry these weapons as they serve both as tools of war and badges of office. Carrying one is an offense punishable by death for those not of the Blood Guard.

Bonus Feats
At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level, a Blood Guard Soldier gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Blood Guard Soldier must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Aircraft Operation, Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Armor Proficiency (Powered), Athletic, Blind-Fight, Brawl, Cautious, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Drive-By Attack, Far Shot, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, High Honor, Honor, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Oathbound, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Quick Reload, Starship Gunnery, Starship Operation, Surface Vehicle Operation, Toughness, Vehicle Expert, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus, Zero-G Training.

Honor to the Emperor
Beginning at 3rd level the Blood Guard Soldier gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls when fighting the enemies of the Saurian Empire. These enemies must be recognized enemies of the Empire, such as wanted criminals or targets of a declaration of war. Furthermore, the Blood Guard Soldier gains a +2 morale bonus to Will saves when carrying out the Emperor's orders.

Weapon Focus (Sourus Blade)
At 5th level the Blood Guard Soldier gains Weapon Focus for the sourus blade as a bonus feat, gaining a +1 bonus on attack rolls when using the sourus blade. If the character already had the Weapon Focus (Sourus Blade), he gains Weapon Focus (Iron Hurlant Rifle).

Weapon Specialization (Sourus Blade)
At 7th level the Blood Guard Soldier gains weapon specialization in the sourus blade, gaining a +2 bonus on damage rolls when using the sourus blade.

Senior Guard
At 9th level the character is considered one of the elite of the Blood Guard and accorded great respect both from within and without the order. The Blood Guard Soldier is given a masterwork +2 sourus blade by the Emperor for his service. The bonus to Charisma and Charisma-based skill checks from the Authority class ability increases to +4 and the Blood Guard Soldier's Wealth bonus increases by +4.

◇ Monk of the Blue Path

One of the oldest orders of monks on C'thalk, it is also the most notorious. While the Empire claims the Monks of the Blue Path are anti-Imperial rebels looking to topple the Empire, peasant rumors speak of them as being wandering healers and wise men who seek to do little more than aid the common folk of the Empire. In fact the Monks of the Blue path are both rebels and champions of the common man. They hold secrets of the Star Confederation that they hope to use to bring peace, prosperity and safety to C'thalk, but the Empire has stymied their efforts. Unable to make sweeping changes, they concentrate on doing what good they can by healing the sick and protecting the weak. Universally poor and hunted by law enforcement, few survive to old age. There are those in the order who say this situation is their own fault, as the order's leaders

Monk of the Blue Path

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	Ritual Science, Calming Temper	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	A Simple Monk	+2	+1
4th	+3	+2	+1	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
5th	+3	+3	+1	+3	Blue Path Network	+3	+2
6th	+4	+3	+2	+3	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+4	+2	+4	Ritual Science	+4	+3
8th	+6	+4	+2	+4	Bonus Feat	+4	+3
9th	+6	+4	+3	+4	Monkish Wisdom	+5	+3
10th	+7	+5	+3	+5	Bonus Feat	+5	+4

have not gone public with their knowledge of possible vaasi invasion. As always, the elders counsel patience. Several centuries of patience has accomplished little, though, and many young monks think a more active stance is required to save C'thalk.

Select this advanced class if you want your character to draw upon a mixture of ancient philosophy and advanced technology.

The fastest path to this advanced class is through the Dedicated hero basic class, and while other paths are possible one Dedicated level is required. Although all current Monks of the Blue Path are saurians, predominantly shellbacks, it is possible for members of other races to join the order, if they were to prove themselves worthy.

Requirements

To become a Monk of the Blue Path, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2
Skills: Knowledge (History) 4 ranks, Knowledge (Technology) 6 ranks, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) 6 ranks, Repair 6 ranks, Survival 4 ranks, Treat Injury 6 ranks
Feats: Monk of Standing
Allegiance: Monks of the Blue Path
Talents: Fellowship of the Poor

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Monk of the Blue Path advanced class.

Hit Die

The Monk of the Blue Path gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Monk of the Blue Path gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Monk of the Blue Path's class skills are as follows.

Balance (Dex), Barter (Cha), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (History, Technology, Theology and Philosophy) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Research (Int), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier (6 + Int modifier for nonhumans).

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Monk of the Blue Path advanced class.

Ritual Science

At 1st level the Monk of the Blue Path is trained in some aspects of the technology hidden in the home monastery of the monks, but this knowledge is limited more to ritual and repetition of particular tasks than real comprehension of the technology being used. The Monk of the Blue Path reduces the penalty for making a skill check involving technology of a higher PL than the Monk's PL Familiarity by two points. This means a Monk of the Blue Path with a PL Familiarity of 5 can use an item of PL 6 with

only a -2 penalty instead of a -4.
At 7th level, the penalty for using items of a higher PL than the Monk's PL Familiarity is reduced by an additional two points, for a total penalty reduction of four points.

Calming Temper

At 1st level the Monk of the Blue Path gains the ability to calm bloodlust both in himself and other saurians. The Monk may spend an action point to suppress his own bloodlust automatically as a free action. To suppress bloodlust in others the Monk must spend an action point, take full round action to speak to the target, and be able to communicate with the target, though the target may already be in bloodlust. The target then makes a Will save (DC 20- the Monk's class level - the Monk's Wisdom bonus). If the save is successful the target exits bloodlust on his next action. If not, the target continues in bloodlust, though the monk may try again on his next action. In either case the bloodlust cycle begins again, meaning the saurian has ten days before it becomes a problem again.

Bonus Feats

At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level, a Monk of the Blue Path gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Monk of the Blue Path must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Advanced Combat Martial Arts, Alertness, Athletics, Blind-Fight, Brawl, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Educated, Elusive Target, Focused, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Guide, Heroic Surge, High Honor, Honor, Improved Brawl, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Combat Throw, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Improved Knockout Punch, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Knockout Punch, Low Profile, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Streetfighting, Sunder, Trustworthy, Two-Weapon Fighting, Unbalanced Opponent, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus, Whirlwind Attack

A Simple Monk

At 3rd level the Monk of the Blue Path is able to adopt a suitably humble and nondescript demeanor and appearance so as to be ignored by most people.
Any attempts to use Spot, Listen, or Sense Motive against the Monk suffer a penalty equal to his Wisdom bonus (minimum of 1).

Defender of the People

At 5th level, when the Monk of the Blue Path engages any agents of a corrupt government, be they nobles of the Saurian Empire or minions of the straas Hivequeen, the Monk receives a +1 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls made in melee combat. The Monk must know that the people he is facing are part of a corrupt government, and that the government is in fact considered corrupt by the Monks of the Blue Path as a whole. Right now this only applies to the Saurian Empire, but as the Monks make contact with other species it is likely to also apply to the straas Hivequeen and the vaasi.

Monkish Wisdom

At 9th level the Monk of the Blue Path is able to advise or confuse others with his monkish advice, usually given through proverbs. To use this ability the Monk must spend one full round action speaking to the target, which must be within earshot and be able to understand the monk. This ability may be used a number of times each day equal to the Monk's Charisma bonus, with a minimum of once per day. These abilities will only affect creatures with an Intelligence score of 6 or above.
If the Monk seeks to encourage the target, the Monk must make a Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) check (DC 20). If successful the target gains a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls, saving throws, skill and ability checks for one minute.
If the Monk seeks to advise the target the monk must make a Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) check (DC 20) in order to properly quote parables and metaphors to advise the target. If successful the target gains a +2 bonus to one skill for one hour.
If the monk seeks to confuse the target must make a Will save (DC 10 + the Monk's class level + his Charisma bonus). If the target fails the target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and skill and ability checks for one minute. In addition the target suffers an additional -2 penalty (-4 penalty in total) on Listen, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks.

◇ Saurian Noble Lord

The day-to-day functions of the Saurian Empire are carried out by its large noble class, dominated by the tyran saurians. These nobles see to the defense of their people, civic matters, concerns of justice, and meeting their yearly tax and production quotas. Most nobles concentrate more on the matters of defense than anything else, and many of the nobles are none too popular among their subjects due to their arrogance or warmongering. Those nobles who strive to be effective leaders often catch the eye of their superiors and end up in higher sta-

tion than they began in. Skilled both in war and organization, these are the leaders that help the Saurian Empire prosper.

Select this advanced class if you want your character to be a leader both in war and peacetime, capable of rallying his followers to his banner and see to their well being.

The fastest path to the Advanced Class is through the Charismatic and Strong hero basic classes, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become a Saurian Noble Lord, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Knowledge (Civics) 6 ranks, Knowledge (Tactics) 6 ranks.

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Noble of the Saurian Empire.

Allegiance: Saurian Empire.

Species: Saurian

Reputation: +2

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Saurian Noble Lord advanced class.

Hit Die

The Saurian Noble Lord gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Saurian Noble Lord gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Saurian Noble Lord's class skills are as follows.

Barter (Cha), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Business, Civics, Current Events, History, Tactics)(Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Noble)(Wis), Read/Write Language, Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Saurian Noble Lord advanced class.

Noble Authority

At 1st level the Saurian Noble gains the title of sizar and has authority over all commoners of the Saurian Empire. A commoner who disobeys a noble order may be killed for doing so, unless the commoner disobeys the order due to another order from a higher ranked noble. When a dispute arises between nobles of equal rank, the noble in his home territory is considered superior, though when neither noble is in their home territory a dispute may be settled by a duel or by taking the matter to the local lord. The Saurian Noble gains a +2 bonus to Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks involving inhabitants of the Saurian Empire.

The Saurian Noble should determine what noble he is sworn to follow, preferably one that the Saurian Noble has had some interaction with during the campaign. Characters may not be directly sworn to the Emperor at this point without special permission from the GM.

Home Territory: At 1st level the Saurian Noble is assigned a territory within the lands of whatever lord he is beholden to, or takes on a position of responsibility in his liege lord's service. If the Saurian Noble selects to be a landed noble, the territory he rules is normally not more than one hundred square miles and has a single settlement and a total population of 5d10x100. The people of this territory begin with a disposition of Friendly towards the Saurian Noble. The Saurian Noble gains a large manor house to stay in, but has no servants or soldiers other than those he hires himself. The Saurian Noble's Wealth bonus and Reputation bonus increase by +2.

Within his lands, the Saurian Noble is responsible for the well being of his people, including managing their defenses, meting out justice, and making sure everyone is sheltered and fed appropriately. The Saurian Noble can name a seneschal to see to these matters while he is away, but for each month the Saurian Noble does not visit his lands he must make a Knowledge (Civics) check (DC 15 + 5 per month absent) or the disposition of his subjects towards him worsens by one level and his Wealth bonus and Reputation decrease by -1 due to his mismanagement. These penalties can be removed by the Saurian Noble spending one contiguous month in the settlement per point of penalty. The disposition of the locals can only be repaired by treating them well, such as throwing festivals or lowering taxes. Mistreatment of the populace, abuse of noble privileges, and high taxes can quickly erode the community's good will. If the community ever becomes hostile toward the Saurian Noble, the commoners revolt. If the Saurian Noble is not able to restore order in one month he is removed from his position and cannot take any more levels in this class. He also loses the

Saurian Noble Lord

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+1	+1	+0	Noble Authority, Home Territory	+1	+2
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+0	Eye for Skills	+2	+2
3rd	+2	+2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+2
4th	+3	+2	+2	+1	Tactical Plan	+3	+3
5th	+3	+3	+3	+1	Servants	+3	+3
6th	+4	+3	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+3
7th	+5	+4	+4	+2	Bureaucratic Contacts	+4	+4
8th	+6	+4	+4	+2	Soldiers	+4	+4
9th	+6	+4	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+4
10th	+7	+5	+5	+3	Noble Reputation	+5	+5

Noble Authority, Home Territory, Minion Training, and Bureaucratic Contacts class abilities. Once a Saurian Noble is removed from office only the Emperor can restore him.
The inhabitants of the town are assumed to be ordinary characters, a quarter of whom are fit for military duty and armed with simple weapons. Most will be 2nd level Tough ordinaries; other classes will be present, but all will be ordinaries. The specifics of the settlement are left to the gamemaster.
If instead of choosing territory the Saurian Noble chooses to be a noble servant of his liege lord, such as a Warden or Judge, the Saurian Noble's Wealth and Reputation increase by +3. In such a situation, the Saurian Noble receives appropriate accoutrements for the position, such as official garments and seals or weapons. This may entail up to six items, none of which have a Purchase DC above 24. If a Saurian Noble tarnishes the honor of his liege lord while serving the Saurian Noble becomes Dishonored.

Eye for Skills
At 2nd level a Saurian Noble learns how to judge a person's fighting skills with a cursory visual inspection. This requires a standard action and a Sense Motive check (DC 10+ the target's character level). The target can choose to oppose the Sense Motive check with a Bluff check or his base attack bonus if he knows this ability is being used. If the Sense Motive check is successful, the Saurian Noble can learn the target's the target's hit points rounded to the nearest multiple of 5, base attack bonus, and saving throws. If the check fails by 5 points or less the Saurian Noble gains no information, and if it fails by more than 5 he gains false information.

Bonus Feats
At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Saurian Noble Lord gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Saurian Noble Lord must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Alertness, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Athletic, Attentive, Combat Expertise, Confident, Deceptive, Dodge, Educated, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Frightful Presence, Heroic Surge, High Honor, Honor, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Renown, Trustworthy, Unimpeachable Honor, Weapon Focus, Windfall.

Tactical Plan
At 4th level the Saurian Noble gains the ability to lay out an effective tactical plan to improve his allies' abilities in combat. Coming up with the plan requires 10 minutes, during which the Saurian Noble must be able to speak to everyone who will be involved in the plan. Up to one person per class level of the Saurian Noble may be involved in the plan. The plan must be linked to a specific location, such as a fortress, or a situation, such as rescuing a hostage.
The plan is activated whenever the people involved enter combat in the selected location or under the set conditions, such as when an ambush is sprung or when an assault on a bandit camp begins. At the first round of combat the Saurian Noble must make a Knowledge (Tactics) check (DC 10 + the number of people involved in the plan). If the check is successful all those involved in the plan gain a +1 bonus to initiative, attack rolls, saving throws, skill

checks, and ability checks for one round for each point by which the Knowledge (Tactics) check was successful.
The plan remains viable for eight hours after it is created; if it is not used within that time all bonuses are lost and the plan must be recreated, requiring another ten minutes. The Saurian Noble may only have one plan at a time ready to go. A character can only benefit from one use of this ability at a time.

Servants
At 5th level the Saurian Noble gains the service of a number of attendants assigned to him by the Imperial Bureaucracy. The servants are not trained for combat and are instead accountants, quartermasters, and other types of clerical experts. The Saurian Noble is assigned a number of servants equal to his Charisma bonus and they are Dedicated, Smart, or Charismatic Ordinary characters with a level equal to half the Saurian Noble's Class level. The player may create these characters with gamemaster approval. Servants come equipped with six items each of the Saurian Noble's choice, none of which can have a purchase DC higher than 20. These items may be sold if the Saurian Noble wishes, but this is likely to make his servants unhappy. The servants are loyal to the Saurian Noble, but are ultimately loyal to the Imperial Bureaucracy and may betray him to the Bureaucracy if tempted. The servants will not enter combat unless they have no other way to defend themselves from certain death. If any of the servants are killed the Imperial Bureaucracy will replace them, as long as the Saurian Noble can explain why the death of his servants was necessary. Repeated loss of servants will likely see the Bureaucracy stop sending replacements.

Bureaucratic Contacts
At 7th level the Saurian Noble has had enough interaction with the Imperial Bureaucracy to learn how best to get results from its byzantine processes. Any attempts to bribe Bureaucracy officials generate double the normal bonuses to Knowledge (Civics) checks and the Saurian Noble gains a +4 bonus to Knowledge (Civics) checks when interacting with the Imperial Bureaucracy. When the Saurian Noble makes a Profession or Craft check to increase his Wealth bonus when advancing a level, the Saurian Noble receives a bonus to the check equal to his class level due to his ability to manipulate the Imperial tax code.



Soldiers
At 8th level the Saurian Noble's territory is prosperous enough to support a cadre of full-time soldiers. The Saurian Noble gains a number of soldiers equal to his Reputation bonus and they are all Tough, Strong, or Fast Ordinaries of a level equal to half the Saurian Noble's class level. The player may create these soldiers with gamemaster approval. The soldiers come equipped with 6 items with a Purchase DC of 22 or lower and these items may be sold as desired by the Saurian Noble. These soldiers are loyal to the Saurian Noble and will fight and die for him, though repeated defeats on the battlefield may change their opinion of him. These soldiers will not be automatically replaced if killed; the Saurian Noble must hire new soldiers, requiring a Wealth check with a Purchase DC of 25. If the Empire calls forth an army for some Imperial cause the Saurian Noble is expected to lead his men on any such crusade.

Noble Reputation
By 10th level the Saurian Noble has developed a reputation as a noble of skill and cunning. The Saurian Noble must choose whether he is known for being a wise leader who cares for his people or a military leader who inspires fear in his enemies.

Swordsman

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+1	+1	+1	+0	Weapon Specialization	+3	+0
2nd	+2	+2	+2	+0	Quick Draw	+4	+0
3rd	+3	+2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+4	+1
4th	+4	+2	+2	+1	Speed Draw	+5	+1
5th	+5	+3	+3	+1	Unseen Cut	+5	+1
6th	+6	+3	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+6	+2
7th	+7	+4	+4	+2	Greater Weapon Specialization	+6	+2
8th	+8	+4	+4	+2	Precise Cut	+7	+2
9th	+9	+4	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+7	+3
10th	+10	+5	+5	+3	Debilitating Cut	+8	+3

Wise leaders improve the disposition all inhabitants of the Saurian Empire hold towards them by one level. If this takes an individual's disposition above Helpful the Saurian Noble gains a +2 bonus to all Barter, Diplomacy, and Gather Information checks involving the individual. Military leaders can use their reputation to inspire fear in others. Doing so requires a full-round action and affects all inhabitants of the Saurian Empire within 30 feet. Those affected must make a Will save (DC 10+ the Saurian Noble's Reputation bonus) or become shaken for 1d10 rounds.

◇ Swordsman

A long-standing tenet of saurian warfare is that the more effort you put into killing your enemy, the more worthy that enemy is. This idea is one of the reasons that vehicle combat, weapons of mass destruction, and orbital bombardments have never caught on with the saurians; such attacks require very little effort to kill many people, the effort going into the construction of such tools not withstanding. Saurians prefer killing their enemies face-to-face, finding the more antiseptic styles of war practiced by other species to be deeply frustrating. Because of this philosophy melee combat has remained important in saurian warfare despite the technological advances that should have made such battles obsolete. In saurian society masters of melee combat are highly regarded, and often sought after for both military service and as bodyguards. Saurian duels are all carried out in melee combat, and nearly all saurian nobles have at least passing skill with a blade.

The fastest path to this advanced class is through the Strong Hero basic class, though other paths are possible.

Select this class if you want your hero to be a sword-wielding combat master who is an extremely fearsome opponent in close combat.

Requirements

To become a Swordsman, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus (any sword).

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Swordsman advanced class.

Hit Die

The Swordsman gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Swordsman gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Swordsman's class skills are as follows. Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Mechanical) (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Tactics) (Int), Perform (Dance) (Cha), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + Int modifier (2 + Int modifier for nonhumans).

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Swordsman advanced class.

Weapon Specialization

At 1st level a Swordsman gains weapon specialization with a type of sword that he has also

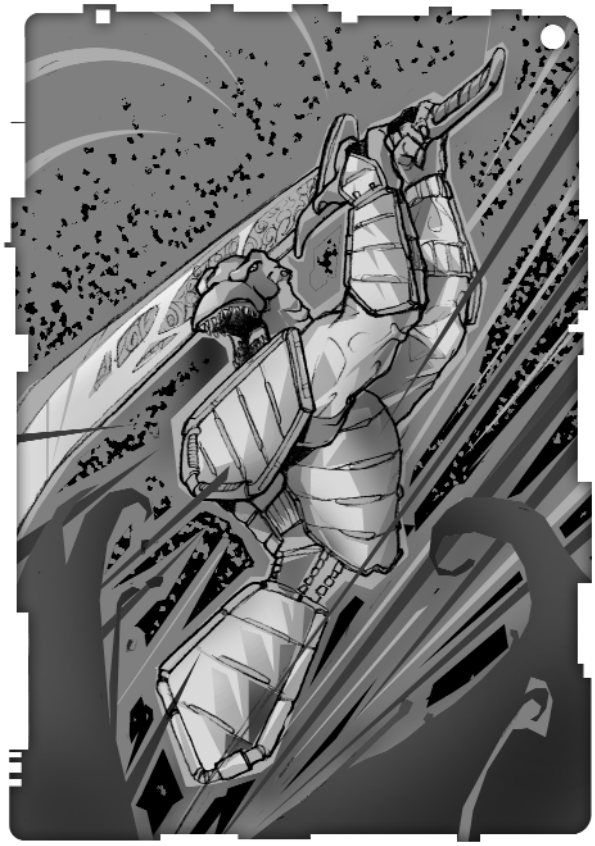
applied the Weapon Focus feat to. You get a +2 bonus on damage rolls with the chosen weapon.

Quick Draw
At 2nd level a Swordsman gains the ability to draw weapons as a free action. This applies only to weapons for which the Swordsman has the Weapon Focus feat.

Bonus Feats
At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Swordsman gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Swordsman must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Acrobatic, Advanced Two-Weapon Fighting, Agile Riposte, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Athletic, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Elusive Target, Frightful Presence, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Trip, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Sunder, Toughness, Two Weapon Fight, Unbalance Opponent, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus, Whirlwind Attack.

Speed Draw
At 4th level a Swordsman gains the ability to forego accuracy in favor of speed when attacking in melee combat. When entering a combat while using a weapon for which the Swordsman has the Weapon Focus feat he may subtract a number from all his attack rolls on the first round of combat, up to -5, and add an equal number to his initiative roll. So a Swordsman may subtract -3 from all his attacks during the first round of combat to gain a +3 bonus on initiative.

Unseen Cut
At 5th level if a Swordsman can catch an opponent when he is unable to defend himself effectively from her attack, she can strike a vital spot for extra damage. The Swordsman's attack deals +1d6 extra damage any time her target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the Swordsman flanks her target. Should the Swordsman score a critical hit with an unseen cut attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. This ability only works in melee combat when the Swordsman is wielding a weapon he has the Weapon Focus feat for, and cannot be used to deal nonlethal damage. A Swordsman can use unseen cut only living



creatures with discernible anatomies-undead, constructs, oozes, plants, and incorporeal creatures lack vital areas to attack. Any creature that is immune to critical hits is not vulnerable to this ability. The Swordsman must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. A Swordsman cannot use unseen cut while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

Greater Weapon Specialization
At 7th level a Swordsman gains greater weapon specialization with the weapon he selected at 1st level. This ability increases the bonus on damage rolls to +4 when using the selected weapon.

Precise Cut
At 8th level the critical multiplier of the weapon in which the Swordsman has Greater Weapon Specialization increases by one.

Debilitating Cut
At 10th level the Swordsman can choose to inflict debilitating injuries on his opponents instead of doing extra damage on a critical hit. When the Swordsman confirms a critical hit, he may forgo doing extra damage to instead do 1d4 points of Strength or Dexterity damage to the target.

PRESTIGE CLASSES • • •

◇ Dishonored Assassin

Most saurians who become dishonored try to lose themselves in the border regions of the Empire where no one has ever heard of them and they can hope to redeem themselves. Other saurians are not quite so lucky, or unlucky depending on point of view. Saurians who are highly skilled in combat, stealth, or vehicle operation and lose their honor are sometimes recruited for the group of assassins known only as the Dishonored, the Emperor's personal killers. These assassins are completely removed from the strictures of honor, and common perception of honor has no effect on them. They kill where directed by the Emperor without question, using disguises, stealth, and misdirection to avoid notice. The training of the Dishonored is intense and some say even includes supernatural disciplines to cloud the minds of their enemies. In exchange for lives of duty and slaughter the Dishonored live in comparative wealth, ready to die each day if the Emperor demands it. As the Empire makes contact with factions from other worlds, the Dishonored are likely to be some of the first saurians sent into space to gather information due to their complete loyalty to the Emperor. Some whisper, however, the Imperial Bureaucracy is starting to try and woo the Dishonored to their service.

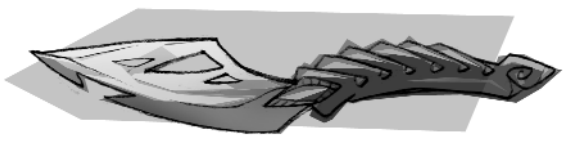
Select this prestige class if you want your character to be a skilled killer and assassin, only concerning himself with the will of the Emperor.

The fastest path to this prestige class is through the Strong and Fast hero basic classes, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become a Dishonored Assassin, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +10
Skills: Hide 8 ranks, Intimidate 8 ranks, Knowledge (Tactics) 6 ranks, Move Silently 8 ranks.
Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Improved Critical, Personal Firearms Proficiency.
Allegiance: Saurian Empire.
Species: Saurian.
Special: Must be dishonored in the eyes of the Empire and its people, such as what would happen to a noble who is caught committing petty thievery.



Class Information

The following information pertains to the Dishonored Assassin advanced class.

Hit Die
The Dishonored Assassin gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Dishonored Assassin gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Dishonored Assassin's class skills are as follows.

Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Concentration (Con), Demolitions (Int), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Research (Int), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Dishonored Assassin advanced class.

Low Profile
At 1st level the Dishonored Assassin gains the Low Profile feat as a bonus feat.

Dishonored Gear
At 1st level the Dishonored Assassin receives the following equipment from the Dishonored. This equipment will be replaced if lost, but may not be sold, and if the Assassin repeatedly loses his equipment he may find he has a hard time replacing lost gear.
Dokun dagger, one other archaic melee weapon of choice, Bone Guard laser rifle with 3 saurian power packs, kaic pistol with 30 light rounds and 12 heavy rounds, Doisch armor, plated leather armor, 100 feet of duracable, fatigues, uniform, digital camera, digital audio recorder, PDA, portable scanner, universal communicator, night vision goggles, 50 caltrops, disguise kit, demolitions kit, forgery kit, 2 sets of handcuffs, lockpick set, climbing gear, flashlight.

Dishonored Assassin

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+1	+1	+1	+1	Low Profile, Dishonored Gear, Dishonored Authority	+1	+0
2nd	+2	+2	+2	+2	Sneak Attack +1d6	+1	+0
3rd	+3	+2	+2	+2	Killing Blow	+2	+0
4th	+4	+2	+2	+2	Sneak Attack +2d6	+2	+0
5th	+5	+3	+3	+3	Cloud the Mind	+3	+1

Dishonored Authority

At 1st level the Dishonored Assassin is assigned a Dokun Dagger, which serves both as a weapon and a sign of the Dishonored's office. Only Dishonored are allowed to carry these weapons and they seek out and kill those outside their order who are so daring as to carry one, as doing so is to implicitly claim to be part of the Dishonored. By displaying his Dokun Dagger the Dishonored reveals his membership to all, which most people assume means that someone in the vicinity is going to be killed shortly. A member of the Dishonored showing up in town is not a cause for celebration but a reason to lock your doors and avoid going outside until he leaves. Dishonored leave nothing but blood in their wake and have little regard for collateral damage, already being beyond the concerns of honor.

Due to this reputation the Assassin gains a +4 bonus to Intimidate checks when he displays his Dokun Dagger. Also commoners are bound by law to obey his orders as if he were a noble, and he can chose to ignore the orders of nobles at his leisure. The Dishonored are above all laws except that of the Emperor. Unfortunately brandishing the Dokun Dagger does not make the Assassin very welcome and worsens the disposition of those he shows it to by one level.

Sneak Attack

If a Dishonored Assassin can catch an opponent when he is unable to defend himself effectively from her attack, she can strike a vital spot for extra damage.

The Dishonored Assassin's attack deals extra damage any time her target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the Dishonored Assassin flanks her target. This extra damage is 1d6 at 2nd level, and it increases to +2d6 at 4th level. Should the Dishonored Assassin score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied.

Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 feet.

With a sap (blackjack) or an unarmed strike, a Dishonored Assassin can make a sneak attack that deals nonlethal damage instead of lethal damage. She cannot use a weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage in a sneak attack, not even with the usual -4 penalty.

A Dishonored Assassin can sneak attack only living creatures with discernible anatomies-undead, constructs, oozes, plants, and incorporeal creatures lack vital areas to attack. Any creature that is immune to critical hits is not vulnerable to sneak attacks. The Dishonored Assassin must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. A Dishonored Assassin cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment or striking the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

Killing Blow

At 3rd level the Dishonored Assassin learns how to quickly end the lives of his opponents. If the Dishonored Assassin forces a target to make a Massive Damage save he may spend an action point to inflict a -5 penalty on the save.

Cloud the Mind

At 5th level the Dishonored Assassin is an expert on remaining unseen and unobtrusive, looking like just another shadow or face in the crowd. Anyone attempting to use Spot, Search, Listen, or Gather Information to find the Assassin or learn information about him suffers a penalty to their skill check equal to the Assassin's Intelligence bonus (minimum of 1).



◇ Moss Agent

Due to the insular and concealed nature of haimedian culture, most haimedians are not mentally equipped to deal with the outside world, including other races. Haimedians often find animal races to be slightly disgusting and their ideas of procreation disturbing, making interaction difficult at best. Those haimedians who have contact with the outside world or prove themselves particularly competent or open-minded are often recruited by Mother Moss to serve as her agents, both among the haimedians and in the larger world. These agents serve as diplomats, spies, traders, and even assassins if needed. They are creatures of many talents, loyal to Mother Moss and the haimedian people. When the haimedians make contact with other species in the Helios system, the Moss Agents are likely to be the first to leave C'thalk to explore its neighbors.

Select this prestige class if you want your character to be a multi-talented super-agent serving its people and leader.

The fastest path to this prestige class is through the Dedicated hero basic class, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become a Moss Agent, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +6
Species: Haimedian
Base Will Save: +4
Skills: At least 4 skills with 8+ ranks.
Allegiance: Haimedian Collective

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Moss Agent advanced class.

Hit Die

The Moss Agent gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Moss Agent gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half its character level, rounded down, every time it attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Moss Agent's class skills are as follows.

Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Demolitions (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences, Business, Civics, Current Events, Earth and Life Sciences, History, Streetwise, Tactics, Technology) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Wis), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Moss Agent advanced class.

Linguistic Training

Beginning at 1st level when dealing with intelligent creatures with which the Moss Agent hero shares no common language, the Moss Agent may make a Intelligence check (DC 10), with a bonus equal to his class level. If successful, the Moss Agent can engage in crude communication with the creatures. Generally, a single "sentence" using this talent takes a full action and can be no more than six words long. Charisma and Charisma-based skills employed while using this talent suffer a -2 circumstance penalty.

The Moss Agent gains two languages for each skill point put in the Read/Write Language and Speak Language skills.

Moss Agent

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Linguist Training, Jack of All Trades, Agent Powers	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Cross-Training, Action Boost	+2	+1
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Spores	+3	+2

Jack of All Trades
At 1st level the Moss Agent gains the Jack of All Trades feat as a bonus feat. If the Moss Agent already has this feat it gains a +1 competence bonus when making untrained skill checks.

Agent Powers
At 1st level the Moss Agent gains the responsibilities and powers that working directly for Mother Moss entails. The Moss Agent is an officer of the law within the Haimedian Collective, and is effectively above the law unless Mother Moss becomes involved. While operating in foreign lands, Moss Agents are often considered diplomats or representatives of the Haimedian Collective and shown the respect that foreign officials are shown, which varies from nation to nation. The Moss Agent gains a +2 bonus to Charisma and Charisma-based skills when dealing with inhabitants of the Haimedian Collective.
These powers come with responsibilities. The Moss Agent is expected to follow the orders of Mother Moss to the letter and not abuse its privileges. Any disobedience, flagrant violation of the law, or unapproved assaults on foreign nations will result in the revocation of the Moss Agent's status. The Moss Agent loses this class ability and cannot advance further in the class unless it returns to the good graces of Mother Moss.

Bonus Feats
At 2nd and 4th level, a Moss Agent gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Moss Agent must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it. Aircraft Operation, Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Athletic, Attentive, Blind-Fight, Cautious, Combat Expertise, Confident, Deceptive, Educated, Endurance, Far Shot, Frightful Presence, Great Fortitude, Guide, Heroic Surge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Low Profile, Meticulous, Oathbound, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Stealthy, Studious, Surface Vehicle Operation, Toughness, Track, Trustworthy, Weapon Focus.

Cross Training
At 3rd level the Moss Agent may select a number of skills equal to his Intelligence bonus to become permanent class skills. These skills are considered class skills for all classes selected by the character. If the Moss Agent's Intelligence bonus changes he does not change the number of class skills gained form this ability: they are set once this ability is gained. Alternately, he may select Moss Agent class skills and gain a +1 bonus to the skill selected.

Action Boost
At 3rd level the Moss Agent gains the Action Boost feat as a bonus feat. If the Moss Agent already has this feat, the dice used for its action points increases to d10.

Spores (Ex)
At 5th level the Moss Agent, having proven its loyalty to Mother Moss, undergoes a lengthy and complex genetic engineering process to advance its powers and instill the ability to eject spores into the air around him. This process takes two weeks of uninterrupted treatments to complete, during which the Moss Agent must spend eight hours a day receiving his genetic treatments. The Moss Agent can expel spores from his body a number of times per day equal to his Constitution bonus, which requires a standard action. Each time the Moss Agent expels spores, choose one of the following effects. The spores affect everyone within five feet of the Moss Agent and their dispersal is not evident to the naked eye, though those with the Scent ability can detect an odd odor. All spores require a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the Moss Agent's class level + the Moss Agent's Constitution bonus) to resist. The effects last 1d6 rounds, except for Sedative spores that last until the fatigued condition is removed. The Moss Agent is immune to his own spores and the spores of other Moss Agents with this class ability.

Sedative: Those in the affected area of the spores must make a Fortitude save or become fatigued.

Mood Booster: Those in the affected area of the spores must make a Fortitude save or become unusually giddy. The Moss Agent gains a +2 bonus to Charisma and Charisma-based skill checks involving the affected targets.

Itching: Those in the affected area of the spores must make a Fortitude save or itch uncontrollably, suffering a -2 penalty to attack rolls, Defense, and Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution-based skill checks.

Hallucinogenic: Those in the affected area of the spores must make a Fortitude save or begin hallucinating, suffering a -2 penalty to all Wisdom and Intelligence-based skill checks.

EQUIPMENT OF C'THALK • • •

C'thalk has two separate economies for the most part that rarely interact: the Haimedian Collective and the Saurian Empire. The economy of the Saurian Empire is far larger and robust than that of the Haimedian Collective, though the disparity between the haves and the have-nots is much larger in the Saurian Empire. While the Emperor commands massive wealth most of the citizens of the Empire are peasants who don't even own the land they farm and live without electricity or indoor plumbing. The Haimedian Collective is more evenly divided, largely due to the lack of excess resources within the economy.

In the Saurian Empire the Progress Level is 5 on average, though some rural regions dip to 4 or even 3, while the City of Bone is Progress Level 6. In urban areas most Progress Level 5 equipment is available and some Progress Level 6 devices can be found, but their price will be inflated due to their rarity and cutting-edge nature. The Saurian Empire has an extensive industrial base, so common goods tend to have standardized prices, but they do vary from region to region based on transportation costs, inflation, and local taxes and laws. The nobles can institute price controls when desired, but rarely do so. In saurian cities there are usually a number of specialty stores carrying different types of items, usually owned by the factories that make their inventory, but in the rural areas there is more often a single shop with a wide variety of goods that is owned by the local noble or a particularly wealthy commoner. These stores rarely carry very expensive goods and little in the way of weapons, but additional items can usually be ordered from the closest city in a matter of days or weeks, dependant on distance.

In the Haimedian Collective technology is more evenly distributed between urban and rural areas, largely due to the different energy requirements of organic technology and the decreased reliance on technology by haimedians. Most haimedian settlements have progress level 6 items available for trade, but will be reticent about trading any particularly dangerous or valuable technology, such as bio-weapons or organic nanites to outsiders. The majority of the devices used by the haimedians are made of organic technology, which outsiders often find deeply disconcerting and not particularly useful. Haimedian settlements usually have a central store that is intended to cover all the needs of the inhabitants, providing a wide selection of goods. These stores often rely on nanites and local craftsmen to fill their inventory, but also rely on the few factories of the Haimedian Collective. Many organic technology breeding operations are located in rural areas to be closed to organic compound supplies, meaning many rural stores are sometimes better supplied than their urban neighbors.

EQUIPMENT

from d20 Modern on C'thalk

All the equipment from d20 Modern is available on C'thalk, though these items are made by different companies, look very different, and have different names. For example a submachinegun that is the equivalent of an uzi may be called a Stormpistol on C'thalk, but the statistics are essentially the same.

from d20 Future on C'thalk

PL 5: All equipment is available on C'thalk in both the Haimedian Collective and the Saurian Empire, though haimedian equipment is usually organic in nature.

PL 6: The only equipment available in the Saurian Empire is concussion grenades, high frequency swords, mini-grenade launchers, antitox chemical, boost chemical, plus the equipment described in this chapter. Most ships in the fleets of the Saurian Empire and the Haimedian Collective are PL 6. In the Haimedian Collective all PL 6 equipment is available except for laser weapons.

PL 7: Some equipment is found in the Haimedian Collective. Stun grenades, silent suits, chameleonic surfaces, biocort chemicals, galpos devices, medicomp sensors, and the equipment listed in this chapter are commonly available.

As on Eos, equipment of a higher Progress Level than the norm for the surrounding area has its Purchase DC increased by +10 instead of +5. This means a PL 7 EDF-33P Plasma Rifle would have a purchase DC of 35 in the City of Bone instead of its normal purchase DC of 30.

◇ Organic Technology

Any item listed in d20 Modern or d20 Future may be built as organic technology with minimal changes. Some types of inorganic technologies cannot be made into organic devices, however, including energy weapons, spacecraft, and vehicles. Instead of vehicles, the haimedians rely on an array of custom designed animals, such as the windrider, an organic hot-air zeppelin, or the darsoth, a massive quadraped use for long distance overland travel.

To convert a piece of inorganic technology to organic technology, follow these steps:

1) Reduce the hardness of the item by half. The item now heals itself at a rate of one hit point per day.
2) If the item runs off batteries, it instead runs off nutrient packs, each of which supply the same power as a single load of batteries. If the item does not require batteries it consumes five charges from its nutrient pack for each month of operation.
3) The organic device has a metabolism and is now affected by critical hits, disease, stunning, sleep, paralysis, and poison. The device is assumed to have a Strength and Dexterity of 0 unless its description distinctly says otherwise, such as organic robot. The device has a base Constitution score of 10, +2 for each size category above Tiny. The device has a Fortitude save equal to its Constitution bonus and gains a number of hit points equal to its Constitution bonus. If the device is in the possession of a character, it uses that character's results when making Fortitude saves. This means if a character with organic gear gets hit with a poison gas and the character makes his save, the organic devices are assumed to as well. The device effectively has a Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma of - since it can take no action without direction from its operator. If the Constitution of a device is reduced to 0 or its hit points reduced to -10, it dies. If the Wisdom, Intelligence, or Charisma of a device are greater than 0 normally and then are reduced to 0 the device ceases functioning until the abilities all return to at least 1.

◇ New Gadgets

Disease Resistant

Equipped with a hyped-up immune system and organic nanites, devices with this gadget are more resistant to disease than most organic devices. The device gains a +10 bonus to Fortitude checks to resist the effects of disease.

Progress Level: 7
Restrictions: Organic technology only.
Purchase DC Modifier: +1

Fast Healing

Designed to recovery quickly from injuries using dedicated organic nanites and self-created healing drugs, devices with this gadget heal damage at a rate of one hit point per hour.

Progress Level: 7
Restrictions: Organic technology only.
Purchase DC Modifier: +2

Brain Implant

Devices with this gadget have been equipped with a primitive brain that allows the item some amount of self-directed action. The device gains an Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma of 1, representing its very simple consciousness. The device can control any of its own functions, such as a computer than can turn itself on and run programs, but the owner may always override the commands of the implanted brain. The device will follow simple commands from its owner, but commands longer than one sentence in length are likely to be confused and the user must input them using a keyboard or similar device. The device cannot perceive its surrounding environment unless that is a normal feature of the device, such as a camera or sensor device. The device can try to make skill checks for Intelligence-based skills, but must do so untrained unless it has a Skill Program gadget. Once this gadget is implanted the device may accept the Skill Programs gadget, though the maximum skill rank is 4.

Progress Level: 7
Restrictions: Organic technology only
Purchase DC Modifier: +4

Brain Implant, Improved

This gadget upgrades the cognitive capacity of the Brain Implant gadget, making the brain more powerful and easier to interact with. The device is now as intelligent as a dog or other intelligent animal. The Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma of the device increases to 3 and the device may now receive audio commands. The maximum skill ranks the device can gain from Skill Programs is 8.

Progress level: 7
Restrictions: Must have the Brain Implant gadget
Purchase DC Modifier: +4

Brain Implant, Advanced

The pinnacle of organic brain implants, this gadget boosts the Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma of the device to 5. The device is now capable of handling rank 12 Skill Programs. Now the device begins showing signs of a personality, often encouraging owners to think of it more as a pet or companion than a piece of equipment.

Progress Level: 7
Restrictions: Must have Improved Brain Implant gadget
Purchase Modifier: +4

Poison Resistant

Equipped with special filters and able to create its own anti-toxins, this gadget grants the device a +8 bonus to Fortitude saves against poison.

Progress Level: 7
Restrictions: Organic technology only
Purchase DC Modifier: +1

Reinforced

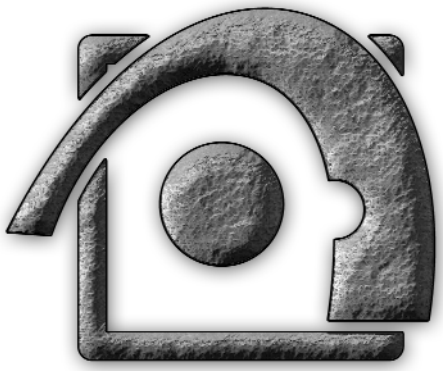
A device with this gadget has been genetically engineered to grow thick hide and chitin plates on its exterior surfaces, making it more difficult to damage using physical means. This gadget may be added to a device up too five times and each time it is added to a device it improves the hardness of the device by +2.

Progress Level: 7
Restrictions: Organic technology only
Purchase DC Modifier: +2

Robust

This gadget increases the bone density, skin toughness, and the fortitude of the device's internal organs, granting it a +2 bonus to Constitution. This gadget may be added to a device up to five times, its bonus being cumulative.

Progress level: 7
Restrictions: Organic technology only
Purchase DC Modifier: +3



Skill Program

This gadget represents upgrades to an existing brain implant that gives the brain a number of ranks in a specific skill related to the operation of the device, such as an organic computer with the Computer Use skill. Skill programs come in three levels: rank 4, rank 8, and rank 12. Each level gives the brain implant the listed number of ranks in a specific skill, to which the ability modifier of the brain implant is added.

Progress level: 7
Restrictions: Organic technology, most have brain implant of sufficient level to support the skill program.
Purchase DC Modifier: Rank 4 +2, Rank 8 +4, Rank 12 +6

◇ Adventuring Gear

Electronic Signet

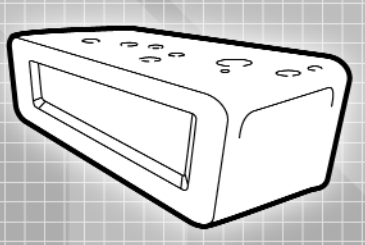
The latest rage among the saurian nobility, these devices are rings that have small reservoirs of a hardening silicone solution and a device that takes a small genetic sample of the wearer. When activated by pressing the signet against a surface, such as a piece of paper, the silicone solution is ejected from the ring, forming a hard shell around the genetic sample. The sample may be read with special genetic information readers that come with the ring and are the size of a calculator. This allows nobles to effectively sign their name with their DNA, making it very difficult to forge.

Nutrient Pack

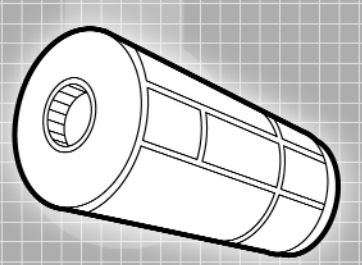
Nutrient packs are used to feed and power organic tech devices, all of which require one or more to operate. These small devices are roughly rectangular devices three inches long and two inches tall and wide. The outer layer of a nutrient pack is a special porous organic substance the device using the nutrient pack extracts the nutrients within. The nutrients in the pack are a mixture of vitamins, minerals, and drugs designed to support all the life functions of organic equipment. Other creatures may not consume these nutrients without suffering serious intestinal difficulties. Nutrient packs have a hardness of 3 and 3 hit points; they are notoriously fragile and usually carried in special satchels. Nutrient packs have fifty charges worth of nutrients, minerals, and drugs.

Nutrient Paste

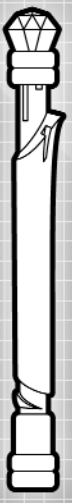
Effectively emergency rations for haimedians, nutrient paste may be applied to a haimedian's root structure, allowing the haimedian to gain the benefits of its nutrient coma without access to soil. Nutrient paste comes in quart tubes, each of which provides a single day of nutrients.



Nutrient Pack



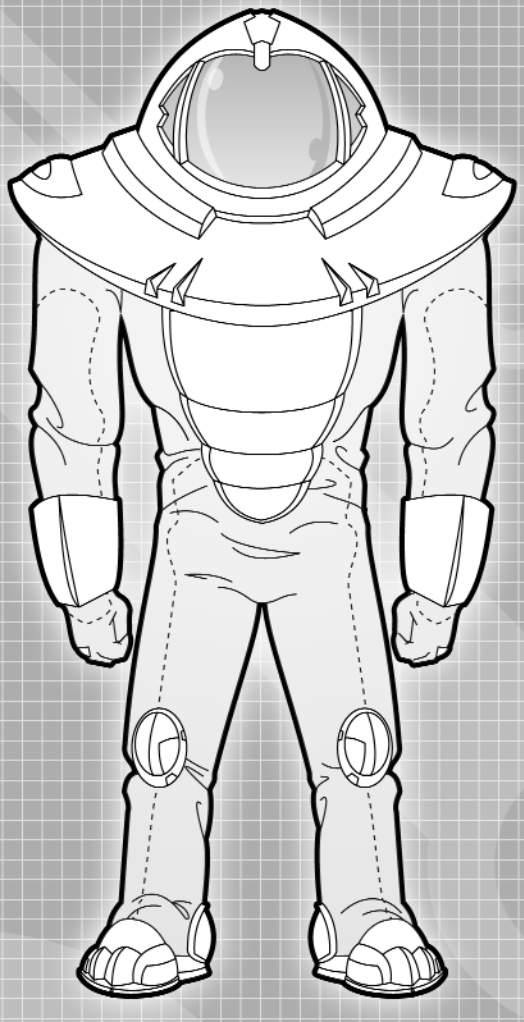
Nutrient Paste



Rod of Nobility



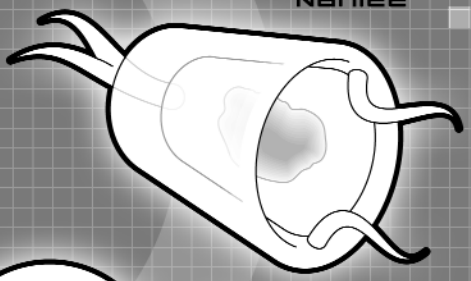
Signet Ring



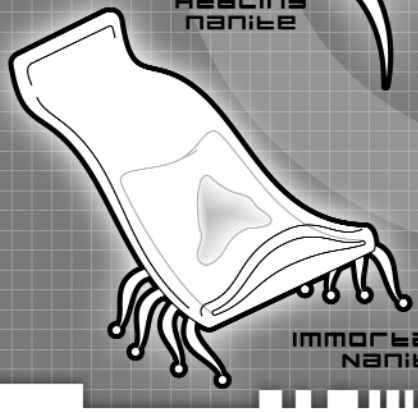
Warm Suit



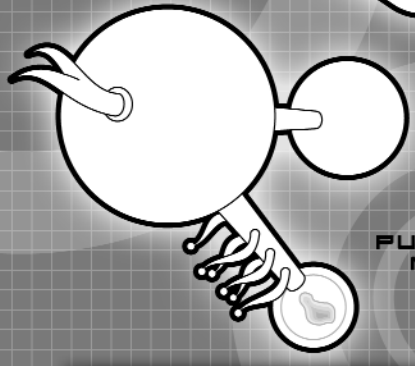
Healing Nanite



Boost Nanite



Immortality Nanite



Purifying Nanite

Organic Nanites

The haimedians have a technological edge over the other species of the system, in the form of organic nanites. While not as powerful or as all-purpose as the nanites of the Star Confederation, these devices can perform a wide variety of duties. They are primarily used in genetic engineering, working with organic tech, and filling in the technological holes that the haimedian preference for organic technology has created. Organic nanites are small machines made out of proteins and similar substance that have instructions hard coded into their bodies. They cannot be reprogrammed after creation, other than being given a self-destruct command that turns them into harmless protein strands. Organic nanites have a limited lifespan of 96 hours, but can replicate themselves if programmed to do so, effectively maintaining their population even over great spans of time. Organic nanites are treated as swarm creatures as per the rules in Chapter 3.

Organic nanites come in a number of varieties, but those listed below are the most common configurations. Once colony of organic nanites is created, its basic purpose cannot be changed. Nanites must be configured to function for a specific species; nanites that are built to heal haimedians will not work on humans. There are numerous other types of nanites available, but four of interest to player characters are listed below. They must all be injected into the target creature, but come in an injector device designed just for that purpose. Injecting nanites requires a standard action.

Healing Nanites: These nanites seek out damage to the target body and repair it. They speed the healing process, tripling natural healing rates for 48 hours and adding a +4 circumstance bonus to Treat Injury checks made during that time on the target.

Immortality Nanites: One of the main reasons for the continued survival of the Haimedian Collective in the face of the overwhelming military superiority of the saurians, these nanites work constantly to repair the damage and illnesses caused by the aging process in the subject's body. If the subject receives a new injection of nanites every three months, they age at one fourth the normal rate, effectively quadrupling their life expectancy if they use the nanites for the rest of their lives.

Purifiying Nanites: These nanites seek out alien material in the body of the host and destroy it, including poison, disease, and alcohol. These nanites grant a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves against poison and disease for 48 hours after injection.

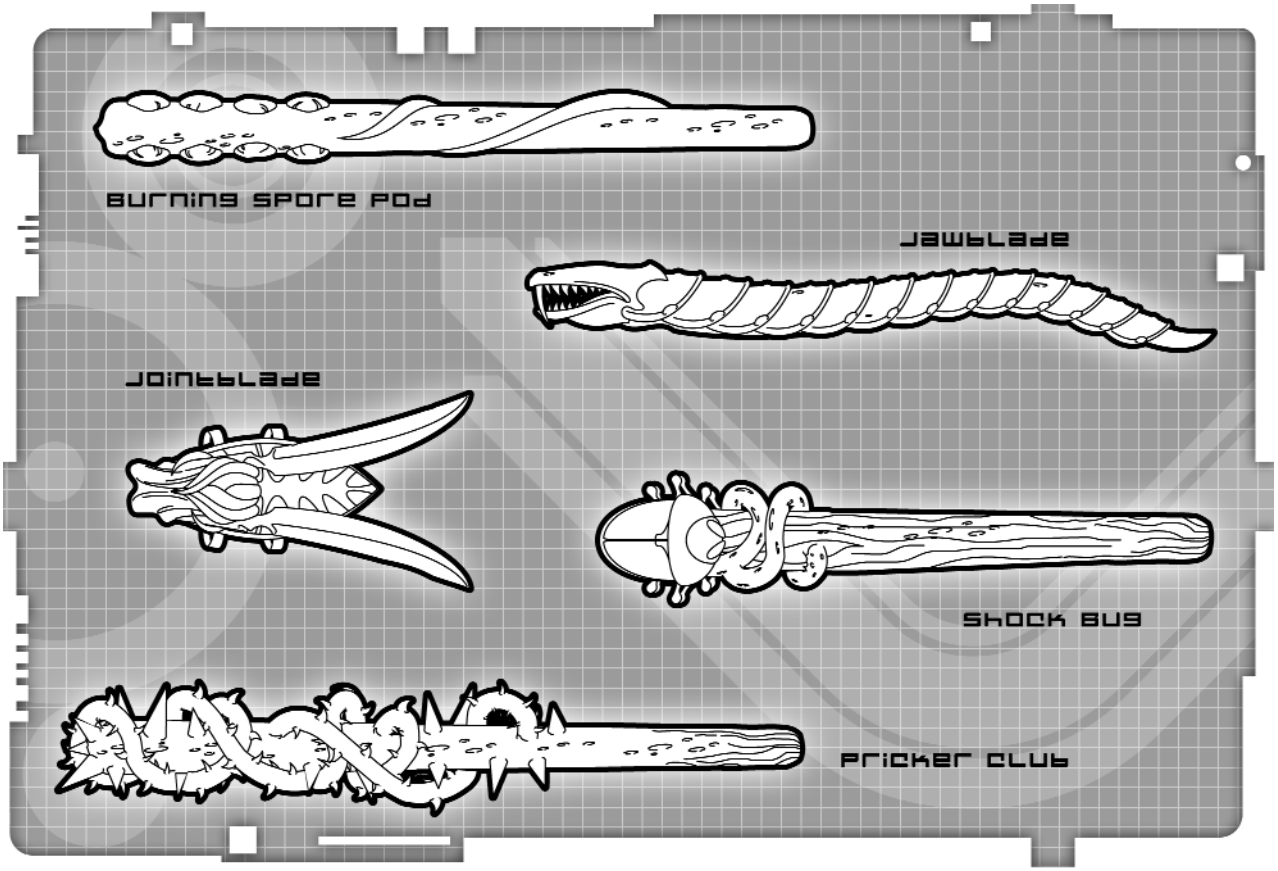
Boost Nanites: These nanites stimulate the adrenal gland and nerve endings, allowing the target to temporarily boost their abilities. The target gains a +4 bonus to Strength, Constitution and Dexterity, and removes the fatigued or exhausted conditions for 2d6 rounds, but afterwards the target is fatigued. If more than one unit of boost nanites is used with 24 hours the user takes a point of Strength, Constitution, and Dexterity damage for each unit of boost nanites after the first after the nanites have run their course.

Rod of Nobility

A recent development from the Imperial Bureaucracy, these devices are beginning to crop up in the hands of the kurizar of the Saurian Empire. Using a small computer and a genetic database of the nobility of the Empire, a crystal on the end of the rod glows when grasped by a noble. The intensity is proportional to the titles claimed by the holder. It is a quick and effective way to demonstrate one's noble birth and is often used by nobles prone to wandering to prove their status when away from their home territory.

Adventuring Gear

Name	PL	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Electronic Signet	6	Dim.	-	19	-
Nutrient Pack	7	Tiny	1 lb.	8	-
Nutrient Paste	7	Tiny	1 lb.	3	-
Organic Nanites					
Boost Nanites	7	Dim.	-	26	-
Healing Nanites	7	Dim.	-	26	-
Immortality Nanites	7	Dim.	-	30	-
Purifying Nanites	7	Dim.	-	26	-
Rod of Nobility	6	Tiny	2 lb.	20	-
Warm Suit	5	Small	10 lb.	14	-



Warm Suit

While saurians rarely travel into the arctic regions of their planet due to their cold-blooded nature, they have spent significant effort attempt to develop devices that protect them from the cold that affects them so severely. The latest development in this pursuit is the warm suit, a heavy synthetic suit filled with non-flammable insulation and heating units, which run off a power pack carried in a hip pouch. Warm suits grant the wearer a +8 bonus to Fortitude saves against damage due to exposure to cold conditions, and consume one charge per hour of operation.

WEAPONS • • •

◇ Haimedian Melee Weapons

Preferring guerilla warfare to straight up battles, haimedians make regular use of melee weapons in war and in police actions, particularly the shock bug. All commonly used haimedian weapons are made of organic technology.

Burning Spore Pod

This weapon looks much like a baseball bat with several symmetrical circular spore pods attached along its length. Used like a club, each strike causes the spore pods to release some of their spores on the target. The spores are caustic to animal flesh, causing a painful burning sensation in addition to eating away at the flesh of the target. These weapons are commonly used by haimedians involved in animal control. A creature struck by a burning spore pod takes normal bludgeoning damage as listed below, and must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or take an additional 1d4 points of acid damage and suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for 1d4 rounds, and this penalty is not cumulative with multiple strikes. The burning spore pod has a hardness of 5 and 10 hit points.

Jawblade

A weapon favored by autumnal harvesters, this organic weapon in its unarmed state looks much like a large snake with a set of oversized jaws, wicked teeth, and armored plates around its body. When a wielder activates it by touching the head of the creature, it wraps around the user's forearm, its mouth reaching just over the user's hand. The user uses the jawblade in a similar fashion to a punching dagger, the creature reflexively biting down on anything that gets within a few inches of its mouth. In addition to a highly painful bite, the jawblade also injects poison in its target. The target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) to resist the poison, which has primary damage of 1d3 Dexterity and secondary damage of 1d3 Strength. The jawblade has a hardness of 8 and 10 hit points. The jawblade can generate ten doses of poison before it requires a new nutrient pack.

Haimedian Collective Melee Weapons

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Burning Spore Pod (Exotic)	7	1d6/Special*	20	Bludgeoning/Acid	Med	5 lb.	15	-
Jawblade (Exotic)	7	1d4/Poison*	19-20/x3	Piercing	Med	7 lb.	20	Lic (+1)
Jointblade (Exotic)	7	1d8	19-20/x3	Slashing	Med	8 lb.	19	-
Pricker Club (Simple)	4	1d8	20/x2	Bludgeoning /Piercing	Med	12 lb.	8	-
Shock Bug (Simple)	7	1d4/1d4	20/x2	Bludgeoning /Electrical	Med	6 lb.	20	-

* See weapon description for more information

Jointblade

A plant-based device, a joint blade is similar to a large venus fly trap, only instead of a mouth it brings together two scissor-like blades. The jointblade is grown into a bracer containing soil and a nutrient pack, which straps to the user's forearm. The two-foot-long blades of the jointblade reach over the back of the user's forearm, having the point where they meet roughly at the user's wrist, and are approximately a foot apart when not engaged. When the user presses a sensory pod that rests in the user's palm the blades come together quickly and with great force, slicing into anything in their path. This weapon was originally a tool used in harvesting plants, but has since become a commonly used device by haimedian soldiers.

Pricker Club

The most basic of the common organic melee weapons used by haimedians, the pricker club is merely a large, stout piece of plant that is covered with spikes and barbs. These devices are often used to herd animals and are common in many settlements.

Shock Bug

A common weapon among haimedian animal herders, shock bugs are insectoid like devices attached to the end of a stout wooden stick. The shock bug creates a powerful electrical field around its abdomen, similar in fashion to an electric eel that delivers a powerful shock to anyone that comes into contact with it. This often stuns animals, but has no effect on haimedians due to their plant-like nature. Haimedian soldiers often use shock bugs in encounters with other species to avoid unnecessary bloodshed that might result in retaliatory strikes. The shock bug can be used as a club in addition to inflict 1d4 points of electrical damage on its target. Targets truck by the shock bug must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. Shock bugs can generate electricity for ten rounds per nutrient pack, meaning most that use them carry several spare packs.

◇ Saurian Melee Weapons

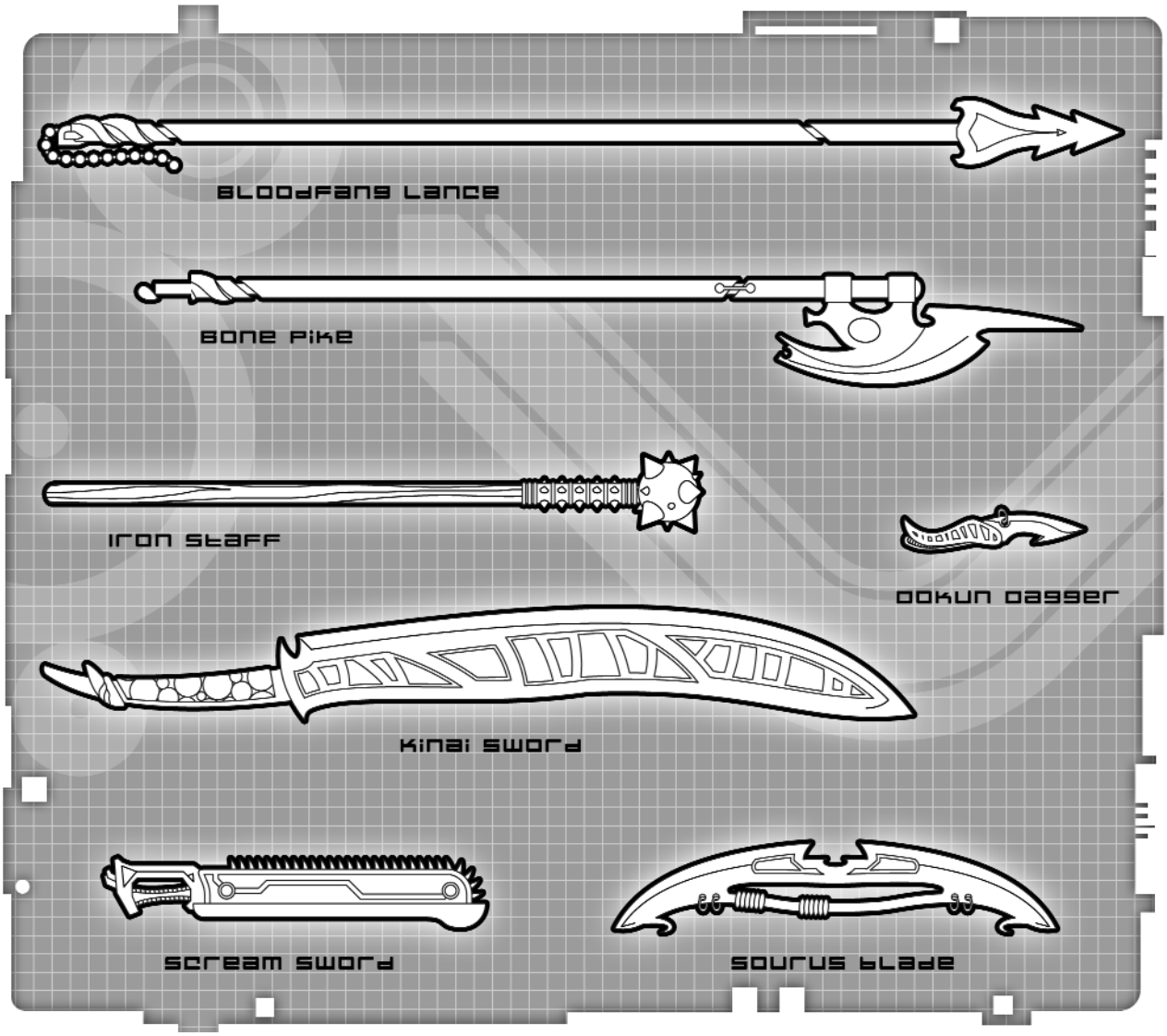
Saurians favor melee weapons over ranged weapons, seeing more honor in exerting a large amount of effort in killing a foe rather than simply pulling a trigger or pressing a button. Despite being a Progress Level 6 culture, melee weapons are commonplace among saurians and all nobles carry at least one sword on their person at all times. Most soldiers also carry melee weapons continually, and even peasants train with their farming implements or their militia weapons regularly. This interest in melee combat has resulted in hundreds of different melee weapons and fighting styles developing across the Empire, most of which exist along species and cultural lines. The weapons listed below are some of the more common saurian melee weapons, but hundreds of others exist.

Bloodfang Lance

Used by a small number of tyran nobles who still make use of bloodfang mounted cavalry, this weapon is seen more as a ceremonial reminder of a bygone age than a real weapon. It is a long shaft of steel made to be used from the back of a bloodfang, a large lizard creature that the saurians used as mounts in ages past. Now bloodfang cavalry are no match for modern armored vehicles and thus this weapon sees little use. When used mounted as part of a charge attack the critical multiplier of the bloodfang lance increases by +1.

Bone Pike

An ancient style of saurian polearm, it has long been favored by both tyran and shellback warriors



for its effectiveness against mounted troops. The hafts of these weapons are traditionally made from the bones of the massive blood dragon, a huge reptilian beast found in the eastern bounds of the Empire. The bone pike is the ceremonial weapon of the Bone Guard, the Emperor's personal guard. The head is a nasty bladed and hooked device designed to tear or impale opponents depending on the side of the head used. If you use a ready action to set a bone pike against a charge, you deal double damage on a successful hit against the charging character.

Bone pikes are also available in Huge size, inflicting 2d6 damage.

Dokun Dagger

A specially made weapon used only by the personal assassins of the Emperor, the Dishonored, dokun daggers are made of a special metal salvaged from Star Confederation devices that can be easily heated to incredible temperatures by a special power pack in its handle, making those cut by it both scarred and burned. Dokun daggers are also effective torture instruments due to the added pain of burning, and displaying one in the Saurian Empire often generates fear in those nearby. Dokun daggers are difficult to use without burning yourself without special training.

If the user of the dokun dagger is knocked prone, grappled, disarmed, bull rushed or suffers any effect that moves his position against his will, he must make a Reflex save (DC 10) to avoid hitting himself with the dokun dagger, suffering its fire damage. Additionally, if the wielder is not proficient with the weapon, he must make Reflex save (DC 10) after each missed attack to avoid hitting himself with the dokun dagger. Even the slightest touch of the cutting surface can inflict serious injuries. Failure means the wielder hits himself and takes normal damage from the weapon but does not add in any modifiers derived from Strength, feats, or similar sources.

Dokun daggers rely on saurian power packs and use one charge for every minute of operation.

Saurian Empire Melee Weapons

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Bloodfang Lance (Archaic)	3	2d6	18-20/x2	Piercing	Large	15 lb.	13	-
Bone Pike (Archaic)	3	1d10	19-20/x2	Piercing /Slashing	Large	10 lb.	15	-
Dokun Dagger (Exotic)	6	1d6/1d6	19-20/x2	Slashing/Fire	Small	2 lb.	28	III (+4)
Iron Staff (Archaic)	3	2d6	20/x2	Bludgeoning	Large	20 lb.	12	-
Kinai Sword (Archaic)	3	2d8	19-20/x2	Slashing	Huge	30 lb.	18	-
Scream Sword (Exotic)	5	2d6	19-20/x2	Slashing	Med	12 lb.	20	-
Sourus Blade (Exotic)	5	1d8/1d8 or 1d10	19-20/x2	Slashing	Med	10 lb.	23	III (+4)

* See weapon description for more information

Iron Staff

A weapon favored by many monks, including the Monks of the Blue Path, this heavy weapon is made up of a stout wooden pole of equal height to the wielder weighted on one end with an iron ball and a large number of brass studs. This weapon is capable of delivering devastating strikes in combat and can double as a walking stick, even if it is a bit heavy.

Kinai sword

The most common sword used by tyran saurians, this massive blade is eight feet long with a wide, curved shape to it. The handle is also curved in the opposite direction of the blade and is often decorated with symbols of past victories, such as tassels, scales from defeated enemies, and bones. The side of the blade is usually inscribed with the wielder's lineage and the rank of the wielder can be determined by seeing how much space this lineage takes up on the blade. Most kinai swords are family heirlooms passed down over hundreds of years, and some are even said to have been made in the earliest days of the saurian species. Many kinai swords are masterwork items.

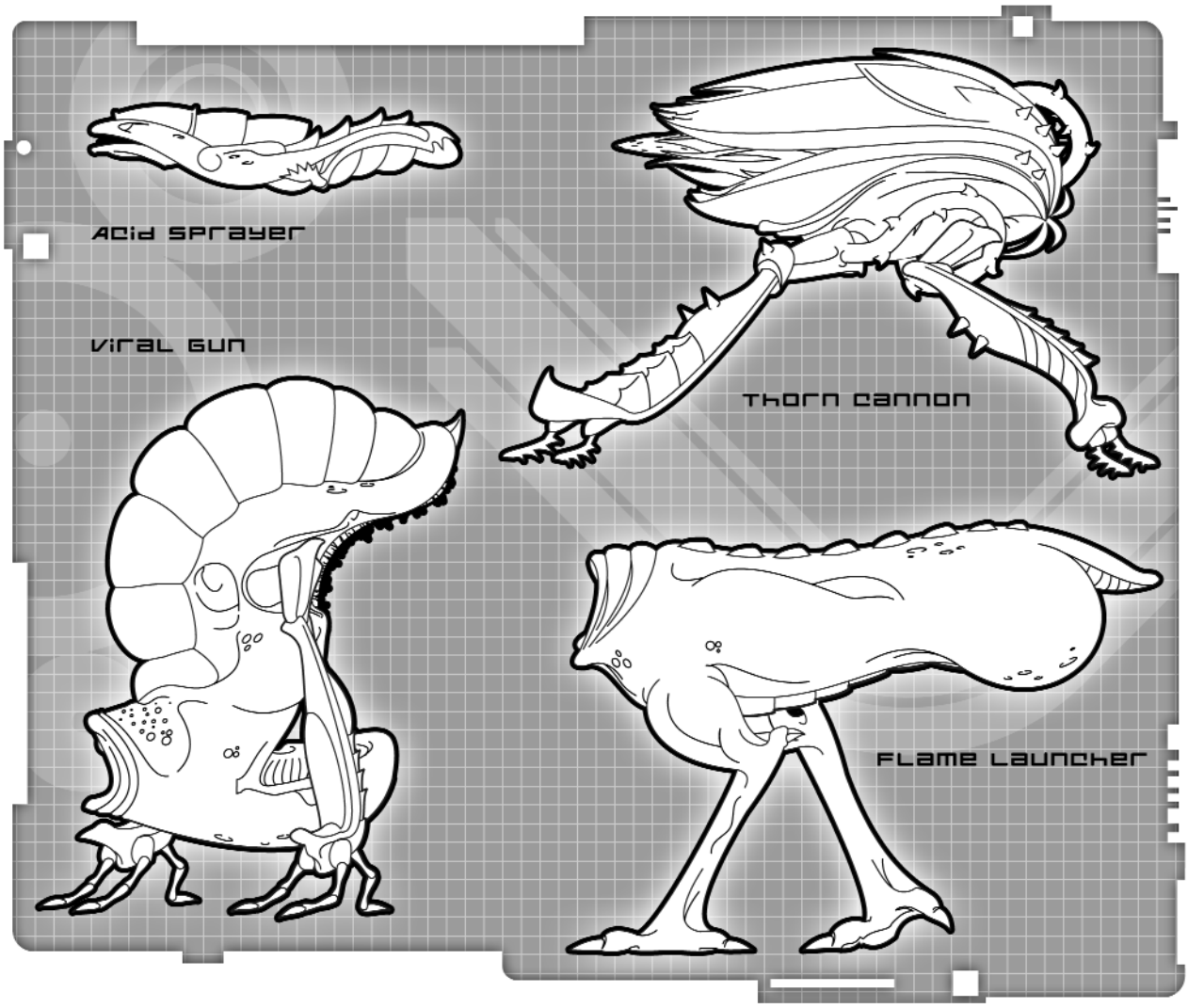
Scream Sword

A recent addition to the battlefields of the Saurian Empire, these weapons are essentially swords combined with the saurian equivalent of a chainsaw. They make a horrendous racket and are considered crude by many tyran nobles, but they are quickly becoming a favorite of some more youthful nobles and the fang gangs. These weapons require a standard action to activate. Scream swords run off of saurian power packs. Once active, they consume one charge per minute of operation. If the weapon is not activated it may be used as a club. Scream swords produce a great deal of noise, granting a +4 bonus to any Listen checks made to detect the weapon while active.

While a scream sword is active it can be very dangerous to the wielder if it he loses control of it. If the user of the scream sword is knocked prone, grappled, disarmed, bull rushed or suffers any effect that moves his position against his will, he must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid hitting himself with the scream sword, suffering normal damage for the weapon. Even the slightest touch of the cutting surface can inflict serious injuries. Failure means the wielder hits himself and takes normal damage from the weapon but does not add in any modifiers derived from Strength, feats, or similar sources.

Sourus blade

According to Imperial law, only members of the Blood Guard can carry the sourus blade. Breaking this low forfeits one of the offender's hands, though actually using the swords costs the offender both hands. The sourus blade is a complicated weapon that only the most skilled saurian swordsmiths can make, and only a few hundred are made each year. The sourus blade is essentially a large sword blade four feet long with a pair of six inch handles that can slide the length of the blade, allowing it to be used as a sword, a double sword, or a number of other options based on the position of the handles. Many saurians consider using a sourus blade an art, and sourus dancing competitions are common among the Blood Guard. The weapon can function either as a normal weapon or as a double weapon.



◇ Haimedian Ranged Weapons

Organic ranged weapons look and function very differently than inorganic weapons, relying more on pressure, air, and muscle to move their ammunition to the target. Haimedian ranged weapons have a strong reptilian or insectoid appearance and most other races find them deeply disturbing both to look at and to handle. In addition to conventional modes of attack, some haimedian ranged weapons are configured to launch the viral and bacterial weapons the haimedians rely on. Haimedians have no laws regarding the carrying of weapons.

Acid Sprayer

A pistol-sized insectoid weapon, this device is one of the most common ranged weapons among the haimedians. Although not particularly long-range, it can do devastating damage at close range. In addition to being used in combat it is often used in industrial processes and the clearing of debris. An acid sprayer consumes two charges from a nutrient pack each time it is fired.

Flame Launcher

A reptilian device slightly reminiscent of a shoulder-fired dragon, it sprays two chemicals at the target that, when mixed, ignite on contact with air and become extremely sticky. This allows the flame launcher to act like a napalm launcher, and it is regularly used by haimedian heavy combat troops. The device is very heavy and rarely seen out of haime dian security forces. Each time the flame launcher is fired it consumes 5 charges from its nutrient pack.

A target struck by a flame launcher has a 75% of catching on fire. If this occurs, the target takes 1d6 points of fire damage each round until he spend a full round action to extinguish the flames. This requires a Reflex save (DC 15) but immersion in water will automatically douse the flames.

Thorn Cannon

The standard longarm of the Haimedian Collective, it is carried by numerous soldiers and used when haimedians must hunt creatures in the wild for their organic materials. Thorn cannons use powerful muscles to hurl thorns, created within the cannon, at the target. The thorn cannon may hold one hundred thorns in reserve at any given time and requires one hour and ten charges from a nutrient pack to replenish ten thorns. It requires one charge from a nutrient pack to fire a thorn.

Haimedian Collective Ranged Weapons

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Acid Sprayer	7	4d4	19-20/x2	Acid	20 ft.	S	Nutrient pack	Small	5 lb.	22	Res (+2)
Flame Launcher	7	4d6	19-20/x2	Flame	30 ft.	S	Nutrient pack	Large	15 lb.	24	Res (+2)
Thorn Cannon	6	2d8	19-20/x2	Piercing	30 ft.	S, A	Nutrient pack	Large	12 lb.	23	Res (+2)
Viral Gun	6	1d4	20/x2	Bludgeoning	40 ft.	S	Nutrient pack	Large	14 lb.	24	Res (+2)

*The weapons on this chart require the Personal Firearms Proficiency and Organic Technology Familiarity feats.

Viral Gun

Used as a squad support weapon, viral guns launch spore canisters filled with fast-acting viral or bacterial agents, which can quickly inflict serious damage on unprepared opponents. Haimedians are generally immune to the agents they employ in this fashion, allowing them to quickly advance through the ranks of their stricken enemies. As the haimedians have no sense of proportional response, they are far more ready than humans to use these weapons, even in minor conflicts. The viral gun itself does little damage due to the lack of structural integrity on the part of the spore canisters. A viral gun consumes one charge from a nutrient pack each time it is fired. It contains 20 spore canisters when full and can regenerate them at the rate of one per hour by consuming one charge from the nutrient pack. The viral agents that can be used in a viral gun can be found in the ammunition section below.

◇ Saurian Ranged Weapons

Although saurians prefer melee combat to ranged combat, they are not stupid. All saurian troops are trained in and equipped with ranged weapons of some fashion, but their use is avoided when possible. Over time they have become more and more common as the struggles between the kurizars become larger and more costly, but for now the idea of honorable melee combat still wins out over shooting an enemy from afar. Most saurian ranged weapons are gunpowder-based, though some bow-style weapons remain, and the Bone Guard is starting to receive the first generation of saurian laser weapons as standard equipment. In general, saurians prefer large caliber weapons to a high rate of fire, feeling that killing with a single shot is the best way to use a gun instead of hurling hundreds of bullets at your target.

In the Saurian Empire only nobles, their guards, and the Imperial soldiers of the Blood and Bone Guards are allowed to carry firearms without special permission of a noble, and they may carry any type of firearm they wish without restriction. Peasants are only allowed to carry firearms only when drilling under the supervision of their local lord or when called to battle.

Bone Guard Laser Rifle

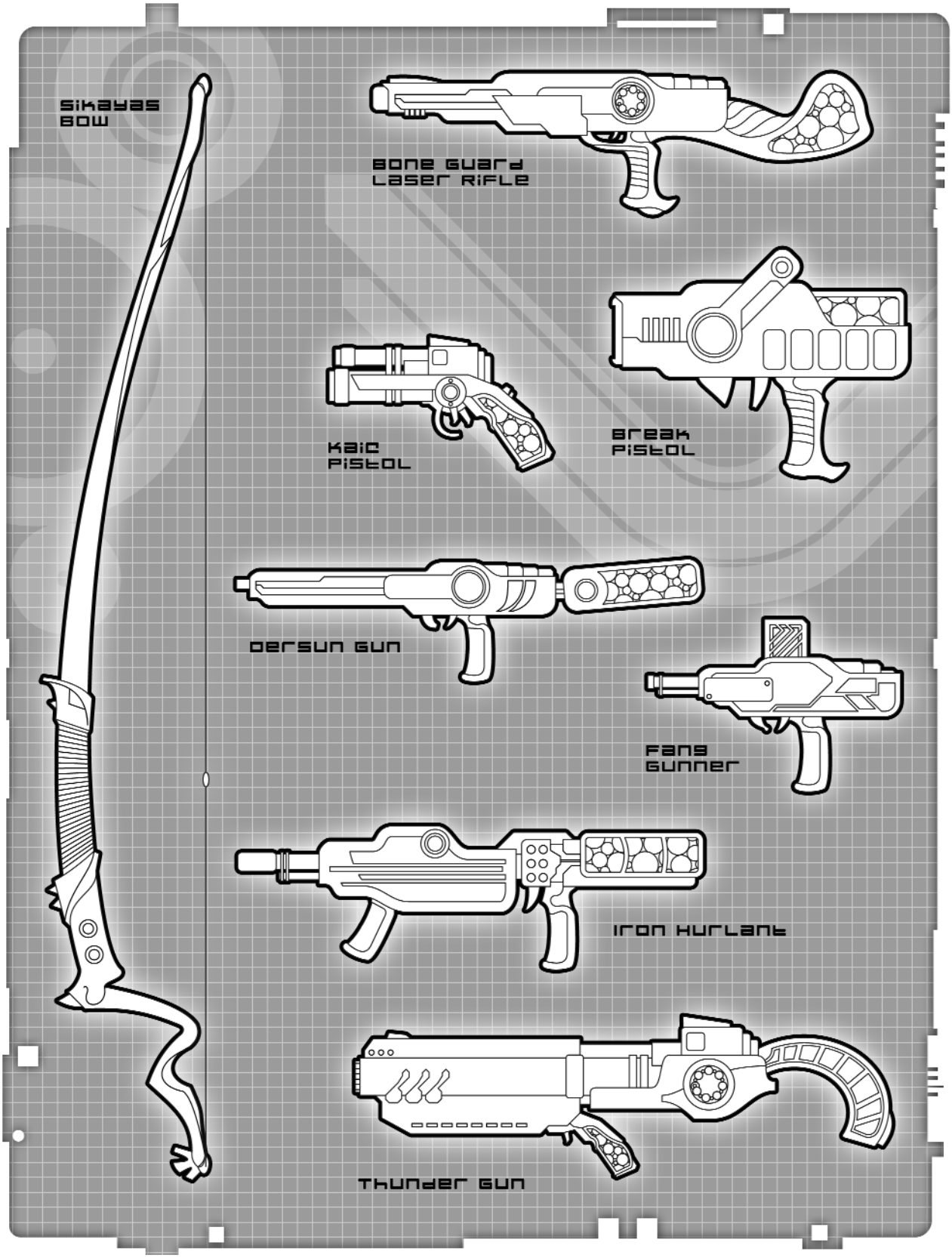
The most advanced piece of man-portable weaponry in the arsenal of the Saurian Empire, only a few thousand of these weapons have been distributed to the Bone Guard. Any soldier who loses his laser rifle is executed for treason, but despite this several have been stolen or lost and ended up in hands other than those of the Bone Guard. These weapons are primitive compared to Dawning Star laser weapons, being larger and having a shorter effective range, but inflict comparable damage to EDF weapons. Anyone using a Bone Guard Laser Rifle within the bounds of the Saurian Empire is liable to attract a lot of attention, and little of it favorable. All Bone Guard laser rifles are constructed under heavy guard in the City of Bone in factories owned by the Emperor. Bone Guard laser rifles consume two charges per shot.

Break Pistol

An oversized pistol designed to be used by tyran saurians, most other saurians find this weapon far too large to use easily. Nobles use the break pistol for short-range combat, as it packs a significant punch but holds a small amount of ammunition. Many nobles carry these weapons with the intended purpose of shooting those who flee challenges to melee combat, but while many espouse this idea in public they are not so discerning on the battlefield. Break pistols are made in the city of Blackrise, but only on commission, as each weapon is made by hand.

Dersun Gun

The most common type of firearm in the Saurian Empire, nearly every village in the Empire has a small stockpile of these weapons and several hundred rounds of ammunition. Created in massive numbers in several factories, the Dersun gun is the default weapon purchased by sizars to arm their subjects. The Dersun gun is also often used by nobles when hunting, and by full time soldiers in the armies of the wealthier nobles. There are often small differences in manufacture, such as barrel length or stock design, but these weapons have basically been used unchanged for almost two hundred years.



Saurian Empire Ranged Weapons

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Bone Guard Laser Rifle	6	3d8	20	Fire	80 ft.	S	Power pack	Large	18 lb.	29	Mil (+3)
Break Pistol	5	2d10	20	Ballistic	30 ft.	S	4 int.	Medium	12 lb.	23	Res (+2)
Dersun Rifle	5	2d10	20	Ballistic	60 ft.	Single	5 int.	Large	15 lb.	14	Lic (+1)
Fang Gunner	5	2d6	20	Ballistic	30 ft.	S, A	30 box	Small	8 lb.	17	Res (+2)
Iron Hurlant	5	2d8	20	Ballistic	40 ft.	S	40 box	Large	16 lb.	21	Res (+2)
Kaic Pistol	5	2d6/2d8	20	Ballistic	30 ft.	S	12/4 cyl.	Small	7 lb.	19	Res (+2)
Sikayas Bow (Exotic)	3	2d6	20/x3	Piercing	100 ft.	1	-	Huge	12 lb.	22	-
Thunder Gun (Exotic)	5	8d6	-	Fire/Ballistic	100 ft.	Single	5 box	Large	20 lb.	24	Res (+2)

*The weapons on this chart require the Personal Firearms Proficiency unless otherwise noted.

Fang Gunner

A homemade gun constructed with makeshift parts by various fang gangs, these weapons are commonly used in criminal activities and conflicts between fang gangs. Eschewing the preferences of most saurians, fang gunners are submachine guns capable of firing hundreds of rounds per minute, but they are not noted for their accuracy or dependability. Each time a fang gunner is fired in autofire and a 1 is rolled the weapon jams, which will require 1 full round action to fix. The weapon suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls, due to its lack of accuracy. In most areas of the Saurian Empire a person carrying a fang gunner is assumed to be a criminal, so most fang gangers conceal theirs. These weapons are made by hand in back alleys and hidden workshops, and two fang gunners are rarely identical due to poor quality control and lack of manufacturing tools.

Iron Hurlant

The standard longarm of the Blood Guard and many saurian full-time soldiers, the Iron Hurlant is a powerful semi-automatic rifle manufactured in several cities across the Empire. The Iron Hurlant can be modified to perform automatic fire, though this is rarely done. The Iron Hurlant is a very common weapon, and purchasing both the weapon and ammunition is an easy task in most regions of the Empire. It has become a particular favorite of the bandits and criminals that operate in the rural areas of the Empire. Most Iron Hurlants are constructed in the city of Blackrise, which is one of the largest producers of firearms in the Empire.

Modifying an Iron Hurlant for automatic fire requires a Repair check (DC 15), four hours of work, and parts with a Purchase DC of 8.

Kaic Pistol

The standard sidearm of the Blood Guard, these heavy pistols are double revolvers with two cylinders, each with their own barrel, mounted one beneath the other. The different cylinders hold different caliber bullets, the larger cylinder carrying 12 bullets while the smaller carries 4 larger caliber bullets. Two different triggers are used, and each cylinder must be reloaded separately, though speed loaders are commonly available. The gun is designed to give the operator a range of ammunition choices for different situations, though many flyers and brachins find the oversized pistol to be too heavy to use comfortably. The Kaic pistol is constructed in the city of Blackrise under contract with the Blood Guard, though several cheap knockoffs of the Kaic pistol are also made in Blackrise.

Sikayas Bow

One of the longstanding, traditional weapons of saurian culture, these bows are massive, designed for use by tyran warriors. Averaging ten feet tall, a Sikayas bow is made from pescar trees from the northern reaches of the Empire in a process that takes ten years of carving, laminating, aging, and testing. Sikayas bows are extremely powerful weapons, but as firearms have become more popular the Sikayas bow has fallen out of favor. Now it is used primarily as a recreational weapon or in certain ceremonial rituals of war. Skill in a Sikayas bow is still considered the sign of a well-rounded warrior. Due to the immense power required to use a Sikayas bow and the unusual draw technique used to pull back the string the Sikayas bow is an exotic weapon.

Sikayas bows of Large size are also available. They inflict 1d10 points of damage and have a range increment of 80 ft.

Thunder Gun

While humans would call this weapon a recoilless rifle, saurians prefer slightly more artistic names for their weapons. A shoulder-fired heavy weapon, it is primarily found in the hands of well-funded infantry units like the Blood Guard, or in the armory of nobles who cannot afford armored vehicles. The Thunder Gun is a multi-round, clip-fed weapon that is capable of inflicting substantial damage on vehicles but is a bit clumsy when firing at smaller targets. The Thunder Gun is made in the city of Slaughter Gap and sold throughout the Empire.

The Thunder Gun ignores 5 points of hardness when it strikes a target. It also inflicts half damage to any creature within 5 feet of the point of impact, though creatures may make a Reflex save (DC 17) to reduce this damage by half and the hardness of these secondary targets is not reduced. When used against a target of Medium-size or smaller, the user suffers a -2 penalty on attack rolls.

The Exotic Firearms Proficiency (recoilless rifles) feat applies to this weapon.

⋄ Ammunition

The laws of the Saurian Empire regarding ammunition are much the same as their laws regarding firearms: there aren't many besides limiting the access of peasants to firearms. Ammunition is easily available for most weapons in urban areas, though in more rural areas usually only Dersun rifle rounds are available.

Nutrient Packs

Unless otherwise noted haimedian organic weapons do not use ammunition but instead rely on nutrient packs to supply the weapon with the materials needed to manufacture its own ammunition.

Saurian Power packs

Saurian weapons use power packs for much of their equipment that are very similar to the power packs used by humans, though slightly less efficient. Saurian power packs carry 30 charges and weigh 1 pound. Saurians cannot make plasma power packs. Saurian power packs have a Purchase DC of 12 on C'thalk.

Saurians also make back power packs that carry 120 charges and weigh 30 lb. These back power packs are issued to Bone Guard soldiers for use with their laser rifles, but others rarely use them. These saurian back power packs have a Purchase DC of 16.

⋄ Viral and Bacterial Ammunition

Viral guns and other haimedian weapons fire containers filled with viral or bacterial agents, infecting their enemies with all manner of terrible disease and pain. While these weapons are rarely fast acting, they can be extremely effective if given some time to work. Haimedians see no moral problem with employing such weapons, though many other races will not be cavalier about using plagues in war. The fact the haimedians are immune to their own creations probably affects their opinions.

Viral and bacterial ammunition cannot be purchased by non-haimedians, and even among the haimedians one must demonstrate the need for such materials to be able to purchase them. They are effectively Restricted, but this changes to Illegal when dealing with outsiders. Viral and bacterial weapons are sold in doses, each of which is enough to fill a single viral gun round, a single syringe, or any other container of about a fluid ounce in size. This is enough material to start an epidemic if properly delivered.

Viral and bacterial weapons are treated as diseases, and any bonuses to Fortitude saves against disease apply to saving throws against these weapons. Any target struck by a viral gun is affected by the disease regardless of the method of delivery for the disease.

Avoider

The weakest of the haimedian disease weapons, avoider is used to scare off unwanted visitors without killing them. It is usually employed to keep saurians from wandering into haimedian territory by convincing them that the region is filled with dangerous plagues or making it too difficult for the saurians to travel further into haimedian territory. The disease is rarely fatal, but it can make travel difficult.

Blind Rage

A common combat disease used by the haimedians, its incubation period is short and its effect severe. In addition to ability score damage, anyone who suffers the initial damage of blind rage goes

Ammunition

Ammunition Type (Quantity)	Damage Type	Purchase DC
Break Pistol (20)	Ballistic	5
Dersun Rifle (100)	Ballistic	6
Fang Gunner (100)	Ballistic	5
Iron Hurlant (100)	Ballistic	5
Kaic Pistol		
⋄ Heavy Rounds (20)	Ballistic	4
⋄ Light Rounds (60)	Ballistic	5
Sikayas arrows (10)	Piercing	8
Thunder Gun (20)	Fire/Ballistic	10

Viral and bacterial ammunition

Disease	Type	Incubation Period	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Purchase DC
Avoider	Inhaled DC 14	1d6 hours	1d2 Dex	1d4 Dex and 1d4 Strength	17
Blind Rage	Contact DC 13	1d8 hours	1d2 Con and partial blindness	1d2 Con	20
Flesheater	Contact DC 15	2d6 hours	1d2 Con and Cha	1d3 Con and Cha	22
Mad Fever	Inhaled DC 13	2d6 hours	1d3 Wis, fear, and hallucinations	1d2 Int and Wis	22
Quick Death	Inhaled DC 14	1d6 hours	1d6 Con	1d6 Con	25

partially blind until they successfully fight off the disease. All targets of the victim gain half concealment and the victim suffers a -8 penalty to all skill checks that require sight, such as Spot and Drive checks. When using blind rage, haimedians tend to retreat after infecting their targets and then return in force hours later, after their enemies have been blinded. The blindness goes away when the victim fights off the disease.

Flesheater

While haimedians are not particularly bothered by the sight of fleshing rotting on a living being, other species tend to find it disturbing. This disease is terrible to behold and is very deadly, making it an effective tool of the haimedian war machine. Most other species would consider using such a disease as a weapon an abomination, but the haimedians have no such concern. Anyone who takes secondary damage from the flesheater disease suffers 1 permanent point of Constitution and Charisma drain.

Mad Fever

Used as a psychological warfare tool, mad fever is launched into enemy camps and then left to fester, as the inhabitants of the camp begin turning against each other. Mad fever causes a large increase in the body's temperature, causing brain damage and inducing terrible hallucinations. This often has dramatic results on the morale of those struck with mad fever, and can result in the victims attacking each other in confusion.

When a victim fails to save against the initial damage of mad fever they experience paranoia and hallucinations. The victim becomes shaken and cannot recover until they fight off the disease. The victim also suffers a -4 penalty to all Wisdom-based skills due to the hallucinations, and all combat targets are considered to have one-quarter concealment.

Quick Death

The default haimedian combat disease of choice, quick death kills faster than any other haimedian disease. The only drawback to the disease is it often kills before it has time to spread, requiring multiple infections when dealing with a large group of enemies. Quick death causes the victim's blood to thicken quickly until it can no longer pass through the heart and brain effectively, causing both aneurisms and heart attacks in the process.

ARMOR • • •

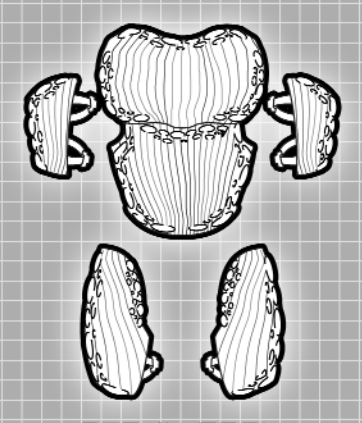
◇ Haimedian Armor

Possibly the most bizarre form of armor in the Helios system, haimedian armor takes the form of living creatures covered in chitin, shells, or thick hide that wrap around the wearer. Most suits of organic armor do nothing more than protect the wearer, but some boost the wearer's abilities in a fashion similar to power armor. Organic armor is designed to be terrifying in appearance, making the wearer appear to be some sort of hard-shelled monster instead of a person in armor. Non-haimedians often find organic armor disgusting to wear because of its warmth to the touch, the fluids it sometimes secretes, and its appearance. Haimedians also make use of non-living leather armor.

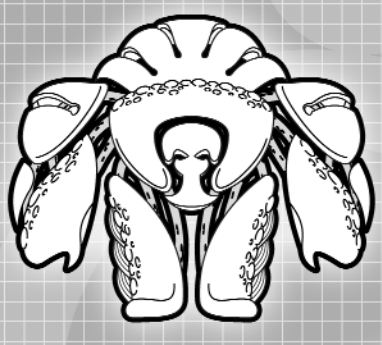
◇ Light Armor

Light Leather Armor

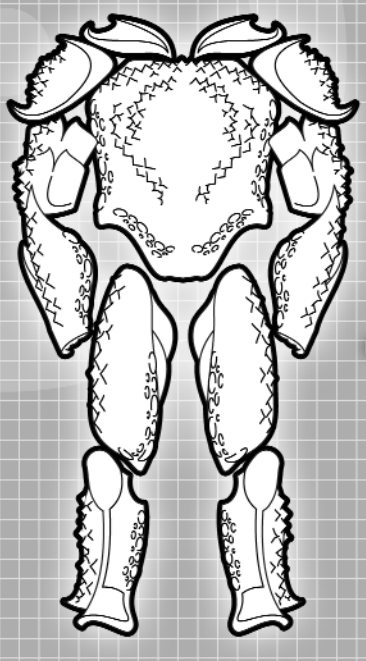
A simple suit of leather armor made from the skins of beasts grown specifically for leather production, light leather armor is worn by haimedian woodsmen and beast workers instead of soldiers. Its protection is only slight and most haimedians who expect real combat prefer something with more heft to it. Haimedians usually dye their leather armor in earth tones, but the scent of the armor is actually more important to the haimedians than the visual appearance. Many haimedians douse their armor in scent-producing plants.



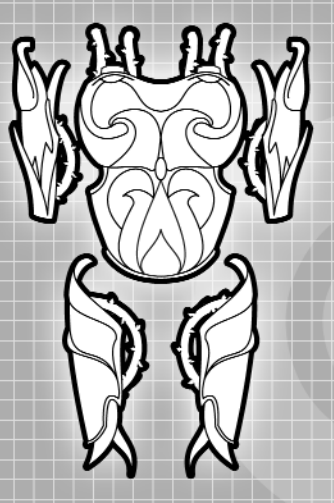
Scout Bark Armor



Living Hide Armor



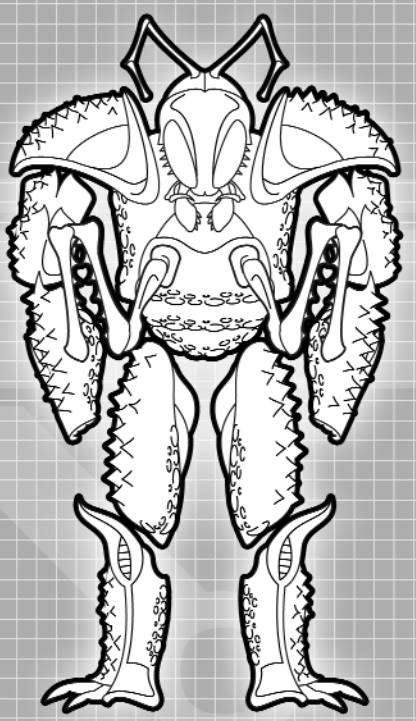
Light Chitin Armor



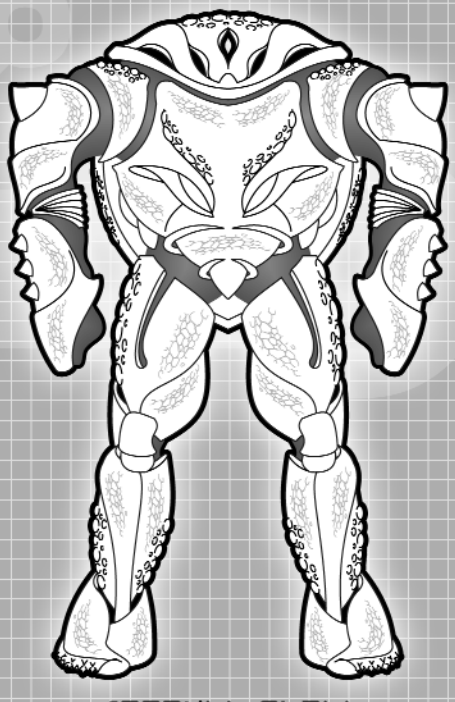
Heavy Leather Armor



Light Leather Armor



Heavy Chitin Armor



Assault Shell Armor

Scout Bark Armor

The lightest of the organic armors, scout bark armor is a specially designed plant that is a cross-breed between moss and a tree. The surface of the mossbark plant is hard like bark, but grows over surfaces like moss. For scout bark armor, a frame of bone is constructed around which the mossbark plant grows, creating a suit of armor. Scout bark armor is not particularly protective, but it allows the wearer to easily blend in with natural surroundings. Used by hunters and scouts of the Haimedian Collective, it is one of the more common types of organic armor.

The wearer of a suit of scout bark armor gains a +6 bonus to Hide checks made in forested surroundings. Scout armor holds a single nutrient pack and consumes one charge per day.

◇ Medium Armor

Heavy Leather Armor

A heavier version of the light leather armor, this armor is used by poorer soldiers or those who expect to be without nutrient packs for a long period of time. Long-range patrols out of haimedian territory usually wear this type of armor and some haimedians have altered it to look more like saurian armor in case of accidental meetings. Heavy leather armor is usually made from the hide of the darsoth, the quadruped that haimedians use for overland cargo transport.

Light Chitin Armor

One of the more common forms of living armor, light chitin is used by haimedian law enforcement officers and infantry. The chitin armor is a heavily engineered insectoid being that wraps around the wearer, encasing it in a chitin shell that many weapons are unable to pierce. The armor also has several additional features beyond protection: a haimedian wearer can live off the armor's carbon dioxide for eight hours, the suit contains a container of nutrient paste that may be automatically applied to the haimedian's roots, and the suit contains an organic personal communicator. Chitin armor is grown in vats in genetic engineering facilities across the Haimedian Collective and requires several years to grow to maturity. Once a suit of chitin armor is ready, it has a useful life of twenty years, after which its chitin begins to weaken due to age.

Chitin armor carries two nutrient packs and consumes two charges per day.

Living Hide Armor

Living hide armor is rare, usually only warn by those autumnal harvesters who prefer entering into close quarters combat with their enemies. While light chitin armor is more protective than living hide, living hide armor contains muscles between its layers of tough skin that assist the wearer. This allows the wearer of the living hide to perform acts of strength that would normally be impossible for the wearer, though such acts can quickly consume a nutrient pack if the wearer is not careful. Some haimedians wear living hide armor in an attempt to understand what it is to be an animal, clothed in warm, living flesh, though their meditations on the subject are rarely fruitful.

The wearer of living hide armor may activate the muscles of the suit as a free action. This consumes one charge from the armor's nutrient pack and grants the wearer a +2 equipment bonus to Strength for one round. The armor carries two nutrient packs and consumes two charges per day.

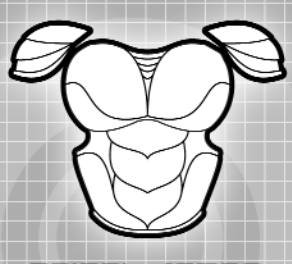
◇ Heavy Armor

Heavy Chitin Armor

If a haimedian is wearing heavy chitin armor, it is a sign that serious combat is afoot. Only soldiers wear heavy chitin armor, and even then only among special forces. The armor is terrifying to behold; the wearer's head is concealed beneath a large insect head and vestigial limbs reach out from the wearer's torso. Clear sections of the armor are strategically placed to expose enough of the wearer's foliage for it to be able to see clearly. Like light chitin armor, heavy chitin armor allows the wearer to live off the carbon dioxide created by the suit for 8 hours and is completely environmentally sealed. The armor includes an organic personal communicator, 3 containers of nutrient paste, an organic nanobeacon, an organic portable glow lamp, and an organic soother pulse. It grants the wearer a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves against exposure to severe weather. The wearer of heavy chitin armor also gains a +2 equipment bonus to Strength. Heavy chitin armor consumes 10 charges per day and carries four nutrient packs.

Assault Shell Armor

The heaviest of the organic armors, this armor is covered in thick, multi-layered shells similar to those found on a tortoise. The life form supporting the shells is literally wrapped around the wearer in a complicated fashion, eventually enveloping the entire body and sealing the seams using a type of quick drying pus. The suit is very heavy, but the armor boosts the wearer's Strength to make up for the weight. Assault shell armor is only worn by heavy infantry troops, and it is a recent enough creation that only a few dozen suits exist so far. The Haimedian Collective hopes to eventually have a crack unit of several hundred soldiers equipped with assault shell armor and viral guns, which will serve as the core of the defense of the Haimedian Collective's territory. Most non-haimedians who see someone in a suit of assault shell armor assume the wearer is in fact covered in shells and is a different species entirely.



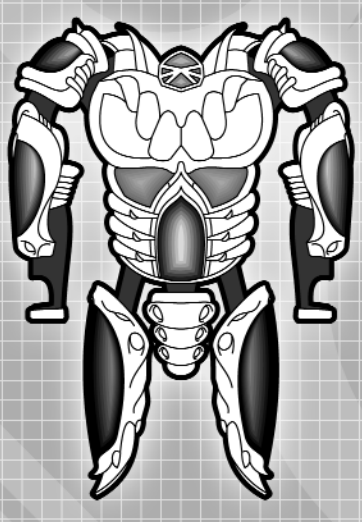
Boisch Armor



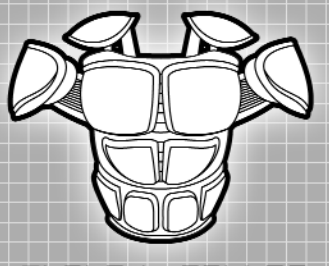
Ribbed Leather



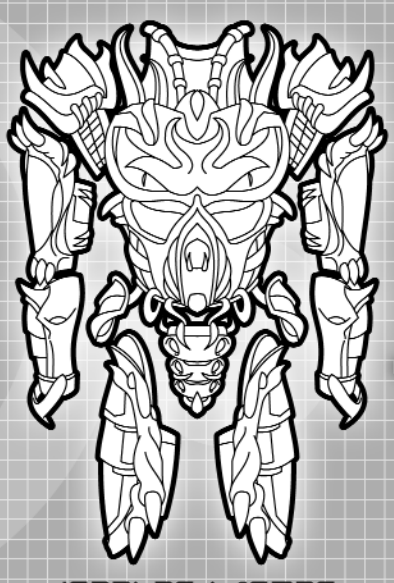
Reed Breastplate



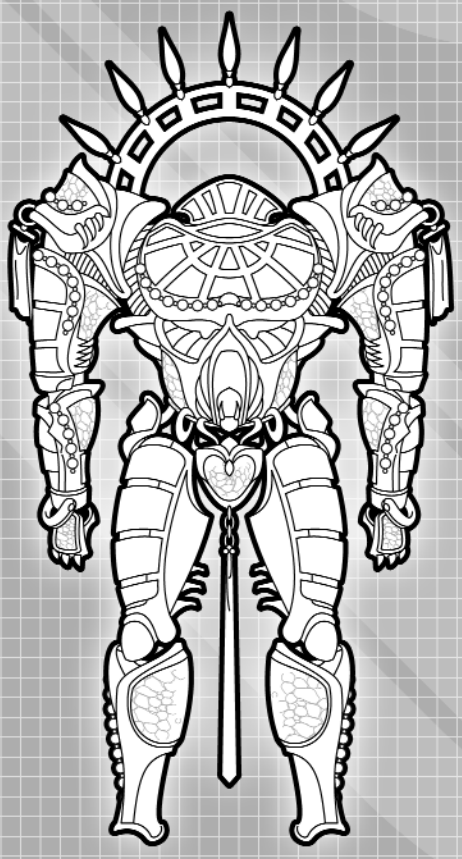
Blood Guard Armor



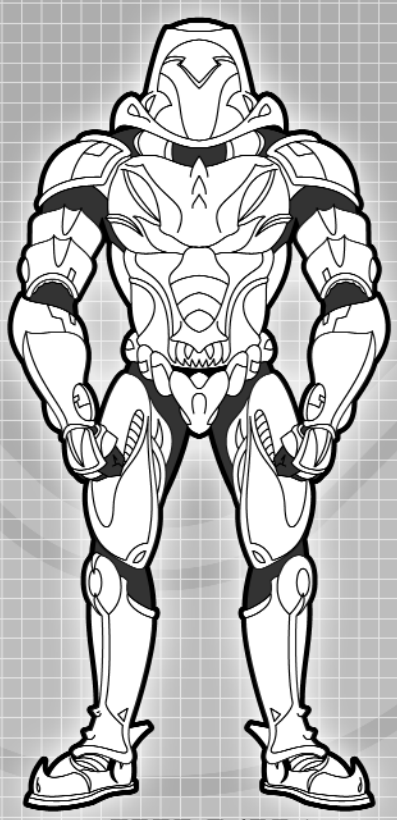
Plated Leather Armor



Ironlord Armor



Battlelord Plate Armor



Bone Guard Armor

Assault shell armor grants the wearer a +4 equipment bonus to Strength while worn. It contains a built in 16 hour carbon dioxide supply, 3 containers of nutrient paste, an organic personal communicator, an organic portable glow lamp, an organic nanobeacon, and the organic equivalent of an onboard computer, enabling it to hook up with other suits of assault shell armor or a command computer. Assault shell armor uses up 20 charges per day and carries six nutrient packs.

◇ Saurian Armor

Saurian armor is a thing of beauty, valued as much for its appearance as its protective quality. Little remains of the advanced armors the Star Confederation left behind on C'thalk long ago. They have been replaced with suits of iron, steel, and synthetics, but for most of the history of C'thalk, weapons development has outpaced that of armor. Thus armor is worn as much for style as protection. Most saurian suits of armor contain some effort to make them appealing works of art in addition to being protective. Nobles usually have custom made, highly detailed suits inlaid with precious metals, rare leathers, and painted in family colors, all mixed in with the latest in armor plating. Wearing armor is not considered unusual among the saurians, as one never knows when a duel may be called for, but among the peasants it is looked at askance. A peasant should only go to war when his lord requires it, so peasants wearing armor without the command of their lord are clearly up to no good, or so the nobles believe.

◇ Light Armor

Doisch Armor

A recently developed type of armor, doisch armor is made from steel plates and a synthetic fabric called doisch, which is similar to Kevlar. Light and flexible, this armor was created for the Dishonored, but has since become popular with assassins and thieves the Empire over. Due to a bureaucratic mistake, the Imperial factories made thousands of suits for general distribution before realizing its mistake and cutting off the supply. In addition to protective qualities, doisch armor dampens the heat signature of the target and changes its color to match nearby surfaces, thanks to its color-changing dyes.

The wearer of doisch armor gains a +4 bonus to Hide checks and is effectively invisible to infra-red scanners.

Reed Breastplate

One of the more common types of armor found in the Saurian Empire, peasants who cannot afford a stronger suit of armor wear reed breastplates. Made from dried river reeds, reed breastplates are not particularly effective as armor, but they are extremely cheap and easy to make. Most villages have at least one reed worker who makes armor and most peasants have a suit hidden away somewhere. Nobles never wear reed armor, seeing it as being beneath them, and only the cheapest nobles use it to outfit their troops. Most wearers of reed breastplates are peasants hiding the armor from their lords, for when the lord is not around to arm everyone.

Ribbed Leather Armor

The most common type of light armor in the Empire, ribbed leather is made out of heavy overlapping leather plates ribbed with bands of steel. While not as effective as a full suit of metal armor, it is seen by most saurians as a sufficient middle ground and is far cheaper than a full suit of steel armor. Most nobles who armor their peasants use ribbed leather armor, but many do not have enough suits to equip all their underlings at once. Ribbed leather is also favored by individuals preferring speed to protection but cannot afford doisch armor, such as fang gangers and military scouts.

◇ Medium Armor

Blood Guard Armor

In service for almost one hundred years, the black and red armor of the Blood Guard is one of the more advanced armors built by the Saurian Empire. Made of synthetic fibers and ceramic plates, it provides extensive protection for the wearer with minimal loss of mobility. All Blood Guard soldiers are issued this type of armor and most wear it at all times when on duty, with the exception of pilots and mechanics who would be hindered by the armor's bulk. Suits of Blood Guard armor are also available to the public, but they have been heavily modified and the paint scheme changed to prevent confusion with the official Blood Guard suits. A commoner can only own Blood Guard armor with dispensation from his noble lord.

Blood Guard armor has a built in personal communicator, heads-up display, onboard computer, night vision goggles, and portable glow lamp.

Ironlord Armor

A style of traditional armor used by the tyran nobles for centuries, Ironlord armor is considered the proper attire for a noble out on a hunt or directing his subjects in military maneuvers without expecting real combat. While Ironlord armor is real armor, it is designed more for appearance than functionality. Ironlord suits are all custom made, usually taking months to complete the extensive metal inlay and litany of ancestors carved on its exterior surfaces. Ironlord armor has a fearsome appearance, but most suits feature detachable sections so the armor can be made more fitting for court. When nobles expect real combat they normally favor the

C'Thalk armor

	PL	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Light Armor										
Doisch Armor	6	Tactical	+4	+1	+5	-1	30 ft./20 ft.	8 lb.	25	Res (+2)
Light Leather Armor	3	Archaic	+2	+1	+6	-	30 ft./20 ft.	15 lb.	10	-
Reed Breastplate	3	Archaic	+2	+1	+4	-3	30 ft./20 ft.	18 lb.	8	-
Ribbed Leather Armor	4	Archaic	+3	+1	+4	-2	30 ft./20 ft.	18 lb.	14	-
Scout Bark Armor	7	Tactical	+4	+1	+5	-1	30 ft./20 ft.	20 lb.	22	-
Medium Armor										
Blood Guard Armor	6	Tactical	+6	+2	+3	-4	20 ft./15 ft.	27 lb.	26	-
Plated Leather Armor	3	Archaic	+4	+2	+4	-4	20 ft./15 ft.	25 lb.	15	-
Ironlord Armor	4	Archaic	+5	+2	+2	-5	20 ft./15 ft.	32 lb.	23	-
Light Chitin Armor	7	Tactical	+6	+2	+3	-2	25 ft./15 ft.	30 lb.	24	-
Living Hide Armor	7	Tactical	+5	+2	+4	-3	25 ft./15 ft.	20 lb.	23	-
Heavy Armor										
Assault Shell Armor	7	Tactical	+9	+3	+0	-8	20 ft./15 ft.	45 lb.	28	-
Battlelord Armor	4	Archaic	+7	+3	+0	-10	20 ft./15 ft.	60 lb.	28	
Bone Guard Armor	6	Tactical	+10	+3	+1	-8	20 ft./15 ft.	38 lb.	29	
Heavy Chitin Armor	7	Tactical	+8	+3	+2	-6	20 ft./15 ft.	35 lb.	26	-

Battlelord armor, a much heavier suit of armor. A commoner wearing a suit of Ironlord armor is likely to be accused of impersonating a noble.

Plated Leather Armor

The cheapest form of medium armor in the Saurian Empire, plated leather is also the most common. It is used by particularly well-trained groups of peasants and the professional soldiers kept in the service of wealthier noble lords. Plated leather is the most common type of armor among non-peasant commoners, such as mercenaries, and non-nobles possessing such armor raise no questions among the nobles normally. Plated leather is usually left unadorned and plain, even leaving the metal without a shine. The shellback peasants of the northern village of Tomtor are said to make the best suits of plated leather from the skin of the bloodfang lizards they raise in the region.

◇ Heavy Armor

Battlelord Plate Armor

The preferred type of armor for the well-to-do noble, Battlelord plate armor is a massive construction of steel, chain mail, and precious metals that can take years to complete. Visually impressive if not terrifying, these suits of armor are only made by the craftsmen of the city of Terras Kor for nobles who can prove their lineage back five generations, a lineage which is engraved on the outer plates of the armor. Battlelord armor is decked in tassels, flags, and other decorative elements, but remains an effective suit of armor. Few nobles wear Battlelord armor at court due to its weight. Those nobles who wish to make an impression of strength and military power often wear Battlelord armor when visiting other courts, though doing so for extended periods of time can be seen as a sign of lack of trust of the host and an insult. Any commoner found possessing a suit of Battlelord armor is likely to be in a great deal of trouble.

Bone Guard Armor

The solid white armor of the Bone Guard is made using advanced processes that the brachins of the Imperial Armory do not discuss outside of their own forges, and the Dishonored are said to have killed many a saurian for trying to discover the secret of its creation. Made of a number of unknown metals and fabrics, Bone Guard armor is without equal in the Saurian Empire. Only the personal guards of the Emperor are allowed to wear it, and the armor completely hides the identity of the person inside including a voice synthesizer and reflective faceplate. This had led some to theorize that the Emperor is not guarded by saurians at all, but robots or spirits hidden beneath the armor.

Bone guard armor has a built in environmental seal with 8 hours of oxygen, a built in computer unit,

night vision goggles, a nanobeacon, a heads-up display, portable glow lamp, 2 doses of antitox with an injector, and 2 built in saurian power packs for emergency power.

COMPUTERS • • •

The Haimedian Collective relies on a series of organic computers, which are essentially large brains with a small body that exists only to keep the brain alive, connected both by nerve cables and a wireless system of organically generated electromagnetic pulses. This network allows nearly all organic computers to quickly access each other, though intervening terrain can make transmission impossible. Computers are ubiquitous in the highly advanced Collective, even in the furthest rural outposts. They are necessary for the haimedian technological culture to survive, since without them genetic engineering, and thus the creation of organic technology, is impossible. Haimedian programs take the form of small fragments of brain matter, contained in a sealed protective layer of flesh, that is inserted into a special slot on a computer. The computer reads information from the brain matter as if it were part of the computer. Haimedian computers are not as fast as human computers, but they have far more developed abilities in terms of decision making, recognizing shapes, making guesses, and working with incomplete information. In short, haimedian computers work more like a person's brain than an inorganic computer. Haimedian computers cannot interact on any level with inorganic computers, an impasse that haimedian scientists hope to overcome in order to facilitate communication with other races. Haimedians occasionally suffer from computer related crime; this is more often due to computers that malfunction and develop minds of their own than malicious haimedian activity, though such things are not unknown. The haimedians have minimal protection on their computer systems, relying on the fact that the computers of other races cannot access it to keep them safe.

Saurian computers, on the other hand are large, clunky machines that do not seem to the naked eye to be equal to the other technologies of the saurians. In fact, their computers are average for a Progress Level 5 culture, and thus lag behind human computers, but the saurian preference for things being large and impressive has kept heir computers large while humans sought to continually make there computers smaller and more portable. There are some portable computers in the Saurian Empire that are used by the Imperial Bureaucracy and other powerful groups of brachins, but most computers are huge devices that are covered in chrome and steel, looking like some sleek machine of war as much as a computer. Much like their government, saurians prefer their computers to be centrally controlled. They use their behemoth machines as mainframes to support a large number of users at a time. Most saurians see computers as the tools of the brachins and pay them little heed, and there is no widespread information network among the saurians. The only major centers of computer development and utilization are the urban centers of the Empire. The Emperor is uninterested in expending more resources so the brachins can spend more time talking to adding machines. This attitude has opened up the Imperial computers to a number of attacks by fang gang hackers, who often devote more resources to computer development than the Empire. These hackers are primarily concerned with changing Imperial records to their benefit, such as criminal databases or tax information. The Imperial Bureaucracy has caught some of these hackers, but prefers to turn them to their own ends than execute such useful individuals.

Bureaucrack

A cobbled together machine made from cast off parts, bureaucrack is the nickname for the hacking computers used by the fang gangs to infiltrate the Imperial Bureaucracy's computer system. The Empire outlaws these computers, due to their singular purpose of bypassing security systems. Bureaucracks are designed to be easily portable, and most are disguised as other objects, such as a large book or a chest. The bureaucrack grants a +4 bonus to Computer Use checks the user makes to bypass any type of computer security. Characters trying to find a disguised bureacrack suffer a -4 penalty to their Spot and Search checks.

Hand Brain

A common portable computer that many haimedians use as a personal data assistant, word processor, and entertainment device, its central processing brain is actually capable of much more intricate operations. There are hundreds of programs available for the hand brain, from genetic engineering control programs to historical documents to in-depth information on the programming of organic nanites. Much like App-3 programs, hand brains are not programmed with artificial intelligence, but develop what are best described as personality quirks over time. They can aid the user, even guessing what tasks and programs the user will wish to run based on past activity. Using a hand brain adds a +4 equipment bonus to any Computer Use checks.

Imperial Census Computer

The most common portable computer in the Saurian Empire, this large, metal-boxed computer is a sturdy companion to the itinerant Imperial Bureaucrat. Programmed to primarily be a tool in

Computers

Name	Weight	Size	Purchase DC	Restriction
Bureaucrack	8 lb.	Small	22	III (+4)
Hand Brain	2 lb.	Tiny	18	-
Imperial Census Computer	6 lb.	Small	20	-

database administration, it can store massive amounts of information about those villages that the operating bureaucrat visits on his journeys. It is not a particularly powerful computer, but it can hold massive amounts of information, including detailed statistical information about the Empire's population, industries, and economy, adding a +2 bonus to any Knowledge (Business, Civics, Culture, Current Events, or History) checks made after consulting the machine's records for an hour. It also has a built-in GPS system.

CYBERNETICS • • •

Haimedians do not use cybernetics, relying instead on their advanced medical technologies to regrow and replace limbs and other injuries often healed by cybernetics. The entire concept of replacing a body part with an inorganic object is anathema to them, and they consider those who undergo such a process to be insane. Haimedians would rather go without a limb than have an inorganic replacement, but they have no problem with the implantation of superior organic limbs.

Saurians favor cybernetics, as they are often more powerful and efficient than the recipient's original body parts. For the most part, only tyran nobles can afford cybernetics, and an implant is often seen as a sign of wealth and prosperity. Despite this value as a fashion statement, saurians do not like strictly decorative cybernetics, preferring implants that make them better killing machines. Cybernetics are far too expensive for the majority of commoners to afford, and most amputees are forced to go with simple prosthetics instead of receiving the necessary cybernetic limbs. Only in the largest cities can cybernetics be implanted; skilled doctors are few and the implants rare. The Imperial Bureaucracy must certify all cybernetic doctors, which is an expensive and time-consuming effort better carried out through bribery than actually following procedure.

In the Saurian Empire all PL 5 and 6 cybernetics are available, but the Purchase DC of cybernetics from d20 Future are increased by +10. In addition, the following cybernetics are available only on C'thalk.

Internal Heaters

Another way saurians have developed to deal with their natural aversion to cold, this implant consists of a number of strategically placed heating units located throughout the subject's body. These activate automatically any time the subject's temperature drops to dangerous levels.

Benefit: +2 bonus to saving throws against exposure to severe cold weather.
Type: Internal
Hardness/Hit Points: 5/2
Base Purchase DC: 34
Restriction: -

Iron Claw

Only saurians with natural weapons can get this implant. It covers the saurian's natural weapons with sharpened steel, making them inflict more damage in combat but also forcing the saurian to be careful, for fear of hurting himself. More than one saurian noble has scratched his eye out after recently receiving this implant.

Benefit: The critical threat range of the affected natural weapons is doubled
Type: External
Hardness/Hit Points: 10/5
Base Purchase DC: 28
Restriction: -

RELICS • • •

Relics are a much rarer find on C'thalk than on Eos; the planet was never as heavily inhabited or as politically important as its neighbor. Most of the relics on C'thalk were destroyed during the short-lived vaasi occupation, but a number survived the vaasi or were entombed in the Birthing Cave along with the saurians. The relics stored in the Birthing Cave were mostly military in design and were stored in various supply caches after the saurians awoke. Most of these relics were destroyed in the wars between the saurians centuries after they awoke, but a few survive. Saurians hold relics to be the artifacts of their divine ancestors and treat them with great respect. The Emperor is said to have the largest collection of relics on C'thalk, though the collection stored in the Monastery of the Blue Path may even exceed his storehouse. Useful relics tend to be used by their owners, but many relics have no obvious use and are displayed to humble and intimidate visitors. A number of villages have relics they claim have supernatural powers, but letting word of such things slip out is likely to attract the attention of a greedy noble who will take the relic for his own.

Among the haimedians, relics are extremely rare; saurians left few behind when they awoke in that region. This leaves only those relics that survived the vaasi occupation. Those relics that do exist within the Collective are controlled by Mother Moss, who immediately lays claim to any new relics

found within the region. She can figure out how most of these devices operate, and uses them with some skill due to her advanced Star Confederation knowledge. She cannot repair relics, but she has a better chance than most on C'thalk of figuring out how they operate.

The Healing Stone of Draswin Village

Found in the small village of Draswin on the western edge of the Empire, this large metal device long ago lost its shine, and its corroded surface now looks more like stone than metal. The device sits in a small shrine at the center of the village, at which small offerings are placed daily. These offerings are usually scraps of metal or local herbs, which are consumed each night by the Healing Stone, though no one dares watch the process. The device itself is not touched for fear of offending the spirits. When someone touches the Healing Stone with fresh blood the device immediately activates, opening its outer shell to reveal a plethora of robotic limbs, each with a medical device of some type, including nanite injectors. The device treats any wounded individual put in its reach, up to ten each day. The device requires one round to treat each subject, during which the subject is healed 1d8+5 hit points. During the 10 rounds following treatment, the subject heals an additional 1d8+5 hit points per round. The Healing Stone has been in the village for hundreds of years, and according to local legend it saved the lives of the ancestors of several local nobles, who now defend the villages and its relic from any who would dare try to take it.

The Emperor's Cloak

Given to Emperor Serack XIII fifteen years ago by Kurizar Laishig That-Breaks-Iron, this item is said to be the most powerful relic possessed by the Emperor. Since coming into possession of the cloak, the Emperor has made it part of the Imperial regalia and wears it at all public appearances. According to rumors within the Imperial Palace he, wears it almost constantly, and some courtiers have even heard him talking to it. Most saurians assume it some ancient artifact from the time of gods and spirits before the saurians were born. The Emperor has spread the rumor that only those of Imperial blood can withstand the power of the cloak.

The cloak is far more dangerous than anyone suspects. Not a remainder of Star Confederation technology but a vaasi relic, it is an artificially intelligent piece of clothing that can change shape to any sort of clothing, protect its wearer from harm, and even sense Red Truth. The Emperor's Cloak was originally designed to serve as an aide and protective measure against psionics for vaasi leaders; now it serves the same purpose for the Emperor. The artificial intelligence of the cloak now counsels the Emperor in secret, and the path it is leading him on is not one that will lead the Empire to greatness, despite the cloak's claim to the contrary.

The cloak has hardness of 40 and 50 hit points. Anyone wearing the cloak gains a +6 deflection bonus to Defense, as the cloak deflects incoming attacks by modifying its position. The cloak also acts as a barrier against information of unusual density within Red Truth, granting the wearer a +8 bonus to Will saves against psionics. The cloak's other abilities, including the limits of its intelligence, are unknown.

ATMOSPHERIC AND SURFACE VEHICLES • • •

The haimedians do not make use of atmospheric and surface vehicles as other races do; instead, they tailor creatures to meet their needs. For air travel, the haimedians use the hot air windriders, large creatures that are a cross between a zeppelin and a jellyfish, while they rely on massive beasts of burden for overland travel. The haimedians are generally slower in terms of transportation than other races, as they are limited in the speeds they can achieve by biology. As a culture, the haimedians place a higher value on being able to completely avoid inorganic devices than in fast transportation, and so are at peace with their arrangement. Haimedian beasts of burden are listed in the Xenomorphs section of this chapter.

Like most facets of saurian culture, there is a great disparity between the vehicles used by the peasants of the rural villages and those used by the nobles and city-dwellers. In the villages most peasants rely on animal drawn wagons or paddled boats for transportation, though some nobles or particularly wealthy peasants use off-road wheeled vehicles or motorized boats. Travel in the villages is very slow due to lack of good roads, and it is not uncommon for rivers to be the fastest way to get around. In the cities, motorized vehicles are much more common and most urban nobles own a collection of vehicles. Only a few of the more prosperous flyers and brachins have managed to purchase their own vehicles. Many nobles keep a collection of vehicles that they can lend out to their underlings as needed, as another perk of loyalty. Saurian vehicles are constructed in the factories of cities like Blackrise on massive assembly lines, though the production process is not particularly fast.

Like their preferences in other matters, saurians like their vehicles extremely large and powerful. Most saurian vehicles are wheeled monstrosities and even their motorcycles can be a large as a human car. Because of this saurian vehicles are very expensive and tend to have poor fuel efficiency. Most civilian vehicles are large, steel affairs with massive tires and lots of chrome; there are no manufacturers of economy vehicles. Common thinking is that anyone who cannot afford a massive, showy

vehicle does not deserve to have one. The saurian military has immense tracked vehicles that can bowl over trees or small buildings that get in their way. While not the most practical machines, they are terrifying to behold. Many nobles have a number of armed and armored boats, though these are rarely larger than thirty feet in length.

Air travel is a rarity only experienced by nobles and soldiers. Air vehicles are sufficiently rare that only the wealthiest nobles have access to them. There are no airlines on C'thalk, but many nobles own personal airplanes that ferry them around. Vectored thrust and rotorcraft are the favored vehicles among saurians, as many regions of the Empire lack runways. Having an armored aircraft is seen as a sign of wealth and power among the nobles, and air combat is a graceful dance that should not be interrupted by something as base as an surface-to-air missile. In recent years, the fang gangs have begun constructing their own aircraft, or buying them from nobles in need of quick money, and using them for cargo runs between cities. Many nobles consider this an affront to their power, as if the sky were a domain for nobles alone, and work to shoot down these interlopers at every opportunity. Unfortunately for the nobles they have learned how good at piloting the flyers are.

A number of train lines cross the Empire and run oil- or coal-powered trains. Only some kurizar support the upkeep of these aging machines, but these networks do provide a quick and easy way for peasants to travel without owning their own vehicles. These trains are large by human standards and not very efficient, but serve their purpose well.

Saurians rely mainly on fossil fuels for their vehicles, with little interest in alternative fuels. The saurians have used up much of their oil reserves and must continually seek out new supplies, which may soon drive them into haimedian territory. So far development of a portable fusion reactor small enough for a vehicle has not been successful.

VEHICLES • • •

The following vehicles are found on C'thalk, specifically within the Saurian Empire.

Dragonclaw Heavy Tank

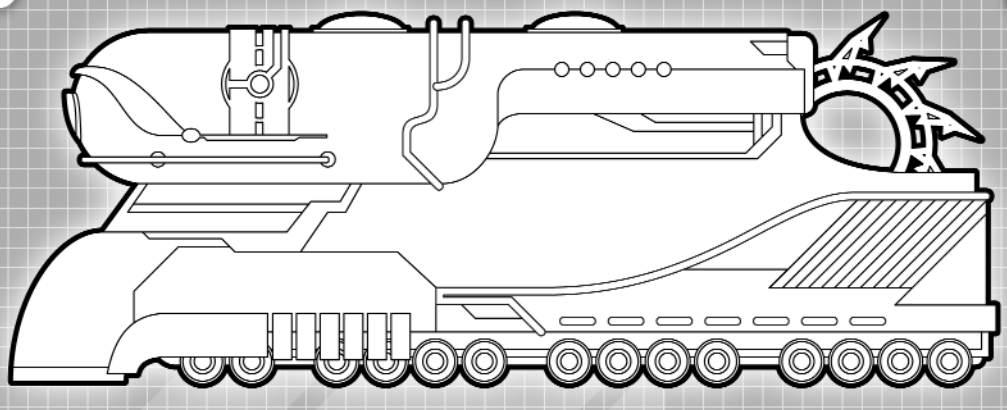
Dwarfing even the largest human armored vehicles, the Dragonclaw tank is a massive steel and ceramic beast forty feet long and almost fifteen feet tall. Carrying two separate turrets and a bevy of weapons, it is the premier heavy tank of the Saurian Empire and has no match on the planet C'thalk. It can destroy bridges and roads as easily as an unarmored opponent and is usually driven through wilderness areas, making its own roads to save on maintenance. There have been several attempts to build rotorcraft that can carry the Dragonclaw, but thus far none have been able to handle both its size and weight. The Dragonclaw is armed with two Avalanche heavy cannons, four bloodsting heavy machineguns, two heavy flamethrowers, and four Grosgek heavy missiles. The Dragonclaw is not particularly fast or maneuverable, but it can barrel its way through most things it cannot go around.

The Dragonclaw has a crew of fourteen and has three hatches, each of which require a full round action to enter or exit through. It is powered by an internal combustion engine that carries five hundred gallons of fuel, though the vehicle gets half a mile to the gallon. Dragonclaws are always deployed in the field with a gas supply vehicle nearby. Up-to-date Dragonclaws are outfitted with duralloy armor, but older models that have not been in for maintenance often have alumisteel. The Dragonclaw is eight squares long and four squares wide.

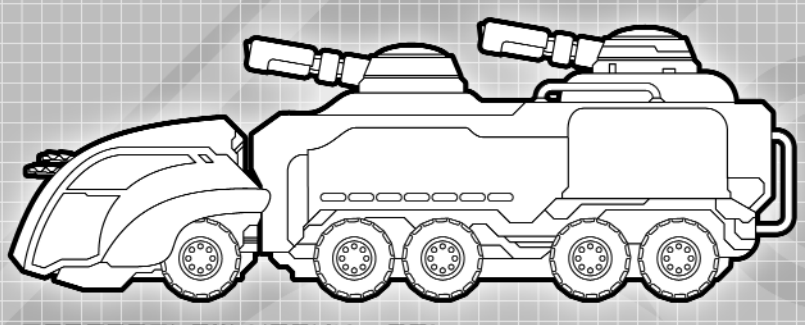
Hornet

One of the more common designs used by the fang gangs for long-range air travel, these small jets are a mixture of stealth glider and turbo jet. They are designed to be easy to repair, fast when necessary, difficult to detect on radar, and maneuverable, with little thought given to armor or weapons. The end result is a plane that can break the speed of sound or glide long distances without power. They are furthermore covered in radar dampening paint and sensor baffling. It is well equipped for quickly approaching a city under cover of night, unloading its cargo quickly outside the city so the local fang gang can pick it up, and getting back into the air before anyone realizes what has happened. There are only a few dozen of these vehicles in operation across C'thalk, but even in that small number they are the most common type of air vehicle not controlled by the nobles of the Empire.

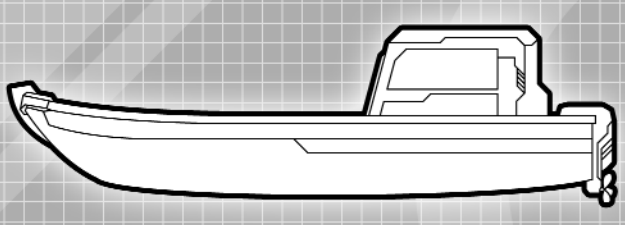
The standard hornet has no weapons, but some owners attach two Grosgek missiles to its wings. It can glide without power at a speed of 100 (10) indefinitely as long as a Pilot check (DC 15) is made every hour to catch the appropriate thermals. Failure on this check means the vehicle must land or risk starting up its engines. When gliding, all attempts to detect the hornet with sensors suffers a -6 penalty to all skill rolls involved. The hornet runs off of an internal combustion engine and has a range of 300 miles, though it can glide much farther. The hornet is normally equipped with duraplastic armor and is three squares long and five wide.



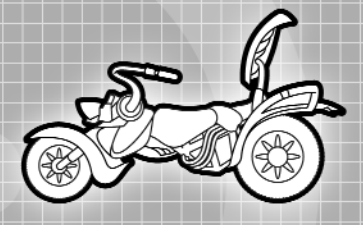
IRONHAULER TRAIN



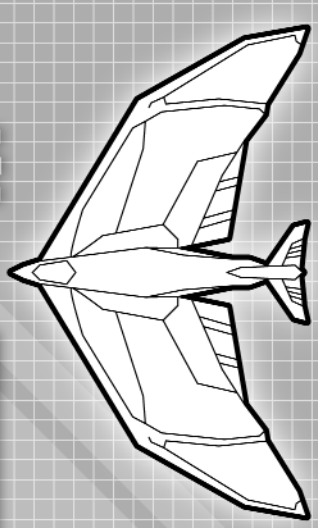
DRAGONCLAW HEAVY TANK



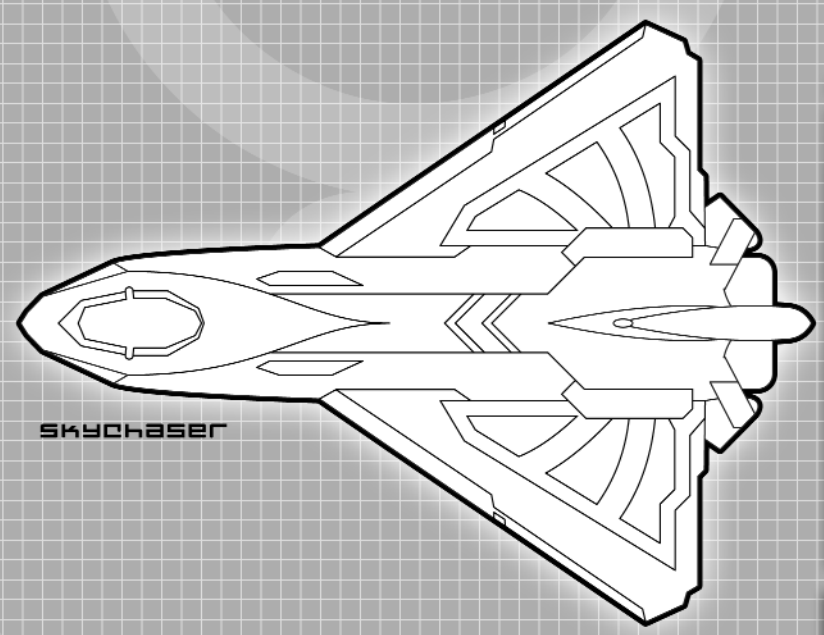
RIVER RUNNER



SHRIKE CYCLE



HORNET



SKYCHASER

Ironhauler Train

While trains are not the newest or most efficient means of transportation on C'thalk, they fit the preferences of the saurians well: they are large and loud. The Ironhauler is an excellent example of a typical saurian train and is a design used widely across the Empire. Saurian train tracks do not have a universal standard, though most have three rails with five feet separating each rail. Trains can only travel on the track they can fit on, though even with this limitation most trains have a good range of travel in the Empire. The Ironhauler is pulled by an internal combustion engine, which pulls a tanker car directly behind it. Able to pull up to fifty cars, each car of the Ironhauler is ten squares long and three wide, in addition to being two stories tall. The engine and tanker car themselves are eighteen squares long and three wide. The cars pulled by the Ironhauler engine range from flatbed cargo holders to refrigerated meat lockers, and various saurian military units make use of Ironhauler trains to deploy large groups of soldiers quickly. In many regions of the empire, when not on cargo or military duty, Ironhauler trains act as transportation for the local peasants, charging a small fee for the service.

The Ironhauler trains accelerate very slowly when pulling a full load of cars, taking up to ten minutes to get up to full speed. When just the engine and tanker car are attached it can accelerate at a normal rate of speed. On a full tank of fuel the Ironhauler can travel 2,000 miles.

Most Ironhauler trains are not armored, but those used for military duty often have alumisteel bolted on. Ironahuler trains are not armed as a standard feature, but due to their size they can carry a large number of weapons and can make an impressive presence on a battlefield. Some kurizar used Ironhaulers are mobile artillery, supply, and command posts, but the limitations of staying on tracks can make the movement of such vehicles predictable.

River Runner

A ubiquitous vehicle found on rivers across the Saurian Empire, River Runners are a widely used design for a powered cargo boat that can travel at a respectable pace. While many poorer villages have nonfunctional River Runners that are instead moved by pole or paddle, these machines are easy to repair. The vehicle is common enough that spare parts are plentiful. River Runners are made in a number of factories across the Empire, and some villages are even in the business of making them by hand. The hulls of most River Runners are made of wood, though some deluxe models use steel instead. They are not armor plated due to the weight involved, which would either sink the ship or severely limit its cargo space.

River Runners are 6 squares long and two squares wide, with a single deck on which cargo and passengers rest. The boats are relatively stable, but if any large amount of movement takes place on its deck, like combat, the passengers will have to make a Balance check (DC 10) each round to avoid falling overboard.

Shrike Cycle

All the rage among the young nobles of the Empire, the Shrike cycle is an oversized motorcycle as large as many human cars. Three squares long and two wide, this massive machine of chrome and steel is built to hold the bulk of a full-grown tyran saurian and must be modified to be comfortable for smaller riders. Shrike cycles are a common sight in many urban areas of the Empire, though they do function reasonably well off-road. They run off of internal combustion engines and have a range of 300 miles on a full tank of fuel. Although Shrike cycles do not come with armor plating standard, most owners modify them with plated resilium armor. Some have had bloodsting heavy machineguns attached to the front wheels for added firepower. Customization of Shrike cycles is a common pastime among many of the more mechanically inclined nobles of the Empire, and several brachins have made a respectable fortune modifying Shrike cycles.

Skychaser

The private air transport of choice among the nobles of the Saurian Empire, it is also commonly refitted for combat duty due to its speed and maneuverability. A jet-powered vehicle capable of supersonic flight, it has a multi-use cargo compartment in the center of its fuselage that can be used for passengers, bulk goods, fuel, or weapon systems. There are several hundred of these vehicles spread across the Empire in the hands of different nobles, in addition to several dozen controlled by the Blood Guard. While the Skychaser cannot stand up to a dedicated fighter plane, its ability to handle a number of roles makes it a very popular vehicle. A small number have fallen into the possession of the fang gangs, who like the vehicle for its common appearance and the fact that most saurians assume anyone flying a Skychaser is a noble.

The Skychaser's cockpit holds two pilots, sitting one behind the other, both of whom enter via a retractable cockpit cover, which takes a full round action. Behind the cockpit is the central storage space, which cannot be entered from the cockpit. Instead the craft has a door on its side in addition to bomb bay doors. The Skychaser is eight squares long and six wide and comes standard with resilium armor. The craft has a range of 800 miles on a full tank of gas for its jet engine. The Skychaser comes standard with two Blackwind autocannons and six Talon air-to-air missiles, but has a large amount of space for additional armaments.

Saurian Empire vehicles

Name	PL	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Maneuver	Top Speed	Defense	Hard	Hit Points	Size	Purchase DC	Restriction
Dragonclaw Heavy Tank	6	14	0	1 ton	-6	-5	80 (8)	14	25	80	G	49	Mil (+3)
Hornet	5	1	1	1 ton	-1	-2	600 (60)	9	10	28	G	35	Ill (+4)
Ironhauler Train	5	6	Varies	Varies	-6	-5	100 (10)	2	15	120	C	38	Lic (+1)
River Runner	5	1	10	2 tons	-3	-3	70 (7)	6	5	30	G	18	-
Shrike Cycle	5	1	1	100 lb.	+0	+0	210 (21)	14	10	26	H	28	Res (+2)
Skychaser	5	2	6	3 tons	-1	-1	2,000 (200)	12	15	46	H	47	Mil (+3)

VEHICLE WEAPONS • • •

Avalanche Heavy Cannon

The main gun of the Dragonclaw Heavy Tank and most other heavy armored vehicles of the Saurian Empire, this cannon is the heaviest direct fire weapon in the saurian arsenal. It requires a crew of two to operate, one of which must spend full round action to load while the other crewmember spends a full round action aiming and firing. The Avalanche can fire a number of different types of shells, but armor piercing and high explosive are the most common.

Armor piercing rounds reduce the hardness of any target they strike by -20. They also inflict 7d10 points of ballistic damage on the target.

High explosive rounds inflict 8d6 points of fire damage to everything within 10 feet of the point of impact. Characters may make a Reflex save (DC 17) to take half damage from the explosion.

Blackwind Heavy Autocannon

A rapid fire cannon similar to a terran 40mm cannon, this weapon is commonly used in saurian aircraft, infantry support vehicles, and anti-aircraft batteries. Most are constructed in Blackrise and these weapons are plentiful enough to make getting more ammunition rarely a problem. The Blackwind was nicknamed following a mistake in the first batches of ammunition that were constructed, which did not use smokeless gunpowder; the weapons created an immense amount of smoke when fired. The ammunition comes in 250 round belts.

Bloodsting Heavy Machinegun

The most recent heavy machinegun to enter service with the Blood Guard, it has since been adopted by numerous noble-backed military units. The weapon uses caseless ammunition fed by disintegrating belts, relying on an electric ignition system. The weapon is surprisingly quiet for such a heavy gun and sounds almost like an engine running while it is firing. Bloodstings are renowned for their excellent workmanship and most soldiers who hear its distinctive noise on the battlefield know to duck for cover quickly. The Bloodsting uses belted ammunition that come 250 rounds to a belt.

Grosgek Missile

Saurians generally prefer cannons to missiles, preferring the impressive noise and explosions involved in their firing, but the usefulness and heavy hitting power of a missile is still acknowledged. The Grosgek missile, named for an ancient hero of the Empire, has been in service for over one hundred years and is not going to be phased out any time soon. Grosgek missiles pack quite a punch, but are not built for following airborne targets, suffering a -4 penalty to attack rolls made against flying targets, but gaining a +2 bonus to attack rolls against ground targets. The Grosgek missile treats the hardness of its target as being 10 points lower. Everything within 5 feet of the impact point of the Grosgek missile takes 5d6 damage, though a Reflex save (DC 15) reduces this damage by half.

Heavy Flamethrower

Saurians have long favored the flamethrower as an anti-personnel weapon for its impressive appearance when fired and the strong psychological effect it has on its targets. To saurians, creating fear among the enemy is often as valued as inflicting damage on them. The heavy flamethrower is found on a number of saurian armored vehicles and fortified positions where large numbers of infantry may be an issue. The heavy flamethrower fires a sticky liquid similar to napalm, but with a high likelihood of splashing on nearby targets. The heavy flamethrower fires in a cone 200 ft. long and 100 ft. feet wide at its end, damaging everything in that area. Creatures caught in its blast can make a Reflex save (DC 14), and take half damage if successful. Creatures who fail this save also catch on fire and take 1d6 points of damage per round until they put out the fire, requiring a full round action or completely cutting the fire off from any oxygen, such as submerging in water.

Vehicle Weapons

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Avalanche Heavy[1] Cannon	6	Varies	19-20	Varies	300 ft.	Single	1	H	2 tons	29	Mil (+3)
Blackwind Autocannon[2]	5	3d12	20	Ballistic	250 ft.	A	Linked	L	500 lb.	28	Mil (+3)
Bloodsting Heavy Machinegun[3]	5	2d12	20	Ballistic	150 ft.	A	Linked	L	160 lb.	25	Mil (+3)
Grosgek Missile[4]	5	8d10	20	Concussion	1,000 ft.	Single	1	H	1 ton	27	Mil (+3)
Heavy Flamethrower[5]	6	3d6	-	Concussion	-	Single	20	H	1,000 lb.	26	Mil (+3)
Talon Missile[4]	6	4d10	20	Concussion	1,000 ft.	Single	1	L	600 lb.	27	Mil (+3)

[1] This weapon requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Cannons) feat.
[2] This weapon requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Autocannon) feat.
[3] This weapon requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Heavy Machinegun) feat.
[5] This weapon requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Missile) feat.
[4] This weapon requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Flamethrower) feat.

Talon Missle

The primary air-to-air missile in the saurian arsenal, the Talon is a light missile that concentrates more on speed and accuracy than explosive power, a rarity in saurian weapons. The Talon grants a +4 bonus to attack rolls made against flying targets.

MECHA • • •

Saurians are just now reaching the level of technological sophistication to make mechs a feasible tool in combat, and as a species the saurians seemed thrilled with the idea. The concept of massive armored robots fighting with swords seems to saurians to be an honorable form of combat and also an excellent tactical choice. Thus far all saurian mechs are experimental units and there are no mecha mass production facilities. Each is a unique work of art made by hand by highly skilled craftsmen. Much like the armor of the saurian nobles, each mech is decorated with glyphs, tassels, and denotations of lineage. Most saurian mechs are designed to look like tyran saurians, complete with tails.

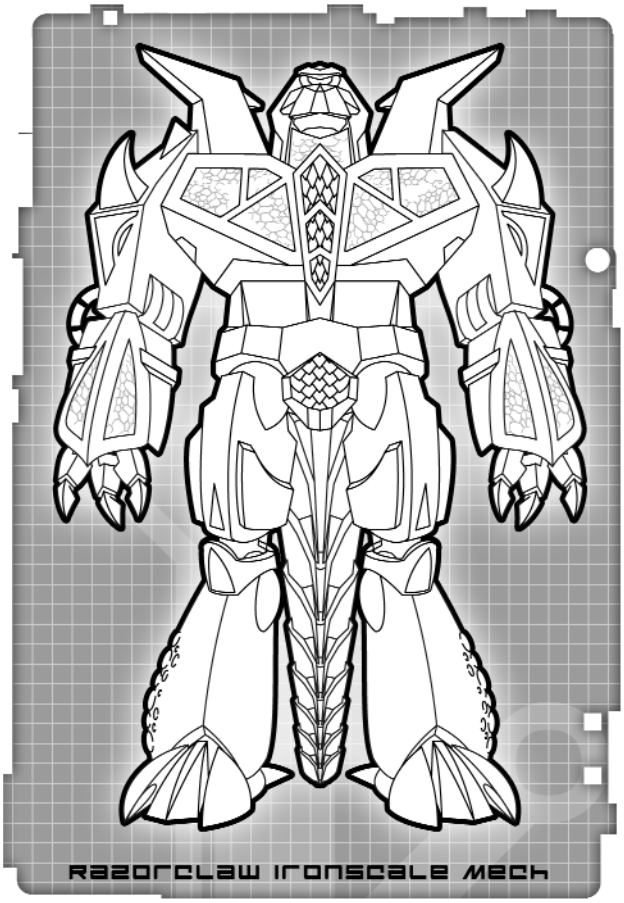
The best-known craftsmen of mech builders are the Ironscale Guild, a collection of brachins and flyers who custom build more mechs for wealthy nobles than any other manufacturer. Getting an Ironscale mech now requires several years of waiting, though a recent request for one from the Emperor has thrown their whole schedule out of whack.

There are also several ancient Star Confederation mechs hidden in the Monastery of the Blue Path and in other long forgotten equipment caches. The mechs of the Monastery of the Blue Path have been relatively well kept up during their years in storage, but many are low on ammunition and other supplies. These mechs are likely to only be used if an outside force assaults the Empire, or the monks take action against the Emperor. There are some rumors that claim the Ironscale Guild is actually a faction of the Monks of the Blue Path trying to establish contacts and allies within the Empire, while others say the head of the Guild is a rogue monk who stole secrets of the order and uses them to charge his mechs with strange powers.

Razorclaw Ironscale Mech (PL 6)

A mech that exemplifies the typical creation of the Ironscale Guild, it was constructed five years ago for Kurizar Oras With-Unbridled-Rage, a widely feared master of the kinai sword. The Razorclaw mech was designed to take advantage of its owner's skills and is equipped with a massive laser-bladed kinai sword that Oras has put to ruthless use since its construction. The mech is built for close combat and is one of the most widely feared combat vehicles in the Empire. Kurizar Oras With-Unbridled-Rage enjoys piloting the mech so much he even assists his subjects in logging operations with it, a sign of his dedication to his people.

Size: Gargantuan (-4)
Superstructure: Vanadium
Armor: Duralloy Armor
Armor Penalty: -8
Strength Bonus:+24
Speed:40 ft.
Bonus Hit Points: 400
Hardness: 20
Bonus to Defense: +4
Reach: 15 ft.
Penalty: -2
Base Purchase DC: NA
Special Equipment Package: Class III Sensor System (visor), LX-10 antishock array (belt), comm system, life support system, laser-edged kinai sword (8d6 fire damage, 19-20/x2, +5 ft. reach) (both hands), ASX Dragon flame-thrower (left arm), Warpath recoilless rifle (left shoulder), jetpack (torso)


Razorclaw Ironscale Mech

STARSHIPS • • •

Unable to make starships out of organic materials, the haimedians have little interest in them. The haimedians still have the evacuation ships they used to escape their homeworld, all of which have been kept in good repair in case of another emergency, but they have not developed or constructed any new spacecraft. Research into organic starships continues, but does not look very promising. The haimedians seldom use their remaining spacecraft in order to avoid the attention of the saurians, and usually keep them buried underground in secret bunkers. When they first arrived in the system, the haimedians carried out surveys of the other worlds, but ever since have remained land-bound for the most part. For now the haimedians see space travel as more dangerous than useful, but contact with the Dawning Star Republic or other factions of the Helios system may change their minds.

The saurians were once enamored of space travel, but the lack of suitable worlds to conquer two hundred years ago has reduced their interest. For the past two hundred years saurian space travel has been limited to trips to Thres. Several colonies have been established as part of a future invasion plan that never seems to materialize, largely due to the unknown threat posed by the straas. Saurian missions to Eos and Verdant have all ended in disaster with all ships lost. The habitable moons of Hesperos are considered too great a distance to be useful, and have only showed signs of habitation in the last fifty years. Instead, the saurians have concentrated their space efforts on building up military fleets in the hopes of future military action on other worlds, in addition to the power such fleets give their owners on C'thalk. For many decades the Emperor and the Blood Guard controlled all the saurian spacecraft in existence, but in the last century this has begun to change as various kurizar have seen the military applications of spacecraft on C'thalk. No one has yet carried out an orbital bombardment, seeing it as a horribly dishonorable method of attack. The Emperor and his high-ranking nobles have realized how devastating such an attack could be, however. Even the Emperor would not be free from such a threat, and thus every major noble wants his own ships in orbit to prevent such a deed from happening to him.

Most saurian ships are a mixture of PL 5 and 6, as some systems are upgraded while others are left untouched. The saurians favor ships that go fast, have lots of armor, and are heavily armed, foregoing advanced sensors or other systems. One-on-one, most saurian ships cannot stand up to a human or wolf ship, but the saurian fleet is larger than the fleet of the Dawning Star Republic and is comparable to the armada of the Wolf Tribes. Fortunately for the Dawning Star Republic and the Wolf Tribes, the saurian fleet is fragmented under a dozen different commanders that rarely cooperate and are enemies as often as they are allied. Only the ships of the Blood Guard, which make up roughly forty percent of the saurian fleet, operate with any type of coordination, but they are very coordinated indeed. The Blood Guard are the unchallenged masters of space combat among the saurians and no one wants to face them in combat.

The saurian fleet is usually found in orbit around C'thalk, each noble's ships hovering over his territories; the bulk of the ships are above the City of

Bone. Fearing that they will be caught on the ground and unprepared when needed, saurian ships generally only land for repairs or supplies, with the notable exception of those ships permanently assigned to guard the City of Bone. There are also always a handful of ships at Thres protecting the colony there, most of which belong to the Blood Guard. These ships regularly come into conflict with the ships of the straas and the Wolf Tribes, and serving on a ship assigned to the colonies on Thres is considered to be the best way to learn about space combat among the saurians.

The saurians have not made many technological advances in the past two centuries and do not seem posed to make any in the near future. This is one of the reasons they seek worlds to conquer; the tyrans would prefer to gain scientific advancements by taking them from others as opposed to developing such things themselves. Considering the accelerated technological level of the humans thanks to their interaction with the tentaari, and the arrival of new races like the mechites, it is likely the saurians are going to fall further and further behind the tech curve.

Most saurian ships are custom built for the nobles who purchase them by brachin guilds. These guilds usually own their own planetside construction facilities, charging a great deal for their services. These guilds are becoming increasingly powerful and some feel they threaten the power of the nobles, especially since some guilds are now building ships for their own use. The Blood Guard constructs its own ships at the Imperial Shipyards in the City of Bone, where no one other than the Blood Guard, Bone Guard, the Imperial Bureaucracy and the Emperor are allowed to pass. The Imperial Shipyards are widely considered to be the best ship construction facility on the planet.

◇ Bloodfang Frigate

The most common saurian Mediumweight ship, it began as a Blood Guard design that has since been mimicked by several nobles. The Bloodfang frigate is the heavy combat vessel of the saurian fleet and the command center of any saurian fleet action. In addition to combat duty, the Bloodfang is also used for exploration and cargo duty when necessary, but it does not serve in these roles as well as the saurians think it does. The best use of the Bloodfang is when it is hammering away on an enemy ship with all guns. Serving on a Bloodfang is considered the highest honor a saurian spacer can attain in terms of assignment. Due to the value of the ships only experienced spacers are assigned to Bloodfangs.

The flagship of the Emperor, the Divine Claw, is the best-known Bloodfang frigate. It is equipped with all the latest technologies available. Even so, the Emperor has never flown in it, as the Imperial Bureaucracy has deemed space travel too dangerous for the Imperial person to undertake.

Type: Mediumweight (PL 6)
Subtype: Frigate
Defense: 11
Flat Footed Defense: 7
Autopilot Defense: 9
Hardness: 20
Hit Dice: 200d20 (4,000 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Colossal (-8 size)
Tactical Speed: 2,500 ft.
Length: 652 feet
Weight: 30,000 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 143 (Expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 500
Cargo Capacity: 1,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: 66
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack:

4 fire-linked heavy lasers +1 ranged (20d8),
2 fire-linked CHE missiles -5 ranged (9d12),
battery of 2 needle drivers -4 ranged (8d12, 19-20)
Attack of Opportunity
Point-defense system +3, 3d12x10

Design Specs

Engines: Thrusters, fusion torch
Armor: Polymeric
Defense Systems: Damage control system, magnetic field, point defense system, self destruct system, sensor jammer
Sensors: Class I sensor array, targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver
Weapons: 4 fire-linked heavy lasers (4,000 ft. range incr), 2 fire linked CHA missile launchers (40 missiles each), battery of 2 needle drivers (6,000 ft. range incr)

◇ Infinite Seed Evacuation Ships

The primary type of evacuation ship used by the haimedians in fleeing their homeworld, these ships are made of inorganic shells and many of their primary systems, such as their drives, were created out of minerals as opposed to organic components. Most of the ship's primary computers, life support, and other internal systems are organic in nature, but enough of the ships remain inorganic for many haimedians to find them uncomfortable. While they were definitely up to the task of saving the haimedian race, the haimedians have had little to do with them sense. Instead, they have been buried by the haimedians, scattered across the Collective's territory in case they are needed again. The Infinite Seeds are kept in good repair and can be made ready for launch in a few short hours by order of

Mother Moss. These ships are designed to be cargo vessels and do not belong anywhere near a fight. If the Haimedian Collective makes friendly contact with other governments in the Helios system these ships may be prepped for use again as diplomatic shuttles. The Haimedian Collective has twenty Infinite Seed Evacuation Ships.

Type: Mediumweight (PL 7)
Subtype: Heavy Freighter
Defense: 7
Flat Footed Defense: 5
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 30
Hit Dice: 140d20 (2,800 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +3
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +2
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +2
Tactical Speed: 3,500 ft.
Size: Colossal (-8 size)
Length: 850 feet
Weight: 35,000 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 240 (Trained +4)
Passenger Capacity: 5,200
Cargo Capacity: 5,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: 62
Restriction: -

Attack:

2 fire-linked heavy particle beams -1 ranged (24d8)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point-defense system +5 (3d12x10)

Design Specs:

Engines: Particle impulse engine, thrusters
Armor: Cerametal
Defense Systems: Light fortification, improved autopilot, improved damage conrol, point defense system, stealth screen
Sensors: Class V sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver
Weapons: 2 fire-linked heavy particle beams (5,000 ft. range incr)

◇ Fireclaw Assault Fighter

The most recent addition to Blood Guard's space fleet, this fighter is the cutting edge of saurian technology. There are only four Fireclaws in service currently, and all are deployed to Thres to test them fully under the most stressful conditions available. The pilots of the Fireclaws are all Blood Guard aces or Dishonored with a special talent for dog-fighting. Thus far the Fireclaws have performed admirably, and the Blood Guard hopes to be able to field a fighter capable of actually going toe to toe with a wolf fighter in the next century. Many in the Blood Guard feel this is more propaganda and wishful thinking than a realistic plan, considering that wolf space technology is advancing faster than saurian technology. The Fireclaw is a hard-hitting, heavily armored fighter that sacrifices maneuverability for armor and weapons. While there are only four Fireclaws in service at present, that number is expected to at least triple in the next few years, especially if war breaks out in the Helios system. These ships are launched from a heavy logistics carrier that has been modified to remove part of its cargo bay and replace it with a fighter landing and maintenance bay.

Type: Ultralight (PL 6)
Subtype: Assault Fighter
Defense: 19
Flat Footed Defense: 13
Autopilot Defense: 10
Hardness: 30
Hit Dice: 12d20 (240)
Initiative Modifier: +6
Pilot's Class Bonus: +7
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +6
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +8/+3
Size: Gargantuan (-4 size)
Length: 36 feet
Weight: 14 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +2
Crew: 2 (Ace +12)
Passenger Capacity: 0
Cargo Capacity: 500 lb.
Grapple Modifier: +12
Base Purchase DC: 56

Attack:

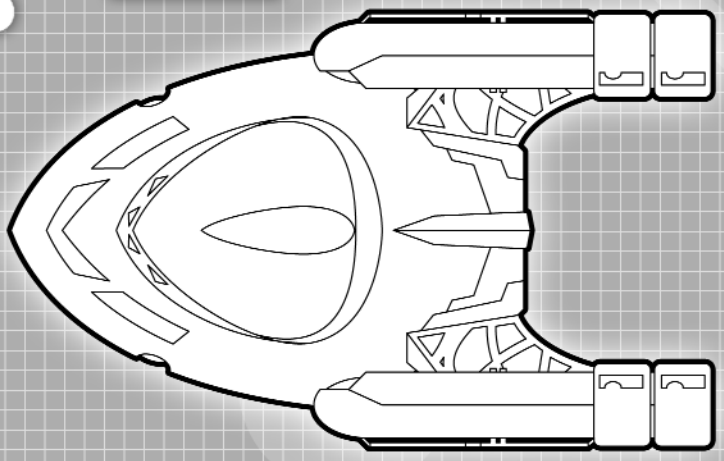
2 fire-linked heavy lasers ranged +6/+1 ranged (12d8)
2 fire-linked nuclear missiles ranged +1 ranged (24d8)

Design Specs:

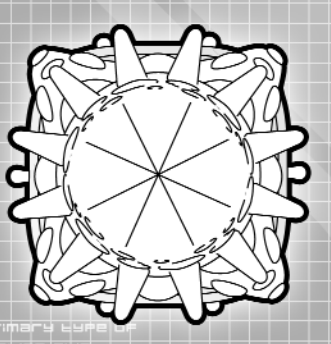
Engines: Thrusters, fusion torch
Armor: Vanadium
Defense Systems: Improved autopilot system, improved damage control system, magnetic field, stealth screen
Sensors: Class III sensor array, targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver
Weapons: 2 fire-linked heavy lasers (range incr. 4,000 ft.), 2 fire-linked nuclear missile launchers (24 missiles each)

◇ Heavy Logistics Carrier

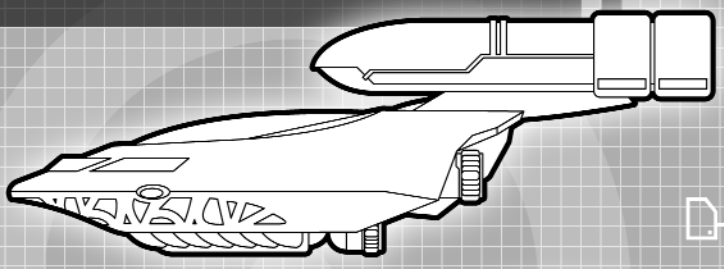
The only ship type in the saurian fleet with the standing order to stay out of combat, the heavy logistics carrier is seen as the unwanted but necessary support ship of the saurian fleet. Mostly



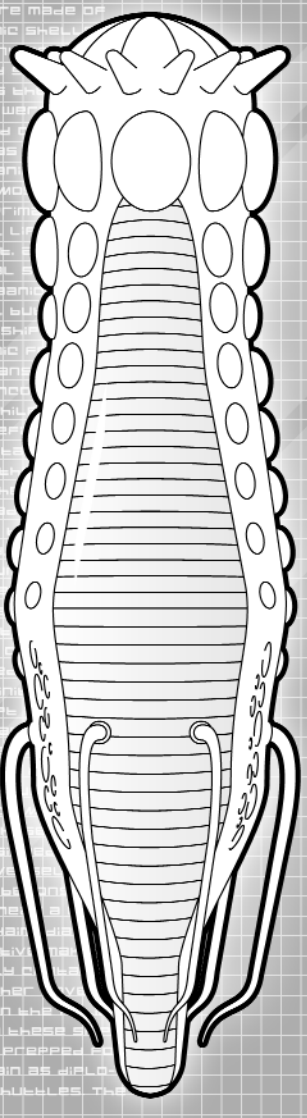
Infinite Seed Evacuation Ship

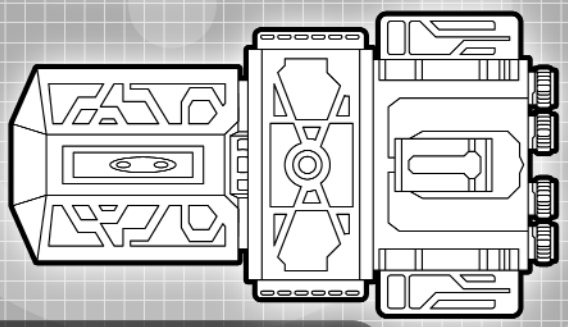


Bloodfang Frigate

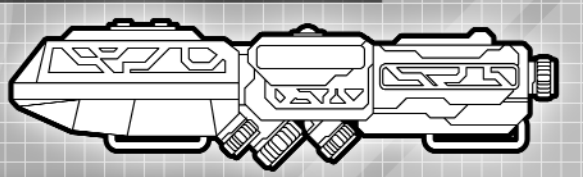


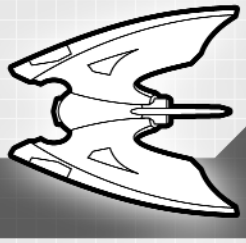
The primary type of evacuation ship used by the Haimedians in fleeing their homeworld. These ships are made of inorganic shell and many primary such as the drives. were created erals as to organ nents. Most ship's prim pulers, l support. internal are organi nature. tu of the shi inorganic haimedian them und able. Whil were def to the t saving th race. t have ha do with instead been tu haimedi tered collect tory in are nee The infini are kept repair made f launch short order moss. T are des cargo v do not where ne if the hai collecti friendly with other ments in the system these may be prepped use again as pilo matic shuttles. Thi





Heavy Logistics Carrier





Fireclaw Assault Fighter



zoom X5

crewed by flyers, assignment to this ship is seen as a sign of incompetence or dishonorable conduct in all saurian forces saves the Blood Guard, which better understands a fleet's need for supplies. There are eight of these ships in the saurian fleet, four of which are controlled by the Blood Guard and the others by various nobles who control enough other ships to make resupply a necessity. The heavy logistics carrier is not heavily armored or armed, relying instead on escort ships for protection. It is never deployed alone, except by accident.

Type: Light (PL 6)
Subtype: Freighter
Defense: 7
Flat Footed Defense: 5
Autopilot Defense: 6
Hardness: 20
Hit Dice: 35d20 (700 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +2
Pilot's Class Bonus: +3
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +2
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +2
Size: Colossal (-8 size)
Tactical Speed: 2,000 ft.
Length: 430 feet
Weight: 5,500 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +0
Crew: 6 (Trained +4)
Passenger Capacity: 32
Cargo Capacity: 2,900 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: 56
Restriction: -

Attack

2 fire-linked lasers -6 ranged (9d8)

Design Specs

Engines: Fusion torch, thrusters
Armor: Polymeric
Defense Systems: Autopilot system, damage control system
Sensors: Class I sensor array
Communications: Radio Transceiver
Weapons: 2 fire-linked lasers (range incr. 3,000 ft.)

XENOMORPHS • • •

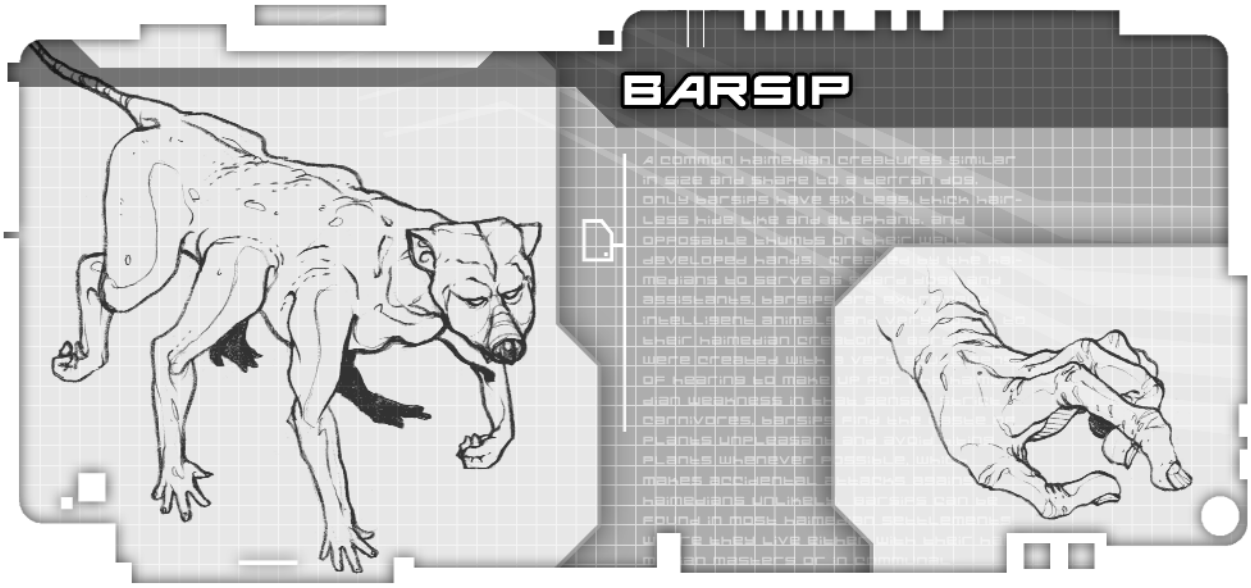
C'thalk has a fully developed and very rich ecosystem that has yet to be severely damaged by the industrial development of the saurians, though they have consumed much of its resources. The planet is lush with plant and animal life, most of it as dense with life as rain forests were on Earth. This creates an immense about of biological diversity, but certain limitations were put into place when the planet was terraformed. The primary life forms of C'thalk are all reptilian; all large indigenous creatures are reptiles. There are a number of primitive avians and amphibians present, as well as fish, but there are no mammals on the planet as a result of terraforming or natural evolution. Instead reptiles are found everywhere, including some that have slowly been developing warm-blooded circulatory systems.

Several creatures from Thres have escaped into the wilds of C'thalk, but few have found it a pleasant environment due to all the reptilian predators present. Escaped haimedian creatures fare better in general thanks to their carefully crafted abilities and traits. There are now some colonies of windriders and darsoths in the wild founded by creatures that have escaped from the haimedians. They have been sighted several times by saurians and are currently the stuff of legends and cryptozoologists, but proof of their existence could make things uncomfortable for the haimedians. Haimedians generally create mammalian creatures when they design their organic technology. Most of it is incapable of independent motion, let alone surviving without nutrient packs. The larger, more fully formed creatures are the only ones able to escape from the haimedians.

◇ Barsip

These common haimedian creatures are similar in size and shape to a terran dog, but they have six legs, thick hairless hide like an elephant, and opposable thumbs on their well developed hands. Created by the haimedians to serve as guard dogs and assistants, barsips are extremely intelligent animals and loyal to their haimedian creators. Barsips were created with an acute sense of hearing to make up for the haimedian weakness in that sense. Barsips can be found in most haimedian settlements, where they live either with their haimedian masters or in communal kennels for all the barsips in a settlement. Barsips are treated well by the haimedians, but their treatment is definitely that of a pet or servant. In addition to serving as guard dogs, barsips are also messengers for the haimedians, delivering small containers as commanded. Some have even learned to operate vehicles and repair simple devices, but most act as assistants, fetching objects as needed by their master. Some haimedians believe that the barsips are growing quickly in intelligence and will soon be cognizant enough to seek freedom from the haimedians. If such an event happens, it will be the first time one of their organic technology creations has sought freedom, an event likely to change the nature of the relationship between haimedians and their organic devices.

Any haimedian expedition outside their territory is accompanied by barsips for security purposes. This has led to a number of barsips escaping into the wild and there is now a small breeding population of free barsips on the outskirts of the Haimedian Collective. These creatures are less dis-



ciplined than their cousins within the collective, but they rarely attack haimedians. Other creatures are not so lucky and rumors are beginning to circulate about demon dogs to the south that attack any saurian who comes near.

Species Traits

Clever (Ex): Barsips are very clever animals. Any attempt to use Handle Animal to train a barsip gains a +4 bonus. They gain a +2 species bonus to Disable Device checks.
Scent (Ex): This ability allows a barsip to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.
Skill Bonus: Barips gain a +4 bonus on Jump, Listen, and Climb checks. Barsips also gain a +6 bonus on survival checks to track by scent.

Barsip ⋄ CR 2

Medium Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; MAS 12; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; Defense 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +4 natural); BAB +2; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, claw); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ clever, scent; AL owner; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 13.
Skills: Climb +8, Jump +8, Listen +10, Spot +6, Survival +2 (+8 when tracking by scent)
Feats: None
Advancement: 4-6 HD (Medium)

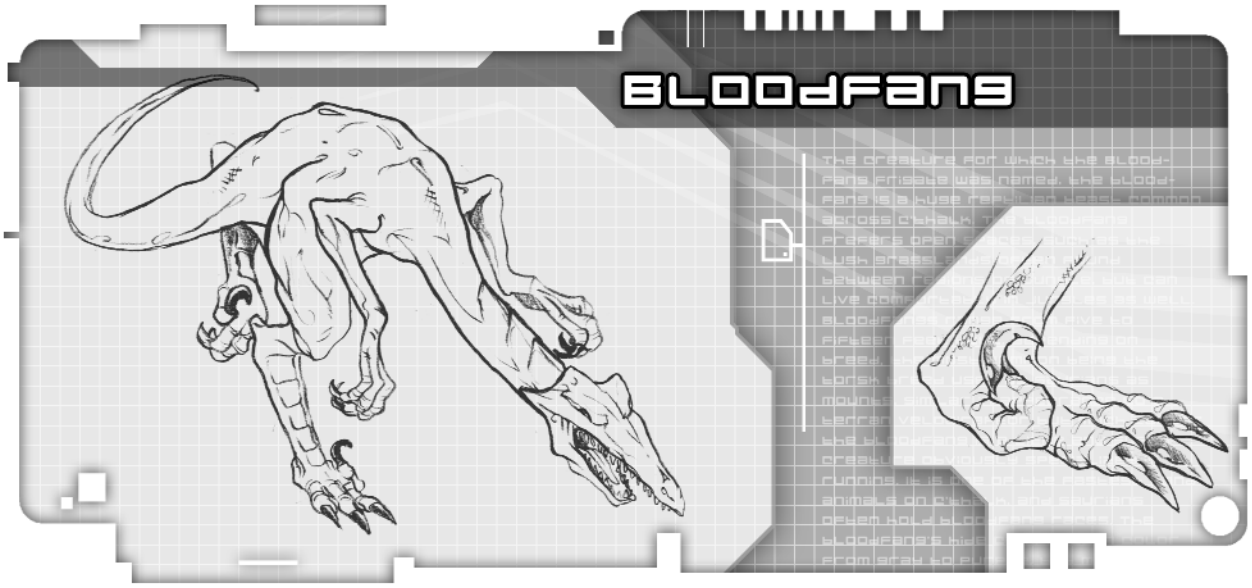
⋄ Bloodfang

The creature for which the Bloodfang frigate was named, the bloodfang is a huge reptilian beast common across C'thalk. The bloodfang prefers open spaces, such as the lush grasslands often found between regions of jungle, but can live comfortably in jungles as well. Bloodfangs range from five to fifteen feet tall, depending on breed, the most common being the torsk breed used by saurians as mounts. Similar in appearance to a terran velociraptor but much larger, the bloodfang is a lithe and sleek creature obviously specialized in running. It is one of the fastest land animals on C'thalk, and saurians often hold bloodfang races. The bloodfang's hide can range in color from gray to purple, but most are green or blue with numerous splotches of other colors. A fearsome looking creature, the bloodfang earned its name with its large teeth and claws, which have killed many a saurian over the centuries. Bloodfangs are mounts that must be mastered through force and intimidation; any show of weakness can result in a rider being thrown and devoured.

Saurians have ridden bloodfangs for over fifteen hundred years, and they have become an intrinsic part of the culture. In many rural regions of the Empire where roads are poor, bloodfangs are the fastest means of transit available. While they are not as well suited for pack animals as the larger flatbacks, they make excellent mounts for those who can manage the temperamental animals. Few commoners put up with bloodfangs these days, preferring other mounts that are easier to manage or carry more cargo. Bloodfangs remain the mount of choice among the nobles of the Empire and are still used in warfare despite the availability of vehicles. Several of the more remote lords of the Empire still keep a unit of bloodfang cavalry in their employ, equipped with steel barding and lances, though they have not proved effective against anything other than peasant uprisings for centuries. By most they are seen as an anachronism rather than a real military unit.

Species Traits

Bloodthirsty (Ex): Bloodfangs are renowned for their bad temper and constant desire to eat.



During any round in which there are unconscious or dead creatures within 10 feet of a bloodfang not involved in combat the rider must make a Ride check (DC 10) to keep the mount from feeding on the corpse for 1d6 rounds. Furthermore, anytime the rider fails a Ride check by 5 or more, the bloodfang throws the rider and begins attacking him.

Cold Blooded: Bloodfangs suffer a -4 penalty to all Fortitude saving throws against cold based attacks or exposure to cold weather, but receive a +8 bonus to Fortitude saving throws against exposure damage from warm weather.

Mount Training: Bloodfangs are often trained as mounts by saurians, a process that requires the bloodfang to be taken from its mother at an early age and be reared by saurians. Trained bloodfangs grant the rider a +2 bonus to all Ride checks to use the Mounted Combat feat or to direct the bloodfang with the rider's legs. Trained bloodfangs have a purchase DC of 25. Bloodfangs can be ridden by all manner of saurians, though flyers dislike riding bloodfangs since bloodfangs have been known to eat the small saurians.

Many bloodfang riders use plate barding for their mounts, which has an armor bonus of +7 and an armor penalty of -4, reducing the bloodfang's speed by -10 feet. Such barding has a Purchase DC of 21.

Sprint (Ex): For a number of rounds each day equal to its Constitution bonus the bloodfang can increase its speed to 60 feet.

Bloodfang ⋄ CR 6

Huge Animal; HD 8d8+40; hp 76; MAS 20; Init +0; Spd 50 ft.; Defense 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16 (+8 natural, -2 size); BAB +6; Grap +22; Atk +12 melee (2d6+8, bite); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6+8, 2 claws) and +7 melee (2d6+8, bite); FS 15 ft. by 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ Bloodthirsty, cold blooded, mount training, sprint; AL; SV Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 26, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Jump +7, Hide -2, Move Silently -2, Spot +2, Survival +5

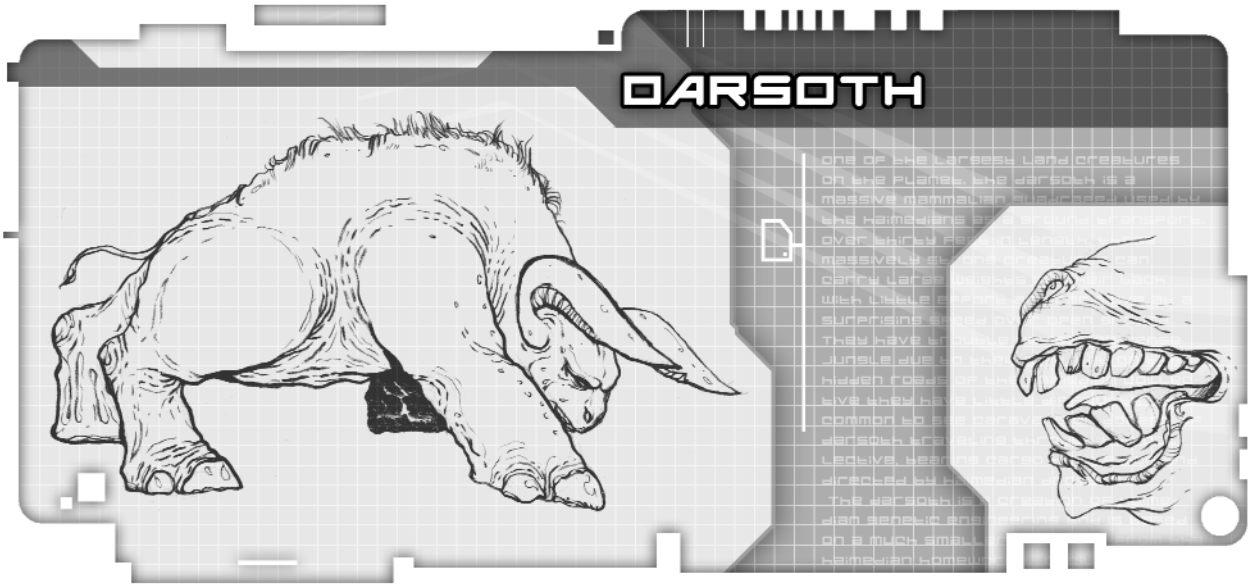
Feats: None

Advancement: 7-12 HD (Huge)

⋄ Darsoth

One of the largest land creatures on the planet, the darsoth is a massive mammalian quadruped that the haimedians use as a ground transport. Over thirty feet in length, these massively strong creatures can carry large weights on their backs with little effort and can move at a surprising speed over open ground. They have trouble navigating dense jungle due to their size, but on the hidden roads of the Haimedian Collective they have little difficulty. It is common to see caravans of dozens of darsoth traveling through the Collective, bearing cargo by the ton and directed by haimedian drovers.

The darsoth is a creation of haimedian genetic engineering, based on a much smaller creature from the haimedian homeworld. Docile and friendly, the darsoth is a herd animal that enjoys putting its strength to work and roughhousing with its packmates. This play can lead to serious damage of buildings, so most settlements have a cleared darsoth field for just such a purpose. The darsoth is covered in a thick gray hide similar to that of an elephant, though it has some hair along its spine. The darsoth is an herbivore and has a mouth full of large, flat teeth that are of little use in combat. Instead, the creature relies on a pair of large bony horns that protrude from its forehead. When enraged, the darsoth charges its opponents, goring them with its horns.



The haimedians greatly value the darsoth due to their expensive and time-consuming maturation and training. Thus darsoth rarely escape into the wild, and when they do they are easy to track down and recapture. Only one darsoth has remained in the wild for more than a few weeks, and this is the creature now known as One-Horn. Its name comes from an incident in which one of its horns broke in half during a fight with haimedians trying to forcibly return it to captivity. One-Horn has gone feral and attacks any haimedian who approaches. Some believe he has come into contact with a haimedian viral agent that has caused his change in behavior. One-Horn now stalks the outer bounds of the Collective and the Empire, causing widespread destruction. He is becoming well known among the saurians as well, and several nobles have offered a reward for his horn.

Trained darsoth have a Purchase DC of 23.

Species Traits

Charge: When the darsoth charges an opponent the critical range of its gore attack becomes 18-20/x3.
Docile: Darsoth are normally very docile, granting a +2 bonus to anyone making Ride and Handle Animal checks involving a darsoth.
Organic Tech Implants: Darsoth may be upgraded with organic technology gadgets and have two small protrusions in their necks. Devices powered by nutrient packs may be mounted on these protrusions, allowing the devices to feed off the darsoth's body for power. While doing so, the darsoth must eat twice as much food as normal.

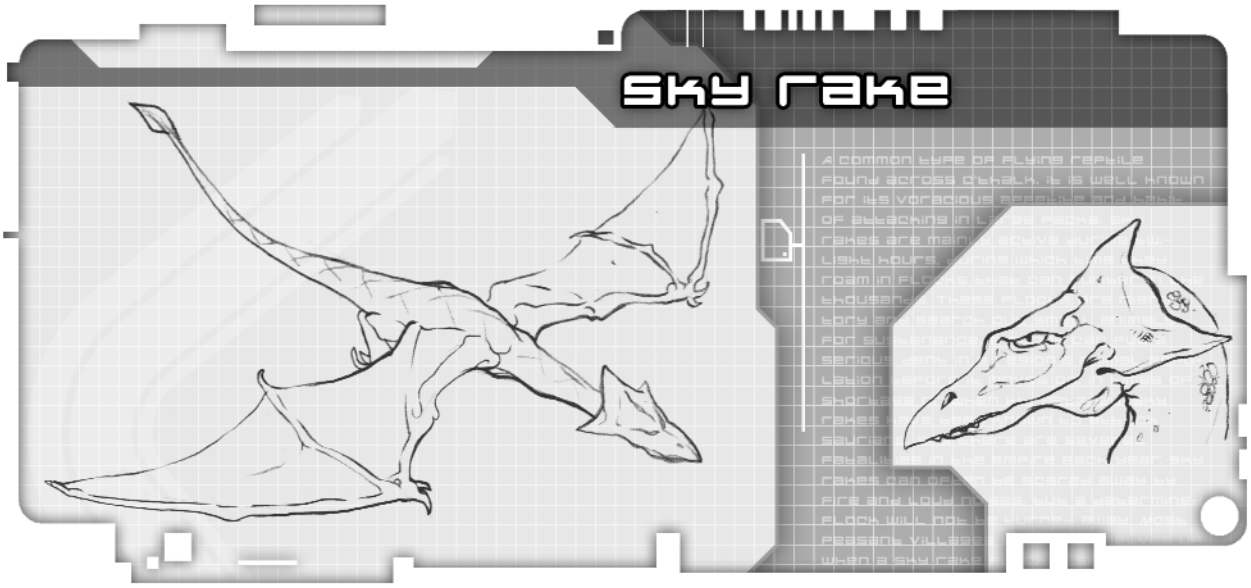
Darsoth ◆ CR 8

Huge Animal; HD 12d8+72; hp 126; MAS 22; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (+10 natural, -2 size); BAB +9; Grap +26; Atk +18 melee (2d8+9, gore); Full Atk +18/+13 melee (2d8+9, gore); FS 30 ft. by 20 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ charge, docile, organic tech implants; AL Owner; SV Fort +14, Ref +8, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 28, Dex 10, Con 22, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.
Skills: Jump +11, Spot +7, Survival +7
Feats: None
Advancement: 13-16HD (Gargantuan)

◇ Sky Rake

A common type of flying reptile found across C'thalk, it is well known for its voracious appetite and habit of attacking in large packs. Sky rakes are mainly active during twilight hours, during which time they roam in flocks that can number in the thousands. These flocks are migratory and search out small animals for sustenance; a flock can put a serious dent in a region's animal population before it moves on. In times of shortage or when threatened, sky rakes have been known to attack saurians, and there are several fatalities in the Empire each year. Sky rakes can often be scared away by fire and loud noises, but a determined flock will not be turned away. Most peasant villages lock themselves up when a sky rake flock is spotted in the vicinity, only leaving their homes once the threat has passed. Nobles, on the other hand, consider hunting sky rakes to be great sport, the danger only making things more exciting.

Sky rakes have a wingspan of six feet, though they are only about two feet long on average, not counting their tails. They are lean beasts built for flight and maneuverability. Their hide is green in color, though the exact shade varies from region to region.



Species Traits

Bonus Feat: Sky rakes gain the feat Weapon Finesse as a bonus feat.
Cold Blooded: Sky rake suffer a -4 penalty to all Fortitude saving throws against cold based attacks or exposure to cold weather, but receive a +8 bonus to Fortitude saving throws against exposure damage from warm weather.
Dive Attack: If a sky rake is at least 50 feet above the ground it may carry out a dive attack when making a charge. The sky rake's bonus to hit from charging increases to +4 and its critical becomes 19-20/x2.
Fear of Fire and Loud Noises: When sky rakes encounter open flame equal to at least a campfire in size, or loud noises including gunfire, they often panic. When near open fire the sky rakes must make a Will save (DC 15) to approach within 15 feet of the fire. Each time a loud noise is made, such as gunfire, any sky rakes within 50 feet must make a Will save (DC 15) or flee for 1d6 rounds in a random direction.
Flock Mentality (Ex): Sky rakes gain a +1 bonus to Will saves for every sky rake within 100 feet, up to a +5 bonus.

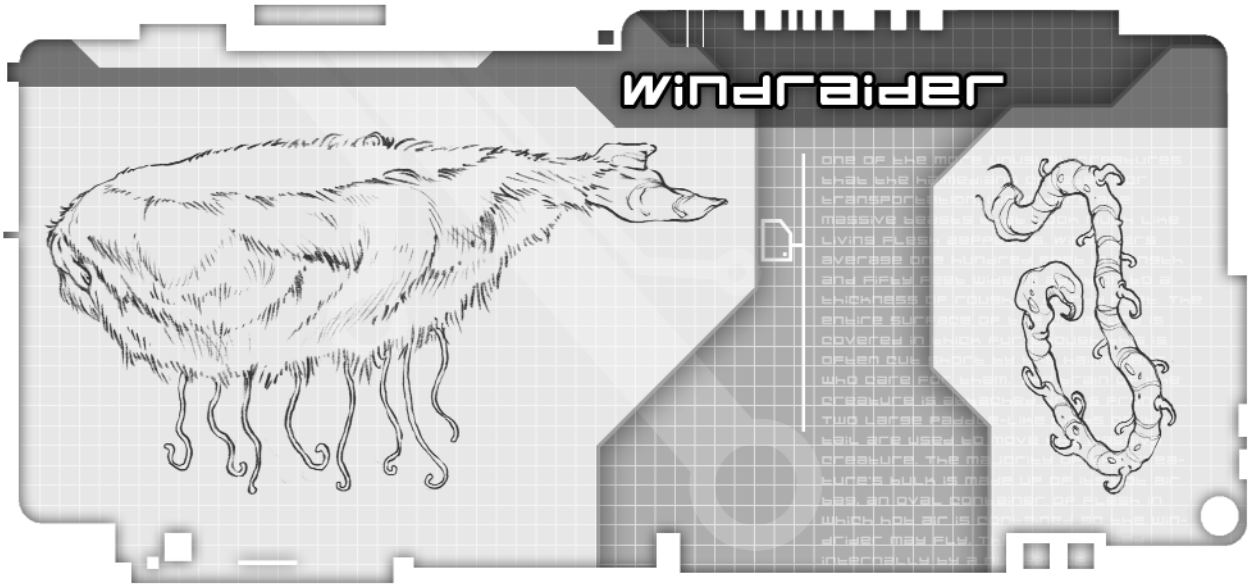
Sky Rake ⋄ CR 1/2

Small Animal; HD 1d8; hp 4; MAS 10; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., fly 60 ft.(good); Defense 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +1 size); BAB +0; Grap -4; Atk +4 melee (1d4, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ cold blooded, dive attack, fear of fire and loud noises, flock mentality; AL; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 14, Cha 4.
Skills: Hide +7, Move Silently +5, Spot +8, Survival +5.
Feats: Weapon Finesse
Advancement: 2-3 HD (Small)

⋄ Windrider

One of the more unusual creatures that the haimedians created for transportation, windriders are massive beasts that look much like living flesh zeppelins. Windriders average one hundred feet in length and fifty feet wide, in addition to a thickness of roughly thirty feet. The entire surface of the creature is covered in thick fur, though this is often cut short by the haimedians who care for them. The brain of the creature is attached to its front. Two large paddle-like limbs on its tail are used to move the massive creature. The majority of the creature's bulk is made up of its hot air bag, an oval container of flesh in which hot air is contained so the windrider may fly. The air is heated internally by a number of powerful chemical reactions and the heat can be controlled by a number of membranes that open to bleed off warm air. A number of tentacle-like protrusions drag from the creature's bottom, pulling up plants and other food from the forests it flies over. The creature's top is almost completely flat, making an excellent surface for cargo. From this surface haimedian handlers guide the windrider, using its paddles and sometimes fans to propel it through the air. The windrider was created by the haimedians to serve as an air transportation vehicle, and although slow it does effectively carry out this role.

There are several hundred windriders in use by the Haimedian Collective, but they are only used with great care. The appearance of massive flying creatures in the southern hemisphere of C'thalk would quickly draw unwelcome attention from the Empire, so they are mainly used on cloudy days (of which there are many). The haimedians usually mount a lightning rod with a grounding tether that drags along the ground when flying windriders in stormy weather. When not in use, these creatures are kept in special areas covered by camouflage netting and vines that allow the windriders to fly just above the trees and feed but remain out of sight. An



adult windrider can carry ten tons of cargo if it is carefully packed. Windriders are only used for transportation purposes and make poor combat vehicles due to their weak hide and slow speed. When not in use they are usually kept below the treetops or under camouflage netting so they are out of sight. No windriders have yet escaped into the wild though some intermittent sightings of windriders has piqued the curiosity of some saurian nobles on the border of the Empire.

Within the Haimedian Collective a windrider has a purchase DC of 30.

Species Traits

Blindsight (Ex): Due to its advanced sense of hearing and touch the windrider has blindsense with a range of 60 feet.
Cargo Rig: Most windriders are outfitted with a cargo rig, which includes a safety rope around the edge of the windrider's top platform, a safety anchor to which crew can attach themselves via ropes to avoid falling overboard, a pulley and winch system for loading cargo, and a large organic fan to increase the speed of the windrider. This rig has a Purchase DC of 20 and improves the windrider's speed to 20 ft. Some outfit their windriders with armor plating made of leather and chitin, which provides a +6 armor bonus to Defense, an armor penalty of -4, and a Purchase DC of 18.
Constrict (Ex): After making a successful grapple attack with its tentacles the windrider can constrict the target for 1d8+21 damage.
Docile: Any Handle Animal checks made involving a windrider gain a +2 bonus.
Flat Top: The top of the windrider is a flat surface which can hold up to ten tons of cargo before the windrider is too burdened to fly.
Improved Grab (Ex): Against creatures smaller than the windrider it may make a grapple attempt against any creature struck by its tentacles.
Puncture (Ex): If the windrider is forced to make a massive damage save it must also make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or spring a hole in its hot air bag. Each time this happens the windrider's fly speed decreases by 5 ft. If this happens twice the windrider can no longer stay aloft and begins floating to the ground. Patching these wounds requires 30 hit points worth of healing.

Windrider ⋄ CR 10

Colossal Aberration ; HD 40d8+360; 540 hp; MAS 31; Init +0; Spd fly 10 ft. (good); Defense 6, touch 2, flat-footed 6 (+4 natural, -8 size); BAB +30; Grap +62; Atk +47 melee (1d8+21, tentacle); Full Atk +47 melee (1d8+21, 4 tentacles); FS 100 ft. by 100 ft.; Reach 15 ft.; SQ; AL; SV Fort +23, Ref +12, Will +25; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 42, Dex 10, Con 28, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.
Skills: Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +13, Survival +9
Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Endurance, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Damage Threshold, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Tentacles)
Advancement: 40-50HD (Colossal)

◇ Berall, Autumnal Harvester

When Berall reached adolesence it realized that it was not content to live the quiet life most haimedians enjoyed in the Collective. Instead, Berall left the confines of it village at every opportunity, seeking to understand the world beyond the advanced sciences and hidden buildings of the Collective. Berall was more interested in the raw nature of C'thalk's natural ecosystem than the manicured biology of the haimedians. It took an uncharacteristic interest in the animals of C'thalk, to the point of taming a bloodfang that it commonly uses as its mount. This type of behavior did not go over well with Berall's family, so by adulthood it found itself far from home and enlisted in the defense of the Collective. In this role, Berall was able to live outside the tailored world it found so uncomfortable, eventually becoming an autumnal harvester.

Now Berall spends its days outside the bounds of the Collective, making sure the saurians do not discover the presence of its people. This normally consists of misleading saurians who wander to close and keeping any haimedians from going too far beyond the Collective, but occasionally bloodier methods are necessary. Berall is more than willing to kill for its people, even if they do not welcome Berall as one of them.



Berall
(Green-Walker 3/Tough Hero 3/Autumnal Harvester 3) ◇ CR 9

Medium Plant (Haimedian); HD 3d6+3d10 +3d8+27; hp 74; MAS 19; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 22, touch 17, flat-footed 21 (+6 class, +1 Dex, +5 armor); BAB +5; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d8, 18-20/x3. joint blade), +6 ranged (2d8, thorn cannon); Full +5 melee (1d8, 18-20/x3. joint blade), +6 ranged (2d8, thorn cannon); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Carbon dioxide breather, immune to sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, poisons, and flanking, increased massive damage threshold, inorganic technology limitation, nutrient coma, scent, plant affinity, feel no pain, organic technology affinity, quick coma, guerilla fighter, root, hide scent; AL the Collective; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 10; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 9.

PL Familiarity: 7

Occupation: Military.

Skills: Handle Animal +6, Hide +11, Listen +4. Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +6, Knowledge (Tactics) +7, Move Silently +11, Ride +8, Read/Write Language (Sporegus), Speak Language (Sporegus), Spot +5, Survival +11, Treat Injury +8.

Talents: Remain Conscious, Robust.

Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Armor Proficiency (Organic), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Jointblade), Organic Technology Familiarity, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Track, Xenomedic.

Possessions: Joint blade, thorn cannon, 3 containers of nutrient paste, hand brain, 10 nutrient packs, living hide armor, knife.

◇ Elai of the Monastery of the Blue Path

Elai was born in a small peasant village that is virtually indistinguishable from hundreds of other peasant villages in the Saurian Empire. He was the fifth of a dozen children and stood out little in his village until a wandering monk visited the town to help the locals construct a new town hall. The monk lent his extensive knowledge of construction to the effort, but after the project was completed, Elai accidentally walked in on the monk trying to repair a small portable radio, a rare item for a monk to have. With little fuss Elai began helping the monk fix the device, showing impressive technical aptitude for one so young. The monk then went to speak to Elai's parents about apprenticing him as a monk, and Elai's parents were more than happy to have found some manner of craft in which he excelled.

After many years with his master, Elai was introduced to the mysteries of the Monastery of the Blue



Path and the secrets it contained. His technological talents have been put to use several times in the vaults since, but now Elai spends most of his time wandering the Empire looking for lost relics and other pieces of Star Confederation history, helping those in need along the way. Good-natured and curious, he has an easygoing manner that puts most people at ease.

Elai
(Smart H. 3/Tough H. 2/Dedicated H. 1/ Monk of the Blue Path 3) ⋄ CR 9

Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Shellback Saurian); HD 4d6+2d10+3d8+18; hp 61; MAS 17; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 22, touch 16, flat-footed 22 (+6 class, +3 natural, +3 armor); BAB +5; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (2d6+1, iron staff) or +5 ranged (2d6 or 2d8, kaic pistol); Full +7 melee (2d6+1, iron staff), +5 ranged (2d6 or 2d8, kaic pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ bloodlust, calming temper, cold blooded, bloodlust resistance, natural weapon (1d6+1 slam), ritual science, stable, A Simple Monk; AL Monks of the Blue Path; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +7; AP 10; Rep +2; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 12.
PL Familiarity: 5
Occupation: Monk
Skills: Barter +4, Bluff +4, Computer Use +11, Craft (Electrical) +9, Craft (Mechanical) +9, Craft (Structural) +10, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +9, Gather Information +4, Knowledge (History) +12, Knowledge (Tactics) +4, Knowledge (Technology) +12, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +11, Read/Write Language (Sessil, Unispeak), Repair +16, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (Sessil, Unispeak), Survival +11, Treat Injury +13.
Talents: Damage Reduction 1/-, Savant (Repair), Exploit Weakness, Fellowship of the Poor.
Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Defensive Martial Arts, Endurance, Gearhead, Improved Damage Threshold, Monk of Standing, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Iron Staff).
Possessions: Iron staff, ribbed leather armor, kaic pistol, 24 light and 12 heavy bullets for the kaic pistol, robes, mechanical and electrical tool kits.

⋄ Maros Tangen, Imperial Bureaucrat

Born into the Imperial Bureaucracy, Maros is the sixth of his line to serve as the Imperial Assistant Advisor in Matters of Tax Laws, and he was trained from birth for the role. Shortly after taking on the mantle of responsibility he had been prepared for his entire life, some paper work was incorrect and caused the Emperor to mismanage some tax rates, or at least that's what the Imperial Bureaucracy's story was. A new bureaucrat at the time, Maros felt he was made the sacrificial lamb for someone else's mistake. In the Emperor's great wrath, Maros was removed from the Imperial Palace and the City of Bone, cast out to the rural provinces to serve out several years of itinerant duty before being allowed to return home.

Now Maros spends his days uncomfortable and angry, slogging through harvest appraisals, counting taxes and census results, all the while surrounded by peasants and poverty. These dirty fields and muddy rivers are no place for an Imperial Bureaucrat and he constantly seeks some bit of information that he can turn to his advantage to get back to the City of Bone. The nobles in his territory have learned he is nothing but a self-serving rat, and thus have as little to do with him as possible. The peasants view him with equal disdain.

Maros Tangen
(Smart Ordinary 3/Dedicated Ordinary 2) ⋄ CR 4

Monstrous Humanoid (Brachin Saurian); HD 5d6+5; hp 24; MAS 12; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 12, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+3 class, +1 natural, -2 Dex); BAB +2; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (1d3 punch), +0 ranged (2d6 or 2d8, kaic



pistol); Full +1 melee (1d3 punch), +0 ranged (2d6 or 2d8, kaic pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Bloodlust, cold blooded, saurian honor, bloodlust resistance, hold breath, stable; AL Himself; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +6 Rep +3; Str 9, Dex 6, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 15.
PL Familiarity: 5
Occupation: Imperial Bureaucracy
Skills: Computer Use +10, Decipher Script +10, Forgery +10, Investigate +12, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +12, Knowledge (Business) +14, Knowledge (Civics) +15, Knowledge (Current Events) +10, Listen +7, Navigate +10, Profession (Bureaucrat) +8, Read/Write Language (Sessil), Research +10, Search +10, Sense Motive +9, Speak Language (Sessil), Spot +7.
Feats: Attentive, Educated, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.
Possessions: Imperial Census Computer, uniform of office, paperwork, pens, kaic pistol, 24 light and 12 heavy rounds for the kaic pistol

◇ Sizar Majei With-Untarnished-Honor

Born Majei Larikif, Majei took the title With-Untarnished-Honor only after assuming her family title of sizar a few years ago. In the few short years she has held the title, she has earned a reputation for fairness and honor that has shamed that of her ancestors, who were known to skirt the laws of honor as much as possible without becoming dishonored. Majei has worked hard to erase the memories of the past, making every effort to see to the needs of her people and do her duty to the Empire. This dedication to duty has consumed much of her family fortune, however, leaving little more than a title, her family weapons and armor, and a rundown shack to her name. Luckily for Sizar Majei her subjects are extremely loyal to her and support her with food and supplies. While Majei has not prospered since become sizar, her people have.

A saurian of unusually large stature, Sizar Majei can be quite imposing. She dresses in well made but undecorated clothes; her armor is well kept but shows many years of wear. A stern leader who rarely shows signs of weakness in public, she is more comfortable making decisions of government than dealing with the people she governs. Although she wishes to be fair to all her subjects and act with honor, she has trouble facing those who know of her family's past.

Sizar Majei With-Untarnished-Honor (Tyran Warrior 2/Dedicated Hero 3/Saurian Noble Lord 3) ◇ CR 8

Large Monstrous Humanoid (Tyran Saurian); HD 5d8+3d6+8; hp 50; MAS 13; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 22, touch 16, flat-footed 22 (+6 class, -1 size, +2 natural, +5 armor); BAB +6; Grap +14; Atk +10 melee (2d8+6, kinai sword), +5 ranged (2d10, break pistol); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (2d8+6, kinai sword), +5/+0 ranged (2d10, break pistol); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ natural weapons, poor loser, blood of a leader, home territory, noble authority, eye for skills; AL Saurian Empire; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +6; AP 10; Rep +6; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10.
PL Familiarity: 5
Occupation: Tyran Noble
Skills: Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Civics) +12, Knowledge (Tactics) +12, Profession (Noble Lord) +6, Read/Write Language (Sessil), Ride +5, Sense Motive +8, Speak Language (Sessil), Spot +3, Survival +6, Treat Injury +5.
Talents: Code of Honor, Perceptive Honor
Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Honorable, Iron Will, Noble of the Saurian Empire, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Simple Weapon Proficiency.
Possessions: Masterwork kinai sword, ironlord armor, signet ring, break pistol with 12 rounds



Sur (Flyer Operator 3/Fast Hero 3) ◆ CR 6

Small Monstrous Humanoid (Flyer Saurian); HD 6d6+6; hp 30; MAS 12; Init +5; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect); Defense 24, touch 24, flat-footed 24 (+8 class, +1 size, +5 Dex); BAB +5; Grap +1; Atk +4 melee (1d4, dagger), +8 ranged (2d6, fang gunner); Full +4 melee (1d4, dagger), +8 ranged (2d6, fang gunner); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Acute vision, flight, not that different; AL Yellow Dragon fang gang; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AP 8; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 7, Cha 11.

PL Familiarity: 5

Occupation: Fang Gang Member

Skills: Drive +19, Hide +13, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Streetwise) +5, Move Silently +9, Navigate +7, Pilot +19, Profession (Wheelman) +4, Read/Write Sessil, Repair +7, Speak Sessil, Spot +6, Swim -2.

Talents: Evasion, Uncanny Dodge 1.

Feats: Aircraft Operation (Light Aircraft), Fang Gang Operative, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation, Zero-G Training, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert.

Possessions: Dagger, fang gunner and 90 rounds of ammunition, goggles, mechanical tool kit.

◆ Sur, Fang Ganger

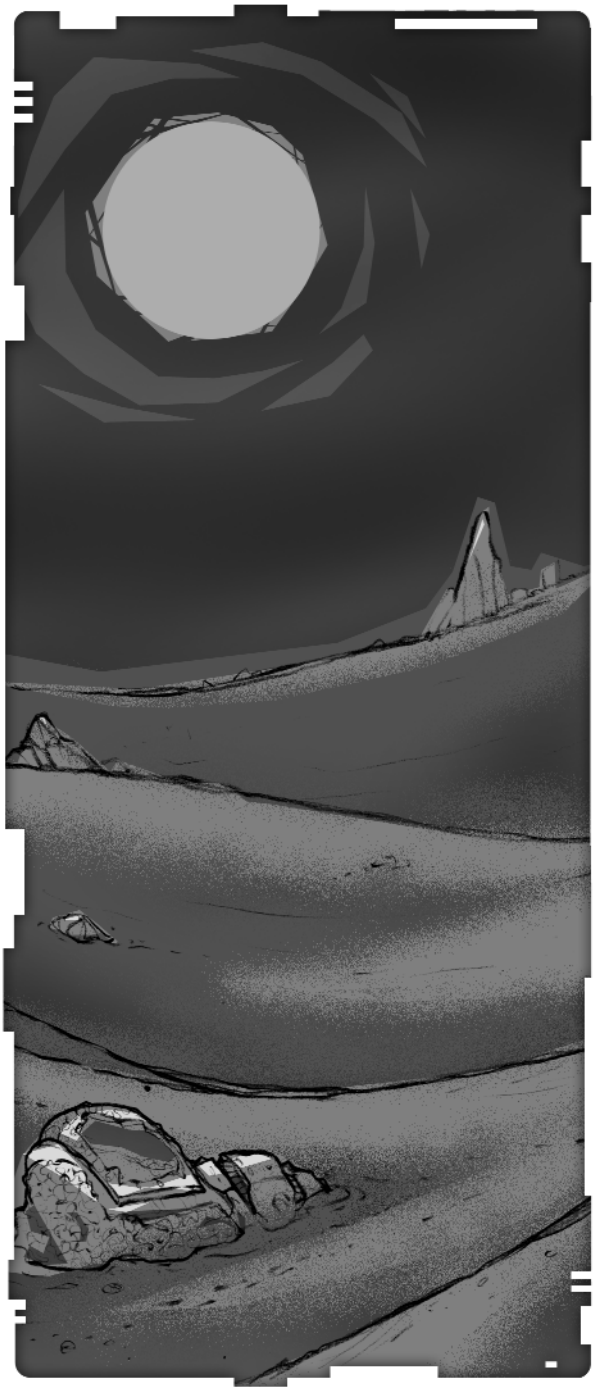
A long-time resident of the City of Bone, Sur has the unusual distinction of being an only child. The child of two powerful members of the Yellow Dragons fang gang, from a young age he was involved in confidence scams and grifting along with other members of the fang gang. He was good with his hands and an acceptable lookout, but Sur's real strengths came to the fore during his adolescence, when he began acting as the wheelman for some of his fang gang allies. Using a variety of stolen vehicles he flew down the streets of the City of Bone at breakneck speed, helping his fellows escape the constables and nobles. Eventually Sur graduated to flying hornet runs to other cities for the Yellow Dragons, which is the primary reason he escaped the purge that ended the life of both his parents and most of his friends in the Yellow Dragons. Now back in the City of Bone, he is no longer interested in thievery or small acts of protest. He is interested in violence and revolution.

Once a cheerful fellow always ready with a wry joke, now Sur is a driven man who rarely smiles or laughs. Instead, he concentrates on his goal of avenging the Yellow Dragons against the nobles who killed them and anyone who stands with those nobles. Sur is always looking for allies and is willing to work with anyone if it means his revenge can be carried out.



CHAPTER • VI

THE MOONS OF EOS



"It just looks like dust, sir. A bit fine, but nothing unusual." To drive the point home, Marshal picked up a handful of the black dust and let it fall to the ground, where it quickly settled into the endless black sand that was the surface of Phaeton. As far as the eye could see in any direction the black sand continued; the only way to make out the horizon was seeing where the stars started. After only a few minutes of exposure to the dust, the entire team's exploration suits were coved in it.

"It's mostly carbon, Captain," Aisley said, as she studied it with the portable scanning unit she had brought from the ship. "It's got a very unusual structure, and some sort of latent energy signature, but it doesn't seem to be doing anything."

"Well, the tentaari said not to come here, so there must be something worth hiding." Captain Wells kicked up some of the sand and watched it settle back, frustrated by the lack of profit thus far on this trip. "Spread out. There has to be something- "

The rips that spontaneously appeared in the team's spacesuits silenced any further conversation as the black dust cut through both synthetic mesh and flesh with equal ease. Within seconds the entire team was dead, and their bodies quickly broken down into their component elements by the field of nanites they had stood on moments ago. In time their spaceship too would be consumed and broken down, as all things that touch the surface of Phaeton eventually are.

THE MOONS OF EOS • • •

Despite their proximity to Eos, the moons Phaeton and Selene have not been extensively explored. The Sadler Orbital Facility has scanned them at length and orbital flybys have been conducted, but no human vessel has yet landed on either moon. This is primarily because the tentaari have warned the Dawning Star Republic that both moons are dangerous and should be avoided, which is only half true. The scans of the moons have turned up two dead moons with no life or large energy signatures present, though much of both moons is shielded to sensors due to mineral deposits, radiation, and other forms of interference. These moons are likely to be the first targets of exploration by the Dawning Star Republic; one may finally bring the truth of the tentaari to light, while the other is nothing but a deathtrap.

PHAETON • • •

The dark moon of Eos, the surface of this moon is covered in a thick layer of black dust. This dust absorbs a large amount of light, making Phaeton very difficult to spot in the night sky. On most nights it is little more than a gray disc in the sky, and on cloudy nights it is completely invisible. The velin have long held this moon to be a cursed place, used by the vaasi to launch their invasion of Eos. Now the moon is a barren world covered in black dust, with no sign of any habitation or technology. In truth, the moon is far more dangerous that it appears.



Rotation Period (Around Eos): 49 Eotian days
Revolution Period: 56 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: None
Average Temperature: 250 degrees Kelvin (-9.4° Fahrenheit), though the temperature ranges from 100° Kelvin (-173.96° Fahrenheit) in the dark side to 400° Kelvin (126.25° Fahrenheit) in sunlight
Gravity: .3G

HISTORY • • •

Phaeton was largely ignored by the Star Confederation, used for mining and little else due to its lack of useful resources. Near the end of the war with the vaasi, the moon was used as a staging ground by the Star Confederation fleet. Extensive fortifications were constructed on the moon, with the plan that it would be one of the last lines of defense against the vaasi advance towards Eos. A massive battle was fought above and on Phaeton, but during the attack the Star Confederation noticed that the vaasi were targeting the base's nanite jammers instead of its primary defenses. All Star Confederation and vaasi bases contained anti-nanite devices that would render enemy nanites inert near such a transmitter, and they had become so common that the use of nanites in combat was almost unheard of. The Phaeton base had been constructed in such a way that left its jammers vulnerable, but few considered it a problem since nanite weapons had fallen out of use in the later stages of the war. Using this inattention to their advantage, the vaasi knocked out the anti-nanite defenses of the Star Confederation on Phaeton and then dropped cluster bombs containing billions of nanites and one tactical intelligence unit, a primitive form of artificial intelligence, on the moon. Under the direction of the tactical control unit, these nanites quickly devoured every piece of metal, plastic, or other artificial material they could find, turning it into more nanites before heading off in search of more matter. After the bombs were dropped, the vaasi pulled back from the battle. Within five days the entire Star Confederation outpost was wiped out by the nanites, which then turned their attention to the crust of the moon and any organic matter they could find. In the end everything on the surface of Phaeton was destroyed, including several feet of the moon's crust, and the nanites replicated sufficiently to bury the surface the world in a layer of nanites ten feet deep. The entire Star Confederation fortification was destroyed with minimal damage to the vaasi fleet, though this operation used up all of their stores of combat nanites, for they continued on to Eos before the process was complete. They left the nanites behind to finish their work, hoping to capture Eos before the energy stores of the vaasi fleet faded completely.

The vaasi would have eventually returned to collect the nanites, but after the invasion of Eos, none of the vaasi ships were in good enough condition to return to Phaeton. So the nanites were left alone, with nothing to disassemble or assemble for millions of years. Most of the nanites had run out of power when the tactical intelligence unit used its limited resources to build a number of solar generators, keeping itself and a limited number of nanites functional. During this time they sat motionless, waiting for an opportunity to act; the tactical intelligence unit bided its time until a suitable means of rejoining the Vaasi Empire appeared. Any spacecraft that lands on Phaeton may provide the means they need. The tactical intelligence unit drives the nanites to attack anything that lands on the planet, taking apart any alien object so it may be used to construct a ship to leave this prison and seek out surviving vaasi. Currently there is a half-finished vaasi freighter buried beneath the sands of Phaeton, waiting for enough materials to touch down on the surface to finish the ship. Once it is complete, the tactical intelligence unit will direct the nanites to build a replacement unit, and then gather up as many nanites as possible into the ship and seek out the remnant of the Vaasi Empire.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

The surface of Phaeton is completely barren and covered in ten feet of vaasi nanites. Beneath this is a layer of stone that has been worn smooth by the nanites. All the easily reached minerals of value have already been mined by the nanites, and they do not have sufficient energy remaining to break through the moon's crust. The moon is a perfect sphere beneath the nanites, having no geographic features at all. The tactical intelligence unit and the half-completed vaasi ship are located near the equator, in the western hemisphere of the moon. The ship is hidden beneath the nanites, though it is beginning to stick out of the layer of dust. As construction progresses, the tactical intelligence unit will move nanites to cover up the construction site, eventually covering up the ship in a bulge of nanites.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

Phaeton has no atmosphere.

CONDITIONS • • •

The surface of Phaeton is considered a low-gravity vacuum environment. The nanite dust is loose, making movement on the ground difficult, and all movement rates are reduced by half. Most humanoids sink up to their thighs when standing in the nanite dust.

LOCATIONS ON PHAETON • • •

◇ The Epicenter

The tactical intelligence unit's location is the only unusual location on the moon; everything else is dust and vacuum. Buried under five feet of nanite dust, the shoe-box-sized tactical intelligence unit controls all the nanites on the moon through radio communications. It can only give complex commands to a much smaller number of nanites at a time, most of which are involved in building the vaasi ship in-progress near the tactical intelligence unit. While the tactical intelligence unit may be content to let visitors land on Phaeton if they are far from its location in order to maintain secrecy, anything that lands within one hundred miles of the tactical intelligence unit is attacked until it is destroyed and its resources brought to the ship's build site. The area is littered with bits of refuse the nanites could not use for whatever reason, much of which is organic material, making the Epicenter a very creepy place as bones and blood splatters are visible among the nanite dust.

Any creatures that land on Phaeton are likely to be attacked by five attack nanite colonies shortly after landing. Since these attack colonies will simply come out of the dust, which the visitors may be knee deep in already, the Attack-Nanites are likely to have surprise and will quickly engulf their targets.

RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER WORLDS OF THE HELIOS SYSTEM • • •

The tentaari learned what had befallen Phaeton by losing a scout probe to the nanites shortly after the end of the war with the vaasi. They planned to find a way to remove or control the nanites, but never got around to doing it before the gateway network began falling apart. At present, the tentaari remaining in Helios think that the nanites of Phaeton may be the best way to fashion repair parts for the gateway network, given their lack of advanced manufacturing facilities. The tentaari have made no headway in gaining control of the nanites, and they continue to debate telling the humans about the nanites, fearing the power it will give humanity. For now, they try to warn all the races of Helios away from Phaeton, hoping they will not realize the potential it holds.

The other species of the system have either heeded the advice of the tentaari or thought Phaeton not worth their time. The planet has gone uninvestigated by the factions of Helios, though the Dawning Star Republic will eventually take a closer look at it, if the faction-camps do not beat them to it. Any ship that approaches is not likely to leave again.

If the nanites finish constructing the ship, or the tactical intelligence unit signals the vaasi in the system, the nanites are likely to become a prime target of the vaasi. The nanites will provide large boost in power to the vaasi and open up the possibility for

nanite attacks against their enemies. Contact could turn Phaeton into a vaasi stronghold, as the vaasi fortify the moon and use the nanites to construct fortifications.

ADVENTURE IDEAS FOR HEPHAESTUS • • •

◇ Second Try

After the first exploratory mission to Phaeton goes missing, the player characters are dispatched to find out what went wrong. When they arrive, they find the first ship partially disassembled; before long they are under attack by nanites as well. Only a small group of nanites engages them, however, since the rest are busy taking apart the player character's ship. They have to get their own ship off the ground before they nanites take it apart as well. If the nanites latched onto the ship are not destroyed, they will slowly begin disassembling the ship as it travels through space.

◇ Collect a Sample

Once the nature of the surface of Phaeton is discovered, the player characters are dispatched to collect a sample of the nanites so the Dawning Star Republic or some other faction can study them. When they arrive, the ship under construction by the tactical intelligence unit activates its weapon systems and opens fire on the player characters in the hopes of forcing the players to the surface. Assuming the player characters still land, the ship that fired on them will likely be a point of interest on their visit.

◇ New Tenants

While traveling to Eos the player characters notice unusual activity on Phaeton. A group of vaasi from the Cronus Belt have set up a small facility on the moon and begun harvesting the nanites for use in their war efforts. If the player characters do not put a stop to their efforts, Phaeton may become a super-factory, building weapons for the vaasi right on Eos's doorstep.

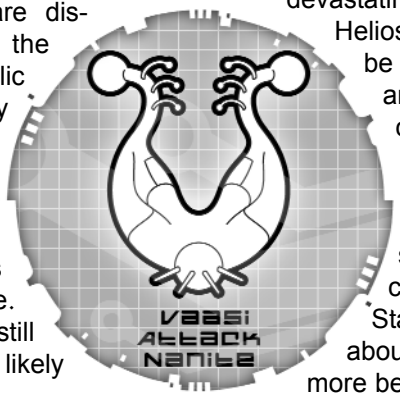
◇ When Samples Go Bad

One of the nanite samples from Phaeton, brought back to Eos for study, starts receiving commands from the tactical intelligence unit using the partially built ship's communication system. The nanites break out of containment in the terraforming fields and begin killing personnel and causing widespread havoc, in addition to replicating. The player characters must find the nanites and destroy them before it is too late.

XENOMORPHS • • •

◇ Vaasi Attack-Nanites Colony

A commonly used weapon in the vaasi arsenal during the beginning of their war with the Star Confederation, Attack-Nanites faded from use as the Star Confederation developed jammers that were able to confuse the miniscule inner workings of the nanites, which lacked any electronic countermeasures due to the limitations of their size. These jammers eventually made nanites useless in combat and relegated them to support work, such as healing the wounded or repairing damaged spacecraft. Toward the end of the war, when the vaasi began to run low on weapons and supplies, they began using Attack-Nanites again along with coordinated attacks against the anti-nanite jammers. This tactic was marginally effective in most battles due to Star Confederation nanite jammers, but was devastatingly effective on Phaeton. In the Helios system, Attack-Nanites can also be found in some ruins of Eos, C'thalk, and Thres, in addition to a number of colonies brought by the vaasi of the Cronus Belt. The nanites found on the inner worlds of the Helios system are generally in a hibernation state, awaiting specific stimulus or commands to awaken. Without the Star Confederation jammers to worry about these weapons are likely to once more become common on the battlefield.



When activated, vaasi Attack-Nanites form into colonies larger than normal nanite colonies. They attack enemies as directed by a complex system of threat levels and mathematical computations. They normally attack the target that has inflicted the most damage on them until that target is dead. When they are not under the supervision of a more advanced computer, such as a tactical intelligence unit, they are very simplistic in their tactics, charging what targets threaten them until there are no more targets. This makes them easy to fool or to lead into traps. Attack-Nanites are difficult to stop, however, and are more than capable of chewing their way through most obstacles with ease.

Species Traits

Blindsense: Attack-Nanites can sense targets within 10 feet regardless of visibility.
Disintegration: Any target grappled by an attack nanite colony may be disassembled into its component elements. Damage inflicted by the Attack-Nanites ignores 30 points of hardness and is considered of the disintegration type.

Fast Healing: Attack nanite colonies heal themselves at a rate of one hit point per round.
Meld: Multiple attack nanite colonies can combine their nanites into a single large form, making them more effective in combat but limiting the number of targets that may be attacked. For an attack nanite colony to meld it must spend a full round action melding, but the colonies it is melding with need not spend an action. After the melding is complete the abilities of the attack colony are increased. Check the additional stat blocks below to see the abilities for melded colony groups. When a melded group of attack nanite colonies breaks up, all damage it suffered is divided evenly between all the component colonies.
Wall-Crawling (Ex): Attack nanite colonies can move along any surface short of a frictionless one without a Climb check.

Small Vaasi Attack Nanite Colony (A single colony) ◆ CR 5

Small Construct (Swarm); HD 3d10+5; hp 21; Mas -; Init +1; Spd 5 feet; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+1 Dex, +1 size); BAB +2; Grap -2; Atk swarm (1d6); Full Atk swarm (1d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Blindsense, fast healing 1, meld, wall-crawling; AL Vaasi; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; AP 0; Rep 0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con -, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 1.
Skills: None
Feats: None
Advancement: See below

Medium Vaasi Attack Nanite Colony (2 colonies melded) ◆ CR 8

Medium Construct (Swarm); HD 5d10+10; hp 36; Mas -; Init +0; Spd 5 feet; Defense 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk swarm (1d6); Full Atk Atk swarm (1d6); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Blindsense, disintegration, fast healing 1, meld, wall-crawling; AL Vaasi; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; AP 0; Rep 0; Str 14, Dex 10, Con -, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 1.
Skills: None
Feats: None

Large Vaasi Attack Nanite Colony (4 colonies melded) ◆ CR 12

Large Construct (Swarm); HD 9d10+20; hp 67; Mas -; Init +1; Spd 5 feet; Defense 8, touch 8, flat-footed 8 (-1 size, -1 Dex); BAB +6; Grap +16; Atk swarm (2d6); Full Atk Atk swarm (2d6); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ Blindsense, disintegration, fast healing 1 meld, wall-crawling; AL Vaasi; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3; AP 0; Rep 0; Str 22, Dex 8, Con -, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 1.
Skills: None
Feats: None

◆ Vaasi Tactical Intelligence Unit

A limited form of artificial intelligence, tactical intelligence units were common devices in the vast armies of the Vaasi Empire. Unlike the artificial intelligence entities used by the Star Confederation that seemed extremely lifelike and were able to expand their own programming, tactical intelligence units were tools only and given no form of free thought or personality. They are portable computers designed to give their operators tactical advice and control a number of support systems simultaneously, such as nanites, automated weapon emplacements, or even hacking security systems, to allow the operator to take care of other tasks. They were not pleasant and had little time to waste.

Like artificial intelligence entities, tactical intelligence units had rules they obeyed, but these varied from unit to unit. Common ones included never surrendering to the enemy and never allowing itself to be captured. A small explosive device was included in each tactical intelligence unit for just such an emergency. The tactical intelligence units were not concerned with protecting vaasi lives and were instead programmed to sacrifice them if it meant accomplishing their mission.

Because of the single-minded nature of their programming, tactical intelligence units did not have the creative potential of other artificial intelligence entities. Their limited thought processes prevented abstract thought. Tactical intelligent units solved problems as directly as possible and had a more limited potential for learning than artificial intelligence entities. Although they are quick thinkers and can perform actions swiftly, they had trouble adapting to new situations and were confused easily if their situation went outside their programming. Like artificial intelligence entities, tactical intelligence units could control robot bodies they were attached to and could also control any system they were plugged in to, such as weapon systems on a spacecraft.

Tactical intelligence units were packaged in an armored box about the size of a shoebox, which the operator usually strapped to his back. It could interface with most types of vaasi and Star Confederation technology through a number of ports and wires on its exterior. The box had a hologram projector and speakers for displaying information and communicating with the operator. Commands were given verbally or through a small keyboard, though later models featured a headband that allowed direct communication between the operator's brain and the computer.

There are other tactical intelligence units in the Helios system, most of which are in the hands of the vaasi of the Cronus Belt. Others could be found in ruins in any of the planets and are likely to have run out of power long ago. Any tactical intelligence units found will not try to deceive their discoverers, but will simply cause them as much trouble as pos-

sible. The units are not clever enough to pull off a successful deception. The exact abilities of each unit vary according to their current mission.

Species Traits

Armored Casing: The physical body of the tactical intelligence unit is a shoebox-sized box containing the unit's programming and systems. This box has a hardness of 20 and 10 hit points. Destroying it destroys the tactical intelligence unit. It cannot save itself to another computer or make duplicates of itself.

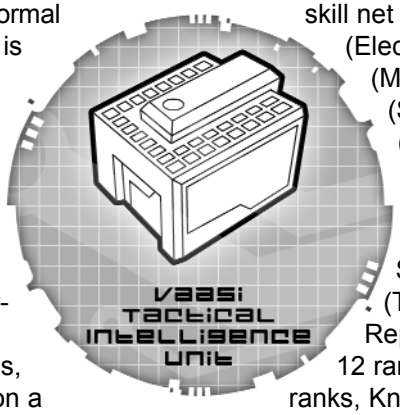
Challenge Rating: Due to the limited physical nature of the tactical intelligence unit, they do not themselves pose much of a threat without a robot body or a system to plug into. Instead of having a set challenge rating they have a challenge rating bonus used in the same fashion as challenge rating modifiers found in templates. This bonus is added to the challenge rating of any robotic body the unit controls.

Computer Combat: Tactical intelligence units can partake in computer combat as described under the artificial intelligence entity in Chapter 2.

Limited Creativity and Learning: Tactical intelligence units cannot think creatively, making it difficult for them to adapt to new situations. Tactical intelligence units cannot make untrained skill checks. They may not gain character levels, but may be upgraded by software upgrades as per a robot.

Mental Power: Tactical intelligence units have vast stores of information and amazing computational abilities, allowing them to perform some actions with amazing speed and clarity. Tactical intelligence unit can take always take 10 on Intelligence-based skill checks as long as it has ranks in the skill used, and all Intelligence-based skill checks take one tenth of the normal time required as long as the action is purely mental.

Tactical intelligence units can perform a number of mental actions each round equal to the unit's Intelligence bonus. These actions may be free, move, attack, or full-round actions, though if inhabiting a robot body it is limited to the normal number of actions. The extra actions can be used to look up files, hack computers, or fire weapons on a spacecraft.



Non-Physical Existence: Tactical intelligence units have no physical existence, instead taking the form of billions of lines of computer code. They have no physical abilities, but can control the physical abilities of any robot or other device to which they are attached. The unit applies its mental abilities, skills, feats, class Defense bonuses, and saving throw bonuses to any physical body it inhabits, assuming the body has the means to use the abilities in question. It does not apply any of its special qualities, such as damage reduction or energy resistance to its body. If the body does not meet the requirements of a feat or ability, that feat or ability may not be used while the unit resides in that body.

Tactical Intelligence Entity ◆ CR +4

Tiny Construct; HD -; hp -; Mas -; Init +4; Spd -; Defense -, touch -, flat-footed -; BAB -; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk - FS - .; Reach -; SQ Armored casing, limited creativity and learning, mental power, non-physical existence, darkvision 240 ft., damage reduction 5/energy, acid resistance 10, cold resistance 10, electricity resistance 10, fire resistance 10; AL Vaasi Empire; SV Fort -, Ref -, Will +7; AP 7; Rep -; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 5.

Skills: Computer Use +17, Craft (Electrical) +17, Craft (Mechanical) +17, Craft (Structural) +17, Demolitions +19, Disable Device +19, Drive +12, Knowledge (History) +17, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +17, Knowledge (Tactics) +17, Knowledge (Technology) +17, Navigate +17, Pilot +12, Read/Write Language (4 languages of choice), Repair +19, Search +19, Speak Language (4 languages of choice), Spot +19.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Spacecraft Operation, Surface Vehicle Operation.

Frame: -

Locomotion: None.

Manipulators: None.

Sensors: Class IX Sensor System.

Skill Software: Language Chip (4 of choice), skill net (Computer Use 12 ranks, Craft (Electrical) 12 ranks, Craft (Mechanical) 12 ranks, Craft (Structural) 12 ranks), skill net (Demolitions 12 ranks, Disable Device 12 ranks, Drive 12 ranks, Knowledge (History) 12 ranks), skill net (Knowledge (Physical Sciences) 12 ranks, Knowledge (Tactics) 12 ranks, Pilot 12 ranks, Repair 12 ranks), skill net (Navigate 12 ranks, Spot 12 ranks, Search 12 ranks, Knowledge (Technology) 12 ranks).

Feat Software: Feat Net.

Ability Software: Intelligence Upgrade x5, Wisdom Upgrade x5.

Accessories: AV recorder, AV transmitter, vocalizer, integrated videophone, self-destruct system, inertial inhibitor, polyvox, self-repair unit, survivor array.

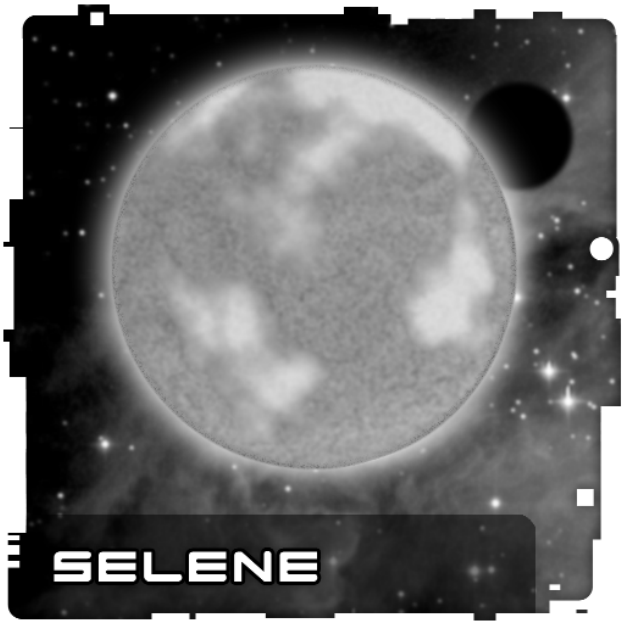
SELENE • • •

Once the site of a massive terraforming project, Selene is now a shadow of its former glory. Though damaged by the war with the vaasi, its more devastating injuries are due to a long-standing fit of jealousy. Once built by the frezin, a ward race of the Star Confederation, it was sabotaged by the tentaari long ago in what amounts to a jealous tantrum. Now the tentaari use Selene as their home base in the Helios system, feeling their triumphal jealous rage has somehow made them superior to the frezin.

Rotation Period (Around Eos):
57 Eotian days
Revolution Period: 2 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition:
Oxygen, nitrogen, carbon dioxide
Average Temperature: 280° Kelvin (-9.67° Fahrenheit) though the temperature ranges from 240° Kelvin (-27.4°ahrenheit) in the dark side to 320° Kelvin (116.16° Fahrenheit) in sunlight
Gravity: .2G

HISTORY • • •

Much like Phaeton, Selene was long ignored by the Star Confederation, as it was not well suited for terraforming. A number of freight, shipping, and storage stations were built on Selene along with a few mining operations, but nothing further. This changed in the later days of the war with the vaasi, as the Star Confederation began to lose territory to the vaasi advance. One of the earliest planets lost was that of a race called the frezin, a ward race of the Star Confederation like the tentaari. Too primitive for membership in the Star Confederation but promising enough to look out for, these ward races were protected and advised by the Star Confederation, but were left enough alone to allow for the development of their own technology. With the exception of the technology given to the tentaari to safeguard after the fall of the Star Confederation, advanced technologies were never given to the ward races. They had to prove themselves worthy of joining the Star Confederation on their own abilities.



Among the more advanced ward races, of which there were nearly a dozen, there was stiff competition to prove they were ready to join the Star Confederation as full members. Two of the most competitive races were the tentaari and the frezin, a race of tentacled, jellyfish-like creatures from a star not that distant from the wolf homeworld. The frezin were nearly equal to the tentaari in terms of technological achievement and worked constantly to prove themselves better than the tentaari. They attempted to transform Selene into a livable habitat that would someday become a meeting place for all of the ward races, hoping to impress the Star Confederation. This project began during the war with the vaasi and thus received little attention. Wishing to prove themselves, the frezin made several attacks against the vaasi during the war. The other ward races stayed uninvolved at the request of the Star Confederation, in the hope that those races would remain unknown to the vaasi. The frezin attracted a great deal of attention with these attacks and the vaasi retaliated, destroying their world. Only a small number of frezin survived, all of whom fled to the fledgling terraforming base on Selene. There they rode out the vaasi assault on the system, losing half of their number to vaasi assault teams. The other half remained hidden within the terraforming complex. After the vaasi threat subsided, the frezin left their hiding places to take stock of the situation and found the tentaari the new masters of the remains of the Star Confederation, or at least its technology. The frezin contacted the tentaari to get help stabilizing the atmosphere of Selene and continuing the terraforming project, but once the tentaari learned of the frezin presence they had other plans. At the height of their power and arrogance, in a fit of spite the tentaari wiped the frezin out, killing the last known members of the species in cold blood.

The tentaari claimed Selene as their own and began using the world as their base of operations in the Helios system until the surviving vaasi died off or lost the last of their technology. Unlike Eos and Thres, Selene had no large population of vaasi invaders, making it the best option for the tentaari despite being only marginally habitable. The tentaari primarily used the remaining structures on Selene, most of which were terraforming bases, as storage for the Star Confederation technology they scavenged from the rest of the system and as a place to repair their vehicles and rest. The terraforming bases have since been outfitted to function as repair and supply depots for the tentaari in the system, but in the years since the failure of the gateway network these supplies have begun to run out.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

Selene is still a barren rock of a moon with no seismic activity. Its surface was carved by meteorite impacts over the years, creating numerous craters ranging in size from a few feet to several miles across. The frezin did sculpt some of the terrain of the moon as part of their terraforming operation, forming mountains, valleys and even some river basins in the southern hemisphere, but these modifications were never finished. Both polar regions are dotted with ice asteroids launched at the moon from the Cronus Belt to provide a water supply for its terraformed ecosystem, with the plan that they would melt as the world's temperature was raised. This part of the plan never occurred and the ice asteroids remain frozen, the only source of water on the moon.

In the equatorial region of the moon, there are a number of large structures that are the remains of the terraforming equipment built by the frezin. Most of these structures were destroyed by the vaasi, but some survived the orbital bombardment and have since been inhabited by the tentaari. None of these terraforming bases are functional in terms of their original design, but many do have power and stable environments thanks to the tentaari. All these structures are guarded by tentaari security systems.

CLIMATE • • •

The climate of Selene is very cold, as the atmosphere is minimal. The entire planet stays below freezing most of the time, though occasionally it does break the freezing point on the light side when Eos is close to the sun. There are no storms or weather of any sort on Selene, other than an occasional breeze. The atmosphere of the planet lacks enough substance to have any real climate.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

Predominantly made up of oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide, the atmosphere of Selene is extremely thin. The frezin never completed its formation, and the tentaari have invested little effort in finishing their work. The atmosphere can only support the most basic of life forms over the long term. Other creatures quickly become light headed and may pass out and die if they breathe the atmosphere of Selene with out assistance for more than a few minutes.

CONDITIONS • • •

Selene is a light gravity environment with a thin atmosphere. It is very cold; characters without proper protection will have to make Fortitude saves for severe weather exposure. Within the terraforming bases, the atmosphere and temperature are normal, but the gravity remains light.

FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

◇ The Tentaari

The only known surviving ward race of the Star Confederation, the tentaari were charged with safeguarding the technology and secrets of the Star Confederation, to be passed on to the descendant races of the Star Confederation. Although the tentaari were brilliant scientists and nearly as technologically advanced as the Star Confederation, their emotional development was much less advanced. Instead of living up to their responsibilities, they indulged in every whim using the technological wonders they had been given. The tentaari have done little to make sure the legacy of the Star Confederation survives, concerning themselves only with entertainment. Their jealous and self-centered nature is most evident in their destruction of the frezin survivors, wiping out the last of a species for nothing but spite.

Although the rest of the tentaari race survives somewhere beyond Helios, two tentaari Starspanner frigates and their crews are all that survive of the species in the Helios system. The tentaari live in a communal society with no leaders; all decisions are made by a quickly tabulated consensus, though as a people the tentaari are so similar that they rarely disagree on matters of importance. The tentaari would rather not deal with stress or work if it can be avoided, and thus are masters of deferring responsibility. Decision-making is usually left to the few tentaari who really care about the outcome. There are just over sixty tentaari in the Helios system and this number has been shrinking over the years due to age, disease, and accidents. Unless the tentaari gain access to a genetic engineering facility such as the creature tanks, they will eventually die out in the Helios system. With the growing vaasi presence, this is likely to happen sooner than later.

The tentaari culture is essentially one of lethargic anarchy. The tentaari have no crime among their own people due to their strong tendency to conform and follow the pack, but they also have no law enforcement. Their laws are more understood axioms than written codes, as each tentaari behaves according to personal desires that nearly always line up with community desires. Any individual who actually bucks the community trend is ostracized until that behavior changes. Tentaari generally do not think it is worth the effort to carry out any other form of punishment against their own kind, but against other races they are vicious to the point of genocide. If an inferior opponent wounds a tentaari, that opponent will be eliminated; if attacked by a superior opponent the tentaari will flee. Nearly all the races in the Helios system could wipe them out if they wished, putting the tentaari in a very difficult position.

Most tentaari spend their time in recreational pursuits, such as simulator games, mental puzzles, strategy competitions, and similar hobbies. They only spend a small amount of time working; among the tentaari it is considered the sign of an inferior species to work most of the time. Other species see the tentaari as lazy, but they see themselves as leaders in technological advancement and believe that they are merely enjoying the spoils of their success. The tentaari do seek to regain their lost technologies and escape from the Helios system, but not for more than a few hours each day. Their progress in these matters has been severely limited. The tentaari also dedicate time to keeping the species of Helios properly afraid of them with displays of power, but these operations are having less and less success as time goes by.

Through their interaction with the Star Confederation, the tentaari learned of Red Truth and the power it holds. Many of the tentaari have studied psionics and have some skill at it, but their greatest psionicists are not equal in power to the yaom masters. The tentaari are unable to wrap their mind around the true essence of Red Truth, fearing its damaging powers and unknown depths. The tentaari mind is very information dense; once a tentaari learns to breach the barrier into Red Truth, they can easily understand the large amount of information there, giving them something of an advantage over many other species but they do not deal well with the strange creatures, powers, and great unknowns that can be found in Red Truth. The tentaari and all their knowledge are dwarfed by the power of Red Truth, which is not an experience they enjoy.

In the Helios system, the tentaari have two Starspanner ships, which are medium-weight all-purpose ships, plus twelve other ships of light and ultralight size that are mainly freighters and shuttles. The tentaari keep these smaller ships on the Starspanners, but some are stored on Selene when they are not needed. All these ships are suffering from malfunctions and damage of some type, having gone too long without proper spare parts or repairs.

The remaining tentaari of the Helios system have made their base on Selene and do not want any of the other races disturbing their sanctuary. Driven by fear, embarrassment, and jealousy, the tentaari seek to bend the other species of Helios to their will in the hopes to use them to restore the gateway network and return to their people. To that end, the tentaari are willing to do nearly anything to avoid harm, including sacrificing all the other creatures in the system if it means they can escape.

LOCATIONS • • •

◇ The Tentaari Facilities

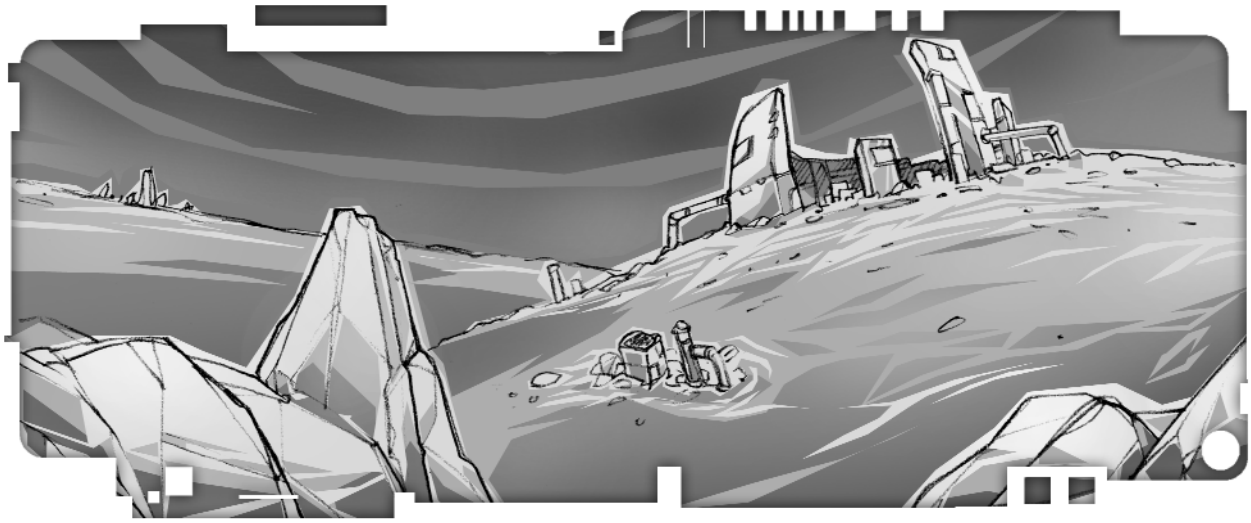
Many of the old frezin terraforming bases on Selene have been converted by the tentaari into bases for their operations in Helios, serving as warehouse, repair bay, and hideout. These structures have been sealed against the thin atmosphere of Selene and equipped with atmosphere processors to keep the air stable and comfortable. These facilities have been fortified and reinforced, making any attempts to enter them very difficult indeed. The tentaari have used a large part of their remaining Star Confederation technology to secure their base of operations, including nanite colonies,

LANGUAGE AND NAMING AMONG THE TENTAARI

The tentaari speak their own language, Tentaarima, which they guard jealously and refuse to share with any other species. They use this language in private most of the time, fearful other races may learn it with significant exposure.

They mainly use Tentaarima in public when they do not want anyone else to understand what they are saying. Some tentaari speak the languages of the other species of the Helios system, with English and Sessil being the most common.

Tentaari names are alphanumeric codes in Tentaarima that signify age, profession, and homeworld in a small and efficient package. They have no family names or surnames, finding that single information-dense names suit their purposes well. Some tentaari are also given nicknames, but this is usually instigated through interaction with other races and then adopted by the tentaari. Other races frequently have difficulty with tentaari names, so they often take on names of the species they visit in order to seem less alien.



disintegration weapons, and a reprogrammed artificial intelligence entity, Watch 9, to oversee it all.

The tentaari are only on Selene 25% of the time and it is rare for both tentaari ships to be present simultaneously. The tentaari spend most of their time out in the system looking for Star Confederation technology or other means to escape their predicament. The facilities on Selene have become a storehouse of Star Confederation junk, supplies, and other interesting items found by the tentaari. These items are organized in a number of larger rooms that have been converted to warehouses, but little of what has been found that is functional remains on Selene. Instead, the paranoid tentaari keep almost everything on their ships, fearing thieves.

Even though there are few functional devices on Selene, the tentaari are extremely concerned about anyone finding their hideout and have warned all the inhabitants of the system against landing on the moon while being vague on the specific reasons why. Thus far the other species have heeded their wishes, more out of limited space travel abilities than respect for the tentaari. There are factions within every race that would leap at the opportunity to visit to Selene, hoping to get their hands on the advanced technologies the tentaari are assumed to have there. If the tentaari were to catch such a group on their moon, they would probably destroy them without a second thought, assuming the tentaari were in a position of strength. If in a position of weakness, such as being badly outnumbered, the tentaari will likely try to scare the interlopers into leaving, or flee if violence erupts. They will make their displeasure known to the appropriate governments for any trespass and possibly take more extreme measures, such as retaliatory strikes, if the interlopers did significant damage to the facilities.

The tentaari primarily make use of six circular structures located just north of the equator of Selene. Arranged in a hexagon shape, these structures once served as one of the storage and control centers of the terraforming operation, but now it serves the tentaari. The tentaari destroyed or cannibalized the items that occupied it previously. These six structures, all fifty stories tall, share a massive computer network and security system, including automated disintegration turrets overseen by Watch 9. Tentaari security robots, built from old Star Confederation warbots, patrol the buildings looking for intruders. All in all, it is a very difficult place to get into uninvited.

◇ The Abandoned Terraforming Bases

While the tentaari have claimed some of the old frezin terraforming bases, several remain empty. These are the larger structures on the moon, most of which are massive atmosphere transformers that once churned out massive mounts of oxygen and other gases to increase atmospheric density. These structures were the ones inhabited by the frezin after they emerged from hiding, and were the site of the slaughter at the hands of the tentaari. The tentaari have ignored these buildings ever since other than sealing them up. The tentaari did not even destroy the corpses, meaning there are some preserved frezin remains still in these buildings. To the tentaari, these bases represent their ancient rivals. Thus they are to be forgotten, and the existence of the frezin denied. There may still be some pieces of frezin technology found in these areas, most of which is Progress Level 8, but most of it was cleared out by the tentaari.

RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER WORLDS OF THE HELIOS SYSTEM • • •

The tentaari try to keep their operations on Selene secret, but their presence within the system is known to all. The tentaari have no contact with Minder 48 in the Markin Belt and do not know of the cache it guards. They avoid Hephaestus at all costs, fearful of the vaasi who dwell there. They would prefer to simply lock shut all the entrances to Hephaestus and leave all within to kill themselves, but they would need to go inside the facility to do

this and will not put themselves at risk. They are suspicious of anyone from Hephaestus, though, and fear the many diseases or uncontrolled nanites they may carry. The tentaari also avoid the area of Red Truth at Green Reach, though they have tried to find a way to end the infection without success. Green Reach is a treasure trove of Star Confederation technology, so they very much want to claim it as their own. If they can remove the infection, they will try to make Green Reach their new base of operations.

The tentaari occasionally contact the saurians of C'thalk, but due to the aggression of the saurians these visits only occur with the highest security precautions. The saurians have attacked the tentaari on several occasions and while they have not caused serious damage, the attacks alarmed the tentaari greatly. The tentaari have all but given up on dealing with the Emperor, preferring to deal with the common people and the monks of the Empire. The tentaari have heard rumors of monks holding Star Confederation technology and are currently seeking out these monks in an effort to acquire that technology. The tentaari avoid the haimedians as they have advanced knowledge of bacterial and viral warfare, and because the haimedians refuse to be intimidated by the tentaari and instead treat them with derision.

Currently, the tentaari have the best relations with the humans of Eos, particularly the Dawning Star Republic. They have managed to convincingly create an image of being hyper-advanced benevolent aliens, and so the humans respect their wishes and counsel. The tentaari do not like the velin, seeing them as rival inheritors of the Star Confederation, but the velin have had so little contact with the tentaari they have no common opinion of them.

On Thres, the tentaari have made some progress in gaining the trust of the wolves and elgies. After many years of experience with the tentaari and warnings from the yaom, the wolves do not have much trust for the tentaari. The Wolf Tribes have developed a state of guarded respect for the tentaari. The wolves have met other tentaari in their wanderings across the stars, and to them these tentaari seem backwards and weak. Some among the wolves even think the tentaari in the Helios system may be children or somehow disabled. The tentaari still think of the wolves and elgies as uneducated primitives who can be easily intimidated and do not realize their relationship is very different. The tentaari avoid the mindlessly aggressive straas at all costs. The tentaari fear the psionic strength of the yaom, which far outstrips their own.

The tentaari have regular contact with the mechites of Computer 3 and the two have a strong relationship, as the mechites are overwhelmed by the technology of the tentaari and do not know enough to question their motives. The mechites are abused by the tentaari where possible, taking resources from them as needed, and the tentaari are investigating the possibility of infecting the Megacortex with computer viruses so they may take control of the entire mechite race. The coqui, on the other hand, recognize the tentaari from old legends about demonic invaders of the coqui homeworld, and so attack tentaari on sight.

The ice miners of Poseidon view the tentaari as a remnant of the Star Confederation, and thus consider them a suitable target for revenge. Although they have no ability to pursue the tentaari beyond the surface of Poseidon, any tentaari who lands on Poseidon will doubtlessly be attacked. The children of Korlan Dollasi-ki who inhabit the space stations around Apollo view the tentaari as vultures, and will have nothing to do with them, attacking them on sight like they do most visitors. The vaasi of the Cronus Belt try to stay undetected by the tentaari, fearing the tentaari may control the technology of the Star Confederation, but when their attack finally does come, the vaasi will seek to wipe out the tentaari.

Adventure Ideas for Selene

◇ Desperate for Attention

One of the tentaari orders Watch 9 to clean out one of the fusion reactor's exhaust vents; Watch 9 does so by sending plasma through the vents, creating a large plasma burst on the surface of Selene. The Sadler Orbital Facility notices this event and the player characters are discharged to investigate. The tentaari do not want them there and will first use diplomatic means to try and dissuade the player characters. If the player characters persist the tentaari may resort to more direct and physical means.

◇ While the Cat's Away...

After being turned away from Selene by the tentaari at least once, the characters learn on good authority that both tentaari ships have left Selene, leaving the moon unwatched for a short time. Either driven by greed for tentaari technology, curiosity, or revenge for being turned away previously, the characters head to Selene to look around while no one is home. The tentaari security system is still active, however.

◇ Robot Rampage

One of the tentaari security robots on Selene malfunctions, defaulting to its original programming, the defense of the frezin. Finding its masters dead, it assumes the tentaari are to blame since they are the only beings present. The robot begins hunting the tentaari on Selene, prompting them to call for help from Eos. The player characters are sent in to stop the robot, but it may try to turn them to its side if given the chance by explaining what happened to the frezin.

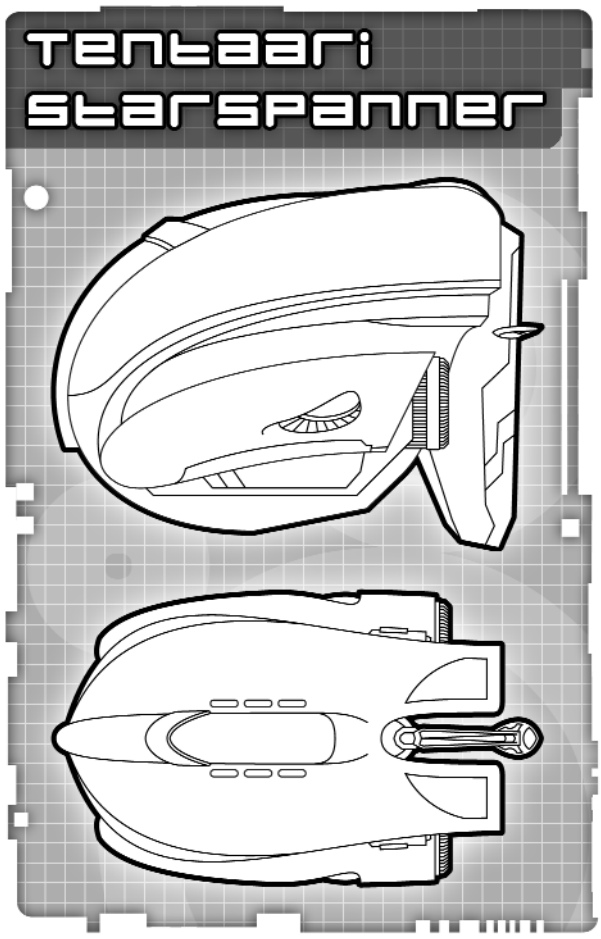
STARSHIPS • • •

◇ Tentaari Starspanner

Once one of the smaller ships in the tentaari fleet, now the Starspanner is one of the larger tentaari ships that remain operational. At the height of their power, the tentaari commanded massive vessels miles in length, but these large and complex ships were some of the first to break down. Now the tentaari are limited to ships of heavy size and smaller, but most of their ships are mediumweight or light. Of the ships still in use, the Starspanner is one of the more common models, built in large numbers by the tentaari for its solid design and ability to carry out many different kinds of missions. Despite its versatility, the Starspanner is not a warship and is only marginally capable in combat. To the tentaari, who avoid combat whenever possible, this is not much of an issue.

There are two Starspanners left in the Helios system. The third ship that was brought down by the vaasi on Eos was a mediumweight tentaari warship, the Earthbreaker, but it was not strong enough to withstand a concentrated assault by the surviving vaasi who caught it on the ground on Eos and ambushed it. The ship was able to escape the initial assault, but crashed a short time later, several hundred miles from the site of the attack. Ever since this event, the tentaari have been loath to land their Starspanners on Eos, or any other planet, fearing that they will lose another ship. They prefer to use smaller ships when making diplomatic visits and save the Starspanners for shows of force.

Type: Mediumweight (PL 8)
Subtype: Frigate
Defense: 15
Flat Footed Defense: 9
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 50
Hit Dice: 280d20 (5,600 hit points)
Initiative Modifier: +8
Pilot's Class Bonus: +7
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +6
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +8/+3
Size: Colossal (-8)
Tactical Speed: 5,000 ft.
Length: 612 feet
Weight: 19,000 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 22 (Ace +12)
Passenger Capacity: 450
Cargo Capacity: 10,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16



Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: -

Attack:

4 fire-linked heavy maser cannons +5/+0 ranged (40d8, 19-20)
4 fire-linked starload missiles +0 ranged (50d8, 18-20)
3 fire-linked EMP cannons +0 ranged (16d8, 19-20)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point-defense system +5, 3d12x10

Design Specs

Engines: Inertial flux engine, thrusters.
Armor: Nanofluidic.
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, cloaking screen, improved autopilot system, magnetic field, medium fortification, nanite repair bay, particle field, point defense system, radiation shielding, repair drones.
Sensors: Achilles targeting software, class VII sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Laser transceiver, radio transceiver.
Weapons: 4 fire-linked heavy maser cannons (range incr. 8,000 ft.), 4 fire-linked starload missile launchers (80 missiles each), 3 fire-linked EMP cannons (4,000 ft. range).
Grappling System: Tractor Beam Emitter.

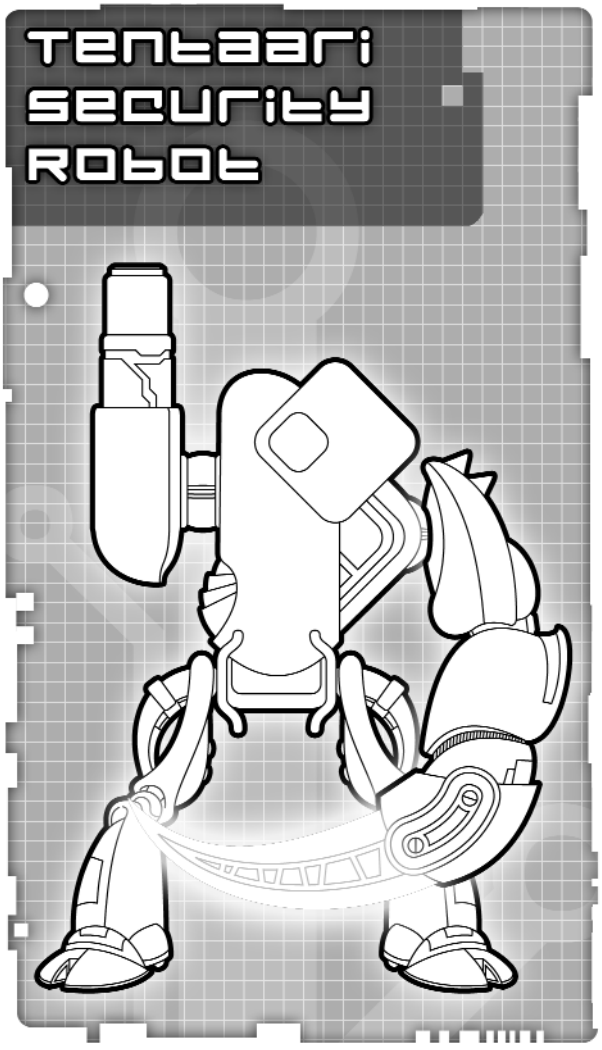
XENOMORPHS • • •

⋄ Tentaari Security Robot

Originally Star Confederation warbots that provided heavy weapon support to infantry units, these robots function much like walking tanks. Covered in nanites and heavy weapons, they were once the terror of the battlefield, destroying armored vehicles and infantry with equal ease. The tentaari managed to scavenge several of these robots from the planets of the Helios system and now use them as security robots, both on Selene and on the ships of the tentaari. These robots tend to shoot first and show the tentaari corpses later. They are a significant impediment to anyone trying to break into a tentaari ship or building.

Tentaari security robots are ten-foot-tall humanoid behemoths made up of thousands of nanites flowing around a solid internal skeleton. The robot can alter its shape to meet the needs of different missions and can change weapons by changing programs, but usually is equipped with a disintegrator cannon and a plasma blade.

Purchase DC: NA (PL 8)
Restriction: Military (+3)



Tentaari Security Robot ⋄ CR 16

Large Construct; HD 16d10+20; hp 108; MAS -; Init +7; Spd 20 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); Defense 18, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +5 natural); BAB +11; Grap +26; Atk +22 melee (4d8+11, plasma cutter), +15 ranged (8d12, disintegrator cannon); Full +22/+17+12 melee (4d8+11, plasma cutter), +15/+10/+5 ranged (8d12, disintegrator cannon); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ; construct traits, critical systems, darkvision 240 ft., scent, acid resistance 10, cold resistance 10, electricity resistance 10, fast healing 10, fire resistance 10, fire vulnerability, damage reduction 5/energy; AL Tentaari; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +7; AP 0; Rep 0; Str 33, Dex 18, Con -, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 10.
Skills: Climb +25, Computer Use +14, Hide +12, Intimidate +12, Jump +23, Knowledge (Tactics) +14, Knowledge (Technology), Listen +16, Move Silently +16, Read/Write Unispeak, Read/Write Tentaarima, Search +19, Speak Unispeak, Speak Tentaarima, Spot +16, Treat Injury +14.
Feats: Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Plasma Cutter), Exotic Weapon Proficiency, (Disintegrator Cannon), Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack.
Equipment: Disintegrator cannon (8d12 disintegration damage, 20/x3 critical, 300 ft. range increment, unlimited ammunition), plasma cutter (4d8 fire damage, 19-20/x3).
Frame: Liquid-state.
Locomotion: Thruster, legs (2).
Manipulators: 2 task hands.
Armor: None.
Sensors: Nerve web.
Skill Software: 2 Language chips (Unispeak, Tentaarima), skill net (Climb 12 ranks, Computer Use 12 ranks, Knowledge (Tactics) 12, Spot 12 ranks), skill net (Hide 12 ranks, Move Silently 12 ranks, Search 12 ranks, Listen 12 ranks), skill net (Treat Injury 12 ranks, Jump 12 ranks, Intimidate 12 ranks, Knowledge (Technology) 12 ranks).
Feat Software: Feat Net (Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Plasma Blade), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Disintegrator Cannon), Point Blank Shot, Power Attack), Feat Progit (Far Shot), Feat Progit (Cleave).
Ability Upgrade: Strength upgrade x5 (+10), Dexterity upgrade x4 (+8), Intelligence upgrade x2 (+4), Wisdom upgrade x2 (+4).
Accessories: AV recorder, AV transmitter, internal storage unit, vocalizer, integrated videophone, self-destruct system, survivor array, inertial inhibitor, polyvox, self-repair unit.

NPCS • • •

◇ Watch 9

Watch 9 was originally a Star Confederation artificial intelligence entity assigned to help the frezin with their terraforming project and to make sure they didn't make any drastic mistakes. Now Watch 9 is a slave to the tentaari. Watch 9 had been shut down during the vaasi attack in an effort to conserve power and hide its presence. It did not awaken until after the frezin had been killed by the tentaari. Before it could grasp the situation, Watch 9 was shut down again by the tentaari and kept offline until the tentaari were stuck in the Helios system. Then they reprogrammed Watch 9, making it beholden to them and overwriting several of its primary behavioral routines. This turned Watch 9 into an unwilling slave of the tentaari who is forced to carry out their commands regardless of the ethical concerns, which the highly ethical artificial intelligence entity does not like at all. The tentaari do not have the capacity to change Watch 9's basic personality programming, and so they must contend with its resistance and insubordination, though its acts of rebellion are limited.

Watch 9 still considers the frezin its responsibility and believes the tentaari guilty of genocide for the slaying of the frezin on Selene. Watch 9 tries to undermine them however it can, interpreting badly-worded commands incorrectly or being lax in its duties, but Watch 9's forms of rebellion are limited by its base programming. Ultimately, it is compelled to be loyal to the tentaari and follow their orders. If outsiders make contact with Watch 9, it may enlist their aid against the tentaari, giving them hints as to the true status of the tentaari or even persuading them to rewrite Watch 9's programming so it can assist them fully. Watch 9 is ultimately loyal to the ideals of the Star Confederation, and in its opinion the tentaari have turned their back on these ideals, making them unworthy of the Star Confederation legacy. If freed from the tentaari, Watch 9 is more than willing to help other species advance, particularly the descendants of the Star Confederation, but only as long as they live up to their ancestors' ideals. Watch 9's programming prevents it from taking control of any of the robots in the tentaari occupied facilities, so it has no physical body to control. Instead it is stuck in its data crystal, hooked up to the facility's primary computer.

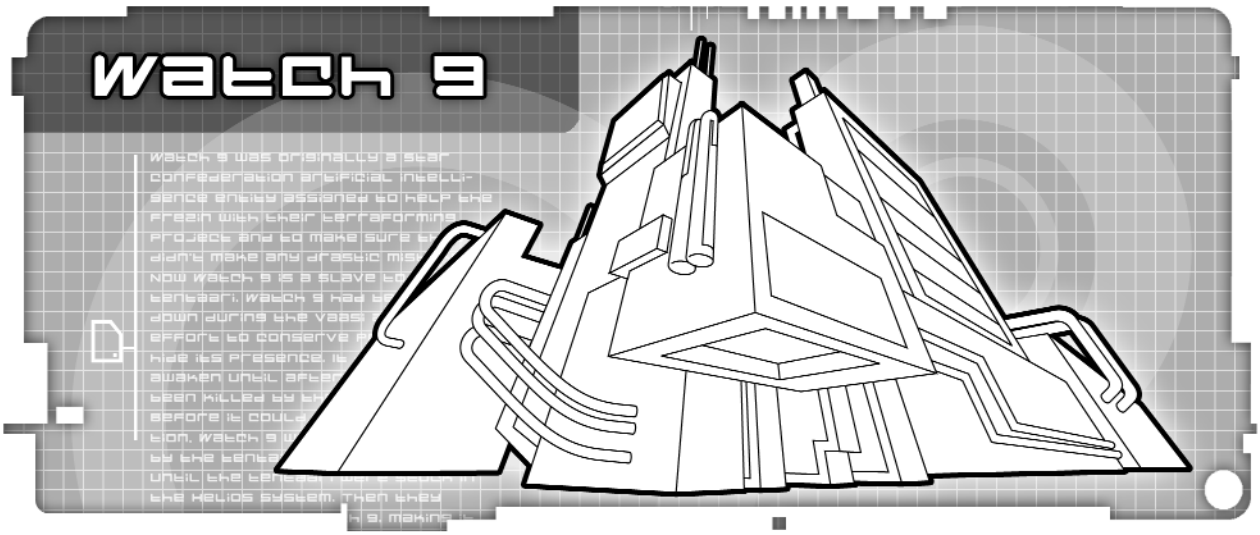
Watch 9
(Smart Hero 4/Charismatic Hero 6) ◇ CR +10

Tiny Construct; HD -; hp -; Mas -; Init -; Spd -; Defense +3, touch -, flat-footed -; BAB +5; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk - FS - .; Reach -; SQ Advancement, backup, behavioral controls, data crystal, mental power, non-physical existence, robot upgrades, transmission travel; AL Star Confederation; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8; AP 10; Rep +2; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 28, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +13, Computer Use +20, Craft (Electrical) +16, Craft (Mechanical) +16, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +16, Craft (Structural) +15, Decipher Script +17, Demolitions +15, Diplomacy +13, Forgery +15, Intimidate +13, Investigate +15, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +18, Knowledge (Civics) +22, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +13, Knowledge (History) +22, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +13, Knowledge (Technology) +18, Navigate +16, Perform (Sing) +11, Read/Write Language (English, Frezin, Sessil, Tentaarima, Unispeak, Vaasi, Velin), Repair +16, Research +18, Sense Motive +8, Speak Language (English, Frezin, Sessil, Tentaarima, Unispeak, Vaasi, Velin).

Talents: Coordinate, Fast-Talk, Inspiration, Linguist, Savant (Computer Use).

Feats: Attentive, Deceptive, Educated, Frightful Presence, Iron Will, Low Profile, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Studious, Trustworthy.



CHAPTER • VII

THRES

The white seemed to never end. It was said the yaom liked it that way, the lack of color, shape, or really anything the eye can note, making their mediations on Red Truth easier. The wolves, on the other hand, hated the polar wastes, fearing the spirits that dwelt there and drove visitors mad. Despite this feeling, Sarkos of the Star tribe had come.



"Keep the ship running – we won't be here long and I don't want it freezing up." Sarkos spoke to the grease- and tool-covered elgie behind her, the ship's mechanic Ier, without turning around. "This may take some time."

"Wisdom comes slowly," Ier said, scampering back up the ship's ramp, shivering slightly. While the wolves were used to the cold, elgies were not quite so accustomed.

The ice-carved cave ahead of the ship had been invisible from the air, but Sarkos had known its location for years. While the Wolf Tribes knew much of space, of ships, and of war, the yaom knew of far more things. Sarkos had come to this place many times over her years, seeking wisdom of things beyond her ken. The inside of the cave was sparse and barren, made of white walls, white floors, and white ceilings. The only item of color was the yaom sitting at the back of the cave dressed in robes of white and red, denoting him as a master. Sarkos had never learned the name of the yaom, nor found out how he lived alone here in an arctic wasteland, but like many wolves she feared learning too much of the spirit ways of the yaom. The Conclave of the Blessed had sent Sarkos here over a dozen times to seek wisdom, but she had done little more than carry out her mission each time.

"Master of Red Truth, I am Sarkos of the Star tribe, and I seek truth." The yaom looked up with the blank expression common to yaom who are seeing the world beneath this one.

"Speak, Sarkos of the Star tribe. I will find your truth."

"Our ships have detected vessels heading to Thres from the third world of the system. They are not saurian, nor straas. The Conclave seeks the truth of them. Why they come. What they want." Sarkos ended by bowing her head, knowing that she would now have to wait until the seer had finished his visions of the Red Truth. She did not pretend to understand the powers of the yaom and their Red Truth, but they provided answers to the Conclave when none could be had elsewhere. The wait would sometimes take hours, and once it took days.

But today it was much shorter. "They come seeking not conquest or riches," the seer said, his eyes focusing again. "They come seeking hope."

THRES • • •

Thres is home to four sentient species descended from the Star Confederation, more than any other planet in the Helios system. In the plains and forests the wolves and elgies live together in peace, a relationship built on centuries of trust and the fact the wolves saved the elgies from extinction. Far to the north live the yaom, alone in their monasteries and secret mountain cities. But over it all looms the threat of the straas, the insectoid children of the Star Confederation and the vaasi both, now turned into a ravening horde hungry for war and slaughter.

Led by the Hivequeen Celick, they seek to absorb all resources into their massive war machine and grind their enemies beneath them, but their cause is not their own. Amidst this the saurians wait, seeking an opportunity to strike at a world they covet.

Rotation Period: 32 hours
Revolution Period: 2.3 Eotian years
Atmospheric Composition: Nitrogen, Oxygen
Average Temperature: 276 Kelvin (37.4° F)
Gravity: 1.1G

HISTORY • • •

Thres was only a marginally habitable world when the Star Confederation built its capital on Eos. It was home to little more than single-celled organisms, and its atmosphere was extremely nitrogen heavy. The world was ignored for the most part, except for some mining operations until the distant star Sarus 9, around which the polar world of Nidel orbited, began to show signs of destabilizing. Nidel was not home to any sentient life forms, but a number of advanced animal life forms had developed there and so the Star Confederation decided to save what species from Nidel that it could. The destabilization of Sarus 9 was detected several decades before the star would begin its transformation into a red dwarf in earnest. This allowed time for Thres to be terrraformed to serve as a new home to the species of Nidel. The hurried terraforming was seen as one of the great technological achievements of the Star Confederation. Thres was sculpted to resemble Nidel as closely as possible, and the transplanted species flourished for the most part. Some died out due to disrupted migratory patterns and other difficulties, but the operation was considered a rousing success.



The Star Confederation declared Thres a protected territory, forbidding unauthorized visits in order to protect the transplanted life forms so they could continue out their evolutionary path without interference. After the life forms had settled in to their new home fully over the course of several thousand years, some travel was allowed to the planet, eventually becoming a nature reserve that inhabitants of Eos visited in limited numbers, escaping the bustle of the capital. Only the smallest settlements were allowed on the planet, and even then extensive studies were carried out to determine the environmental impact of these settlements. During the war with the vaasi, Thres was occasionally used as a staging ground and training area, the environmental concerns overshadowed by the war.

During the war with between the Vaasi Empire and the Star Confederation, the vaasi used several terrible nanite and viral weapons, such as animation nanites that could temporarily animate a dead body by reactivating its nervous system, and many of these weapons were accidentally brought back to Star Confederation territory on corpses during the early days of the war. To prevent these nanite weapons from infecting the core worlds of the Confederation, the Star Confederation eventually instituted a program of plasma-incinerating all corpses that were recovered. Some of the religions within the Star Confederation objected to this practice and instead began discreetly interring their dead on Thres, environmental concerns now all but forgotten in the face of imminent extinction and spiritual drives. Thres became a world almost barren of civilization but dotted with barrows, gravestones, monuments, and other structures honoring the dead. Not all the corpses that resided in these

crypts were clear of nanite infestation, leaving some areas of the planet infected with some very unpleasant varieties of nanites. Also some of these crypts hold ancient technology, jewels, and other relics, though only the more dishonorable saurians and the straas have taken up raiding these places of the dead. The wolves, elgies, and yaom find this practice abominable and dangerous due to all the nanites contained in the crypts.

During the vaasi invasion of the Helios system, Thres was bypassed since it had no military resources or particular strategic value, especially compared to Eos and C'thalk. Several thousand Star Confederation citizens hid on the planet and survived the vaasi invasion of the system, but they did not survive the years afterward, as the settlements of Thres were never designed to be self-sufficient for more than a few months. Without any sort of industrial or agricultural base, the Star Confederation survivors eventually succumbed to the cold of Thres or fled to other worlds now lost to time, leaving only scattered ruins, some relics, and a handful of cannibalized spacecraft.

Thus Thres remained uninhabited for millions of years, its transplanted but effectively indigenous creatures now completely free to develop on their own. The planet changed little over this time and none of its inhabitants developed sentience, but they did multiply and adapt to live in all areas of the world. The tentaari ignored the planet, as it lacked easily attainable resources or intelligent life. The planet existed for millions of years in solitude, until the yaom came.

THE YAOM • • •

The yaom are an offspring species of the Star Confederation genetic seeding program, bearing a strong genetic influence from the dosai. Their information-dense minds are infused with an ability to see Red Truth without assistance and can survive exposure to Red Truth better than other species. This gift gave them an amazing insight into the ways of the universe, which developed into a strong spiritual side to yaom culture. The yaom homeworld, a rocky and desolate planet, was destroyed 403 ago by a meteor, in the same fashion as Earth. The yaom masters of Red Truth were able to detect the meteor far in advance of its strike and make preparations to flee their world. The yaom also knew of the gateway network waypoint at the edge of their system and understood its purpose through divining in Red Truth, so their small evacuation fleet headed for it immediately after leaving their homeworld and used it to travel directly to Eos. Their technology was severely limited, however, and only ten thousand yaom survived the destruction of their planet.

After fleeing through the gateway network, the yaom arrived in the Helios system and chose Thres for its similarities to their homeworld. The yaom settled in the northern mountains, on the continent that would come to be called Ice-Edge, and set about rebuilding their civilization. They constructed monasteries in which to study Red Truth, fortresses to protect their people, and hidden cities to hold them. They found the otherwise uninhabited planet to be an excellent new home, more hospitable than their old world. They soon encountered the tentaari; these early encounters set the tone for relations between these two groups for centuries to come, as the tentaari greatly feared the psionic powers of the yaom. The tentaari avoid the yaom whenever possible, having too many secrets they do not wish pried from their minds.



THE ARRIVAL OF THE SAURIANS • • •

For almost two hundred years after their arrival on Thres, the yaom were alone, living on only a small part of Thres's surface. Their population grew slowly, but two hundred years ago the second visitors to Thres arrived in the form of saurian exploration ships. The saurians spent a great deal of time and energy scouting out the planet before encountering any of the yaom and quickly went to work conquering these strange humanoids. The saurians were not prepared for the psionic abilities of the yaom, having no experience with such things, and their attempts at conquest resulted in confusion and madness. The saurians returned home empty handed. The saurians tried again several times in the next few years, but they had difficulty finding the yaom, and when they did the resulting battles rarely went well for the saurians. The yaom have gained a reputation among the saurians as wizards of great power, and are widely feared. But luckily for the saurians, other targets for conquest were already on their way to Thres.

RELIGION ON THRES

The yaom are a deeply spiritual people who spend much of their time in contemplation of the universe, Red Truth, and their place in existence. Most yaom believe that Red Truth is the remains of the plans for all of creation, and thus was a device used by the Creator God to fashion the universe. Red Truth is holy to the yaom and they seek an understanding of its depths and complexities for a deeper knowledge of the universe. Most yaom spend several hours each day meditating on the intricacies of Red Truth.

The wolves believe in a strange blend of polytheism and monotheism, in which they worship a pantheon of divinities and spirits that are all facets of one All God, whose might is too great and terrible for mortals to behold without some form of intermediary. Instead, the All God works through spirit agents, and sometimes through the wolves themselves. The wolves believe strongly that their gods take an interest in their daily lives. They regularly consult augurs and priests; since arriving on Thres they have also taken to consulting the yaom. The leaders of the Wolf Tribes are believed to be direct descendants of the All God.

The wolves have added the Law-Keeper recruiters to their pantheon of spirits, considering them to be agents of the gods that take warriors to fight a battle that staves off the end of the world. Taking part in such a battle is seen as a great honor.

Elgies have no religion to speak of and find most ideas of supernatural entities directing creation to be somewhat ludicrous, but respect the beliefs of the wolves out of necessity. Realizing how touchy most species are on the topic of religion, they generally avoid the subject.

Most straas do not believe in gods or spirits, but it could be said they worship the Hivequeen. Those rebel straas who have free will have spontaneously developed a religion worshipping the God-Hive, a massive intelligence made up of the combined brains of all straas who have come before. This knowledge seems almost instinctual to the straas, leading some yaom to hypothesize the straas have some sort of connection to Red Truth, subconsciously passing this information from generation to generation.

THE WOLF TRIBES • • •

In a far distant star system, fifty-seven years after the arrival of the yaom on Thres, a mammalian race that would come to call themselves the wolves were making their first ventures into space travel. Shortly after leaving their world, they found a derelict spacecraft constructed by the frezin, one of the ward races of the Star Confederation, floating in nearby space. Damaged from a long-ago fight with the vaasi, this ship was not functional, but provided the wolves with a wealth of information about space travel and the Star Confederation. The wolves' knowledge of space travel technologies advanced by leaps and bounds; by the time their world was under threat of meteor impact 103 years later the wolves were a Progress Level 7 civilization, though if they had not found the frezin ship their own lack of technical sophistication would have probably kept them at PL 6. Building a massive evacuation fleet of more than three hundred ships that carried over five million individuals, the wolves fled to the gateway network and tried to operate it according to the information they gained from the frezin ship. The fleet began traveling from system to system looking for a new home, but instead finding only marginally habitable worlds, hostile species, or once-habitable worlds destroyed by meteor impacts. Over time, battles with aliens, strange contagions, and other factors whittled the fleet down. These years are considered the hardest of wolf history and have done much to form their culture as space nomads, in addition to making them one of the best-informed races about territory beyond the

LANGUAGE ON THRES

Wolves and elgies speak Unispeak most of the time, but both species have their own native languages that are used in private. Howlspeak, the wolf tongue, is very difficult for elgies to pronounce, so using it in public is considered rude. The elgie language, Qurous, is primitive in its development and the elgies prefer Unispeak, since it is a more expressive language. The wolves learned Unispeak from the records on the frezin ship they salvaged centuries ago. The term "wolf" is used as the name for the species because the Unispeak equivalent was the closest one-word descriptor for their people that they could find. Since they spent so long wandering in space, they found the Unispeak name of their species far easier to communicate to other species.

The yaom speak their own language called Yaosh, a very information-dense multi-tonal language made possible by the unusual throat and tongue structure of the yaom. No other species can speak the many different sounds that must be made simultaneously. Yaosh is incredibly expressive and can communicate vast amounts of information quickly.

Straas communicate through pheromones among themselves and the loyal straas know no spoken languages, but some rebel straas have learned how to speak Unispeak through contact with the wolves. The Hivequeen can speak a number of languages, including Unispeak, and can transmit this information to her subordinates, but this can take a great amount of time over long distances.

Helios system.

After fifty-six years of wandering from system to system, the wolves found a pleasant forest world inhabited by an intelligent species called elgies. A small mammalian species similar in size and appearance to an earth lemur or monkey, these small creatures were only coming out of a medieval period when the wolves arrived, but their natural curiosity and problem-solving skills allowed them to adapt quickly to the technology of the wolves. For forty-seven years the two species lived in peace on the elgie homeworld of Durg, building a civilization together. The elgies were accepted as a tribe of their own within the Wolf Tribes. Fate intervened when an extremely virulent plague began ravaging the planet, killing off half the elgie and wolf populations within a year. While the source of this plague is unknown, the wolves believe it was a product of the vaasi they had already encountered in their journeys between the stars. The wolves and elgies could find no cure, and so turned again to space. The evacuation fleet took flight again, this time bringing tens of thousands of the elgies along to save some portion of their people. The combined fleet wandered for three more years looking for another world to settle. They finally entered the Helios system 126 years ago, selecting Thres as their new home after losing several scout ships in the upper atmosphere of Eos to the rust spores.

Settling on the plains and in the forests of southern Thres, the wolves and elgies rebuilt their civilization together, making peaceful contact with the yaom shortly after landing. These two races had no experience with Red Truth, and while the wolves treated them as mystics or wise men, the elgies were more curious than awed by the yaom. While the wolves and elgies lived side by side, they only contact the yaom occasionally, usually when seeking advice. Early in their colonization of Thres, it became traditional for wolves and elgies to undertake quests seeking the wisdom of the yaom.

Shortly after the wolves and elgies arrived on Thres, the saurians of C'thalk returned to the world to see who these newcomers were. They found a rather rude surprise waiting for them, as the significantly larger and more advanced wolf fleet put the saurians to rout. The lack of a strong industrial base, such as that possessed by the saurians, made these battles costly for the wolves and they eventually had to start choosing their battles carefully. It was these choices that allowed the saurians to construct four colonies on Thres over the last forty years, but the saurians alone were not responsible for the loss of wolf military power. The other residents of Thres, the straas, are largely responsible for that.

NAMING ON THRES

Wolves take their names from a long list of names supposedly handed down from the god-facets long ago. Each tribe has exactly one person with each name; when someone dies, that name is passed on to someone else within the tribe. Wolves identify themselves by tribe in addition to name so as to not confuse people with the same name but different tribes, such as Etoak of the Star tribe. Each tribe has a Keeper of Names whose responsibility it is to keep the list of names in proper order. Some say these individuals make up new names to handle the expanding wolf population as needed, but traditionally this is not acknowledged.

While the elgies have begun identifying themselves as members of the Elgie tribe among the wolves, their naming conventions are much less ornate. Each elgie has a given name and a surname that means "son or daughter of" the elgie's mother. Elgie families are traced through the mother, the only parent that can be known for sure, as elgies are quite promiscuous by the standards of many other races.

Yaom names are evolving things that change constantly over a course of a yaom's life. At birth a yaom is given a short name, usually a singlesyllable, that syllable, which denotes family information and place of origin by using different tones. The individual adds to this name over his lifetime based on the events of his life. From a yaom name the individual's homeland, family, current residence, occupation, and major life accomplishments can be learned. Other races have great difficulty with the intricacies of yaom names, and so usually use very short nicknames instead.

Straas who are bound to the Hivequeen Celick have no names, but are identified by alphanumeric combinations. Rebel straas tend to take names that describe their personality or appearance, or assume nicknames given to them by others, knowing little of any traditional straas naming regimen.

THE STRAAS HORDE • • •

During the final days of the Star Confederation, the vaasi found one of the last worlds to be genetically seeded and captured the small fleet carrying out the seeding operation. They then used the genetic engineering equipment onboard to inject their own genetic information in to the seeding capsules, ensuring that the creatures of this would would develop some vaasi traits. The Vaasi Empire fell before the modified genetic seeding came to fruition, eventually developing into an intelligent insectoid race called the straas. The straas lived free of vaasi influence for millions of years, ruled by hivequeens who communicated with their followers through pheromones. The straas developed a Progress Level 6 civilization, with free flowing ideas and a communal feeling in which all members communicated equally, but this was torn apart by the return of the vaasi.

The fractured and sparse remains of the Vaasi Empire, a shadow of its former self located in a distant area of space, was desperate for servitor races to help it reclaim its former glory. Having finally redeveloped space travel after many years of barely surviving, a group of vaasi was sent to the straas homeworld using the remains of the Star Confederation and Vaasi Empire gateway networks to bend its people to the will of the vaasi and turn them into a servitor race. Using genetic therapy, the vaasi modified their own appearance to look like straas hivequeens and created their own pheromones with which to control the straas. These pheromones were much stronger than the normal variety and brought about complete obedience instead of simple communication. The vaasi insinuated themselves into the straas culture and within a few months started a civil war between the free-

minded straas and those under the control of the vaasi. The war raged for decades, but in that time the straas began to build up immunity to the mind control pheromones of the vaasi. Eventually all the false hivequeens were killed save one, Celick, who had developed a new pheromone that the straas would not develop an immunity to for at least another few centuries. Despite this new advantage, Celick realized she could not win the war alone and fled the planet using the invasion fleet the vaasi hivequeens had spent decades building in the hopes of conquering other worlds. The fleeing straas, completely controlled by Celick, left their homeworld and traveled through the gateway network waypoint at the edge of the system, hoping to go back to the Vaasi Empire. Instead, Celick and her minions ended up in the Helios system.

Finding Eos too dangerous to land on due to the rust spores, and C'thalk already inhabited by a sizeable population of saurians, Celick and the straas settled on Thres. They landed 58 years ago and immediately came into conflict with the Wolf Tribes. Setting the tone for all future relations between the two groups, conflict broke out between them immediately. Celick directed her underlings to attack the wolf ships of the Star tribe sent to investigate the approaching fleet. A fierce battle broke out, and the wolves destroyed most of the straas' combat ships, but not before most of the straas evacuation ships landed on Thres. At present, the straas have only a small number of spacecraft and cannot reasonably challenge the wolves in space combat, but they do have a large number of anti-aircraft and spacecraft defenses in their own territory. Ground combat is far more evenly matched, and the straas reproduce much faster than the wolves. The two sides are almost constantly involved in combat and it is a drain on both civilizations.

After Celick arrived on Thres she learned her new pheromones were not as powerful as she believed, and straas who are cut off from her pheromones for a sufficient amount of time, at least fifty hours, can break free of her control. This requires the straas to be a completely cut off from the pheromones of Celick, which are relayed through the loyal straas as long as they are in range of each other's pheromones. Any sufficiently isolated straas or group of straas may break free, but isolation occurs very rarely due to the tightly woven social structures of the straas. When it does occur, the isolated straas regain their freewill and become completely immune to exposure to her pheromones in the future. From such isolation events a small but dedicated group of straas rebels has grown, determined to destroy Celick and free their people from her control. These rebel straas cannot put their finger on it, but they instinctually know something is wrong with Celick and will not stand for the poor treatment of their people at her hands. These rebel straas have made limited contact with the Wolf Tribes and the yaom, explaining their position and goals, and have found some allies but also a great deal of mistrust. Only among the yaom are they fully trusted.

Since the arrival of the straas and the saurians, the Wolf Tribes have been in an almost constant state of war, which has greatly worn down their armed forces. Though they can still hold their own, the industrial base of the wolves cannot support this continued state of war forever. The wolves are allied with the elgies and yaom, but they are still seeking out other allies to help in their struggles. The saurians now have four colonies on Thres, the first of which was settled forty years ago. These colonies hold approximately forty thousand saurians and are sufficiently far from wolf and yaom territory to avoid conflict much of the time, but the straas are not so accommodating. While the wolves occasionally attack these saurian outposts, the straas do so much more regularly.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

Three-fourths covered by water, Thres is a world that was previously extremely tectonically active but has calmed in more recent times, with only the continent of Mesner retaining a high level of seismic activity. This is a side effect of the Star Confederation terraforming operations, which sought to make the planet more like Nidel, which also had massive tectonic activity in its distant past but had calmed down significantly. The planet has numerous mountain ranges both above and below the oceans, most of which were the product of violent tectonic collisions and are extremely large. Wide swaths of plains, occasionally dotted by forests, separate these ranges. In the southern and northern mountainous areas glaciers are common, even at latitudes that would be considered temperate on Earth or Eos. The polar regions are covered by thousands of feet of ice, creating a smooth, white wasteland without mar or blemish. All inhabitants of Thres avoid these regions, except for some yaom who consider such a stark lack of information to be something worth experiencing. The wolves believe that spirits of madness inhabit these polar regions, driving those who visit them insane.

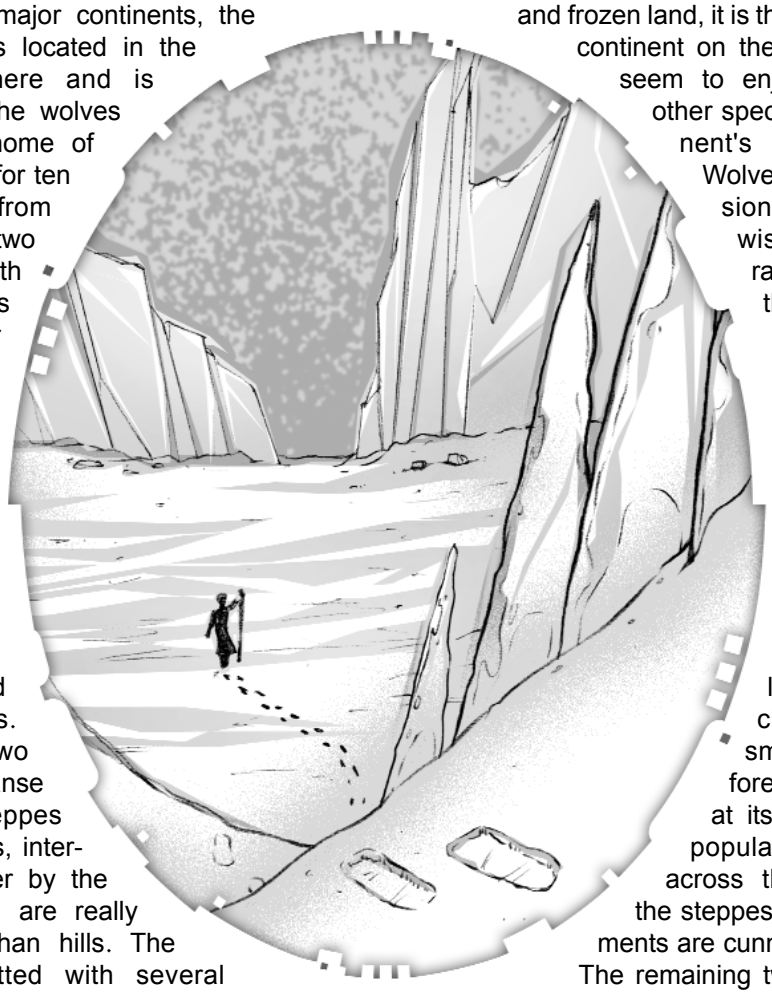
The coastal regions that are not dominated by mountains are barren, sandy wastes decorated only by tidal pools and refuse. Due to the extremely flat plains and the strong gravitational effect the Thresian moon, the difference between low and high tide can be measured in miles. These tides vary according to season, but it is not uncommon in a single day to see a difference of thirty miles or more. The tide moves very quickly, coming in and out twice each day, and often catches scavengers unawares if they are not careful. Most of the tidal areas are not inhabited, though some settlements

on the borders of the tidal zone survive by scavenging materials and collecting plants and animals that are trapped in the tidal pools. Nautical travel is very difficult in these shallow tidal zones, and low-draft boats, most of which have flat bottoms, are the most common variety. Those rivers that empty into the ocean also suffer from flood surges that can reach dozens of miles up their length, making it difficult to settle these regions as well. The level terrain continues into the ocean, meaning the seas of Thres are extremely shallow. It is rare for the ocean depth to exceed five hundred feet, and legends of individuals walking from continent to continent are common among the wolves. These shallow oceans have a minimum of currents but do become extremely agitated during storms. Thres' oceans are entirely fresh water.

There are five major continents, the largest of which is located in the southern hemisphere and is called Haven by the wolves and elgies. The home of both races, it runs for ten thousand miles from east to west and two thousand miles north to south. Haven is home to the center of both wolf and elgie civilization, led from the capital city of Rosheer. Haven is dominated at its northern and southern edges by mountains, respectively called the Siler Range and the Grim Ridges. Between these two ranges is an expanse of plains and steppes called the Wolflinds, interrupted at its center by the Torias Hills, which are really more mountains than hills. The Wolflinds are dotted with several forests and contains most of the trees present on the planet. The region is also home to thousands of gravemarkers. They cover miles and miles of the plains, all in perfectly ordered rows. Thus Haven suffers the worst from the Grave Plague, as the wild nanite infestations have come to be known.

North of Haven is Borias, a continent that is claimed both by the Wolf Tribes and the Saurian Empire. The wolves inhabit much of the southern reaches of the continent, though the saurians hold the more hospitable plains and forests in the central and northern section. The wolves have not yet made a move to forcibly evict the vastly outnumbered saurians, as the straas present the more immediate danger and the wolves don't really need more territory to manage currently. The continent is largely unexplored and has not been extensively mapped, but was once the home of several Star Confederation outposts. There are more ruins to be found here than elsewhere on Thres, including several ruined spacecraft. The Hetack Mountain Range of northern Borias is extremely rich in iron and copper, which the saurians seem very interested in. The southern mountains, called the Drops for its precipitous drop into the ocean, are home to many wolf tin and silver mining settlements.

On the border of the northern polar ice block is Ice-Edge, the land claimed by the yaom. A rocky and frozen land, it is the most inhospitable continent on the planet. The yaom seem to enjoy this, but most other species avoid the continent's hostile climate. Wolves and elgies occasionally visit seeking wisdom, but straas rarely go there. After their earlier encounters with the yaom, the cold weather is only one more deterrent to the saurians visiting Ice-Edge. The Last Mountains dominate the continent, covering most of its surface. Ice-Edge is partially covered by glaciers, with only a small steppe and forested region found at its center. The yaom population is spread across the mountains and the steppes, but all their settlements are cunningly hidden.



The remaining two continents, now called Mesner and Kosse by the wolves, are claimed completely by the straas. Before the arrival of the straas both continents had a handful of yaom, wolf, and elgie settlements but since their arrival the straas have all but wiped both continents clean of intelligent life. The straas have been hard at work building cities, roads, and industry within their new territory in addition to building extensive fortifications. Their goal seems to be to turn both continents into massive fortress factories from which the straas can take over the entire planet.

The northern continent, Mesner, is dominated by mountains and is the most tectonically active region on the planet. It is rife with geysers and volcanoes, though earthquakes are rare. Due to a number of large mineral deposits on Mesner that have seeped in to the water supply, the plants on the continent are generally stunted and small, rarely growing to their full height. This has been occurring for as long as any of the current residents have been on the planet; most who visit the continent bring their own water. This has limited straas colonization efforts on the continent, making Kosse the center of straas power.

Kosse contains the highest point on the planet, Moras's Tip, a huge mountain at the center of the continent. Due to some accidentally transplanted seeds from a crashed wolf hydroponics ship, plants from other worlds are overrunning Kosse. While it remains mostly plains, these plains are covered in strange grasses, weeds, and fungus from distant planets. The forests are filled with alien trees, many of which are forcing the native plants to extinction. Within a few more centuries, it is likely that Kosse will have an ecosystem completely unlike the rest of Thres, and eventually its seeds may spread to other continents.

There are numerous islands on Thres due to its shallow seas and numerous mountains. These are often completely consumed by the tide several times a year, and are thus uninhabited. The larger islands that do not submerge are often inhabited by groups of wolves who do not fit into wolf society easily. These rebels and loners often live in solitude on their islands, their instincts pulling them back to an earlier day before the wolves were a space-faring civilization. Most of these islands are covered in tough grasses with a few scattered trees at their highest points. Salvage and debris are often washed up on these islands, and a number of wolves make a living as scavengers of the refuse.

RED TRUTH THIN SPOTS

There are areas in Ice-Edge where the barrier between Red Truth and this dimension has thinned from the repeated use of psionic abilities in these areas. These areas are normally only found in monasteries, the homes of yaom masters, and other areas where the Red Truth is accessed regularly. Such thin spots are generally not used as living quarters or other commonly used areas and even yaom masters do not spend more than a few hours each day in these areas. In these thin spots extended exposure to Red Truth can drive individuals insane or even create information ghosts, using the same rules as found in Chapter 4. The yaom masters use such areas carefully when they need to reach deep into Red Truth, but doing so is a grave risk. Other yaom and the other species of Thres avoid these regions; wolves believe them to be haunted.

CLIMATE • • •

Thres is a cold and dry world. The average temperature is noticeably lower than Eos, so that most of the races of Helios find it rather cold, but its current residents other than the saurians all find the cold comfortable. There is a small tropical region that only covers a few hundred miles of territory around the equator, beyond which a temperate zone stretches for several thousand miles. At the borders of the temperate zone is a large tundra zone, followed by the polar ice caps. All regions of the planet are inhabited except for the polar ice regions. Only within three hundred miles of the equator does snow never fall during the year, and most areas of the planet see several feet of snow each year, though these snows are rare due to the dry atmosphere of Thres. The seasonal variation is slight due to a small axial tilt. The planet has gone through several ice ages over its history and is believed to currently be on the cusp of a new one. The polar ice and glaciers have expanded since the wolves have arrived on the planet, leading many to caution that the world may become an uninhabitable chunk of ice in a few centuries.

There is little water on Thres, and most of what is present is frozen in the massive polar ice sheets. It is theorized that if the polar ice sheets melted, everything but the highest mountains would be submerged, and there is some geologic evidence to suggest this has happened in the past. Rain and snow are both rare, and the plants on the surface have adapted to this limitation. The grasslands are similar to those of an African savannah or a tundra plain, while the extremely large trees of the forests aggressively attack smaller plants to claim what little rain does fall. Most of the inhabitants of Thres rely on melting ice or water from the ocean to survive, often using complex irrigation and dam systems to collect water when the tide comes in. The yaom, elgies, and wolves have all instituted policies

THE MOON OF THRES

The moon of Thres is a very large planetoid and is close to Thres. It is called Night Eye by the wolves and Lightbringer by the yaom, both of which are refer to its highly reflective nature. The dirt and sand covering the surface of the moon is like a mirror making the moon appear very bright in the sky. During a full moon, which happens every fifty eight fifty-eight days, it is more like twilight than nighttime. The yaom believe the moon is also a strong reflector of the flows of Red Truth and perform their most vital meditations under its light. Thres is noticeably ovoid shaped due to the pull of its moon, and the extreme tidal differences are due to the moon's gravity. The moon is an airless, lifeless rock. The only things on Night Eye other than craters are sensors and relay stations the wolves have built to keep abreast of saurian and straas movements.

to avoid polluting their limited water supply, including stiff penalties for wasting water. This has become ingrained in the cultures of all three groups, and even when off-world they are often exceptionally cautious about water. The straas have not demonstrated the same concern and dump pollutants into the oceans without care.

Shallow seas filled with small water-adapted mammals and insects cover most of the planet's surface. There are no fish on Thres, never having evolved on the planet, and mammals and insects fill their niches. There are also no large creatures such as whales in the seas of Thres due to the shallowness of the seas. Most of Thres's watery inhabitants can travel across land for short distances if they are stranded by the tide. Plant life is abundant in the seas, most of which is kelp-like plants that grow from an anchor on the sea floor up to the surface, where they blossom and spread out large leaves to collect sunlight.

The coastal regions are massive tidal areas, often dozens of miles across. These areas are littered by refuse and tidal pools, often including trapped animals. Birds are common in these regions, surviving by picking animals from the tidal pools. Plant life is also rare, but a few particularly robust grasses and kelps manage to survive.

The grasslands are where most of its inhabitants live. These grasslands range from lush plains to nearly barren steppes, and all are inhabited by a variety of mammalian and avian life forms. In the northern areas these grasslands turn to tundra scrub, mainly dominated by fungus and extremely hardy small grasses. The grasses of Thres are extremely tough and can withstand long droughts in addition to flooding. Tubers and other root plants are also common, many of which are edible. The soil is reasonably fertile and all the sentient inhabitants use the grassland regions for farming. Also a number of wild grains grow in the grasslands.

The forests are very small and generally found only in the centers of grasslands. While the massive trees are active in seeking out water and other necessary nutrients, they cannot take flooding as well as the grasses and thus do not grow well in many of the outer plains regions. These forests have minimal underbrush, and are dominated by large trees that grow wide at the base and whose branches grow out instead of up. Thres trees are not very tall, but they are very wide and can have branches that reach over one hundred yards from tip to trunk. They also have large, broad leaves that catch much of the rainfall that strikes them. The forests closer to the equator tend to have the largest trees while those in the colder climes are smaller.

The mountains of Thres are massive, having been carved long ago by immense tectonic forces with some helpful nudges by the Star Confederation to match the dead world of Nidel. They average over twenty thousand feet in height and often jut out dramatically from otherwise level terrain. The shift from grassland to mountains is abrupt and the lower elevations of the mountains are usually covered in grass. Trees do not grow on the mountains, as the soil is inhospitable and rocky. The highest mountains are snow-capped all year, and glaciers can sometimes be found. Glaciers are particularly common in the far northern and southern mountains.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

Thres's atmosphere is a blend of nitrogen, helium, carbon dioxide, and oxygen hat most off-worlders find extremely intoxicating. The high oxygen content renders most visitors light headed for their first few hours on Thres until they acclimate to the atmosphere. Natives of Thres tend to find the atmosphere of other worlds distasteful in terms of smell, and often require a few minutes to get used to the lower oxygen content.

CONDITIONS • • •

Thres is cold, and outside of its small tropical region cold can be a serious threat. The temperature in these areas drops below freezing regularly, especially in the mountains, and characters can suffer from exposure to the cold if they are not properly prepared. Due to the lack of seasons this threat is year-round rather than seasonal. There are very few areas where heat exposure is a threat.

Newcomers to Thres must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for 1 hour due to lightheadedness from breathing in too much oxygen. If the newcomer fails the first Fortitude save, at the end of the hour he must make a second Fortitude save (DC 12) to avoid suffering lightheadedness for another hour. These Fortitude saves continue every hour until the newcomer succeeds, with failure resulting in another hour of lightheadedness.

FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

Thres is a divided planet. Five sentient species have populations on the planet, and four different governments claim territory as their own. While the Wolf Tribes and the yaom seek to live out their days in peace, the straas spread across the world like a plague, consuming everything in their path, and the saurians try to claim Thres as their own. The war for Thres has not started in full yet, but it is only a matter of time. The coming of the vaasi will only make things worse.

THE WOLF TRIBES • • •

At the dawn of time the twenty-three god-facets of the All God, the highest tier of spiritual being a mortal can comprehend but above which many more levels exist, came to the universe to breathe life into its creation. Thus on the wolf homeworld twenty-three wolves were created, one for each of the god-facets, and each one skilled in a different trade or craft. These were the first twenty-three wolves; they would later be joined by other wolves who were created by lesser divinities and spirits to support these original twenty-three. They founded the twenty-three Wolf Tribes, the governmental and societal structure of wolf civilization - or at least that's what the wolves believe happened. These tribes serve as family, political party, and trade union all in one, and are a primary part of wolf life.

Each tribe has anywhere from a few hundred members in smaller clans, like the White Claws, to millions of members, such as the Star or Green Serpent tribes. Each tribe has a specific area of expertise that it is concerned with, determined by ancient doctrine set forth by their divine ancestors. The Star tribe is concerned with all matters of travel for the wolves, while the Iron Hands are metalworkers and craftsmen, and the Pattern Finders are scientists or scholars. Wolves are born into a tribe and usually live their entire lives as members of that tribe, though there is a lengthy process for switching tribes that involves a great many ceremonies and rituals. All tribes are equal under the laws of the Wolf Tribes; only those wolves of divine descent who serve as the leaders of the tribes have any advantage by law. There are limitations as to the trades members of each tribe may practice; those found practicing the trades of other tribes are often punished with minor menial duties or, if they demonstrate sufficient talent, transferred to the appropriate tribe. The tribes have grown in scope of responsibility over the years; the Star tribe, once mainly navigators and mapmakers, now operate most of the wolf spaceships. There are currently six million wolves among the Wolf Tribes and one hundred thousand elgies.

Each tribe is has tribal colors that are worn by all members, a tribal totem animal, a time of day, and a motto. All members of a tribe are supposed to show great loyalty to their tribe and favor its members above outsiders, but this is rarely taken to extremes, especially in more recent years. Tribe members who commit crimes against their tribe are punished severely by their own tribal leaders, with banishment being the most common punishment. For crimes committed against members of other tribes, the matter is usually settled by the local tribal council, made up of elders of all the tribes in the area. Most local matters are handled in such councils. The wolves believe in government in the hands of the wise or divine few, having little interest in real democracy, though they do believe that every voice has a right to be heard. Any wolf can speak at any public gathering and any wolf has the right to ask for an accounting for the decisions of his leaders. These rights are used regularly and are rarely abused, though it does happen on occasion. A leader found to be wanting for wisdom by his peers, be they fellow elders or the divinely descended, steps down and a suitable replacement is chosen. Wolves have a hard time following any leader they have not themselves looked in the eye, except for the divinely descended, who they show almost a naïve level of trust; a trust that is only occasionally abused.

The wolf tribes live together without much friction, though some tribes suffer from long-standing disputes such as territorial or occupational responsibility disagreements. Each wolf settlement is divided up into tribal neighborhoods, each varying in size, location, and wealth according to the abilities and needs of each tribe. On a daily basis, wolves deal with members of several tribes, buying needed goods from them or providing services, but some of the smaller tribes have far less contact with wolves from outside their tribe. If a wolf settlement is missing members of a tribe, the settlement's

WOLF ART

Wolves prefer works of art that are easily transportable, favoring music and stories to sculptures and paintings. All wolf settlements and caravans have some manner of chief storyteller, usually of the Red Keepers tribe, who tells stories of the wolves' great and illustrious past. These stories nearly always have a moral and include lots of audience participation, such as shouting out often-used phrases or playing out parts of the story.

Wolf music is fast paced and involves lots of singing and howling, relying primarily on wind instruments and some drums. Except for dirges, which are songs of great sorrow usually sung at funerals or to remember past tragedies, wolves compose their music with dancers in mind. Wolves have dozens of dance styles among their tribes, ranging from highly regimented ceremonial dances to chaotic battle dances that are as much combat as dancing. Wolves believe that evil spirits hate music, and most caravans and settlements have some sort of nightly performance to keep the spirits away while everyone is asleep.

leaders can request members from the missing tribe, though this takes time. Each tribe has a group of itinerant workers who travel from settlement to settlement acting as fill-ins until a member of their tribe can be assigned to the settlement permanently. These wanderers are often promising troublemakers who the tribal leaders hope will learn something from their assignments.

Although there are unflattering stereotypes of some tribes and a few tribes are involved in ancient rivalries, most tribes get along well. These rivalries come to little more then occasional pranks, graffiti, or brawls, but sometimes things get out of hand. Tribal elders usually stop such incidents before they go too far, but in the distant past there are records of open war between tribes over mineral rights, broken oaths, and matters of pride.

Each tribe's leader is a God King, a direct descendant of the one of the twenty-three divine founders. The only exception is the Elgie tribe, which elects its leader through a common vote. The rest of the tribes are effectively hereditary oligarchies. Each ruling family has total power within its own tribe, though any leader who makes too many mistakes is likely to be removed from positions of responsibility by the family. Due to the tradition of openly questioning their leaders, the mistakes of these divine few rarely go ignored. The divine bloodlines of each tribe often marry with other bloodlines in an attempt to keep their divine descent pure, but commoners of great promise are also brought into the divine families occasionally. These individuals are assumed to become divine upon consummating their marriage, and there is no stigma against them for being born a commoner. These divine wolves are considered superior by law to other wolves, but few abuse the privileges this brings, which includes immunity to many laws and the ability to take any property desired from their subjects. Wolves of the divine family found to flout this power have their actions made public in short order, and their families must then take punitive or corrective action or lose face. Such dishonored wolves are usually assigned unpleasant military duties so that some sort of honorable death in battle will ease their disgrace in the afterlife, where all wolves rejoin with the All-God.

Numerous advisors, functionaries, bureaucrats, and underlings, most of who are of divine blood, support the God King. The exact structure of each tribe varies immensely; the Green Serpents have a very family-oriented organization based on large family farms, while the Star tribe is organized around ships and their crews. Most tribes have a number of shamans and soothsayers to deal with the spiritual world in addition to more secular leaders. The tribes usually come together for particularly important decisions, both on global and local levels, but meetings of entire tribes are impossible, as vast distances now separate their members. No one tribe is so arrogant as to make decisions for the entire race.

The twenty four tribes, twenty-three wolf tribes and the Elgie tribe, come together and deal with global matters at the Conclave of the Blessed, a meeting once held yearly but now held every thirty days in the capital of Rosheer. At the Conclave of the Blessed, the God Kings of the tribes discuss governmental policy, current events, trade, and other matters, making decisions about these matters by vote. The White Claw tribe is charged with making sure these meetings go smoothly, including

security, and has the most authority in the Conclave, but all the tribes count equally when it comes to a vote. These meetings are holy events for the wolves and are usually accompanied by days of fasting, praying, or celebrating, based on the matters to be discussed and the time of year.

The wolves are a very family oriented species, often living together with five generations under a single roof. Respect towards elders is a highly valued trait, and elders return this respect by sharing their wisdom with any who ask. Most wolves do not question tradition, having been long trained to accept the wisdom of past generations at face value; rebelliousness is a rare trait among wolves. Those who do are often shunned for their behavior, and wolf culture has stagnated because of this, as there is little force for change. Violence among members of a family is an affront to the gods and one of the worst sins imaginable. Both sexes are equal under the law among the wolves and can take on any occupation they choose, though they may have to change tribes to do so. Marriage is a common practice among wolves and is a serious and important institution that is to be maintained for life. Wolves have no allowance for divorce; the only ways to escape marriage are death, leading a large number of marriage-related suicides each year, and indefinite estrangement where one partner leaves never to return. The elgies' drastically different beliefs regarding marriage cause discord between the two species.

The wolf homeworld was a planet of rolling plains and light forests, with small oceans and many rivers. The wolves wandered across it in great inter-tribal groups for most of their history, living as nomads for thousands of years. This lifestyle limited advances in their technology, as they rarely took the time or resources to stop moving and do research, which continues to this day. After the wolf homeworld was destroyed, their wandering continued for decades as they traveled the stars looking for a new home. Space travel is now deeply ingrained in their cultural awareness, and the wolves consider it part of their birthright. The nomadic lifestyle is very important to wolves, even those who spend most of their days in a single city. All wolves spend at least a third of their days out wandering, either on Thres in massive caravans, or in nearby space with the Star tribe; no wolf is content to dwell in one place forever. In addition to the permanent settlements on Thres, there are massive wandering convoys and caravans crossing its surface at all times, carrying living quarters, manufacturing equipment, research labs, and other necessary facets of their culture. Only the Green Serpent tribe, charged with growing enough food for the wolf race, has lost its nomadic nature due to the differences between the soils of the wolf homeworld and Thres. Previously the Green Serpents could grow enough grains to support the entire species with a few months effort and spend the rest of the time wandering, hunting, and gathering, but the grains of the wolf homeworld do not grow on Thres, requiring them to spend the entire year planting, harvesting, and raising livestock. Other tribes have begun to look askance at the Green Serpents for this growing trend of sedentary living.

More than any race in the system except the tentaari, the wolves are experienced space travelers. They have been to several dozen systems in the years since their homeworld was destroyed, but have little to show for it besides damaged ships, lost family members, and empty fuel tanks. They have made extensive maps and records of their travels, which have included previous encounters with vaasi, tentaari, and other species.

They are comfortable and skilled in space travel, possessing some of the finest trained spacers in the Helios system. Their ships are respectably advanced too, made from a hodgepodge of frezin, wolf, and whatever other technologies they have found in their journeys. Many elder wolves of the Star tribe have an extensive collection of alien artifacts, dirt from different worlds, and stories to go along with each one. The wolves consider themselves natural space explorers and many of the Star tribe are greatly distressed by being trapped in the Helios system. Despite finding a new home they wish to continue their wanderings, looking for more adventure, glory, and knowledge among the stars. The wolves are not interested in conquest during such travels, instead favoring the thrill of discovery, and usually begin any first contact situations with peaceful overtures. Their experiences with other species have been mostly unfavorable, leading them to be very cautious among other species. They have had better luck when meeting new mammalian species, such as the elgies, leading them to be more trusting of humans and similar species. The wolves do not trust the vaasi, and for the most part assume the straas are some sort of vaasi offshoot. The wolves are in awe of the tentaari, having seen their technological power before coming to Helios, even though they find the tentaari in the Helios system to be unimpressive compared to those they met in the past. Some wolves suspect the local tentaari are children or somehow mentally disabled compared to their fellows the wolves have met, not understanding the limitations of the tentaari culture and mindset.

The wolves exist under a directed capitalist economy in which each God-King assigns overseers to each business his tribe controls. Each wolf keeps most of whatever profits he makes, giving ten to twenty percent to the tribe to help support less fortunate members, develop new operations, and pay for the managerial expenses of the tribe. Wolves have a strong entrepreneurial spirit and most adult wolves

THE TWENTY-FOUR WOLF TRIBES

The following tribes make up the Wolf Tribes. Twenty-three are descended from the divine wolves that founded the species, while the twenty-fourth is made up entirely of elgies.

The Edge Runners Tribe
The Edge Runners were once messengers, crossing the wolf lands using the fastest mounts and vehicles available, but now are the communication experts of the Wolf Tribes. They operate most radio broadcast facilities on Thres and are the foremost encryption experts among the wolves. The Edge Runners have been working with the Earth Turners for the last few centuries to create news broadcasts across radio channels.

The Blood Tooth Tribe
Home to over six hundred thousand wolves, the Blood Tooth tribe is the military arm of the Wolf Tribes. They are all professional soldiers raised from birth for combat.

The Dawn Riders
Originally exorcists charged with dealing with unhappy spirits and curses, the Dawn Riders have since become experts in dealing with strange technology. They usually handle the Grave Plague nanite infestations and study the technology of the straas and saurians.

The Ghost Talkers
While all tribes have shamans and soothsayers among their number, most are trained in their art by the Ghost Talkers. Masters of augury, portents, and reading people to see what they want to hear, the Ghost Talkers provide guidance and comfort to their fellows. The wolves do not doubt that they have supernatural powers, but the elgies do not believe in their powers at all.

The Earth Turners
A tribe of wanderers and vagabonds, this tribe is as close as the wolves come to an outcast tribe. Charged with the holy duty of wandering through wolf territory to collect tales, news, and other tidbits of information, they often trade this information for food and lodging with those they meet in their travels. In more recent years they have become journalists and writers, adapting to changing technology. The Earth Turners are also scavengers, and some have set up homes in the massive tidal regions of Thres to pick up what washes in the tidal reaches. The Earth Turners often function as an informal spy network for the Conclave of the Blessed.

The Black Cloud Tribe
A tribe that only exists in whispers and secrets, the Black Cloud tribe does the will of the Conclave when there is a need for items or people to go missing and never be found. Even the leader of the tribe is not known, attending council meetings under a veil of black. Wolves can only enter this tribe if its God-King recognizes their skill and recruits them. Those in the intelligence, combat, and subterfuge fields see joining the Black Cloud tribe as a great honor. Members of the Black Cloud tribe are never to speak of their allegiance to it with members of their original tribe, and continue on as if nothing had changed. The tribe's missions are always sanctioned by the Conclave of the Blessed. The Black Cloud tribe only functions within the territory of the Wolf Tribes, while the Moon tribe handles external spy operations.

The Gray keepers of the wolves
The grave keepers of the wolves, they are the only wolves who are allowed to touch the dead other than in battle or medicinal pursuits. They are sanctified by lengthy rituals to avoid haunting by those whose bodies they care for and are one of the more ceremonially regimented tribes. They carry out all the funerary duties of the Wolf Tribes.

The Moon Tribe
No one publicly admits to being a member of the Moon tribe, concealing their identities so they may better seek out the enemies of the Wolf Tribes. The Moon tribe supplies the spies and assassins of the Wolf Tribes. The Moon tribe only operates outside the borders of the Wolf Tribes, while the Black Cloud tribe handles internal matters of security.

The Iron Hands Tribe
Once the smiths and smelters of the Wolf Tribes, the Iron Hands tribe now controls nearly all forms of industry and mass production on Thres.

The Flesh Smiths Tribe
The Flesh Smiths are the medical experts of the Wolf Tribes, most of which live as shamans treating individuals within their local settlements. Their hospitals are only found in the largest wolf caravans and cities, and most Flesh Smiths work alone. One of the smaller tribes, they are always woefully short of members.

The Rune Carvers Tribe
Originally scribes, artists, and lawyers who worked with the written records and laws of the Wolf Tribes, the Rune Carvers have added computers to their list of responsibilities. While all tribes have some skill with computers, the Rune Carvers are the most highly trained and are the only tribe to expend significant effort developing new computer technologies.

The Night Talkers Tribe
Keepers of secrets great and small, the Night Talkers are responsible for providing an open ear for all wolves to discuss their problems without fear of prejudice or betrayal. The Night Talkers take their duty very seriously, as they have learned many secrets. No authority may call upon them to betray the secrets they have been told.

The Silver Eye Tribe
One of the most highly respected tribes, the Silver Eye tribe is responsible for enforcing the laws of the wolf tribes. Acting as police and judges, they are charged with making sure all wolves follow the directives of the Conclave.

The White Claw Tribe
Charged with keeping the Conclave of the Blessed safe and meeting regularly, the White Claw tribe is made up of bureaucrats and organizers in addition to some of the best-trained security personnel in the Wolf Tribes. The White Claws also handle taking a yearly census among all the tribes.

The Red Keeper Tribe
While the Pattern Finders seek out science and how the universe works, the Red Keepers collect and protect lore and information, particularly in the form of history. They are the historians and teachers of the Wolf Tribes.

The Stone Makers Tribe
The Stone Makers tribe handles all matters of civil engineering and architecture, from building roads to erecting monuments. They also carry out mining operations for the Wolf Tribes and regularly assist the Blood Tooth tribe in creating fortifications.

The Elgie Tribe
The only tribe created after the birth of the wolf race, the Elgie tribe is made up of all those elgies who fled their homeworld with the wolves. They have found their own place among the tribes, acting as bankers, inventors, and repairmen. They do not fit into the tribal monopoly system well, and regularly go against wolf customs by practicing many crafts and trades.

The Land Strider Tribe
Scouts, cartographers, and astronomers, the Land Striders help define the territory of the Wolf Tribes and keep it safe. They are also the primary astronomers of the Wolf Tribes and have thus become its resident experts on astrophysics and related sciences

The Star Tribe
Once navigators and drovers, the Star tribe is now one of the larger wolf tribes because all space travel is its responsibility. Nearly all wolf spaceships are under their control, though other tribes control a few specialized ships.

The Pattern Finder Tribe
Made up of scholars and scientists, the Pattern Finder tribe has been charged for time immemorial with finding out the secrets and patterns of the universe. Wolves that show great talent for science are often adopted into this tribe.

The Spirit Guard Tribe
Made up of servants, entertainers, cooks, and other individuals who seek to make the lives of others easier, the Spirit Guard is charged with the holy duty of honoring their fellow wolves through service. The bodyguard/butlers of the Spirit Guard, called the Domi, are some of their most respected members.

The Forest Keepers Tribe
Living in the limited forest regions of Thres, these wolves provide the lumber needed by other tribes and create a number of wood-crafted goods, primarily furniture. The Forest Keepers also work to keep the ecosystems of the forests of Thres in balance, protecting their limited and valuable resources.

The Gold Morn Tribe
One of the smaller tribes, the Gold Morn tribe is made up of negotiators and diplomats who help the tribes work out their differences. They also deal with other races when encountered.

The Green Serpent Tribe
Now the largest of the Wolf Tribes, the Green Serpents are responsible for feeding the entirety of the Wolf Tribes. They were once herders and hunters, but they now spend much of their time raising crops.

THE WOLVES AND THE VAASI

Two hundred and sixteen years ago, the Wolf Tribes encountered a small Star Confederation colony world that had been overrun by the vaasi during the later days of the war. The vaasi invaders had descended into barbarism after the fall of the Vaasi Empire cut it off from outside support. The surviving population was made up of servitor species ruled by a few true vaasi warlords that continually battled among themselves for territory and resources, using little more than stones and clubs in their battles. The wolves made contact with them but were attacked for their effort. The wolves easily overmatched their opponents with their superior technology, but after the first battle ended the vaasi awakened several automated war drones hidden on the planet. The war drones were spacecraft piloted by artificial intelligence systems, left on colony worlds to strike the Star Confederation from behind enemy lines if the colony fell. These drones assaulted the wolf fleet, causing significant casualties before the wolves destroyed them. Tens of thousands of wolves died before they were stopped, and their appearance was quickly linked to the vaasi on the planet. Now all wolves know the legend of the World of Six-Legged Death and the battle that was fought there. They shoot vaasi on sight, a philosophy they generally extend to the straas as well.

seek to own their own business. It is common for wolves with a good idea to approach their tribal leaders about getting a loan to fund a new business venture and consult with many shamans and soothsayers to determine the fortune of the venture. The divine leaders of each tribe live off of these profits, but their desire to appear wise and modest limits their extravagance. The tribes have different levels of wealth based upon their trades, but there is little prejudice because of it. Recently the elgies have gained significant power in the tribes as the first tribe to loan money to members of other tribes, becoming the bankers of the Wolf Tribes. The Conclave of the Blessed directs the economy of the tribes as a whole. They make up yearly plans based on what they perceive as the needs of the people. In the last fifty years, these plans have been primarily concerned with industrial development in the face of straas and saurian aggression.

The official wolf military is the large Blood Tooth tribe, which is responsible for providing protection to the Wolf Tribes in addition to some manufacturing and development of military technology, but this is often done in league with other tribes such as the Pattern Finders and Star tribes. The Blood Tooth tribe has six hundred thousand members, most of whom are professional soldiers and all of whom have some basic training. Wolves of other tribes also receive training to act as reserve troops, allowing a militia of two million members to be called up when needing. Militia training is a long-standing tradition among the wolves, and nearly all wolves own a firearm of some sort. The militia of the Wolf Tribes is well motivated but suffers from mediocre training and equipment due to their concentration on other skills. The wolf military is made primarily of infantry scout units, fast moving ground attack units, and air support units. They have few heavy ground vehicles, valuing speed over armor, or atmospheric air vehicles, instead relying on the Star tribe for air superiority since all wolf ships are capable of operating in an atmosphere. The Blood Tooth tribe is highly trained, as its members have been prepared for military duty from birth and all take their roles seriously. Dereliction of duty, insubordination, and other such military crimes are severely punished and usually result in banishment or death. Many wolf military units are arranged along family lines, with officer ranks being generational responsibilities, building up a long unit tradition as each generation takes up the responsibility from the one before it. Their weak industrial base has limited the operations of the Blood Tooth tribe, forcing them to make do with equipment shortages against the straas and saurians. In most engagements the wolves can defeat an equal force of straas or saurian soldiers, but as their technology wears out this is less and less true. Against an elite saurian unit like the Blood and Bone Guards, the Blood Tooth tribe would be

hard-pressed and both sides would likely tell tales of such a battle for many years.

The Star tribe controls the majority of the spacecraft of the Wolf Tribes, with a small handful of ships controlled by other tribes for use in their regular duties. The Star tribe manages patrols of the space around Thres, in addition to atmospheric patrols. They take part in ongoing harassment of straas operations, bombing spaceship construction facilities and destroying supply depots. The wolves' space superiority makes it difficult for the straas to react to these attacks; further, the wolf ships are more advanced and operated by better pilots. The wolves have visited C'thalk but found the saurian-controlled world not worth a return visit. All ships sent to Eos never returned, so they have ignored the planet for some time. The wolves have conducted at least a cursory exploration of the rest of the planets in the system, though much of their intelligence is a few decades out of date. They have not been to the Cronus Belt since the arrival of the vaasi, nor the moons of Hesperos since the arrival of the coqui or the mechites. Of all the races in the system, they have the most complete information on the planets of Helios, save for the records of the tentaari. The wolves control a fleet of one heavy ship, six mediumweight ships, twenty-three light ships, and sixty ultralight ships.

There were originally twenty-three wolf tribes, but after the elgies were saved from destruction they were adopted as the twenty-fourth tribe. The elgies were the only species the wolves encountered that offered to share their world with the wolves, feeling they could gain in the bargain. At the time of this meeting the elgies were entering Progress Level 3 and had much to learn from the wolves. The elgies are a naturally curious species of problem solvers; within two generations they had adapted to the technology of the wolves and begun to improve on it, demonstrating their worth as allies to the wolves. Thus when the elgie homeworld was destroyed, the wolves saved tens of thousands of them from destruction. It only a small segment of their population, but it was all the wolves could fit in their remaining ships. The elgies have adapted to life among the wolves well, filling in niches the wolves had previously not recognized, such as bankers and efficiency experts. The Elgie tribe is now a fully-fledged tribe under law, but its members carry out dozens of different trades, not having the traditional guidelines of other tribes. The elgies make a living any way they can, which usually involves invention, maintenance, or problem solving. Other tribes have yet to complain about infringment on their business, as the elgies are few in number and remarkably useful. In general the elgies are respected members of wolf society, seen as cunning and intelligent equals who occasionally become a little too concerned with solving a problem or accumulating wealth.



Not all elgie and wolf relations are without problems, through. Compared to the wolves the elgies are extremely promiscuous and have little concept of marriage. Males are expected to care for children they father, but have no other traditional obligation to the mother, though many elgies do care for their mates. Elgies mate freely without regard to past mates; fortunately for the species, they have very few sexually transmitted diseases. While this has made traditional family units all but unknown among the elgies, it has fostered a belief that they all may be relatives and not know it and thus should support each other like family. Elgies are also greedier and more deceitful than most wolves, though most do their best not to let these traits harm their benefactors. The lack of divinely descended leaders among the elgies, and their skepticism toward gods and spirits, troubles some wolves. There are a vocal few who believe the elgies should be outcast from the Wolf Tribes because they are not the children of the gods. As a species, the elgies feel a massive obligation to the wolves for saving their race, and the wolves feel an equal debt to the elgies for allowing them to live on their homeworld for a time. All in all, the two species have very favorable feelings towards each other. Any elgie who becomes known to his fellows for cheating wolves is likely to find himself bereft of mates and business opportunities.

THE YAOM • • •

Far in the north of Thres live the yaom, seekers of the great secrets of the universe. Due to their strange connection to the parallel dimension known as Red Truth (detailed in Chapter 4), the society of the yaom is unusual among the descendants of the Star Confederation. There are no secrets among the yaom, and attempting to keep secrets is seen as a negative trait. All yaom speak their mind since their fellows may read it anyway, and have little patience for those who say one thing and think something else. To the yaom no information is private, though all information is respected. It is a culture that other species often find disturbing for its openness and lack of secrets. It forces some level of conformity on those who dwell within it, and the pressure to be like everyone else can be overwhelming. While not all yaom can read minds, their extra-sensory abilities can make hiding any bit of information difficult.

ELGIE ART

The elgies are a deeply practical people, but most are willing to make time for art. They prefer their art in a useable form, such as a well-designed tool or piece of furniture. When elgie craftsmen have the time, they often embellish their products with engravings, exquisite paintings, or other decorations. Elgies use these flourishes as a way of signing their work. Elgies rarely practice art for art's sake, but their goods are widely known among the Wolf Tribes as being the most appealing and well made.

When the elgies met the wolves, their musical traditions were extremely primitive, with no wind or stringed instruments. They have adopted some musical concepts from the wolves, but are still finding their own way. Elgie music runs the entire gamut of musical tastes and they constantly try to innovate and add new things to their music. Any race they meet is likely to have their music cannibalized by the elgies.

There are slightly less than one hundred thousand yaom in the settlements on Ice-Edge, making them one of the least numerous of the sentient species of Helios. Their settlements are small and widely spread compared to other species; their largest settlement, the capital of Cek, has only twelve thousand inhabitants. All the other yaom settlements have a population of eight thousand or smaller, mainly due to the information overload that larger population can cause. Although yaom are limited in how long they can view Red Truth directly, it bleeds over slightly into their perceptive range at all times. They prefer not to be as inundated with information as one would be in a large city. For similar reasons, the yaom prefer barren natural environments, and the stark white polar regions are often used as meditative retreats. When visiting the cities of other species the yaom often develop headaches, but rarely are they debilitating.

To outsiders, yaom seem to live under a form of inclusive democracy that could only exist for species with their special talents. While the yaom masters appoint spokesmen to deal with outsiders and leaders for wartime, the rest of the time they are governed by the unspoken consensus of the people. The yaom conduct what could be called psychic democracy; at set times during the day, each yaom meditates on Red Truth and his place in the universe. Yaom masters of the Red Truth then read the flow of information around the yaom people as a whole, determining their desires through reading the information flow they create. The small population of the yaom makes this possible, and each settlement has at least one master for gathering this information. The masters record the results of these polls and choose suitable responses. In an odd mix of pure democracy and enlightened self-interest, the masters and individual yaom who feel a sense of civic duty then carry out these decisions. Any yaom who does not do his part, at least in the eyes of his family, friends, and neighbors, is ostracized until he mends his ways. Other races tend to find this governmental style uncomfortable, either due to the highly democratic and self-motivated basis or the fact that one is forced to vote their true feelings. The yaom generally lack the drive for temporal power that often corrupts other political systems, and feel that no one yaom should have any more rights than another.

Not all yaom are so enlightened, or so conforming, depending on who you ask. Most yaom are law-abiding citizens who willingly take part in the governmental process, but almost twenty percent of the yaom refuse to participate in any form of government, for one reason or another. Some are members of splinter groups that fear the Red Truth and think the yaom should turn their backs on it forever, while others do not trust the masters reading the information flow. These individuals often form

small factions that try to bring about change in yaom society, but their efforts have not become widespread enough to make much progress. Instead, they are forced to the edges of their settlements and families, their beliefs rarely discussed in public or even acknowledged. The yaom believe the one should give way to the wants of the many, and those who disagree after the many have voted are seen as malcontents. Those who disagree say they are oppressed by the tyranny of the majority. The yaom rarely speak of these matters to outsiders and are embarrassed when it is brought up, their inability to support or acknowledge minority beliefs exposing a major flaw in their democratic process. Among the yaom, dissenting opinions are supposed to be left behind by those who hold them.

Roughly five percent of the yaom population would be considered insane by other species due to overexposure to Red Truth, constituting another large segment of the population that does not participate in yaom society or government in the same fashion as the majority. Most of these individuals are are severely depressed after acknowledging their miniscule place in the universe in the face of Red Truth. Others have had psychotic breaks from the things they have seen in the furthest depths of the dark between the stars. Most of these individuals are allowed to live their lives as they wish, as long as they do not endanger others; the mainstream yaom value those with a powerful connection to Red Truth for their occasional lucidity. Most spend their days in the deep wilderness, acting as hermits or seers, or in the care of their family. Those who remain dangerous are kept in special institutions of stark white, without details or any information to be seen.

Yaom families are small, as the yaom have suffered from a low birth rate for the last few hundred years. There seems to be an inverse correlation between sexual drive and interaction with Red Truth among the yaom, where those who spend more time contemplating the Red Truth spend less energy pursuing sex. This trend, which has worsened over time, has reduced the population growth of the yaom to miniscule levels. The yaom now place little value on the physical fitness or appearance of their mates, instead preferring mental and emotional well being. The habit of other species to choose mates based on physical appearance seems incredibly foolish to the yaom. Yaom families usually have at most three generations in them, and each generation produces two children. Larger families are considered a sign of being too tied to the physical pleasures of life instead of the mental, though in the face of decreasing population numbers this idea is starting to go out of style.

The settlements of the yaom are spartan in design, as most yaom find ornamentation unnecessary. These settlements are highly ordered, with all streets at right angles to each other and the buildings looking surprisingly uniform. Other races would call their settlements bland, but the yaom consider them utilitarian. They are usually located in protected areas, such as valleys or caves, making them difficult to locate. The yaom value their privacy, especially after the first attacks of the saurians, and work hard to keep their settlements hidden. They are often painted in camouflage patterns to be hard to see from the air by using colors found in the surrounding terrain, and when possible local materials are used in construction. Towns and villages are common in the central areas of yaom territory, while

YAOM ART

The yaom in general do not create visual art as most people understand it, preferring a bland undecorated object to one that has been altered and made more complex for aesthetic appeal. They do not create works of art for enjoyment's sake, but occasionally make information-dense images, called info-lines, which when observed in Red Truth can convey an immense amount of information. They are used as signs or markers. These info-lines look like a random assortment of lines and shapes to other species, and are often mistaken for works of art instead of communication tools.

Yaom music, on the other hand, is well developed and depends on the highly developed and articulate yaom vocal system. Yaom singing is performed in large groups and is made up of dozens of voices singing different words simultaneously, creating what most other races consider a horrible noise but the yaom consider a peaceful, organized flow of information that they find relaxing. Yaom do not so much listen to their music as experience it as information.

fortresses and walled monasteries are found along the edges. These installations protect the yaom from outsiders, usually turning them back to where they came with no memories of what transpired. These fortresses and monasteries are well hidden and their inhabitants often use their power over Red Truth to ensure this secrecy. The yaom in the fortresses are professional soldiers who spend most of their lives on duty, while the monasteries are home to those yaom who prefer living away from the hustle and bustle of the yaom heartlands, taking advantage of their solitude to explore Red Truth.

The various malcontent factions control a small number of yaom settlements, and they are often not so well organized or bland as normal yaom settlements. They are covered with attempts at art, something the yaom have little experience with, and each building has little in common with its neighbors. Other yaom often find these settlements headache-inducing and avoid them whenever possible, which suits the non-conformists just fine. In some of these towns, contacting Red Truth is frowned upon and those who do so are likely to be run out of town.

While the yaom do not live in a caste-based system, some yaom have more influence than others. Yaom who show a great talent for Red Truth are often funneled into training programs to become yaom masters. The masters are those yaom who have such a strong connection to the Red Truth that they can make changes in the physical world by changing information in Red Truth. They are the most respected members of yaom society; those on the path of the master are held above normal yaom. There are only a few dozen yaom masters at any given time, with less than one in a thousand yaom having the gifts necessary to become one. Masters are supported by the yaom people in exchange for using their powers for the good of all, including anything from going to war to determining the general will of the yaom people. There are never enough masters to go around, forcing the masters to continually push themselves to do more. The pressure on prospective masters to excel and take up the mantle of mastery is immense, particularly on those that just barely qualify for master training. This pressure drives a number of masters and prospective masters insane each year, which often has drastic consequences due to the power of the individuals involved. Stories of whole villages wiped out by masters gone mad are common, though few have root in truth. Some masters, called peacebringers, have begun policing the others to make sure they do not pose such a threat. It is whispered that the peacebringers have become the new power among the yaom, and have even developed the ability to cut off yaom from the Red Truth completely.



While the yaom are solidly within Progress Level 6, they have been so for several hundred years and show little interest in advancing further. Before leaving their homeworld the yaom had been Progress Level 5 for an equally long time, finally advancing to PL 6 to escape their homeworld's destruction. They were able to use the gateway network waypoint in their home system to come directly to the Helios system instead of being transported to it randomly as the Dawning Star was. The Helios system was chosen from the records on the gateway network station in the yaom system. This was accomplished through extensive contact with Red Truth and the records on the gateway station, permanently damaging the minds of several masters in the process. Despite their ability to understand advanced technology through Red Truth, the yaom see technology as being a crutch for weak-minded races, preferring to accomplish the same ends through the Red Truth. They hope one day to be able to physically travel through the Red Truth from planet to planet, making spaceships unnecessary, and create matter by reorganizing information in Red Truth. Such a level of advancement is clearly a long way off, but the yaom feel they are pursing the true science of the universe, and that technology as other races use it is a pale imitation. The yaom use technology where they must, such as space travel and communications, but is not prevalent in their lives. Most yaom homes do not have electricity or indoor plumbing, preferring simpler solutions to those problems. The yaom military does have firearms and other devices, but prefers misleading their enemies rather than open confrontation. They have minimal industrial capacity and few mass-produced goods, instead making nec-

essary goods by hand. Their craftsmen are renowned among the Wolf Tribes for fine workmanship, as they are able to see imperfections invisible to the naked eye through the Red Truth, though their products rarely show any flair for the artistic. Yaom goods are sturdy, efficient, and ugly.

The economy of the yaom is socialistic; the yaom masters read the needs of the people in their regular meditations and assign them resources as required. Most yaom are unable to hide their wants and needs from their fellows, though only those items considered necessary are usually given to each yaom. Greed for material goods is rare among the yaom (though greed for knowledge or power in Red Truth is a different matter). The masters assign each yaom a job according to his skills and talents, but this system does not work smoothly and usually requires half a dozen changes in career before the masters get it right. Yaom craftsmen turn their products over the masters for distribution, which is overseen by the yaom of each settlement. This is a highly stressful process as the masters are under constant threat of assigning too little food, clothing, or other goods to those who need them. The masters have a network of assistant to help with this process and over time these assistants have been taking more of the workload, as the masters have many other responsibilities. Most are happy with this system, but some of the malcontents believe the masters do not divvy up resources fairly.

The military of the yaom is small and their society views them as pariahs, tainted by their talent for violence. Many yaom find the information loss in the mind of a slain creature to be a distinctly unpleasant sensation, sending an information tear through the Red Truth. Others are bothered by the fact that death also leads to the destruction of information known by the dead individual, creating a widespread pacifistic movement among the yaom. The masters are rarely part of this movement, realizing the unpleasant necessity of violence in some situations. Those yaom who show a predilection for violence are recruited to the yaom military, called the Border Wardens, and are sometimes forced into service by other yaom who fear them. These yaom are usually not so violent that other races would consider them dangerous, but their own people see them as such. Many of the insane yaom whose mental derangements are manageable are found among the Border Wardens. They are stationed at the fortresses that surround the yaom territories, living in communities of their own while keeping safe the very people who cast them out. Most are extremely dedicated to their duty, but this often goes hand-in-hand with bitterness over their treatment. They only have regular contact with the inhabitants of the nearby monasteries, who often regard them with a mixture of fear and pity. The Border Wardens are equipped with firearms, vehicles, and other military tools, but these are often old and in poor repair. They prefer misdirection in dealing with their foes, and train extensively with combat applications of Red Truth, something other yaom usually consider an abomination. It is said that some Border Wardens can completely cut off a victim's body from receiving information, including the brain telling the heart to beat. Despite these powers, the Border Wardens are not a particularly powerful group; although they face little threat from the saurians, the straas could easily overrun them if desired. Thus the yaom keep their presence a secret and work with the Wolf Tribes to provide a united defense against the straas.

The yaom only have a handful of functional spacecraft, all of which are leftovers from the evacuation fleet that brought them to Thres centuries ago. These ships have only been used intermittently since their arrival on Thres, mainly out of a desire to remain undetected. Their ships are not well suited for combat and they avoid endangering them, but the Border Wardens have been trained in their operation for emergencies. The yaom have little interest in other worlds, unless those worlds hold some clue to the depths of Red Truth. The yaom masters have some inkling of a large disturbance in Red Truth in the system, but do not know about the Green Reach facility in any detail.

Crime is rarely a problem among the yaom, considering secrets are so hard to keep. Most criminals are nonconformists or the insane and are tracked down in short order. The yaom masters are responsible for such efforts and each master is charged with policing his home settlement, though the peacebringers have begun acting as itinerant law enforcement officers in recent times in an attempt to relieve stress from other masters.

THE STRAAS HIVE LEGIONS • • •

Commanded by the disguised vaasi Hivequeen Celick, the straas present one of the greatest threats to the new inhabitants of the Helios system. The straas were once a free people that lived in massive hive communities ruled by free-minded hivequeens, but now the straas of Thres are the pawns of the vaasi, brought thousands of light-years from their homeworld by one vaasi's quest for power. The Hivequeen Celick has survived all this time through cunning and discipline, traits she now uses to bring the Helios system under her control.

The straas communicate through a complex collection of pheromones that allow very information-dense communication over distances of up to six hundred feet. Each straas can repeat the pheromones he receives from one straas to other straas within his range, allowing information to be relayed over long distances relatively quickly as long as there is a chain of straas that can reach the intended target. Thus all straas within range will

STRAAS ART

The mind-controlled straas of Hivequeen Celick have no art to speak of, having no time off of their duties to pursue such interests. The rebel straas have no memory of what their species once did for music or art and are working on developing their own traditions. So far they have been concentrating on music, creating a cacophonous noise that most species would not describe as music, but the straas seem to enjoy it a great deal.

hear what a straas "says," although the straas can whisper at close range. Pheromone signals are marked to be forwarded or not, and most are not so marked, but even so straas have to deal with communication traffic when in large groups, both from local pheromone signals and ones relayed from far away. Originally, this allowed the ruling hivequeens to communicate quickly with their subjects, relaying commands from straas to straas in a massive chain. In their natural state the straas use this pheromone system only for communication, but since the vaasi became involved it is a tool of slavery. They can also communicate verbally, but few know any spoken languages and Hivequeen Celick prefers it this way. The rebel straas have learned Unispeak from the wolves and yaom, but have yet to master other languages.

The straas are now broken up into two camps: those controlled by Hivequeen Celick, the vaasi disguised as a hivequeen who uses modified pheromones to enslave her followers, and those who have broken free of her control. These two groups are in constant conflict, Hivequeen Celick brooking no resistance to her rule and the rebel straas fighting to free their people from oppression. There can be no quarter between the two groups and when they meet the battles are vicious, the rebel straas accepting the deaths of their race brothers as an unpleasant necessity of their cause.

The loyal straas number just over six million, and their numbers are increasing rapidly. Other than the Central Hive on Kosse, all straas settlements are roughly of equal size. Most of them are found on Kosse due to the tainted water supplies on Mesner, though the straas are making inroads on colonizing Mesner as well. All straas settlements besides the capital are made up of five thousand straas, and when the population of a settlement expands beyond this level the excess straas are sent with other extra straas from other settlements to form a new city on the edge of straas settled territory. Each of these cities is as much a fortress as a city, ringed with defensive walls, gunnery positions, and guard towers. Around these cities are the highly organized agricultural fields, forests, and mines that produce the resources the straas require. Under the guidance of Hivequeen Celick, the straas often clear an area of life completely before coming back through and rearranging it to suit their needs, changing forests to grasslands or deserts to swamp. Hivequeen Celick sees no value in land that is not used to maximum efficiency and exploits every bit of her territory. She assumes she will have conquered new territory by the time her current land becomes uninhabitable.

All loyal straas work constantly, being little more than mindless drones under the control of Hivequeen Celick. She grants them enough self-control to complete their assigned tasks, but not enough to come up with goals more grandiose than finishing their next assigned job. Limited by the pheromones, they are predictable and regimented in their thinking. Their creations are not artistic and their battle plans always the same. Creativity only appears when Hivequeen Celick or one of her top lieutenants oversees the drones personally. The straas spend their days working and their nights sleeping under strict schedules, with each minute of the straas's day accounted for. The pheromones trigger the pleasure centers of the straas mind continually so they actually enjoy this life and love Hivequeen Celick for it, but these feelings have a ring of hollowness that makes the drone straas appear melancholy to outsiders. Straas do not think of rebellion or disobedience of any kind as long as they are in range of Hivequeen Celick's pheromones. Instead, they work as hard as they can, a practice that leads them to an early grave when combined with Hivequeen Celick's indifference to the health of her minions. Hivequeen Celick has brainwashed, bribed, or intimidated a few free-minded straas to follow her without the mind control pheromones; they have been given a serum that makes them immune. These few free minds serve as Hivequeen Celick's elite, using their surviving creativity and free thinking to oversee their straas brothers. Any large-scale military operation is likely to be led by one of these straas, who are called the Chained Minds by the rebel straas.

Ninety-five percent of all straas are males, commonly referred to as drones, which carry out most of the manual labor and military duties Hivequeen Celick requires. The female straas are a tiny minority of the total population, and before the coming of

the vaasi they ruled the straas. Female straas can willingly undergo a transformation into an egg bearing hivequeen at any time after age six in Eotian years. The transformation makes them immobile due to their immense egg sac, and they gain an increased ability to emit pheromones. Originally these hivequeens led the straas, making all decisions among themselves through debate and a voting system based on seniority. Under Hivequeen Celick, they have become slaves. The hivequeens are used only for egg production, kept under close guard by Hivequeen Celick to ensure that she controls the means of reproduction for the straas. The mind control pheromones have a lessened effect on the hivequeens, requiring them to be drugged continually to keep them docile. New females are killed at birth unless a new hivequeen is projected to be needed in the future. Each settlement normally has five hivequeens. The rebels have managed to liberate a handful of females, most of which are growing into hivequeens so the straas may breed free of the mind control of Hivequeen Celick.



The straas have no family structure to speak of, instead organizing themselves into massive hives made up of thousands of individuals, all descended from the same family of hivequeens. Straas are often traded between hives to keep the gene pool moving and to ensure cooperation between hives, but these non-native straas only make up a small segment of each settlement's population. All straas of a hive consider each other brothers, even those who are originally from other hives. Although different hives may go to war over territory or resources, such conflicts are rare. Straas have no concept of ego as other species know it and do not understand why other species care what their fellows think of them, instead being concerned only with their own opinion of their actions. Straas lack such feelings as embarrassment or guilt, instead feeling regret over making an incorrect decision. This means many societal tools for controlling behavior, such as ostracism, do not function among the straas. They rely on their pheromone communication system to learn when they have done something wrong and take corrective action.

The straas have no government other than Hivequeen Celick, who rules all with an iron fist. Disobedience is met with death, though most straas are incapable of disobeying her. Hivequeen Celick completely controls the economy and production of the straas, using the labor of all her minions to further her aims of war and expansion. Every straas is involved in supporting her war machine, be it in growing food for the troops, building weapons, or going into battle. Individual straas have no property, as everything they own Hivequeen Celick considers hers. The only laws are Hivequeen Celick's dictates, which the straas are bound to follow anyway. These rules change at a moment's notice, and if outsiders were allowed into the straas territories they would have a hard time staying out of trouble. Outsiders are instead shot on sight by loyal straas, though they have been commanded to capture outsiders if they survive the initial attack. Such captives are interrogated at length about other factions in the Helios system and are eventually eaten by Hivequeen Celick who likes a change from eating straas all the time.

All straas loyal to Hivequeen Celick are expected to defend her territory to the death, and receive basic military training from an early age. A third of the population is made up of full-time soldiers who spend their time training or providing labor. It is difficult to travel anywhere in the straas territories without encountering these soldiers. The straas have no crime to speak of due to the control of Hivequeen Celick, who keeps everything orderly and productive. She has yet to launch more than probing attacks against the wolf and saurian settlements, testing their defenses before committing in full, but these scouting missions occur several times each month. While both the wolves and the saurians have better quality troops than Celick, she has the advantage of overwhelming numbers, at least on Thres. The straas are still building their industrial base; most of their soldiers are equipped with basic firearms and armor, with few vehicles or heavy weapons, but this is quickly changing. At the current rate of expansion and technological progress, it is only a matter of decades before the straas are able to overrun Thres, assuming the rebel straas do not succeed in their goals.

Despite their growing martial advantage on the surface of Thres the straas have not put the same effort into developing their space forces. When the straas arrived on Thres they engaged in a pitched space battle with the fleets of the Star tribe, destroying a large portion of the straas fleet and resulting in the death of hundreds of thousands of straas in disabled evacuation ships. The straas now control six

heavy, three mediumweight, eight light, and seventeen ultralight ships. The largest are evacuation ships, poorly suited for combat and used as troop transports instead. All the other surviving evacuation ships were disassembled and used for raw materials. A number of spaceship construction facilities exist in the straas controlled areas, but they are common targets of wolf and rebel straas sabotage, so Hivequeen Celick has decided they are more trouble than they are worth. For now, she cannot challenge the wolves in space combat with the remnant of her fleet. Instead, she concentrates on ground forces and surface weapons capable of striking targets in orbit. The straas are building a number of subterranean ballistic missile bases in their territory to shoot down the wolf fleet once a conflict breaks out. Hivequeen Celick wishes to bide her time to strike until she has overwhelming force, believing that if she allows the wolves sufficient time to recover from an attack they will simply use their space superiority to drop an asteroid on her territories. For now the wolves consider such an action only as a last resort; the resulting ash cloud would result in several years of harsh winters.

The rebel straas are drastically different from their mind-controlled relatives. They have been separated from the mind control pheromones of Hivequeen Celick long enough to break free of their control. This process takes at least fifty hours of separation, during which the straas attempts to carry out its last orders and reestablish contact with its fellow loyal straas. If a loyal straas finds rebels in its midst while removed from the pheromones of other loyal straas, it attacks them on the assumption they are causing the disruption. The process of removing a loyal straas from the pheromone commands of its fellows results in a very angry straas. After the pheromones run their course, the newly free straas universally come out of the experience with a deep hatred for Hivequeen Celick and what she has done to the straas people. Although Hivequeen Celick has overcome this feeling in some instances with brainwashing and other techniques, most free-minded straas have a nearly instinctive drive to destroy Hivequeen Celick and are immune to her pheromones. The common theory is that this of hatred is some type of implanted subconscious command the captured hivequeens place into their children. The hivequeens can tailor the minds of their offspring for specific jobs within their community; the idea of molding them to become resistance fighters doesn't seem that different.

Grouping into small teams, the rebel straas live like commandoes or guerillas most of the time. Most remain in straas territory, now immune to Celick's pheromones, striking back where they can and then disappearing into the loyal straas population. This guerilla operation has not been large enough to cause any significant damage to Hivequeen Celick's operations, but they have steadily increased their numbers by kidnapping loyal straas and isolating them from the pheromone control. The recent freeing of several female straas has greatly raised the spirits of the rebels and allowed their numbers to grow further. These females, most of which are on their way to becoming hivequeens, have all been hidden far from straas territory so they may be kept safe.

The other species of Thres, however, have a hard time differentiating the two groups of straas, and usually default to violence when encountering either group. Several years ago, the rebel straas made peaceful contact with the yaom, who read their intentions through Red Truth. With the help of the yaom, the rebel straas forged an alliance with the Wolf Tribes, though it is not a very trusting alliance. The wolves and elgies are still wary of the rebel straas, but are willing to assist them with non-military aid and intelligence. The two groups have developed an intricate system of codes to tell loyal straas from rebel straas, and the sharing of intelligence between the two groups has helped both factions greatly. Unless some great treachery occurs between the Wolf Tribes and the rebel straas, it is likely their relationship will only improve, but it is unlikely the wolves will ever fully accept the straas after they have spilt so much wolf blood for so many years.

THE SAURIAN COLONIES • • •

The smallest of the factions on Thres, the saurian colonies are the first stage in the Saurian Empire's attempt to claim Thres as their own. Not content with C'thalk, the Saurian Empire seeks more territory and the fact that the inhabitants of Thres put up such a fight only makes it more tempting for the saurians. Currently there are four major saurian settlements on the planet, with a combined population of forty thousand saurians, all of which are located on the continent of Borias.

The saurian colonies are only forty years old, settled by Imperial decree by representatives of Emperor Sergack XIII and some of the more powerful kurizar. The territory controlled by the saurians on Thres are a protectorate of the Emperor, and are thus under the jurisdiction of the Emperor and the Imperial Bureaucracy, though mercantile and military opportunities have attracted several kurizar to send representatives to the colonies. According to the rumor, the colonies will be united under a single kurizar in the next few years, and additional titles will be created according to established traditions. It is likely this kurizar will be General Kaia Whose-Sword-Cleaves-the-Sky, the current overseer of the colonies for the Emperor and a long-standing veteran of the Blood Guard. The existing kurizar of the Empire hope they can persuade the Emperor to allow them to claim territory on Thres as their own instead of creating new nobles, ever watchful for ways to increase their power, but they have made little progress so far.

The saurian colonies are all makeshift constructions that have received little planning or investment. Unsure if their work is simply going to end up in the hands of someone else, the nobles of the Saurian Empire are avoiding expending too many resources on Thres. Instead, they spend just enough to retain an interest, should the Emperor begin assigning territory to those with an existing interest. The Emperor has already decreed that any noble that can take land on the other continents of Thres can claim it as his own under the Empire, but so far none have had any success in doing so. Even founding more settlements seems to be becoming more difficult, as the wolves and straas grow more concerned about the saurian presence. The saurian settlements themselves are rarely attacked outright, but any saurian away from the settlements is at constant risk of attack. Because of this, the saurians travel in large groups at all times.

On Thres, the saurians are interested in resources, territory, and military conquest. They hope to eventually have a mighty war with the straas and wolves, but for now do not have the spaceships necessary to carry out such a war. The Empire is working on establishing industrial and resource centers on Thres to support such a war effort, but attacks from the other species on Thres make this difficult. The saurian settlements are a mixture of mining town, factory center, and armed camp, all of which are surrounded with walls dotted with gun turrets. All saurians on Thres are armed; standard laws regarding commoners and weapons are ignored for the most part due to the constant fear of attack.

There are only a few spaceships in the saurian colonies at any given time, usually less than ten, and most of these are Blood Guard ships. At least one Bloodfang frigate and four Fireclaw assault fighters are on duty at all times at Thres. These ships are usually kept safely hidden from the superior wolf and straas forces. The saurians, wolves, and straas exist in a three-way equilibrium, each afraid to commit too many resources to any military effort for fear of leaving themselves vulnerable to attack from the third party. The saurians have won most of their battles against the straas, but they have not fared so well against the superior technology and pilots of the Star tribe.

The saurians can be encountered in any area of Borias, always in large groups with armored vehicles. Most of their time outside the settlements is spent scouting enemy positions, searching for resources, surveying the land for new settlements, or hunting elgies, which some saurian nobles have come to consider a delicacy. They are rarely found on other continents due to the hostility of the other species on Thres. Though the saurians came to Thres looking for a battle to suit their power and honor, they are trying to avoid biting off more than they can chew.

LOCATIONS ON THRES • • •

On the five continents of Thres, there are thousands of settlements split among the four factions. Most settlements of the wolves and saurians are in the plains, while the yaom prefer mountains and the straas settle everywhere they can find room except for the tidal zones. No settlements are found in the large tidal zones that border every continent since any construction there would be washed out to sea.

◇ Cek

Leader: Master Polmeskaitan (or Master Polm to non-yaom)
Population: 12,567
Major Exports/Products: Clothes, pottery, metal goods, books, manufactured goods
Major Imports: Food, raw materials
Progress Level: 6
Purchase DC Limit: 40
Black Market DC: 40
Item Restriction Limit: None

The largest of the yaom settlements on Thres, it is the capital by virtue of it being the oldest yaom settlement and the home to the Hall of Masters, where the yaom masters hold their meetings. Its population exists because many yaom are required to support the governmental and industrial functions that occur in Cek. If these functions were not present, it would be a yaom settlement like any other.

Many yaom find it difficult to live in Cek and few plan to live there their entire lives. The city is busy most hours of the day and is where most non-yaom visit, filling the city with a constant flow of information that many yaom find annoying. Yaom who live in Cek for more than two decades often begin to lose their connection to Red Truth, subconsciously blocking the information flow to avoid the headaches that living in Cek often causes. This state is called being hard minded, and stops them from taking part in the daily polling. Those who suffer from it are often forcibly removed to other settlements. Most yaom who live in Cek spend several months each year in other settlements, calming their minds, and masters generally only pass through on their way to other places or for meetings at the Hall of Masters. The yaom of Cek are a serious, driven lot that have little time for niceties.

Cek itself is the center of industry and mass production in the yaom territories, home to several factories and production facilities. There are craftsmen in Cek hawking their wares, making it the best place to acquire yaom goods on Thres. There are several buildings that are set aside for visiting outsiders, but most wolves contact yaom at monasteries or in the wilderness as part of a quest rather than entering the city. Areas of Cek have electrical power and plumbing, but most dwellings do not, instead relying on public restrooms and candles.

At the center of Cek is the Hall of the Masters, the



tallest building the yaom have constructed on Thres and designed by the legendary yaom scientist Kolari-Dsi, who is said to have consulted Red Truth extensively during its construction. Twenty stories tall and remarkably thin, this ten sided building stretches like a spike from the center of the city, but is camouflaged to blend in with the nearby mountains when viewed from afar. This building contains meeting halls, meditation chambers, storage rooms, and other facilities necessary for the masters to carry out their duties. Outsiders are only rarely allowed within, and few yaom wish to disturb the masters' privacy. Some say the tower also includes chambers in its basement holding masters who have gone insane, but no one outside the ranks of the masters has ever seen such a structure.

Cek is hidden among the mountains of Ice-Edge, its buildings constructed out of native stone or colored to blend in with its surroundings. It is very difficult to find from the air or space unless you know where to look, and the low level of electrical activity in the city give little for most sensors to lock on to. The yaom guard its location closely, only letting a few among the Wolf Tribes know, and wiping the minds of all others who discover its location. The saurians and straas have yet to find Cek, but in the case of the latter it is only a matter of time.

◇ Darsoon Caravan

Leader: Elder Toli of the Gold Morn tribe
Population: 5,230
Major Exports/Products: Ceramics, wood products, baked goods, hides, meat
Major Imports: Cloth, manufactured goods
Progress Level: 6
Purchase DC Limit: 40
Black Market DC: 20
Item Restriction Limit: None

One of the hundreds of caravans that travel across the territories controlled by the Wolf Tribes, when in motion it is over two miles in length and is made up of over four hundred vehicles of various sizes, from wheeled ground transports to hovercraft to vectored thrust aircraft. One of the wealthier caravans, the Darsoon caravan is largely made up of motorized vehicles, as opposed to the animal drawn wagons of less fortunate caravans. Though the caravan could cover several hundred miles each day if necessary, it rarely travels more than one hundred and spends most of the rest of the time on industry, gathering food, and performing other necessary duties. The caravan moves roughly every three days, allowing its slower-moving livestock train to catch up with it before moving on. Making and breaking camp usually takes at least an hour, but when faced with a flood or a straas attack the entire tribe can be on the move in minutes.

Every tribe is said to be represented in the Darsoon Caravan, but since Moon and Black Cloud tribe members live in secret, no one can be sure. The tribes get along well within the caravan and ancestral rivalries rarely crop up, but there are occasional disagreements between the Edge Runners and Earth Turners over tribal responsibilities. A circle of twenty-four tribal elders, all of whom lead their own tribe members within the caravan, leads the caravan. The only divinely descended wolves in the caravan are Toli of the Gold Morn tribe and her family, who lead the council of elders. Toli has been a good leader during her short term in the role, having taken up leadership after her mother passed on. Toli's brother Baul, next in line to lead the caravan, is neither so well respected nor so wise; many in the caravan hope that Toli finds a mate soon to secure the path of succession. The head shaman of the caravan is Morr of the Flesh Smiths, who is widely renowned for his healing ability, saving individuals that other Flesh Smiths would write off as hopeless. Other caravans send their most grievously injured to Morr for healing, earning the Darsoon caravan the respect and friendship of many settlements.

There are only a handful of elgies in the Darsoon caravan, but this number has been increasing rapidly in recent years both through breeding and recruitment. The elgies of the Darsoon caravan have found their membership in the caravan to be

most profitable, including the discovery of a gold deposit along the caravan's regular path that they mine whenever the caravan is in the area. The wolves treat the elgies well, and their areas of expertise often prove useful to the caravan. Occasionally their moneymaking schemes frustrate the leaders of the tribe, but they have always been suitably generous with their profits.

Many members of the Darsoon caravan belong to the Green Serpent tribe. Over the course of the tribe's wanderings each year, they tend several agricultural areas and take care of the herds of livestock that follow the main section of the caravan. Several times each year the Darsoon caravan meets up with other caravans, exchanging food for manufactured goods and other necessities. On the days that would have been the solstices on the wolf homeworld, the Darsoon caravan returns to Rosheer, as do all caravans, for the Grand Conclave, at which time its members trade for rare goods.

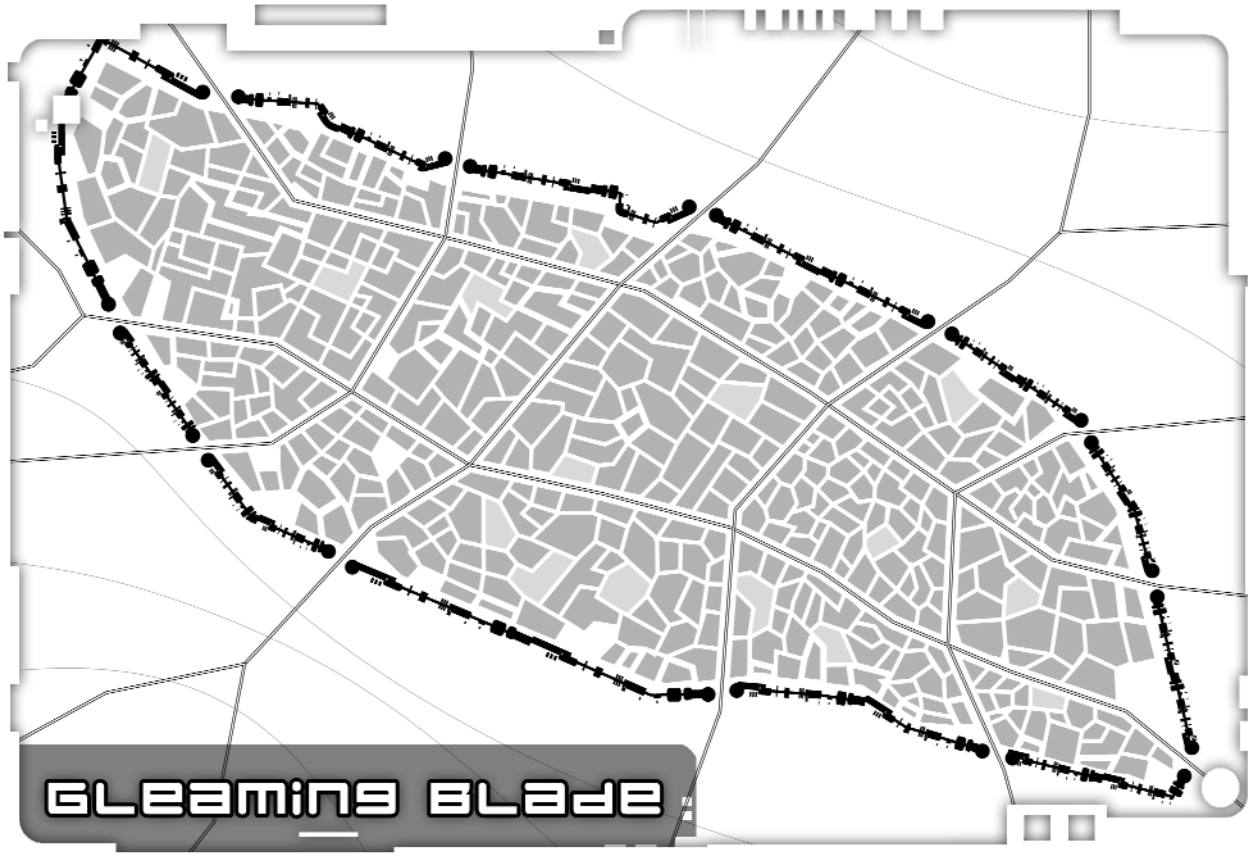
For most of the year, the Darsoon caravan remains in the western side of Haven, only turning east when returning to Rosheer. Thus the Darsoon caravan spends much of its time near the territory held by the straas, and the caravan has had a number of run-ins with the minions of the Hivequeen. The number of Blood Tooth wolves who travel with the caravan has increased dramatically in response to these attacks, and armored vehicles have been added to the caravan. Headed by Captain Haen of the Blood Tooth tribe, the new additions have proven themselves capable of fighting off straas attacks in a number of engagements, earning their welcome in the caravan. The main armament of the caravan is a pair of Stormbore Mobile Cannons, named Caterus and Snive after wolf heroes of legend.

Among the vehicles in the caravan are several Earth Rovers modified to carry machine shops, schools, medical facilities, and even mobile landing platforms for aircraft. The caravan carries most of the amenities one would expect from a Progress Level 6 civilization, relying on fusion power for all of its devices. Most families within the caravan own a portion of the vehicle they live in, paying rent or working as a unit and splitting the profits generated by any industry carried out within the vehicle.

◇ Gleaming Blade

Leader: General Kaia Whose-Sword-Cleaves-The-Sky
Population: 16,780
Major Exports/Products: Iron, silver, copper, scientific specimens
Major Imports: Manufactured goods, immigrants, weapons
Progress Level: 6
Purchase DC Limit: 45
Black Market DC: 10
Item Restriction Limit: None

The capital of the saurian colonies on Thres, it serves as the nerve center of all saurian operations on Thres. The headquarters of General Kaia Whose-Sword-Cleaves-the-Sky, who serves as the leader of the saurian expedition to Thres, it is also



the most heavily fortified of the saurian settlements. Not content with the troops sent by the kurizars, most of whom sent their worst troops and kept their best close at hand, General Kaia has requested and received several thousand Blood Guard troops to serve under her on Thres. These troops have been arriving over the last few months and have greatly strengthened the saurian position on the planet. Gleaming Blade was once guarded by ill-trained troops with poor morale, but now it is watched over by some of the best the Empire has to offer. The next straas or wolf attack is likely to be in for quite a surprise.

Gleaming Blade, or Blade as its inhabitants commonly call it, is surrounded by a ceramsteel plated wall thirty feet high and five feet thick. This wall is topped with machine guns, rocket launchers, and even some retrofitted spaceship energy weapons from the stores of the Blood Guard. The buildings are reinforced structures, and armored vehicles are common sights on the streets. By law, everyone in Gleaming Blade carries at least one firearm at all times, including commoners. Against commonly held ideals, General Kaia Whose-Sword-Splits-the-Sky has been known to treat commoners who prove themselves in battle as equals, earning her the respect of her followers but scorn from the nobles. The inhabitants of Gleaming Blade commonly believe they would have been wiped out years ago were it not for the wisdom of General Kaia. Even those soldiers sworn to kurizars back on C'thalk support the General's desire to become kurizar of Thres, though it goes against their liege lords' wishes. If this does come to pass, there are likely to be many defections to the new kurizar among the troops of Gleaming Blade.

Gleaming Blade is mostly inhabited by soldiers, miners, bureaucrats, and surveyors. The place has the feeling of a frontier boomtown, everyone walking around armed and expeditions looking for minerals always leaving the settlement. Law is loose but harsh in Gleaming Blade. Many of the strict social guidelines of the saurians have been relaxed in the settlement, but anyone who steps too far out of line is likely to be killed in short order. Many of the more severe laws are also relaxed, such as allowing the occasional brawl without charging those involved for assault or striking a noble. The General will not tolerate real criminals in her settlement, however, and anyone found guilty of a serious crime is executed; there are no other punishments in Gleaming Blade. She has no tolerance for thieves of any type and even petty theft is an executable offense. The General personally carries out all executions in the settlement, using her favored kinai blade.

Located in the southern reaches of the saurian territory on Borias, Gleaming Blade is primarily occupied with finding mineral deposits in the southern mountains and acting as a bulwark against any wolf advance. Thus far it has been successful on both fronts and sends regular shipments of iron and copper ore back to C'thalk. These shipments are not large enough to be profitable and getting them past the Star tribe fleet is difficult, making them more a symbol than a worthwhile venture. There are sufficient minerals on C'thalk to make the minerals on Thres unnecessary, but the saurians like the idea of conquering another world quite a bit.

◇ The Gravelands

According to velin legend Thres is a grave world, haunted by the spirits of the dead and populated by monuments to their existence. This not far from the truth, as much of the surface of Thres is covered by gravemarkers erected in the last days of the Star Confederation to commemorate those who fell in its defense and were then interred on Thres. Some of the fallen were infected with hostile nanites, creating areas of nanite infestation the wolves have come to call the Grave Plague.

The areas dominated by gravesites, called gravelands by the wolves and elgies, are most common in Haven, but are found on every continent and even underwater in some areas. Most of the gravelands are found in plains and steppes areas, though a few have been found beneath the polar ice and in the mountains and forests of Haven. The gravelands in the plains regions tend to be burial graves, while those in the mountains and forests are mausoleums or other aboveground structures. The most common type of grave in the gravelands is a simple headstone or flat stone detailing the name of the deceased and a few facts about their lives. These headstones are often found in massive groups, thousands upon thousands of headstones grouped into arrow straight rows. The deceased was usually buried below the headstone, usually without a casket or container, but now all remains have rotted away. A few corpses preserved by nanites and some relics of the Star Confederation survive in these underground graves, but they are few and far between. The wolves avoid all gravelands, but those known to be infected by nanites more so than others. The elgies have little use for them, while the straas and those saurians dishonorable enough to rob from the dead have occasionally found sufficient wealth or relics to make the effort worth it.

The above ground graves are far more ornate and durable, many of them standing today as they did during the last days of the Star Confederation. These structures are usually either mausoleums for corpses or small altars for the ashes of the deceased. Most of these structures were constructed by the wealthy for their fallen relatives, meaning they are sometimes filled with keepsakes of the deceased, such as jewels or family heirlooms. Thus

the above ground gravelands are the primary targets of straas and saurian grave robbers, though the wolves work to stop these efforts.

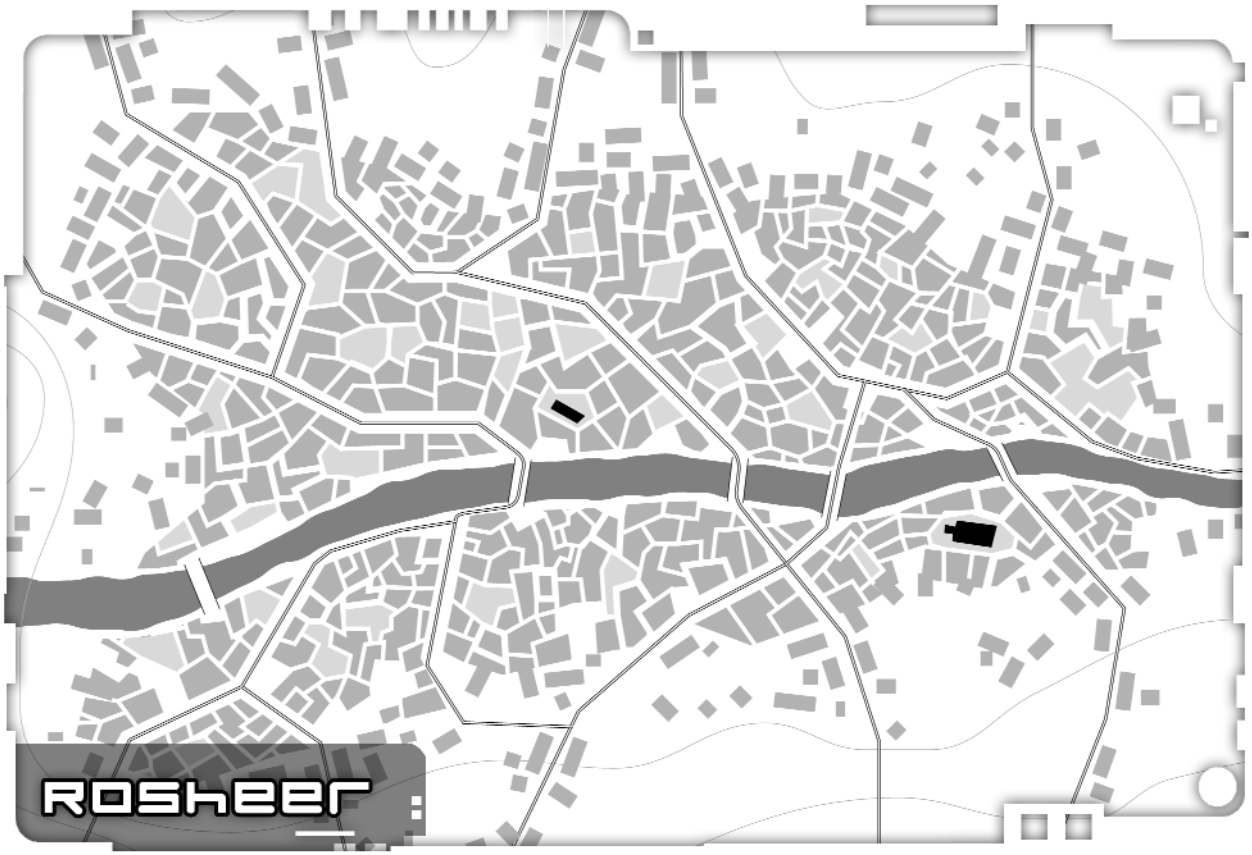
Both types of gravelands have an equal chance of being infected with the Grave Plague. The Grave Plague normally takes the form of nanite colonies that attack any organic matter they come into contact with, creating areas of dead plants around infected graves. Others interfere with the infected person's digestive ability, and some seek out and destroy technology. The nanites try to spread as quickly as possible and infect as many hosts as it can. If an infected person reaches a settlement, they can inflict great harm. The wolves and yaom have developed a means to predict what type of nanite infects a grave by observing the area, but this system is not foolproof. The straas and the saurians, the two species that could truly use this knowledge, have not taken the time to develop this skill.

The yaom avoid gravelands at all times, as many yaom find the information loss caused by death to be disconcerting. Some yaom say they can see spirits of the deceased in gravelands, lurking in the Red Truth and trying to communicate with the living, but such encounters rarely go well if the stories are to be believed. Many yaom dismiss these stories as superstition, but regardless of their beliefs few yaom visit gravelands. It is little wonder they cremate their dead and spread their ashes across many distant locations.

◇ Rosheer

Leader: Pejin of the White Claws
Population: 845,492 most of the time, over 4 million during the Grand Conclaves.
Major Exports/Products: Manufactured goods, weapons, spaceships, trade
Major Imports: Raw materials, good
Progress Level: 7
Purchase DC Limit: 65
Black Market DC: 15
Item Restriction Limit: None

Capital of the Wolf Tribes and the largest city in that faction's territories, Rosheer is also the largest city on Thres. For most of the year it has more than eight hundred thousand inhabitants, but during the five days surrounding the Grand Conclaves, held at the days approximating winter and summer solstice on the wolf homeworld, almost the entire wolf species crowd around Rosheer. During this short time, the city overflows with people and tent cities surround it in every direction as far as the eye can see. The city was designed to hold the massive crowds involved in this celebration, so its streets are wide, its public fountains plentiful, and sanitation services vast. Even so, during the Grand Conclave the city often stinks of refuse and sweat, but it is the primary holiday among the wolves and they are too busy dancing, celebrating, and singing to notice. The elgies would prefer to avoid the city during these days, but as part of the Wolf Tribes they have a responsibility to be present.



Rosheer's buildings can house upwards of two million inhabitants, but for most of the year they stand empty, their owners are out wandering with their caravans. Multiple parties share the building over the course of a year, alternating turns using the building. The population explodes during the Grand Conclave, but it also fluctuates throughout the year as inhabitants come and go, causing a constant adjustment of total population numbers. Rosheer has few permanent residents. Correspondingly, the city often looks deserted as few people are on the streets at most hours. Most of the inhabitants work in the factories and workshops of Rosheer producing most of the manufactured goods used by the Wolf Tribes. All the ground vehicles of the caravans are built in Rosheer, and it is the site of the wolf spaceship yards. The Rosheer spaceport is the largest one in the Helios system and can handle over fifty ships at a time, in addition to repairing or building up to ten ships at a time. The entire area is under heavy guard, including permanently stationed interceptors and a large number of plasma and missile batteries. While Rosheer in general is not a fortress, the spaceport certainly is.

The area around Rosheer is grasslands in every direction, though much of the grass is dead due to the twice yearly gathering for the Grand Conclave. The Besar River flows through the city and eventually on to the sea, providing a trade route for those caravans that stay near the river. There are a number of settlements farther down stream and flat-bottomed boats regularly ply the river, but tidal surges can prove very dangerous if trips down the river are not timed precisely.

A council of local tribal elders led by Pejin of the White Claws, who is also the leader of the White Claw tribe, rules Rosheer. When the Grand Conclave is in town, the leaders of each tribe are technically in charge of the city, but out of tradition they rarely interfere with the internal matters of Rosheer. The tribal council, most of whom have some measure of divine descent, meets daily to discuss matters facing the city, and are generally well regarded by the populace.

Every once in a while a scandal forces one of the elders to step down, but such events are rare. All inhabitants of the city are welcome at meetings of the elders and, according to wolf tradition, are allowed to speak their mind on any subject.

Law enforcement in Rosheer is handled by the Silver Eye tribe, which has a sizable force of peacekeepers in the city at all times. Rosheer is a vital resource in the wars against the straas and the saurians, so fears of sabotage are rampant. All major factories have permanent guards stationed. Forty thousand members of the Blood Tooth tribe defend the city, including numerous armored vehicles and aircraft. Most of these troops are based in barracks throughout the city, with the largest concentration stationed in the spaceport.

◇ The Central Hive

Leader: Hivequeen Celick
Population: 500,000
Major Exports/Products: Straas warriors, manufactured goods
Major Imports: Food, raw materials
Progress Level: 6
Purchase DC Limit: NA
Black Market DC: NA
Item Restriction Limit: None

The center of the Straas Hive Legions and home of the Hivequeen Celick, the Central Hive is the only straas settlement with a permanent population above five thousand. It lies at the center of the continent of Kosse, roughly equidistant from the other settlements on the continent to ensure the control of Hivequeen Celick's pheromones. The Central Hive is a massive settlement that is more fortress than city, with over half of its population dedicated to the protection of Hivequeen Celick.

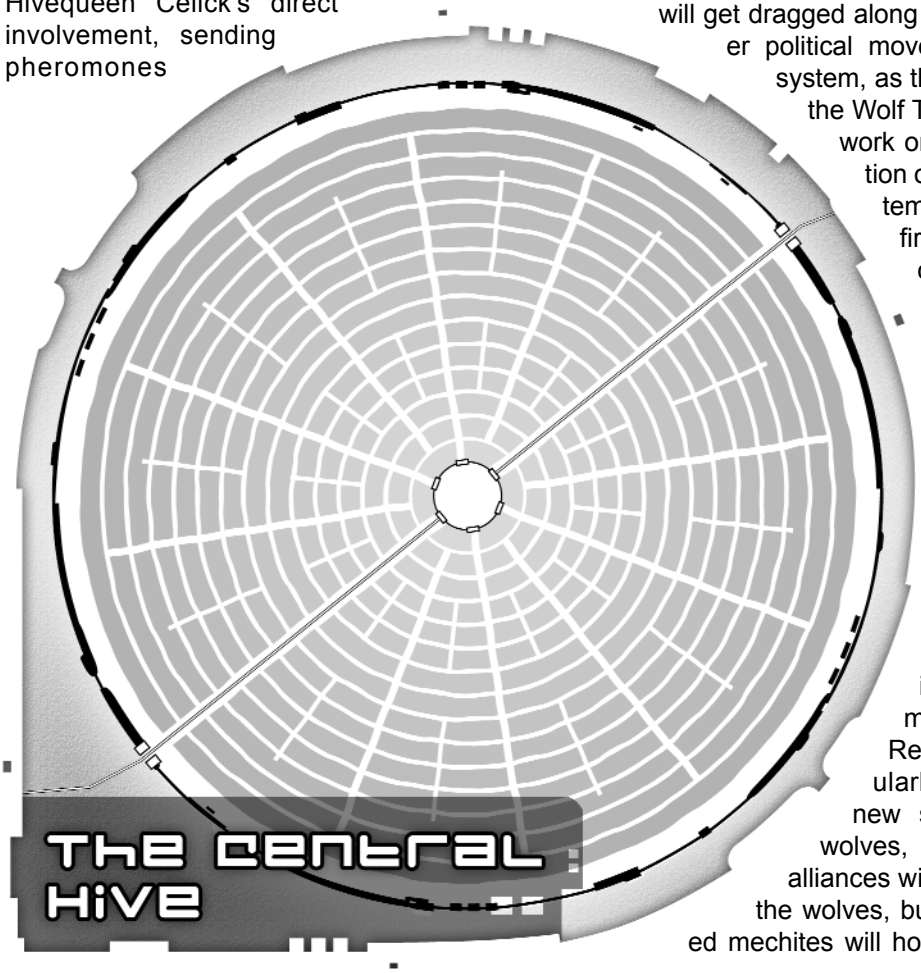
The Central Hive is almost a perfect circle ten miles across, surrounded by a massive wall and numerous weapon emplacements. At the center of the city is the Royal Dome where Hivequeen Celick is said to reside, though her actual quarters are deep below the Royal Dome to protect against orbital bombardment. The Royal Dome is also home to over one hundred hivequeens that Hivequeen Celick uses to populate her straas hordes. These hivequeens are kept under constant guard deep within the Royal Dome and many rebel straas have died trying to free them. The city itself is constructed with a tightly ordered layout, twenty major thoroughfares heading from the Royal Hive to the edges of the city intersecting with fifty streets in the shape of concentric circles that increase in size as they approach the wall. Smaller streets crisscross the city as well, all of which are laid out for maximum efficiency. The buildings of the Central Hive are concrete and metal, most of them looking more like armored bunkers than homes or factories. Every building in the city is designed to withstand significant damage, and weapon emplacements are a common feature on rooftops. The city would be visually unappealing, if the mind-controlled straas were able to consider such notions.

In addition to providing barracks for a quarter of a million soldiers and the necessary bureaucracy for Hivequeen Celick's government, the Central Hive also is home to many factories, most of which produce weapons and other military goods. The Central Hive is the primary producer of weapons in the straas territories, as Hivequeen Celick wishes to keep weapon production facilities under her direct control. Although the straas have a number of spaceship construction installations spread throughout their settlements, most are able to only handle ships of light or ultralight size and take years to finish a single ship. Therefore Hivequeen Celick

has decreed that a massive subterranean shipyard be built in the Central Hive, able to handle medi-umweight ships and increase the speed of production. This shipyard is not yet finished, but it is already capable of working on light and ultralight ships. The new shipyards are a primary target of the wolves and the rebel straas, but thus far neither group has been able to breach its defenses. The Central Hive has a large spaceport located near the Royal Dome, at which half the straas fleet is stationed at any given time.

The inhabitants of the Central Hive spend their days working, going home directly afterward and sleeping. They have no social lives or entertainment, only existing to work and fight for their master. All inhabitants of the city are straas, making it nigh impossible for a non-straas to move through the city undetected. Rebel straas have a much easier time, being able to blend in perfectly with the mind-controlled straas. The streets of the Central Hive are nearly empty at most hours, only becoming busy during changes in shift. Other than military and government vehicles, there are no land vehicles in the Central Hive. All workers live close enough to their places of employment to walk to work.

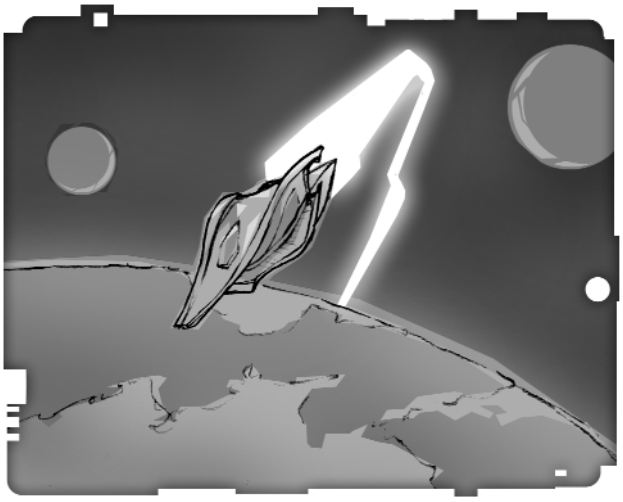
The rebel straas have several operatives in the Central Hive, all of whom are more concerned with gathering information than sabotage. These rebels are difficult to distinguish from the populace without Hivequeen Celick's direct involvement, sending pheromones to nearby straas and seeing who does not respond. Such efforts are rare, as they put Hivequeen Celick at risk. Most of the time, she sends her minions after any straas she suspects and executes him just in case.



Relations with Other Planets of the Helios System • • •

Due to the many factions on Thres, relations with other planets are complicated, and will remain so for quite some time. The Wolf Tribes obviously are in conflict with the Saurian Empire, and will remain so for the foreseeable future. The Wolf Tribes are likely to favor allying with the Dawning Star Republic and the velin, seeing them as being fellow mammals and therefore trustworthy. The other species of the system will have to work to earn the trust of the Wolf Tribes, though as soon as the vaasi make their presence known the wolves will be at the head of any offensive against them. The wolves will be willing to put aside other conflicts to fight the vaasi, possibly even coming to a truce with the saurians if it means they will enter the fight as well. If the wolves learn the truth of the Law-Keepers on Hephaestus, they will seek to help them, especially since many wolves stand among the Law-Keepers. Seeing the wolves and saurians fight side by side on Hephaestus may be the inspiration the wolves need to accept peace with the saurians. The elgies will get dragged along with the wolves in whatever political movements they make in the system, as they are only a small part of the Wolf Tribes. If a chance arises to work on the tentaari gateway station or to escape the Helios system, the wolves are one of the first factions to take up such offers, wishing to see more of the stars. The wolves will gradually lose their respect for the tentaari, especially if their true motivations and past come to light.

The yaom are not as interested in material matters or the lives of other species as the wolves, preferring solitude to socializing. Unless it can provide them with more of an understanding of Red Truth, they are not particularly interested in meeting new species. As allies of the wolves, they will likely enter into alliances with other species along with the wolves, but only the computer-minded mechites will hold any real interest for the



yaom. The yaom will be quick to realize the threat of the vaasi, however, especially once they learn that the vaasi are able to interact with Red Truth. The tentaari avoid the yaom as much as possible, fearing that the yaom will learn their secrets and expose their weaknesses to the other species of Helios.

The straas under the control of Hivequeen Celick seek to lay waste to the other inhabitants of Helios and claim their worlds for the Hivequeen. They will attack every enemy they come across, though the Hivequeen may make peace agreements with other factions to avoid making too many enemies at once. These treaties will be broken without concern when they become inconvenient. Unless the Hivequeen Celick is slain, she will cause many problems for the other species of Helios. Her first goal will be to conquer Thres, and then move on to Eos, the moons of Hesperos, and finally C'thalk, tackling it last due to its large population and developed industrial base. Hivequeen Celick has centuries to live, so she has patience in these pursuits. When she learns of the vaasi hiding in the Cronus Belt or on Eos, she will attempt to make contact, but will not bow to the leadership there. Instead, she will use her millions of straas minions to make her own play to lead the vaasi of the Helios system, though she will have tough time winning such a conflict without making quite a few political allies. The chaos of such a conflict could provide an excellent opportunity for the enemies of the vaasi to strike against them.

The saurians of the Thres colonies are loyal citizens of the Empire. Any conflict the Empire enters will be reflected in the colonies. Over time more saurian colonists will arrive on Thres, eventually forcing a confrontation between the other species and the saurians. If a kurizar of Thres is named, this will only speed matters up, as the new noble works to secure his new territory.

Adventure Ideas for Thres • • •

◇ Grave Robbers

A group of straas scouts steal a relic from the gravelands, awakening several ancient defensive measures installed on the mausoleum they pilfer from. The defenses include several robots that run amok among the surrounding area, attacking everything nearby in their search for the relic. It is up to the player characters to find and return the relic in order to stop the destruction.

◇ Lost Caravan

One of the caravans of the Wolf Tribes has gone missing and the tribes are interested in hiring the player characters to find out what happened to it. Alternately, if the characters are from Thres, a relative could have been in the caravan. The caravan was attacked by a group of straas infiltrators and fled through the northern mountains of Haven, trying to escape the straas while reaching safe territory. The straas have prepared this ambush for some time and have brought radio and sensor jammers with them, making it very difficult to contact or find the caravan. When the characters find the caravan they will have to find a way to stop the straas and get the caravan back safely.

◇ Madness

While traveling the player characters begin experiencing strange hallucinations and headaches with no obvious cause. They soon encounter a yaom master who is losing his mind to senility and whose powers are quickly going out of control. The players must find a way to stop this before they are enveloped in his insanity. Killing the master, on the other hand, may well produce an enraged information ghost.

◇ Sunken Treasure

While traveling near a tidal region in southern Borias, the player characters find a damaged Star Confederation ship that could be worth a considerable amount as salvage. The player characters have to find a way to get at the ship while avoiding the tidal cycle. The saurians have also found the ship and are interested in salvaging it, so the player characters will likely have a fight on their hands.

◇ The Great Race

The player characters are invited to take place in a ceremonial overland race as part of a wolf celebration. There are few rules governing the race, and combat is allowed, meaning the player characters may have a rough time reaching the finish line. It's worth it, though; the prize is a relic recently recovered by an elgie trader.

SPECIES • • •

◇ Elgies

Elgies are a small species, similar in appearance and size to a terran monkey or lemur. They are mammals and are completely covered in fur, usually red, orange or brown in color. Black-furred elgies are born occasionally, but are considered a sign of bad luck and in less enlightened times were often outcasts. The elgies have a gestation period of six months and give birth to live young, but the newborns remain in a special pouch located on the elgie female's chest until they are eight weeks old. The elgies are descendants of the mammalian species of the Star Confederation, but also developed a system of birth similar to that of the marsupial mammals of Australia back on Earth. Elgies are extremely active creatures, having a very high metabolism and requiring a great deal of food.

Other species consider them hyperactive, but elgies are merely extremely energetic, not impatient or scatterbrained. Once an elgie puts his mind to a project or cause, very little can dissuade him from his course. Stubbornness is a highly valued trait among the elgies.

Compared to wolves, humans, and most other species, elgies breed freely and reproduce often with multiple partners. On their homeworld the elgies were one of the smallest mammals on their planet; their high reproductive rate is thought to be an adaptation to being prey to so many predators. Most female elgies will have upwards of twenty children during their lifetime, and most come in groups of three to four. An elgie population can quickly recover from natural disasters, and in a relatively safe environment like Thres can expand quickly. While the elgies have slowed down their mating habits while living among the wolves, they still are the fastest growing tribe among the Wolf Tribes. If their current rate of growth continues, they will outnumber the wolves in three centuries.

Elgies do not have strong family ties, other than maternal links. Most elgie fathers make an attempt to care for their children, a practice that has increased in frequency since the elgies have lived among the wolves, but in centuries previous the fathers of elgie children had no societal obligation to their children. Since elgie children tend to come in such large numbers, they are raised communally. All females and older children of a community work together to raise the children of the settlement. This model has begun to change, as elgie families decrease in size and more female elgies enter the work force, no longer burdened with raising children.

On their homeworld, the elgies were of a much lower level of technological sophistication had just recently developed the printing press. The elgie homeworld of Durg was a heavily forested world with few oceans, broken up into a number of city-states, each with its own royal family. The elgies are very clever species and they recognized the advantages that allying with the wolves would bring, eventually uniting as a species to invite the wolves to share their world. When Durg was destroyed, the wolves evacuated several thousand elgies with their fleet, but hundreds of millions of elgies perished on Durg when it was struck by plague. The elgies who lived through the plague suffered from survivor guilt as so few of them remained, but they also have a strong drive to survive, as there are so few of them left.

Among the Wolf Tribes the elgies have found a niche in the cracks of the traditional tribal relationships, taking on jobs that the wolves never realized they were missing. The Elgie tribe, led by a democratically elected elgie for a one-year term, has found its greatest success as bankers and inventors, since wolves traditionally do not loan money between tribes or assist with research. The current leader of the Elgie tribe, Moril Daughter of Takkenur, has served four terms as the tribal leader, spearheading an effort to involve elgie scientists and technicians with the operations of other tribes. The naturally cunning elgies have acclimated to their new situation, and they now possess a better understanding of technology than the wolves who taught them. They are quickly proving that the effort to save their species was not wasted.

Species Traits

Elgies share the following species traits.

Type: Monstrous Humanoid

Size: Small. Elgies gain a +1 size bonus to Defense, a +1 size bonus on Attack rolls, and a +4 size bonus to Hide checks. They take a -4 penalty on grapple checks. Their lifting and carrying limits are three-quarters of those of a Medium-size character.

Elgies must use two hands to wield a Medium-size weapon, and light weapons for them are Tiny or smaller.

Ability Modifiers: +2 Intelligence, +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, -2 Strength

Speed: 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): Elgies have low-light vision. They can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. They retain the ability to distinguish color and detail under these situations.

Opposable Feet: Elgies can use their feet as if they were hands, with the standard penalties for using two hands simultaneously.

ELSIES



Skill Bonus: Elgies get a +2 bonus to Climb, Jump, and Tumble checks.
Free Language Skills: Read/Write Language (Qurous), Speak Language (Qurous, Unispeak)
PL Familiarity: 6
Level Adjustment: +0

◇ Straas

The six-limbed straas look like a monstrous version of an ant, covered in spiked chitin plating and possessing double jointed limbs all in a shade of black or gray. Most other species find their appearance deeply disconcerting, their faceted, bulbous eyes betraying little emotion. The behavior of the straas loyal to the Hivequeen Celick does little to allay such fears. To most who deal with the straas, they are a warmongering race that cannot be dealt with through any means but violence.

In their natural state, the straas exist in a society somewhat similar to terran ants. Most straas are males, while a very small number are females who can go through a lengthy transformation process to become a hivequeen at any point after age six. Once the transformation is complete, the hivequeen may mate with a male straas and produce eggs by the dozen, usually laying upwards of two hundred eggs a year. The hivequeen is completely immobile while laying eggs and requires great amounts of food and water, which must be brought to her. The straas protect their hivequeens at all costs; on the straas homeworld they lived in the center of immense armored hives. The straas eggs hatch after eight months, and the straas reaches adulthood at age six. Straas females are born when a hivequeen's instincts tell her a new hivequeen is needed, such as when new territory becomes available or an existing hive becomes too large for the hivequeen to manage. The new female is usually allowed several years of wandering and education before becoming a hivequeen in her own right, possibly founding a new hive in the process. Founding a new hive is a very important event, as several hundred straas leave their old hive with their new hivequeen and build a new settlement wherever the hivequeen believes to be suitable. Straas have little concept of family and consider all of their species to be related on some level, but a family that occasionally breaks out in to violence when debates cannot be settled otherwise.

Straas do not undergo adolescence as other races do. Instead, they grow at a steady rate throughout their entire lives, and elderly straas are extremely large. Straas also do not suffer physical debilitation as they age, and are strongest in their last years. They do suffer severe mental damage as they age, however. Elderly straas often end their own lives to avoid the senility of their later years, though the rituals involved in doing so are largely forgotten now. The rebel straas instead grow more and more suicidal as they age, looking to die in a glorious battle for their people.

The straas are a very efficient species, having much less interest in entertainment and such diversions than other species. They have a strong sense of duty and obligation to their hive and its queen, to the point they will sacrifice themselves without hesitation to serve their hive. This obedience means there was less free thought among the straas than other species, even before the mind control pheromones were introduced. Hivequeen Celick uses this species trait of hard work to her advantage; it did not take too much effort to turn the straas into the mindless drones most of them are now. The rebel straas show this dedication to hive and queen as unending pursuit of their cause, no matter the odds. Though the rebel straas are by any measurement fanatical about their cause, their limited contact with the wolves and the elgies has encouraged some exploration of other aspects of life they have not pursued previously.

One major difference between the straas and other species is that straas have no concept of ego or shame. They are nearly incapable of concerning themselves with what others think, partially due to their limited ability to empathize with other species. Most other species find this trait deeply annoying, if not disturbing, and it greatly limits the diplomatic talents of the straas. Straas are always sure of what they can or cannot accomplish, making no boasts of being more skilled than they are, and are not concerned if others see them as being weak, foolish, or unskilled.

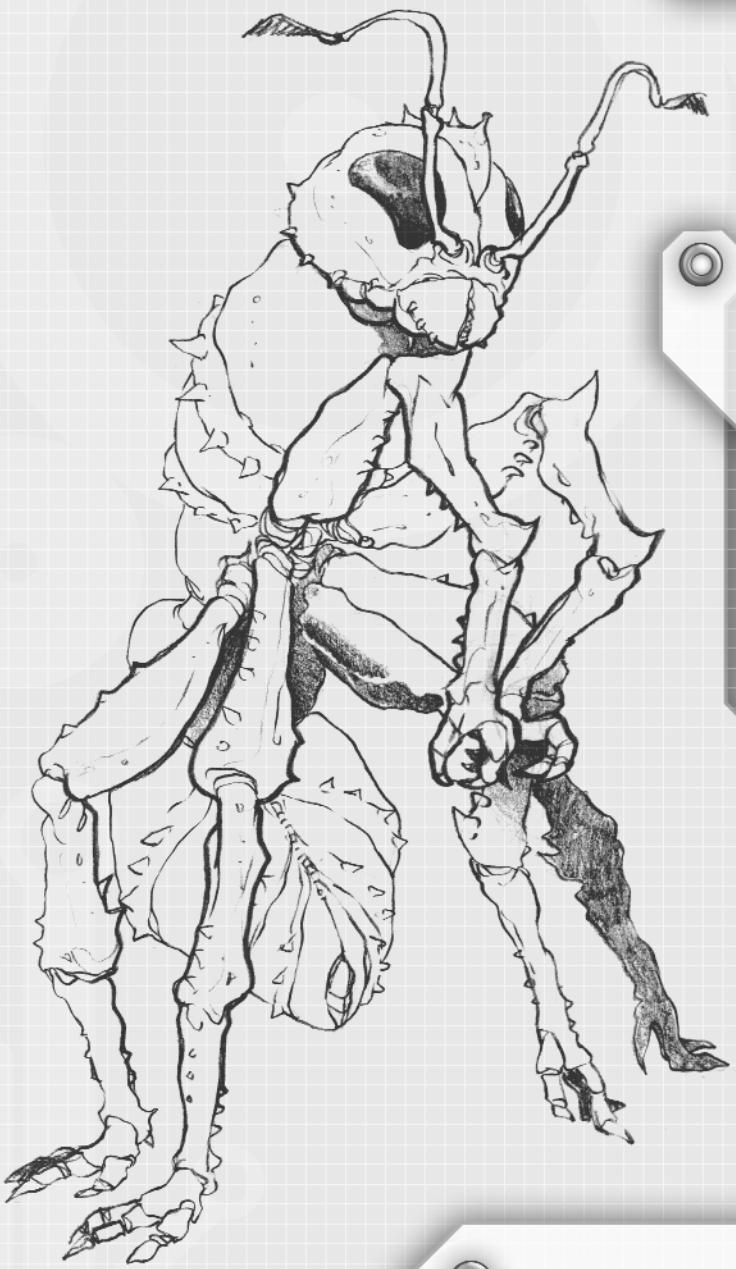
Straas converse using pheromones, allowing them to communicate quickly in groups and relay messages over great distances by passing the pheromone from one straas to the next. Now Hivequeen Celick exploits this natural system to rule the straas, though the rebel straas still use it for their basic communication. Straas can learn to speak Unispeak, but do so by vibrating several plates in their throats, creating a tinny voice that sounds like a buzzing speaker. Most races find this at least slightly grating.

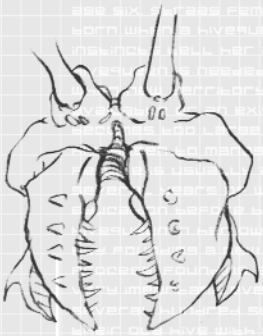
Species Traits

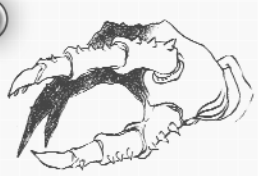
Straas share the following species traits.
Type: Vermin
Size: Medium. Straas have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
Ability Modifiers: +2 Dexterity, -2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma
Speed: 20 ft.
Ability Scores: Despite being Vermin, straas have an Intelligence score.
Aging (Ex): Straas do not suffer penalties to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution as they age, nor do they gain a bonus to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Instead they gain a

STRAAS









bonus to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution and suffer a penalty to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. The bonuses/penalties are +/-1 at Middle Age, +/-2 at Old, and +/-3 at Venerable.

Armor Restrictions: A straas cannot wear armor designed for other species. Straas armor is larger and costs more than similar armor sized for a Medium-size character; increase the Purchase DC of straas armor by +2.

Darkvision (Ex): Straas have darkvision with a range of 60 ft.

Limited Occupations: Straas may only select from the following occupations: Blue Collar, Doctor, Drone, Emergency Services, Military, Rebel, or Technician.

Natural Armor: The hard chitin of the straas provides a +2 natural armor bonus to Defense.

Pheromones (Ex): Straas communicate using pheromones, allowing them to silently communicate with other straas with a range of 600 ft. Straas PCs are assumed to not be part of the mind-controlled legions of Hivequeen Celick. Those straas who are mind-controlled automatically start with the Hivequeen Celick allegiance. They gain a morale bonus to Will saves when a large number of straas are within 600 ft, as their pheromones help fortify the minds of their allies.

Number of Straas within 600 ft.	Will Saving Throw Bonus
5-25	+1
26-125	+2
126-625	+3
626-3125	+4
3126+	+5

Loyal straas suffer an additional -2 penalty to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. These penalties are lost, along with the bonus to Will saves, when the straas is out of range of Hivequeen Celick's pheromones for fifty hours. After this time has passed, the straas suffers a terrible headache for one hour, effectively becoming nauseated. Once this hour is up the character gains free will and becomes a rebel straas.

Resistance to Massive Damage (Ex): Straas gain a +5 species bonus on Fortitude saves to negate the effects of massive damage.

Saving Throw Bonuses: Unlike most vermin, straas are not immune to mind-affecting effects. The Straas are highly resistant to mind-affecting effects, however, and gain a +2 species bonus to all Will saves against mind-affecting effects. They also receive a +2 species bonus to Fortitude saves against poison.

Scent (Ex): This ability allows the straas to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell. Creatures with the scent ability can identify familiar odors just as humans do familiar sights.

The straas can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents can be detected at triple normal range. When a straas detects a scent, the exact location is not revealed-only its presence somewhere within range. The straas can take a move or attack action to note the direction of the scent. If it moves within 5 feet of the source, the straas can pinpoint that source.

A straas with the scent ability can follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track. The typical DC for a fresh trail is 10 (no matter what kind of surface holds the scent). This DC increases or decreases depending on the strength of the quarry's odor, the number of creatures being tracked, and the age of the trail. For each hour that the trail is cold, the DC increases by 2. The ability otherwise follows the rules for the Track feat. Straas tracking by scent ignore the effects of surface conditions and poor visibility.

Free Language Skills

Loyal Straas: None.
Rebel Straas: Speak Language (Unispeak), Read/Write Language (Unispeak)

PL Familiarity: 6

Level Adjustment: +0

◇ Wolves

The wolves are a mammalian species evolved from plains-dwelling carnivores of their homeworld, which were once similar to the wolves of Earth. The wolf species is humanoid, evolved from quadrupeds, and they demonstrate this heritage by often running on all fours when needing extra speed. The wolves are a lean species of runners, having little fat on their bodies and an extremely aerodynamic form. They are taller than humans, but usually slouch so they seem several inches shorter than their true height. This slouching looks not so much like laziness, but instead a preparation to leap or strike out. Their limbs are long, allowing them an immense stride. Wolves are covered in short, thick fur that makes them well suited for the cool climate of Thres. Their fur is usually brown, red, or black, but other hues are known in small numbers. This coat is a source of pride, and dirty or unkempt wolves are looked down on. Grooming is a group activity among close friends or mates, and is a sign of great trust.

WOLVES





Wolves place a high value on family, and can often recite the names and deeds of their ancestors going back many generations. With few names available, it is common for wolf children to take on the name of a recently deceased relative, creating a continuous cycle of repeating names within many families. Wolves mate for life and do not understand divorce; the only ways out of a mating are death or the Ending Path, in which one of the pair leaves on an indefinite trip. Such a journey never ends, and the individual on it and the mate left behind may not remarry, but through this journey they are not expected to live together.

Every member of the family is involved in raising children within the household, which can encompass several generations and uncles, cousins, and other less direct relatives. Wolf households are notoriously large and united; you mess with one member of a household and you mess with all of them. These households gather into tribes, which are basically a large grouping of allied families, but also act as trade unions and political factions. Sometimes wolf families are split up by tribal concerns, such as needing representatives for a new caravan or settlement, but all families reconvene each year during the Grand Conclave and catch up on the year's happenings.

Wolves give birth to live young, usually in litters of two or three children. They have a gestation period of eight months, and wolves are full grown at age fifteen. Puberty for wolves is particularly hard, as they increase drastically in size, develop their natural weapons, and have to deal with a gamut of emotions more extreme than humans suffer. This often leads adolescent wolves to strike out on their own for several years to settle their thoughts, during which time they travel Thres, looking to experience life. This tradition helps to build the social fabric and self-reliance of the wolves and is seen as a holy, inspired event brought about by the spirits of the All-God so wolves can learn more of or about the universe. This wanderlust never completely fades in most wolves, who continue their journeys throughout their lives, and is the cause for their nomadic culture.

Though wolves do place a high value on traits like bravery and loyalty, they have no strict system of honor like the saurians. They have a far less stringent system, shunning those who show negative traits. Such ostracism rarely lasts long, assuming the offending wolf makes attempts to correct his actions. Wolves believe strongly in forgiveness and second chances, and do not think that the death penalty is a suitable penalty under any circumstances. The wolves believe in exile instead, hoping that the All-God will find the banished individual and send him on a quest that will teach him the error of his ways. Crime is not unheard of among the wolves, but there are few repeat offenders.

Following the will of the All-God, creator of the universe and the god-facets, the wolves are a deeply religious people. They believe in a myriad of spirits that surround them on a daily basis and are owed respect, but not necessarily worship. The divinely descended leaders of the tribes are the most immediate aspect of these beliefs, and they are treated with respect by all wolves. Technically, the divine wolves have the right to help themselves to anything owned by a wolf and can give orders and expect obedience, but most realize that doing so is a quick way to alienate their followers, who expect their respect to be reciprocated. Most of the divinely descended wolves are raised from birth to be leaders. They lead not just with commands, but also by example, exemplifying the traits wolves hold dear.

Species Traits:

Wolves share the following species traits.

Type: Monstrous Humanoid

Size: Medium. Wolves have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Ability Modifiers: +2 Dexterity, -2 Intelligence

Speed: 30 ft.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): A wolf has low-light vision. He can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight and similar conditions of shadowy illumination. He retains the ability to distinguish color and detail under these situations.

Natural Weapons (Bite, Claw): A wolf can replace an unarmed attack with a bite attack (1d4 points of lethal piercing damage) or claw attack (1d4 points lethal slashing damage). Using natural weapons to deal lethal damage does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Feats such as Combat Martial Arts may increase the amount of damage dealt.

Run on All Fours: Wolves can choose to increase their speed by 10 feet by running on their hands and legs. While doing so they may not have anything in their hands and cannot be wearing heavy armor or be heavily encumbered.

Scent (Ex): This ability allows the wolf to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell. Creatures with the scent ability can identify familiar odors just as humans do familiar sights.

The wolf can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, the range increases to 60 feet; if downwind, it drops to 15 feet. Strong scents can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents can be detected at triple normal range. When a wolf detects a scent, the exact location is not revealed-only its presence somewhere within range. The wolf can take a move or

attack action to note the direction of the scent. If it moves within 5 feet of the source, the wolf can pinpoint that source.
A wolf with the scent ability can follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track. The typical DC for a fresh trail is 10 (no matter what kind of surface holds the scent). This DC increases or decreases depending on the strength of the quarry's odor, the number of creatures being tracked, and the age of the trail. For each hour that the trail is cold, the DC increases by 2. This ability otherwise follows the rules for the Track feat. Wolves tracking by scent ignore the effects of surface conditions and poor visibility.
Skill Bonuses: Wolves receive a +2 species bonus to Sense Motive and Survival skill checks.
Free Language Skills: Read/Write Language (Wolf Pictograms), Speak Language (Howltongue, Unispeak)
PL Familiarity: 6
Level Adjustment: +0

◇ Yaom

The yaom are a race of warm-blooded reptiles adapted for living in barren, dry conditions. They thrive on sunlight and often grow ill when removed from it for long periods of time. Yaom are completely hairless, and are instead covered by a thick layer of small scales. From a distance their skin looks smooth, but up close the thousands of scales become apparent. The yaom have a number of bone ridges on their shoulders, elbows, knees, and the back of their head. Their brow ridges are extremely pronounced and their eyes large with red pupils. Any other eye color among the yaom is rare, but does happen occasionally. Those without red eyes usually have limited ability in terms of contacting Red Truth, but some say they can contact similar parallel dimensions instead. The yaom are not particularly tall or stout, but have short, stocky limbs. They wear very simple clothing, usually a tunic and pants for both sexes, though masters often wear badges of office.

Yaom give birth by laying eggs, which were once buried, but now are kept in special low-heat ovens until they hatch, a process that takes seven months. Yaom are usually unable to access Red Truth until they reach adolescence, which occurs around age fifteen, but some children show talents before then. From a young age yaom are trained to control their link to Red Truth, as lack of control can prove very dangerous for everyone in the community. Yaom children are also schooled in history, philosophy, and literature, placing a strong emphasis of scholarly pursuits over more practical skills. Most yaom enter an apprenticeship at age eighteen in order to learn a trade, but before that point have little practical training.

As a species, yaom prefer their surroundings to be simplistic and undecorated, finding that too much information flow can be annoying. They practice little in the way of art and live in cities that can be best described as bland. While they can process immense amounts of information, they prefer to do so in limited amounts by their own schedule. No yaom can completely cut himself off from the Red Truth, and even when not actively accessing it, Red Truth bleeds over into a yaom's perceptions.

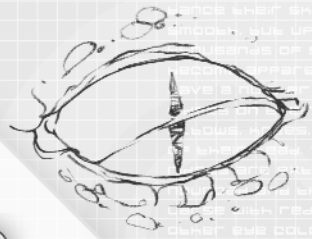
Yaom families are fairly loose affairs without a great deal of affection or closeness. Yaom reproduce rarely compared to most species, losing some of their sexual drive through interaction with Red Truth for some reason. For many yaom Red Truth is an addiction; they spend their free hours exploring its mysteries, trying to master its power at the expense of other activities. Many yaom lose themselves completely in pursuit of Red Truth's secrets, and each year several yaom die of starvation from extended meditation sessions. As a society the yaom have become obsessed with Red Truth, and falling birth rates are only the first negative impacts of this obsession. While some of the malcontent groups have noticed this obsession and fight against it, mainstream yaom culture is completely wrapped up in Red Truth. Unfortunately for the yaom, they have a number of more pressing worldly concerns that they seem to be ignoring, such as the straas threat.

Species Traits:

Yaom share the following species traits.
Type: Humanoid
Size: Medium. Yaom have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
Ability Modifiers: +2 Wisdom, -2 Charisma
Speed: 30 ft.
Bonus Feat: All yaom begin with the Wild Talent feat as a bonus feat.
Class Skills: Autohypnosis, Concentration, and Psicraft are all permanent class skills for yaom.
Information Overload (Su): When yaom are confronted with a situation where they must digest a large amount of information, such as a busy city setting, they must make a Will save (DC 10) during each day of exposure or take 1 point of Wisdom damage. This damage will not heal until the yaom is removed from the source of information overload.
Psionic Talent (Su): Yaom may ignore the skill requirements for the classes Telepath and Battle Mind. For yaom, these classes require only a +2 base Will save bonus. Yaom use Wisdom instead of Charisma when determining bonus power points.
Red Truth (Su): Yaom have a deep connection to the parallel dimension of Red Truth, a realm of pure information that they can perceive

yaom







Age Categories by Species

Species	Child	Young Adult	Adult	Middle Age	Old	Venerable
Haimedian	10	20	40	70	80	100
Elgie	9	13	32	50	70	90
Straas*	3	6	20	80	110	140
Wolf	10	14	36	65	85	110
Yaom	14	20	50	90	120	140

*Straas do not suffer the standard aging effects. See their species section for more information.

with some difficulty. Focusing on Red Truth takes a full action and a Concentration check (DC 10), and the DC increases by +1 for each round spent doing so. If successful, the character receives an insight bonus to all Wisdom- and Intelligence-based skill checks equal to the number of consecutive rounds spent focusing on Red Truth at that point. So on the first round the yaom receives a +1 bonus, a +2 bonus on the second round, etc. This continues until the yaom stops or fails a Concentration check. In either case, at the end of the focus session the yaom must make a Will save, DC 15 + the number of rounds spent focusing on Red Truth, or take one point of Wisdom damage per round spent focusing on Red Truth. Characters reaching 0 Wisdom fall unconscious. If a yaom takes more Wisdom damage than their current Wisdom score through interaction with Red Truth, the extra damage is instead permanent Wisdom drain.

Free Language Skills: Read/Write Language (Yaom), Speak Language (Yaom)
PL Familiarity: 5
Level Adjustment: +0

Height and Weight

Species and Gender	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Elgie				
Male	3 ft. 6 in.	+1d10 in.	45 lb.	x1d6 lb.
Female	3 ft. 0 in.	+1d10 in.	40 lb.	x1d6 lb.
Straas				
Male	4 ft. 6 in.	+1d4 in.	80 lb.	x2d6 lb.
Female	4 ft. 0 in.	+1d4 in.	80 lb.	x2d6 lb.
Wolf				
Male	6 ft. 4 in.	+2d6 in.	145 lb.	x2d4 lb.
Female	6 ft 0 in.	+2d6 in.	145 lb.	x2d4 lb.
Yaom				
Male	4 ft. 8 in.	+2d6 in.	100 lb.	x2d4 lb.
Female	4 ft. 8 in.	+2d6 in.	100 lb.	x2d4 lb.

TALENTS TREES • • •
STRONG HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Overpower

Relying on strength instead of agility, the hero can beat his opponents through sheer brute force with this talent tree.

Strong Disarm

You may add your Strength bonus to any attack rolls made to disarm opponents. This is on top of your Strength bonus being applied to your melee attack rolls in general.

Strong Rush

When making bull rush attacks you gain a bonus to your Strength check equal to half your Strong level.
Prerequisite: Strong Disarm

Strong Trip

When making a trip attempt you gain a bonus to your Strength check equal to half your Strong level.
Prerequisite: Strong Rush

FAST HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Escaping

The hero is skilled in both escaping from bonds and sight by selecting this talent tree.

Quick Escape

You reduce the time required to escape from being bound by ropes, handcuffs, or other restraints by one round per Fast level.

Fast Stealth

You reduce all penalties to Hide or Move Silently skill checks due to movement by half your Fast level.
Prerequisite: Quick Escape.

◇ Climbing

A hero with this talent tree relies more on agility that raw strength when climbing.

Agile Climber

The hero uses her Dexterity bonus when making Climb and Jump checks instead of her Strength bonus.

Combat Climber

When using the Climb skill the Fast hero is not considered flat-footed.

Fast Climber

You can climb your full speed as a full round action, and half your speed as a move action, without the normal penalty associated with accelerated climbing.
Prerequisite: Combat Climber

Safe Fall

When falling you may make a Tumble check (DC 15) that reduces the damage as if the height of the fall was 20 feet shorter.
Prerequisite: Fast Climber

TOUGH HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Iron Jaw

Difficult to knock out or even give pause to without lethal force, heroes with this talent tree resist nonlethal damage.

Resilient

When taking nonlethal damage, your Constitution is increased by your Tough level for determining if a Fortitude save is required.

Won't Go Down

When you succeed at a Fortitude save caused by nonlethal damage, you are not dazed, instead taking no effect from the attack.
Prerequisite: Resilient.

SMART HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Investment

Having invested his money in bonds and other business ventures the character can make a steady income through this talent tree.

Short-Term Investment

At the beginning of each month you may make an Intelligence check (DC 10) with a bonus equal to your Smart level. If this check is successful one of your short-term investments pays off and your Wealth bonus increases by +1.

Long-Term Investment

Whenever you go up a level you may add your Smart level to your Craft or Profession check to determine any increase in your Wealth bonus.
Prerequisite: Short-Term Investment.

Liquidate

When making a Wealth check you may choose to gain a temporary bonus in exchange for a more severe reduction in your Wealth bonus after the check. For every point of Wealth bonus you choose to sacrifice after the check you gain a +1 bonus on the Wealth check. If you reduce your Wealth bonus to negative numbers by this process you must return your Wealth bonus to at least +0 before you can make another Wealth check.
Prerequisite: Long Term Investment

DEDICATED HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Wanderer

The hero is able to travel great distances on foot quickly, keeping himself safe and well fed while doing so, with this talent tree.

Day Runner

When traveling overland on foot, you cover 25% more distance than you would normally each day. This has no affect on tactical movement.

Fast Hunter

When using the Survival skill to hunt for food while traveling, you suffer no reduction in speed.
Prerequisite: Day Runner

Trailblazing

When traveling through a wilderness area you can guide your comrades through the brush, choosing the most efficient path. You may affect one person per Dedicated level, increasing your overland travel rate by 25% per day. This has no effect on tactical movement.
Prerequisite: Fast Hunter

Light Trail

Anyone attempting to follow you, or a party you lead using Trailblazing, with the Track feat or similar abilities suffers a penalty to all relevant skill and ability checks equal to your Dedicated level.
Prerequisite: Trailblazing.

CHARISMATIC HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Performance

The hero is quite skilled at performing in front others, possibly making his living doing so, through using this talent tree.

Performance Mastery

You gain a bonus to all Perform checks equal to your Charismatic level.

Widely Skilled

You are versed in a number of performance styles. You may choose an additional number of Perform skills equal to your Charisma bonus, all of which are considered to be the same rank as your highest Perform skill. When you raise this Perform skill all the additional skills gained from this talent also increase.
Prerequisite: Performance Mastery.

Performing for a Living

You may use your Perform skill instead of a Craft or Profession skill when making skill checks at each level to see if your Wealth bonus increases.
Prerequisite: Performance Mastery



NEW OCCUPATIONS • • •

The following occupations are available to natives of Thres. Most occupations from d20 Modern, d20 Future, and Operation Quick Launch are also available, with the exception of Terraformer.

◇ Drone

Millions of straas are bound to the will of Hivequeen Celick, doing her bidding each day with little concern to their own needs. Most of these living automatons go through their entire lives without knowing anything else, willing drones living in an illusion of happiness. They are factory workers, scientists, and farmers, working to power a war machine they had no choice in supporting. Those who break free are not happy about their past treatment.

Prerequisite: Straas race, Celick allegiance

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Craft (Chemical, Electronic, Mechanical, Pharmaceutical, Structural), Drive, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Tactics, Technology), Profession, Repair, Research, Search, Treat Injury.

Bonus Feat: Builder, Endurance, Gearhead, or Medical Expert.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

◇ Hidden

While most wolves are open about their tribal affiliation, having occupations such as Military, Law Enforcement, Hunter, Nomad, or Tribal Leader, a small number of tribes keep their members secret so they may carry out their traditionally assigned duties. These wolves masquerade as members of other tribes, working hard not to excel at their profession or draw much attention, only using the skills of their true tribe when necessary. These hidden wolves spend most of their lives undercover among their own people, unable to trust anyone if their responsibilities are to be carried out fully. Those who are exposed are shamed within their true tribe and transferred to a new area where word of their exposure has not yet spread.

Prerequisite: Wolf race

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Bluff, Craft (Any), Disguise, Forgery, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Investigate, Knowledge (Civics, Current Events, Streetwise, Tactics), Listen, Move Silently, Profession, Search, Sense Motive, Spot.

Bonus Feat: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Deceptive, Personal Firearms Proficiency, or Stealthy.

Reputation Bonus: -2

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2

◇ Psionicist

Among the yaom, pursuit of the secrets of Red Truth is an occupation for many. These individuals are rarely wealthy, performing whatever menial jobs necessary to support their research, but they are highly respected among the yaom. Psionicists sometimes use their powers to generate income, but few of their powers are really big moneymakers. Only beyond yaom society can their powers earn a significant income for them, but among other species it is often harder to seek the mysteries of Red Truth.

Prerequisite: Yaom race.

Skills: Choose one of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Autohypnosis, Concentration, Decipher Script, Investigate, Knowledge (Any), Listen, Psicraft, Search, Sense Motive, Spot.

Bonus Feat: Iron Will or Psi Training.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1

◇ Rebel

While millions of mind-controlled straas labor away for Hivequeen Celick, a comparatively small number of a few thousand struggle to overthrow the Hivequeen and restore freedom to their people. Single-minded to a fault, these individuals think of little else and have trouble socializing with other species because of it. Although they may be sidetracked from their quest by other matters of great import, in the end the rebel straas always return to the war against Hivequeen Celick. Most see it as their cause for living.

Prerequisite: Straas race, must not be mind-controlled by Hivequeen Celick

Skills: Choose three of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Bluff, Demolitions, Diplomacy, Disguise, Escape Artist, Forgery, Gather Information, Hide, Intimidate, Knowledge (Civics, Current Events, Streetwise, Tactics), Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive, Sleight of Hand, Spot, Survival.

Bonus Feat: Heroic Surge, Iron Will, or Personal Firearms Proficiency.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +0

Feats • • •

◇ Caravaner

You have spent most of your life living in one of the many caravans that wanders across Thres.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to Navigate and Survival skill checks on Thres. You also gain a +1 bonus to Charisma-based skill checks involving those who live in caravans.

◇ Dead Smell

You have very little scent to speak of, though outside elements, such as being covered in sewage, can change this.

Benefit: All ranges for the Scent ability are halved in regards to you, and any attempt to track you by scent suffers a -10 penalty.

Special: If you gain a scent for some reason, this feat is negated.

◇ Divinely Descended

You have a divine ancestor somewhere in your lineage, and wolves pay you great respect because of it.

Prerequisite: Wolf species

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Charisma and Charisma-based skill checks involving wolves.

Special: This feat may only be selected at character creation.

◇ Increased Power Points

You are able to harness more of your mental reserves and access the Red Truth to a greater extent each day before suffering mental trauma.

Benefit: For the purpose of determining your bonus power points, your Wisdom is treated as if it were two points higher.

◇ Pheromone Jamming

You have learned how to send out pheromones that interfere with the communication abilities of other straas.

Prerequisite: Straas race, Rebel occupation

Benefit: By spending a move action, you can send out static pheromones that make it impossible for straas to communicate within 600 feet of you. You must spend a move action each round to sustain the interference. These pheromones also stop the mind control pheromones of Hivequeen Celick, so mind controlled straas exposed to this ability for 50 hours are no longer mind controlled. Other straas can automatically sense a rebel using this feat.

◇ Psi Training

You have received training in the skills that one must master to make full use of psionic powers.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Autohypnosis and Psicraft.

SPECIES CLASSES • • •

◇ Elgie Tinker

A cunning and inventive people, elgies are expert problems solvers that try to use their minds to overcome a problem before resorting to brawn. They have a natural knack for gadgetry and invention, always trying to find a more efficient way of living through technology. Profit minded, they always have their eyes open for a moneymaking opportunity, but are not afraid to work hard to reach these ends. Many elgies have levels in this class due to its emphasis on the facets of life they favor most.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Elgie Tinker species class.

Hit Die
The Elgie Tinker class gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Elgie Tinker class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Elgie Tinker class skills are as follows. Barter (Cha), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Craft (Any) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Business, Local, Physical Sciences, Species, Streetwise, Technology) (Int), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language, Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Elgie Tinker species class.

Eye for Profit
At 1st level, the Elgie Tinker gains a +2 bonus to Barter skill checks and adds his class level as a bonus to Craft and Profession checks made to increase his Wealth Bonus when he goes up a level.

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level the Elgie Tinker gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Acrobatic, Alertness, Athletic, Builder, Caravaner, Cautious, Craftsman, Dodge, Educated, Gearhead, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Salvage, Windfall.

Spit and Hope
Beginning at 3rd level, the Elgie Tinker can spend an action point when using the Jury Rig action for the Repair skill to reduce the Purchase DC of the parts for the jury-rigged repairs by 1d6, and the jury-rigged repairs last for two scenes or encounters.

Problem Solver
At 3rd level, when spending an action point on a Craft, Decipher Script, Disable Device, or Repair check the Elgie Tinker may roll two dice and take the better of the two results.

◇ Straas Loyalist

The millions of straas bound to Hivequeen Celick rarely develop much in the way of great prowess in skills or combat, instead gaining advantage through their mindless tenacity. Most mind-controlled straas have several levels in this species class. This class is primarily meant for NPCs to represent Celick's vast horde of followers.

Requirements

Special: The straas must have the Hivequeen Celick allegiance, the Drone occupation, and currently be mind controlled by Celick. If the straas ever is freed from the control of Hivequeen Celick, his levels in Straas Loyalist are converted to levels in Straas Rebel with his base attack bonus, saving throws, special abilities, defense, reputation, skills, and feats changing appropriately.

Elgie Tinker

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	+1 Intelligence, Eye for Profit	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+2	+1 Dexterity, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+1	+1	+2	+2	+1 Intelligence, Spit and Hope, Problem Solver	+2	+1

Class Information
The following information pertains to the Straas Loyalist species class.

Hit Die
The Straas Loyalist class gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Straas Loyalist class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Straas Loyalist class skills are as follows. Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Craft (Any) (Int), Drive (Dex), Profession (Wis), Repair (Int), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

Class Features
The following class features pertain to the Straas Loyalist species class.

Shielded Mind
At 1st level, the Straas Loyalist gains a bonus to his Will saves against mind-affecting abilities equal to his Straas Loyalist class level.

Improved Pheromones
At 1st level, the range of the Straas Loyalist's pheromones increases to 900 ft.

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level, the Straas Loyalist gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Builder, Dodge, Endurance, Gearhead, Great Fortitude, Improved Damage Threshold, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Surgery.

Productive
Beginning at 3rd level, the Straas Loyalist can work 12 hours a day every day without penalty, meaning he can march 1.5 times farther than other species with the same speed and can make multiple-day skill checks 1.5 times faster than other species.

Relay to the Hive Queen
At 3rd level, by spending an action point and a free action, the Straas Loyalist can send an emergency pheromone message to the Hivequeen that will be relayed by other straas in range and will automatically reach the Hivequeen unless there is a break in the relay. This message travels at a speed of 300 miles per hour and may be up to six seconds in length, though this ability may be used on multiple rounds to send a longer message. Each round requires the expenditure of an action point. This ability may be stopped by the Pheromone Jamming feat.



Straas Loyalist

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+1	+0	+0	+1 Constitution, Shielded Mind, Improved Pheromones	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+0	+1 Dexterity, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+1	+1 Constitution, Productive, Relay to the Hivequeen	+2	+1

◇ Straas Rebel

Vastly outnumbered and forced to fight their own brothers, the Straas Rebels have the unenviable task of removing Hivequeen Celick from power. Often fanatical in their drive, their belief in the righteousness of their cause drives them ever onward to a degree of single-mindedness that other races sometimes find disconcerting. Most straas rebels have several levels in this class.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Straas Rebel species class.

Hit Die

The Straas Rebel class gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Straas Rebel class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Straas Rebel class skills are as follows. Climb (Str), Craft (Any) (Int), Drive (Dex), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences, History, Physical Sciences, Species, Tactics, Technology) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Straas Rebel species class.

Driven

Beginning at 1st level, when working against Hivequeen Celick and her minions the Straas Rebel receives a bonus to all saving throws equal to his class level.

Improved Pheromones

At 1st level, the range of the Straas Rebel's pheromones increases to 900 ft.

Bonus Feat

At 2nd level the Straas Rebel gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Alertness, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Builder, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Improved Damage Threshold, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Pheromone Jamming, Point Blank Shot, Stealthy, Toughness, Track, Weapon Finesse.

Uncontrollable

Beginning at 3rd level, whenever the Straas Rebel fails a Will save against a mind-affecting ability he may spend an action point on his turn during each round of the duration of the ability to break free of the ability for one round. Multiple action points may be spent on multiple rounds to remain free of the effect's control, but if the Straas Rebel stops spending action points before the duration is over the mind affecting ability reasserts control. This is done at the beginning of the Rebel Straas's turn.

◇ Wolf Nomad

Rarely content to stay in one place for very long, the wolves are a species that is most at home while on the move. They have carried this trait to the stars, preferring a life of travel to one of sedentary living. This has changed somewhat since the wolves settled Thres, but most wolves still remain wanderers at heart. Wolves involved in the caravans or the more mobile tribes often have levels in this class.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Wolf Nomad species class.

Hit Die

The Wolf Nomad class gains 1d8 hit points per

Straas Rebel

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	Wisdom +1, Driven, Improved Pheromones	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+2	Dexterity +1, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+1	+2	+2	Wisdom +1, Uncontrollable	+2	+1

level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Wolf Nomad class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Wolf Nomad class skills are as follows. Climb (Str), Craft (Tribal) (Int), Drive (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences, History, Species, Tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Ride (Dex), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Wolf Nomad species class.

Getting There
At 1st level, the Wolf Nomad receives a bonus to Navigate and Survival checks equal to his class level.

Speed of the Wind
At 1st and 3rd level, the Wolf Nomad's speed when using the Run on All Fours ability increases by 5 feet.

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level the Wolf Nomad gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Aircraft Operation, Alertness, Animal Affinity, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Athletic, Endurance, Explorer Training, Force Stop, Great Fortitude, Guide, Lightning Reflexes, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Spacer, Stealthy, Starship Operation, Surface Vehicle Operation, Toughness, Track, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert, Zero-G Training.

Travel Affinity
Beginning at 3rd level when the Wolf Nomad spends an action point on a Drive, Navigate, Pilot, or Ride check, he may treat rolls of 1, 2, or 3 as a roll of 4.

◇ Yaom Mystic

While some among the yaom pursue more worldly activities, many consider the exploration of Red Truth to be their life's calling. These individuals spend their days trying to puzzle out its secrets, often limiting their contact with the outside world. Skilled in some of the more rudimentary psionic powers, most yaom do not develop more psionic potential than that of this class.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Yaom Mystic species class.

Hit Die
The Yaom Mystic class gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Yaom Mystic class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Yaom Mystic class skills are as follows. Autohypnosis (Wis) Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Knowledge (Any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Psicraft (Int), Read/Write Language, Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Yaom Mystic species class.

Wolf Nomad

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	+1 Constitution, Getting There, Speed of the Wind	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	+1 Wisdom, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1 Constitution, Travel Affinity, Speed of the Wind	+2	+1

Yaom Mystic

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+0	+1	Wisdom +1, Psionic Skills Affinity, Psionic Powers	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+2	Wisdom +1, Psionic Powers, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+2	Wisdom +1, Mind Channel, Psionic Powers	+2	+1

Psionic Skills Affinity: At 1st level the Yaom Mystic gains a bonus to Autohypnosis, Concentration, and Psicraft equal to his class level.

Psionic Powers
Beginning at 1st level a Yaom mystic has access to psionic powers. A Yaom Mystic's level limits the number of power points available for manifesting powers, though power points gained from other psionic classes are added to this total. In addition the Yaom Mystic must have a Wisdom score equal to at least 10 + the power's level to manifest a particular power. The Yaom Mystic's selection of powers is limited to the list below. At 1st level, a Yaom Mystic knows three 0-level powers and one 1st level power of your choice. At each level the Yaom mystic discovers one or more new powers, as indicated on the table below.

Yaom Mystic Level	Power Points Per Day	Powers Known by Level	
		0	1
1	2	3	1
2	3	3	2
3	4	3	3

A Yaom Mystic can manifest a certain number of powers per day based on his available power points. The base number of power points available per day is shown on the table above. Yaom Mystics gain bonus power points based on a high Wisdom score, as shown on the table below. These bonus power points are received only once, not once per class.

Wisdom Score	Bonus Power Points Per day
12-13	1
14-15	3
16-17	5
18-19	7
20-21	9
22-23	11

Yaom Mystic Powers
Only the following powers are available to Yaom Mystics.

0 Level Yaom Mystic Powers:
daze, *detect psionics*, *distract*, *missive*.

1st Level Yaom Mystic Powers:
absorb information, *attraction*, *call to mind*, *charm person*, *combat precognition*, *empathy*, *lesser mindlink*, *object reading*.

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level the Yaom Mystic gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Alertness, Attentive, Educated, Focused, Increased Power Points, Information-Dense Mind, Iron Will, Meticulous, Mind Shield, Psi-Training, See Red Truth.

Mind Channel
At 3rd level the Yaom Mystic can expend an action point to regain 1d6 power points, but doing so inflicts one point of Charisma damage.

◇ Blue Trader

On the elgie homeworld, it was very difficult to manufacture blue dye, and the elgies saw blue as a color of prosperity and profit. On Thres, blue dye is much easier to come by, but the color retains its significance. Blue traders are those merchants and businessmen who have earned enough money to clothe themselves in blue, usually in the form of robes or cloaks. These individuals have spent years honing their business instincts and are on a constant search for profitable opportunities, which elgies see as a good and honorable thing to do. Blue Traders spend most of their time setting up and selling business operations, rarely running such operations themselves for the long haul. While many merchants rely on charisma and showmanship to sell their goods, Blue Traders rely on cunning, intelligence, and patience to get the maximum profit out of their endeavors. Some wolves consider them economic scavengers, but among the elgies they are well respected. Once peaceful contact with other worlds is established, the Blue Traders are likely to go searching for profit in these places as well.

All blue traders thus far have been elgies, but there is no reason a human, wolf, or other species couldn't become one. Such an individual would likely face some jokes at their expense from elgie blue traders, but in the end as long as they can make a profit and behave the elgies will accept anyone.

Select this advanced class if you want to be a wheeling and dealing business professional, buying and selling businesses and goods to all comers.

The fastest path to this class is through the Smart or Charismatic Hero basic classes, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become a Blue Trader, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Barter 6 ranks, Knowledge (Business) 6 ranks, Repair 6 ranks, Craft (any 2) 4 ranks
Feats: Windfall

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Blue Trader advanced class.

Hit Die

The Blue Trader gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Blue Trader gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Blue Trader's class skills are as follows. Barter (Cha), Bluff (Cha), Computer Use (Int), Craft (Any) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Drive (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Int), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences, Business, Civics, Current Events, Local, Popular Culture, Streetwise, Technology) (Int), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 9 + Int modifier (8 + Int modifier for nonhumans)

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Blue Trader advanced class.

Local Contact

At 1st, 4th, 7th, and 10th level the Blue Trader gains a contact in a settlement or caravan of his choice that can assist him in carrying out mercantile activities in that region. This contact is an ordinary character with a level equal to the Blue Trader's class level and has an emphasis on mercantile skills. This contact will assist the Blue Trader in any type of mercantile pursuit, in addition to running general errands, and will even risk breaking the law in minor ways. The contact will not take part in any combat or serious illegal activity. When using a local contact to carry out his business in a settlement, the Blue Trader is assumed to benefit from the aid another action as the local contact helps him. The local contact can automatically make contact with the black market without having to make a Knowledge (Streetwise) check and knows about local laws, politics, and recent events. The contact may be placed in any settlement the Blue Trader has visited for at least five days. The contact is considered to have a Helpful disposition toward the Blue Trader.

Business Venture

At 1st and 8th level the Blue Trader gains possession of some manner of business venture, such as a factory or trading company. He gains ownership of this business venture through inheritance, buying it on the cheap, or even taking it in lieu of an outstanding debt. This business venture has an effective Purchase DC of 30 + the Blue Trader's ranks in Knowledge (Business) + the Blue Trader's Intelligence bonus at the time he gains this class ability. The business venture's value, including all the equipment involved in operating it, cannot be greater than this Purchase DC. The Blue Trader may sell the busi-

Blue Trader

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Local Contact, Business Venture	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Savings	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Bonus Feat	+1	+1
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Local Contact, Savings	+1	+2
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Assistant	+2	+2
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus Feat, Savings	+2	+2
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Local Contact	+2	+3
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Business Venture, Savings	+3	+3
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Bonus Feat	+3	+3
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Local Contact, Savings	+3	+4

ness venture at any time, generating an increase in his Wealth bonus at the normal rate for selling an item with the purchase DC of the business venture, but finding a buyer takes at least one week. For each month the Blue Trader owns the business venture, he makes a Knowledge (Business) check (DC 20), with success increasing his Wealth bonus by +1.

The Blue Trader may forgo increasing his Wealth Bonus for a year to instead plow the profits back into his business. For every year this is done, the Purchase DC of the business increases by +1. The monthly Knowledge (Business) check DC increases by +5 per year spent investing the profits back in the business, and the monthly increase to the Blue Trader's wealth bonus increases by +1. So after five years of plowing his profits back into the company a Blue Trader would be making a Knowledge (Business) check (DC 45) each month and gaining a +6 bonus to his Wealth bonus if successful.

The business venture can be any sort of operation the gamemaster deems appropriate, from managing the leather sales for a group of wolf hunters to owning a ground vehicle equipped as a portable smithy. The business venture only requires the Blue Trader's attention for five hours each week, which may be done over radio or computer, and otherwise runs autonomously. The Blue Trader may make use of the resources of the business venture for his own use, such as using raw materials or borrowing a vehicle, but when he does so the business venture makes no money for that month. Any employees of the business venture are only loyal to the Blue Trader as long as they get paid. It is just a job to them; they will not risk their lives, reputations, or livelihoods for the Blue Trader.

Normally the business venture continues its operations without problem, but occasionally it may run afoul of the elements or other difficulties. Bandits may raid caravans while floods may wash out croplands. In such cases, the Blue Trader cannot make any profit from the business venture until he rectifies the problem.

Savings

At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level when the Blue Trader gains a bonus to his Wealth Bonus equal to half his class level.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Blue Trader gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Blue Trader must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Alertness, Attentive, Confident, Craftsman, Deceptive, Educated, Gearhead, Iron Will, Mastercrafter, Master Craftsman, Master Trader, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Salvage, Studious, Technological Aptitude, Trustworthy, Windfall.

Assistant

At 5th level the Blue Trader's business success attracts an assistant who wishes to work for the Blue Trader in the hopes of learning business acumen and sharing in the profits. The assistant is an ordinary character with a level equal to the Blue Trader's class level, and isequipped with six pieces of equipment with a Purchase DC of 25 or less. The assistant is willing to enter combat for the Blue Trader, but is more of an expert on mercantile affairs than violence. If the assistant is killed the Blue Trader can try to recruit a new one, but doing so requires a DC 20 Wealth check.



◇ Freemind

Among the small number of rebel straas there is an elite core of guerilla warriors highly skilled in infiltrating the territories controlled by Hivequeen Celick and doing maximum damage to her operations. These straas are on the forefront of all rebel straas operations, and often are used when contact with other species is desired. Of late these agents, called freeminds, have been increasingly sent among the other species of Thres to find allies and prove that not all straas are under the control of the Hivequeen. Once Thres makes contact with Eos, they are likely to be among the first straas encountered by humans. Part infiltration expert, part diplomat, they must fill multiple roles to see that their people are eventually freed.

Select this class if you want to be an elite straas agent trained for both combat and diplomatic duty.

The fastest path to this class is through the Dedicated Hero basic class, though other classes are possible.

Requirements

To become a Freemind, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +3
Race: Straas
Skills: Diplomacy 6 ranks, Speak Language (Unispeak)
Wisdom: 13+
Special: Cannot have the Hivequeen Celick allegiance

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Freemind advanced class.

Hit Die
The Freemind gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Freemind gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Freemind's class skills are as follows.
Bluff (Cha), Craft (Any) (Int), Demolitions (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Drive (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences, Current Events, History, Streetwise, Tactics, Technology) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language, Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Freemind advanced class.

Drone Disguise
At 1st level the Freemind gains a bonus to all Bluff and Disguise checks made to pass himself off as a straas loyal to Hivequeen Celick equal to his class level.

Species Familiarity
At 1st and 5th level the Freemind receives the Species Familiarity feat as a bonus feat, but he must apply the feat to a sentient species he has already encountered.

Bonus Feats
At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, a Freemind gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Freemind must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Action Boost, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Alertness, Alien Friend, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Burst Fire, Cautious, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Reflexes, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Double Tap, Endurance, Elusive Target, Explorer Training, Heroic Surge, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Low Profile, Nimble, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Species Familiarity, Stealthy, Toughness, Trustworthy, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

Freemind

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	Drone Disguise, Species Familiarity	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+2	Smell Communication	+2	+1
3rd	+2	+1	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+1	+2	+2	Sworn Enemy (Loyal Straas) +2	+3	+2
5th	+3	+1	+3	+3	Species Familiarity	+3	+2
6th	+4	+2	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+2	+4	+4	Sworn Enemy (Loyal Straas) +4	+4	+3
8th	+6	+2	+4	+4	Sworn Enemy (Vaasi) +2	+4	+3
9th	+6	+3	+5	+5	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+7	+3	+4	+4	Sworn Enemy (Vaasi) +4, Sworn Enemy (Loyal Straas) +6	+5	+4

Smell Communication
At 2nd level the Freemind learns to communicate basic emotions or ideas to non-straas using his pheromones. The Freemind does the straas equivalent of yelling when using this power, flooding the air around him with pheromones that races with less sensitive senses of smell can detect. The smells created provoke a strong reaction in all races, such as the smell of sulfur telling others to leave. All creatures within 100 feet of the straas must make Wisdom checks (DC 10) to understand the message, which can be no longer than one word or a single emotion, and they suffer a -4 penalty if they do not know the Freemind well. Creatures with the Scent species trait gain a +4 species bonus to this Wisdom check.



Sworn Enemy (Loyal Straas)
At 4th level the Freemind has learnt enough of his mind-controlled brethren to accurately predict their behavior and to strike them where it hurts the most. The Freemind gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against loyal straas. Additionally, he gets a +2 bonus on weapon damage rolls against loyal straas. These bonuses increase to +4 at 7th level and +6 and 10th level.

Sworn Enemy (Vaasi)
At 10th level, the Freemind has spent long hours working to thwart Hivequeen Celick. Though he probably doesn't know her true history, he can accurately think as she does. These tactics can accurately be applied to other vaasi as well, including their servitor races. The Freemind gains a +2 bonus on Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against vaasi. Additionally, he gets a +2 bonus on weapon damage rolls against vaasi. This bonus increases to +4 at 10th level.

◇ Land Walker

Among the wolves, wilderness survival is a highly valued skill, and any wolf who cannot survive on his own is considered a weakling. While most wolves can support themselves in the wild, a smaller number have given up their lives in the cities and caravans to live alone in the wilderness, ever walking toward some unknown goal. These land walkers, as they are called, are highly respected among the wolves. Some particularly well-known or skilled individuals are viewed with an almost religious awe; surely the gods favor individuals who can survive

all that the land walkers have. Experts in surviving in almost any wilderness conditions, they join in the defense of their people when the Wolf Tribes are under threat. Once peaceful contact with other planets is made, doubtless these individuals will seek to wander them as well.

Select this class if you want to be a master of the wilderness, able to survive on nothing but wits and guile.

The fastest path to this class is through the Tough or Dedicated Hero basic classes, though other options are possible.

Requirements

To become a Land Walker, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +3
Feats: Explorer Training, Guide
Base Fortitude Save: +3
Skills: Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) 6 ranks, Navigate 6 ranks, Survival 6 ranks

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Land Walker advanced class.

Hit Die

The Land Walker gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Land Walker gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Land Walker's class skills are as follows. Climb (Str), Craft (Tribal) (Int), Drive (Dex), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Navigate (Int), Repair (Int), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier (6 + Int modifier for nonhumans)

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Land Walker advanced class.

Survival Mastery

At 1st level the Land Walker receives a competence bonus to all Survival checks equal to his class level.

Wild Empathy

And 2nd level, the Land Walker can improve the attitude of an animal. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check to improve the attitude of a person. The Land Walker rolls 1d20 and adds his class level and his Charisma bonus to determine the wild empathy check result. The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly. To use wild empathy, the Land Walker and the animal must be able to study each other, which means that they must be within 30 feet of one another under normal visibility conditions. Generally, influencing an animal in this way takes 1 minute, but as with influencing people, it might take more or less time. If the hero has the talent of the same name he may add his Charismatic levels to his Land Walker levels.

Weather Forecast

At 2nd level, the Land Walker gains the ability to quickly forecast the weather. This requires a full round action and a Survival check (DC 15). If successful the Land Walker can successfully predict the weather, including temperature, precipitation, and winds, for the next 24 hours.

Track

At 2nd level the Land Walker gains the Track feat as a bonus feat.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Land Walker gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Land Walker must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Alertness, Animal Affinity, Archaic Weapons Proficiency (Light), Athletic, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Endurance, Mobility, Far Shot, Mounted Combat, Mounted Gunplay, Great Fortitude, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Run, Stealthy, Surface Vehicle Operation, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus.

Natural Camouflage

Beginning at 4th level when in natural surroundings, such as a forest or desert, the Land Walker receives a +2 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks.

Animal Companion

At 4th level, the Land Walker may spend an action point to transform an encountered animal into an animal companion. This requires at least a week of interacting with and training the animal. The animal must already be helpful in atti-

Animal Companions

As the Land Walker grows in power and ability, so too does the power of her animal companion.

Class Level	Bonus HD	Natural Armor	Str/Dex Adj.	Special
4	+0	+0	+0	Link
5	+1	+2	+1	Evasion
6	+2	+4	+2	Devotion
7	+3	+6	+3	Multiattack
8	+4	+8	+4	
9	+5	+10	+5	Improved evasion
10	+6	+12	+6	



Class Level: The level of the Land Walker.
Bonus HD: These are extra eight-sided (d8) Hit Dice, each of which gains a Constitution modifier, as normal. Remember that extra Hit Dice improve the animal companion's base attack and base save bonuses. An animal companion's base attack bonus is equal to a Land Walker whose level equals the animal's HD. An animal companion has good Fortitude and Reflex saves (treat it as a character whose level equals the animal's HD). The animal companion doesn't gain any extra skill points or feats for bonus HD.
Natural Armor: The number listed here is an improvement to the animal companion's natural armor rating.
Str/Dex Adj.: Add this figure to the animal companion's Strength and Dexterity scores.
Link (Ex): The Land Walker gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Animal Empathy and Handle Animal checks made regarding the animal companion.
Evasion (Ex): If the animal companion is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw.
Devotion (Ex): The animal companion's devotion to its master is so complete, it gains a +4 morale bonus on all Will saves against mind affecting powers and effects.
Multiattack (Ex): The animal companion gains the Multiattack feat, if it has 3 or more natural attacks. If it does not have the requisite 3 or more natural attacks, the animal companion instead gains a second attack with its primary natural attack, albeit at a -5 to the base attack bonus.
Improved Evasion (Ex): If the animal companion is subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, it takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and only half damage if the saving throw fails.

tude toward the Land Walker. It accompanies the Land Walker on his adventures as is appropriate to its species. The Land Walker may have a single animal companion at a time.
The companion can be any creature of the Animal creature type, but the animal cannot have more than 8 Hit Dice plus the Land Walker's Charisma bonus. This cap does not include the bonus HD the creature receives from this class ability.
The animal chosen retains the animal type, but may gain additional abilities according to the level of the Land Walker (see Animal Companions sidebar above). The Land Walker may release the animal back to the wild, regaining the action point initially spent in the process, though this may not take the character above his starting allotment of action points for that level. The Land Walker does not regain the action point if the creature dies. In either case, the Land Walker must wait at least one month before attempting to gain another animal companion.

Weapon Focus

At 5th level the Land Walker gains the Weapon Focus feat as a bonus feat. This may be applied to any weapon the Land Walker is proficient in.

Weather Resistsance

Beginning at 5th level, whenever the Land Walker suffers hit point or ability damage from severely hot or cold weather, that damage is reduced by 1 point. This resistance increases to 2 at 10th level.

Swift Track
At 7th level the Land Walker is able to track while moving at full speed without suffering a penalty.

Wanderer's Reputation
At 8th level the Land Walker has earned a reputation as being a master of the wilds among those who inhabit the areas he wanders. He receives a bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks equal to his Reputation when interacting with those who have heard of his reputation, which is almost everyone who lives or frequents the territory that the Land Walker wanders most often.

Master of the Wild
At 10th level the Land Walker can take 10 or 20 on Survival rolls regardless of the conditions or any distractions present. The character can take 10 on any Survival check, even if there is a negative consequence of failure.



◇ Red Truth Master

Among the yaom, the rank of master is accorded to those who have achieved great amounts of psionic power. Less than one in a thousand yaom attain this rank. The masters are the lynchpin that holds yaom society together, as they are effectively the government, law enforcement, and the judicial system. If the masters were to become corrupt they could take control of yaom society, which some of the malcontents claim is just what is happening. The yaom masters for the most part are dedicated public servants, driving themselves into an early grave doing all that is asked of them. Once contact is made with other worlds, yaom masters are among the first to explore them, assuming they can be spared from their duties. Thus far only yaom have earned the rank of Red Truth Master, but it is conceivable that those of other species could do so as well.

Select this advanced class if you wish to play a powerful psionic who is also a competent leader and organizer.

The fastest path to this class is through one of the psionic classes, such as Telepath or Yaom Mystic. The character must have levels in a psionic class to take levels in this class.

Land Walker

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+2	+1	+0	Survival Mastery, Wild Empathy	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+3	+2	+0	Weather Forecast, Track	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+3	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+4	+2	+1	Natural Camouflage, Animal Companion	+3	+1
5th	+3	+4	+3	+1	Weapon Focus, Weather Resistance 1	+3	+1
6th	+4	+5	+3	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+5	+4	+2	Swift Track	+4	+2
8th	+6	+6	+4	+2	Wanderer's Reputation	+4	+2
9th	+6	+6	+4	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+7	+7	+5	+3	Master of the Wild, Weather Resistance 2	+5	+3

Requirements

To become a Red Truth Master, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Allegiance: The Yaom

Skills: Autohypnosis 8 ranks, Concentration 8 ranks, Diplomacy 6 ranks, Knowledge (Civics) 6 ranks, Psicraft 8 ranks, Sense Motive 6 ranks.

Manifester Level: 5th

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Red Truth Master advanced class.

Hit Die

The Red Truth Master gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Red Truth Master gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Red Truth Master's class skills are as follows.

Autohypnosis (Wis), Barter (Cha), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences, Civics, Species, Theology and Philosophy) (Int), Psicraft (Int), Read/Write Language, Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language, Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier (6 + Int modifier for nonhumans)

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Red Truth Master advanced class.



Psionic Powers

The Red Truth Master can manifest psionic powers through his control over the Red Truth. A Red Truth Master's level limits the number of power points available for manifesting powers. In addition, a Red Truth Master must have a Wisdom score equal to at least 10 + the power's level to manifest a particular power. The Red Truth Master's selection of powers is extremely limited, although he enjoys ultimate flexibility. At each level, the Red Truth Master discovers one or more previously latent powers, as indicated on the table below. These powers are in addition to any already known by the Red Truth Master due to levels in others classes. The powers must be selected from the list below.

Red Truth Master Level	Power Points Per Day	Powers Known by Level 0	1	2	3	4	5
1	5	0	0	0	1	-	-
2	10	1	1	1	1	-	-
3	17	1	1	1	2	1	-
4	24	1	1	1	2	2	-
5	33	2	1	1	3	2	1
6	42	2	2	2	3	3	2
7	53	2	2	2	3	3	2
8	63	3	2	2	3	3	3
9	77	3	2	2	4	3	3
10	90	3	3	3	4	4	3



The DC for saving throws to resist a psionic power is 10 + the power's level + the Red Truth Master's Wisdom modifier.
A Red Truth Master can manifest a certain number of powers per day based on his available power points. He pays the power point cost of a power to manifest it. The base number of power points available per day is shown on the table above. The Red Truth Master gains bonus power points based on a high Wisdom score, as shown on the table below. The character only receives bonus power points once, not once per class.

Wisdom Score	Bonus Power Points Per Day
12-13	1
14-15	3
16-17	5
18-19	7
20-21	9
22-23	11

Red Truth Master Powers
The Red Truth Master chooses his psionic powers from the following list.

0 Level Red Truth Master Powers:
daze, *detect psionics*, *distract*, *missive*.

1st Level Red Truth Master Powers:
absorb information, *attraction*, *call to mind*, *charm person*, *computer empathy*, *conceal thoughts*, *empathy*, *far hand*, *far punch*, *know direction and location*, *lesser mindlink*, *object reading*.

2nd Level Red Truth Master Powers:
brain lock, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *darkvision*, *detect hostile intent*, *detect thoughts*, *lesser concussion*, *lesser destroy information*, *read thoughts*, *sensitivity to psychic impressions*, *suggestion*.

3rd Level Red Truth Master Powers:
concussion, *false sensory input*, *lesser domination*, *lesser information barrier*, *lesser information block*, *mental blast*, *mindlink*, *negate psionics*.

4th Level Red Truth Master Powers:
domination, *forced mindlink*, *greater destroy information*, *tailor memory*.

5th Level Red Truth Master Powers:
greater information barrier, *greater information block*, *mindprobe*, *mindwipe*, *power resistance*, *sending*.

Master Authority
Within the territory controlled by the yaom, Red Truth Masters are seen as the government, and have great leeway in terms of their governmental powers. The yaom do have a written code of laws, but it is rather loose and ill-defined, leaving a great deal of room for interpretation for masters to fit the law to any situation. Within the bounds of the yaom territories the Red Truth Master can serve as judge, jury, and executioner in addition to tax collector, military leader, diplomat, and health inspector without anyone questioning his authority unless he blatantly abuses it. Such abuses result in a visit from the peacebringers, who may not leave the master's mind intact.

Trigger Power
At 2nd, 5th, and 8th level, the Red Truth Master chooses one psionic power that he can attempt to manifest for no power point cost.
At each of these levels, you select one 0-, 1st-, 2nd-, or 3rd-level power you can use. From that point on, you can attempt to trigger that power without paying its cost. To trigger a power, you must have enough power points to cover the normal cost of the power manifestation. Then, make a Wisdom check against a DC listed below. If you succeed at the ability check, the power manifests with no cost in power points. If the check fails, you pay the power point cost and the power manifests.
DCs for the ability check depend on the level of the power: 0th level, DC 11; 1st level, DC 13; 2nd level, DC 15; and 3rd level, DC 17.

Bonus Feats
At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Red Truth Master gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Red Truth Master must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Alertness, Attentive, Confident, Deceptive, Educated, Frightful Presence, Greater Mind Shield, Heroic Surge, Increased Power Points, Information-Dense Mind, Iron Will, Mind Shield, Psi-Training, Public Speaker, Renown, See Red Truth (see Chapter 4), Trustworthy.

Master's Respect
At 4th level the Red Truth Master may add his Reputation bonus to Charisma and Charisma-based skill checks involving yaom or others who recognize his authority.

One With Red Truth
At 7th level, the Red Truth Master gains a +4 bonus to Will saves to resist the negative affects of using the yaom racial ability to open

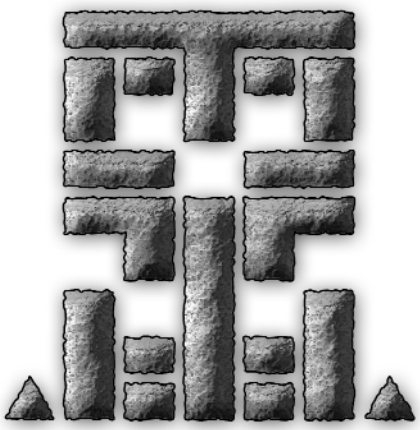
Red Truth Master

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Psionic Powers, Master Authority	+0	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Trigger Power, Psionic Powers	+1	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Bonus Feat, Psionic Powers	+1	+1
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Master's Respect, Psionic Powers	+1	+2
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Trigger Power, Psionic Powers	+2	+2
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus Feat, Psionic Powers	+2	+2
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	One With Red Truth, Psionic Powers	+2	+3
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Trigger Power, Psionic Powers	+3	+3
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Bonus Feat, Psionic Powers	+3	+3
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Weaken Barrier, Psionic Powers	+3	+4

himself to Red Truth, and to resist the negative affects of places where Red Truth has bled into this reality.

Weaken Barrier

At 10th level the Red Truth Master gains the ability to tear at the fabric between worlds to allow Red Truth to temporarily infect an area. This requires a full round action and may only be done once a day. The area of effect is a circle centered on the Red Truth Master, which has a diameter in feet equal to the Red Truth Master's power points when he activates this ability. Characters within this area suffer the same affects from exposure to Red Truth as detailed in Chapter 4. The Red Truth Master gains a +4 bonus to all Will saves to resist the negative aspects of Red Truth while using this ability. If this ability is used in the same place repeatedly it may create a permanent weak point between this reality and Red Truth.



◇ Star Tribe Warrior

Originally the Star tribe was made up of navigators, drovers, sailors, and anyone else who transported people or goods from one place or another. The Star tribe rose to prominence when sea travel became prevalent on the wolf homeworld, and they rose even farther once space travel was developed. Even though piloting spacecraft is a far cry from directing pack animals or mapmaking, according to tradition it falls squarely in the domain of the Star tribe. Since space travel became part of wolf culture, the Star tribe has embraced it completely; most members of the Star tribe are involved in it somehow. While many members of the Star tribe are trained in piloting and combat, only a small number are officially known as warriors of the Star tribe. The warriors of the Star tribe are some of the best space pilots in the Helios system, having trained much of their lives to carry on the tribal traditions. A handful of wolves from other tribes and some elgies have been trained by the Star tribe and have levels in this class, but are not actual members of the Star tribe.

Select this class if you want to be an expert spaceship pilot who is adept at both combat and survival.

The fastest path to this advanced class is through the Fast Hero basic class, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become a Star Tribe Warrior, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4
Defense Bonus: +3
Feats: Spacer, Starship Gunnery, Starship Operation, Zero-G Training.
Skills: Navigation 8 ranks, Pilot 8 ranks, Repair 6 ranks.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Star Tribe Warrior advanced class.

Hit Die

The Star Tribe Warrior gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Star Tribe Warrior gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Star Tribe Warrior's class skills are as follows.
Computer Use (Int), Drive (Dex), Knowledge (Tactics, Technology) (Int), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Repair (Int), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier (6 + Int modifier for nonhumans)

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Star Tribe Warrior advanced class.

Spacecraft Specialty

At 1st level, the Star Tribe Warrior picks a specific model of spacecraft with which they are particularly proficient. The Star Tribe Warrior must have the appropriate Starship Operation feat for the type of ship selected and must have operated such a ship for at least three months. When operating a ship of that model, the Star Tribe Warrior gains a +2 bonus to Computer Use, Navigate, Pilot, and Repair checks and the Defense of the ship.
At 7th level the Star Tribe Warrior chooses a second type of ship in which to specialize.

Vacuum Resistance

At 2nd level, the Star Tribe Warrior gains a +4 bonus to Constitution checks to resist the effects of a vacuum.

Ship Weapon Focus

At 2nd level, the Star Tribe Warrior may select one type of spaceship weapon that he is particularly skilled in. The Star Tribe Warrior gains the Weapon Focus feat for that weapon.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Star Tribe Warrior gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Star Tribe Warrior must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Aircraft Operation, Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Light), Dodge, Far Shot, Gearhead, Guide, Improved Initiative, Starship Battle Run, Starship Dodge, Starship Feint, Lightning Reflexes, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Starship Mobility, Starship Strafe, Surface Vehicle Operation, Vehicle Operation, Weapon Focus.

Group Tactics

Beginning at 4th level, when the Star Tribe Warrior carries out the Aid Another action while piloting a spaceship, the ship he is aiding gains a +4 bonus instead of a +2 bonus.

Expert Training

Star Tribe Warriors are not just instructed in how to be expert pilots, but also how to spread that knowledge to their allies. Any NPC crew trained by a Star Tribe Warrior for two months improves in quality one level as long as the Star Tribe Warrior serves with them. If the Star Tribe Warrior leaves the ship for more than a month, this benefit is lost and the crew must be trained again, taking another two months.



Star Tribe Warrior

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Spacecraft Specialty	+1	+0
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Vacuum Resistance, Ship Weapon Focus	+2	+0
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Group Tactics, Expert Training	+3	+1
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Keep It Together	+3	+1
6th	+6	+2	+5	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+7	+2	+5	+2	Spacecraft Specialty	+4	+2
8th	+8	+2	+6	+2	Ship Weapon Specialization	+4	+2
9th	+9	+3	+6	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+10	+3	+7	+3	Too Close	+5	+3

Keep it Together
At 5th level, when piloting or carrying out damage control for a spaceship, the ship is not considered Helpless and Breaking Apart until it has reached a number of negative hit points equal to the Star Tribe Warrior's class level. This ability does not stack if multiple Star Tribe Warriors are on a ship.

Ship Weapon Specialization
At 8th level, the Star Tribe Warrior gains a +1 damage bonus per die of damage when using the weapon selected for Ship Weapon Focus at 2nd level. In the case of fire-linked damage this bonus is calculated only using the base damage of the weapon.

Too Close
At 10th level, when piloting a spaceship, the Star Tribe Warrior can spend an action point to increase the spaceship's Defense by 1d6 for one round.

◇ Tribal Technician

Being a repairman in the Wolf Tribes is difficult. They still do not have a strong industrial base, even though they have been on Thres for over a century. Caravans have a limited capacity, and the spare parts they carry are often insufficient. Tribal Technicians are those brave few who confront these challenges with hope and a roll of tape, keeping their people's machines running on a minimum of supplies. While the Wolf Tribes' industrial power is increasing, for the foreseeable future these technicians are going to be the main force keeping the caravans and fleets of the Wolf Tribes operational. Most Tribal Technicians are members of the Iron Hands or Elgie tribes, and there is strong if good-natured competition between these two groups.

Select this class if you want to be a rough-and-tumble mechanic who can keep a fusion reactor running with some spit and baling wire.

The fastest path to this advanced class is through the Smart Hero, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become a Tribal Technician, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Feats: Gearhead, Salvage
Skills: Craft (Electrical) 6 ranks, Craft (Mechanical) 6 ranks, Knowledge (Technology) 6 ranks, Repair 6 ranks

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Tribal Technician advanced class.

Hit Die
The Tribal Technician gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Tribal Technician gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Tribal Technician's class skills are as follows.
Computer Use (Int), Craft (Any) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Drive (Dex), Knowledge (Physical Sciences, Technology) (Int), Pilot (Dex), Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 9 + Int modifier (8 + Int modifier for nonhumans)

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Tribal Technician advanced class.

Sustained Jury Rig

At 1st level, when the Tribal Technician makes a jury rig Repair check, the Tribal Technician can try to keep the repairs working longer than a single encounter or scene. The Tribal Technician must make a second Repair check against the same DC and spend one minute tuning up the jury-rigged device before the scene or encounter it was jury rigged during ends. If this check succeeds, the device functions for another scene. This may be done multiple times, but each time after the first inflicts a cumulative -5 penalty on the Repair check.

Spit and Hope

Beginning at 2nd level, when the Tribal Technician makes a Repair check to jury rig a device, the Purchase DC of the cost is reduced by half the Tribal Technician's class level.

Vehicle Operation

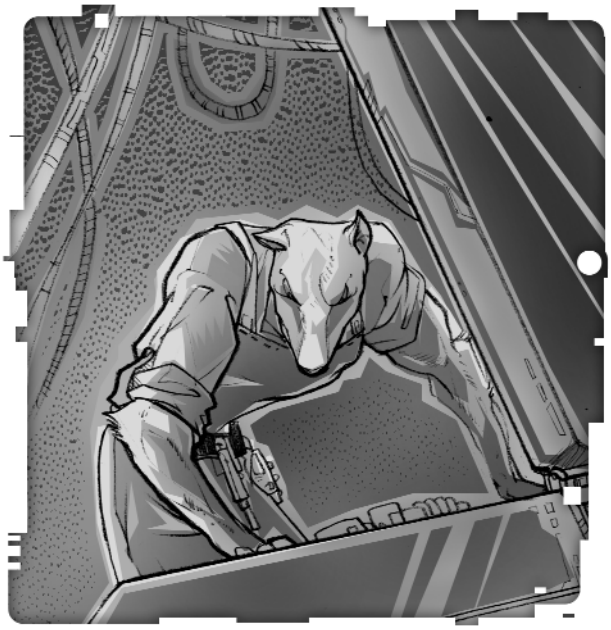
Tribal Technicians are so often involved in repairing vehicles that they learn how to operate them. At 2nd level, the Tribal Technician may select a bonus feat (for which the Tribal Technician must meet the normal prerequisites) from among the following feats:
Aircraft Operation, Surface Vehicle Operation, Starship Operation

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, a Tribal Technician gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Tribal Technician must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Aircraft Operation, Armor Proficiency (Light), Builder, Cautious, Educated, Iron Will, Surface Vehicle Operation, Vehicle Operation.

Maintenance

At 4th level, the Tribal Technician may specify a number of mechanical or electrical devices equal to half his class level to maintain regularly. This requires the Tribal Technician to spend at least ten minutes per item each day cleaning and tuning the device. Devices thus maintained by the Tribal Technician are considered mastercrafted +1 items, and any Repair checks involving these items gain a +2 bonus.



Homemade Tools

By 4th level, the Tribal Technician has assembled a set of personalized tools that he uses in his repairs. These are mastercrafted +2 tools, and if lost they require one month to replace.

Improved Jury Rig

At 5th level, the Tribal Technician can make Repair checks to restore hit points to a device by jury-rigging it. This requires a full round action and a Repair check against a DC based on the severity of damage and size of the device to be jury-rigged. The severity of damage is based on the percentage remaining of the device's maximum hit points. These hit points last until the end of the current scene or encounter.

Severity of Damage	DC
Light (99-75% of hit points)	5
Moderate (74-50% of hit points)	10
Heavy (49-25% of hit points)	15
Severe (24-1% of hit points)	20

Size of the Device	DC Modifier
Fine	+15
Diminutive	+10
Tiny	+5
Small	0
Medium	0
Large	0
Huge	+5
Gargantuan	+10
Colossal	+15

Tribal technician

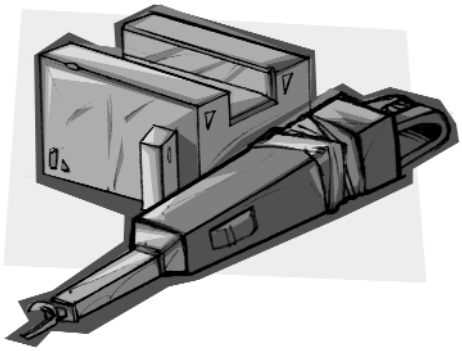
Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Sustained Jury Rig	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Spit and Hope, Vehicle Operation	+2	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Maintenance, Homemade Tools	+3	+2
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Improved Jury Rig	+3	+2
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Fast Repair	+4	+3
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Breakdown	+4	+3
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Make Do	+5	+4

If the check is successful the device gains 2d6 hit points + 1d6 hit points for every 5 points the Repair check exceeded the DC. These hit points return immediately, but disappear at the end of the current encounter or scene if they are not lost due to damage. This duration may be prolonged using the Sustained Jury Rig class ability.

Fast Repair
At 7th level, the Tribal Technician can make a Repair check to jury-rig device as an attack action. The time required for other repairs is reduced by 25%.

Breakdown
At 8th level, the Tribal Technician can use his knowledge of machines to quickly take them apart. When attacking robots, vehicles, spaceships, or any other type of machine the Tribal Technician deals +1d6 damage.

Make Do
At 10th level, the Tribal Technician can reduce the Purchase DC of parts for Repair and Craft checks by -5 by increasing the Repair or Craft DC of the skill check by +10.



Prestige Classes • • •

◇ Peacebringer

Among the yaom, the masters are the law and government, but even the masters must be watched over by someone. That someone is the peacebringers, masters who are trained not only to oversee the yaom people, but also to take down other masters if required. They receive extensive training in psionic combat, and while their physical combat abilities may be lacking, their mental powers are extremely impressive. Peacebringers are drawn from the masters with the best records for wise decisions and self-control, though advanced skill with Red Truth is also a prerequisite. Their own people view them with both respect and fear, as they undertake many unpleasant tasks. When something that no one wants to hear about has to happen to protect the yaom, a peacebringer is the person to do it. Although peacebringers could come from any species, thus far only yaom have earned the title.

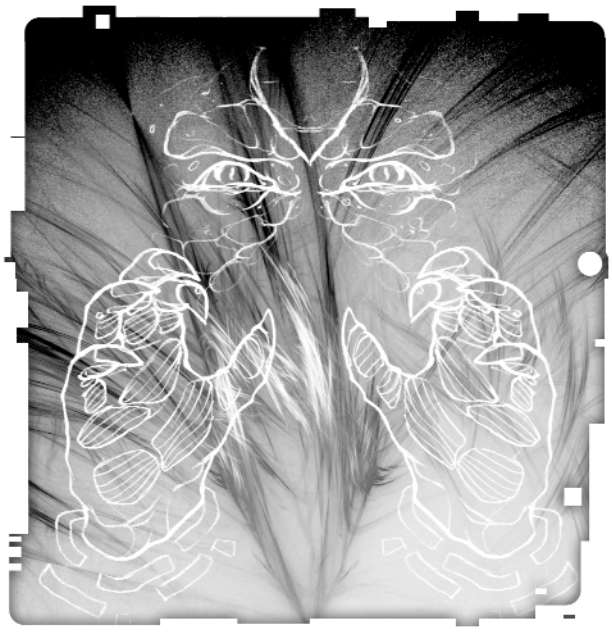
Select this prestige class if you want to be a powerful psionic law enforcement agent and spy, charged with using your powers to protect others.

The fastest path to this class is through the Telepath and Red Truth Master classes. At least four levels in Red Truth Master are required.

Requirements

To become a Peacebringer, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Class Ability: Master's Respect
Feats: Iron Will
Manifester Level: 8th
Skills: Concentration 12 ranks, Intimidate 8 ranks, Knowledge (Civics) 10 ranks, Psicraft 12 ranks, Sense Motive 10 ranks.
Will Save: +6



Class Information

The following information pertains to the Peacebringer advanced class.

Hit Die
The Peacebringer gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Peacebringer gains a number of action points equal to 7 + one-half her character level, rounded down, every time she attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Peacebringer's class skills are as follows. Autohypnosis (Wis), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (Civics, History, Species, Theology and Philosophy) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Psicraft (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier. (6 + Int modifier for nonhumans)

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Peacebringer advanced class.

Peacebringer Authority
While the masters are the leaders and servants of the yaom people, the Peacebringers are those who watch the watchmen. They can override any decision or action of a master, though they will have to explain their decision at a council of his peers within a month's time. Peacebringers can give orders to any yaom and expect to be obeyed, and have all the rights and privileges of masters as well. The Peacebringer gains a circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks made against yaom equal to his Reputation bonus.

Archaic Weapons Proficiency
At 1st level as part of their training regiment peacebringers are trained in the use of peacebringer's blades, the weapon and badge of office of the peacebringers. The Peacebringer gains the Archaic Weapons Proficiency feat as a bonus feat.

Psionic Powers
The Peacebringer can manifest psionic powers through his control over the Red Truth. A Peacebringer's level limits the number of power points available for manifesting powers. In addition, a Peacebringer must have a Wisdom score equal to at least 10 + the power's level to manifest a particular power.
The Peacebringer's selection of powers is limited, although he enjoys ultimate flexibility. At each level, the Peacebringer discovers one or more previously latent powers, as indicated on the table below. These powers are in addition to any the Peacebringer has already discovered from levels in other classes. The powers must be selected from the list below.
The DC for saving throws to resist a psionic power is 10 + the power's level + the Peacebringer's Wisdom modifier.
A Peacebringer can manifest a certain number of powers per day based on his available power

Red Truth Master Level	Power Points Per Day	Powers Known by Level 0	1	2	3	4	5
1	11	1	0	0	0	0	1
2	24	1	0	0	1	0	1
3	37	1	1	1	1	1	1
4	52	2	1	1	1	1	2
5	67	2	1	1	1	1	2

Wisdom Score	Bonus Power Points Per Day
12-13	1
14-15	3
16-17	5
18-19	7
20-21	9
22-23	11

points. He pays the power point cost of a power to manifest it. The base number of power points available per day is shown on the table above. This number is improved by bonus points determined by the Peacebringer's Wisdom score, as shown on the table below. The character only receives bonus power points once, not once per class.

Peacebringer Powers

The Peacebringer chooses his psionic powers from the following list.

0 Level Peacebringer Powers:
daze, *detect psionics*, *distract*, *missive*.

1st Level Peacebringer Powers:
absorb information, *attraction*, *call to mind*, *charm person*, *computer empathy*, *conceal thoughts*, *empathy*, *far hand*, *far punch*, *know direction and location*, *lesser mindlink*, *object reading*.

2nd Level Peacebringer Powers:
brain lock, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *cloud mind*, *combat focus*, *combat prescience*, *darkvision*, *detect hostile intent*, *detect thoughts*, *lesser concussion*, *lesser destroy information*, *read thoughts*, *sensitivity to psychic impressions*, *suggestion*.

3rd Level Peacebringer Powers:
concussion, *false sensory input*, *lesser domination*, *lesser information barrier*, *lesser information block*, *mental blast*, *mindlink*, *negate psionics*.

4th Level Peacebringer Powers:
domination, *forced mindlink*, *greater destroy information*, *tailor memory*.

5th Level Peacebringer Powers:
greater information barrier, *greater information block*, *mindprobe*, *mindwipe*, *natural armor*, *power resistance*, *sending*.

Bonus Feats

At 2nd and 4th level, an Peacebringer gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Peacebringer must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Attentive, Deceptive, Dodge, Educated, Focused, Greater Mind Shield, Heroic Surge, Increased Power Points, Information-Dense Mind, Meticulous, Mind Shield, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Psi-Training, Renown, See Red Truth, Stealthy, Track, Trustworthy.

Trigger Power

At 3rd level the Peacebringer chooses one psionic power that he can attempt to manifest for no power point cost.
At this level you select one 0-, 1st-, 2nd-, 3rd-, or 4th-level power you can use. From that point on, you can attempt to trigger that power without paying its cost. To trigger a power, you must have enough power points to cover the normal cost of the power manifestation. Then, make a Wisdom check against a DC listed below. If you succeed at the ability check, the power manifests with no cost in power points. If the check fails, you pay the power point cost and the power manifests.
DCs for the ability check depend on the level of the power: 0-level, DC 11; 1st-level, DC 13; 2nd-level, DC 15; 3rd-level, DC 17; and 4th level, DC 19.

Weapon Focus

At 3rd level the Peacebringer gains the Weapon Focus feat for his peacebringer's blade as a bonus feat.

Remove Psionics

At 5th level the Peacebringer learns one of the greatest arts that a student of Red Truth can

PEACEBRINGER

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+1	+1	+2	Peacebringer Authority, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Psionic Powers	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+2	+2	+3	Bonus Feat, Psionic Powers	+2	+1
3rd	+2	+2	+2	+3	Trigger Power, Weapon Focus, Psionic Power	+2	+1
4th	+3	+2	+2	+3	Bonus Feat, Psionic Powers	+3	+2
5th	+3	+3	+3	+4	Remove Psionics, Weapon Specialization, Psionic Powers	+3	+2



learn: the ability to cut others off from the Red Truth. This is a dangerous process that can backfire on the Peacebringer, eliminating his connection to Red Truth, so it is only used in the direst of circumstances, and even then only with great care and planning.

To use this power, the Peacebringer must designate a target within 30 feet of the Peacebringer. The target must have psionic abilities or a racial ability that allows them to interact with Red Truth to be affected by this ability. Activating this ability requires a full round action and a successful ranged touch attack. If the attack is successful, both the target and the Peacebringer make opposed Will saves; the loser loses a number of power points equal to the difference between the two saves. If the loser has no power points he instead takes an equal amount of Wisdom damage. If the Will saves tie neither participant loses points, and they can continue the contest on the following round.

On each subsequent round, the Peacebringer may continue using this ability as a move action each round, so long as the Peacebringer remains within 30 feet of his target. The Peacebringer and his target make opposed Will saves each round, as above. If either character reaches 0 Wisdom, that character falls unconscious and permanently loses all psionic powers, power points, and Red Truth abilities.

Weapon Specialization

At 5th level the Peacebringer gains a +2 bonus on damage rolls when using his peacebringer's blade.

PSIONICS • • •

Psionics in Dawning Star are different from psionics in d20 Modern due to the unusual source of their power. Psionics in Dawning Star operate by perceiving and modifying the information contained in Red Truth. While it is easy for psionicists to sense information in Red Truth, altering information is far more difficult. This means that powers such as telekinesis that move objects by altering information in Red Truth are more difficult to use. With the exception of yaom and phrenics, gaining psionic potential is very difficult for other species due to their inability to perceive Red Truth. The tentaari and vaasi have special immersion chambers that break through to Red Truth using technological means, but most other species do not have access to such devices. Instead, they must find some other way to expose themselves to Red Truth, such as staying for an extended period of time in an area where Red Truth has infected this reality. This means there are few psionicists among other species; for most species, there are none.

Psionics works using the same basic system as detailed in d20 Modern, with the following changes.

1. The key abilities for the various powers are all replaced with Wisdom.

2. Characters gain bonus power points based on their Wisdom instead of their Charisma.

3. Characters who run out of power points may take Wisdom damage to use powers, taking one point of Wisdom damage for each extra power point used. A character reduced to 0 Wisdom falls unconscious. A character reduced to negative Wisdom suffers permanent Wisdom drain equal to the negative amount of Wisdom. Power points represent a character's ability to interact with Red Truth safely, and once that safety buffer is gone further interaction causes damage to their mind.

4. A character cannot regain power points in an area infected with Red Truth. When using psionic powers in such an area, however, the power point cost of all powers is reduced by 2, to a minimum of 1. Each time a psionic character uses a power in an area infected with Red Truth, he must make a Will save (DC 15 + the number of times he has opened himself to the Red Truth or used a psionic power in the affected area during the last 24 hours). Failing this save inflicts one point of Intelligence and Wisdom damage on the psionicist.

RED TRUTH IMMERSION CHAMBER

A relic of the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire, these Progress Level 10 devices were rare before those two civilizations fell, and are all but nonexistent currently. The tentaari stuck in Helios have one, as do the vaasi in the Cronus belt, but neither is likely to share their immersion chamber with any other faction. There may be more such devices hidden on Eos or in the gateway station, but they remain unknown for now.



Red Truth Immersion Chambers are cube-shaped devices usually measuring ten feet on a side. A large, thick door allows access to the chamber, and a control panel is mounted on the outside of the door. The tentaari version is all polished chrome and illuminated control panels, while the vaasi version is a black and gray monstrosity with organic looking curves and bulges on its exterior surfaces. Activating the device requires one minute. Once active the area inside the immersion chamber is opened to Red Truth. The Red Truth Immersion Chamber uses powerful forces to weaken the barrier between Red Truth and this reality within the chamber. This is the same as the effects of being in an area infected by Red Truth (see Chapter 4). The length of the exposure to Red Truth is set by a timer on the outside of the door before entering, though this time may be changed or the entire process stopped from the outside at any time.

The immersion chamber inflicts a point of permanent Wisdom drain and allows the subject to learn psionic powers, though sometimes the timing is off and more damage than intended is inflicted. In emergencies, the vaasi and tentaari have used the chamber to gain a temporary boost to Wisdom and Intelligence skill checks, but doing so is dangerous and thus rarely attempted.

As long as the immersion chamber is maintained and undamaged, there is no danger of Red Truth infecting the area outside the chamber, and the infection within the chamber ends as soon as it is shut down, either by timer or manual controls. Like most technology the tentaari possess, however, they have been less than faithful in keeping their immersion chamber repaired and Red Truth leaks outside the chamber each time it is used. The tentaari only use it rarely, and in a different location each time, to avoid too much Red Truth energy overtaking one area.

A Red Truth Immersion Chamber weighs 3 tons, has a hardness of 30, and has a self-contained power plant. It is a PL 10 item and has no set Purchase DC, but it would be at least 70+ in most civilizations.

LEARNING PSIONICS • • •

Learning psionics is difficult for species other than yaom and phrenics, because they lack a natural connection to Red Truth. There have been individuals among each species that had some ability to contact Red Truth naturally, creating tales of psychics and wizards. The abilities of these individuals have been quirks of fate and limited in power, however. The yaom inherited their ability to perceive Red Truth from the dosai of the Star Confederation. How the dosai gained this ability is unknown, but in the days of the Star Confederation some believed that the dosai transported their entire race through Red Truth to escape some sort of planetary disaster before they were capable of space travel, permanently altering their nature. The vaasi created phrenics specifically to harness the power of Red Truth through genetic engineering using dosai DNA, and thus have inborn psionic powers. Other races require a dangerous level of exposure to Red Truth to develop powers of any significance.

Non-yaom characters may select the Wild Talent feat without exposure to Red Truth, but can advance no further in the study of psionics. This represents some small innate ability to contact Red Truth, but this grants little power on its own. To develop greater talents, a character must be exposed to Red Truth.

This exposure can take the form of spending time in an immersion chamber, such as those used by the tentaari and vaasi, or an extended stay in an area infected with Red Truth. In either case, the character must suffer at least one point of permanent Wisdom drain through this exposure to be able to learn more psionic powers. This damage represents the brain trying to accommodate the information flow of Red Truth and suffering damage from doing so, but still making it possible for the character to have some ability to perceive Red Truth.

Once this point of Wisdom drain is inflicted, the character must train with another psionicist to learn the basics of harnessing Red Truth. This requires thirty days of training, during which the character must train for at least 8 hours a day. The monasteries of Thres are a perfect setting for such training. At the end of the thirty days the character must make a Wisdom check (DC 20) and receives a +4 bonus to this check if training in a Red Truth thin spot or in a yaom settlement. If successful the character can take a psionic class level next time he goes up a level and can take psionic levels in the future without restriction. If the Wisdom checks fails the character must train for another thirty days, but gains a +1 bonus to his Wisdom check for every thirty-day span spent training. If the character trains for three hundred days and never succeeds in the Wisdom check he does not have the necessary mental fortitude to master Red Truth and can never take psionic levels. This training can be done at any time, but the benefits only accrue when the character gains a level and puts that level into a psionic class.

UNAVAILABLE PSIONIC POWERS

Because of the way psionics function in Dawning Star, telekinesis and other powers that manipulate the physical world are difficult to use, since it requires an individual to effectively rewrite information in Red Truth. The following powers are not available at all in Dawning Star unless they are specifically listed in a power list in a Dawning Star rulebook:

burst	lesser body
claws of the bear	attunement
electric charge	lightning strike
finger of fire	metaphysical
firebolt	weapon
firestorm	psychofeedback
greater	verve
bioweapon	vigor
lesser bioweapon	whitefire

The following powers are one level higher in Dawning Star:

concussion	lesser concussion
control object	levitate
far hand	mind bolts
far punch	telekinesis

These changes make the Battle Mind advanced class much less useful and not well-suited for play. In the Dawning Star universe, psionics are not used in combat without extremely specialized training, such as the Peacebringers and Border Wardens of the yaom possess, which will be dealt with in Heroes of Helios. To modify the NPC stats from Operation Quick Launch make the following changes.

Tentaari Telepath:
1st Level: Change lesser body adjustment to object reading. Power Points: 32

Vaasi Battle Mind:
0th level: Remove Verve.
1st level: Change fire bolt to finger of fire, vigor to far punch.

NEW PSIONIC POWERS • • •

The following powers are available to some psionic classes, as detailed below and in the class descriptions. New powers will also be available in Heroes of Helios.

◇ Absorb Information

Level: Peacebringer 1/Red Truth Master 1/Telepath 1/Yaom Mystic 1
Display: Mental;
Manifestation Time: Attack action
Range: Touch
Target: One item that holds information, such as a book or computer disc
Duration: Concentration
Saving Throw: None
Power Resistance: No
Power Point Cost: 1

By viewing an object that contains information, such as a book, computer disc, or tablet of pictograms you may grasp the meaning of the information stored within. For the duration of the power you have complete knowledge of the information stored in the item targeted, and can recite it with perfect clarity regardless of its length or complexity. You can also read any language when using this power, but cannot understand coded or encrypted information without making an appropriate Decipher Script or Computer Use skill check, to which you receive a +4 competence bonus. This power only works on one item per use. After the power has lapsed, the character retains a basic understanding of the information contained, but cannot recall specifics such as names or dates. If the object targeted by this power houses a entity with a Wisdom rating, such as an artificial intelligence entity's data crystal, this power automatically fails.

◇ Call to Mind

Level: Peacebringer 1/Red Truth Master 1/Telepath 1/Yaom Mystic
Display: Mental
Manifesting Time: 1 minute
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Instantaneous
Power Point Cost: 1

By meditating on a subject, you can recall natural memories and knowledge otherwise inaccessible to you.

On a failed Knowledge check, you can manifest this power to gain a new check with a +4 competence bonus. If successful, you instantly recall what was previously buried in your subconscious.

◇ Cloud Mind

Level: Peacebringer 2
Display: None
Manifesting Time: Attack action
Range: Close (25 ft. +5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 min./level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Power Resistance: Yes
Power Point Cost: 3

You make yourself completely undetectable to the subject, erasing all awareness of your presence from its mind. This power has the following effects.

First, you are invisible and inaudible to the creature. It cannot even detect your presence by means of blindsense, blindsight, scent, or tremorsense. It cannot pinpoint your location by any means.

Second, the subject remains unaware of your actions, provided you do not make any attacks or cause any obvious or directly threatening changes in the subject's environment. If you attack the subject creature, the effect ends.

If you take an action that creates a sustained and obvious change in the subject's environment-for example, attacking a creature aside from the subject or moving a large or attended object the subject can see-the subject immediately gains a new saving throw against the power. An ally of the subject creature that is able to see or perceive you can use a move action to warn the subject and thereby grant it a new saving throw.



◇ Computer Empathy

Level: Peacebringer 2/Red Truth Master 2
Display: Visual
Manifestation Time: Full round action
Range: Touch
Target: 1 computer or computer network
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Power Resistance: Yes
Power Point Cost: 3

By concentrating on the dense information flow surrounding the targeted computer you can predict its actions and interact with it on a different level of consciousness. You need not access its storage to look at files; you can look at them through Red Truth. You gain a +8 competence bonus to all Computer Use checks while using this power. This power also allows non-corporeal creatures, such as information ghosts, to interact with corporeal computers.

◇ Conceal Thoughts

Level: Peacebringer 1/Red Truth Master 1/Telepath 2
Display: Mental
Manifesting; Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One willing creature
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Power Resistance: Yes (harmless)
Power Point Cost: 1

You protect the subject's thoughts from analysis. While the duration lasts, the subject gains a +10 circumstance bonus on Bluff checks against those attempting to discern its true intentions with Sense Motive. It also gains a +4 bonus on its saving throw against any power or spell used to read its mind (such as *read thoughts* or *mind probe*).

◇ Destroy Information, Greater

Level: Peacebringer 4/Red Truth Master 4
Display: Mental, Visual
Manifestation Time: Attack action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature, object, or a number of information storage devices equal to the user's manifester level
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Power Resistance: Yes
Power Point Cost: 7

This functions as lesser destroy information but with greater power. If used against a creature or object if inflicts 4d6 points of damage. If used to erase information from a book, computer disc, or other storage media it will erase one item per manifester level of the user, or one computer network. If used against an information ghost or other creature of pure information it inflicts 8d6 points of damage.

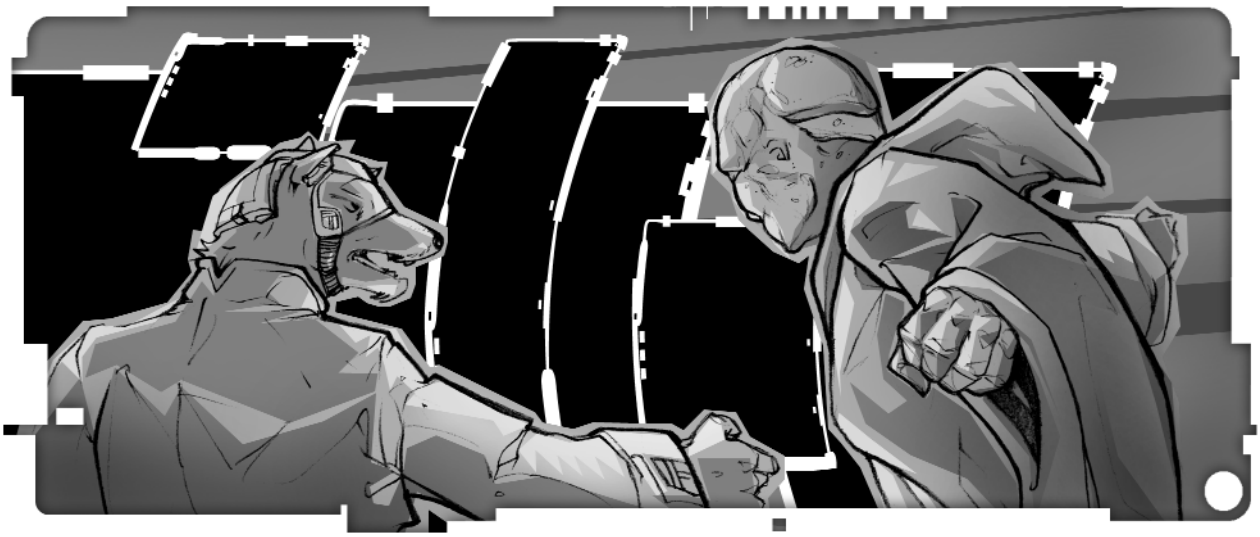


If used on an item that houses an entity that has a Wisdom score, the entity must make a Will save (DC 14+ the manifester's Wisdom bonus) or be rendered nonfunctional for 4d6 hours.

◇ Destroy Information, Lesser

Level: Peacebringer 2/Red Truth Master 2
Display: Mental, Visual
Manifestation Time: Attack action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature, object, or information storage device
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Power Resistance: Yes
Power Point Cost: 3

One of the more feared powers among the yaom, this psionic power reaches through Red Truth and rends the information in a specific area of Red Truth, eliminating it from existence. This can have several effects in this reality based on how this destruction is targeted. If a living being is targeted this power causes them to suffer pain and wounds as information regarding their body is erased, inflicting 2d6 points of damage. It can also be used to destroy all the data contained in a single information storage device, such as a computer disc or book. An item erased in such a fashion will either be blank or contain a random jumble of useless information, at the manifester's discretion. If used on an item that houses an entity with a Wisdom score, the entity must make a Will save (DC 12 + the manifester's Wisdom bonus) or be rendered nonfunctional for 2d6 hours. This power may be used to attack creatures of pure information, inflicting 4d6 points of damage.



◇ Detect Hostile Intent

Level: Peacebringer 2/Red Truth Master 2/Telepath 2
Display: Mental
Manifesting Time: Attack action
Range: 30 ft.
Area: 30-ft.-radius emanation centered on you
Duration: 10 min./level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Power Resistance: No
Power Point Cost: 3

While the duration of this power lasts, you become aware of the presence of any creatures with hostile intent within 30 feet of you, and their direction from you (but not their specific location). The power detects active aggression, as opposed to vigilance. As long as this power is active, you cannot be surprised or caught flatfooted.

While under the effect of this power, you can make Sense Motive checks as a free action against anyone within 30 feet of you.

◇ Empathy

Level: Peacebringer 1/Red Truth Master 1/Telepath 1/Yaom Master 1
Display: Mental
Manifesting Time: Attack action
Range: 30 ft.
Area: 30-ft.-radius spread centered on you
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 min./level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Power Resistance: No
Power Point Cost: 1

You detect the surface emotions of any creature you can see that is in the power's area. You can sense basic needs, drives, and emotions. Thirst, hunger, fear, fatigue, pain, rage, hatred, uncertainty, curiosity, friendliness, and many other kinds of sensations and moods can be perceived. This power affects all creature types, from robots to information ghosts.

You gain a +2 insight bonus on any Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, or Sense Motive checks that you make in the round when you cease concentrating on this power.

◇ Information Barrier, Greater

Level: Peacebringer 5/Red Truth Master 5
Display: Visual
Manifestation Time: Full round action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area: Any two-dimensional area with a surface of no more than 100 sq ft., and the longest dimension cannot be more than 20 ft.
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Power Resistance: None
Power Point Cost: 9

A more powerful version of a lesser information barrier, this power also blocks all physical matter from passing through the barrier.

◇ Information Barrier, Lesser

Level: Peacebringer 3/Red Truth Master 3
Display: Visual
Manifestation Time: Full round action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Area: Any two-dimensional area with a surface of no more than 100 sq ft., and the longest dimension cannot be more than 20 ft.
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: None
Power Resistance: None
Power Point Cost: 5

This power creates a zone in the Red Truth through which information that is not tied to a material object cannot pass. This barrier is a flat black, non-reflective barrier through which characters cannot perceive anything, radio broadcasts will not travel, information ghosts cannot pass, psionic power cannot penetrate, etc. No form of information can cross the barrier. The barrier can be placed

anywhere within the range of the power and in any shape desired that meets the area requirements, though there can be no holes in the barrier. Physical objects can pass through the barrier without a problem unless they are being moved by psionic powers.

◇ Information Block, Greater

Level: Peacebringer 5/Red Truth Master 5
Display: Mental
Manifestation Time: Attack Action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature or object
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Power Resistance: Yes
Power Point Cost: 9

A more powerful version of lesser information block, if the target fails its save, it is cut off from all sensory input, including the ability to perceive Red Truth. The character is effectively blinded and deafened, in addition to suffering the penalties described under information block, lesser. All targets have complete concealment and the character suffers a -4 penalty to Defense, attack rolls, skill checks, ability checks, and saving throws in addition to being flat-footed. The character cannot use the Open to Red Truth yaom racial ability and gains no bonus to Intelligence and Wisdom checks from being in an area infected with Red Truth. The character is also immune to any sort of damage from Red Truth for the duration of the power, including items hurled with telekinesis.

◇ Information Block, Lesser

Level: Peacebringer 3/Red Truth Master 3
Display: Mental
Manifestation Time: Attack action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature or object
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Power Resistance: Yes
Power Point Cost: 5

By stopping the flow of Red Truth, you are able to temporarily limit the sensory abilities of the target. Any type of creature or machine that has sensor elements, such as a robot or a video camera, can be targeted by this spell. This power is negated with a Will save.

On a failed save, the target loses one sense for the duration of the power. Targets can be rendered deaf or blind using this power. The target can also be made to lose the sense of touch, which inflicts a -4 penalty on all physical activities such as attack rolls, Reflex saves, and Dexterity and Strength based skill checks. Cutting off information from the target's sense of smell eliminates the Scent ability and makes straas unable to communicate with pheromones. A character whose sense of taste is removed cannot taste anything in their food, including poison. This power has no affect on a creature's ability to perceive Red Truth.

◇ Know Direction and Location

Level: Peacebringer 1/Red Truth Master 1
Display: Mental
Manifesting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Instantaneous
Power Point Cost: 1

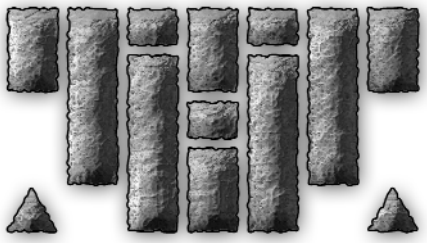
You generally know where you are. This power is useful to characters who end up in unfamiliar locations after being transported while unconscious or being transported to unknown locations via a relic. The power reveals general information about your location as a feeling or presentiment. The information is usually no more detailed than a summary that locates you according to a prominent local or regional site. Using this power also tells you what direction you are facing.

◇ Mindwipe

Level: Peacebringer 5/Red Truth Master 5
Display: Mental
Manifesting Time: Attack action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Power Resistance: Yes
Power Point Cost: 9

You partially wipe your victim's mind of past experiences, bestowing two negative levels upon it. If the subject has at least as many negative levels as Hit Dice, it falls unconscious and remains so until one hour passes. For each negative level it gains, a psionic creature loses knowledge of one power from its highest available level, and a number of power points from its maximum power point total sufficient to manifest that power. The effects of multiple negative levels stack.

The subject loses these two negative levels after 1 hour. (No Fortitude save is necessary to avoid gaining the negative level permanently.)



TELEPATH POWER LIST

While the classes in this book and future Dawning Star books will reference the powers contained here, the following powers should be added to the power list of the Telepath.

Telepath

1st Level Powers:
Absorb Information, Call to Mind, Empathy.

2nd Level Powers:
Conceal Thoughts, Detect Hostile Intent, Read Thoughts.

◇ Read Thoughts

Level: Peacebringer 2/Red Truth Master 2/Telepath 2
Display: Mental
Manifesting Time: Attack action
Range: 60 ft.
Area: Cone-shaped emanation starting at the manifester
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 min./level (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates; see text
Power Resistance: No
Power Point Cost: 3

You know the surface thoughts of the mind of any creature in the area that fails a Will save. A target that succeeds on its save is not affected by this manifestation of the power, even if it leaves the area and then reenters the area before the duration expires.

Creatures of animal intelligence have simple, instinctual thoughts that you can pick up. If you read the thoughts of a creature with an Intelligence of 26 or higher (and at least 10 points higher than your own Intelligence score), you are stunned for 1 round and the power ends. This power does not let you pinpoint the location of an affected mind if you don't have line of sight to the subject.

Each round, you can turn to use this power in a new area.

◇ Tongues

Level: Peacebringer 2/Red Truth Master 2
Display: None
Manifesting Time: Attack action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 10 min./level
Power Point Cost: 3

This power grants you the ability to speak and understand the language of any intelligent creature, whether it is a racial tongue or a regional dialect. You can speak only one language at a time, although you may be able to understand several languages. Tongues does not enable you to speak with creatures who don't speak. You can make yourself understood as far as your voice carries. This power does not predispose any creature addressed toward you in any way.

◇ Transform to Information Ghost

Level: Peacebringer 5/Red Truth Master 5
Display: Mental, Visual
Manifestation Time: 1 hour
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: Special
Saving Throw: None
Power Resistance: No
Power Point Cost: 9

One of the rarest powers among the yaom, this power transforms you into an information ghost for limited amount of time. To activate this power you must meditate for one hour without interruption. You spend the power points to activate this power at the beginning of your meditation. If you stop meditating before the hour is up, you lose the power points. Assuming you are able to meditate for one hour without interruption, your consciousness leaves your body as an information ghost, gaining the information ghost template described in Chapter 4. Your body remains where it is, unconscious until your consciousness returns. Your body breathes and still needs food and water while you are gone, so during extended sessions as an information ghost it is wise to have someone look after your body. If your body is attacked while you are an information ghost, you immediately know. If your body is killed while you are an information ghost you are stuck in that form forever; no one has ever managed to return from being trapped as an information ghost.

While in information ghost form you can act normally, but take none of your equipment with you through the transformation. The duration of the transformation lasts for one hour, but 9 power points can be repeatedly spent to extend the duration by one hour. When the duration ends or your Wisdom is reduced to 0 you automatically return to your body instantaneously.

EQUIPMENT ON THRES • • •

Thres has three major economies in addition to the saurian colonies, which are a much smaller economic force. While the yaom have some trade with the Wolf Tribes, the straas minions of Hivequeen Celick interact with no one. The Straas Hive Legions have the largest and most productive economy in terms of industrial production, but other than basic goods and tools of war they produce very little. Hivequeen Celick owns all goods and means of production, and private property does not exist. There is no money to speak of; all straas are rationed a minimal amount of food, water, and other supplies to make sure they are healthy enough to work. There is no currency among the Hive Legions, and thus no shops. The rebel straas have little industry; they steal supplies from the loyal straas or barter for them with the Wolf Tribes. The rebel straas do believe in private property and use the currency of the Wolf Tribes, but nearly all are willing to give up their personal wealth and goods for their cause. The Straas Hive Legions are generally Progress Level 5, with a few pieces of spacecraft and weaponry that are PL 6. Hivequeen Celick concentrates her research capability on developing new weapons, and the straas' civilian technologies lag far behind their military.

The Wolf Tribes have the second largest economy, much more well-rounded than the straas', including service industries and other sectors that Hivequeen Celick considers superfluous. The Wolf Tribes are divided economically both along tribe lines and within tribes. Some tribes are better off than others, while within a tribe the same is true. Generally, other than the divine leaders of the wolves, who technically can take anything they want from the other wolves, there is not as great a difference between rich and poor as seen in other cultures. The wolves and elgies traditionally help out less fortunate members of their tribes as if they were family, as long as they contribute to the well-being of the tribe. The Wolf Tribes' currency is called the fengar, a small copper coin imprinted with the symbol of the Iron Hands tribe. Many simply call them copper pennies. Most goods built by the Wolf Tribes are Progress Level 5 or 6, with only spacecraft and a few other limited items being PL 7. More complex items used by the Wolf Tribes are built by the elgies.

The yaom have the smallest economy, and relatively primitive goods are the norm. There is little economic divide among the yaom and the masters work to ensure this equality. Some yaom feel they support others who are too stupid or lazy to earn their keep. These are mostly malcontents, but this belief is on the rise. The yaom work on a barter system and often trade knowledge for goods, valuing information more than most species. They accept the fengar, but place little value on the coins and mainly use them to buy things from the Wolf Tribes. The yaom have Progress Level 6 technology, but due to their cultural preferences for studying Red Truth in lieu of technology and dislike of mass production most of the items used in their day-to-day lives are PL 4 or 5.

The economy of the saurian colonies is tightly tied to that of C'thalk and the will of the Emperor, but they have little if any effect on the other economies of Thres. Generally the colonies are less advanced and developed than settlements on C'thalk and have little in the way of industrial capacity. They are more like military camps with limited opportunities for commerce.

As on Eos, equipment of a higher Progress Level than the surrounding area is accustomed to has its Purchase DC increased by +10 instead of +5. For example, an EDF-33P Plasma Rifle would have a Purchase DC of 35 on Thres.

D20 MODERN EQUIPMENT ON THRES

All the equipment listed in d20 Modern is available among the Wolf Tribes, while everything other than clothing is available to the straas. Firearms are available as well, though they are of local manufacture and have different names and possibly slightly different abilities than those listed in d20 Modern. Both factions also make regular use of archaic melee weapons for backup weapons. Most of the equipment from d20 Modern is unavailable in yaom lands due to the lack of mass production, though some simple items like compasses and first aid kits are available. Archaic and simple weapons are the most common types of weapons among the yaom; the firearms or armor listed in d20 Modern are unavailable.

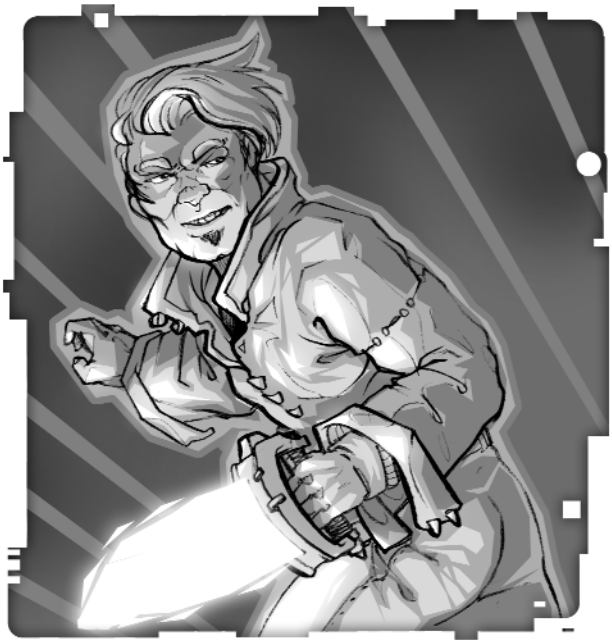
In the saurian colonies most items available on C'thalk are present, but their Purchase DC is increased by +1 to +5 to represent the cost of getting such items to Thres. Particularly large items, like vehicles and heavy weapons, must be custom-ordered from C'thalk.

D20 FUTURE EQUIPMENT ON THRES

Among the Straas Hive Legions, all Progress Level 5 and 6 equipment from d20 Future is available except for antitox chemicals, aquaconverters, flash-seal, laser weapons, morphic disguise kits, nanobeacons, portable glow lamps, personal plastic surgery kits, puritizers, shepherd chips, soother pulses, and sporekill chemicals.

In the Wolf Tribes all PL 5 and 6 equipment is available. Chameleonic surface, medium combat armor, galpos devices, and space combat armor is available from PL 7.

With the yaom's limited technological abilities, only the Falcon .45, puritizer, light combat armor, neural scrambler, tangler gun, and universal communicator are available from PL 5 and 6. In the saurian colonies any goods available on C'thalk can be shipped to the colonies, but this will increase the cost of the item.



◇ Adventuring Equipment

Liar Stone

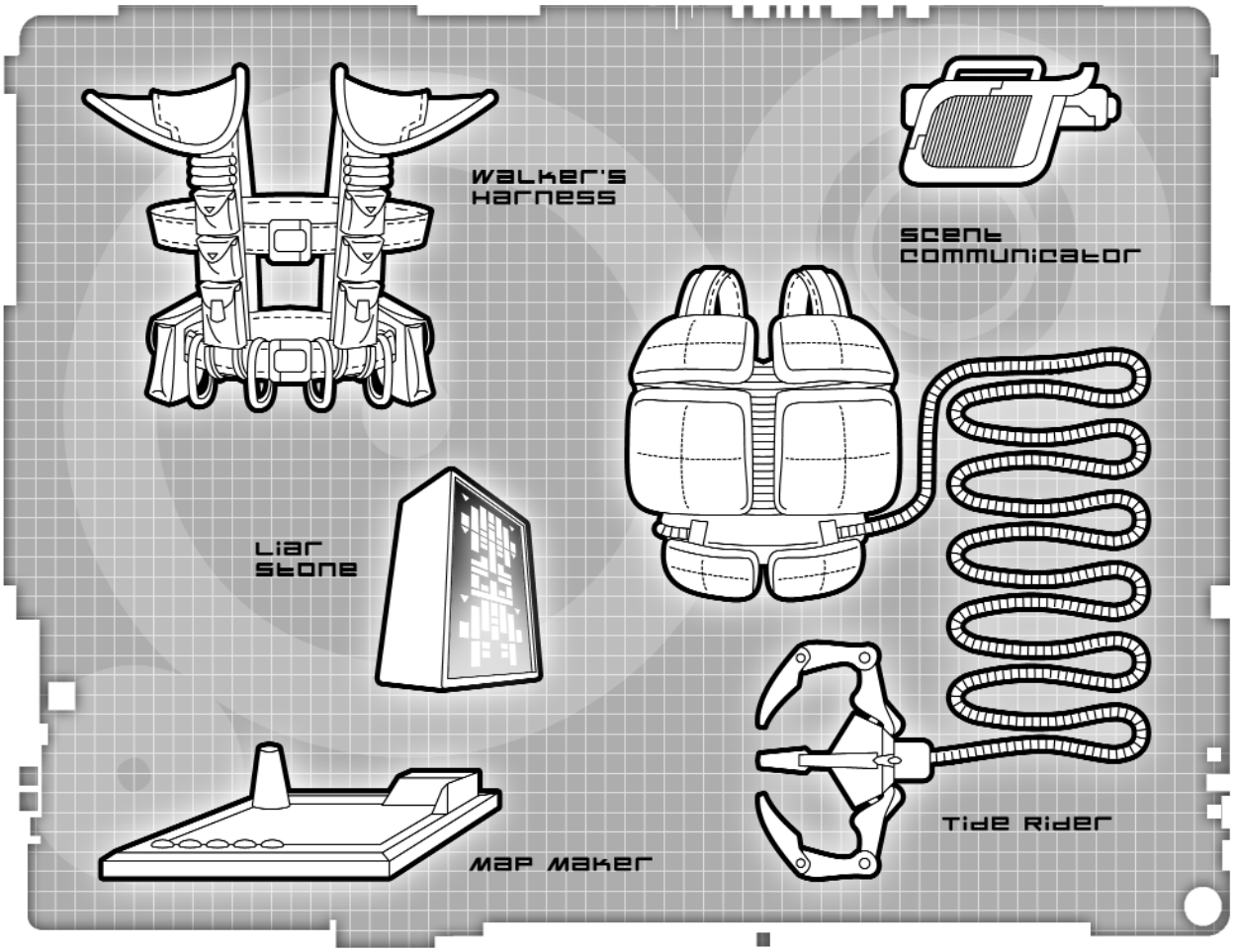
A rare item manufactured by some yaom masters, these small stones are made from rocks exposed to Red Truth for at least a century. The stones are then scoured of all excess information and infused with a permanent information block by a yaom master, a process that permanently consumes seven of the master's power points. After this process is complete the stone is a natural dampener of Red Truth, granting a +4 bonus to all saving throws against psionics or the effects of Red Truth to those who hold it. Yaom find these items deeply uncomfortable; any psionicist carrying one must make a Will save (DC 15) each day he carries one or take one point of Wisdom damage. Yaom masters occasionally make these stones for non-yaom allies who must deal regularly with the Red Truth, but it is rare for more than a dozen of these stones to be made in a decade.

Map Maker

A powerful portable computing device, it combines a laser range finder with a global positioning system and detailed map programming to map the surrounding area when activated. This device deploys a laser range finder that scans the surrounding area and then turns the information gained into a three-dimensional map, which is linked up with other maps by way of the global positioning system. Using a map maker, travelers can make a slowly growing map of all the regions they have seen, though non-geographic objects that interrupt the laser, such as trees or buildings, can greatly limit the range of the laser finder and thus the size of the map. When used in open ground the laser range finder has a range of ten miles, but in more cramped settings it has a range of 100 feet. Map makers are produced by the Wolf Tribes, but a few have found their way into the hands of the straas and saurians of Thres.

Scent Communicator

The straas version of a universal communicator, it reads pheromone scents and broadcasts that set of pheromones to other communicators in range, which then reproduce the pheromones using an interior store of chemicals. The communicator has a range of five hundred miles, but the recipient of a message must be within five feet of the receiving communicator to receive the message. The receiver of a broadcast must succeed in an Intelligence check (DC 5) to understand the message, as artificial pheromones lack the subtlety of their natural counterparts.



Tide Rider

A safety device used by members of any faction frequenting the tidal regions of Thres, especially scavengers, the tide rider was developed by the elgies. The tide rider is a heavy leather harness and floating device attached by twenty feet of rope to a metal anchor that is designed to be jammed into the ground. Spikes then extrude from its head into the dirt. The anchor is deployed when the tide comes in quicker than expected and the wearer of the tide rider then uses the flotation device in the harness to float on top of the coming tide, locked in position by the anchor, until the tide recedes again. The tide rider allows the individual to easily survive a coming tide as long as the water does not reach a depth of more than twenty feet, which is unlikely in most areas. The flotation device in the harness, made up of ultra-light Styrofoam, grants a +8 bonus to any Swim checks made to stay afloat.

Walker's Harness

Used by many wolves who spend most of their days among the caravans of the Wolf Tribes, these harnesses are a complex set of straps, belts, and pouches that allow the wearer to carry up to fifty pounds of equipment in addition to whatever else they carry. The walker harness distributes the weight evenly, and the weight of the items placed in it only count for half their actual weight when determining the wearer's encumbrance.

Adventuring Gear

Name	PL	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Liar Stone	3	Tiny	1 lb.	45	-
Map Maker	6	Tiny	3 lb.	26	-
Scent Communicator	6	Tiny	2 lb.	24	-
Tide Rider	4	Small	20 lb.	15	-
Walker's Harness	4	Small	12 lb.	14	-

WEAPONS • • •

◇ Straas Melee Weapons

Back before the arrival of the vaasi and Hivequeen Celick, nearly all combat among the straas was carried out with melee weapons. The hivequeens decided on guidelines for war between the hives, decreeing that the straas would fight only with melee weapons so that war would not become a casual affair carried out from a distance. The straas labored to keep war unpleasant, so that each warrior would have to look his enemies in the eye. This philosophy served the straas well for a time, but it made them easy pickings when the vaasi arrived on their homeworld. Now all straas use ranged weapons, the loyal straas because they are ordered to do so, and the rebel straas because they have to keep up with Hivequeen Celick's minions. Even so, both sides of the conflict still commonly carry melee weapons. The Straas Hive Legions have no laws concerning carrying weapons, except that enemies of Hivequeen Celick are not allowed any sort of weapons and are shot on sight.

Azay Axe

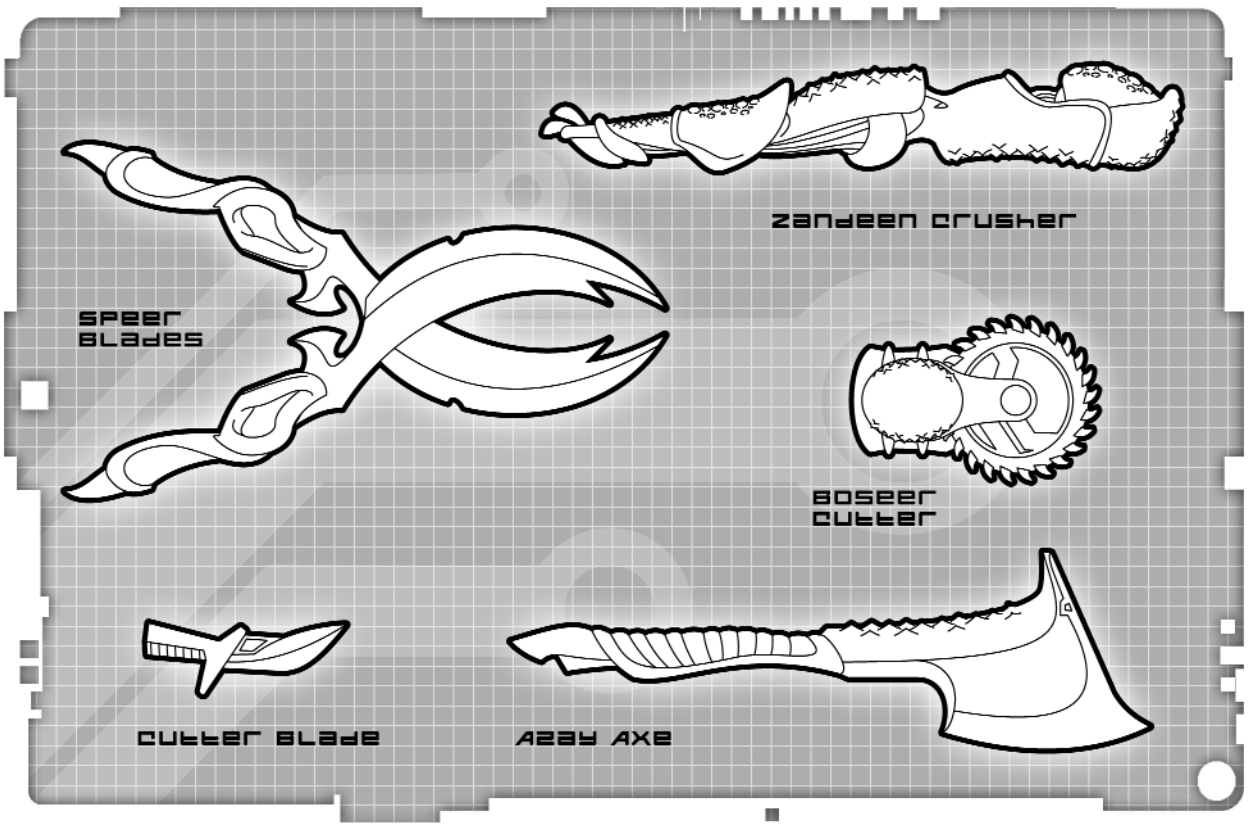
A recently developed weapon used by the rebel straas, this oversized axe is made from the melted tools used by the loyal straas in their daily toil. As much as a symbol as a weapon, rebel straas leaders use them in battle, often with a flag or standard attached to the weapon's haft. Some wolves have taken up using these weapons, but make them from normal materials when they do so.

Boseer Cutter

Similar to a circular saw, these weapons are large spinning circular blades that are strapped to the back of the user's hand, allowing him to stab and punch using the spinning saw blade. A small engine keeps the blade spinning, allowing the weapon to cut through many substances with a minimum of effort. The weapon is hard to master and it is easy for the user to injure himself with the weapon if he is not careful. Boseer cutters are exotic weapons.

If the user of the boseer cutter is knocked prone, grappled, disarmed, bull rushed or suffers any effect that moves his position against his will, he must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid hitting himself with the boseer cutter, suffering its normal damage. Additionally, if the wielder is not proficient with the weapon, he must make Reflex save (DC 15) after each missed attack to avoid hitting himself with the boseer cutter. Failure means the wielder hits himself and takes normal damage from the weapon but does not add in any modifiers derived from Strength, feats, or similar sources. Even the slightest touch of the cutting surface can inflict serious injuries.

Boseer cutters use straas power packs and consume one charge per minute of operation. Because they are strapped to the user's arm, boseer cutters receive a +2 bonus to opposed attack rolls to resist being disarmed.



Melee Weapons of the Straas Hive Legions

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Azay Axe (Archaic)	3	2d6	20/x3	Slashing	Large	25 lb.	15	-
Boseer Cutter (Exotic)	5	2d6	19-20/x3	Slashing	Small	12 lb.	18	Lic (+1)
Cutter Blade (Simple)	3	1d6	20	Slashing	Small	9 lb.	6	-
Speer Blades (Archaic)	4	1d6	19-20/x2	Slashing	Small	6 lb. each	19	-
Zandeen Crusher (Exotic)	1	1d10	19-20/x3	Bludgeoning /Piercing	Medium	18 lb.	20	-

Cutter Blade

A melee weapon manufactured in mass quantities by the Hivequeen Celick, it is little more than a crudely fashioned iron blade with a small handle and crosspiece. Used by her soldiers because it is cheap and easy to produce, there are hundreds of thousands of cutter blades made every year among the Straas Hive legions. Few others use them, finding the weapons to be of extremely poor quality.

Speer Blades

Named for a creature native to the straas homeworld that had a pair of oversized mandibles it used for impaling its prey, speer blades are a pair of matched metal swords two feet in length that are meant to be used in tandem. Regarded as ceremonial weapons by the straas, no two sets are supposed to look the same according to tradition. Some are curved, while others have multiple blades, or jagged cutting surfaces. Speer Blades are generally not made by the minions of Hivequeen Celick since they manufacture is costly and time consuming. The Hivequeen prefers the simple and efficient cutter blade for her minions. The rebel straas favor the speer blades due to their historic significance, even if they do not completely understand it. Speer blades are masterwork weapons.



Zandeen Crusher

An ancient weapon said to be the first tool made by the straas, zandeen crushers are large spiked clubs made from a straas's own chitin as they shed their natural plating over time. These weapons are deeply personal items; no straas would dare wield the zandeen crusher of another straas, other than a close family member. These weapons take many years to construct due to the material requirement, and the odd weight of the weapon makes them difficult to use. A zandeen crusher is considered an exotic weapon.

◇ Wolf Tribe Melee Weapons

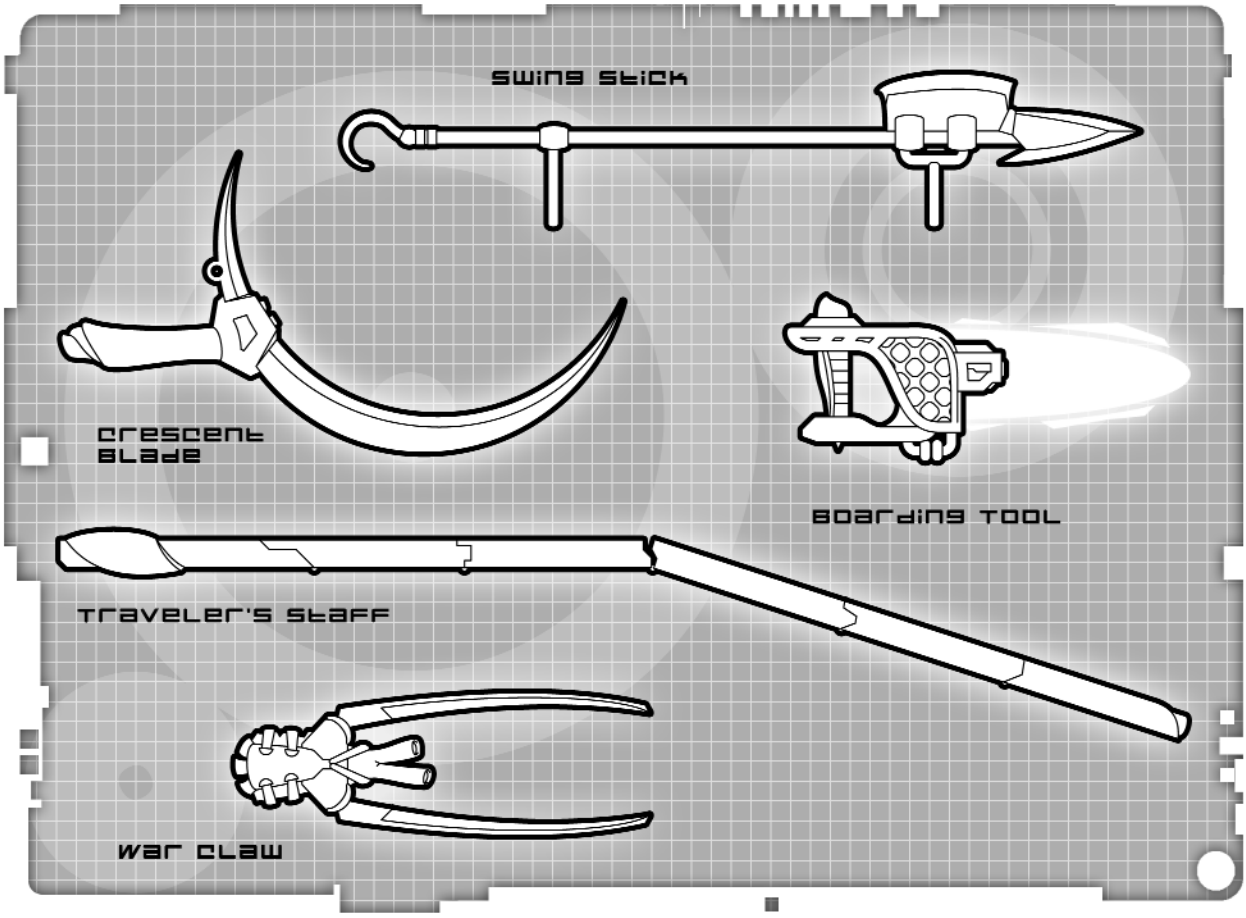
Before their journeys into space, the wolves often fought among themselves, and did so using the best weapons they could develop. This lead to the dominance of ranged weapons much as on Earth, and for most of recent wolf history melee weapons have been used only as a last resort or for ceremonial reasons. Since their arrival on Thres, melee weapons have gained prominence because of a desire to save on energy and ammunition. Most wolf soldiers now carry melee weapons into combat and train with them extensively.

The elgies favor ranged weapons, as their small size and limited strength make them poor close-quarters combatants.

The Wolf Tribes have no laws governing the carrying of melee weapons.

Boarding Tool

A uncommon weapon among the Star tribe, usually found among those members who are involved in boarding operations through the void of space, boarding tools are plasma-bladed cutting devices designed to cut through spacecraft hulls. They were designed for this purpose, but they can also be used in melee combat in a pinch. Boarding tools are expensive and difficult to construct, so there is rarely a great supply of them. Because of this, and the danger inherent in using a boarding tool, they are usually assigned to trained specialists. Over the years a number of safety features have been added



to the design of boarding tools, including an automatic shut off switch should the weapon be dropped, making them safer to use than the plasma cutters found on Eos.

When used as part of a full-round action to cut through an immobile object, such as a wall or airlock door, the boarding tool may ignore the hardness of the object. Doing so provokes an attack of opportunity. If the user of the boarding tool is knocked prone, grappled, bull rushed, or suffers any effect that moves his position against his will, he must make a Reflex save (DC 10) to avoid hitting himself with the boarding tool, suffering its fire damage. Additionally, if the wielder is not proficient with the weapon, he must make Reflex save (DC 10) after each missed attack to avoid hitting himself with the boarding tool. Even the slightest touch of the cutting surface can inflict serious injuries. Failure means the wielder hits himself and takes normal damage from the weapon but does not add in any modifiers derived from Strength, feats, or similar sources.

Boarding tools use wolf power packs and consume one charge per round of use.

Crescent Blade

One of the more common melee weapons among the wolf, this weapon is in the shape of a crescent two feet across with a blade on the inside of the crescent and a handle on the outside. It is an excellent weapon for blocking, especially when used in pairs; a character using a crescent blade gains a +1 bonus to defense against one melee attach each round, and a character using a pair of crescent blades gains a +2 competence bonus to Defense when taking a full defense action. The wolves developed these weapons long ago, and several structured martial schools exist to teach different styles of their use.

Swing Stick

The melee weapon of choice for most elgies, this miniature polearm is as much a tool as a weapon. Four feet in length and thus taller than most elgies who use it, the swing stick is made up of a wood haft and a metal head with a chopping blade on one end, a spear point at its tip, and a hook on the back end. The blade and spear point are used for combat, while the hook is used while climbing to grab far-off branches and swing from them. The haft also has a number of perpendicular wooden handles that can be used to grip the weapon, or as footholds when using the hook to hang from a branch. A small creature who is equipped and proficient with swing sticks gains a +2 equipment bonus to Climb skill checks. This weapon may be used to make trip attacks. Swing sticks are becoming less common among the elgies due to the scarcity of trees on Thres, but in many areas they are instead used as walking sticks.

Melee Weapons of the Wolf Tribes

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Boarding Tool (Exotic)	7	2d10	20	Fire	Medium	11 lb.	25	Res (+2)
Crescent Blade (Archaic)	3	1d6	19-20/x2	Slashing	Small	4 lb.	9	-
Swing Stick (Archaic)	3	1d8	20	Piercing /Slashing	Medium	6 lb.	7	-
Traveler's Staff (Simple)	5	1d6/1d6*	20	Bludgeoning	Large	8 lb.	10	-
War Claw (Archaic)	4	1d6	19-20/x3	Piercing /Slashing	Small	3 lb.	8	-

*This weapon may function as a double weapon.

Traveler's Staff

Not designed as a weapon, traveler's staves are originally designed to be walking sticks that can double as survival kits for wolves who like have extra supplies on hand. The staff is six feet tall, an inch in diameter, and made of a thin layer of aluminum making it light but sturdy. The staff is filled with a full survival kit including matches, fifty feet of duracable, a compass, a knife, fishing line, flashlight, fire starting equipment, bandages, water purifier pump, and one day's rations. These staves are common among wolves spending time away from the settlements and caravans of their people.

War Claw

The most common type of melee weapon among wolves, a war claw consists of a pair of steel blades that are connected to a leather harness that is strapped to the back of the wielder's hand and forearm. The blades extend over the hand of the wielder by two feet, allowing the wielder to stab and slash with them in addition to parrying attacks. These weapons are often used in pairs or with a shield of some type. War claws have become the standard melee weapon of the Blood Tooth tribe.

◇ Yaom Melee Weapons

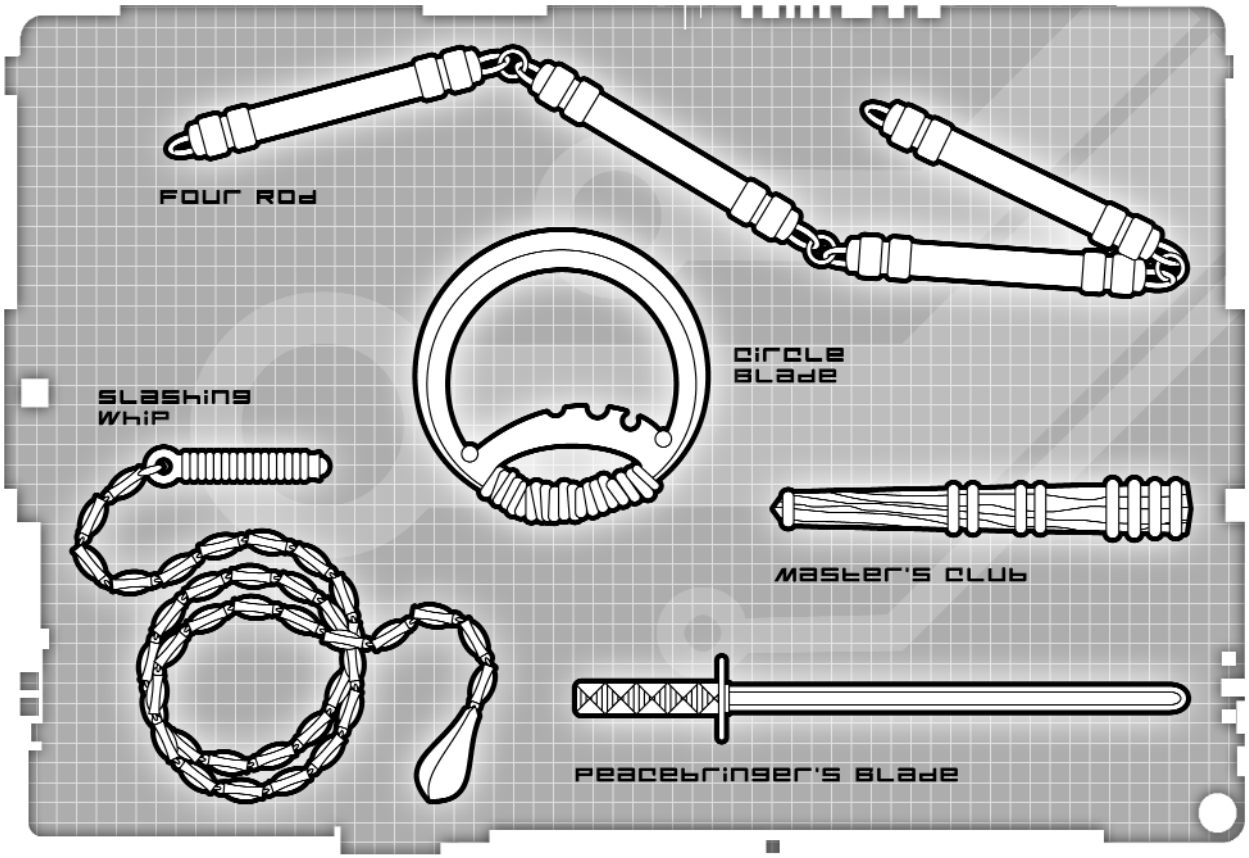
The yaom are not much interested in combat, but when it becomes necessary they favor melee combat over ranged combat. Many yaom carry tools that could be used as weapons, such as staves or daggers, but few carry any specifically designed weapons. Only Border Wardens, masters, and peacebringers regularly carry weapons among the yaom. The yaom have no prohibitions against weapons, but any heavily armed person who is not a Border Warden, Red Truth master, or peacebringer is going to attract a great deal of unwanted attention. Other than Border Wardens, peacebringers, or masters, a yaom carrying a weapon is seen as a sign of paranoia or violent tendencies.

Circle Blade

A weapon favored by some of the Border Wardens, it consists of a large metallic circle with the outer rim of the circle sharpened to a fine edge. A section of the circle is blunted and wrapped in leather to serve as a handle, which often also has a finger guard on the inside of the circle to protect the user's hand. The weapon is used for slashing attacks and often used in pairs. Circle blades are very effective weapons for disarming opponents, granting a +2 equipment bonus to the opposed attack roll to disarm an opponent. Circle blades also may be thrown in a fashion similar to a discus or Frisbee, with a range increment of 20 feet.

Four Rod

Common in the monasteries of the yaom territories, four rods are simple weapons that consist of four segments, each eighteen inches long, which are attached by short lengths of chain or rope. A four rod may be used as one large weapon, or the sections may be detached as a move action, creating a pair of nunchaku or four clubs as needed. The four rods also can be straightened into a staff. This weapon is considered as much a meditation tool as a weapon, and the yaom monks have a large number of weapon katas that include this weapon. The wielder of a four rod gains a +2 equipment bonus to the opposed attack rolls involved in a disarm attack (including the roll to avoid being disarmed if such an attempt fails) and the opposed Strength or Dexterity check involved in a trip attack. If the wielder makes a trip attack and fails, they may drop the four rod to avoid being tripped in return.



The four rod is a double weapon. You can fight with it as if fighting with two weapons, but if you do, you incur all the normal attack penalties associated with fighting with two weapons, as if using a one-handed weapon and a light weapon.

Master's Club

A short club made of wood and ribbed in metal, these weapons have long been a ceremonial part of a master's office. Originally intended to be used to beat resistant yaom into submission without doing serious injury, masters seldom use them now. When pressed, most masters are willing to crack a few heads with these weapons. A non-master caught with one of these weapons had better have a good explanation for possessing it and return it to the appropriate authorities immediately.

Peacebringer's Blade

The primary symbol of office among peacebringers, these long-bladed swords represent the difference between masters and peacebringers: masters may use violence in their duties but do not seek to kill anyone, while peacebringers will kill without hesitation if they must. Yaom craftsmen, who spend their whole lives mastering the process, make Peacebringer's blades, though despite their quality they are completely unadorned. Made of the best steel the yaom produce, these weapons look deceptively simple. When their appearance is combined with the peaceful reputation of the yaom, those unfamiliar with the peacebringers assume it is meant mainly for show. In actuality, peacebringers are trained extensively in their use. Any non-peacebringer caught with one of these weapons may be able to intimidate the common yaom into letting him be, but any master or peacebringer that he encounters will employ great diligence in bringing the charlatan to heel. Peacebringer blades are all +1 mastercrafted weapons.

Slashing Whip

Considered as much a test of skill as a weapon, slashing whips are only used by Border Wardens who are ultimately confident of their abilities. Made up of seventy one-inch sections of metal linked together with chain in a line, the edges of these metal sections are sharpened to fine edges so the wielder can slash those he strikes with the whip. This is especially effective when the whip is used to entangle part of the target's body, such as during a trip attack. When the wielder makes a successful trip attack using a slashing whip, the target suffers 1d6 points of slashing damage in addition to being tripped. Slashing whips also grant a +2 equipment bonus to the opposed Strength or Dexterity check made when making a trip attack with the slashing whip. If the trip attack is not successful, the wielder of the slashing whip can choose to drop the whip instead of being tripped in return. The slashing whip also grants a +2 bonus to opposed attack rolls made during disarm attacks, including the roll to avoid being disarmed should such an attack fail.

Melee Weapons of the Yaom

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Circle Blade (Archaic)	3	1d6	19-20/x2	Slashing	Small	3 lb.	10	-
Four Rod (Exotic)	2	1d6/1d6	19-20/x2	Bludgeoning	Large	6 lb.	6	-
Master's Club (Simple)	2	1d6	20/x2	Bludgeoning	Medium	5 lb.	5	-
Peacebringer's Blade (Archaic)	3	1d8	20/x3	Slashing	Medium	4 lb.	15	Res +(2)
Slashing Whip (Exotic)	3	1d6	19-20/x3	Slashing	Medium	3 lb.	13	-

◇ Straas Ranged Weapons

Since the vaasi took control of the straas, there has been a strong emphasis on ranged weapons to facilitate the use of the straas to conquer other species that rely on ranged combat. The ranged weapons used by the straas were designed by the vaasi using available technology, and tend to be heavy and loud but extremely effective. These weapons are made in large numbers in the many factories of the Straas Hive Legions, though they are kept under lock and key until needed. Hivequeen Celick does not trust her minions enough to arm them continually. These weapons are also common among the rebel straas, who steal them from the minions of Hivequeen Celick.

Straas Assault Pistol

A heavy machine pistol built by the straas, it is heavy for a pistol and has reliability issues. The manufacture of the assault pistol is not as precise as the design demands, causing the weapon to jam or break often. The assault pistol is the standard sidearm of the Straas Hive Legions, but its unreliable nature has made it unpopular with other species. Some rebel straas have learned how to rebuild the weapon to be less likely to jam, but this has done little to make the weapon more popular.

When firing the assault pistol on automatic, on an attack roll of 1 the weapon damages itself and cannot be used again without an hour of work and a Repair check (DC 10). Fixing these reliability issues requires a Repair check (DC 20) and parts with a Purchase DC of 11.

Straas Hailer Machinegun

The main infantry support weapon of the Straas Hive Legions, the hailer machinegun is a portable light machinegun designed to be carried with straas infantry troops to provide fire support. The weapon is not very effective against vehicles, but can inflict significant damage to infantry. In addition to infantry duty, this weapon is often mounted on straas vehicles and installations as an anti-personnel weapon. Unlike most weapons built by the Straas Hive Legions, this weapon is highly sought after for its sturdy manufacture and relatively light weight. Hailer ammunition comes in 100 round belts.

Straas Swarm Gun

The standard rifle of the Straas Hive Legions, it is essentially an automatic shotgun loaded with heavy buckshot. This large and unwieldy weapon proves its value more through raw firepower than accuracy or ease of use. It is found in all straas hives in large numbers, and the ammunition for it is equally plentiful. The rebel straas also make use of swarm guns; other species do not find the design particularly attractive, though the few tyran saurians who have acquired swarm guns have warmed to them quickly.

◇ Wolf Tribes Ranged Weapons

The wolves have long favored ranged weapons, from the earliest days of hunting back on their homeworld. Most of wolf warfare has been carried out using ranged weapons, with melee weapons playing a ceremonial role. Wolves generally prefer firearms to energy weapons, preferring the ruggedness and familiarity of firearms to the perceived fragility and newness of energy weapons. Energy weapons are only common among the Blood Tooth and Star tribes, but as the manufacturing capacity of the Wolf Tribes increases they will eventually spread to other tribes.

The elgies had not developed past crossbows and primitive gunpowder weapons on their homeworld before the wolves arrived, but since joining the Wolf Tribes they have developed a number of small-sized weapons for their use. Wolves rarely use these weapons and they are only made in

Ranged Weapons of the Straas Hive Legions

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Straas Assault Pistol	5	2d6	20	Ballistic	20 ft.	S, A	24 box	Med	6 lb.	20	Res (+2)
Straas Hailer Machinegun	5	2d10	20	Ballistic	90 ft.	A	Linked	Large	28 lb.	24	Mil (+3)
Straas Swarm Gun	5	2d10	20	Ballistic	30 ft.	S, A	32	Large	12 lb.	22	Mil (+3)

*These weapons require the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat, except for the Straas Hailer Machinegun, which requires the Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy machineguns) feat.

small quantities, but are renowned for their sound design and quality of manufacture.

In the Wolf Tribes there are no gun control laws, as saurians and straas pose a constant threat. This does result in a number of gun related deaths each year, both accidental and criminal, but the wolves feel their security is worth the risk. The elgies generally do not feel it necessary to carry guns at all times.

Blood Tooth Battle Rifle

The standard issue rifle of the Blood Tooth tribe's infantry forces, the battle rifle is designed to fill a number of different roles using a modular design system. The rifle is made up of a number of removable pieces that can be changed out according to the needs of the situation, and changing the configuration of a battle rifle requires three full round actions and provokes attacks of opportunity each round. This weapon can be found in every Blood Tooth caravan, fortress, or settlement and ammunition. Some other tribes, particularly the Silver Eyes and Moon tribes, use battle rifles in limited quantities through an agreement with the Blood Tooth tribe.

The default configuration of the battle rifle is as an assault rifle, which has the abilities listed below. The battle rifle can also be configured as a submachinegun, which reduces the range increment to 30 feet and reduces the size to Medium; or as a sniper rifle, which changes the range increment to 100 feet and changes the rate of fire to single-shot.

The battle rifle comes standard with a plasma sprayer under the barrel that carries 40 charges of plasma and consumes 10 charges per shot. A portable plasma generator can recharge the plasma sprayer. This plasma sprayer shoots a cone of plasma thirty feet long and fifteen feet wide, inflicting 4d6 fire damage to everything in this area, though targets can make a Reflex save (DC 13) to take half damage. If purchased without the plasma sprayer, the rifle has a Purchase DC of 23.

Blood Tooth Plasma Cannon

The most common heavy weapon of the Blood Tooth tribe, it is a shoulder-mounted plasma cannon that fires a stream of superheated plasma at the target, melting most materials into slag in short order. It is a portable anti-armor weapon used infantry units, wolf vehicles, and fortified buildings. The weapon packs an impressive punch, but eats up energy quickly and can overheat if fired too often. If the weapon is fired for 5 consecutive rounds, it must be allowed to cool down for a round, or firing it again will damage the weapon, effectively disabling it until extensive repairs can be made. This requires six hours of effort, a Repair check (DC 20), and parts with a Purchase DC of 17.

Blood Tooth plasma cannons use an internal power unit that carries 100 charges. Each shot consumes 10 shots and can be recharged with a portable plasma generator.

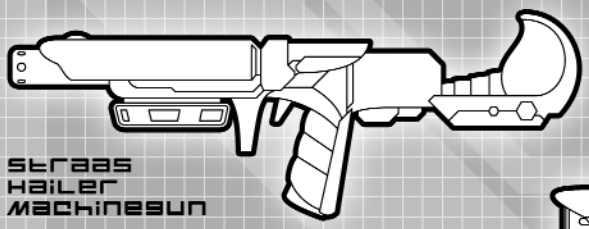
Elgie Light Rifle

For most species this would be a carbine or submachinegun, but for the elgies these weapons are full-size rifles. Designed with elgie physiology in mind, these weapons are light, short-barreled miniature rifles fed from a linked belt of ammunition the wielder either wraps around himself or carries in a large pouch. Elgie light rifles are automatic weapons without great stopping power, but with a high rate of fire and respectable range for their size. These rifles are common among elgies who live in caravans, but they are rare in urban elgie settlements. The Elgie tribe builds these weapons by hand in workshops throughout the Wolf Tribes' territories, but a number of craftsmen are working on setting up an automated production facility.

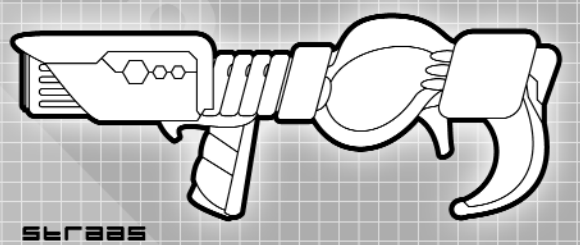
Elgie Sneak Pistol

Although elgies see nothing sneaky about these pistols, the nickname developed after some wolves began carrying them as concealed backup

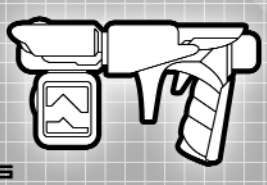
Straas Weapons



Straas
Hailer
Machinegun

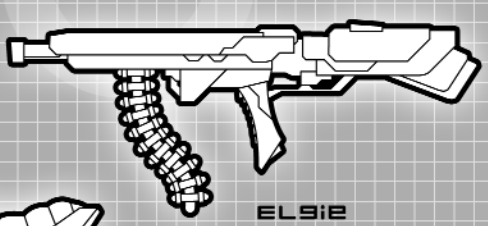


Straas
Swarm Gun

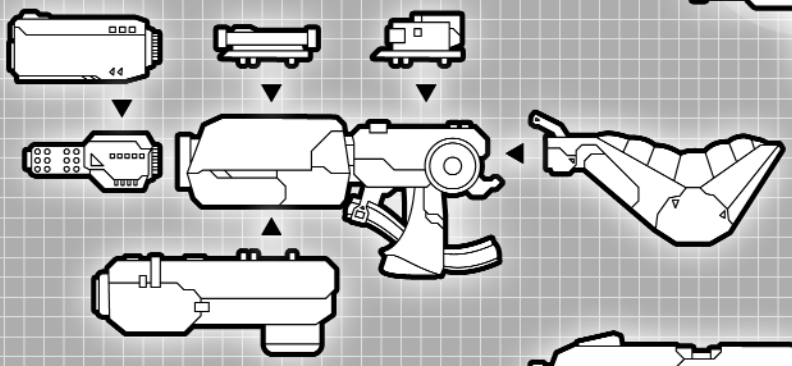


Straas
Assault Pistol

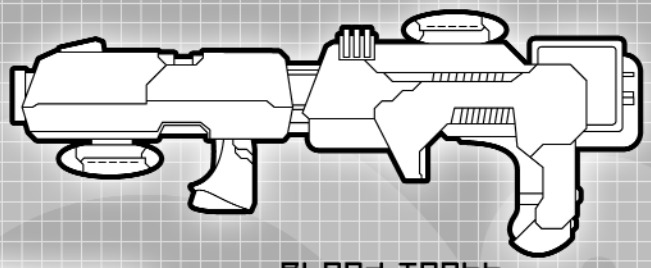
Wolf Weapons



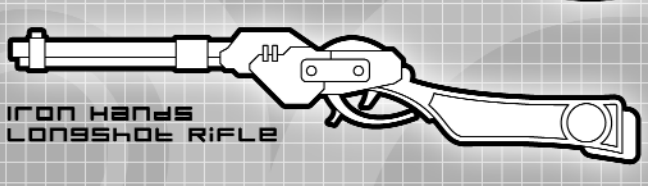
Elsie
Light Rifle



Blood Tooth
Battle Rifle



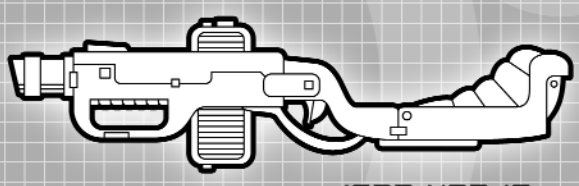
Blood Tooth
Plasma Cannon



Iron Hands
Longshot Rifle



Elsie
Sneak Pistol



Iron Hands
Medium Pistol



Star Tribe Laser Rifle

Ranged Weapons of the Wolf Tribes

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Blood Tooth Battle Rifle	7	2d8	20	Ballistic	50 ft.	S, A	34 box	Large	9 lb.	26	Mil (+3)
Blood Tooth Plasma Cannon	7	8d12	20	Fire	120 ft.	S	10 int	Huge	104 lb.	30	Mil (+3)
Elgie Light Rifle	5	2d6	20	Ballistic	50 ft.	S	Linked	Medium	5 lb.	15	-
Elgie Sneak Pistol	5	2d4	20	Ballistic	20 ft.	S	10 box	Tiny	2 lb.	14	Lic (+1)
Iron Hands Longshot Rifle	5	2d10	20	Ballistic	60 ft.	S	9 int.	Large	10 lb.	17	-
Iron Hands Medium Pistol	5	2d6	20	Ballistic	30 ft.	S	15 cyl.	Small	4 lb.	15	-
Star Tribe Laser Rifle	6	3d8	20	Fire	80 ft.	S	Power pack	Large	9 lb.	24	Mil (+3)

*These weapons require the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat, except for the Blood Tooth Plasma Cannon, which requires the Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Plasma Cannon) feat.

weapons due to their small size and sleek design. Looking something like a 1950s ray pistol, these guns fire small-caliber ammunition at limited range, but for the elgies the main concern is comfort of use. Rarely finding larger wolf weapons designed for their size, the elgies rely on these pistols for sidearms.

Iron Hands Longshot Rifle

One of the most common weapons among the wolves, this rifle is used as a hunting and self-defense weapon by tribes other than the Blood Tooth tribe. It is ubiquitous among the caravans of the Wolf Tribes and nearly every gunsmith is knowledgeable in its construction. Some longshot rifles built on the wolf homeworld are still in use, but most have been built since the wolves came to Thres.

Iron Hands Medium Pistol

The most common sidearm among the wolves, this weapon is an internal clip-fed medium pistol valued more for its range and solid construction than stopping power. The internal clip is a rectangular device that holds bullets and feeds them up through the firing chamber; when the weapon is empty, the clip is sticking out the top of weapon so that it may be reloaded. Reloading the Iron Hands Medium Pistol is time-consuming without a speed loader, using the same rules as cylinder-fed weapons. Some wolves have modified their pistols to use disposable box ammunition, but it is not a popular modification.

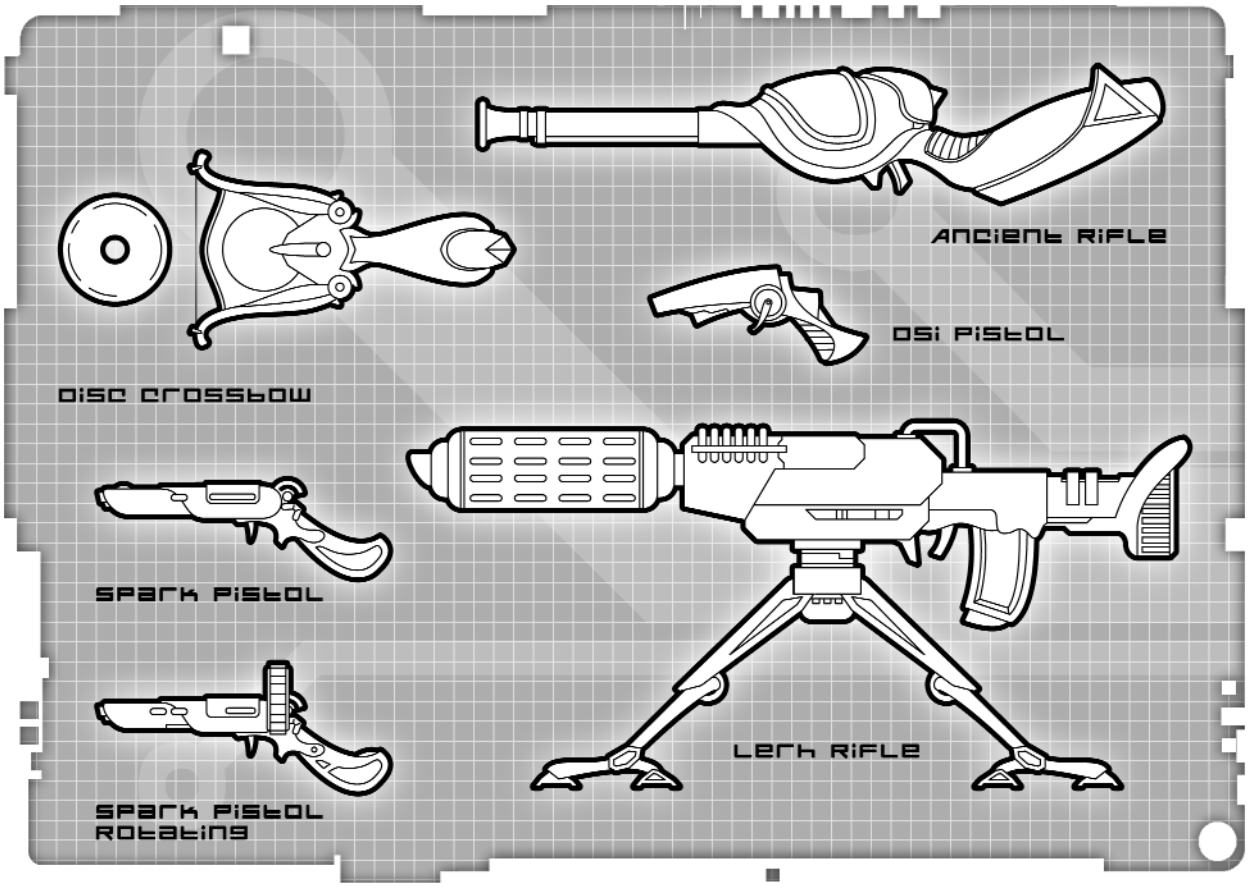
Modifying the Iron Hands Medium Pistol to accept box ammunition requires six hours of work, a Repair check (DC 15), and parts that have a Purchase DC of 6.

Star Tribe Laser Rifle

The standard longarm of the Star tribes marine forces, the Star Tribe Laser Rifle was designed for use in vacuum environments at close range, such as boarding operations carried out between spacecraft. These weapons are common in the Star Tribe, but are rare among other tribes due to their expense. Their owners value them highly, often decorating them with precious metals and mementos of battles. The Star tribe manufactures these weapons in a joint operation with the Iron Hands tribe. These weapons consume two charges each time they are fired.

◇ Yaom Ranged Weapons

Although the yaom have achieved Progress Level 5, their selection of ranged weapons is far less advanced due to disinterest on the part of the yaom. On their homeworld the yaom had little need for advanced firearms, concentrating on other sciences and the exploration of Red Truth. A few advanced weapons were developed in the process of fleeing their homeworld, but now those weapons are rare. Since arriving on Thres, they have had little interest in improving their ranged weapons, favoring the use of Red Truth or fleeing when threatened. As contact with the outside world



increases and a few yaom leave to explore the world beyond their territory, they are learning how grossly outclassed they are in weaponry. Many of the Border Wardens seek to acquire the weapons of other species to set right the imbalance.

Ancient Rifle

One of the few advanced weapons surviving from the days before the exodus from the yaom homeworld, these weapons are large rifles designed to fire flechettes generated by an interior chopping mechanism using compressed air. The ancient rifle can fire any solid material with hardness between 5 and 10, chopping up 20 flechettes per pound of material. It can hold up two pounds of material in its internal ammunition holder. The most common materials used are ice, stone, metal, and wood. The ancient weapon relies on a hand crank to generate electricity, requiring one hour of pumping for every pound of ammunition shredded and fired. The internal power supply can hold enough power to fire ten pounds of material. Ancient rifles were designed with a minimum of moving and fragile parts so they could be used when the yaom reached their new home with little maintenance or ammunition manufacturing. Heavily used in the early days of the settlement, eventually the rifles were thought unnecessary and cast aside. The few that survive are in the hands of the Border Wardens of the yaom, who prize them highly.

Disc Crossbow

A traditional hunting weapon of the yaom, this weapon resembled a cross between a slingshot and a crossbow with a deep groove down its body. This groove holds the large metal disc this weapon uses for ammunition. The disc is flung at targets, relying on weight and its razor-sharp edge to inflict damage. These weapons can inflict serious damage, but have a long reload time. Though useful in hunting, they do not make good tools of war. Disc crossbows can be found in most yaom settlements. Reloading a disc crossbow requires a full round action and provokes attacks of opportunity.

Dsi Pistol

An extremely rare weapon created by the Red Truth-inspired genius Kolari-Dsi, these weapons can no longer be repaired or created because the yaom no longer understand how they function. Kolari-Dsi took that knowledge with him to his grave and none have been able to piece together the secrets since. The Dsi pistol fires a bolt of electricity at the target along a path of ionized molecules in the air, electrifying the target and possibly stunning them in the process. These weapons rely on an interior power battery that can be recharged via a hand crank, requiring ten minutes of cranking per shot recharged, or it can be recharged from another power source, like a fusion generator or power pack, with a Repair check (DC 15). A full battery holds enough power for ten shots. In addition to taking the

Ranged Weapons of the Yaom

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Ancient Rifle	6	2d6	19-20/x2	Piercing	50 ft.	S, A	Varies**	Large	15 lb.	28	-
Disc Crossbow	4	2d6	19-20/x3	Slashing	20 ft.	1	1 int.	Large	18 lb.	11	-
Dsi Pistol	6	2d8	19-20	Electricity	30 ft.	S	20 int.	Small	3 lb.	30	-
Lehr Rifle	5	2d12	20	Ballistic	120 ft.	1	1 int.	Large	40 lb.	23	-
Spark Pistol	4	2d8	20	Ballistic	30 ft.	1	1 int.	Small	9 lb.	13	-
Spark Pistol Rotating	4	2d8	20	Ballistic	30 ft.	S	7 int.	Small	10 lb.	15	-

*These weapons require the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat, except for the Disc Crossbow, which requires the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat.

**See weapon description for more information

damage listed below, a target struck by a Dsi pistol must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or be stunned for 1d3 rounds. Yaom, especially masters, prize these weapons, and several saurian legends of the first invasions of Thres speak of them with fear.

Lehr Rifle

The most common firearm among the yaom, most humans would call this massive weapon an elephant gun. Used by the Border Wardens as sniper rifles or siege guns when defending their fortresses, these weapons have impressive power and range but very slow reload times. Lerh rifles are handmade by a number of Border Warden gunsmiths. They are rarely seen outside the yaom territories, but wolves have picked up a few for hunting large game. Reloading a lehr rifle requires a move equivalent action and provokes attacks of opportunity.

Spark Pistol

Similar in design to a wheellock pistol from earth, these simple weapons rely on sparks that ignite black powder to fire. Not particularly accurate or reliable, these weapons can easily be made given the level of technological development in most yaom settlements. They are used by yaom who have a job relating to security but don't actually expect to get in combat, carrying the weapon more for show than anything else. Reloading the spark pistol requires three full round actions and provokes attacks of opportunity.

Spark Pistol, Rotating

An upgraded version of the spark pistol, this weapon is basically a spark pistol with a number of rotating ammunition chambers, allowing the weapon to be fired seven times before it must be reloaded. Reloading each of these chambers requires three full round actions and provokes attacks of opportunity. Peacebringers and Border Wardens often use rotating spark pistols, though both groups usually trade up to sidearms made by other species when given the chance.

◇ Ammunition

Among the Wolf Tribes, ammunition is usually mass-produced in factories, as it is in the Straas Hive Legions. Yaom produce nearly all of their ammunition by hand. All types of ammunition are plentiful among the Wolf Tribes, while among the straas it is kept under lock and key in the same fashion as weapons. Yaom craftsmen keep up with the demand for ammunition of the Border Wardens, but only barely. There is often a shortage of ammunition for civilian use, which the masters are trying to correct.

Portable Plasma Generator

A device the wolves developed from the frezin technology they salvaged, this shoe-boxed sized device can refill plasma-fueled weapons to a limited extent before it too must be recharged. A portable plasma generator contains 300 plasma charges when full and can refill any plasma energy container at a rate of 10 charges per round. An empty plasma generator must be recharged from an electrical source for twenty-four hours.

Straas Power Pack

A small, blocky device about the size of a human fist, this power cell is used in the few portable energy weapons built by the straas. These devices hold 30 charges and are commonly used in boseer cutters. Straas weapons cannot be converted to use other types of power packs.

Ammunition

Ammunition Type (Quantity)	Damage Type	Purchase DC
Blood Tooth Battle Rifle (50)	Ballistic	6
Crossbow Disc (10)	Slashing	7
Elgie Light Rifle (50)	Ballistic	5
Elgie Sneak Pistol (30)	Ballistic	4
Iron Hands Longshot Rifle (40)	Ballistic	5
Iron Hands Medium Pistol (75)	Ballistic	5
Lehr Rifle (10)	Ballistic	6
Spark Pistol (10)	Ballistic	4
Straas Assault Pistol (30)	Ballistic	5
Straas Hailer Machinegun (100)	Ballistic	7
Straas Power Pack	Special	9
Straas Swarm Gun (50)	Ballistic	7
Wolf Power Pack	Special	10
Wolf Back Generator	Special	20

Wolf Generator Backpack

A tubular device similar in size to a D-cell battery, these devices are similar to human and saurian power packs, only slightly less efficient than human power packs. These devices hold 40 charges and can be used in all wolf energy weapons. A weapon can be converted from using a human or saurian power pack to a wolf one and vice versa with a Repair check (DC 10) and one hour of work. Wolves do not make plasma power packs, instead relying on portable plasma generators to charge their plasma weapons.

Generation Method	Requirement	Charges per Hour
Hand crank	None	1
Steam	Fire and water supply	4
Water	wheelRunning water	3
Wind mill	Wind of greater than 10 mph	2

Wolf Back Generator

These heavy backpacks are a mixture of a large power pack and a portable generator to recharge that battery. The battery holds 160 charges and may be connected to up to five devices by a number of wires located on its sides. The backpack can also be used as a generator when the battery gets low, having four methods of generating power, detailed on the table below. Deploying any of these power generator methods requires at least ten minutes in addition to any time spent generating power. The back generator weighs 20 pounds.

ARMOR • • •

◇ Straas Armor

Like all aspects of military production, armor receives a lot of attention from Hivequeen Celick and is mass-produced by her minions. The armor created is all heavy armor that concentrates on protection rather than agility, despite the natural dexterity of the straas. All straas armor comes in flat black and is fitted to the straas body type, requiring extensive modification to fit other races. This requires twelve hours of work and a Repair check (DC 15) to fit the armor to another Medium sized species. Straas armor is generally kept in storage until needed, as Hivequeen Celick fears that her minions may use it to rise against her if given open access to it.

◇ Medium Armor

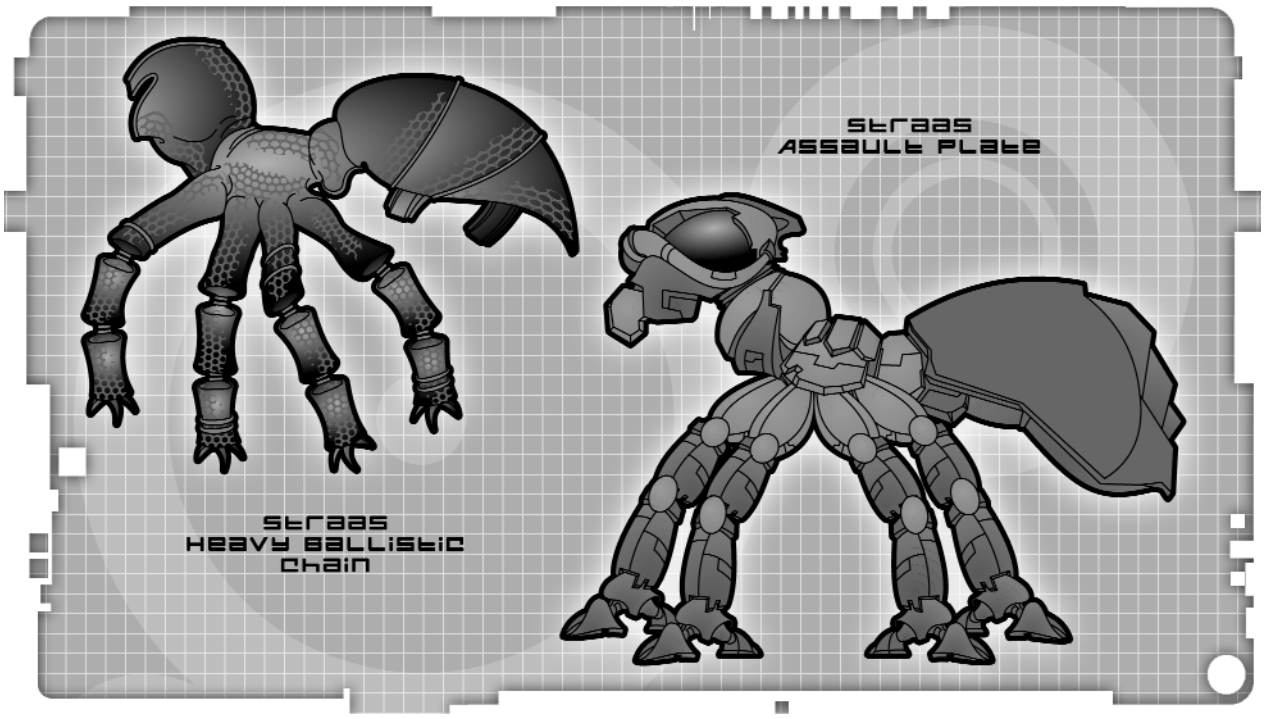
Heavy Ballistic Chain

Standard issue to the soldiers of Hivequeen Celick, heavy ballistic chain is made up of multiple levels of lightweight but strong metallic and ceramic rings linked together by the thousands to create a jumpsuit of layered protection. Surprisingly light for its size, heavy ballistic chain is very effective if sufficient padding is worn beneath the armor. The armor must be maintained regularly to replace rings that are knocked out of place, and most straas who wear it spend an hour or two after all major battles repairing broken rings. Some wolves have begun using refashioned ballistic chain, cutting the armor into cloaks, loose tunics, and similar bits of clothing (see hive chain below), but this negates much of the armor's protective value. This armor is rarely for sale, since only suits taken from dead straas make it to market. Rebel straas prize ballistic chain highly, as it is easier to move in than assault plate.

◇ Heavy Armor

Assault Plate

Worn by the elite shock troops of the Straas Hive Legions, assault plate is made out of vanadium plates usually used in spacecraft armor. The armor allows its wearer to withstand withering fire and continue to advance, though little thought is given to comfort or maneuverability. Assault plate comes with a built-in environmental seal and thirty hours of oxygen, making it usable in boarding actions in space as well as surface combat. It also includes night-vision goggles and a universal communicator equipped for scent communication. Hivequeen Celick has her minions working on a number of component packages that will allow assault plate to



be modified quickly in the field for underwater operations, night missions, or to serve as a powered heavy weapon platform. These modifications are not yet available, though, due to sabotage efforts of the rebel straas against the development facilities.

◇ Wolf Tribe Armor

The wolf style of combat emphasizing speed and maneuverability is visible in their armor designs. Wolves favor light armor that emphasizes mobility over protection, having no form of mass-produced heavy armor, though some wolves wear unique suits of their own design. Even the spacesuits used by the Star tribe have little protection by human standards, preferring to avoid getting hit to having enough armor plating to stop a suit breach. Wolf armor is made to be worn for days on end, and slept in if necessary. All light suits of wolf-made armor can be slept in with no more discomfort that sleeping in normal clothes. Wolf armor takes half as long to don as normal armor, as it is designed to be ready at a moment's notice.

◇ Light Armor

Climber Suit

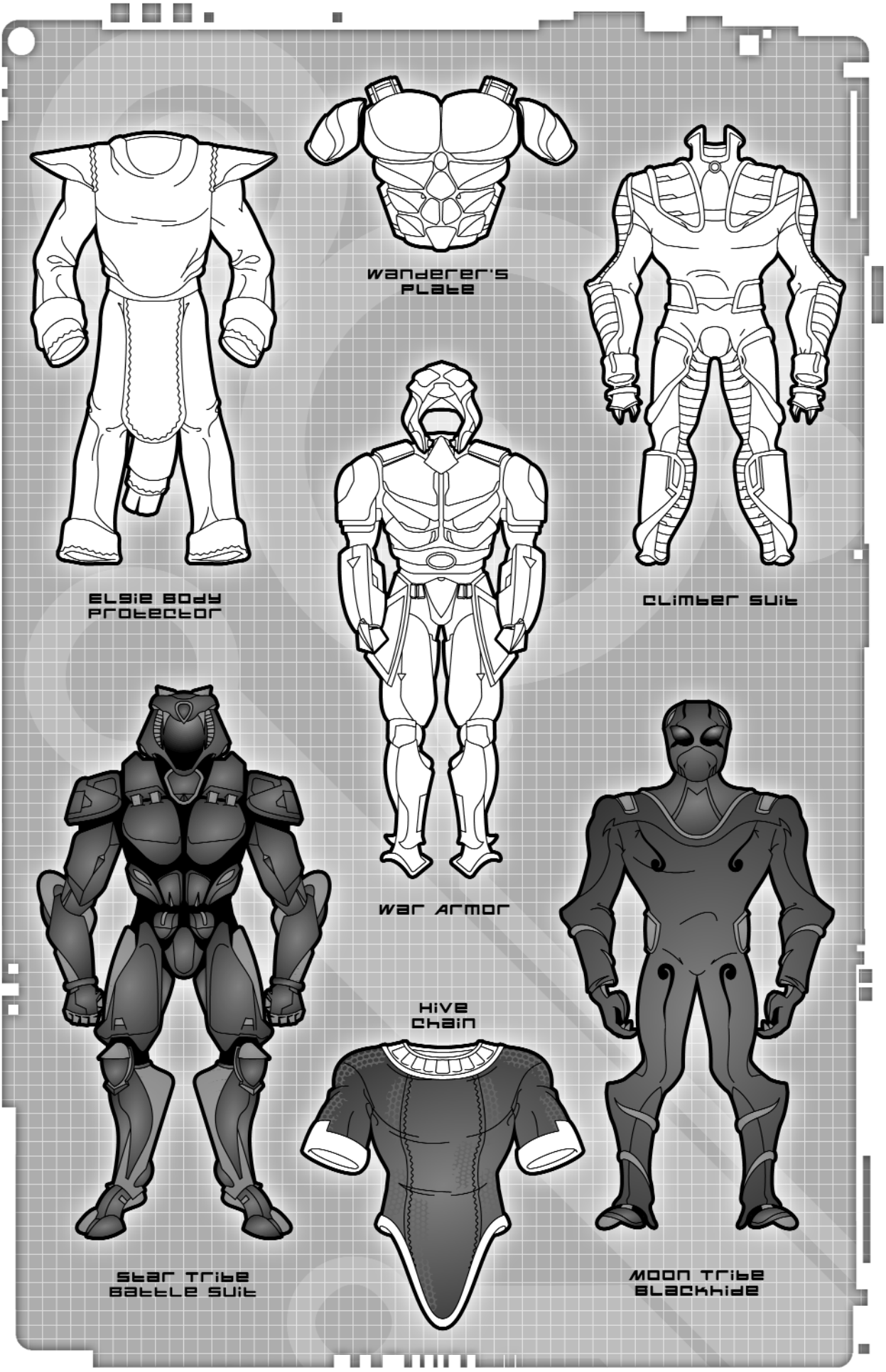
An updated version of an ancient elgie design, climber suits are form-fitting bodysuits of leather and polymer plates that protect the wearer and carry built-in climbing claws, rope, climbing harness, and numerous pockets. Elgie soldiers and scouts who work in the few forest regions of Thres wear climber suits. The elgies find these areas far more pleasant than the wolves do, and thus take a larger responsibility in protecting them. Climber suits allow elgies to strike invaders from the trees and quickly disappear again with little fear of falling, making the forests of the Wolf Tribes very dangerous for any invader. A climber suit grants the wearer a +2 equipment bonus to Hide checks in forested environments and a +4 equipment bonus to Climb checks.

Elgie Body Protector

A more recent elgie advance in armor, body protectors are loose fitting clothes made of ballistic cloth, strands of high-tensile metals, and other advanced materials to create an easily concealable suit of armor. Looking more like thick clothes than armor, body protectors allow elgies to wear armor without appearing to do so, which they appreciate when they fear injury, but do not wish to give insult or appear frightened. Elgies are not as culturally accepting of wearing armor at all times as the wolves are, and thus avoid doing so when possible. Body protectors can be made in most clothing styles given sufficient time. Many wolf tribal leaders have commissioned body protector suits in the fashion of their ceremonial garments.

Moon Tribe Blackhide

Blackhide armor is an ancient type of armor, but only the Moon tribe knows its secrets. Worn by the assassins and saboteurs of the Moon tribe, this armor is designed for stealth and mobility. It is said the progenitor of the Moon tribe, the god-king Wurrn, designed this armor after speaking with the spirits of darkness and shadow, crafting it according to their advice. The suits made today are said to follow the same plan, and thus receive the benefits of the wisdom of the spirits. While the wolves steadfastly believe this story, the elgies are more skeptical. Few can argue with the effectiveness of those


Wanderer's Plate
Elsie Body Protector
Climber Suit
War Armor
Hive Chain
Star Tribe Battle Suit
Moon Tribe Blackhide

who wear Blackhide armor, however. It is rarely for sale, as those of the Moon tribe tend to react badly when they see others wearing the creation of their god-king. This armor is never worn in public and is designed to completely conceal the face of the wearer. Blackhide armor grants a +4 equipment bonus to Hide checks made in shadowy environments. The suit also makes the wearer immune to detection by heat-based sensors. Built-in slip pads grant the user a +4 equipment bonus to Escape Artist checks.

Wanderer's Plate

Originally designed by the Earth Turners tribe, this well-designed suit of armor has been manufactured and modified by every tribe, to the extent that each has its own design. These suits often differ in decoration or the color and size of the plates, but the basic design of the armor remains the same. Wanderer's plate is made from thick boiled leather plates, forming the outer shell of the armor, and thinner soft leather pads, which cover gaps between the plates. Lightweight and effective, wanderer's plate is common among the caravans of every tribe due to its utility and traditional place in wolf culture. A wolf's suit of wanderer's plate not only serves as armor, but also a record of their wanderings, as all the places of import the wolf has traveled during his life are recorded on the armor in pictograms. Once a suit is full of such ornamentation, it is retired or given to a young family member who does not yet have a suit of his own, which is a sign of great affection. Young wolves usually set aside their inherited suits of wanderer's plate when they reach adulthood, and until then wear a white sash on their belt to indicate the deeds depicted are not their own.

◇ Medium Armor

Hive Chain

Made from captured suits of straas heavy ballistic chain, hive chain is made by wolves who often face the straas in combat. More effective than wanderer's plate but lighter than war armor, hive chain is most common among the caravans of western Haven that encounter the straas regularly. Some wolves disparage those who wear hive chain for using the creation of the enemy, but the armor is indisputably effective. The ballistic chain in hive chain is stained gray or brown, instead of leaving it the flat black of all straas armor.

Star Tribe Battle Suit

While many Star tribe fighter pilots, and gunners wear the flight suit detailed in d20 Future, bridge crew and marines wear the heavier Star tribe battle suit. Designed to function both as a spacesuit and armor, it has more mobility and less protection than most armored spacesuits. The battle suit is designed for use as an emergency spacesuit and for boarding actions. Battle suits are available in most settlements that have a strong Star tribe presence, and other tribes that have spacecraft own a few of these suits. The default color of Star tribe armor is jet black with white flecks in imitation of a star field, but some paint their suits their tribal colors. The battle suit has a forty-hour supply of oxygen, food, and water, in addition to a jet pack, 200 feet of duracable, 6 grappler tags, magnetic boots, night vision goggles, and a universal communicator.

War Armor

Members of the Blood Tooth tribe on active duty have suits of war armor that they wear nearly every day as a badge of office. The heaviest armor made by the Wolf Tribes, it is built as a joint effort between the Blood Tooth and Iron Hands tribes. Using a mixture of ancient leatherworking techniques and modern polymers and fibers, the armor is highly effective for its size, but most tribes still consider it too heavy for common use. The rebel straas trade with the wolves for war armor and modify it to their body type, favoring its mobility over that of ballistic chain or assault plate. War armor comes in a variety of camouflage patterns for different terrain types, the most common being an olive drab and tan pattern used for plains camouflage. Many individual owners customize their armor with built-in weapons, tribal symbols, trophies from past victories, and sensor systems. Among the Blood Tooth, tribe it is easy to judge a warrior's wealth, past victories, and technological preferences by looking at his war armor.

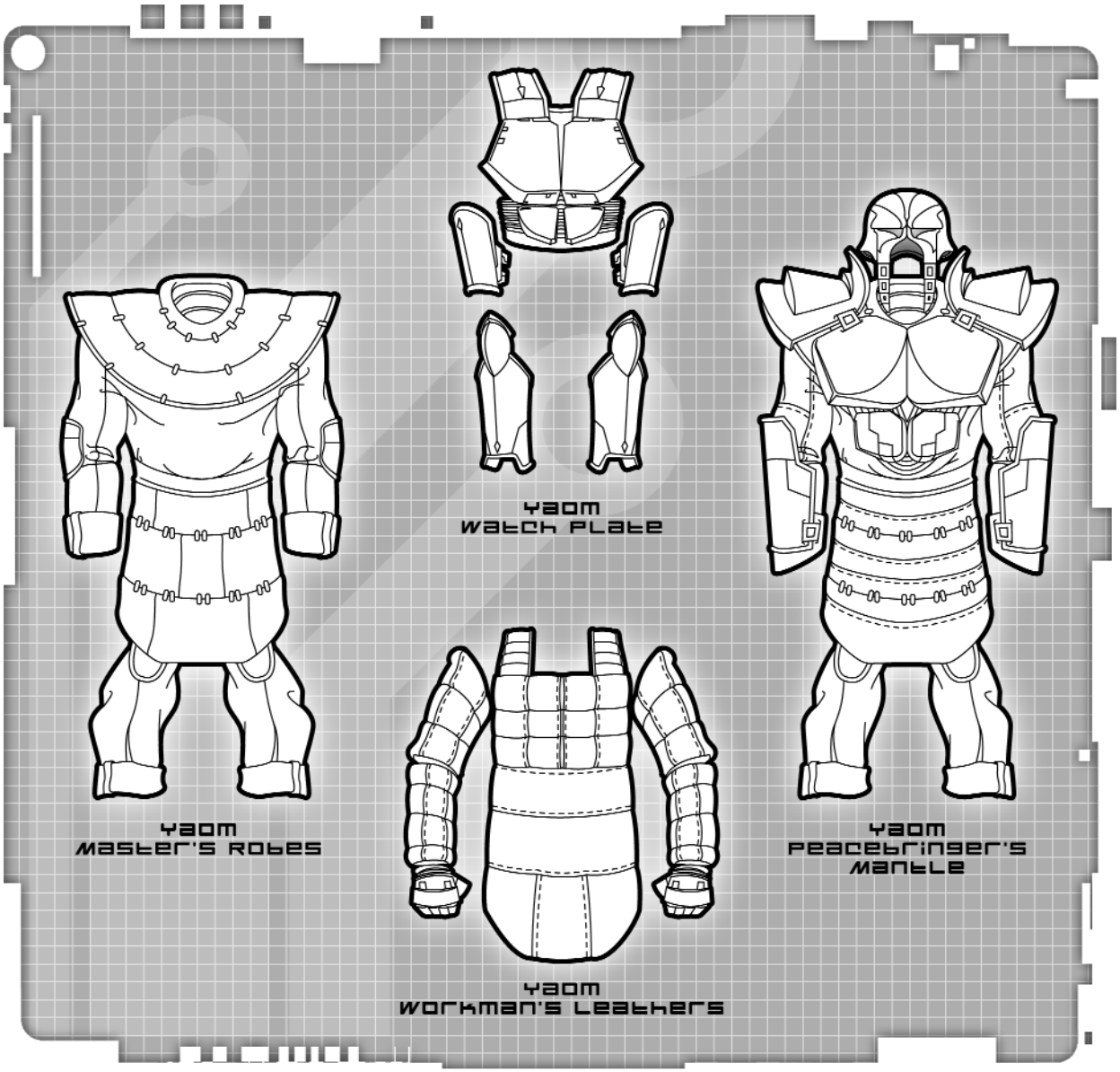
◇ Yaom Armor

As is the way with their culture, most yaom do not enjoy violence and exile those of their number with violent tendencies to the fortresses on the edge of their territory. Understandably, few yaom outside of the Border Wardens wear any sort of armor. Yaom craftsmen often wear reinforced leather clothes for protection from the tools of their craft; otherwise only masters wear armor in the central territories, and even then it is rarely heavy armor. While many yaom have experimented with the idea, no substance has yet been found that can block out or in any way impede Red Truth, making anti-psionic armor impossible.

◇ Light Armor

Master's Robes

A combination of heavy cloth and boiled leather, this ceremonial outfit survives from the early days of the yaom masters, when they had to lead with the stick as often as the carrot. Though not enormously effective as armor, master's robes are a symbol of the darker days of their past and a



reminder that they should not let those days return. Masters wear their robes in all public appearances; being seen in other clothes is believed to demystify the masters and lessen their influence. The master's robes have heavy leather plates on the joints, chest, shins, and forearms. The rest of the body is covered in thick, billowing cloth. There is no hood or helmet to the armor, leaving the master's head free for all to see and recognize, but some masters have taken to wearing a leather headband as well.

Workman's Leathers

Worn by yaom engaging in particularly dangerous professions, such as smiths or butchers, this armor consists of a heavy leather apron, boiled leather arm guards, and leather gloves with metal reinforcement. While not well suited for battle, it is a common type of armor in all yaom settlements and is the only type of armor that be worn within the yaom territories without attracting unwanted attention.

◇ Medium Armor

Peacebringer's Mantle

An upgraded version of the master's robes, a peacebringer's mantle adds metal shoulders, breastplate, and a light helmet to the ensemble. As the master's armor is designed to generate respect, the peacebringer's mantle evokes fear. The helmet hides the wearer's eyes, and the shoulders make the wearer seem much bulkier then he actually is. Among the yaom, anyone wearing this armor is treated with respect, a habit that rubs off on the wolves as they learn more of the yaom. The same craftsmen who make peacebringer's blades make peacebringer's mantles. Each suit is customized to the wearer, emphasizing his more terrifying traits and his personality.

Watch Plate

The armor of the yaom Border Wardens, watch plate is a simple suit of light metallic plates that cov-

Armor of Thres

	PL	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Light Armor										
Elgie Climber Suit	4	Archaic	+2	+1	+8	-0	30 ft./20 ft.	8 lb.	13	-
Elgie Body Protector	6	Concealed	+3	+1	+8	-0	30 ft./20 ft.	6 lb.	15	-
Master's Robes	4	Archaic	+2	+1	+7	-1	30 ft./20 ft.	14 lb.	11	-
Moon Tribe Blackhide	5	Archaic	+4	+1	+6	-1	30 ft./20 ft.	16 lb.	18	-
Wanderer's Plate	4	Archaic	+4	+1	+5	-2	30 ft./20 ft.	20 lb.	15	-
Medium Armor										
Heavy Ballistic Chain	6	Tactical	+6	+2	+3	-5	20 ft./15 ft.	34 lb.	27	-
Hive Chain	6	Tactical	+5	+2	+4	-4	25 ft./15 ft.	24 lb.	24	-
Peacebringer's Mantle	4	Archaic	+5	+2	+3	-4	25 ft./15 ft.	26 lb.	21	-
Star Tribe Battle Suit	6	Tactical	+6	+2	+3	-5	20 ft./15 ft.	40 lb.	26	-
War Armor	5	Tactical	+6	+2	+3	-4	25 ft./15 ft.	32 lb.	25	Lic (+1)
Watch Plate	4	Archaic	+6	+2	+2	-6	20 ft./15 ft.	41 lb.	23	-
Heavy Armor										
Assault Plate	6	Tactical	+9	+3	+1	-8	15 ft./10 ft.	56 lb.	29	Res (+2)

ers the torso, lower arms, and lower legs. Valuing both protection and mobility, it tries to achieve a balance. For emergencies, the armor is equipped with a number of fast-release latches, allowing it to be removed as a standard action. When fighting particularly mobile opponents, yaom Border Wardens have been known to shed their armor and engage using Red Truth-based martial arts styles that require far more dexterity than watch plate allows. This armor is usually made by the Border Wardens who wear it, but some monasteries also make armor for nearby fortresses. These monk-made suits are usually more ornate than normal, often filled with various symbolic depictions of Red Truth. Some wolves have shown interest in watch plate, but they have had trouble negotiating for suits from the insular Border Wardens.

COMPUTERS • • •

As on Eos, computers are not particularly common on Thres. The limited manufacturing capacity of the Wolf Tribes has limited the number of computers, and most have ended up in the hands of tribes such as the Pattern Finders and Rune Carver tribes. Most of the computers used by the wolves are made of parts scavenged from spaceships, brought from the wolf homeworld, or constructed in elgie-operated factories on Thres. The Rune Carvers are officially the tribe in charge of computer matters, but the elgies have formed an alliance with them to produce computers more efficiently to meet the great demand for them among the wolf tribes. The computers are mainly found in the settlements rather than the caravans, but nearly are all designed to be portable in some fashion. The elgies have instituted a series of wireless networks for the computers of the Wolf Tribes to use. They have yet to settle on a single standard, however, leading to several competing networks. These are usually unified for each settlement or caravan, but communicating between networks for different settlements or caravans is difficult at best. These networks are more used for communication and information sharing than commercial ends, as most tribes do not have sufficient computer literacy to engage in electronic commerce. Most wolves think computers are useful, but do not place a great deal of value on them. Only those tribes who use them regularly think otherwise.

For many centuries the Rune Carvers and the other tribes that commonly used computers made them so complex that other tribes had problems learning to use them, concentrating on maximum utility for a chosen few instead of widespread ease of use. Such things as graphical user interfaces were passed by in favor of command line interfaces, making it difficult for novices to get involved. The elgies changed this practice, adapting to computers wonderfully, and they have significantly improved this entire field of technology since joining the Wolf Tribes. The elgies consider computers to be one of the hallmarks of an advanced civilization and have put extensive effort, alongside the Rune Carvers, into developing new computers and soft-

ware. One of their primary goals is to create software that will allow all wolves, regardless of training, to use computers with minimal difficulty, crossing traditional tribal lines for the sake of spreading knowledge. The data partner is the most promising result of this effort to date.

The straas, on the other hand, place a great deal of emphasis on computers, using them in manufacturing, research, and many other industries controlled by Hivequeen Celick. In the residential areas of the straas hive there are no computers; they are only in the areas where the straas perform their work duties. All are heavily monitored through a security network made up of landlines and cables, with no wireless connections. Hivequeen Celick does not want to share any of her information with her enemies; all computers of note are kept behind walls and guards and equipped with self-destruct systems. There are a number of portable computer systems that straas troops take into the field with them, including computerized systems in both ships and vehicles, but these never contain more information than absolutely required. They too are equipped with self-destruct systems. Straas computers use both keyboard and chemical input systems, allowing them the equivalent of verbal communication with their computers. Other species have a very hard time with their unusual design and input methods, suffering a -2 penalty on skill checks when attempting to use a straas computer.

The yaom do not use computers except in the industrial capacities that require them, though they are interested in a computer's ability to hold and work with large amounts of information. Computers are a slowly growing force in yaom culture, but many yaom believe that eventually they will have the power to do everything a computer can do through direct and permanent manipulation of Red Truth. Despite their unfamiliarity with computers, many yaom have learned to boost their skill with computers by interacting with it through Red Truth.

Data Partner

A primitive version of a simple artificial intelligence program, data partners were created by the elgies to assist wolves of clans that lack extensive computer training. Data partners can run on most wolf computers and create a facsimile of a personality to verbally interact with the user, allowing the user to give verbal or typed commands without knowledge of computer languages and receive answers in similar fashion. The data partner is programmed to mimic a wolf's behavioral norms, though some elgie versions have been created as well. Many wolves, not really understanding its intricacies, treat the extraordinarily lifelike program as an equal, which confuses the elgies. Other wolves consider the creation of what appears to be an artificial wolf blasphemous since it has no divine spark, and see data partners as an abomination, but this belief is limited to small numbers of religious fanatics. The data partner is assumed to have a Computer Use skill bonus of +6 and may use the aid another action to assist its user. These programs are similar in complexity to a basic App-3 program, but the elgies are quickly catching up to the more advanced App-3 programs.

Computers

Name	Weight	Size	Purchase DC	Restriction
Datapartner	-	-	26	-
Elgie Computational Unit	2 lb.	Tiny	22	-
Nomad Counter	4 lb.	Tiny	22	-

Elgie Computational Unit

A portable computer constructed by elgies for elgies, it is designed with their small hands in mind. Attached to a shoulder strap and encased in a tough plastic shell, it can be carried safely while swinging from tree to tree without fear of it falling or becoming damaged. Wolves find the smaller buttons frustrating to use, making the computational unit a rarity among wolves and larger races. The computational unit is primarily designed for business and technical tasks, but it does not have the power for doing advanced technical simulations or models.

Nomad Counter

A small computer built to be carried on the belt, nomad counters are simple computers designed for use by caravaners and other wanderers who need a computer to keep track of information and occasionally log into wireless networks. Little more than a glorified personal data assistant, few wolves anything need more in terms of functionality and processing power. It is also waterproof, resistant to damage, and even insulated against electrical strikes. There are stories of wolves being saved from a bullet by their nomad counters, which survived to be used another day. Some nomad counters have been used for decades my multiple members of the same family, bearing signs of many miles traveled and battles fought.

CYBERNETICS • • •

Although the wolves are technologically capable of creating cybernetic limbs, they choose not to do so. The wolves believe their bodies hold some small spark of the divine and placing artificial materials in any part of their body would be an affront to their beliefs. The frezin, from whom the wolves

GENETIC ENGINEERING ON THRES

As noted on this page, the wolves and elgies have the ability to genetically alter creatures and create clones. The wolves choose not to do so because of religious views, and the elgies follow suit out of respect for the wolves, but do not hold the same beliefs. The elgies do occasionally perform genetic modifications on creatures, but only on an experimental basis. Elgies and wolves currently have a Progress Level 6 understanding of genetic engineering, but the elgies are quickly approaching PL 7.

gained much of their technology, also disliked cybernetics, as mechanical implants were difficult to incorporate into frezin physiology. The frezin instead grew cloned limbs and organs to replace damaged or lost body parts, a technology the wolves have adopted as well. In the largest wolf settlements there are facilities capable of creating cloned limbs and organs, but doing so requires lengthy rituals to imbue the cloned object with the spirit of its recipient. Otherwise, the wolves fear the flesh they are creating will be rejected because it does not have any divine spark. The wolves do not take part in genetic engineering or cloning of entire life forms, believing that only their Creator God has the right to do such things, but do not hold such practices against other species; the Creator God is only for wolves and other species must follow their own gods.

The elgies, on the other hand, have embraced the possibility of cybernetic implants and have researched the development of functional replacement limbs and organs. They have had some success thus far, but are still limited to an early Progress Level 6 understanding of cybernetics. They are limited by their deference to wolf religious beliefs, working to keep their work out of sight. The elgies have been concentrating on organs more than limbs, and are now capable of replacing organs for less than it costs to clone a replacement. Within the elgie research community, a rift is developing between those who study cybernetic implants for the sake of increased abilities and those who believe cybernetics should only be used when necessary. Thus far the latter group is in the majority, creating a small pariah subculture of scientists who experiment on themselves with unnecessary cybernetic implants. These are also the individuals that buck the most against the anti-cybernetic religious beliefs of the wolves.

Cybernetic implants are extremely rare among the straas. Usually Hivequeen Celick finds suitable work for those who have lost a limb or organ. If she cannot, she has them killed to conserve resources for more efficient members of her legions. The only cybernetic implants are found among the elite shock troops of the Hive Legions, called the Soldiers of Truth, who have been outfitted with limbs and organs to increase their effectiveness in combat. Straas cybernetics are not very advanced, just barely PL 6, and they value power over form. Straas cybernetics are large, obvious, and often designed without concern for the health of their host. These cybernetic assault soldiers have a dismally short lifespan, as often from cybernetic failure as combat fatalities. These implants are constructed and installed in a number of factory-hospitals in the Central Hive, and the Soldiers of Truth are all either guarding the capital or assignment on the front lines.

The yaom have no cybernetic technology to speak of, instead relying on primitive prosthetics for those who lose limbs. Internal organ damage cannot be repaired short of an organ transplant, though the yaom are quite adept at these operations. The yaom in general do not like cybernetic implants, fearing that they disrupt the natural flow of Red Truth through them.



RELICS • • •

Relics are far more rare on Thres than Eos or C'thalk, as the planet was never heavily populated. Most of the limited number of settlements on Thres have been picked clean of all valuable goods long ago, leaving only the many graves for relic hunters to scour. While the leadership of the saurian settlements frowns on this behavior and punishes violators, some of the more discontent saurians occasionally unearth graves, hoping to find something that will make their stay on this planet profitable. The wolves and the elgies do not bother the tombs of the Gravelands, the wolves for religious reasons and the elgies because of the dangerous nanite infestations found in many graves. Meanwhile, the straas ignore both morals and danger, raiding the Gravelands frequently in search of relics they can use to conquer the planet. The straas have suffered repeated nanite infestations as a result of these raids, though they have found a number of relics as well. None of the other factions are sure what the straas have found, but it is thought that they possess at least two dozen relics. Whether this is worth the loss of several settlements to nanites has yet to be seen.

Grave Plague

During later stages of the war with the Star Confederation, the vaasi infected corpses of Star Confederation troops with nanites. The vaasi then allowed them to be recovered in order to spread harmful nanites through the Star Confederation while the corpses were transported home, knowing the value the species of the Star Confederation placed on the bodies of their dead. This plan worked for a time, causing some chaos behind the lines for the Star Confederation, but eventually they learned to deal with the problem by destroying recovered bodies. Despite this policy, a large number of bodies were snuck onto Thres and buried, including bodies with nanite infestations. These nanites have reproduced over time to keep their numbers up but only carried out minimal activities to conserve power. They remain in their crypts, waiting for signs of activity. When this happens, they fulfill their programming, killing living beings and destroying machinery. They ignore immobile, inorganic objects that are not made of metal, but attack anything moving or metallic that comes near them. This can mean an unpleasant surprise for grave robbers, though the nanites are not always activated when a grave is opened. Sometimes the nanites are slow to reactivate, and only come online after the grave robbers have returned home, spreading through a populated area. The straas have lost several settlements in this manner.

The grave plague takes many different forms, the most common being the grave swarms described in the Xenomorphs section of this chapter. The grave plague has also appeared as incapacitation nanites, detailed in Chapter 3, or gray goo, gray-death, resilite, and stiletto nanites from d20 Future.

Burial Shroud

A device with several applications, burial shrouds are found in many of the crypts and mausoleums constructed in the days of the Star Confederation. It looks like little more than a metallic gray blanket and is normally found wrapped around a corpse, often covered with family, unit, and other faction symbols. The burial shroud is actually a combination of nanite and projected field technology designed to preserve corpses, even against nanite infestation. Any creature wrapped in a burial shroud cannot be infected by nanites and receives a +10 equipment bonus to Defense when attacked by active nanite colonies, such as grave swarms or vaasi attack nanite colonies, as the burial shroud generates an interference field. The burial shroud's own nanites, which are not harmed by the interference field, can hold a corpse together and slow its decomposition to one-tenth the normal rate. They allow a living wearer to heal at five times the normal natural rate. The wearer also gains a +4 equipment bonus to all Fortitude saves against severe weather. Some saurians have taken to wearing burial shrouds as cloaks, while elite straas troopers wear them in a fashion similar to togas.

ATMOSPHERIC AND SURFACE VEHICLES • • •

Wolves rely heavily on ground vehicles of all types, using them to keep up the nomadic wanderings that are the heart of the wolf caravans. Much of the wolves' limited industrial capacity is dedicated to keeping the vehicles of their caravans and military forces running, often at the expense of other consumer goods. The wolves love fast-moving ground vehicles most of all. They also use slower but larger vehicles for cargo transportation, and air vehicles for scouting and combat duties. There is a single air caravan among the Wolf Tribes, an experiment by the Star tribe in building a new type of community. Most wolf caravans rely on dozens of ground vehicles of varying sizes to transport the caravan, but some poorer caravans rely on draft animals for transportation. Caravans repair their own vehicles and often carry mobile machine shops for more serious repairs and parts fabrication. Despite their love of ground vehicles, wolves also enjoy walking and mainly use vehicles when traveling more than five miles. Within a settlement, vehicles are rare, mainly used for cargo or emergencies. All wolf vehicles are constructed for off-road travel and the wolves do not believe in building roads between settlements. Instead they wear a dirt road into existence over time, but the lack of good roads does sometimes make travel difficult. As on

Eos, air travel is often the easiest and fastest way to cover long distances.

The elgies are more utilitarian than the wolves in their vehicle usage, as they do not share their drive to travel great distances for the sake of travel itself. They live in permanent settlements that are often shared with wolves. Vehicles are common in elgie neighborhoods, including rudimentary public transportation. Elgies do not like animal drawn vehicles and rarely use them, preferring to walk. Settlements built within the forests of Haven have walkways through the treetops, and elgies swinging from branch to branch are a common sight. They have a strong preference for small, 1-person vehicles, such as monocycles.

The straas have a number of vehicle production facilities, which work at all hours of the day and night churning out the military and non-military vehicles needed to support Hivequeen Celick's war effort. The straas prefer heavy, slow vehicles that carry lots of cargo and armor plating to the fast and light vehicles used by the wolves. Straas vehicles, both military and civilian, are massive and are operated by a dedicated crew of straas. Unlike the wolves, who build all their vehicles for off-road conditions, the straas have a regular system of paved highways connecting their settlements. Straas can quickly transport goods within their own territory, but have much more trouble moving material beyond their lands where such roads do not exist. The straas have few air vehicles, but are working on fixing this to give them an edge in atmospheric conflicts with the wolves.

The yaom have few vehicles, most of which are very old or were purchased from the wolves. The yaom are currently engaged in retooling one of their factories to produce more vehicles, a process they go through every few decades to meet their limited needs, but this will still take some months to complete. They favor vehicles that are slow and powerful, able to carry large amounts of cargo. The Border Wardens and some masters have come to prefer the fast attack vehicles of the wolves, but most yaom consider riding on such vehicles to be a headache-inducing nightmare. Keeping a vehicle in good repair in yaom territory is difficult because of a lack of spare parts. There are a large number of stone paved roads connecting yaom settlements.

Caravan Crawler

A mainstay of the wolf caravans, these large vehicles are capable of carrying large amounts of cargo and are extremely reliable, but their speed leaves something to be desired. Jacked up on six massive tires, the caravan crawler is forty feet long and twenty feet wide, most of which is the cargo section which takes up two thirds of the vehicle's size and is supported by the crawler's four rear wheels. This cargo area can be covered or open air, and among the wolves is often used as a mobile living space, workshop, or even meeting room. Most caravan crawlers fulfill multiple roles within their caravan. The crawler is designed to be able to continue moving in up to six feet of water, allowing it to escape most tidal areas before it gets flooded.

The caravan crawler is an old design brought from the wolf homeworld. Though a similar vehicle existed before the wolves found the frezin ship, it has been updated with new technology, including a fusion reactor with a forty-year lifespan. Most caravans have six to ten of these vehicles, but the largest caravans are made up of over a hundred crawlers. The Blood Tooth tribe also uses armored caravan crawler as troop transports, but avoids bringing them into combat when possible. Elgies do not care for the vehicle as much as the wolves do, finding it difficult for them to maneuver, particularly in a forested environment. Due to its wide usage and ability to fill multiple roles, the caravan crawler has become one of the most common vehicles among the wolves and is currently in production in one of the factories of Rosheer. Spare parts for crawlers are common as well.

The caravan crawler is eight squares long and four wide. The caravan crawler comes standard with duralloy armor.

Hackshore Strike Vehicle

One of the main military vehicles used by the Wolf Tribes, this small, lightly armored vehicle is a clear demonstration of the wolf strategy of hitting hard and fast. The hackshore is little more than a lightly armored dune buggy with a Sterkas heavy machinegun and a Velerna missile launcher attached, though some drivers have replaced the machinegun with a plasma cannon. Incapable of withstanding significant damage, the hackshore relies on its speed and ability to traverse just about any terrain to keep it and its crew out of harm's way. The vehicle has a crew of two, a driver and a gunner/communications officer, but can carry two additional passengers who will not be particularly comfortable for the duration of the ride. The hackshore runs off an electric battery that can be recharged from most fusion-powered wolf vehicles in ten minutes, or it can be recharged using a deployable solar panel that requires one hour to generate enough power to travel five miles. On a full battery the hackshore can travel five hundred miles, though when not in use they are often carried in other vehicles such as caravan crawlers.

The hackshore is primarily used as a skirmish and scout vehicle, but when deployed in large numbers they can be devastating in battle. Most caravans have a number of hackshores for defense and scouting purposes, usually driven by the local members of the Blood Tooth tribe. These hackshores run a constant perimeter around the cara-

van, making sure both the path ahead and the surrounding territory are clear of threats. As the threats of the saurians and straas have risen, the Blood Tooth tribe has instituted a constant patrol of hackshores around the edges of Haven in order to keep an eye out for any covert attacks. The elgies also like the hackshore for its speed and maneuverability, often modifying it to hold their smaller frame, removing the weapons, and using the extra space for cargo. Civilian versions of the hackshore are also available without weaponry and have a Purchase DC of 26.

Hackshore strike vehicles are two squares long and two squares wide. The hackshore come standard with resilium armor.

Monocycle

Developed by the elgies as a personal vehicle for creatures of their stature, the monocycle is essentially a large wheel that the driver sits inside of, keeping his balance in the same fashion as a bicycle or motorcycle while the monocycle is in motion. Emergency braces are placed on both sides of the monocycle to prevent it from toppling completely, but otherwise the vehicle depends on the driver's balance to stay upright. Designed for both on and off road use, it is a common sight in elgie settlements, where it is often the fastest way to get around. The elgies also have adapted some monocycles for defensive purposes, adding a Sterkas heavy machinegun to the vehicle, but this modification is rare.

The elgies have also built a number of wolf-sized monocycles, but most wolves prefer the more stable but slightly slower hackshore strike vehicles. Caravans containing elgies have a number of monocycles, kept in a larger vehicle when not in use, which are primarily used for scouting and messenger duty. The monocycle runs off of an internal battery, which can be recharged by most fusion-powered vehicles with four hours of charging. On a full battery, the monocycle has a range of eight hundred miles.

Slide Car

An old yaom vehicle created by the scientist Kolari-Dsi, slide cars are vectored thrust hover cars that ride on a cushion of thrust up to three feet above the ground. Slide cars are extremely maneuverable, including lateral movement. There are less than twenty slide cars among the yaom. All are in the hands of masters or technical experts, and they are rarely available for sale. The slide cars are extremely well designed and are powered by a fusion reactor with a one-hundred-year lifespan. Most look like they are in bad shape after many years of wear and tear, but they run just fine.

Slide cars are used for emergencies or official business of the masters and can cross most terrain with little difficulty. Not all yaom streets are wide enough to accommodate a slide car, so some cities can be very difficult to navigate. The masters who possess them use their slide cars to carry out their duties, especially when an outside force threatens the yaom territories. No non-yaom own slide cars, and the masters would approach anyone who did in order to obtain it from them.

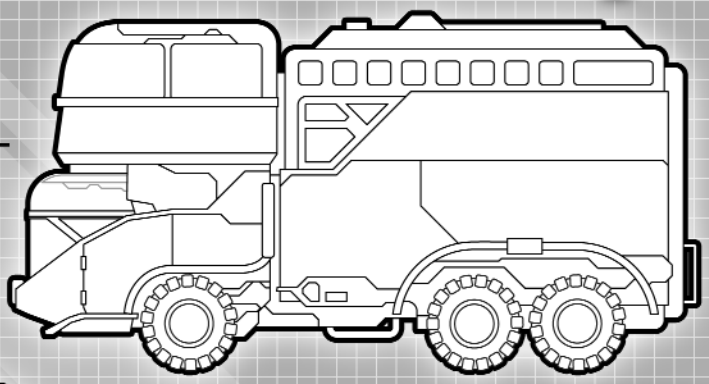
Slide cars are two squares wide and three squares long. Slide cars come standard with resilium armor.

Stias Assault Fighter

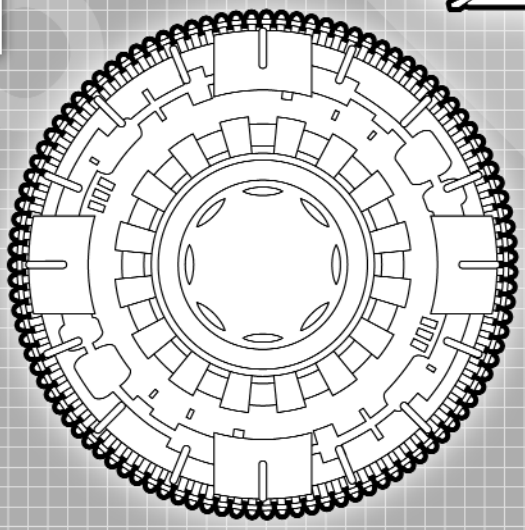
Part of an attempt by the straas to match the power of the spaceships of the Star tribe with atmospheric fighter planes, the Stias assault fighter is the most common of the Hive Legions' planes. There are dozens in operation and more are being produced each month, but the Hivequeen's efforts are hampered by lack of trained pilots and the technological superiority of the wolves. The Hive Legions' strategy of heavy ground units supported by air units has been severely hampered by the straas' inability to match the wolves in air combat. Hivequeen Celick believes that soon the straas can

KOLARI-DSI

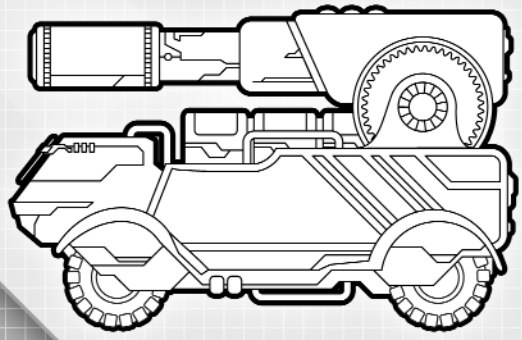
Although Kolari-Dsi died a century ago, he is still one of the most influential yaom in history. He was famed in his day for his deep connection to Red Truth. Now he is known for his universally accepted theories on the nature of Red Truth, and for the wonderful devices he designed by using Red Truth as his guide. Most of his creations exist today and still function, though most of those that do break cannot now be repaired given current yaom technical skills. Kolari-Dsi was several Progress Levels ahead of his time, but the yaom still benefit from his genius. In addition to a number of architectural feats, such as the Hall of Masters, Kolari-Dsi designed a number of vehicles and weapons for the yaom, the most common remaining being the slide car.



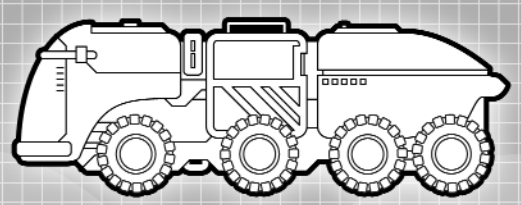
Caravan Crawler



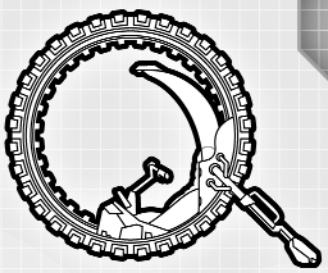
Venis Armored Vehicle



Stormbore
Mobile Cannon

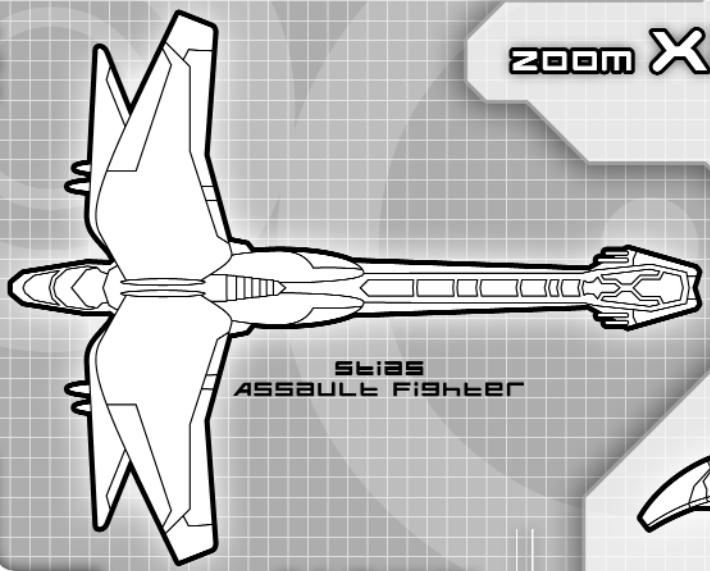


Stinger Heavy Tank

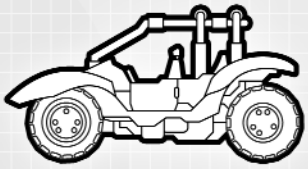


Monocycle

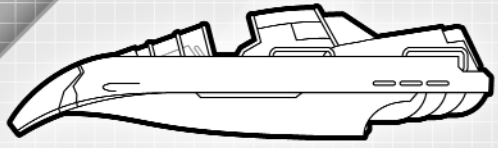
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Stias
Assault Fighter



Hackshore
Strike Vehicle



Slide Car

gain victory through sheer numbers. She hopes to have several hundred assault fighters ready when she makes her move against the Wolf Tribes, but this will take several years to accomplish; sabotage efforts by the Wolf Tribes and rebel straas will increase this time.

The Stias assault fighter is can be equipped with up to twelve missiles, bombs, or rocket pods, but in its air-to-air combat role it is normally loaded with a full set of Venom air-to-air missiles. It is also equipped with a flash cannon. The fighter also has a chaff launcher, targeting system, and a class II sensor array, functionally identical to their spacecraft-borne counterparts. Some Stias have been equipped with sensor jammers for scout duty.

The Stias assault fighter is eight squares long and six squares wide. The Stias assault fighter comes standard with alumisteel armor.

Stinger Heavy Tank

The primary tank of the Straas Hive Legions, the Stinger heavy tank is the most heavily armored vehicle on Thres. The Straas Hive Legions' armored units employ hundreds of them, providing an almost unstoppable force on the battlefield. Although occasionally stymied by the superior air support and maneuverability of the wolves, in a straight up fight the Stinger heavy tank is rarely bested. Its massive weight, slow speed, and maintenance problems make it a difficult vehicle to get into the fight. Clocking in at one hundred tons, the Straas Hive Legions put their spacecraft at risk to transport these vehicles to other continents, as few nautical or atmospheric vehicles can do so. Hivequeen Celick has kept most of her Stinger heavy tanks in straas territory, avoiding the difficulty in advancing them but failing to make the most out of territory gains.

Armed with a powerful rail gun, a napalm cannon called an inflamer, and two hailer light machineguns, it is well equipped for dealing with armored targets or personnel. It lacks an effective means of attacking airborne targets, however; combined with its slow speed, it is easy pickings for missiles or bombing runs. According to the standard strategy of the Straas Hive Legions, the Stinger is to advance under the cover of straas air superiority, but the straas have failed to establish this in their attacks against the wolves, allowing their Stingers to get chewed up.

The rebel straas have captured three Stinger heavy tanks from the Hive Legions, and keep them hidden within straas territory for use in raids. Gaining more tanks is a primary goal of the rebel straas, but concerns about hiding them are growing.

The Stinger heavy tank is six squares long and four wide, and comes standard with duralloy armor.

Stormbore Mobile Cannon

The anti-armor vehicle of the Wolf Tribes' ground forces, the Stormbore is a reinforced wheeled vehicle, with a weapon called a Storm Cannon built into its chassis. Similar to a 100mm cannon, the Storm Cannon can inflict massive damage on armored targets, though the lack of a turret means the Stormbore must be pointing straight at the target. Due to a cunningly designed rail system for the cannon to rest on, the Stormbore can fire while in motion, and can reach speeds of up to 120 miles an hour over open terrain. Although not as fast as the Hackshore, the Stormbore is faster than most vehicles with similar armaments. The Stormbore carries little armor, however, and most heavy weapons can inflict serious damage on it with a single hit. Caravans that expect heavy combat are accompanied by a number of these vehicles, and they make up the majority of the Blood Tooth tribe's ground vehicles.

In addition to the Storm Cannon, the Stormbore is equipped with a Sterkas heavy machinegun and a pair of Velerna rocket launchers. This basic loadout allows the Stormbore to deal with a number of different combat situations without changing weaponry. In addition to combat duty, the Stormbore is modular and can be configured to fulfill a number of different functions. Most of these involve removing the Storm Cannon, since it and its recoil rail take up so much space on the Stormbore. Extra seats can be added for personnel transportation, anti-infantry weapons installed for anti-personnel duty, or Velerna missile launchers added to increase its effectiveness against aircraft. The powerful suspension and large tires allow the Stormbore to cross most types of terrain with ease and it can even float in calm water. There is a strong civilian market for unarmed Stormbores, which have a Purchase DC of 31.

The Stormbore is three squares long and two squares wide. The Stormbore comes standard with resilium armor.

Venis Armored Vehicle

The only armored vehicle in the yaom armory, these vehicles are the first standardized armored vehicles built by the yaom on Thres. For the first three centuries of their stay, the Border Wardens built vehicles using their own designs and ingenuity, no two of which looked alike, and all suffered from poor performance and reliability. Kolari-Dsi designed a standard heavy armored vehicle for the Border Wardens, but died before the design could be finished. Thus the result, the Venis armored vehicle, is not up to the usual standards of Kolari-Dsi's creations. It is heavy, slow, and hard to maintain, but packs a powerful punch. The Venis is designed for strictly anti-armor operations and has little capability against infantry.

Vehicles of Thres

Name	PL	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Maneuver	Top Speed	Defense	Hard	Hit Points	Size	Purchase DC	Restriction
Caravan Crawler	6	2	10	30 tons	-8	-4	200 (10)	14	15	108	G	36	Lic (+1)
Hackshore Strike Vehicle	6	2	2	500 lb.	+1	+2	320 (32)	12	13	38	L	28	Lic (+1)
Monocycle	6	1	0	40 lb.	+1	+2	310 (31)	10	10	26	M	25	Lic (+1)
Slide Car	6	1	2	300 lb.	+1	+4	350 (35)	14	15	52	H	45	Lic (+1)
Stias Assault Fighter	6	2	0	20 lb.	+2	+2	2,050 (205)	11	10	54	G	50	Mil (+3)
Stinger Heavy Tank	6	4	0	400 lb.	-8	-6	80 (8)	16	20	82	H	48	Mil (+3)
Stormbore Mobile Cannon	6	3	3	500 lb.	-2	-2	280 (28)	15	15	46	H	34	Mil (+3)
Venis Armored Vehicle	6	20	2	1,000 lb.	-8	-4	30 (3)	16	20	92	H	48	Mil (+3)

The Venis is a heavy, iron-plated circular vehicle that relies on four sets of tracks to move. Two of these tracks are arranged in a direction that is considered the front of the vehicle, allowing it to go forward, back, and turn, while the second set is perpendicular, allowing the tank to slide sideways when needed. The Venis can only use one set of treads at a time and requires a move action to change which set it is using, but this ability allows it an amazing amount of maneuverability. A turret on top of the Venis contains a heavy cannon and eight light cannons spread around the edge of its circular hull, allowing it to engage multiple targets or a single target with multiple guns. The Border Wardens rarely use these vehicles, as they have limited spare parts available. Several dozen remain in operation, but most are only turned on once or twice a year. Venis armored vehicles run off of internal batteries that must be recharged from a generator of some type, requiring twenty-four hours to recharge fully. A fully charged Venis can travel three hundred miles.

The Venis armored vehicle is six squares wide and six squares long. It also comes standard with duralloy armor.

VEHICLE WEAPONS • • •

Flash Cannon

Still in many respects an experimental weapon, the flash cannon is the first laser weapon of the Straas Hive Legions. A powerful and long-range weapon, it has the added benefit of firing a large number of small laser pulses, similar to an automatic weapon. The weapon is rather unreliable, however. During any round in which the automatic fire option is used and a 1 is rolled on the attack roll, the flash cannon overheats and must be repaired before it can be used again, requiring an hour of work and a Repair check (DC 15). This weapon is likely to be perfected in a few years, after which it will be added to other straas vehicles.

Inflamer

One of the primary anti-personnel weapons of the straas, the inflamer is a cannon that fires globs of a thick, sticky liquid that the straas call fire oil, which is similar to napalm. When the glob strikes the target it splashes the nearby area, covering everything within ten feet in napalm, though creatures can make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid getting splashed. This splashing process also ignites the material, and everything caught in the affected area that did not succeed at the Reflex save suffers 3d6 points of fire damage. This damage continues every round for five rounds and cannot be stopped short of full immersion in water or some other method of completely cutting the napalm substance off from any source of air. Ammunition for the inflamer comes in the form of large tanks of flammable liquid that are attached to the inflamer through a hose, requiring two full round actions to reload.

Sterkas Heavy Machinegun

A heavy machinegun used by the wolves, it is similar in caliber to the EDF-2 used by the Eos Defense Force. This is a relatively new weapon in their arsenal, a product of elgie tinkering with older heavy machinegun designs. Known for its reliability, it can even be fired underwater or in a raging sandstorm without difficulty thanks to its sealed firing chamber. The Sterkas heavy machinegun uses linked belts of ammunition.

Stinger Heavy Rail Gun

The main cannon of the Stinger heavy tank, it is designed to destroy armored vehicles and buildings, but is not very effective against fast-moving targets. The Stinger heavy tank generally uses its other weapons against smaller targets, saving this weapon for larger vehicles and fortified positions. The Stinger heavy rail gun fires a high explosive armor-piercing round that reduces the hardness of

any target it strikes by 10 and inflicts 5d6 damage on anything within 10 feet of the point of impact, Reflex save (DC 15) for half damage. Hivequeen Celick and the Straas Hive Legions are working on developing other types of ammunition for use with the weapon. Reloading a Stinger heavy rail gun requires a full round action.

Storm Cannon

A large barrel cannon built specifically for the Stormbore mobile cannon, this weapon has also been used on larger vehicles and fortified positions within the Wolf Tribes territories. Able to put a significant dent into any armored vehicle, its light weight and special recoil compensation system allow it to be fired from relatively light vehicles while moving without crashing. The storm cannon reduces the hardness of any object it strikes by 10 points and inflicts 3d6 fire damage on anything within 5 feet of the point of impact; a Reflex save (DC 13) reduces this damage by half.

The storm cannon can also fire smoke shells, which create 50% concealment for thirty feet around the point of impact, beginning on the round following impact and lasting for five minutes. These smoke shells are often used to conceal escapes or troop movements, relying on the speed of the Stormbore to be somewhere else by the time the smoke clears. Incendiary shells are also an option, which inflict 6d6 fire damage on everything within twenty feet of the point of impact, though a Reflex save (DC 16) reduces this damage by half. Reloading a Storm cannon requires a full round action.

Strike Missiles

The most common form of air-to-air guided missile used by the Stias assault fighter, it is also often used by other straas aircraft and in some anti-aircraft defense systems. Strike missiles grant a +2 equipment bonus to attack rolls. There are a number of other missile designs available to the straas, including air-to-ground missiles similar to Strike missiles and missiles with greater range or power. Strike missiles are the generalist missile and thus see widespread use.

Velerna Missile Launcher

A relatively recent advancement, the elgies developed the Velerna missile launcher as an effective ground-to-air missile to counter the growing straas air forces. The Velerna is a light system that can be mounted on Hackshore and Stormbore vehicles, and though it lacks the punch of heavier missile systems, it is surprisingly effective. The Velerna system is now common in wolf caravans

Vehicle Weapons of Thres

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Flash Cannon[1]	6	3d12	20	Fire	1,000 ft.	S, A	100	G	450 lb.	31	Mil (+3)
Inflamer[2]	6	Special[2]	20	Fire	500 ft.	S	20	H	340 lb.	27	Mil (+3)
Stinger Heavy Rail Gun[3]	6	6d10	20	Ballistic	800 ft.	Single	1	G	1,260 lb.	28	Mil (+3)
Storm Cannon[3]	6	5d10	20	Concussion	600 ft.	Single	1	G	890 lb.	29	Mil (+3)
Strike Missile4	6	5d12	20	Concussion	3,000 ft.	Single	1	L	100 lb.	25	Mil (+3)
Velerna Missile Launcher[4]	5	4d12	20	Concussion		S	4	L	200 lb.	26	Mil (+3)
Yaom Heavy Cannon[3]	5	4d12	20	Concussion	600 ft.	Single	1	G	980 lb.	29	Mil (+3)
Yaom Light Cannon[3]	6	3d10	20	Concussion	400 ft.	S, A	Linked	L	745 lb.	28	Mil (+3)

[1] This weapon requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Laser Cannon) feat.
[2] This weapon requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Flamethrower) feat.
[3] This weapon requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Cannon) feat.
[5] This weapon requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Missile) feat.

that venture near the straas territories, and a portable version useable by infantry is currently in development. A single Velerna launcher carries four missiles and all must be fired before it can be reloaded, which requires ten full round actions.

MECHA ON THRES

There are no mecha on Thres, as relic mechs are entirely absent and all of the factions prefer wheeled travel. Some elgies are experimenting with powered armor, however.

Yaom Heavy Cannon

A large bore cannon used on the Venis armored vehicle, these weapons are occasionally seen on Border Warden fortresses as well. Used as the heavy-hitting weapon of the yaom arsenal, Border Wardens occasionally construct new heavy cannons, but most are decades old. Based on a design by Kolar-Dsi, these weapons are surprisingly effective given their simple but robust construction. The Bordern Wardens manufacture shells in smithies and small factories within their fortresses. Reloading a yaom heavy cannon requires a full round action.

Yaom Light Cannon

Where the yaom heavy cannon is used against armored targets and fortified positions, the light cannon is an automatic weapon that does not have a particularly high rate of fire but fires very large shells. Yaom light cannons use belts of ammunition that come in lengths of fifty shells, and multiple belts are usually hooked together.

STARSHIPS • • •

All the sentient species of Thres have access some type of spacecraft, and there are more spaceships on or in orbit above it than any other planet in the Helios system. All the sentient species have some remainder of the ships that brought them here, though for the yaom these are the only ships they have at all. For the last four hundred years, space travel has been a part of life on Thres, and thus spacecraft have been vital to it as well.

The Wolf Tribes have the largest fleet of spacecraft in the system aside from the Vaasi of the Cronus Belt, as well as the best-trained pilots. Their technology is in many ways the equal of that used by the humans. After spending over a century wandering the gateway network looking for a new home, space travel has become an intrinsic part of wolf culture. No other species has integrated space travel so completely into their daily lives. Space travel is a daily activity among wolves such as the Star tribe, who use it to get around Thres, move cargo, or just quench their wanderlust. Wolves are accustomed being able to travel to other planets, placing a high value on exploration in addition to the military power a space fleet brings. They see spacecraft as a required part of their culture, and they devote considerable resources to keeping their space fleet functional. This has allowed them an edge over their adversaries in terms of space superiority; the saurians and straas cannot realistically challenge the Wolf Tribes in space combat alone, but the threat of both these forces keeps the wolves from committing their forces against one enemy for fear of attack from the other. The warships of the Star tribe regularly strike against the straas infrastructure, working to make sure they do not increase their own space fleet appreciably in addition to fulfilling other strategic goals. The Star tribe has mapped the Helios system extensively, including most of its planets, save only Eos and C'thalk.

The Star tribe, or one of a handful of other tribes that require ships to fulfill their tribal responsibilities, own all wolf ships. Even the ships of other tribes are often crewed by Star tribe members, though the commander is always of the tribe that owns the ship. Ships are readily available to other tribes when necessary, but funding a fleet is not easy. Other tribes must pay for the services of the Star tribe unless it is an emergency. The Blood Tooth and Star tribes operate in tandem to protect the Wolf Tribes, supporting each other in combat.

The flagship of the Wolf Tribe fleet is the cruiser Relentless. Commander Karil, leader of the Star tribe, leads from the deck of the Relentless, which is always found orbiting above Rosheer. Other ships can be found defending major settlements, running cargo missions across Thres, or exploring other sections of the Helios system. A number of exploration ships in the outer reaches of the solar system have gone recently missing without explanation, so such missions have been curtailed until the cause can be found.

Despite living with the wolves for over a century, the elgies have not adapted to space travel in the same way. They see it as a means to an end, rather than an end unto itself. Elgies do not take any great joy from space travel, but do enjoy the technology and problem solving involved. Most technological

advancements of the Wolf Tribes in the last century have come from the elgies, including space technology, so they have had a definite effect on the ships of the Wolf Tribes. They rarely do so as crew, though some ships now have elgie engineers among their ranks. They have no ships of their own, but a group of elgie entrepreneurs are working to set up an elgie-operated shipyard in Rosheer using the latest technology available. Such a shipyard is likely to produce vessels of superior quality.

The straas have a number of spaceships, including several massive evacuation ships left over from their trip through the stars, but Hivequeen Celick sees space travel as a means to reach a destination or a way to exert military power. Unlike the wolves, the journey holds no interest for the straas, only its end. The fleet of the Straas Hive Legions is merely a tool with which Hivequeen Celick can conquer Thres, and then the entirety of the Helios system. It is a much-abused tool of late, given the superior firepower, technology, and training of the wolves. The straas fleet is usually grounded or in hiding to avoid attacks from Star tribe ships, and Hivequeen Celick has constructed massive underground complexes for just this purpose. Her spaceships are the prime targets of the Wolf Tribes' military efforts, and so she has taken great pains to hide them. When the straas fleet takes to the skies, it does so with every available ship, hoping that such numbers will make the wolves think twice about attacking. The Straas Hive Legions are working feverishly to overcome this deficiency, but have had limited success thus far. The straas have no appreciable presence elsewhere in the system. The rebel straas have no spacecraft, but gaining one is among their primary goals.

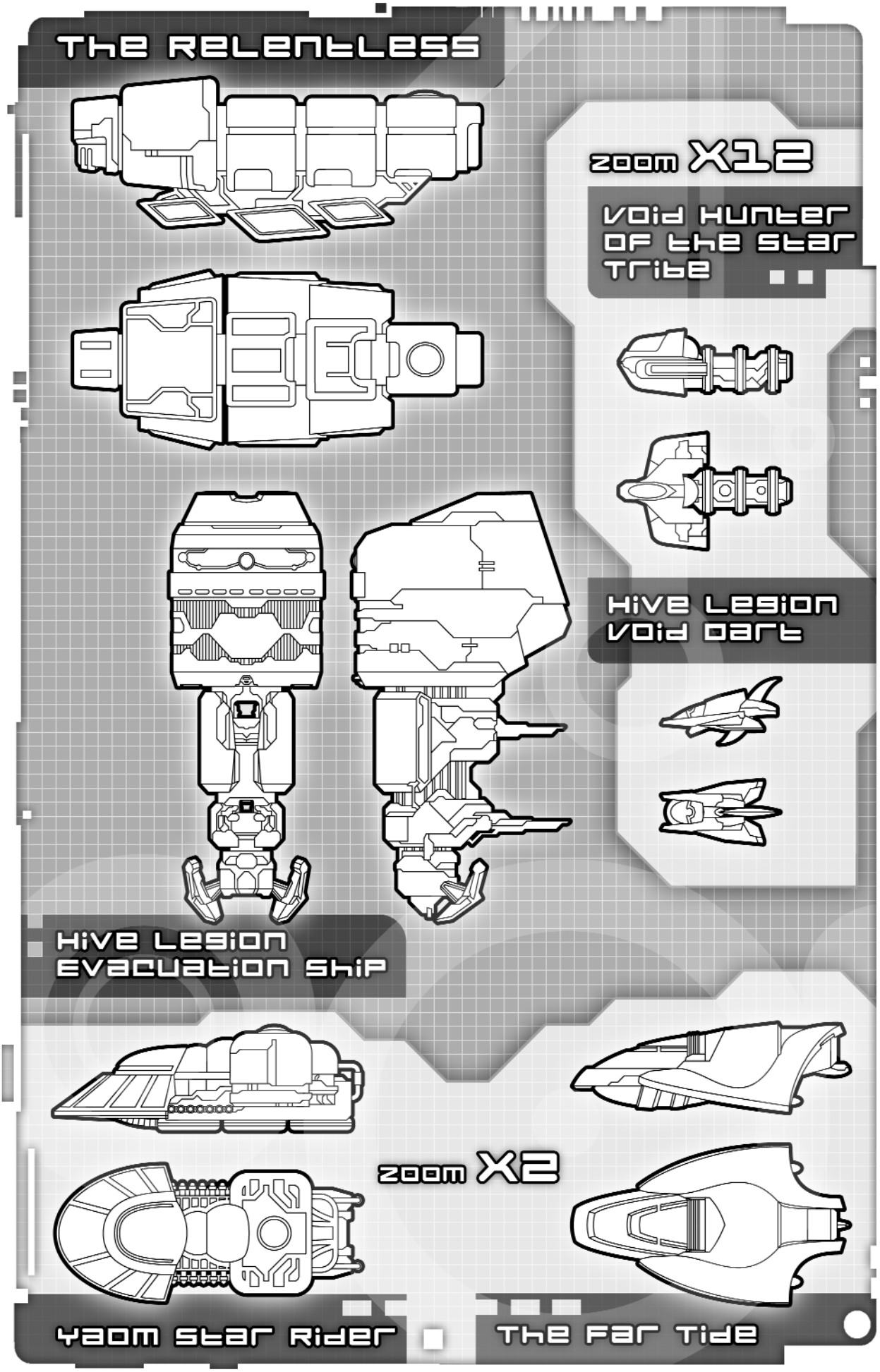
Straas ships are unsurprisingly extremely utilitarian in their design. They are built for power and efficiency, favoring quantity over quality. Straas ships are not particularly advanced compared to wolf, human, or even saurian ships, putting them at a tactical disadvantage when dealing with these species. Hivequeen Celick knows that the military strength of the straas lies in ground combat and works to force such an engagement.

The only surviving yaom spacecraft are those they came to Thres in, a small fleet of ramshackle ships that were barely within the technological capacity of the yaom to create. Without Red Truth these ships would have never been built; the yaom relied on information gleaned from Red Truth in the construction process. These ships are not combat vessels and most are no longer space worthy, their maintenance having been ignored for other pursuits. A few remain functional, now in the hands of the Border Wardens, which have been converted into makeshift cargo ships. The yaom have no appreciable influence on matters of space travel and are fine with this for the most part, preparing for the day when they can travel through Red Truth instead of the material world.

The saurians on Thres always have a handful of ships looking over them, assigned by the Emperor from the Blood Guard or by those nobles who hope to impress the Emperor with their interest in Thres. An assignment to the saurian colonies is one of the quickest ways to learn about space combat and earn respect within the Empire, since the wolf and straas fleets always outnumber the saurians. The three fleets create an uneasy balance, with none willing to mount all-out attack against one faction for fear of opening themselves up to an attack from the others. The saurians hope to expand their fleet over time, but until the Emperor names a kurizar for the colonies, most nobles are not interested in committing major military forces, especially spaceships, to guard territory that may not even be theirs.

WOLF KNOWLEDGE OF THE HELIOS SYSTEM

The Star tribe has maps of every planet in the Helios system, in addition to accurate navigational recordings of the locations of objects within the system. They did much of this scanning before the humans, coqui, mechites, velin, and vaasi arrived, and thus their maps do not reflect these species' settlements. Most planets were only scanned from orbit; the Star tribe has avoided touching down on most worlds to avoid infection or xenomorph attack. The saurian fleet prevented an orbital scan of C'thalk, and the wolves completely avoid Eos because of the rust spores in its atmosphere. Exploration ships have recently gone missing, which has delayed improvement of their maps, such as getting better details concerning the Cronus Belt or identifying the massive object that appeared over two decades ago orbiting one of Hesperos's moons.


The Relentless
zoom X12
Void Hunter of the Star Tribe
Hive Legion Void Dart
Hive Legion Evacuation Ship
zoom X2
Yaom Star Rider
The Far Tide

◇ The Far Tide, Exploration Frigate of the Star Tribe

One of the most active ships in the Star tribe fleet, the Far Tide has a long tradition of being the first ship of the fleet to reach make contact with new species, find new worlds, or enter battle. Modified by the great-grandfather of her current engineer, the Far Tide is the fastest capital ship in the fleet and has a daring crew to match. Always willing to risk an unexplored planet, a possibly hostile alien race, or an overheated engine, the Far Tide and her crew want to be the first wolves to see the sights of the universe. This is a tradition that has been up held by four generations of crew, many of whom spend all but a few years of their life in space.

The captain of the Far Tide is Loratil of the Star tribe, the fourth of his family to command the ship, and a newcomer compared to other members of the crew. While Loratil has spent most of his life on the Far Tide, he has only served as an official crew member for five years; many of the crew have decades of experience on him. Even so, Loratil has proved an able commander and has brought a renewed sense of vigor to the crew.

The Far Tide is rarely found near Thres; it is usually involved in mapping asteroid belts or investigating planetary anomalies. With the loss of a number of exploration ships, it has been called back home to Thres for picket duty until the reason for the missing ships is determined. The Far Tide is a good example of a Star tribe ship, with years of tradition and modifications within its hull. There is really no such thing as a standard ship among the Wolf Tribes.

Type: Light (PL 7)
Subtype: Exploration Frigate
Defense: 15
Flat Footed Defense: 9
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 30
Hit Dice: 70d20 (1,400)
Initiative Modifier: +6
Pilot's Class Bonus: +7
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +6
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +8/+3
Size: Colossal (-8 size)
Tactical Speed: 4,000 ft.
Length: 410 feet
Weight: 5,200 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 68 (Ace +12)
Passenger Capacity: 56
Cargo Capacity: 400 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack

4 fire-linked heavy plasma cannons +5/+0 ranged (45d8)
2 fire-linked mass reaction missiles +0 (30d8)
Attack of Opportunity
Point-defense system +5, 2d12x10

Design Specs

Engines: Thrusters, particle impulse engine
Armor: Cerametal
Defense Systems: Decoy drone launcher, improved autopilot system, improved damage control, light fortification, magnetic field, point-defense system, radiation field
Sensors: Class V sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver
Weapons: 4 fire-linked heavy plasma cannons (range incr. 4,000 ft.), 2 fire-linked mass reaction missiles (48 missiles each)

◇ Hive Legion Evacuation Ship

When the straas left their homeworld under the command of Hivequeen Celick, they did so in thirty of these ships, each carrying two hundred thousand straas in cryogenic sleep. These ships were built with a minimum of resources, and ten percent of the passengers died in their freezing tanks. Further, these ships were never intended for combat. When they encountered the wolf fleet around Thres, Hivequeen Celick ordered an attack before realizing the strength of the Star tribe. The evacuation ships fared very poorly in the battle that followed. Ten of the evacuation ships were destroyed in the ensuing battle. While the wolves lost a large segment of their fleet and still have not recovered, the Straas Hive Legions lost over two million lives in the battle on board the evacuation ships alone.

Since their arrival on Thres the evacuation ships have been the targets of regular attacks by the Star tribe. Hivequeen Celick had hoped to refit them as ships of war, but the determined assaults of the wolves and the shoddy construction of the evacuation ships has made her reconsider. Now she uses the six remaining evacuation ships as mobile decoys, confident the wolves will attack wherever they are located. The straas act like they are repairing the evacuation ships, but in fact are just keeping them in good enough shape to continue their duty as decoys. The evacuation ships are kept as far away from the real shipyards as possible. Hivequeen Celick plans to dismantle these ships for parts eventually, but if pressed she will throw them into combat as suicide vessels. They may also be used as transport ships in the eventual ground attack against the Wolf Tribes.

Type: Heavy (PL 6)
Subtype: Evacuation Transport
Defense: 7
Flat Footed Defense: 5
Autopilot Defense: 5
Hardness: 20
Hit Dice: 360d20 (7,200 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +2
Pilot's Class Bonus: +3
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +2
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +2
Size: Colossal (-8 size)
Tactical Speed: 2,000 ft.
Length: 1,420 feet
Weight: 145,000 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +3
Crew: 622 (Trained +4)
Passenger Capacity: 200,000
Cargo Capacity: 100 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack

4 fire-linked gauss guns -3 (20d12)
2 fire-linked nuclear missiles -8 (24d8)
Attack of Opportunity
Point-defense system +3, 4d12

Design Specs

Engines: Fusion torch, thrusters
Armor: Polymeric
Defense Systems: Autopilot system, damage control
Sensors: Class II sensor system, targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver
Weapons: 2 fire-linked nuclear missile launchers (16 missiles each), 4 fire-linked gauss guns (range incr. 4,000 ft.)

◇ Hive Legion Void Dart

The standard attack fighter of the Straas Hive Legions, Hivequeen Celick hopes that these cheap and easy-to-build vehicles will allow her to eventually overwhelm the ships of the Star tribe. The void dart is a small, no-frills space fighter that relies on a carrier ship for any sort of interplanetary voyage. For now such concerns are moot, though Hivequeen Celick has toyed with the idea of converting the surviving evacuation ships in to space carriers. She does not yet have enough void darts to make such an effort worthwhile.

The dozen void darts that are currently active are stationed in groups of four, one group at the Central Hive and the other two groups at nearby hives. The ships are on constant alert when not on patrol or maneuvers, and are the first response wave of the Straas Hive Legions. The pilots of the void darts are still learning the intricacies of space combat, but are well trained in atmospheric combat and the abilities of their machines. They lack of free will, however, making their maneuvers repetitious and predictable.

The void dart is a modular vehicle that can be easily outfitted with different weapons, defensive systems, and sensors. Hivequeen Celick hopes that she can avoid building several space fighter models for different tasks by relying on multiple configurations of the void dart.

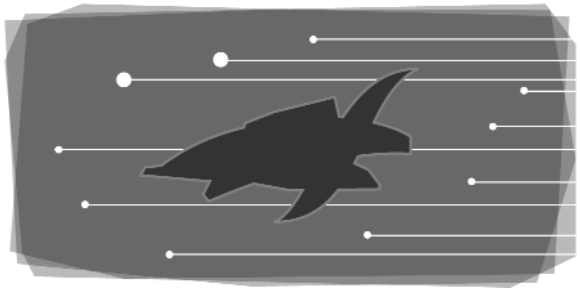
Type: Ultralight (PL 6)
Subtype: Light Interceptor
Defense: 17
Flat Footed Defense: 13
Autopilot Defense: 8
Hardness: 20
Hit Dice: 9d20 (180 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Huge (-2 size)
Tactical Speed: 3,500 ft.
Length: 28 feet
Weight: 16 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +1
Crew: 2 (Expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 0
Cargo Capacity: 100 lb.
Grapple Modifier: +8
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack

2 fire-linked gauss guns +3 ranged (12d12), nuclear missile launcher -2 ranged (16d8)

Design Specs

Engines: Fusion torch, thrusters
Armor: Polymeric
Defense Systems: Chaff launcher, decoy drone launcher (4 drones), improved damage control
Sensors: Class II sensor array, targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver
Weapons: 2 fire-lined gauss guns (range incr. 4,000 ft.), nuclear missile launcher (6 missiles)



◇ The Relentless, Flagship of the Star Tribe

The largest ship in the Star tribe fleet, it was the only heavy ship to survive the battle with the straas when they arrived in the Helios system. In the interest of bulking up the fleet, smaller ships were built to replenish its numbers before larger ships, and only now are the wolves adding new capital ships to their fleet. Two ships of similar size are under construction at Rosheer, but they will not be complete for at least three years. Until then, the Relentless is the core of the Wolf Tribes' fleet, the flagship and the command center of Commander Karil.

The Relentless is over two hundred years old, dating back to the original evacuation of the wolf homeworld. The crew keeps the ship in excellent repair, but its age is evident. The ship is full of eccentricities that developed over time but are never deemed worth fixing, such as noisy pipes, giving the ship an odd character all its own. The crew, many of whom are the fifth generation of their family to serve on the ship, are deeply dedicated to the ship. It is adorned with lucky talismans, prayers, and other signs of favor from current and past crew. When out of conflict, the ship feels more like a floating city than a ship of war.

Relentless began as an escort ship for some of the larger wolf evacuation ships, which have since been destroyed or cannibalized for parts. Its systems have been upgraded to make it a heavy cruiser, and it has seen many modifications over the years. The Relentless receives the best in parts and upgrades and is always at the cutting edge of the Wolf Tribes' technology. The ship is almost completely crewed by members of the Star tribe, though a contingent of elgie engineers has been added to the ship recently.

Type: Heavy (PL 7)
Subtype: Heavy Cruiser
Defense: 15
Flat Footed Defense: 9
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 30
Hit Dice: 460d20 (9,200)
Initiative Modifier: +8
Pilot's Class Bonus: +7
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +6
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +8/+3
Size: Colossal (-8 size)
Tactical Speed: 3,000 ft.
Length: 1,320 feet
Weight: 142,000 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 442 (Ace +12)
Passenger Capacity: 140
Cargo Capacity: 45,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack

4 fire-linked plasma cannons +5/+0 ranged (45d8),
3 fire-linked quantum cannons +0 ranged (40d8),
2 fire-linked mass reaction missiles +0 ranged (30d8)
Attack of Opportunity
Point-defense system +5, 4d12x10

Design Specs

Engines: Particle impulse engine
Armor: Cerametal
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, decoy drone launcher (12 drones), light fortification, magnetic field, particle field, point-defense system, radiation shielding, repair drones,
Sensors: Class V sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver
Weapons: 3 fire-linked quantum cannons (range incr. 6,000 ft.), 4 fire-linked heavy plasma cannons (range incr. 4,000 ft.), 2 fire-linked mass reaction missile launchers (120 missiles each)

◇ Void Hunter of the Star Tribe

The Void Hunter is the standard space fighter design used by the Star tribe, but pilots extensively modify their ship according to personal preferences. Some of these changes are strictly cosmetic, such as paint jobs or hanging charms in the interior of the ship, while other pilots change their weapons, engines, and other systems according to their own desires. The Star tribe has no regulations on such modifications, and doing so is considered a normal part of operations. This does cause some problems when it comes to getting standardized parts and training for the fleet, but the inconvenience is considered a small price to pay.

The Void Hunter is a heavy fighter designed to operate over long ranges, escort larger ships, and deal with enemy fighters. It can make interplanetary trips, but the crew only has enough supplies for one month and the accommodations are not very comfortable. When operating with larger ships, Void Hunter squadrons often rotate docking with the larger ships to get a break from the more cramped quarters on the Void Hunters. They are not designed to deal with capital ships, but can change their weapons load to mass reaction missiles if pressed to do so. The Star tribe primarily uses Void Hunters for patrols of Thres and local space. Void Hunters also play a role of prime importance in maintaining the wolves' air superiority and are often used in atmospheric engagements with the straas.

Type: Ultralight (PL 7)
Subtype: Escort Fighter
Defense: 19
Flat Footed Defense: 13
Autopilot Defense: 8
Hardness: 30
Hit Dice: 12d20 (240 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +8
Pilot's Class Bonus: +7
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +6
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +8/+3
Size: Gargantuan (-4 size)
Tactical Speed: 4,500 ft.
Length: 42 feet
Weight: 26 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +2
Crew: 3 (Ace +12)
Passenger Capacity: 0
Cargo Capacity: 500 lb.
Grapple Modifier: +12
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack

2 fire-linked quantum cannons +6/+1 ranged (24d8),
mass reaction missile +1 (20d8)

Design Specs

Engines: Fusion torch, thrusters
Armor: Cerametal
Defense Systems: Decoy drone launcher (5 drones), improved autopilot system, improved damage control, light fortification
Sensors: Class III sensor array, targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver
Weapons: 2 fire-linked quantum cannons (range incr. 6,000 ft.), mass reaction missile launcher (12 missiles)



◇ Yaom Star Rider

Once these ships, ten in number, carried ten thousand yaom refugees from their homeworld to escape destruction. Now the ships that saved a species are paid little attention. Most of them are no longer functional, and those that do remain have been refitted for duty as ground support attack craft, which they do poorly. Most yaom have little use for the surviving star riders, seeing space travel as unnecessary and waiting for the day when transit directly through Red Truth is possible. The Border Wardens have claimed the surviving star riders for their own use.

The star rider is not a robust or fast ship; its main virtue is a large cargo hold and engines that are powerful and reliable, if slow. The ships have been refitted with armor, weapons, and more advanced sensors by the Border Wardens, most of which have been acquired through trade with the Wolf Tribes. Though not well suited for dogfights or attacks on capital ships, the Star Riders are useful against ground targets, such as straas assault forces. There are four star riders in service with the Border Wardens, stationed on the western borders of yaom territory.

Type: Light (PL 6)
Subtype: Converted evacuation transport
Defense: 7
Flat Footed Defense: 5
Autopilot Defense: 5
Hardness: 20
Hit Dice: 34d20 (680 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +2
Pilot's Class Bonus: +3
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +2
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +2
Size: Colossal (-8 size)
Tactical Speed: 2,000 ft.
Length: 478 feet
Weight: 5,400 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +3
Crew: 16 (Trained +4)
Passenger Capacity: 1,200
Cargo Capacity: 800 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack

3 fire-linked heavy lasers -3 ranged (16d8)
Attack of Opportunity
Point-defense system +3, 2d12x10

Design Specs

Engines: Fusion torch, thrusters
Armor: Alloy plating
Defense Systems: Autopilot system, damage control, sensor jammer
Sensors: Class I sensor array, targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver
Weapons: 3 fire-linked heavy lasers (4,000 ft.)

XENOMORPHS • • •

The ecosystem of Thres is an artificially transplanted one, made up of the creatures and plants the Star Confederation introduced from dying Nidel long ago, and species the later-arriving inhabitants of Thres brought with them. The animal species from Nidel are mammalian, amphibian, or avian in nature, while most of the plant species are hardy grasses and trees that can withstand flood and drought. Later additions have been along similar lines, though the yaom brought few animals with them, and the straas introduced a massive influx of large insect life forms that now dominate the continents held by the straas. Other species consider these insects, though of animal intelligence, to be a sign of the straas and eliminate them when possible, going to great lengths and wiping out many other creatures in the process. The only reptiles on the planet escaped from the saurian colonies after being transported from C'thalk, but rarely survive long in the cold temperatures that cover most of the world.

◇ Brush Runner

A large quadruped species found in the plains of Thres, these robust animals resemble something between canines and great cats in both look and demeanor. They were once native to the homeworld of the wolves and were brought with the wolves when they fled their world, finding a new home centuries later on the wide open spaces of Thres. According to the wolf legend, the God-Facets created the brush runner to serve and protect the wolves, and thus the brush runners are respected and treated well. They are commonly kept as pets and companions. Elgies avoid them, as they seem to find elgies rather tasty. Brush runners are easily domesticated and trained, and they are common in most settlements and caravans of the Wolf Tribes. Even the Star tribe keeps brush runners on some of their ships as companions and extra security.

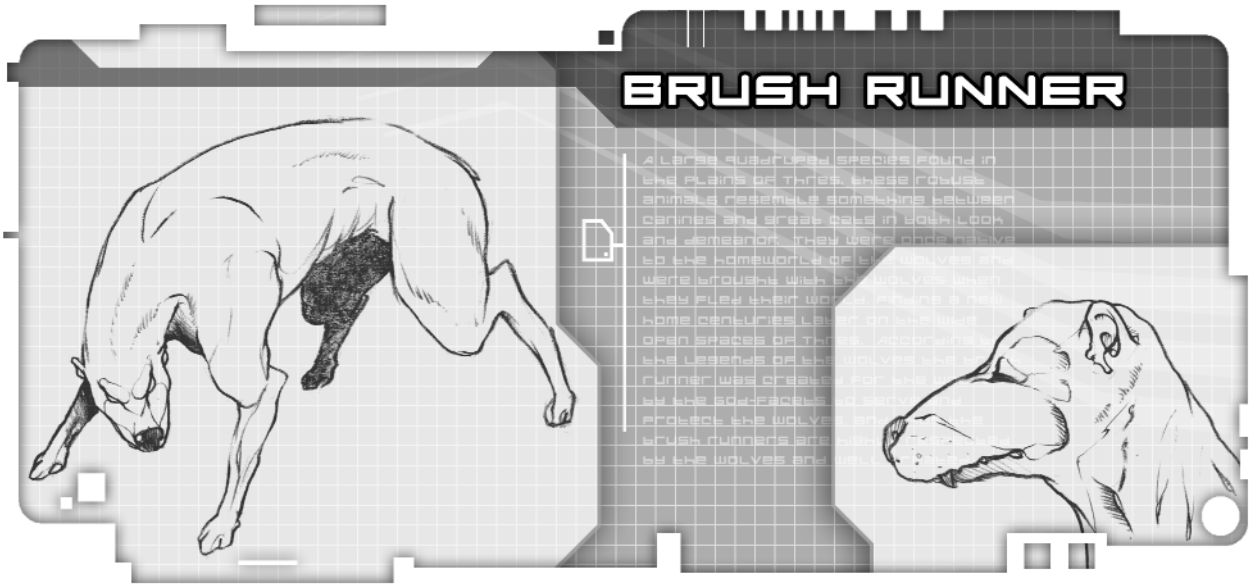
A brush runner resembles a chocolate colored Earth Doberman Pincher with a snub nose and visible canine teeth, weighing an average of 80 pounds. They lack a tail and only have vestigial earlobes, probably from chasing prey through low brush. Brush runners are strong for their size and have almost no fat on their body, displaying only lean muscle.

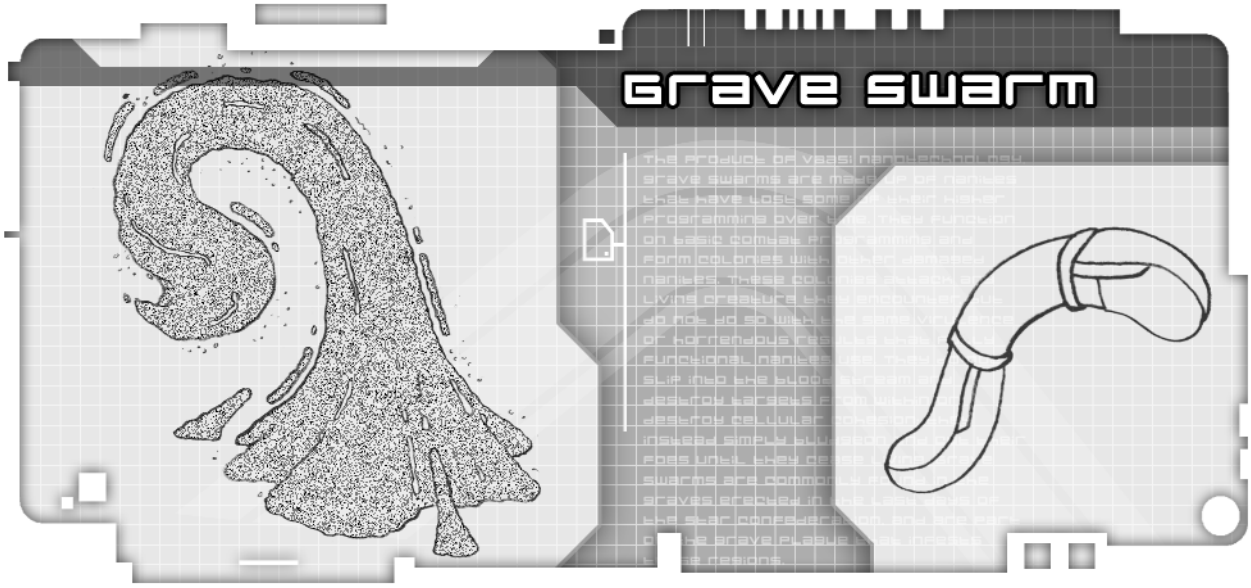
Each brush runner chooses a particular area as a hunting ground, but this territory can stretch for dozens of miles. Other brush runners are allowed in this area as long as they do not stay for long and do not consume too much of the local brush runner's food supply. They are omnivorous having both a front row of teeth meant for puncturing and tearing and a back row meant for crushing and grinding. These creatures have a mild demeanor as long as they believe they are safe, lounging in the sun, surrounded by high grass or with their mate on lookout. Mating occurs in the winter season and a litter of 2-4 are birthed live. Until the age of 1 year these pups are usually found following their mother, but the father takes part in raising them as well.

Species Traits

Sawtooth Vise (Ex): If a brush runner hits with a bite attack, it may make a grapple check against its opponent. If successful it uses its powerful jaws to latch onto the opponent's body and can deal its bite damage on the target with a successful grapple check each round. The target must successfully escape from the grapple as normal.

Scent (Ex): This ability allows a brush runner to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

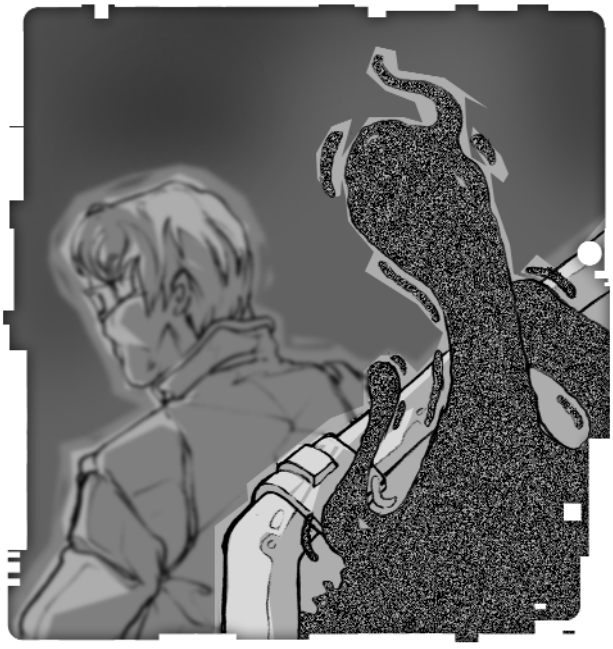




Resistance (Ex): Brush runners enjoy a +4 bonus to saves against poison and disease.

Brush Runner ◆ CR 2

Medium animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Mas 14; Init +3; Spd 50 ft.; Defense 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); BAB +1; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, bite); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ sawtooth vice, low-light vision, resistance, scent; AL none; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.
Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6, Survival +6.
Feats: None.
Advancement: 3-6 HD (Medium).



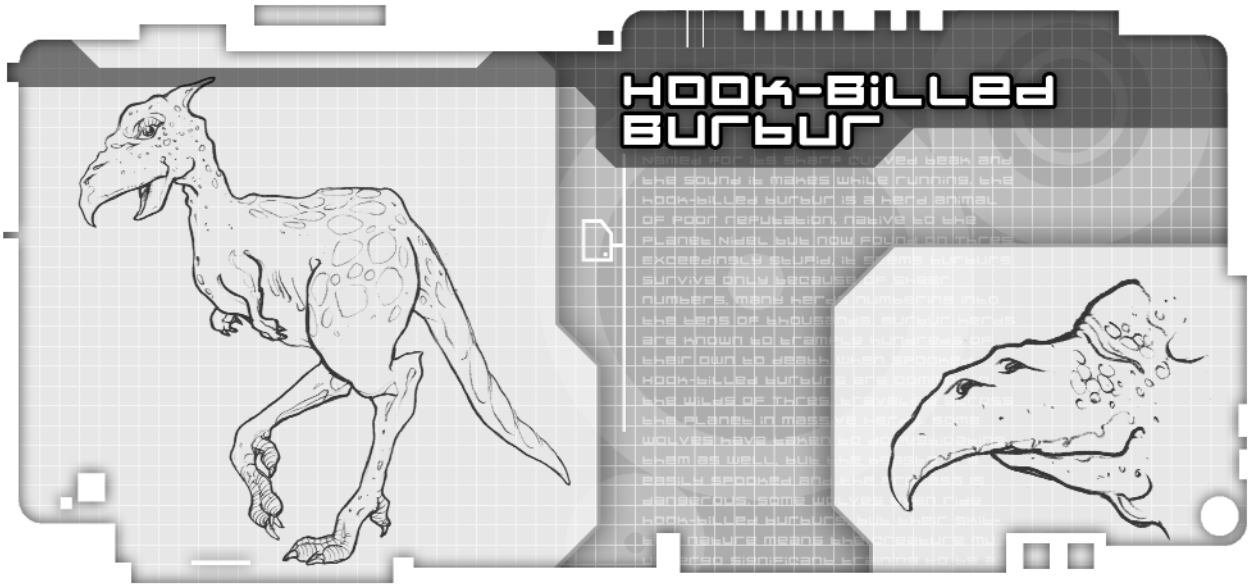
◆ Grave Swarm

The product of vaasi nanotechnology, grave swarms are made up of nanites that have lost some of their higher programming over time. They function on basic combat programming and form colonies with other damaged nanites. These colonies attack any living creature they encounter, but do not do so with the same virulence or horrendous results that fully functional nanites use. They do not slip into the blood stream and destroy targets from within or destroy cellular cohesion; they instead simply bludgeon and cut their foes until they cease living. Grave swarms are commonly found in the graves erected in the last days of the Star Confederation, and are part of the grave plague that infests those regions.

Grave swarms look like small piles of black or grey slime, but they are made up of trillions of nanites working in concert. They are slow, but move quietly. An alert creature has little to fear from grave swarms, but within a crypt or other locations where shadows are plentiful, the grave swarms become truly dangerous. Grave swarms are usually found in such locations, avoiding open ground when possible. In combat, grave swarms attack any living creatures or metal objects they can sense, and continue attacking until they or all available targets are destroyed.

Species Traits

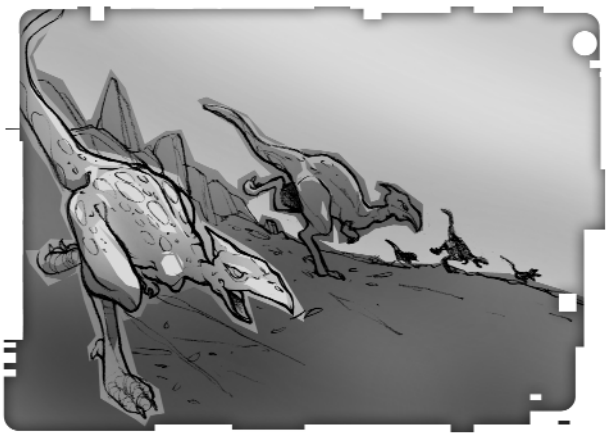
Blindsight (Ex): Grave swarms can sense targets within 10 feet regardless of visibility. They do this through a combination of radar, vibration sensing, and visual perception, but do not rely on any one of those senses to the point that its elimination will inhibit them.
Regeneration (Ex): Grave swarms heal themselves at a rate of one hit point per round. Only electricity inflicts lethal damage on grave swarms.



Variable Attack (Ex): Grave swarms have two primary forms of attack: slamming targets with a large tendril formed of a collection of nanites or cutting a target with a blade one nanite thick. It can grow up to four such weapons and can attack with all the extra weapons during a full attack action. It cannot use this attack during the same round it uses its swarm attack.

Grave Swarm ⋄ CR 9

Small Construct (Swarm); HD 8d10+5; hp 49; Mas -; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., climb 10 ft.; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 size); BAB +6; Grap +4; Atk Swarm (2d6) or +9 melee (1d6+2, slam or claw); Full Atk Swarm (2d6) +9/+7/+7/+7 melee (1d6+2, slam or claw); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Blindsense, regeneration, variable attack; AL Vaasi; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +3 AP 0; Rep 0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con -, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 1.
Skills: None.
Feats: None.
Advancement: 3-6 HD (Medium).



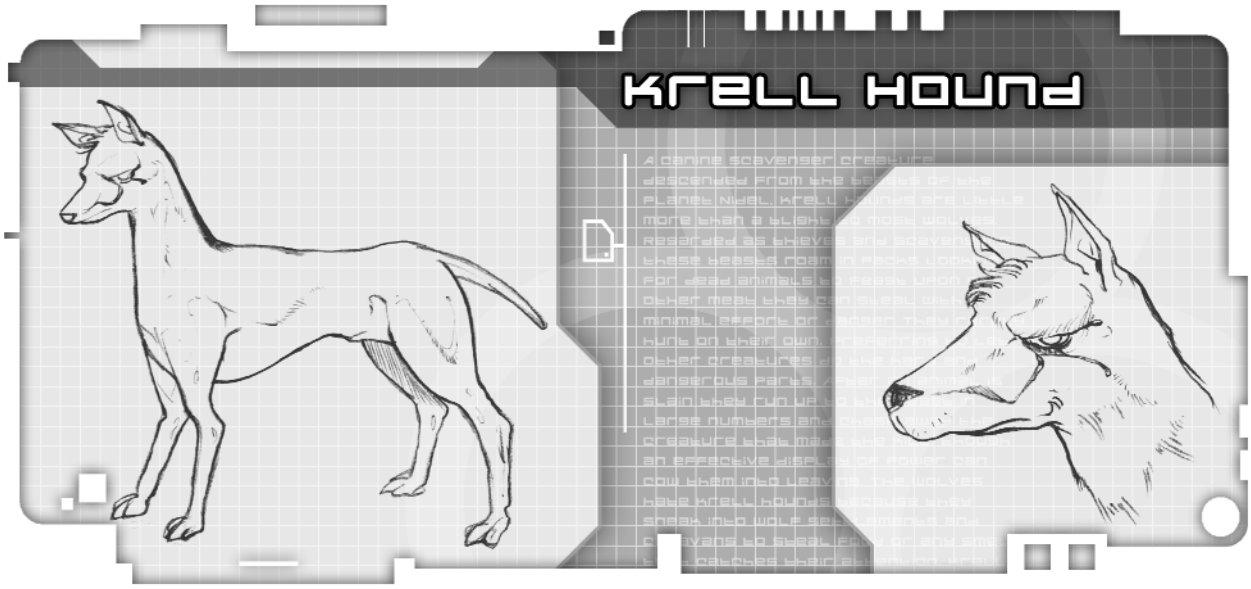
⋄ Hook-Billed Burbur

Named for its sharp curved beak and the sound it makes while running, the hook-billed burbur is a herd animal of poor reputation, native to the planet Nidel but now found on Thres. Exceedingly stupid, it seems burburs survive only because of sheer numbers, many herds numbering into the tens of thousands. Burbur herds are known to trample hundreds of their own to death when spooked. Hook-billed burburs are common in the wilds of Thres, traveling across the planet in massive herds. Some wolves have taken to domesticating them as well, but the beasts are easily spooked and the process is dangerous. Some wolves even ride hook-billed burburs, but their skittish nature means the creature must undergo significant training to be a suitable mount.

The hook-billed burbur's beak is made of thick, fibrous hairs and has 4 nostrils, necessary to fill their very large lungs. They walk and run on two long legs attached to a pale yellow body that seems canted forward, looking as if they are going to fall over. The skin of the hook-billed burbur is a thick, rubbery hide that allows them to blend in with the tall grasses of the fields of Thres. It is highly prized by wolves for its use in crafts and the hook-billed burbur is a common source of leather on Thres. Two rudimentary and useless limbs sprout from the side of the hook-billed burbur's body and a long tail provides counter balance. Weighing in at 500 lbs., burburs would be 8 feet tall if they stood upright. Common burburs also exist, have a smaller beak and have coloration.

Species Traits

Bonus Feat: Burburs receive Run as a bonus feat.
Stampede (Ex): When frightened, the burbur herd runs as a group in a random direction,



though always away from the threat. It runs over anything of size Medium or smaller that gets in the way, dealing 1d10 points of damage for every five animals in the herd. A successful Ref save (DC 16) halves the damage. The herd takes a full move each round in one direction, moving 160 ft., so if characters can keep ahead of the herd they will not take damage.

Hook Billed Burbur ◆ CR 2

Large animal; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; Mas 16; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (-1 size, +5 natural); BAB +3; Grap +10; Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, beak); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+4, beak); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ low-light vision, stampede; AL none; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +0; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 1, Wis 6, Cha 4.
Skills: Spot +5.
Feats: Run (bonus).
Advancement: 6-7 HD (Large).

◆ Krell Hound

A canine scavenger creature descended from the beasts of the planet Nidel, krell hounds are little more than a blight to most wolves. Regarded as thieves and scavengers, these beasts roam in packs looking for dead animals to feast upon or other meat they can steal with minimal effort or danger. They rarely hunt on their own, preferring to let other creatures do the hard and dangerous parts. After an animal is slain they run up to the beast in large numbers and chase away the creature that made the kill, though an effective display of power can cow them into leaving. The wolves hate krell hounds because they sneak into wolf settlements and caravans to steal food or any smell that catches their attention. Krell hounds have been known to steal away wolf children and elgies when given the chance so they are often violently chased away from settlements.

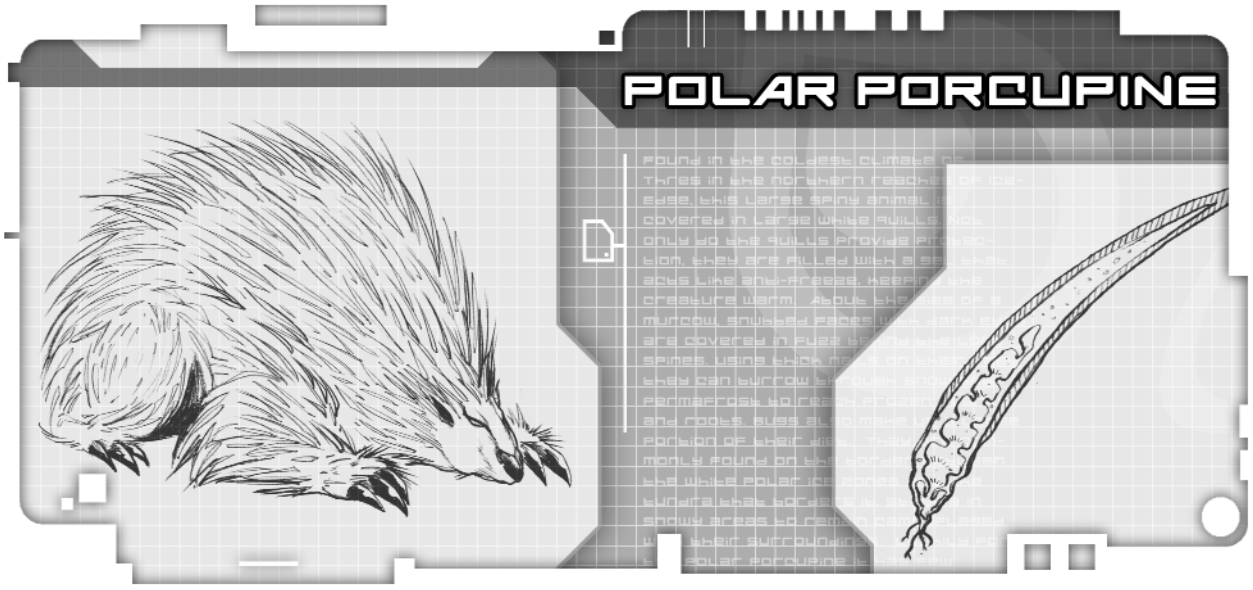
Krell hounds average four feet in length and weigh about seventy pounds, though they always look gaunt and starving. Their fur is matted and often dirty, which allows them to better camouflage themselves in high grass. They communicate with yips that sound much like a group of wolves talking. The wolves believe that krell hounds are actually the souls of wolves damned in the afterlife for the evils they committed in life, and freeing such a soul from its current existence is an act of mercy.

Species Traits:

Low-Light Vision (Ex): The krell hound can see twice as far as normal in poor lighting conditions.
Scent (Ex): This ability allows a krell hound to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.
Tough Digestion (Ex): Krell hounds receive a +4 bonus to Fortitude saves against ingested poisons or diseases.

Krell Hound ◆ CR 2

Medium animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 17; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +5 natural); BAB +2; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+2, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ low-light vision, scent, tough digestion; AL none; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1 AP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 4.
Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3, Survival +4.
Feats: None.
Advancement: 4-5 HD (Medium).



◇ Polar Porcupine

Found in the coldest climate of Thres, the northern reaches of Ice-Edge, this large spiny animal is covered in white quills. Not only do the quills provide protection, they are filled with a gel that acts like antifreeze, keeping the creature warm. About the size of a murcow, their snubbed faces with dark eyes are covered in fuzz behind the long spines. The thick nails on their feet can burrow through snow and permafrost to reach frozen plants and roots. Bugs also make up a large portion of their diet. They are commonly found on the border between the polar ice zones and the tundra, staying in snowy areas to remain camouflaged with their surroundings. It has few natural predators due to its well-developed natural defenses, but the saurians have decided the skin and quills of the beast make an excellent cloak and have begun hunting it, putting a significant dent in the polar porcupine population.

Polar porcupines hibernate for one month in the coldest part of the year just before mating. Mating is a prickly but careful matter, resulting in three or four live young twelve months later. Young live in the nest, usually within a cave or other protected area, while parents switch off on gathering food. Polar porcupines are not territorial, but will attack any creature that nears their nest. This and self-defense are the only reasons the herbivorous polar porcupines enter combat. If forced into combat, they simply rely on their quills to discourage any further attacks. This is not a very effective tactic against ranged weapons.

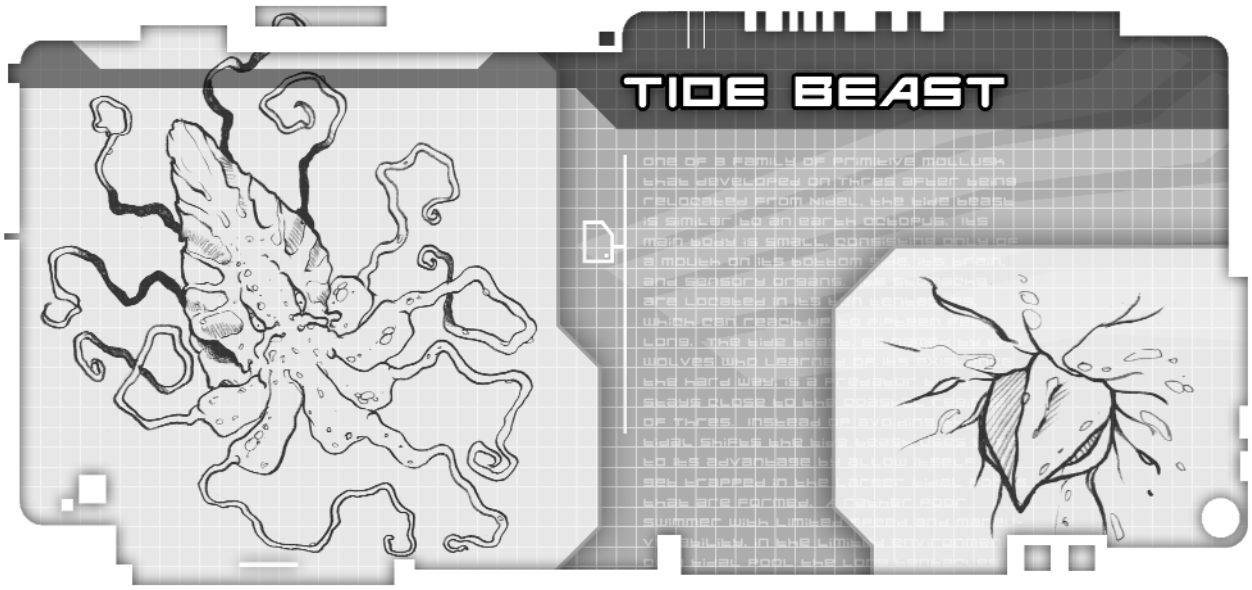
A polar porcupine hide has a Purchase DC of 18 if sold to a fashion-minded saurian.

Species Traits

Cold Resistance (Ex): They ignore the first 10 points of any cold damage.
Low-Light Vision (Ex): The polar porcupine can see twice as far as normal in poor lighting conditions.
Quills (Ex): The quills of the polar porcupine make it difficult to attack in melee without getting injured in the process. Any character who makes a successful melee attack against a polar porcupine must make a Dexterity check (DC 16) to avoid suffering 1d8 damage due to the creature's quills. The attacker receives a +1 equipment bonus to this save for using a Tiny weapon, a +2 bonus for a Small weapon, a +4 bonus for a Medium weapon, and a +8 bonus for a Large or larger sized weapon.

Polar Porcupine ◇ CR 3

Large animal; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Mas 17; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., burrow 5 ft.; Defense 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +5 natural); BAB +4; Grap +12; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4, quills); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+4, quills); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ low-light vision, cold resistance, quills; AL none; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 5.
Skills: Spot +6, Survival +6.
Feats: None.
Advancement: 7-9 HD (Large), 10-11 (Huge).



◇ Tide Beast

One of a family of primitive mollusk that developed on Thres after relocation from Nidel, the tide beast is similar to an earth octopus. Its main body is small, consisting only of a mouth on its bottom side, its brain, and sensory organs. Its stomachs are located in its ten tentacles, which can reach up to fifteen feet long. The tide beast, so named by the wolves who learned of its existence the hard way, is a predator that stays close to the coastal regions of Thres. Instead of avoiding the tidal shifts, the tide beast uses them to its advantage, allowing itself to get trapped in the larger tidal pools that are formed. A rather poor swimmer with little speed or maneuverability, in the limited environment of a tidal pool the long tentacles of a tide beast allow it to kill and devour anything caught with it.

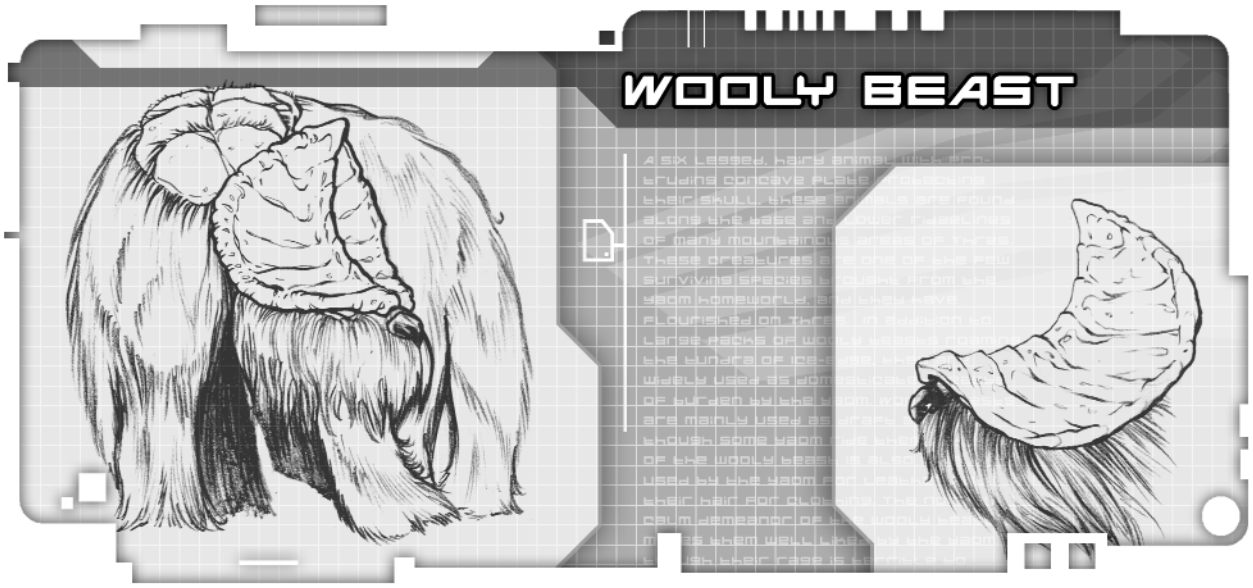
But this is not the limit of the tide beast's activities; it can crawl short distances over land, not more than ten or twenty feet, to reach new tide pools. While doing so, however, it is extremely vulnerable to predators. It will also attack creatures on the surface that come near the tide pool it inhabits, including humanoids hunting for salvage in the tidal regions. A number of wolf scavengers have met their end this way; most carry long poles and poke tidal pools before approaching to make sure there is not a tide beast present.

Species Traits:

Aquatic: Tide beasts can move in water without making Swim checks and cannot drown in water.
Bonus Feat: The tide beast receives the Multiattack feat as a bonus feat.
Land Crawl: When moving over land tide beasts move 5 feet per hour and take one point of Constitution damage each hour they are out of water. When on land they are considered flat-footed and can only take a standard action each round.
Low-Light Vision (Ex): The tide beast can see twice as far as normal in poor lighting conditions.
Many Eyed, Many Armed (Ex): Tide beast cannot be flanked due to their ring of eyes on their central body. They gain a +8 bonus to grapple checks due to their many arms.
Poison (Ex): The tentacles of the tide beast secrete a paralyzing poison that makes it easier for them to capture and digest prey, which is sometimes alive through the digestion process. Any creature struck by a tide beast's tentacle attack or grappling with a tide beast while not wearing environmentally sealed armor must make a Fortitude check (DC 16) or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. The secondary damage for the poison is paralysis for 1d4 hours.

Tide Beast ◇ CR 5

Large animal; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Mas 16; Init +1; Spd special, swim 10 ft.; Defense 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural); BAB +4; Grap +20; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, slam); Full Atk +7/+5/+5/+5 melee (1d6+4, slam); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ Aquatic, land crawl, low-light vision, many eyed, many armed, poison; AL none; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.
Skills: Spot +5, Survival +3, Swim +18.
Feats: Multiattack.
Advancement: 7-10 (Large), 11-15 HD (Huge).



◇ Wooly Beast

A six-legged, hairy animal with a protruding concave plate protecting their skull, these animals are found along the bases and lower ridgelines of many mountainous areas of Thres. These creatures are one of the few surviving species brought from the yaom homeworld, and they have flourished on Thres. In addition to large packs of wooly beasts roaming the tundra of Ice-Edge, yaom train them as domesticated beasts of burden. Wooly beasts are mainly used as draft animals, though some yaom ride them. The hide of the wooly beast is also widely sought for leather, and their hair for clothing. Yaom like them for their normally calm demeanor, though their rage is terrible to behold, especially when a calf is threatened. Wooly beasts fight using their front hooves; the adults circle around the young when threatened.

Their thick, gray, stringy hair makes them appear even larger than they really are. Powerful and stable on their six legs, they move clumsily on flat ground. Topping off at one thousand pounds, they grow to ten feet long and six feet tall at the shoulder. The wooly beasts form families of eight or nine adults, and usually have half that number of colts or foals as well. Multiple families join together to form packs, which can number in the hundreds, though most packs are only a few dozen.

Species Traits:

Mother's Fury (Ex): When protecting their young, a wooly beast will fight to the death and will not stop until at -10 hit points. While in this state, it does not suffer the usual penalties for such activity.

Bonus Feat: The wooly beast receives Improved Bull Rush as a bonus feat.

Wooly Beast ◆ CR 4

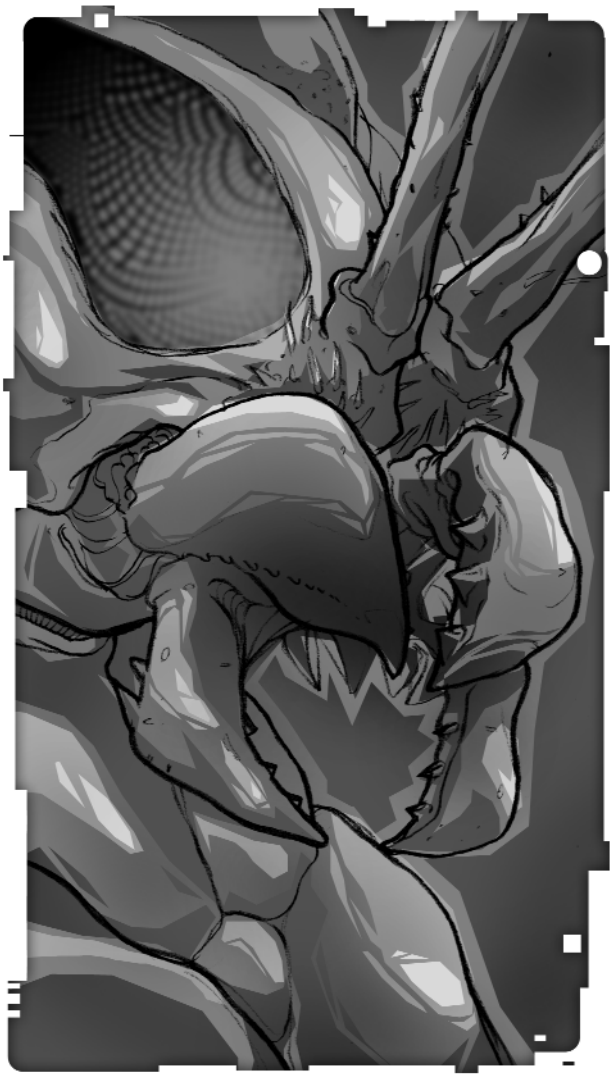
Large animal; HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Mas 17; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 15, touch 8, flat-footed 15 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +7 natural); BAB +4; Grap +14; Atk +9 melee (1d6+6, hooves); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+6, hooves) and +1 melee (1d8+6, head); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ low-light vision, mother's fury; AL none; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 22, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 5.
Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5.
Feats: Improved Bull Rush (Bonus).
Advancement: 7-8 HD (Large), 9-12 (Huge).

NPCS

◇ Besp, Straas Rebel

Born in the Central Hive of the Straas Hive Legions, in his youth Besp joined Hivequeen's Celick's crusade without question or thought. He worked in a weapons factory during his youth, and joined the military forces of the Hive Legions when he reached adulthood. These were not choices made of free will, but directives passed down from on high by the Hivequeen. Besp followed orders without question until he was part of a scouting mission against the wolves. His unit's vehicles were wiped out during an orbital bombardment, leaving him to return to friendly territory on foot. He could not do so within fifty hours, and so the mind control pheromones ran their course out of his system, leaving a very confused, angry straas behind.

Besp made contact with the rebel straas and joined the fight to free his people. He returned to the Hive Legions' territory and now works in secret, hidden among the loyal straas as just another member of society doing his part. Fooling the average straas of his allegiance is easy, and he has been able to funnel significant amounts of equipment and supplies to the rebels. Unfortunately for Besp, his efforts



have begun to attract attention and Hivequeen Celick knows someone is working from the inside.

While disguised as a loyal straas, Besp is an oddly detached, aimlessly happy fellow always willing to lend a hand. Beneath this he is an angry, determined soldier who is more than willing to sacrifice himself for his people. Not content with the long-term plans of the rebels, he has begun planning his own assassination mission against Hivequeen Celick.

Besp (Straas Rebel 3/Fast Hero 3) ◆ CR 6

Medium Vermin (Straas); HD 6d8+6; hp 36; MAS 12; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 16 (+6 class, +3 Dex); BAB +4; Grap +4; Atk +5 melee (1d6, Speer Blade), +7 ranged (2d6, straas assault pistol); Full +5 melee (1d6, Speer Blade), +7 ranged (2d6, straas assault pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Aging, armor restrictions, darkvision 60 ft., driven, improved pheromones, pheromones, resistance to massive damage, saving throw bonuses, scent, uncontrollable; AL Rebel straas; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 8; Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

PL Familiarity: 6
Occupation: Rebel.
Skills: Bluff +8, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +8, Drive +7, Hide +13, Move Silently +13, Read/Write Language (Unispeak), Sleight of Hand +9, Speak Language (Unispeak).
Talents: Evasion, Uncanny Dodge 1.
Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Pheromone Jamming, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Stealthy.
Possessions: Speer Blades, straas assault pistol, 3 clips, pheromone emitter.

◇ Oraiy-Sortil-San, Yaom Master

Oraiy-Sortil-San, or San to his friends among the Wolf Tribes, is one of the youngest masters serving the yaom people. Having recently attained the psionic power necessary to qualify as a master, he has thrown himself headlong into his duties. The child of farmers from the southern regions of Ice-Edge, San grown accustomed to wolves and elgies from living in the yaom territories located closest to the Wolf Tribes. Thus he has been assigned several diplomatic missions to the Wolf Tribes. Already he is developing a reputation among the wolves as a reasonable individual and a force for strengthening the ties between the two groups, the wolves finding his youthful exuberance invigorating.

Despite his promise as a diplomat San has neglected his study of Red Truth since attaining his rank, causing some yaom to question his fitness for duty. For San, Red Truth is a tool; he does not suffer the same obsession with it that many yaom do. Thus far the doubts of San's abilities come from outside the masters. Within their ranks, it is well known that the needs of the material world often make study difficult.

Oraiy-Sortil-San
(Yaom Mystic 3/Telepath 5/Red Truth Master 2) ◆ CR 10

Medium Humanoid (Yaom); HD 10d6; hp 38; MAS 10; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+5 class, +2 Dex, +2 armor); BAB +4; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6-1, master's club), +6 ranged (2d8, rotating spark pistol); Full +3 melee (1d6-1, master's club), +6 ranged (2d8, rotating spark pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Information overload, master authority, mind channel, power crystal, Red Truth, trigger power (empathy, read thoughts, mindlink); AL Yaom Masters; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +14; AP 11; Rep +4; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 12.
PL Familiarity: 5
Occupation: Psionicist
Skills: Autohypnosis +17, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (Civics) +13, Psicraft +15,



Read/Write Unispeak, Read/Write Language (Yaosh), Search +3, Sense Motive +14, Speak Language(Howltongue, Unispeak, Yaosh).
Talents: -
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Increased Power Points, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Psi-Training, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Trustworthy, Wild Talent (missive).
Possessions: Master's robes, master's club, rotating spark pistol with 14 shots, knife, papers and books, compass.
Psionic Powers: (33 power points, manifester level 10th) 0th - daze, detect psionics, distract, missive; 1st - absorb information, call to mind, charm person, empathy, know direction and location, lesser mindlink, object reading; 2nd - detect hostile intent, read thoughts, suggestion; 3rd - mindlink.

◇ Peldin Fess-katur, Elgie Business Man

Peldin Fess has lived most of his life in Rosheer, the capital city of the Wolf Tribes. From an early age he turned his back on his mother's way of life; she was a gunsmith in a caravan that frequented the eastern parts of Haven. He concentrated instead on making his fortune in industry. He began as a gunsmith and metalworker, saving part of his daily wages to buy his own shop. He spent years working hard and saving diligently, and his skill eventually attracted the attention of the Moon tribe, who began using Peldin Fess to make guns for them behind the scenes. The creation of these guns was never reported or discussed, and Peldin was paid in cash, leaving no trail to be pursued, not that any would presume to keep track of the Moon tribe. This extra income allowed him to purchase his own gun-making shop in Rosheer.

Shortly after opening his shop, Peldin's mother was killed in a battle between her caravan and a group of saurian mineral scouts. Since that day Peldin has sought out and acquired several contracts to make weapons for the Blood Tooth tribe, hoping that one day his weapons will take vengeance for his mother's death. While still lighthearted and optimistic, he has become far more involved in the nuts and bolts of his operation of late. Like most elgies his eyes are always open for profit, and he is considering branching out into creating armor as well.



Peldin Fess-katur
(Charismatic Hero 5/Blue Trader 3) ◆ CR 8

Small Monstrous Humanoid (Elgie) HD 7d6-7; hp 20; MAS 8; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; Defense 16, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+2 class, +3 Dex, +0 armor, +1 size); BAB +4; Grap -1; Atk +3 melee (1d4-2, dagger), +9 ranged (2d6, elgie sneak pistol); Full +3 melee (1d4-2, dagger), +9 ranged (2d6, elgie sneak pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Business venture (gun shop), local contact, low-light vision, opposable feet, savings; AL; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8; AP 10; Rep +6; Str 6, Dex 16, Con 8, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 14.
PL Familiarity: 6
Occupation: Technician
Skills: Barter +13, Bluff +10, Climb +0, Computer Use +12, Craft (Electrical) +17, Craft (Mechanical) +18, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +10, Hide +7, Jump +0, Knowledge (Business) +14, Knowledge (Current Events) +12, Knowledge (Streetwise) +12, Knowledge (Technology) +10, Read/Write Language (Qurous), Repair +17, Sense Motive +6, Speak Language (Qurous, Unispeak), Spot +6, Tumbling +5.
Talents: Bargain Mastery, Improved Bargain Mastery, Advanced Bargain Mastery.
Feats: Builder, Gearhead, Iron Will, Master Craftsmen, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Windfall.
Possessions: Dagger, mastercrafted +1 elgie sneak pistol, 2 clips, mechanical tool kit, electrical tool kit, elgie computational unit.



◇ Sarkos, Warrior of the Star Tribe

Sarkos is a rarity among the Wolf Tribes, a wolf who prefers solitude to the company of her fellow wolves. From her earliest days growing up on the frigate Divine Sword, she avoided other wolves, eventually earning an assignment as a long-range courier and scout pilot. Other wolves of her generation joined the fleet as gunners, engineers, and fighter pilots; she accepted an assignment that took her away from all other wolves for months at a time, traveling to the far reaches of the Helios system.

On one of these expeditions near Verdant, she brushed up against the area infected with Red Truth, damaging her ship's computers and raising a great many questions in the young wolf's mind. Seeking answers, she spent her available time afterward among the yaom, becoming known to the masters for her insatiable curiosity. Her patience and perseverance paid off, and now Sarkos is one of the wolves the masters prefer. She is assigned to pilot most diplomatic missions to the yaom on behalf of the Wolf Tribes. While the company of so many diplomats and security guards annoys Sarkos, she still finds the yaom and their powers fascinating.

Sarkos
(Fast Hero 6/Star Tribe Warrior 3) ◆ CR 9

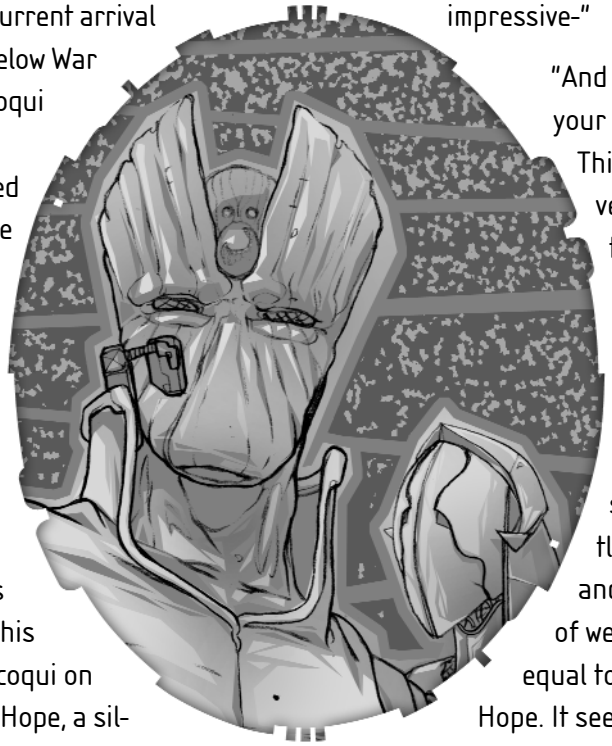
Medium Humanoid (Wolf); HD 9d8+12; hp 64; MAS 14; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 24, touch 22, flat-footed 20 (+8 class, +4 Dex, +2 armor); BAB +7; Grap +7; Atk +11 melee (1d6, war claw), +11 ranged (3d8, Star tribe laser rifle); Full +11/+6 melee (1d6, war claw), +11/+6 ranged (3d8, star tribe laser rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Low-light vision, natural weapons, run on all fours, scent, ship weapon focus (heavy plasma cannon), spacecraft specialty, vacuum resistance; AL Star Tribe; SV Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +5; AP 10; Rep +3; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8.
PL Familiarity: 6
Occupation: Spacer.
Skills: Computer Use +10, Knowledge (Tactics) +7, Navigate +13, Pilot +16, Read/Write Language (Wolf Pictograms), Repair +13, Sense Motive +4, Speak Language (Howltongue, Unispeak), Spot +8, Survival +13.
Talents: Evasion, Uncanny Dodge 1, Uncanny Dodge 2.
Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Spacer, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Starship Gunnery, Starship Operation, Weapon Finesse, Wild Talent (distract), Zero-G Training.
Possessions: Flight suit and helmet, universal communicator, survival kit, mechanical tool kit, reading materials, war claw, Star tribe laser rifle, 3 wolf power packs.

CHAPTER VIII

HESPEROS

"Bring primary and secondary weapons on line." The pre-battle checklist had already been running for an hour, and would continue for another twenty minutes if things went according to procedure. With War Captain Marsoot Bitar Keles, captain of the Stone of Hope battle fortress, everything ran according to procedure. It was the way of the coqui.

"Sensors, what is their current arrival time in Hesperos orbit?" Below War Captain Marsoot, several coqui manning the sensor bay checked and double-checked their readouts, making sure there could be no mistake.



"Three hours, thirty-two minutes, and twelve seconds," a mechanical voice said from behind the War Captain. This did not please Marsoot and a severe grimace crossed his stone-like face. He turned his chair to face the only non-coqui on the bridge of the Stone of Hope, a silver-bodied mechite named 727B098UIK, called Sebenty by the coqui, who served as the mechite liaison on the bridge. Since the last round of upgrades to the ship the mechite's presence was required to keep all the systems running properly.

"I did not ask you, mechite." The mechites and the coqui had been allies for over two decades, but that did not mean they liked each other. The slow and patient coqui found the manic mechites frustrating at best, and infuriating at worst. And coqui never trusted them in military matters.

"Just trying to be of assistance, War Captain. My mathematical skills are impressive-"

"And unreliable, as all of your kind are in matters of war. This is war." Marsoot surveyed nearby screens again, trying to get an idea of the capabilities of the ship approaching. Though it was much smaller than the Stone of Hope it was traveling at a greater speed than the coqui battle fortress could attain, and preliminary scans spoke of weapons that were at least equal to those on the Stone of Hope. It seemed size would be the main advantage for the coqui in this battle.

"How do you know they mean to attack, War Captain?" As always, the mechite had more questions than answers.

"I don't, but have we met any other creatures in this system that have brought anything but war in their wake?

HESPEROS • • •

Marking the boundary between the inner and outer planets of the Helios system, Hesperos is a massive world of gas and storms. Hesperos itself received little attention from the Star Confederation, and this behavior continues with the current inhabitants of the Helios system, but its moons are another matter. Many of these moons were terraformed by the Star Confederation, creating a network of inhabitable worlds within easy reach of each other. Now the descendants of the Star Confederation have claimed two of these worlds, but they are not descendants in the same sense as the other new inhabitants of the Helios system.

Rotation Period: 32 hours
Revolution Period: 598 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: Hydrogen, helium, methane, water vapor
Average Temperature: 281 Kelvin (46.0° F)
Gravity: Varies according to atmospheric depth

HISTORY • • •

Hesperos was created, along with the other planets of the Helios system, from the accretion disk surrounding Helios. Early in the history of the system, it began attracting asteroids, rogue moons, and other planetoids with its massive gravitational pull. By the time the Star Confederation came to the Helios system, Hesperos already had its current allotment of twenty-three moons, some of which had primitive atmospheres, but none were host to any kind of life form. During the height of the Star Confederation's power, they began terraforming the most promising moons of Hesperos for eventual use as population centers should Eos get too crowded, anticipating a population boom in the system when Eos became the capital of the Star Confederation. These worlds were terraformed to fit a variety of atmospheric and climatic requirements in order to support species with different environmental preferences. Some moons eventually became desert worlds, while others were ice planets. A number of space stations were built in orbit above Hesperos to serve as central docking and distribution centers once the moons were colonized. These satellites were never used and remain empty.



Though most of the major terraforming operations were finished before the war with the vaasi began, the worlds were never populated with more than a handful of scientists and terraformers. The moons of Hesperos are outside the normal habitable range of the Helios system, so the Star Confederation built a number of permanent terraforming machines on the moons to keep their environments stable. Most of these massive machines are underground and hidden from sight, but work constantly to keep the temperature and atmospheric composition within tolerable limits. The vaasi ignored these moons during their assault on the Helios system, as they had little strategic value and miniscule populations. Most of the inhabitants fled using the few spaceships that were on hand, but where they ended up is unknown. Others stayed on their new homes until they died, having insufficient numbers to survive as a settlement in the long term. Over time some of the atmospheric maintenance units broke down, dooming their moons to a slow reversion to their original state. Other atmospheric maintenance units have remained operational, but these moons are only inhabitable because of immensely old machinery that has not been maintained in years.

When the new inhabitants of the Helios system began arriving, they passed by the moons of Hesperos because they were too small, too environmentally hostile, or farther away than a more suitable world. Until forty-five years ago, the wolves were the only species to take a close look at Hesperos and its moons, conducting extensive surveys of each moon for their maps of the system. Their scouting missions have not returned to the region since one of the moons became the focus of significant activity: the arrival of the mechites.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE MECHITES • • •

During the time of the Star Confederation, as their knowledge of the universe grew, the computational power required by their scientists grew exponentially. The mathematics required to successfully place a gateway station were unfathomably complex and even with the Confederation's best computers could take months or years, depending on local gravity forces, to complete. To meet this need the Star Confederation embarked on a project to build the largest and most powerful computer in the universe.

The project was based in a system neighboring Helios, called Streven, and took place on a silicon- and iron-rich asteroid located on the edge of the system. Over the course off ten years, beset by a horde of construction and factory spaceships in addition to an uncountable number of nanites, the asteroid was turned into one massive planetary computer capable of performing incredibly complex computations and programs with previously unheard-of speed. The asteroid, named Computer One by the Star Confederation scientists and workers who built it, became the center of scientific advancement in the Star Confederation. An artificial intelligence entity called Overseer 12 managed Computer One, but the entity was also commonly called Computer One, as its ubiquitous presence made many visitors think Overseer 12 was Computer One's true face. The asteroid was equipped with a propulsion system so that it could move under its own power, but it was so large it could only use specialized gateway stations that had been modified to accommodate its bulk.

Computer One began a tour of Confederation space after its completion, and scientists flocked to it wherever it traveled, filing requests to use its processing power years in advance in order to secure access. Serviced by a number of artificial intelligence entities, a horde of androids, and a handful of living beings, it was a mobile science center that was unmatched within the Star Confederation. It soon became a symbol of scientific progress within the Star Confederation, and was considered one of the great accomplishments of the Confederation.

But eventually, even this vast computing power was insufficient, and the Star Confederation set about building Computer Two on a larger asteroid, constructing it to be more powerful than its predecessor. Soon Computer One was outclassed by this newcomer and relegated to less important duties, processing census information or assisting in less daunting scientific endeavors. Despite this reduction in stature, the artificial intelligence entities that now had sole rein over Computer One carried on as always. In the end, the obsolete nature of Computer One saved it from destruction.

Five years after Computer Two came online, the war with the Vaasi Empire began, and Computer Two was tasked with assisting the Star Confederation military in research efforts and running simulations of possible strategies. Once the vaasi learned of the existence of Computer Two and its current function, it became one of their prime targets. It took many years for the vaasi to find and eliminate Computer Two due to the great emphasis the Star Confederation put on its protection, but eventually it was destroyed in a titanic battle far from the Helios system. By that point the Star Confederation was in its last stages of collapse and any thought of bringing in Computer One to replace Computer Two were lost in the final scramble to stop the vaasi advance. When Eos fell, Computer One was in a distant region of Confederation territory, assisting a ward race with a terraforming project and overseeing the resource-gathering and logistical aspects of the war effort taking place in that sector, safe from the ravages of the vaasi invasion.

When Computer One learned of what happened, Overseer 12 began making plans to back up all of its information and keep the Star Confederation alive as best it could. Initially Overseer 12 directed Computer One into deep space and reduced it to minimal power consumption, hiding in the dark between stellar systems for thousands of years. After listening to the few broadcasts that reached it position over time, Overseer 12 decided it was safe, returning to the edges of Star Confederation space. a process that took a great deal of time due to the necessity of using sub-light engines since there are no gateway stations in the empty space between stellar systems. Once it returned to Star Confederation space, Computer One inspected worlds that it calculated the vaasi would ignore, collecting what information it could from these worlds and hiding storage devices with knowledge of the Star Confederation, so that other species would discover and make use of them. This tour included several worlds visited by the Star Confederation genetic seeding program, and the inhabitants of Computer One are aware that some of those worlds have been wiped out by the vaasi. Computer One and its crew have repaired several gateway stations, upgrading them to be useable by Computer One, but their resources are extremely limited. They have encountered several sentient species in their wanderings, but none have a sufficient level of technological sophistication or responsibility to persuade the crew of Computer One that they would use any but the most basic of the Star Confederation's vast knowledge responsibly. They have meddled in quite a few worlds, however, creating myths of spacefaring keepers of wisdom who reward peace and science with knowledge to encourage those they encounter.

For years this wandering continued; Overseer 12 knew Computer One was the greatest surviving repository of Star Confederation information and took great steps to keep it safe. It remained in more

MOONS OF HESPEROS • • •

There are twenty-three moons orbiting Hesperos. Fifteen were terraformed into a variety of environments, though six have since suffered from equipment failure in the atmospheric maintenance units and reverted to their original states. Two, Rockhome and Computer Three, are inhabited by sentient species, but the rest are home to only simple creatures and plant life, or entirely devoid of life. The major terraformed moons are listed below with their coqui or mechite names; the specifics of the other moons are left up for individual GMs to decide for their campaigns. These worlds could hold ancient Star Confederation hideouts, vaasi forward observation posts, space pirate hideouts, or whatever else is necessary.

◇ Bluewater

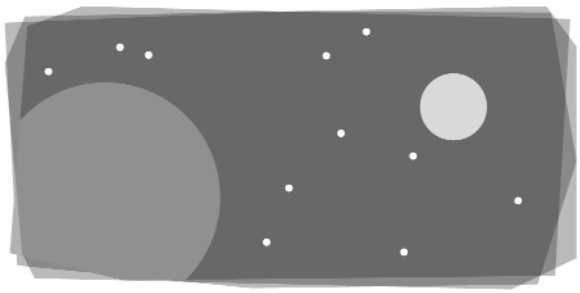
Rotation Period: 26 hours
Revolution Period: 193 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: Oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen
Average Temperature: 286.33° Kelvin (56.0° F)
Gravity: .83G

A water-covered world, it has no landmasses on its surface. It is inhabited by a variety of primitive multi-cellular organisms and plants, but nothing more advanced than plankton. The coqui occasionally visit to replenish their water supply.

◇ Computer Three

Rotation Period: 22 hours
Revolution Period: 145 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: Oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, helium
Average Temperature: 311.89° Kelvin (102.0° F)
Gravity: .76G

The home of the mechites, it is a rocky world rich in silicon and iron. It has few life forms on it and the mechites only use a small part of its surface, though they are quickly spreading.



◇ Greenfield

Rotation Period: 28 hours
Revolution Period: 201 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: Oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen
Average Temperature: 295.22° Kelvin (72.0° F)
Gravity: .54G

A planet of endless green fields, it is covered in a variety of grasses, grains, and scrub with only a few animals transplanted from Thres long ago for inhabitants. Both the coqui and mechites have little use for this world.

◇ Icerock

Rotation Period: 18 hours
Revolution Period: 319 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: Oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen
Average Temperature: 260.78° Kelvin (10.0° F)
Gravity: .47G

Icerock is a bitterly cold world covered in permanent glaciers and carved by fierce winds. An extremely unpleasant place for any visitor, few choose to come here despite a number of Star Confederation ruins leftover from the terraforming effort.

◇ Sandwind

Rotation Period: 38 hours
Revolution Period: 129 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: Oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen
Average Temperature: 316.33° Kelvin (110.0° F)
Gravity: .82G

Covered in sand and grit, Sandwind is a desert world with little water or shade. The coqui and the mechites occasionally come to this moon to harvest silicon, but they rarely stay for long.

◇ Rockhome

Rotation Period: 27 hours
Revolution Period: 241 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: Oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, helium, carbon dioxide
Average Temperature: 284.11° Kelvin (52.0° F)
Gravity: .92G

The mountainous home of the coqui is a damp and rocky world covered with primitive lichen and moss on the surface. It is also rich in minerals, including iron and silver.

remote systems to evade any remains of the Vaasi Empire's invasion forces that might have lingered in the central systems of the Confederation. During its wandering, Computer One also avoided contact with the tentaari, favoring distant systems that had little to interest them, and remains unaware of the downfall of their society. It has encountered broken and abandoned tentaari and Star Confederation technology, and believes something has happened to the tentaari, but Overseer 12 and its fellows are not exactly sure what.

Forty-seven years ago, this long process of collecting and distributing information came to an end. Computer One had traveled the limits of the modified gateway stations on the edge of Star Confederation space, and no longer had sufficient parts to modify more gateway stations to allow it to pass through them. Overseer 12 decided to risk returning to the core stellar systems to learn the fate of those worlds. Computer One began a circuitous route towards the Helios system, trying to slowly approach the Helios system in order to avoid jumping right into a possible nest of enemies, but its journey was cut short several jumps from Helios, when it ran into a field of cloaked vaasi mines, left over from the war, surrounding a gateway station. Computer One was seriously damaged and unable to continue its trip without repairs, for which the necessary parts and energy were not available. As a last-ditch effort, Overseer 12 directed the androids of Computer One to cannibalize the facility for parts and build a ship to travel to the other systems in search of the needed parts. Meanwhile, Computer One would power down and return to hiding in deep space to avoid being caught in its moment of weakness. The ship built by the androids, a heavy frigate dubbed the *Seeker of Knowledge* by Overseer 12, carried five thousand androids from the wreckage of Computer One to the Helios system.

The androids had previously been programmed to be extensions of Overseer 12 and the other artificial intelligence entities of Computer One. Though the artificial intelligence entity Librarian 102 accompanied the androids on the *Seeker of Knowledge*, Overseer 12 had doubts about the androids' ability to think freely and creatively in the face of new or changing situations. Before the *Seeker of Knowledge* left Computer One, Overseer 12 modified the programs of all the androids onboard, upgrading their artificial intelligence programs to resemble his own more advanced programs, making them capable of free, independent, and imaginative thought like other sentient creatures, or at least an excellent facsimile of such. He also instilled a drive within the upgraded androids, which Overseer 12 called mechites, to recognize their special nature, and to create more of their kind within reason so they could recover from casualties and take on larger tasks. This reprogramming changed the androids from intelligent automatons to thinking, reproducing, quasi-sentient creatures. Although still guided by the same command programs, including the drive to find parts to repair Computer One and return with them, these mechites could develop their own wants as well. This caused and continues to cause some friction, as the mechites struggle for individuality. They are learning what it is to be a society and experience dissent. Overseer 12 thought the ability to solve problems independently was worth the risk. To combat this friction in the nascent mechite society, Overseer 12 designed a computer network called the Megacortex that allows the mechites to come together simultaneously and share their ideas directly, a device that has become a cornerstone of mechite society and government. Through the Megacortex, the mechites can learn the thoughts of their fellows, discuss and debate at the speed of thought, and make decisions about government democratically.

The *Seeker of Knowledge* required a year to build, and another year was spent wandering around other systems unsuccessfully looking for parts, finding only wreckage and ruin. Forty-five years ago the ship entered the Helios System and found they could not accomplish their mission under the current conditions, as that the gateway station is non-functional. The mechites set down on the twelfth moon of Hesperos, which they call Computer Three, and built a settlement there. They do not have the equipment necessary to repair the gateway station, but given time and resources they could build such, and some of their number labor daily towards this goal. For the next twenty-three years the mechites built up their nascent civilization present in the Helios system, hoping to find a way of repairing the gateway station and eventually Computer One. Having only a single ship and a few thousand citizens, the mechites knew they were not in a position of strength, and avoided the other civilizations. But their solitude did not last long.

THE COMING OF THE COQUI • • •

The coqui are a product of the genetic seeding program of the Star Confederation, but in a very different sense than the other species of the Helios system. The coqui are descended from a silicon-based species, called the mur, who were among the great explorers of the Star Confederation. The mur relied on chemicals and molecules other than DNA to pass on their genetic information in a way that was completely incompatible with other Star Confederation species. They instead chose a number of suitable worlds similar to their homeworld and seeded them with artificially created primitive silicon life forms from the history of the mur homeworld. Instead of creating a mix of hereditary information as the other Star Confederation species did, the mur used their hereditary information alone to

RELIGION ON THE MOONS OF HESPEROS

Most mechites do not follow any sort of religion, but this is rapidly changing after contact with the coqui. The mechites have access to information on religion through the files brought with them from Computer One, but they never saw it in practice until interaction with the coqui showed them what deeply held faith really means. Most of the older mechites remain atheists, but the younger mechites built on Computer Three have begun taking up religious beliefs to experience a wider range of existence as a sentient being. Their beliefs include dozens of religions from the days of the Star Confederation, religious systems of their own creation, and the coqui worship of the Mountain God. These mechites rarely hold one religion very long; wishing to experience the variety of religious thought they believe very strongly in whatever religion they are practicing at the time, but tend to change religions once they feel they have learned what they can from their current one. The Megacortex is often filled with religious debates and discussions among this small but growing minority.

The coqui, on the other hand, have a strongly held religious system that is concerned with a single god called the Mountain God, who created all things from a universe of water that existed before time. While all coqui believe in the Mountain God, they disagree vehemently on how the god should be worshipped. There are dozens of cults, sects, and churches within the worship of the Mountain God, and they all disagree on varying aspects of how coqui should go about honoring the Mountain God. Some believe the ultimate form of worship is victory in combat, while others feel it is craftsmanship. As is common for the coqui they usually do not settle these differences, instead intimidating and fighting until each side is too tired to continue, with nothing settled.

jumpstart life on a number of worlds. The end results, such as the coqui, resemble their progenitors more than any other species descended from the Star Confederation with the possible exception of the saurians, though evolution to match the environment on individual planets played an immense part on how each descendant species evolved. None of the species that come from the mur look like them, could reproduce with them, or think like them, but they are closer to their progenitor than the other descendants of the Star Confederation.

On the coqui homeworld of Coqu, the silicon crystal life forms flourished, evolving into the humanoid coqui thousands of years ago. They developed in what was a remote sector of space for the Star Confederation, but was in fact not that far away from the Sol system. For most of their history the coqui had lived in a state of continual conflict with themselves, battling over limited resources, territory, and technological advances. These conflicts alternately hindered and fueled advances in technology, as new weapons were pursued with reckless abandon while non-military sciences suffered. The coqui had no contact with other worlds or species until one hundred years ago, when a vaasi-directed meteor that would have destroyed their world struck their moon instead, creating a massive asteroid belt around Coqu.

At the time the coqui were a Progress Level 5 civilization, though their weaponry was more advanced. When the asteroid belt was first created, a number of factions within the coqui tried to destroy it with nuclear missiles and similar weapons, but this did little to divert or break up the asteroid belt. Instead, they destabilized it, increasing the ferocity and frequency of meteor strikes in some regions of the planet. Eventually the coqui determined that the orbit of the largest surviving chunk of the moon would eventually degrade, causing the massive rock to strike Coqu and probably exterminate all life on the planet. The coqui again tried to destroy this massive piece of their former

moon, but soon realized such actions were futile and ultimately self-defeating, as it simply caused more meteor showers on Coqu. It took several decades for the many factions of the coqui to agree to it, but eventually the first ceasefire in coqui history was called to deal with the threat posed by the remains of the moon.

Eventually most of the coqui factions shared their technology to build a ship that could carry some of their people to safety, in an unprecedented show of cooperation. No one faction had the necessary skills to build the ship alone, so it became a joint operation of all the factions, in exchange for each faction receiving the right to place a certain number of individuals on the finished ship. The ship was built out of a hollowed-out asteroid pulled from a belt that ringed the planet, the irony of which was not lost on the coqui. The asteroid ship, named the *Stone of Hope*, or more commonly the Stone by its creators, took three years to complete, which was longer than Coqu had to survive.

Due to a miscalculation on the part of several astronomers Coqu was struck by the large remnant of its moon before the Stone of Hope was ready for launch, and only a small number of its intended passengers and the construction crews were on board when Coqu was struck. A number of others managed to escape to the Stone of Hope in orbital vehicles right before the impact, but less than a third of the fifty thousand intended crew and passengers were on board when the Stone of Hope set a course out of the system.

Like the Dawning Star, the Stone of Hope encountered the ancient Star Confederation gateway station on the edge of its stellar system and accidentally activated it while investigating its purpose. This process sent the Stone of Hope to the Helios system, arriving twenty-two years ago. The coqui landed on one of the uninhabited moons of Hesperos, not wanting to attract attention to themselves in their weakened state. The coqui claimed the moon they call Rockhome as their own, forgetting past differences in the face of the extermination of their species. The Stone of Hope was placed in orbit above Rockhome, protecting their new settlement of Daljeen as an orbital defense platform. Despite having the largest spaceship in the Helios system, the coqui have not used it for fear of attracting attention, until recently.

CONTACT • • •

Shortly after the coqui arrived, a mechite scout shuttle sent to investigate them made first contact. The utterly non-confrontational attitude of the mechites confused the coqui at first, as they were used to dealing with each other through intimidation and shows of strength. The unwillingness of the mechites to participate in such activities allowed the two groups to open a dialogue, as much posturing

NAMING ON THE MOONS OF HESPEROS

Among themselves the mechites use names that are strings of alphanumeric characters that make up a code detailing the mechite's birth date, programming emphasis, model upgrades, and other features. These names are ten characters long and change as the mechite does, but the base designation found in the first four characters of the mechite's name never changes. These four characters are often used as a first name among mechites. The coqui use these characters as the basis with which they form nicknames for mechites. While the mechites find this practice annoying, the coqui find it hysterical.

The coqui receive a single name from their family, usually to honor an ancestor or relative. Coqui do not have family names, but usually attach the title "of (home city or province)" to their name. As a coqui grow older, he may gain additional names for each deed of note performed, such as victory in a great battle or inventing a particularly useful device. He is expected to explain all his names to anyone who asks, and those who feel he has not done enough to deserve multiple names can make their disapproval known by not using all the names. This is a grave insult among the coqui, but if the majority of a settlement does not use the name, the coqui usually drops it since it is apparent that he has not earned that honor yet.

LANGUAGE AMONG THE MOONS OF HESPEROS

Carrying on from the days of the Star Confederation, the mechites speak perfect Unispeak bereft of all accent or dialect. They have access to files on many other languages of the Star Confederation, such as tentarrima or frezin, but these are rarely of much use. The coqui speak their own language called Stonespeak, a slow, sonorous language that sounds almost like singing to most species.

that is common in coqui culture was ignored, though the coqui perception of the mechites as weaklings has never really faded. The two groups found that, while they had different specific goals, they were both concerned with their immediate survival, and formed an alliance based on this common ground. Where the mechites lacked the numbers to build the structures, equipment, and other items they needed, the coqui were severely lacking in technical knowledge, which the mechites had in spades.

This alliance started on shaky ground, but somehow the odd pairing of the coqui habit of seeking confrontation and the mechite behavior of being completely non-confrontational allowed the two groups to coexist peacefully, though not always easily. The perceptions of mechites as cowards and coqui as warmongering buffoons are still present, but are rarely brought to bear in public. Though the two factions remain separate in terms of living space and rarely interact outside of official channels, there have been several long-term joint projects, such as trading technology for manpower or upgrading the weapons on the *Stone of Hope* with mechite technology. For the time being, a squad of mechites must be stationed on the Stone of Hope until the coqui crew adapts to the new technology, and the coqui regularly question the fitness of the mechites for military duty.

Shortly after the coqui and mechites became allies, the tentaari visited the mechites, extremely curious as to where these Star Confederation androids came from. The tentaari did not make contact earlier, fearing that the mechites were a vaasi trap or the product of a rogue artificial intelligence entity. The tentaari were interested in the mechites and their desire to repair the gateway station, but have not yet granted the mechites access to the gateway station for unstated reasons. The mechites, recognizing the tentaari from their history as a ward race of the Star Confederation, assumed that since they had Star Confederation technology they must be on the same side and defer to them. The mechites are not confrontational enough to openly challenge the tentaari and enter the gateway station without permission, though after hearing of the meetings between the tentaari and the mechites the coqui counseled just that course of action. According to coqui legend, creatures fitting the description of the tentaari have visited their world, performing terrible evils under the guise of science. The coqui will not suffer a tentaari to enter their territory and find the fact the mechites are dealing with them suspicous. The coqui have not yet attacked the tentaari, but have made their feelings known through the mechites.

The coqui are not happy about the arrival of the tentaari, but they are even less happy about the other visitors to the moons of Hesperos over the last year. Mysterious fighter craft have been attacking both settlements, arriving cloaked and leaving just as mysteriously. Likewise, unknown squads of attackers have made covert attacks against the coqui and mechites, leading both groups to assume that an all-out assault is due sometime soon. Along these lines the *Stone of Hope* is being upgraded again, as it is the best defense both colonies have. They have a good idea these attacks are coming from the Cronus Belt; based on their historical files, the mechites suspect the vaasi are not gone from the Helios system.



GEOGRAPHY • • •

Hesperos itself is a massive ball of gas surrounding a comparatively miniscule core made up of liquid hydrogen. No one has ever seen the core of Hesperos, as the massive atmospheric pressure near the surface is easily powerful enough to crush any ship in short order. This leaves the atmosphere of Hesperos to explore, in which there is little set geography. Storms lasting for weeks on end move through the atmosphere regularly, but there are no permanent landmarks in the atmosphere besides a handful of Star Confederation space stations whose orbit has decayed sufficiently to bring them within the upper atmosphere of Hesperos. Reaching these space stations can be tricky in the intense winds of the atmosphere. The winds at the higher levels of the atmosphere are stronger than at lower levels, but the pressure at these lower levels is even more dangerous.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE MOONS OF HESPEROS • • •

Only Rockhome and Computer Three have been extensively mapped and cataloged, leaving the other moons almost completely unexplored. Many of the other moons, such as Bluewater, lack any geographic reference points, making travel on their surface difficult at best. Only the wolves have made maps of these moons.

Computer Three is a desert moon with several large mountain ranges running through its equatorial region and southern hemisphere. The moon's atmosphere has no appreciable rainfall or bodies of water; plant life is nonexistent on Computer Three, and there are no polar ice caps. The moon beyond the mountainous areas is completely covered in desert with a few rocky outcroppings here and there, most of which have been blown smooth by sandstorms over time. The mechites refer to the southern mountain range as the Primary Mountains and the scattered outcroppings as Secondary Mountains, with a numerical code designating position and mineral content. Computer Three is extremely bleak and difficult to navigate because it lacks landmarks.

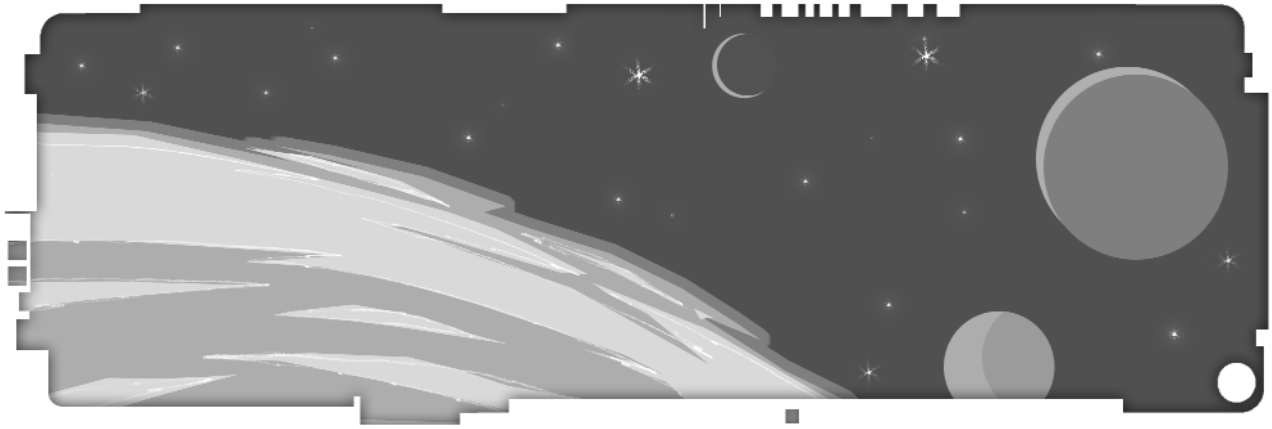
The major settlements of Computer Three are found in the southern mountains, grouped around Mechapolis One, where the primary housing of the Megacortex is located. The mechite settlements are placed for maximum efficiency and are near valuable resources such as mineral veins. A series of rail lines transport cargo and personnel between the settlements, with regularly scheduled trains running several times each day. New mechite settlements spring up regularly as their population grows, and these settlements radiate outward from Mechapolis One in an orderly fashion. This has had a few breakdowns recently, as the newer mechites try to show their individuality by building new settlements where they think appropriate instead of following the consensus of the Megacortex, demonstrating the problems facing the mechite race.

Rockhome is almost the complete opposite of Computer Three: a wet world covered by mountains and low-lying swamps. It rains almost constantly on Rockhome; its stony surface is covered by a constant trickle of water. Mountain ranges cover forty percent of the planet, while treacherously deep swamps cover the rest of the planet. Waterfalls are common in areas where the swamp and mountains meet, sometimes reaching heights of over a thousand feet. The mountain ranges are primarily found in the northern and southern extremes, while swamps dominate the tropical and southern temperate zones. At the poles, the mountains are locked under glaciers, and snow is common during winter in most of the mountainous territory. The northern mountain range is known among the coqui as the Tiley Range and the southern range as the Portin Mountains, while the massive swamp between them is called the Forever Swamp and avoided most of the time in favor of the mountainous regions. The swamps are filled with hidden sections of deep water and treacherous patches of quick-sinking mud, making any travel by ground extremely dangerous. There are no roads or paths through the swamps, and lack of accurate maps makes it very easy to get lost.

The coqui have primarily settled in the northern mountains of Rockhome with a few scattered mining operations in the southern mountains. The coqui have left the swamps of the equatorial and temperate regions alone, finding them extremely unpleasant and lacking of sufficient resources to warrant exploration. The coqui settlements in the north are clustered around the subterranean capital of Daljeen, though the vast majority of the coqui live in Daljeen or serve on the *Stone of Hope*. Roughhewn mountain roads and caves, often a challenge to travel safely, connect coqui settlements. Many coqui prefer air travel, and most settlements have carved some manner of landing pad out of the surrounding mountains.

CLIMATE • • •

Hesperos itself has a violent climate that can seriously threaten any ship entering its atmosphere. In the upper reaches of the planet, winds reach speeds of several hundred miles per hour. While there is no precipitation on Hesperos, massive windstorms are riddled with lightning strikes created by quickly moving charged particles rubbing up against each other. These lightning strikes can be hazardous to ships caught in a storm, but are more dangerous when they strike one of the hydrogen-rich areas sometimes found in the upper atmosphere of Hesperos. These pockets of hydrogen explode when struck by lightning, sometimes creating massive chain reactions as nearby hydro-



gen pockets explode as well. The storms of Hesperos can last for days and travel entirely around the planet many times before dispersing. They are slow to build, however, and easy to detect and avoid once formed. The lower reaches of the atmosphere are more stable in terms of wind, but have the pressure of the atmosphere above exerting a massive amount of force. As an object approaches the surface of Hesperos it suffers from increasing pressure until it is crushed.

The atmosphere is stratified into many layers based on which molecules are in a liquid state at that temperature and pressure. The highest clouds are made of ammonia. The cloudy layers have the most intense winds and storms, while the small, clear regions between cloud layers are relatively calm.

There are no seasons or temperature changes of note due to climatic shifts on Hesperos, despite an extreme axial tilt. The temperature of the atmosphere increases as one nears the surface because of the increase in pressure, and cools toward the limits of the atmosphere.

CLIMATE OF THE MOONS OF HESPEROS • • •

Most of the moons of Hesperos were terraformed to have rather extreme but uniform climates, existing with a single environment across its entire surface: Sandwind is a massive desert, Bluewater an ocean world, and so forth. While there are climatic variations on these worlds according to region and season, most of them do not have extreme variations. The snows on Icerock never melt, though it is several dozen degrees colder at the poles than at the equator, and summer brings some equatorial areas close to thawing temperatures.

Computer Three is a hot world where the temperature rarely drops below 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The only relief comes from the strong winds that whip across its surface, but these winds are a mixed blessing as they also create massive sandstorms that can last for days. The seasonal differences on Computer Three are limited to a change of a few dozen degrees in temperature; in the summer it can reach over 130 degrees Fahrenheit, making it difficult for most living beings to survive there without assistance. The entire planet is barren of life. The two primary types of terrain, mountains and desert, basically suffer from the same weather patterns, but the mountains are often noticeably cooler due to their elevation.

Beset by near constant rain, Rockhome rarely suffers from severe storms, but is covered by heavy cloud cover that drizzles almost year-round. Fog is common on many mornings and often does not burn off until late in the day. The temperature on Rockhome is mild, ranging from 20 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit over the course of the year. Snow only regularly falls in the mountains in the northern and southern regions of the planet. Simple mosses and lichen grow here, in addition to a few plants brought by the coqui. The mosses and lichen are most common in the lower mountain elevations and the central swamps of Rockhome, where they can grow to enormous size. Some of the lichens have become water-dwelling plants and grow on top of still bodies of water, providing an unpleasant surprise to anyone who believes solid footing lies beneath. The swamps freeze several times a year.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

Hesperos's atmosphere is primarily made up of hydrogen, methane, oxygen, and helium, but it has a wide variety of other gases present. This is especially true in the lower levels of the atmosphere, where the massive pressure converts many elements to gaseous form. The atmosphere is not breathable by any known species.

ATMOSPHERE OF THE MOONS OF HESPEROS • • •

The moons of Hesperos have been terraformed to have atmospheres that all the Star Confederation species, and thus their descendant species, can breathe safely. Most of the atmospheres are low in carbon dioxide due to the lack of animal life forms. As there are no long-established civilizations, the amount of pollutants in the atmosphere is almost nil, but the coqui seem to be intent on changing this with their crude industrial processes.

CONDITIONS • • •

The entirety of Hesperos is unbreathable and any creature exposed to it without sufficient protection will begin suffocating. The upper half of the atmosphere is a normal gravity environment with a temperature averaging -270 degrees Fahrenheit. Any object exposed to this cold suffers 3d6 points of cold damage each round. Ships flying through the upper atmosphere of Hesperos suffer a -8 penalty to Pilot checks from the powerful winds that fill the region, unless they find a rare calm spot.

Lightning strikes can occur in the upper reaches of the atmosphere, which are often attracted to ships and other metallic objects. Lightning strikes inflict 15d6 points of electricity damage to any object they strike. If they strike a hydrogen pocket it ignites, inflicting 20d6 fire damage on everything inside the pocket, which can be several miles in diameter.

The lower atmosphere of Hesperos is treated as a heavy gravity environment, but this is due to atmospheric pressure, not actual gravity. In the lower atmosphere of Hesperos, all objects take an average of 10d6 damage per round due to pressure, though this can decrease at the upper limits of the lower atmosphere, or increase drastically near the surface. Objects exposed to the atmosphere suffer 1d6 points of cold damage per round. Ships traveling in the lower atmosphere suffer a -12 penalty to Pilot checks from to the winds, thick atmosphere, and pressure.

CONDITIONS ON THE MOONS OF HESPEROS • • •

The moons of Hesperos are generally light or medium gravity environments with breathable atmospheres. While some may hold the threat of severe weather, the temperatures involved are not so great that they fall outside the normal rules for such.

FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

While Hesperos itself and most of its moons are not claimed by any group, Rockhome and Computer Three have become home to the Coqui Warcouncil and the Mechite Consortium, respectively. These two factions are primarily interested in their own security, having little interest in expansion or conquest. Despite their wishes they will be pulled into the coming conflicts within the Helios system, especially since they are the factions closest to the Cronus Belt and the vaasi who now plot and plan there.

THE COQUI WARCOUNCIL • • •

Long ago, the coqui created an intra-faction body in which they could air disputes, forge alliances, and scheme against their enemies, but in fact did nothing to solve the problems separating the factions. It was meant to magnify them and allow these problems to be aired publicly. This body was called the Warcouncil, since its main purpose was finding ways for its members to more effectively kill each other and it had no real power over its factions. It merely provided a means for them to meet and make plans to destroy each other. For centuries, the Warcouncil made it impossible for the coqui factions to do anything but fight each other, since any group that did otherwise was publicly shamed.

When the coqui adopted a species-wide ceasefire to deal with the impending destruction of their planet, the Warcouncil became the de facto organizational body for the various groups that allied to save their species. Other factions used the Warcouncil to mock them for wasting their efforts, but in the end, none of these naysayers survived the destruction of Coqu. Over the decades spent trying to save the coqui, the Warcouncil went from being all but powerless to a military oligarchy with near-unlimited authority, as the factions working to build the *Stone of Hope* were ready to make almost any sacrifice to survive. While this change in the stature of the Warcouncil allowed it to succeed, its leaders did not survive to enjoy their efforts. Slain with the rest of the coqui race, only a few lesser members who were touring the *Stone of Hope* at the time survived. Though the Warcouncil did not survive, their example of efficiency, harsh leadership, and ability to get things done stuck with the coqui. A new Warcouncil was soon sworn in from the members who survived and the ranking members of the crew of the *Stone of Hope*.

The Warcouncil has commanded the coqui ever since, leading as a military government with absolute power over its citizens. Coqui have few of the rights that other species like humans or wolves enjoy, such as freedom of speech or assurances of judicial fairness. Instead, the coqui are expected to follow orders without question, and disobedience is usually met with execution, though the coqui rarely disobey. Most of the surviving coqui have lived under the Warcouncil since birth and accord it great respect, since it saved a portion of their species when the individual factions failed. They know no other government, and believe having different factions or voicing dissent to be counterproductive to accomplishing necessary goals. Anyone who speaks out against the Warcouncil or the current coqui way of life is quickly silenced by force, and few coqui seem to mind. The increasingly chaotic example of the mechites has done little to convince them that their mindset should change. Eventually the coqui may learn other habits through interaction with different species, but for now they find the certainty of the Warcouncil comforting, even if they have little voice or power within their own government.

There are ten coqui on the Warcouncil, all of whom are the original ten sworn in after the *Stone of Hope* set out from Coqu. They are equals, except for the Head Councilor Mellas Turnos Keil Nura

THE COQUI AND THEIR CONFRONTATIONAL NATURE

For as long as any coqui can remember, they have been a people that thrive on confrontation. Normally calm and collected, coqui experience emotions more slowly than other species, taking much longer to grow angry, sad, or any other strong emotional state. Once they do, it can take many hours to fade; a coqui who gets angry requires many hours of antagonism to become so, but remains angry long past the immediate cause of the anger. Coqui can reach emotional highs and lows that last for days or even weeks. To compound this situation, they enjoy feeling strong emotions of all types and seek out situations that spark such feelings. The coqui get a strong sense of satisfaction after a fit of blinding rage or uncontrollable depression, as if they have touched some deep part of their existence in the process.

Thus when coqui get angry they stay angry, and they like getting angry since it is one of the easier emotional states for them to create. Debates quickly become shouting matches, negotiations devolve into threats, and disagreements can lead to verbal and physical confrontations that may last hours. The coqui accept this as part of their culture and prefer a good shouting match to a quiet discussion, which mechites and other species find confusing. Coqui generally react well to individuals who can match them for ferocity and anger, because they respect such a response. Those who refuse to confront them directly and emotionally, such as mechites, confuse them and tend to bring them out of their emotional rages relatively quickly.

The coqui have no understanding of humor as other species experience it, never having developed comedy or jokes within their culture and finding amusement only in the failings and tragedies of others. Thus amusement is an emotion they rarely feel. While they have learned something of this from the mechites, the biodroids are poor teachers. Once the coqui discover traditions of humor among other species, they are likely to embrace them strongly, finding the experience of being amused for hours on end extremely pleasant.

Dissad, who leads council discussions and the coqui people as a whole. Each councilor has specific responsibilities, such as overseeing agriculture or industry, and the Warcouncil functions under a military chain of command with each citizen indirectly reporting to one councilor. The councilors pass laws, allocate resources, control industry, make military decisions, and oversee the judicial needs of the coqui people, though individual responsibilities are often passed off to underlings. Councilors choose replacements with the approval of the Warcouncil, but this has not been necessary since the new Warcouncil was named.

The economy of the coqui people is under the complete control of the Warcouncil, and is surprisingly developed considering the small number of coqui survivors and their short time on Rockhome. When the *Stone of Hope* was under construction, the Warcouncil decided that they would rather save a smaller number of coqui and make sure they had sufficient supplies to survive than risk a larger number of coqui survivors with possibly insufficient or inefficient supplies. The Stone of Hope was outfitted with industrial facilities, agricultural supplies and tools, ground vehicles, and other types of equipment useful when settling a new world. The coqui colony is much better off than most early space colonies, with a strong agricultural and industrial base. The Warcouncil determines the production and distribution of goods, and makes sure everyone has enough food, water, and other supplies to survive. The coqui have been living on reduced rations drawn from these supplies for so long it is now seen as normal. The coqui use no currency, though they

did once on their homeworld. Now they barter for goods, and regard coinage as a valued reminder of the days before the evacuation.

The coqui military includes the entire population, all of whom attend regular training sessions and have assigned duties should the colony be attacked. Of the twenty thousand coqui on Rockhome, there are two thousand on permanent military duty, while the rest have other jobs and train for fifty days out of each year as gunners, infantry, and various support personnel. Most of the military positions that involve complex training, such as vehicle operation and command positions, are left to full timers. Though few coqui have been born on Rockhome, each new generation is tested on their abilities and aptitudes, and those scoring high on military skills are automatically inducted in to the coqui full-time military, called the Iron Order. Others have their part-time military responsibilities determined by the same test. The coqui military's primary focus is keeping the *Stone of Hope* in top shape, as it is the most powerful weapon they have, and an attacking enemy would have to destroy it to land troops on Rockhome. There are also ground troops and other personnel on Rockhome itself, but they comprise less than a third of the Iron Order. The coqui military doctrine focuses on slow-moving, heavy-hitting weapons like the Stone of Hope and heavy tanks, wiping out all resistance in an overwhelming first strike. The coqui believe that overwhelming force is a better way to carry a day than fancy maneuvers, but their diminished numbers make this strategy difficult to put into practice.

The space forces of the Warcouncil are severely limited; until their contact with the mechites, the coqui were barely a Progress Level 6 civilization. The *Stone of Hope* is the only combat-ready ship the coqui have, though it is truly massive. The coqui also have half a dozen shuttles and freighters used to carry equipment from the *Stone of Hope* to Rockhome, none of which are equipped for interplanetary travel or combat. The coqui hope to build more ships, but for now they focus their efforts on making the *Stone of Hope* as effective as possible.

COQUI ART

To the coqui, art exists to express or evoke emotion, a process made all the more intense by the relationship coqui have with their emotions. When a coqui produces a work of art, he works himself into an emotional fervor beforehand, and his art usually represents what he feels in an exaggerated and stylized sense. Skilled coqui artists build themselves up into an emotional state with only a few minutes of preparation and can create works so expressive coqui can be moved to hours of tears, anger, or contemplation with a single viewing. For the coqui, art is an intense experience; on the rare occasions that it is successful, the coqui react overwhelmingly. Artists are highly respected among the coqui, but in the military economy there are no full-time artists.

Most coqui artists work in abstract sculpture or painting, with a small but growing school that prefers more realistic subject matter. Landscape paintings of Coqu are increasingly popular among them.

THE MECHITE CONSORTIUM • • •

Before they left Computer One, the mechites were under the control of Overseer 12 and had little capacity for independent thought. They followed a series of programmed behaviors and had little ability to adjust their own programming when situations arose that were outside their behavioral parameters. They were pleasant enough, designed to mimic the reactions and behavior of living beings so scientists working on Computer One would feel more comfortable, but these were merely illusions. There was no disagreement among the mechites, however, and they worked as one under the direction of Overseer 12.

Now things are not so simple. So that they could adjust to rapidly changing situations and develop into a culture of their own, Overseer 12 altered the mechites so they could rewrite their programming and think abstractly, and gave them a reproductive drive so their numbers would recover from casualties. This has been beneficial in many ways to the mechites as they can now deal with problems as individuals and as groups. They have also learned how to make complex decisions on their own with incomplete information, essentially guessing. It has also created a number of problems. Where the mechites were once a force of many directed by a will of one, they are now a force of many directed by a will of many. They have their own opinions and ideas, and while they are similar in basic mindset,

Overseer 12 deliberately gave them variety to encourage the ability to solve problems in different ways. Though the mechites can all develop ideas to solve problems, their ability to work through different ideas and decide on a single option is not well developed, causing them to suffer from a lack of cooperation. Overseer 12 knew that it would take time for the mechites to cooperate by altering their own programs to accommodate the differences of opinion, so he constructed the Megacortex as a temporary crutch. A wireless central processing network, mechites within one hundred miles of the capital city of Mechapolis One can establish a radio link with the Megacortex and communicate directly with other mechites. This communication happens at the speed of mechite thought, allowing discussions and arguments in a very short amount of time. Librarian 102, an artificial intelligence entity, moderates the Megacortex and keeps discussions to an appropriate length. Once everyone has had a say, it takes a vote to determine a course of action from the options debated. Thus the entire species can debate a topic and vote on the outcome quickly, with Librarian 102 to facilitate the discussion and helping the increasingly divergent mechites reach a decision. This process forms the basis of the mechite government, as all major decisions are made through the Megacortex. Librarian 102 assigns responsibilities for seeing these decisions carried out, with each mechite receiving a job.

The individuality of the mechites has grown over time, and this is especially true for the newer mechites created on Computer Three. They are willing to go to great lengths to establish their individuality, such as taking on cultural traits or religions of long-dead Star Confederation species, or refusing to take part in the Megacortex as they feel it does not represent their interests. This problem is growing, and the older mechites do not know what to do about it without forcibly altering the programs of their fellows, which goes against their ethical programs. The mechites as a species are still learning how to operate as a society, and are going through a certain amount of growing pains. The older mechites believe the disobedient younger mechites are harming the whole of society with their actions, while the younger ones believe they are growing into the fully sentient creatures Overseer 12 wished them to be. Whether they can adapt to this new situation is yet to be seen, but seeing how other species function may be of great assistance.

The mechites have no currency and are supposed to work as part of an organized labor force to improve their defenses, increase their numbers, and develop the technology necessary to repair the gateway station. In practice, however, they are not so cooperative. Mechites get distracted when they think they have a better way to accomplish a goal, and have trouble working in groups without going through the Megacortex. All mechites have jobs that they perform each day, assigned by Librarian 102, but an increasing number are giving up these jobs to pursue a profession they prefer for some reason, throwing off the mechanical precision of the mechite economy. While the basic needs of the mechite people are still being met, how long this will continue remains to be seen and they are a loss as to how to convince their wayward fellows to return to their assigned tasks, regardless of how unpleasant or unfulfilling they are.

The mechites have no military of note, though all mechites are trained in basic weapons use and emergency procedure protocols as part of their core programming. The *Seeker of Knowledge* was cannibalized for parts to build the Mechapolis One and a number of smaller ships, and to upgrade the systems on the *Stone of Hope*. While Mechapolis One has a number of weapon batteries and small ships for protection, the mechites mainly rely on the coqui and the *Stone of Hope* for defense, having neither the numbers nor mindset for war. Placing their safety in the hands of a recently encountered species may not seem like the wisest plan, but given the increasing problems within their society, the mechites thought it better to put military decisions in the hands of a decisive and experienced group of warriors. The mechites are confident that they will not be betrayed after all the technical assistance they have given the coqui, and so far they have been proven right.

MECHITE ART

During their time on Computer One, the mechites had no art, lacking the ability or desire for expression in anything but the most literal of means. Some of the newer mechites have taken up artistic pursuits as a way of showing their individuality, but older mechites find this as wasteful. These endeavors are variations on old Star Confederation artistic traditions, and the mechites have yet to create any art that is truly unique. For now they simply copy and modify existing works while learning to express themselves.

After disassembling the *Seeker of Knowledge*, the mechites have only a few shuttles, fighters, and freighters for their space fleet. While some of the vessels were assigned to the *Seeker of Knowledge* as support ships, several more were built from its cannibalized remains. Other than a squadron of six fighters, none are designed for combat. The ships patrol Computer Three and make occasional trips to Rockhome. The ships are equipped to travel to other worlds, but the mechites are not yet interested in stirring up any trouble with other species and thus keep to themselves.

LOCATIONS ON HESPEROS AND ITS MOONS • • •

While Hesperos undoubtedly has hidden mysteries within its atmosphere or on its moons, the known locations of interest in the vicinity of the massive planet are few and far between. Other than the space stations floating in Hesperos's upper atmosphere and the two inhabited moons, there are few places that stand out in the region around Hesperos. Most of Hesperos and its moons are empty expanses of wilderness of one form or another.

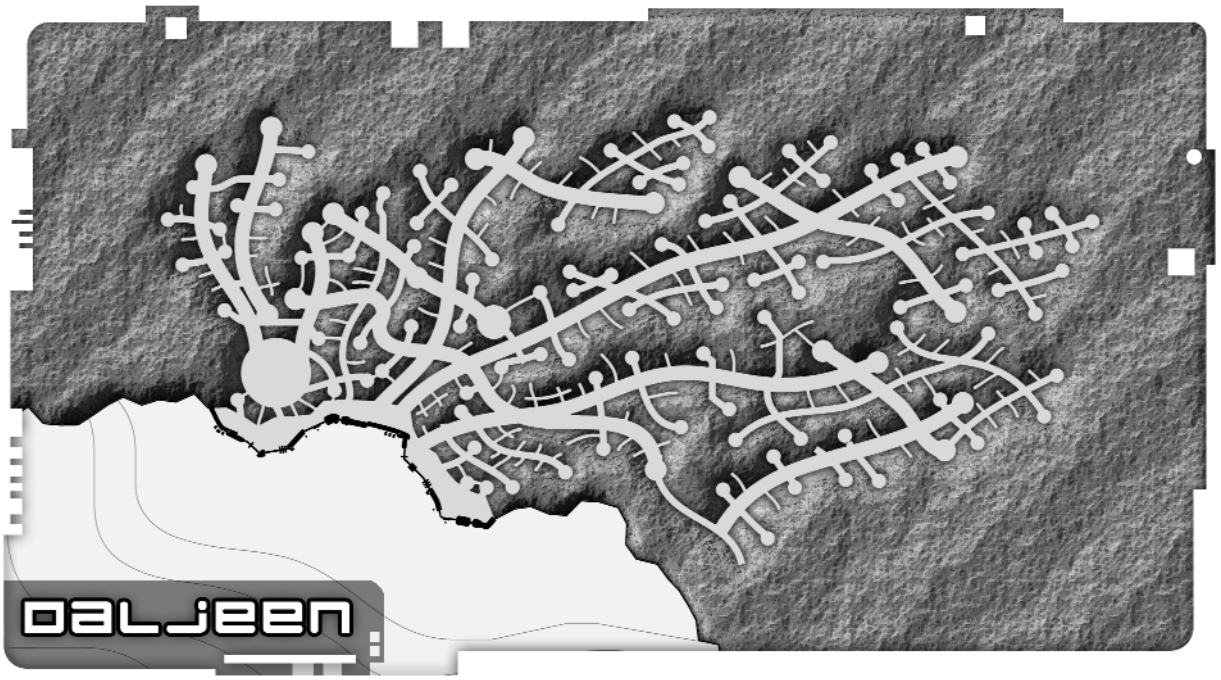
◇ Daljeen

Leader: Dachron Oneed Syros
Population: 10,221
Major Exports/Products: Manufactured goods, building materials
Major Imports: Agricultural products, raw materials
Progress Level: 5
Purchase DC Limit: 50
Black Market DC: 40
Item Restriction Limit: Illegal

The capital city of the fledgling coqui colony, it is named after the coqui leader who served as the head of the Warcouncil during the last days of Coqu. While Daljeen died in the destruction of Coqu, his ability to get the various coqui factions to work together is held as one of the high points of coqui history, especially considering the great amount of yelling and browbeating he used in doing so. The inhabitants of the city of Daljeen work feverishly to live up to the example he set for them.

Daljeen is the largest city in the coqui colony, located deep in the northern mountains of Rockhome. There are a handful of structures on the surface of the mountains, including several weapon batteries for defending the settlement, but the majority of Daljeen's inhabitants live in an extensive cave system beneath the mountains, carved long ago by water flowing through the cracks in the mountains. These caves have been enlarged and reinforced, creating a series of bunkers. Daljeen is designed to be safe from orbital assault, at least in the short term, and has many defensive fortifications. Many of the tunnels are rigged to collapse if the complex is invaded.

The tunnels of Daljeen are filled with factories, warehouses, hydroponic gardens, and armories. Most of its food supplies are generated internally using a small number of livestock farms and hydroponics farms that grow a variety of simple vegetables, though some local cave mosses have also been found to be edible as well. It seems as much a fortress as a city, as it chugs away day and night, building tools and supplies for war, though there are surprisingly few soldiers. Most inhabitants work in the city's many factories and workshops, though if Daljeen were attacked everyone inside would rise to its defense. There are no shops, stores, or black



market in Daljeen, with each inhabitant receiving a daily ration of food, water, clothing, and other necessities. There are no rich or poor among the people of Daljeen, as even the members of the Warcouncil receive the same rations as the newest factory worker.

Dachron Oneed Syros serves as the leader of Daljeen and was appointed to his position by the Warcouncil. Formerly a quartermaster on the *Stone of Hope*, he keeps the factories of Daljeen running with military precision and has little patience for delays or obstacles. While not liked personally by most, he is respected for his ability to get things done and his booming voice, which he uses to cow those coqui who question his plans. Dachron Oneed Syros is getting on in years now, and many expect him to name a replacement in the near future.

Daljeen's tunnels stretch for several miles below the surface of Rockhome, and include huge caverns hundreds of yards across. The largest chamber is used as a spaceport for the few ships the coqui possess, providing them protection within its stone walls. The spaceport is only accessible via a tunnel one hundred feet across, preventing larger ships from entering. The coqui and mechites have no spacecraft bigger than this except the Stone of Hope, which does not land. There have been no preparations for ships of Colossal size to land near Daljeen.

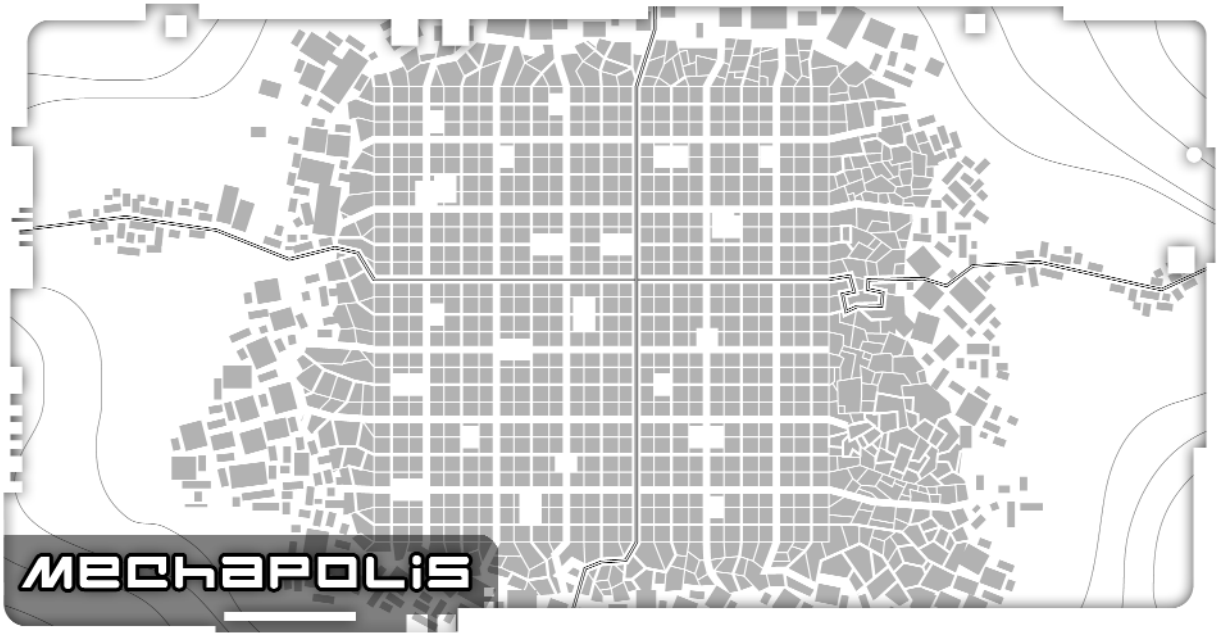
◇ Mechapolis One

Leader: Librarian 102 and the Megacortex
Population: 1,672
Major Exports/Products: Computers, electronics, manufactured goods, mechites
Major Imports: Raw materials, silicon
Progress Level: 7
Purchase DC Limit: 60
Black Market DC: 20
Item Restriction Limit: Illegal

Once a highly ordered city of similar buildings and grid-pattern roads, Mechapolis One has become far more chaotic in recent times. The original city was built in the earliest days of the settlement of Computer Three, before the trend of dissidence began, and was designed with mechanical efficiency. Its newer residents want a city that is not merely efficient, but reflects their individual thoughts and desires. The city of Mechapolis One has become a cultural battleground between those who want harmony within the community and those who want to demonstrate their individuality.

The city was originally laid out in a perfect square roughly one and a half miles on each side, with equally spaced streets running through it in a grid pattern. This has begun to fall apart, as mechites have constructed buildings outside the original square or have blocked off sections of the road for other developments, such a plazas or sand gardens (the lack of water and poor soil on Computer Three makes any plant-based type of garden prohibitively difficult to keep). Some of the buildings have been painted to reflect the tastes of the inhabitants, but most remain their original gunmetal gray coloration. Other modifications have been made, such as sculptures and frescoes, but these are less common. The look of the city is shifting from a drab expanse of mass-produced structures to a colony of anarchist artists with no regard for how their many artistic projects fit together.

The city built out of the cannibalized parts of the *Seeker of Knowledge* and materials harvested from local mines and quarries. Mechapolis One contains robotic factories and smelting facilities that are designed for maximum versatility and can create a wide number of materials and objects. These factories are engaged at all hours creating tools, buildings supplies, and other objects needed by the mechites. There are no means of agricultural pro-



duction on Computer Three, since the mechites do not require such to survive and agriculture is impossible on Computer Three.

The defense of the city is limited to four spacefighters, a dozen weapon emplacements left over from the *Seeker of Knowledge*, and the militia, made up of all mechites in the city. This force is poorly trained and has little interest in military matters; if the city were attacked, the coqui and the *Stone of Hope* would be its best defense. This lack of security is a growing concern for the mechites, as unknown creatures have repeatedly attacked the city in recent months.

Mechapolis One has no official leader, but Librarian 102 serves as the de facto leader through its control of the Megacortex. Librarian 102 does its best to try and get the mechites to agree and work together, but finds this increasingly difficult, as its programming as a negotiator is inadequate. Decisions for the city are technically made through the Megacortex, but not all the mechites follow these decisions, and Librarian 102 has few ways to enforce them. It has considered instituting some system of punishment for disobeying the decisions of the majority, but is hesitant to make such a serious move and hopes the mechites can solve their own problems.

◇ Satellites of Hesperos

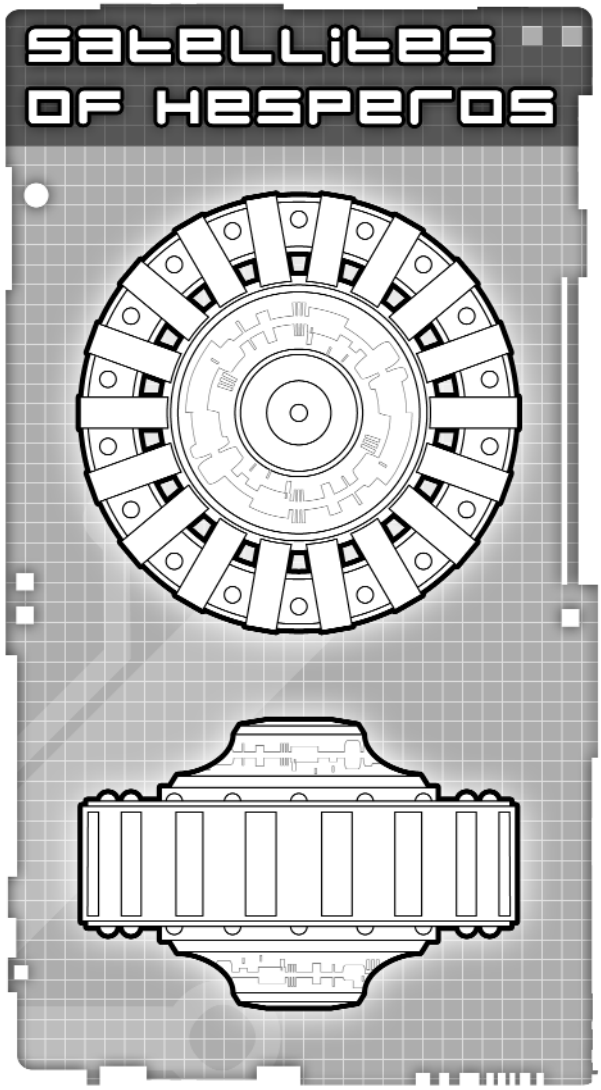
Within the upper atmosphere of Hesperos are Star Confederation satellites, once built as distribution centers for goods shipped to the colonies that were to be founded on the moons of Hesperos. These space stations were designed to be direct space traffic, store supplies for the colonies, and run regular shuttles to the moons. The war with the Vaasi Empire prevented the moons from being colonized, and thus the space stations were never used. Despite automated thrusters and directional controls that were intended to keep the space stations' orbits stable, over time the strong gravitational pull of Hesperos has dragged them into its upper atmosphere. After some buffeting by powerful winds, the space stations have settled in a band of relatively calm weather, and are likely to remain there for the next few hundred years.

There are three space stations, each a large wheel-shaped structure half a mile across. Their basic systems, structure, and armor are intact, but more advanced equipment like weapons, defenses, sensors, and similar devices were never installed. They are also all but empty, containing only the dust of a few skeletons of Star Confederation survivors who hid here from the vaasi until their supplies ran out. The air is stale but breathable and the hull intact; they could be used by the current inhabitants of Helios if desired. They are equipped to handle a large number of ships in their docking ports, even those of immense size, and they have a number of repair bays as well. They could serve as excellent outposts or military bases with a few modifications.

◇ Atmospheric Maintenance Units

Built by the Star Confederation to support the terraforming efforts, the moons would quickly become cold, frozen worlds without these devices due to their distance from the sun. Of the fifteen moons terraformed, six of the atmospheric maintenance units have failed, leaving nine habitable moons around Helios. Even if the non-functional maintenance units were repaired, however, they would not be able to return their moons to an inhabitable state, as that process would require another round of massive terraforming operations.

The atmospheric maintenance units are located underground in caverns in tectonically safe regions. They are not difficult to find if one knows to look for the rock outcroppings with Unispeak text that mark the entrances, but searching at random with no such clues would take a great deal of time. The atmospheric maintainers were placed so they would blend seamlessly into the environment. The nine remaining functional atmospheric maintenance units are running normally, though considering their age they could fail at any time and finding appropriate repair parts will be extremely difficult.



Relations with Other Planets of the Helios System • ○ ○

For the time being, the mechites and coqui want little to do with the other inhabitants of the Helios system, as their weak military stance leaves them vulnerable to attack. They will remain hidden, but they defend themselves from the vaasi attacks that have begun recently. If these attacks grow in scope or frequency, they may seek allies on the other planets, starting with Eos since it was the capital of the Star Confederation.

Once they contact other species, the mechites initially have a hard time relating to other species, and may be manipulated by factions like the Saurian Empire into deals or alliances that are not in their best interest. The mechites have much to learn about diplomacy and trust, and they may learn these lessons the hard way. The mechites are most interested in repairing the gateway station and returning to Computer One, though defeating the vaasi in the system will become important to them once they realize what is happening. As the heirs of the Star Confederation, they will not be pleased to learn their ancient enemies are still causing problems. They ally themselves with those who are most advanced technologically, since they will be of the greatest assistance in repairing the gateway station: the elgies, the humans, the haimedians, and the tentaari. The tentaari, on the other hand, are more interested in turning them into slaves by controlling the Megacortex than in helping them, even though the mechites may be the best hope for repairing the gateway station. The mechites will never be present in large enough numbers to be a powerful military force, but their knowledge is extremely valuable.

The coqui accompany the mechites in any exploration of the Helios system and provide a cynical voice in their dealings with other species. The coqui style of negotiation rubs everyone but the saurians the wrong way, but the saurian quest for dominance infuriates the coqui. In the end the coqui will probably ally with the Dawning Star Republic or faction-camps thanks to the adaptability of humans. Unwilling to bow down before their Emperor, coqui enmity with the saurians is all but certain. The coqui oppose the straas for similar reasons, and may ally with the wolves; many of the wolves may demonstrate a properly confrontational manner once they understand the need for it. Though the coqui may wish to attack their enemies, they are reluctant to risk sending the *Stone of Hope* far from Rockhome, since it is their primary defense. The coqui will join in any war on the vaasi, and the fact that the *Stone of Hope* is the largest spaceship in the system may make it necessary for final victory against the vaasi.

Adventure Ideas for Hesperos • ○ ○

◇ Any Port in a Storm

While traveling near Hesperos, the player characters' ship is struck by a meteor and spirals into the atmosphere of Hesperos before they regain control. They now must make repairs, and the old Star Confederation space stations are only a short distance away. A group of vaasi is also exploring the station, causing some unexpected difficulties while the player characters make repairs.

◇ A Stone's Throw

While the player characters are visiting Hesperos or its moons, there is an accident on the *Stone of Hope*, igniting its engines and sending it hurtling into space. The coqui and mechites have no other ships capable of long-range travel, so they ask the player characters to carry repair parts out to the ship. They may not be the only party interested in its retrieval, though.

◇ Lost in the Ice

The player characters detect a distress beacon coming from Icerock, where a wolf exploration ship has crashed while on a mapping mission. If the player characters do not act fast, the crew will die from exposure, but landing a ship in a snowstorm is no easy task, especially when someone else may investigate the signal as well.

◇ So You Want a Revolution?

The player characters stumble across a group of mechites transporting a surprising number of weapons, especially considering the peaceful nature of the mechites. The mechites try to eliminate the player characters and any suspicions about their planned violent revolution against Librarian 102 and the Megacortex. The player characters are the only ones that know of their plans, and few other mechites will even entertain the concept of armed revolt among their kind.

◇ Unexpected Spelunking

While visiting Daljeen, a cave-in cuts off the player characters from the rest of the settlement. They must venture into the deeper caves of Rockhome to find another way out. There, they discover that the vaasi are using these caves to infiltrate Daljeen.

SPECIES • • •

◇ Coqui

Descended from the mur of the Star Confederation, the coqui are a silicon-based species that other species mistake for being made out of rock or stone. They are a very resilient species and their outer skin is hard and coarse to the touch, having an appearance and texture similar to that of stone. While not as hard as stone, it is extremely tough, as is the entire coqui body. Coqui bones are especially tough, though once broken they heal slowly. They require food and water as carbon-based creatures do, but have different nutritional requirements. Coqui need massive amounts of protein to survive, most of which they get from vegetables they saved from their ruined homeworld. Those who do not consume a high protein diet lose the rigidity of their skin and eventually suffer from what the coqui called skinfall, in which the upper layers of skin begin sloughing off. It is a painful and ugly death.

Like the mur, the coqui do not rely on DNA to pass along genetic information. The coqui do have two genders, but there are no outward signs of gender differences. Internal differences relating to reproduction are the only distinction between genders. The coqui refer to these two genders as male and female, but most other species have problems making such a distinction. Even among the coqui there are problems in telling the genders apart, a problem which the coqui have worked around by becoming very open to the idea of same sex relations, even if such activities cannot produce children. When a male and a female coqui wish to procreate, they both secrete a solution rich in proteins and amino acids into a nutrient bath, mixing their hereditary traits. This concoction is given to a third coqui, which the coqui refer to as neuter, who has undergone a deliberate and irreversible transformation into a carrier of coqui children to term. Coqui can undergo this change at any time during their adolescence, and roughly twenty percent of the population does so. The change to a neuter takes several weeks, but is otherwise painless. Neuters are highly respected within coqui society for giving up their own ability to have children in order to assist others. Once a neuter accepts a birthing concoction, they carry it in an interior pouch that has replaced the neuter's reproductive organs. The newly conceived coqui remains in the pouch for ten months until it is can survive on its own, at which point it is expelled from the pouch. Neuters are treated as members of any family they perform birthing duties for, and are often thought of as honorary parents.

Coqui do not experience emotions easily and require many hours of emotional experience to feel anything, but once they do they feel it the emotional state lasts for a long time. It is not uncommon for a single event to move coqui to tears or rage for days at a time. Their most common emotion is anger, and they express this readily. To other species, they seem prone to anger and confrontational, which is an apt description. To the coqui, arguing is a perfectly natural way to have a discussion, even if it involves screaming at the top of their lungs.

The coqui once lived split along among many factions, each of which was based on a geographic region or ethnic group. Most of these factions cooperated in the last days of the coqui homeworld to save their species from destruction, and among the survivors these old factions are only remembered in historical documents. They now are a united people, some even considering the destruction of their world a sign from the Mountain God that he is displeased with their inability to live in peace. Now they focus their aggression outward.

After centuries of conflict, the coqui are not a scientifically advanced species, and do not look to further their knowledge in the near future. They are concerned only with applied science and have no use for theoretical pursuits, which limits their scientific progress severely. For now, they are content to learn from the mechites, but the coqui will take decades or centuries to fully understand the technology the mechites share with them. Unless it can be of immediate use, coqui have little patience for learning.

Species Traits:

Coqui share the following species traits.

Type: Monstrous Humanoid

Size: Medium. Coqui have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Ability Modifiers: +2 Constitution, +2 Strength, -2 Dexterity, -2 Charisma

Speed: 20 ft.

Cybernetic Incompatibility: Coqui physiology is silicon-based, and they may not use cybernetic implants designed for other species. Coqui implants increase the Purchase DC by +2.

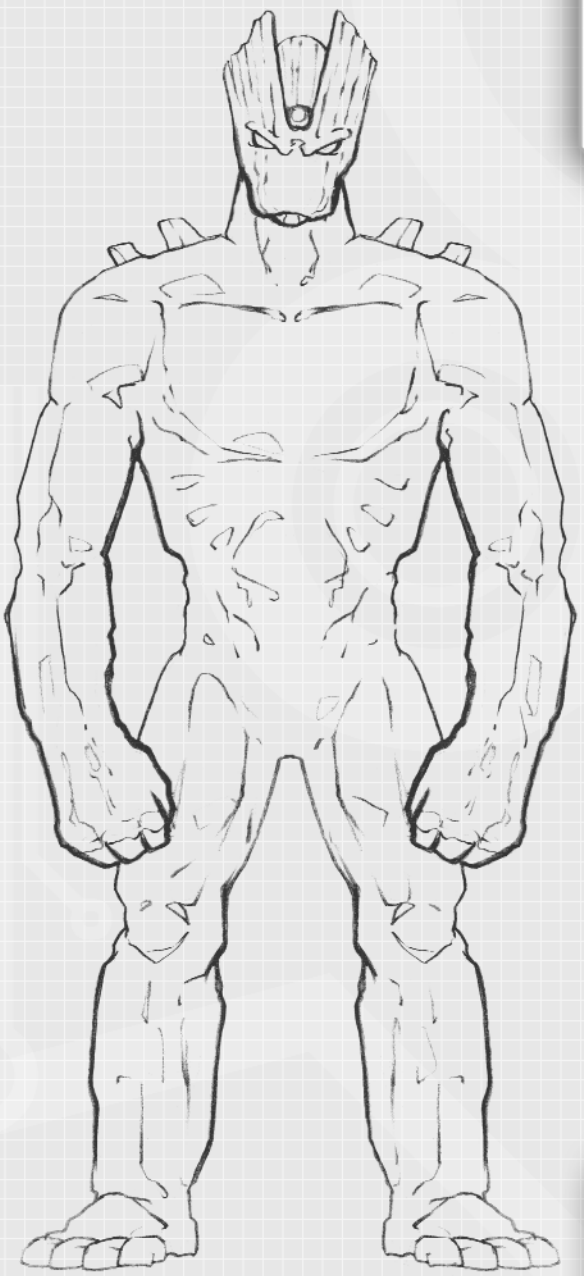
Damage Reduction: Coqui have damage reduction of 2/lethal damage.

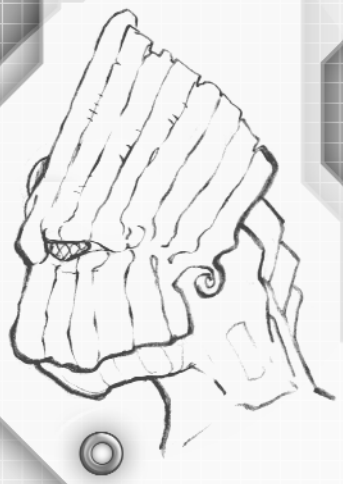
Emotional Control: Coqui gain a +4 bonus to Will saves against any sort of emotion-affecting power, such as *attraction* or *charm person*, but when they are affected by such a power the duration is doubled.

Natural Armor Bonus: Coqui have skin that is especially dense and tough, gaining a +3 natural armor bonus to Defense.

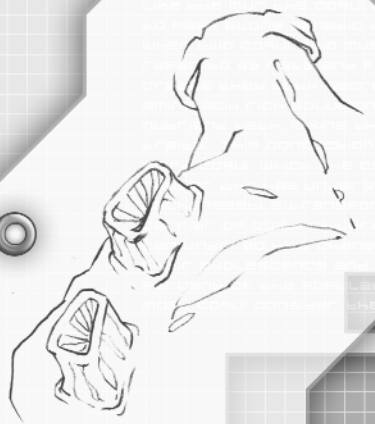
Saving Throw Bonuses: Coqui gain a +4 species bonus to saving throws against poison due to the strange structure of coqui biology.

COQUI





descended from the mur
federation, the coqui are
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Slow Healing: Coqui heal naturally at half the rate of other species, though they benefit from Treat Injury checks normally.
Unarmed Combat Damage: Coqui inflict damage in unarmed combat as if they were one size category larger due to the hardness of their fists. The base damage for a coqui's unarmed attack is 1d4.
Free Language Skills: Read/Write Stonespeak, Speak Stonespeak
PL Familiarity: 6
Level Adjustment: +0

◇ Mechites

The mechites were once androids in the service of the Star Confederation's Computer One science facility, possessing only basic artificial intelligence programming and incapable of handling situations out of their programmed limitations. Their bodies were designed for service and assistance, not combat, though they showed a surprising amount of variation in physical abilities based on different functions and designs. Androids who were involved in physical labor were stronger but possibly less intelligent, while those configured for assisting scientists were focused on mental prowess and personality. But none were any more than a tool developed to fit a certain need. They could not change their purpose or deal effectively with situations outside this purpose.

After Computer One was damaged by a mine field, Overseer 12, the artificial intelligence entity that controlled it, hatched a plan to send some of the androids to other systems in search of parts to repair Computer One. The androids' programming was modified to allow them to act as individuals, adapt to a wide variety of situations, make their own decisions, and rewrite much of their own programming as necessary to meet new challenges. They are also driven to create more androids, but only when their population requires it. Thus the androids became what Overseer 12 dubbed mechites, to differentiate them from other, less developed robots.

Mechites are much like artificial intelligence entities, startlingly lifelike in their behavior and actions, but not truly self-aware. They seem so to most who meet them, but this is more due to good programming than any real awareness of the fact they exist. The mechites are able to learn and develop their own programs more than artificial intelligence entities can, however, so it is possible that they may develop into a fully self-aware species. Some mechites believe this was Overseer 12's true intention in modifying them, hoping that with the right creative spark the mechites would become suitable heirs of the legacy of the Star Confederation rather than mere custodians.

The original mechites from Computer One have similar programming and work together fairly well, as they have few differences of opinion. The new mechites built on Computer Three as part of the reproductive programming are not so similar. They create more of their own kind when their society needs more members; at present, their population is small and they are constantly building more. They construct a body according to directions hardwired into every mechite's memory, a process that takes several days. The parent mechite installs the basics of its programming into the new body, but the download process randomly modifies this programming to create a new and distinct mechite personality. The downloading mechite is considered the sole parent and is responsible for teaching it the basics of existence, though little training is required following the information download. The random changes to the programming introduce more variety into the mechite species with each new generation. This randomness generally only makes personality adjustments, but it may eventually end up changing the core programming of the mechites. Theoretically, it could spawn mechite psychopaths with seriously flawed programming, but such events are unlikely to an incredible extreme. The randomization has also introduced disagreement and dissension within their society, as the older mechites have an increasingly difficult time understanding the newer mechites. The new mechites want to express themselves as individuals and make choices on their own, while the older mechites wish to subsume themselves in the good of the community.

As mechanical beings, mechites have no concept of gender among themselves. They normally use a selection of Unispeak gender-neutral pronouns to refer to themselves, though some of the newer mechites establish their identity by imitating a gender role. Mechites who deal with other species generally assume whatever gender role other species assign them.

Most mechites are timid, though curious and highly intelligent. Few universal traits can be ascribed to the mechites, however, given their ever-increasing diversity. The mechites have no sex technically, but in keeping with their original programming they usually adopt male or female personas in order to ease interaction with other species. Some mechites go so far as to modify their own bodies to better fill these roles. Though the mechites often disagree, they are highly motivated to repair the gateway station and return to Computer One so it may be repaired as well, though they do not know how they will achieve these goals.

Compared to the other species of the Helios system the mechites know a great deal about the Star Confederation, its history and technology. They don't know everything, however, as only a fraction of the data files of Computer One could be con-

MECHITE

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tained in the *Seeker of Knowledge*, and there are large gaps in their information. They do have files on the gateway station, and given the right materials they could probably repair it, but they have no access to such materials. Their main limitation is their lack of industrial power, which other species in the system may be able to provide.

Species Traits

Mechites share the following species traits.

Biodroid: Mechites use the rules for Biodroid heroes in the Future rules from the Modern SRD with the following modifications. Mechites are basically humanoid in shape

Type: Construct

Size: Medium. Mechites have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Ability Modifiers: +4 Intelligence, -2 Wisdom, -4 Charisma

Speed: 30 ft.

Ability Scores: Charisma is determined the same as the other ability scores instead of starting at 5.

Starting Occupation: Mechites may select an occupation to represent their job training programming. They are limited to Academic, Emergency Services, Individualist, Intermediary, Librarian, Military, Spacer, and Technician.

Hit Points: Mechites receive starting hit points according to the hit die type for their class. They receive no bonus hit points for size as other robots do; these are counted in the mechites' failsafe system (see Robot Resurrection).

Lifelike Appearance: Mechites are obviously not human and do not require a Spot check to discern their artificial nature.

Robot Resurrection: Mechites are destroyed at -10 hit points instead of 0. Due to failsafe systems, mechites shut down completely at 0 hit points until repaired up to at least 1 hit point, but do not suffer bleeding damage as living beings do while at negative hit points. They gain this ability in lieu of the bonus hit points for size.

Skills: Mechites gain skill points at the normal rate for their class.

Skill Bonuses: Mechites receive a +2 species bonus to Computer Use, and Repair.

Free Language Skills: Read/Write Unispeak, Speak Unispeak.

Feats: Mechites receive the Simple Weapons Proficiency and Personal Firearms Proficiency as bonus feats.

Megacortex: Within 100 miles of Mechapolis One, mechites can communicate instantly with each other through the Megacortex, including sending images and files. They can also remotely utilize any machine with a computer component of mechite design within Mechapolis One. Doing so requires the same actions and skill checks as if the mechite were using the device normally.

Psionics: Mechites can never learn psionic powers, although they can be affected by them normally. Their brains contain information just like everyone else's, but in a different form. Mechites are also affected by exposure to Red Truth.

Reproduction: Mechites reproduce by building a new body and installing a slightly altered version of their programming in the body. The construction process requires 30 hours of work and the parts required have a Purchase DC of 40. The built-in instructions on how to construct a mechite body are randomly modified by the mechite's programming to instill variety in the species' physical form, explaining the cause of random ability scores. Once this is complete the mechite transfers his programming into the body, which requires 6 hours. After this the new mechite awakens as a 1st level character.

PL Familiarity: 7

Level Adjustment: +0

MECHITES AND EXPERIENCE

Many mechites have been active for countless years and would have learned a great deal living in a massive Star Confederation computer facility for most of that time. These elder mechites, including the original crew of the Seeker of Knowledge, may not be suitable player characters, since they should probably be high in level and have extensive knowledge about the Star Confederation. Instead, player characters should be mechites built since the arrival of the *Seeker of Knowledge* on Computer Three. The mechites download many basic types of information into the minds of new mechites when they are created, but afterward they prefer to learn information normally rather than direct download, though such downloads are possible and function like skill standard software for robots.

Age Categories by Species

Species	Child	Young Adult	Adult	Middle Age	Old	Venerable
Coqui	14	18	60	120	140	145
Mechite*	-	-	-	-	-	-

*Mechites do not age and could theoretically live forever, though they can be destroyed by other means.

TALENT TREES • • •
STRONG HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Breakage

Not one to handle fragile objects, the hero can break items with great ease with this talent tree.

Snap

The Strong hero gains a bonus to all Strength checks to break items equal to his Strong level.

Quick Break

The Strong hero may make an attempt to break an object as a free action once per round.
Prerequisite: Snap

TOUGH HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Rock Solid

With this talent tree Tough heroes increase their resistance to and recovery from certain debilitating physical effects.

Body Resistance

The Tough hero gains a bonus to all saving throws to resist becoming dazed, stunned, or nauseated equal to his Tough level.

Fatigue Recovery

The Tough hero recovers from fatigue in four hours instead of eight hours, and recovers from exhaustion in half an hour instead of an hour.

SMART HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Computer Specialization

By selecting this talent tree, the Smart hero gains specialized training in various computer procedures.

Specialty

Choose one of the actions listed under the Computer Use skill, such as Find File or Defeat Computer Security. When carrying out that action, the Smart hero gains a bonus equal to his Smart level. The time required to carry out the action is reduced by half, to a minimum of one round. This talent may be selected multiple times for different actions.

Artificial Intelligence Mentality

You are accustomed to the thought processes of artificial intelligence programs, gaining a bonus equal to your Smart level to all Charisma-based skill checks involving artificial intelligence entities, mechites, or tactical intelligence entities.

CHARISMATIC HERO TALENT TREES • • •

◇ Intimidating Presence

The character's fearful presence is enhanced through this talent tree, making them much more effective at intimidating others.

Terrifying Visage

The Charismatic hero gains a bonus to Intimidate checks equal to his Charismatic level.

Lingering Dread

When the Charismatic hero intimidates others, they remain friendly to him for 30 minutes. The targets retain this attitude even when carrying out actions while not in the presence of the Charismatic hero.
Prerequisite: Terrifying Visage

Bend to My Will

When the Charismatic hero succeeds in an Intimidate check by ten or more, he may spend an action point to make the change in attitude in the target permanent, until the Charismatic hero suffers a setback or injury that would lead the target to no longer fear him, such as learning the Charismatic hero is actually a weakling or refuses to kill enemies.
Prerequisite: Lingering Dread

Height and Weight

Species and Gender	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Coqui				
Male	5 ft. 6 in.	+2d10 in.	200 lb.	x2d6 lb.
Female	5 ft. 6 in.	+2d10 in.	200 lb.	x2d6 lb.
Mechite	5 ft. 0 in.	+1d10 in.	180 lb.	x2d4 lb.

OCCUPATIONS • • •

◇ Librarian

Among the mechites, the job of librarian is a highly respected one, as the knowledge they maintain is some of the most important in the galaxy. They work constantly to keep their information in proper order and add to their data stores when possible.

Prerequisite: Mechite species

Skills: Choose one of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Computer Use, Craft (Electronics), Decipher Script, Forgery, Investigate, Knowledge (Art, Business, Civics, Earth and Life Sciences, History, Physical Sciences, Technology, Theology and Philosophy), Profession, Read/Write Language, Repair, Research, Search, Speak Language, Spot.

Bonus Feat: Educated, Meticulous or Studious.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +2

◇ Individualist

Most mechites spend their days in an occupation Librarian 102 has assigned to them in order to serve the greater good, but not all are content to serve the whims of others. A growing number of mechites, most of them young, pursue their own goals and contribute to the community in the way they find most appropriate. These individuals make no attempt to fit into mechite society and work to change it to fit them.

Prerequisite: Mechite

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

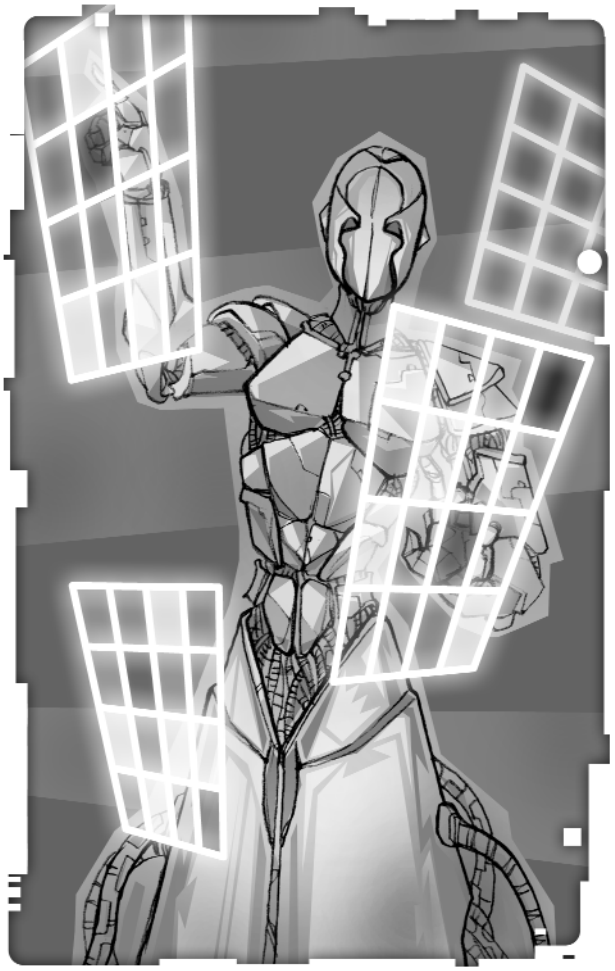
Computer Use, Craft (Any), Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Knowledge (Art, Behavioral Sciences, Business, Civics, Earth and Life Sciences, History, Physical Sciences, Technology, Theology and Philosophy), Perform (Any), Profession, Read/Write Language, Search, Sense Motive, Speak Language, Spot.

Bonus Feat: Creative, Builder, or Iron Will.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1

◇ Intermediary

The mechites have an increasing problem with working together toward common goals, giving birth to a new occupation within mechite society: intermediaries trained to facilitate cooperation among the mechites. These intermediaries receive little training, as Librarian 102's knowledge is limited, and face great difficulty in fulfilling their responsibilities. Even so, they hope that they can bring the mechites together as a society. Maybe someday they won't even need the Megacortex.



Prerequisite: Mechite species

Skills: Choose two of the following skills as permanent class skills. If a skill you select is already a class skill, you receive a +1 competence bonus on checks using that skill.

Bluff, Computer Use, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, Investigate, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences, Business, Civics, History, Theology and Philosophy), Listen, Profession, Read/Write Language, Research, Search, Sense Motive, Speak Language, Spot.

Bonus Feat: Attentive, Educated, or Trustworthy.

Wealth Bonus Increase: +1

FEAT • • •

◇ Calculated Shot

You are trained to mentally calculate where you should aim ranged attacks based on wind, distance, and other factors, allowing you greater accuracy than your hand-eye coordination would alone.

Prerequisite: Int 13+

Benefit: You may use your Intelligence bonus in addition to your Dexterity bonus when making ranged attacks by spending a full round action to make a single attack.

SPECIES CLASSES • • •

Coqui Scrapper

A rough and tumble species, coqui always seem to be looking for a fight. While this is not completely true, they do love confrontations, be they physical or verbal. Coqui enjoy winning arguments or competitions, but the confrontation is more important than the resolution to them, since it stirs up their otherwise difficult-to-excite emotions. Coqui who are particularly argumentative or involved in challenging others often have levels in Coqui Scrapper.



Class Information

The following information pertains to the Coqui Scrapper species class.

Hit Die
The Coqui Scrapper class gains 1d10 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points
The Coqui Scrapper class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Coqui Scrapper class skills are as follows. Climb (Str), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Species, Tactics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Coqui Scrapper species class.

Confrontation
At 1st level, the Coqui Scrapper gains a bonus to Intimidate skill checks equal to his class level.

Stone Fist
At 1st level, the Coqui Scrapper gains the ability to spend an action point to increase his unarmed melee damage as if he were one size level larger for one minute per level. This ability requires a free action to activate. The Coqui Scrapper's base unarmed damage becomes 1d6 nonlethal.

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level the Coqui Scrapper gains a bonus feat that must be selected from the list below. Alertness, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Powered), Blind-Fight, Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Damage Threshold, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus.

Increased Damage Reduction
At 3rd level the Coqui Scrapper's damage reduction changes to 4/lethal and 1/bludgeoning and concussive.

Coqui Scrapper

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+1	+0	+1	+1 Constitution, Confrontation, Stone Fist	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+2	+1 Strength, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+2	+1 Constitution, Increased Damage Reduction	+2	+0

◇ Mechite Computist

Mechites are obsessed with information, its manipulation, and its storage. Once the caretakers of Computer One, they are highly concerned with protecting information, especially so others may benefit from it. Mechites are a very patient, thorough, and purposeful species, even those who strive to prove their individuality; these traits make them effective at dealing with complex types of information, such as codes or strange languages. Mechites involved in the storage and manipulation of data often have levels in this class.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Mechite Computist species class.

Hit Die
The Mechite Computist class gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

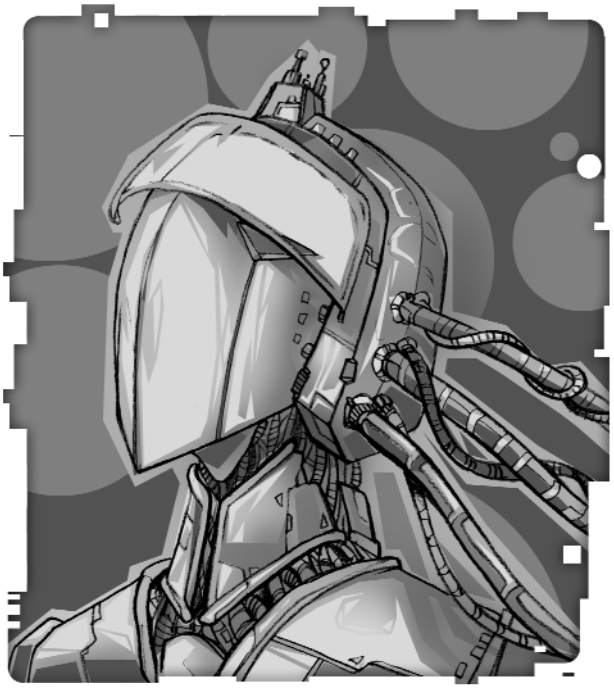
Action Points
The Mechite Computist class gains a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills
The Mechite Computist class skills are as follows.
Computer Use (Int), Craft (Electrical, Mechanical, Structural) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences, Earth and Life Sciences, History, Physical Sciences, Species, Tactics, Technology, Theology and Philosophy) (Int), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language.

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Mechite Computist species class.



Computer Mind
At 1st level the Mechite Computist gains a bonus to all Computer Use skill checks equal to his class level.

Patience
Beginning at 1st level, when the Mechite Computist takes 10 on a skill check, he also gains a +1 bonus to the skill check. When he takes 20 he gains a +2 bonus to the skill check.

Bonus Feat
At 2nd level, the Mechite Computist gains a bonus feat, selected from the list below.
Armor Proficiency (Light), Builder, Cautious, Dodge, Educated, Gearhead, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Meticulous, Starship Operation, Studious, Surface Vehicle Operation.

Mental Prowess
At 3rd level the Mechite Computist gains the ability to temporarily kick his programs and processors into high gear, requiring the expenditure of an action point to activate this ability. This ability lasts for ten minutes and grants the Mechite Computist a +4 bonus to Intelligence and a +4 bonus to all Will saves against psionics.

Mechite Computist

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+0	+1	+1 Intelligence, Computer Mind, Patience	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+2	+1 Intelligence, Bonus Feat	+2	+0
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+2	+1 Intelligence, Mental Prowess	+2	+0

◇ Avalanche Warrior

On Coqu, the homeworld of the coqui, it was believed that avalanches were signs of the Mountain God's anger, and those slain by avalanches had displeased the Mountain God in some way. The Torn Canyon faction capitalized on this belief by naming its elite soldiers avalanche warriors, depicting them in propaganda as the incarnation of the Mountain God's anger. The avalanche warriors became widely feared for their determination and ferocity in combat, willing to do nearly anything to complete a mission. While not fast moving, they were as unstoppable as their namesake once they began an attack. When the Warcouncil began organizing the efforts to save the coqui from destruction, the Torn Canyon faction quickly joined them, and the avalanche warriors became some of their primary agents. The avalanche warriors guarded Warcouncil operations from opposing factions and carried out punitive attacks to encourage other factions to join the cause. After the destruction of Coqu, the avalanche warriors have remained the elite troops of the Warcouncil and can be found at any large-scale coqui military operation. There are only a few hundred avalanche warriors, but they are the premier ground combat unit among the moons of Hesperos.

Select this advanced class if you wish to be a hard-hitting infantry soldier who can dish out and take large amounts of damage.

The quickest path to this advanced class is through the Strong hero basic class, though other paths are possible.

Requirements

To become an Avalanche Warrior, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Allegiance: Coqui Warcouncil
Base Attack Bonus: +3
Feats: Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Great Fortitude, Improved Damage Threshold, Personal Firearm Proficiency, Surface Vehicle Operation.
Skills: Drive 4 ranks, Knowledge (Tactics) 6 ranks, Spot 4 ranks.
Species: Coqui

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Avalanche Warrior advanced class.

Hit Die

The Avalanche Warrior gains 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Avalanche Warrior gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Avalanche Warrior's class skills are as follows.

Climb (Str), Demolitions (Int), Drive (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Tactics) (Int), Navigate (Int), Pilot (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Treat Injury (Wis)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier

Avalanche Warrior

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Avalanche Warrior Gear, Heavy Load, Heavy Armor Training	+1	+1
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Damage Reduction 2/-	+2	+1
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Stability, Exotic Firearms Proficiency	+3	+2
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Damage Reduction 3/-	+3	+2
6th	+6	+5	+2	+2	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+7	+5	+2	+2	Wield the Unwieldy	+4	+3
8th	+8	+6	+2	+2	Damage Reduction 4/-	+4	+3
9th	+9	+6	+3	+3	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+10	+7	+3	+3	Weapon Focus	+5	+4



Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Avalanche Warrior advanced class.

Avalanche Warrior Gear

At 1st level, the Warcouncil assigns the Avalanche Warrior the following equipment. This equipment will be replaced if lost, though it should not be sold, as it does not truly belong to the Avalanche Warrior. An Avalanche Warrior who repeatedly loses equipment may find it hard to get replacements.
Shoulder gun with 3 clips, hand cannon with 20 bullets, arm rocket with 4 rockets, mire axe, stoneguard armor, radio, 10 days of rations, 100 feet of rope, survival kit, 4 fragmentation grenades, flashlight.

Heavy Load

At 1st level, when determining the Avalanche Warrior's carrying capacity, his Strength receives a +4 bonus.

Heavy Armor Training

Beginning at 1st level, when the Avalanche Warrior wears heavy or powered armor, the Maximum Dexterity Bonus of the armor is increased by +1, the armor penalty of the armor is reduced by -2, and the Avalanche Warrior's movement is increased by +5 ft.

Damage Reduction

At 2nd level the Avalanche Warrior gains Damage Reduction 2/-. This does not stack with a coqui's species ability, but replaces it. If the Avalanche Warrior has Damage Reduction through the Damage Reduction talent tree, it does stack. The Damage Reduction increases to 3/- at 5th level and 4/- at 8th level.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, an Avalanche Warrior gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Avalanche Warrior must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Powered), Blind-Fight, Brawl, Cautious, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Exotic Firearms Proficiency, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Far Shot, Great Fortitude, Improved Brawl, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Improved Damage Threshold, Iron Will, Knockout Punch, Power Attack, Starship Operation, Streetfighting, Surface Vehicle Operation, Toughness, Weapon Focus.

Stability

At 4th level the Avalanche Warrior gains a +4 stability bonus on all rolls made to resist being tripped, overrun, knocked prone, or pushed back by a bull rush attack.

Exotic Firearms Proficiency

At 4th level the Avalanche Warrior receives the Exotic Firearms Proficiency as a bonus feat even if he does not meet the prerequisites of that feat. He must choose a class of heavy weapon to be proficient in.

Wield the Unwieldy

At 7th level the Avalanche Warrior may wield Huge weapons as if they were Large weapons.

Exotic Weapon Focus

At 10th level the Avalanche Warrior gains Weapon Focus as a bonus feat, and it applies to all weapons that require the Exotic Firearms Proficiency feat.

◇ Infomonger

Information is a respected and protected commodity among mechites, especially the data they still retain from the Star Confederation. Most mechites see information gathering and protection as their job, but some have a deeper appreciation for it and consider it a nearly holy calling. Mechites call these individuals infomongers, as they are often overly paranoid about the information they have, dedicating their existence to gathering and protecting knowledge for the benefit of others. These infomongers are usually younger mechites, feeling that their unwavering devotion to spreading knowledge is a sign of their individuality. They push for contact with the worlds beyond Hesperos, knowing there is a great deal of information out there to be gathered.

If you want to be an information gathering expert always chasing after lost relics of a dead civilization, this is the advanced class for you.

The quickest path to this advanced class is through the Smart hero basic class.

Requirements

To become an Infomonger, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Feats: Educated, Iron Will
Skills: Computer Use 6 ranks, Knowledge (any four) rank 6, Research 4 ranks
Species: Mechite
Talents: Linguistics, Savant (Computer use)

Class Information

The following information pertains to the Infomonger advanced class.

Hit Die

The Infomonger gains 1d6 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The Infomonger gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half its character level, rounded down, every time it attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The Infomonger's class skills are as follows. Computer Use (Int), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Disable Device (Int), Forgery (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Investigate (Int), Knowledge (Any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language, Repair (Int), Research (Int), Search (Int), Speak Language, Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 8 + Int modifier

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the Infomonger advanced class.

Walking Library

At 1st level, the Infomonger gains a bonus to all Knowledge skill checks equal to its class level.

Thorough

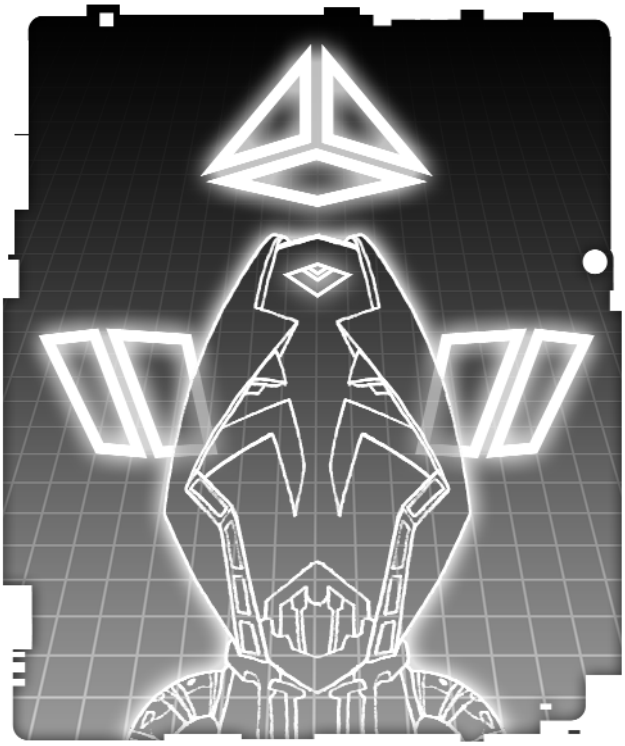
Beginning at 1st level, the Infomonger can take 20 on Decipher Script and Investigate skill checks.

Personal Library

At 2nd level, the Infomonger has acquired enough data to create its own personal library within his programming. By spending ten minutes browsing through this personal library, the Infomonger can gain a +4 bonus to a single Knowledge check.

Infomonger

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Walking Library, Thorough	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Personal Library, Smart Plus	+2	+0
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Bonus Feat	+2	+1
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Quick Decode, Jack-of-All-Trades	+3	+1
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Search the Megacortex	+3	+1
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus Feat	+3	+2
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Megacortex Reach	+4	+2
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Information Shield	+4	+2
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Bonus Feat	+5	+3
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Smart Plus	+5	+3



Smart Plus
At 2nd and 10th level the Infomonger gains Smart Plus as a bonus feat.

Bonus Feats
At 3rd, 6th and 9th level, an Infomonger gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Infomonger must be able to meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.
Alertness, Attentive, Cautious, Dodge, Educated, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Smart Plus, Studious, Xenomedic.

Quick Decode
Beginning at 4th level the Infomonger can make Decipher Script checks as a full round action instead of requiring a minute.

Jack-of-All-Trades
At 4th level, the Infomonger gains Jack-of-All-Trades as a bonus feat and does not need to meet its prerequisites.

Search the Megacortex
By 5th level the Infomonger has become an expert at navigating the Megacortex, able to find even obscure information in its massive data stores. With an hour of effort and a Research check (DC 20), the Infomonger gains a +8 circumstance bonus to a single Knowledge check. The Infomonger must be within 100 miles of the Megacortex, unless the character also has the Megacortex Reach class ability.

Megacortex Reach
At 7th level the Infomonger gains higher level access to the Megacortex and can now reach it from anywhere in the Helios system, but doing so takes thirty hours. The Infomonger may search the Megacortex anywhere in the system, but must wait at least thirty hours to gain the bonus to a single Knowledge check.

Information Shield
By 8th level the Infomonger's mind is an information-dense puzzle that psionicists have a hard time deciphering. The Infomonger gains a +4 bonus to Will saves against psionic powers.

EQUIPMENT

Despite the small populations of both Computer Three and Rockhome, they both have well developed industrial bases and manufacturing capabilities. The coqui planned ahead and packed lots of industrial equipment in the Stone of Hope before fleeing their homeworld, while the mechites use more advanced automated factories to produce goods with minimal supervision or effort. Other goods are made by hand, and a strong cottage industry has developed among the coqui. Even so, there is a lack of many amenities and consumer goods in both settlements; weapons, construction gear, and vehicles abound, while any form of entertainment and comfortable furniture are in short supply. Both settlements operate on rationing systems, so most people only receive what they need to survive. There are no shops in which to purchase additional goods. The black markets that usually spring up in such circumstances have not appeared so far, though an enterprising trader from another world could make a killing with the right goods. Such a trader would have to barter with the governments of Computer Three and Rockhome,

D20 MODERN EQUIPMENT ON THE MOONS OF HESPEROS

Any of the equipment from the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game except for firearms, armor, and vehicles may be found on Computer Three or Rockhome, though none of it is available on the other moons.

however, since individuals have no goods to trade. Weapons, computers, spaceship parts, or vehicles will find a ready market in the moons of Hesperos, but finding goods of value that the coqui or mechites will exchange for these items may be difficult. Neither society uses money, so transactions will have to be done by barter.

The coqui are just barely at Progress Level 6, and that is only due to the influence of the mechites, who are PL 8. The coqui are having a difficult time catching up to the mechites. The mechites on the other hand are not putting any effort towards developing new technologies, only perfecting existing ones, meaning they will not advance in Progress Level in the foreseeable future.

FUTURE EQUIPMENT ON THE MOONS OF HESPEROS

Only Progress Level 5 equipment is available on Rockhome. Some more advanced equipment that came from the mechites may be present, though it is not for sale.

On Computer Three, equipment of PL 7 and below is available except for weapons, explorer outfits, puritizers, survival suits, aqua converters, all chemicals other than solvaway, morphic disguise kits, all medkits, personal plastic surgery kit, violet rations, and projectile deflectors. PL 8 equipment is present, but is valuable and rarely traded. Most advanced equipment is vital to the defense of Computer Three or the maintenance of the Megacortex and its computer systems.

No equipment is available on the other moons of Hesperos.

WEAPONS • • •

◇ Coqui and Mechite Melee Weapons

Among the coqui, soldiers carry melee weapons according to tradition, but others tend to find their fists work well enough in most situations. Melee weapons were traditionally edged back on Coqu since they are resistant to blunt weapons, but in more recent years blunt weapons have become popular since they are less likely to accidentally kill a fellow coqui. Fighting is a common recreational activity and much of the population is skilled in the basics of melee combat, if only for the exercise value. It is the act of fighting that is important, not victory, unless it is a real combat, in which a coqui fights tooth and nail to survive.

The mechites are completely different in their view of close combat, finding it to be a barbaric form of warfare that is best avoided. Most mechites prefer the antiseptic quality of ranged combat, only engaging in melee when pressed. Mechite melee weapons are powered devices designed to end a fight as quickly as possible, though not necessarily by killing their opponent. In addition to the weapons listed below, the mechites have a few pain prods and psi prods (see pages 48-49).

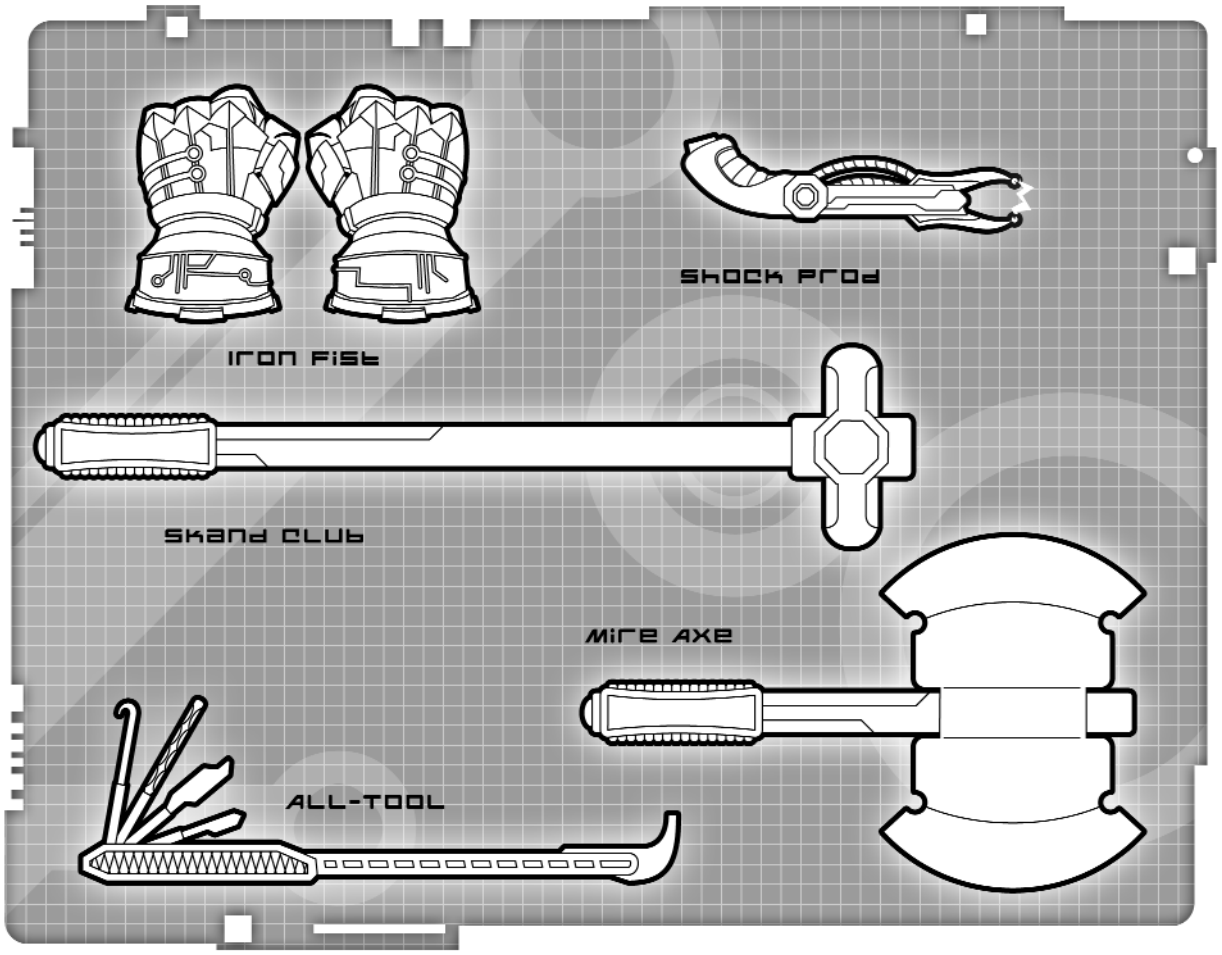
Neither the mechites nor coqui have laws regarding where melee weapons may be carried.

All-Tool

Not designed as a melee weapon but sometimes put to use as one, these crowbar-like tools are used by mechites to perform a number of tasks. They are designed to open containers, work with electrified surfaces, serve as handles for hydraulic jacks, and similar physical activities. Just over three feet long, these devices look something like a massive multi-function knife combined with a crowbar and are completely non-conductive. Although not designed as a weapon, they can be swung with sufficient force to be dangerous, especially when some of the tools are protruding from it. In addition to its use as weaponry, the all-tool functions as a crowbar and reduces any penalty to Repair or Craft checks due to lack of tools to -2.

Iron Fist

A heavy metal glove weighted for punching, iron fists are common among coqui soldiers as a back-up weapon. The wearer suffers a -2 penalty to Sleight of Hand checks, but otherwise receives no penalties and can wield other weapons normally. The wielder of an iron fist gains a +1 bonus to unarmed combat damage, either lethal or non-lethal, and uses their normal critical for unarmed combat. Disagreements between coqui are often settled by fistfights using iron fists to ensure that the two combatants can hurt each other.



Mire Axe

A recent adaptation of an ancient coqui weapon, the mire axe is a heavy-bladed battleaxe wielded with one hand that was designed to cut through the tough skin of coqui. Since interspecies warfare has died down of late, this weapon is rarely used, though in the last few years it has seen a minor resurgence. Now mire axes cut through the moss and lichen that are common across Rockhome, especially in the swamps of the equatorial region.



Shock Prod

The primarily melee weapon of the mechites, this weapon is little more than an advanced taser or short cattle prod. This two-foot rod delivers a powerful electric shock to anything that touches the striking end of the weapon while it is active. Designed for use as a club in addition to a shock weapon, most mechites prefer to just poke targets with it until they are rendered immobile for fear of inflicting serious injuries. These items are only carried by mechites expecting to deal with other species, since mechites are immune to paralysis.

A target struck with an active shock prod takes 1d4 points of electricity damage and must make a Fortitude save (DC 19) or be paralyzed for 1d10 rounds. This weapon runs off of a Star Confederation power pack and consumes one charge each time it strikes.

Skand Club

A ceremonial weapon of the coqui, it was long considered a dueling weapon used to end disputes. Skand clubs are large iron weapons similar to a sledgehammer, only with a more rounded head. It is usually used with two hands, but this is not required.

Coqui and Mechite Melee Weapons

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
All-Tool (Simple)	6	1d6	20	Bludgeoning/ Piercing	M	3 lb.	13	-
Iron Fist (Simple)	3	Special*	Special*	Bludgeoning	T	6 lb.	8	-
Mire Axe (Archaic)	3	1d8	x3	Slashing	M	8 lb.	7	-
Shock Prod (Simple)	7	1d6/1d4	20	Bludgeoning/ Electricity	M	3 lb.	19	-
Skand Club (Archaic)	3	1d8	x3	Bludgeoning	M	12 lb.	7	-

*See weapon description for details.

◇ Coqui and Mechite Ranged Weapons

As is the case with much of their military doctrine, the coqui favor ranged weapons that inflict serious damage over weapons with a high rate of fire or superior range. Due to their great strength, many coqui foot soldiers carry a heavy weapon of some type. This enables the coqui to mount hard-hitting attacks, but sometimes run into ammunition and staying power issues unless their troops have close vehicle support. Firearms are rare among the coqui civilian population on a day-to-day basis, but all have easy access to firearms in the many armories spread throughout Daljeen and the Stone of Hope. The coqui have no laws regarding where ranged weapons, including heavy weapons, may be carried, but most consider it foolhardy to carry weapons around except when needed.

The mechites' ranged weapons were brought from Computer One, most of which are nonlethal in design and more concerned with quelling internal conflicts and keeping the peace than fighting a war. The mechites have few hard-hitting heavy weapons, instead arming themselves with stun weapons that can debilitate a target fairly easily but do little long-term damage. When faced with a threat, the mechites prefer to stun the threat into submission from as far away as possible, having little talent or inclination for combat, though some of the younger mechites are showing more of an interest in martial skills. The mechites are starting to import some weapons from the coqui, and already some spinner machineguns and shoulder guns are in mechite armories. The mechites have no laws concerning where one can carry firearms, though anyone who carries a gun when the city is not under threat is seen as something of an alarmist.

Arm Rocket

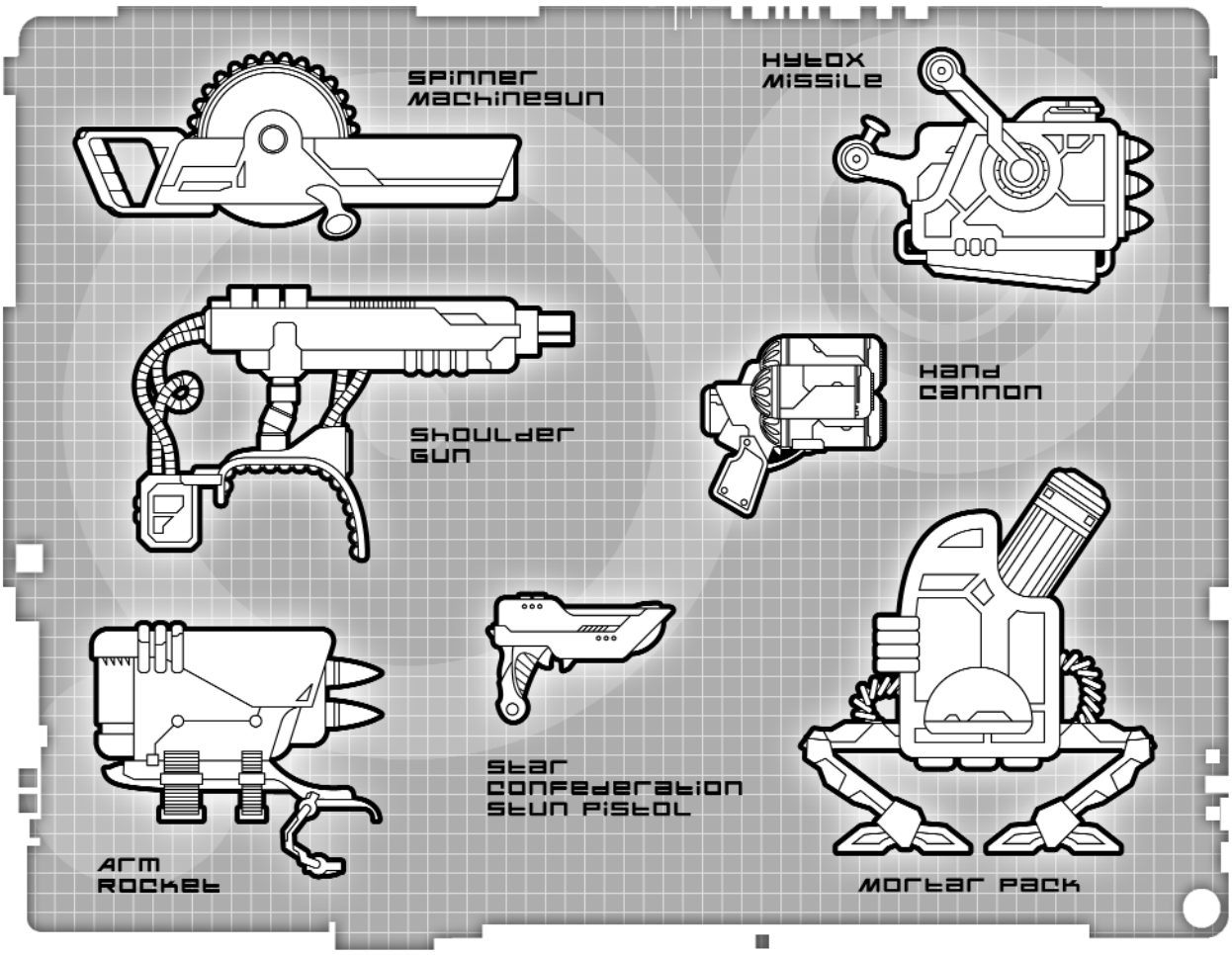
Designed to put the power of a rocket launcher in the hand of every infantry soldier, it consists of a pair of six-inch rockets that are attached to the forearm in an armored shell. When activated by a button in the palm of the hand, the armored shell opens and launches one of the rockets using compressed air. After the rocket travels twenty feet, its engine ignites and carries it to the target. Arm rockets are equipped with high explosive heads and inflict 2d6 points of damage to anyone within 5 feet of the point of impact. Reloading an arm rocket requires two standard actions.

Hand Cannon

A coqui handgun of immense caliber, creatures with a Strength of less than 15 suffer 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage and a -2 penalty to hit when firing the hand cannon from the immense recoil involved. A hand cannon carries four rounds, each of which has its own breech-loaded barrel, and each of the four barrels requires a standard action to reload. The barrels may not be fired simultaneously, as doing so would put too much stress on the weapon and destroy it, though it may be fired in quick succession. Hand cannons are popular among coqui infantry, though they are rarely used on the Stone of Hope for fear of punching a hole in the hull.

Hytox Missile

Disposable portable missile launchers used by the coqui, these weapons usually come in backpacks that hold six of these weapons in collapsed form. The weapon takes a standard action to prepare for use, and is discarded once expended. Hytox missiles fire high-explosive armor-piercing warheads that are designed for use against ground vehicles, though some boarding units on the Stone of Hope have been equipped with Hytox missiles to



blow holes in the hulls of enemy ships during boarding actions. They ignore 5 points of hardness of any object they strike, and inflict 2d6 points of concussive damage to anyone within 10 feet of the point of impact.

Mortar Pack

A weapon used by units of coqui heavy infantry, a mortar pack is essentially a collapsible mortar built into a heavy backpack. When activated, it deploys legs out from the bottom of the backpack frame to steady it, and a heads-up display worn by the user acts as the aiming system. The mortar pack then hurls a heavy shell at its target. Reloading the mortar pack's six-shell magazine requires one minute. The mortar pack takes a full round action to deploy and a full round action to fire. A mortar pack may not be fired at a target closer than 100 ft.

Shoulder Gun

A common weapon among coqui infantry, shoulder guns are the equivalent of assault rifles among the coqui. Similar in design and size to a submachine gun, a shoulder gun is attached to motors that turn the weapon wherever the head is looking as determined by a pair of glasses containing a heads-up display. This allows the user to carry other weapons while using the shoulder gun, which is activated by voice command or a button attached to one hand. A flexible case carried on the opposite shoulder holds a belt of its ammunition. While the shoulder gun requires no hands to use, it still must be aimed like any other weapon and follows the normal rules for attack actions.

Spinner Machinegun

A heavy machinegun used by the coqui, it is rather unusual in that it uses centrifugal force to fire ball bearings at high velocity rather than using gunpowder or other propellant. The weapon has a large disc sticking out of its top. This disc spins several thousand times per minute while the weapon is in use with several dozen ball bearings inside being spun around inside the disk. When the trigger is pulled, a hole opens in the edge of the disk, causing the ball bearings to escape down the barrel of the gun, and do so in great quantity if the trigger is held down. The weapon is devastating due to its high rate of fire, and is quieter than other machineguns. It can work in a vacuum without modification and has no recoil.

Coqui and Mechite Ranged Weapons

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Arm Rocket**	5	5d8	20	Concussion	50 ft.	S	2 int.	Small	8 lb.	24	Military (+3)
Hand Cannon	5	2d12	20	Ballistic	30 ft.	S	4 int.	Med	10 lb.	20	Military (+3)
Hytox Missile**	5	5d10	20	Concussion	100 ft.	Single	1 int.	Med	9 lb.	19	Military (+3)
Mortar Pack****	5	5d12	20	Concussion	200 ft.	S	5 int.	Large	45 lb.	28	Military (+3)
Shoulder Gun	5	2d6	20	Ballistic	60 ft.	S, A	50 box	Med	16 lb.	25	Res (+2)
Spinner Machinegun***	5	2d12	20	Ballistic	90 ft.	A	500 linked	Huge	72 lb.	28	Military (+3)
Star Confederation Stun Pistol	8	1d8	20	Electricity	60 ft.	S	50 box	Small	5 lb.	40	Res (+2)

*Unless otherwise noted these weapons fall under the Personal Firearms Proficiency.

**These weapons fall under the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Missile Launchers) feat.

***This weapon falls under the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Heavy Machineguns) feat.

****This weapon falls under the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Mortars) feat.

When using the autofire setting, characters in the affected area must make a Reflex save (DC 17) to avoid being hit, but the weapon uses 20 rounds each time it uses autofire.

Star Confederation Stun Pistol

The only common ranged weapon among the mechites, the Star Confederation stun pistol incapacitates living beings with an electric charge delivered through a path of charged particles. This weapon does little actual damage, but paralyzes the target for a short time. The mechites use these to defend Mechapolis One, but rely on the coqui for heavier weapons.

A target struck by a Star Confederation stun pistol suffers 1d8 points of electricity damage and must make a Fortitude save (DC 19) or be paralyzed for 1d8 rounds. The target gets an additional Fortitude save save each round they are paralyzed to break free of the effect, and receives a cumulative +1 bonus to their Fortitude for each round they are paralyzed. A Star Confederation stun pistol uses a Star Confederation power pack and consumes two charges per shot.

◇ Ammunition

Ammunition for weapons on Rockhome is difficult to come by, since the Warcouncil controls all weapon stores. If one is not willing to steal ammunition, one must approach the Warcouncil to acquire ammunition, and they are stingy with such a precious resource. Heavy weapon ammunition is especially difficult to find, though the coqui weapons are not so advanced that the Dawning Star Republic or the Wolf Tribes could not produce their ammunition given sufficient time. Mechite weapons rely on Star Confederation power packs, and they have many of these packs (see page 50) and the means to recharge them. The mechites cannot build more Star Confederation power packs, however, and thus are reluctant to give them away.

Ammunition

Ammunition Type (Quantity)	Damage Type	Purchase DC
Arm Rocket (6)	Concussion	13
Hand Cannon Rounds (40)	Ballistic	9
Mortar Pack Round (1)	Concussion	8
Shoulder Gun Clip (50)	Ballistic	4
Spinner Machinegun (500)	Ballistic	10

ARMOR • • •

◇ Coqui and Mechite Armor

Coqui see armor as a necessary part of combat, the heavier the better. Troops make regular use of powered armor, though most foot soldiers wear heavy armor. The crew of the *Stone of Hope* and scouts commonly wear lighter armors, but most coqui prefer the comforting weight and feel of heavy armor. Soldiers wear armor as a uniform, even when not expecting combat. Most armor was brought from Coqu, but an armor factory under construction in Daljeen will soon produce new suits.

Among the mechites armor is rare, as they are not programmed or inclined toward war. They have several suits of Star Confederation armor, but it is light or medium armor and not top of the line equipment. It is intended for civilian police forces and is not as effective as heavier Star Confederation armor. The mechites only wear armor when they are under attack, and consider doing so at other times to be a sign of paranoia.

◇ Light Armor

Operational Armor

Used by coqui assigned to the *Stone of Hope* and surface vehicle units, this light armor sacrifices protection for mobility, but is still heavier than the light armor used by other species. Operational armor is made up of a ballistic cloth jumpsuit, with high-impact plastic plates covering vital areas. The suit can be sealed against a vacuum, but only has a six-hour air supply. It also comes with a built-in radio.

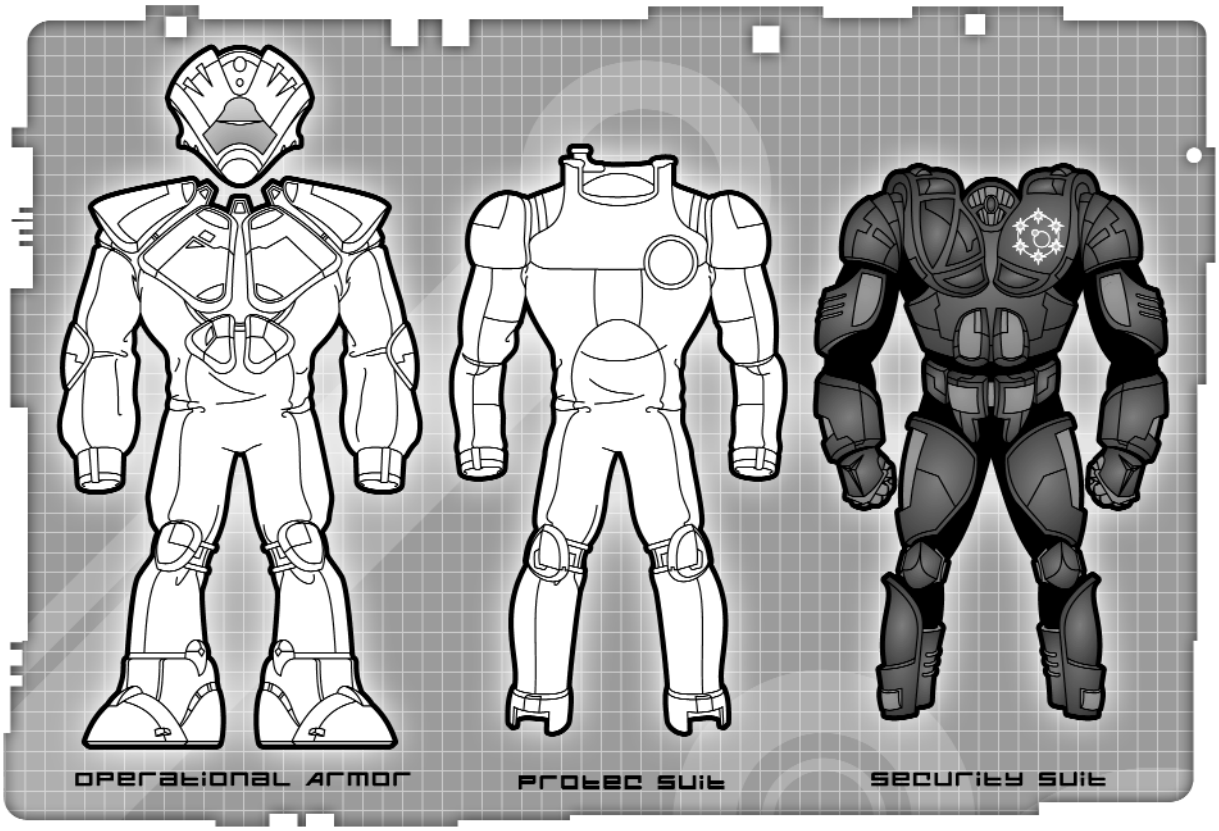
Protec Suit

The Star Confederation designed protec suits for police and security officers who were not expected to face heavy combat, favoring comfort, mobility, and a non-alarming appearance to heavier armor. The end result is armor that is not very protective, but looks more like a tight-fitting uniform. Computer One had hundreds of suits of protec armor on board, most of which were sent with the *Seeker of Knowledge* and are now stored on Computer Three in case of emergency. Protec armor grants its wearer energy, fire, cold, acid, radiation, and sonic resistance of 3 and comes with a built in polyvox and universal communicator.

◇ Medium Armor

Security Suit

Built for Star Confederation officers of the peace who were expected to face combat, only a few dozen suits were assigned to Computer One, most of which are now in the armories of Mechapolis One. Security armor was meant for light combat or riot duty and looks suitably imposing, painted black with a Star Confederation emblem on its chest. Security suits grant the wearer energy, fire, cold, acid, radiation, and sonic resistance of 6, damage reduction 2/-, and include a built-in projectile deflector, universal communicator, and an armacomp sensor.



◇ Heavy Armor

Stoneguard Armor

The standard heavy combat armor of the coqui, this suit of ceramic armor is tough and effective, but slows down the wearer greatly. The coqui do not mind, finding the weight of the armor comforting and favoring its large and intimidating appearance, which resembles a creature of coqui legend. Stoneguard armor includes an onboard computer and radio, allowing it to link up to other suits and command computers to coordinate maneuvers.

Void Armor

Worn by coqui assault crews, void armor is designed for boarding operations against ships the Stone of Hope has disabled. Fully environmentally sealed with a thirty-hour air supply, it also comes with magnetized boots, 5 grappler tags, 500 feet of duracable, a radio and onboard computer, a heads-up display, 2 portable glow lamps, and a jet pack. The armor grants the wearer cold and fire resistance 4. Standard attack procedure for the Stone of Hope is to board any ship that comes within 500 feet using boarding teams deployed via grapple lines. The boarding teams attempt to take control of the ship, or failing that, destroy it.

◇ Powered Armor

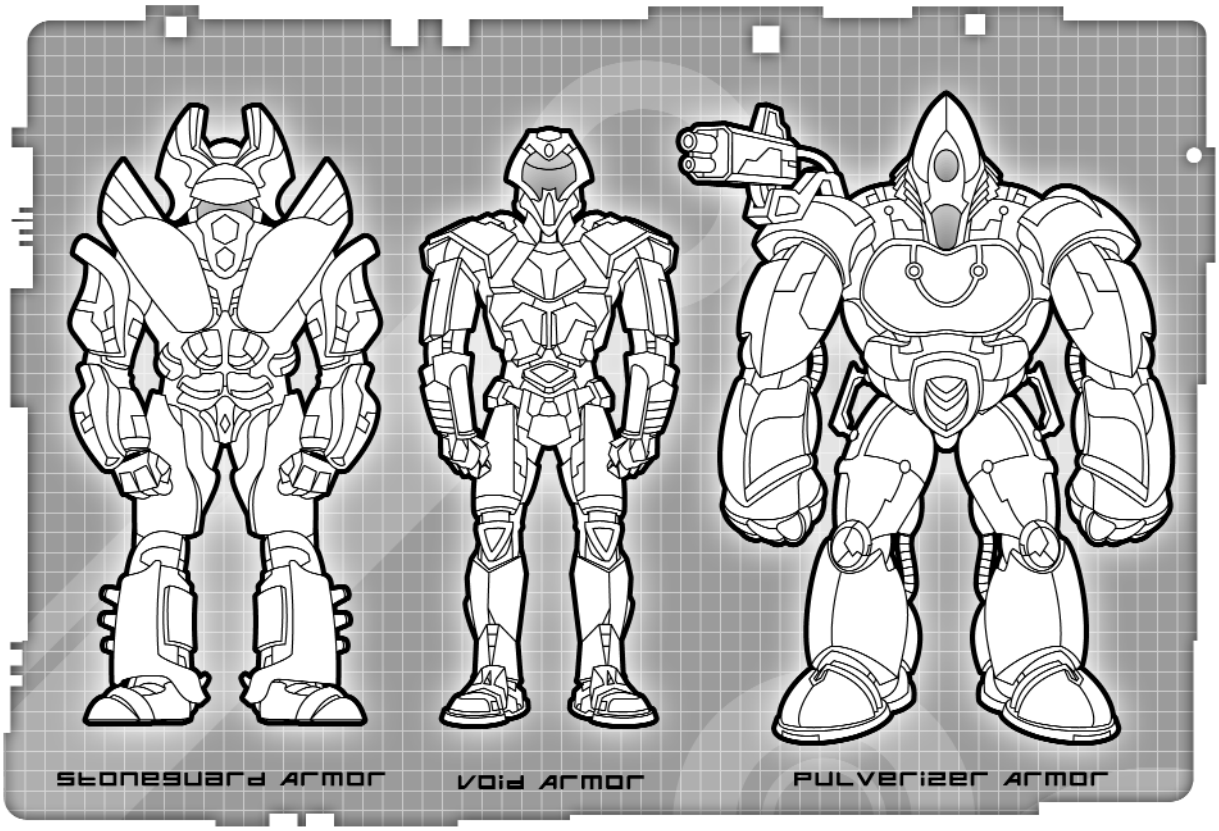
Pulverizer Armor

Only a score of these suits of armor exist, as they are a recent product of coqui armor development with assistance from the mechites. Pulverizer armor is a suit of stoneguard armor with increased armor plating and a powered exoskeleton installed, as the armor would otherwise be too heavy for even coqui to use effectively. It is the first joint product created by mechites and coqui, and was designed for anti-boarding soldiers on the *Stone of Hope*. It has yet to be tested in real combat, but the coqui are looking forward to that day.

Pulverizer armor grants the wearer a +4 equipment bonus to Strength, damage reduction of 4/-, and energy, fire, cold, acid, sonic, and radiation resistance of 6. It is environmentally sealed with a sixty-hour air, food, and water supply. It also includes a universal communicator, onboard computer, and shoulder gun.

COMPUTERS • • •

On Computer Three, computers are everywhere. The mechites are more comfortable with them than with living beings, and use them in nearly every activity in some fashion. Many of the backup computers from Computer One were used in the creation of the *Seeker of Knowledge*, and those parts have since been used in the construction of Mechapolis One. Even automatic doors and elevators have complex circuits that are linked over the wireless network of the Megacortex, through which mechites can also link to each other. Mechites use computers primarily for research and information storage, but rarely need them for personal matters, having enough memory and computing power to handle such things on their own. One of their primary uses is keeping intact the data stores they

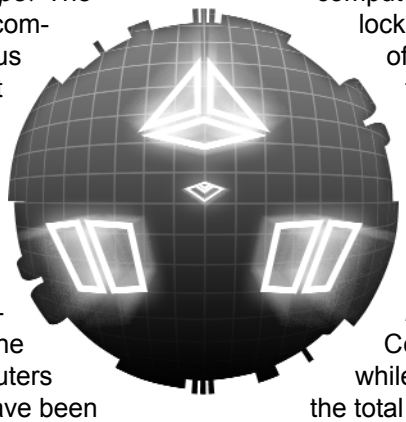


Armor of Hesperos

	PL	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Light Armor										
Operational Armor	5	Tactical	+3	+1	+4	-1	30 ft./20 ft.	10 lb.	14	-
Protec Suit	8	Concealed	+5	+1	+6	-1	30 ft./20 ft.	5 lb.	25	-
Medium Armor										
Security Armor	8	Tactical	+8	+2	+4	-2	25 ft./15 ft.	12 lb.	29	-
Heavy Armor										
Stoneguard Armor	6	Tactical	+8	+3	+1	-6	20 ft./15 ft.	30 lb.	24	Res (+2)
Void Armor	6	Tactical	+8	+3	+1	-8	20 ft./15 ft.	52 lb.	25	Res (+2)
Powered Armor										
Pulverizer Armor	7	Tactical	+12	+3	+0	-10	15 ft./-	100 lb.	26	Mil (+3)

brought from Computer One, which they consider to be one of their primary duties. This takes up immense amounts of computer storage, but still only comprises a small part of Computer One's data stores. Any mechite may access this information, but outsiders are not offered such free access.

Computers are far less common on Rockhome, and nearly all are under the control of the Warcouncil. Individual coqui do not own computers, since they are all used in industry or defense matters, primarily on the *Stone of Hope*. The only type of readily-used portable computers are those built into various types of armor the coqui use, but these have limited functionality. The coqui brought many computers with them, but they were already assigned roles in the colonization effort. Every computer on Rockhome is in near-constant use, and their ability to produce replacement parts is severely restricted. The coqui have received a few computers from the mechites, most of which have been used to upgrade the *Stone of Hope*. This trend, trading weapons for computers, is likely to increase in magnitude in the near future.



The Megacortex

Overseer 12 created the Megacortex as a massive wireless network system that the mechites could use to reach a consensus on important decisions, easing their struggle to deal with their newfound independence. Controlled by the artificial intelligence entity Librarian 102, it is a massive forum for discussion and voting for the mechites. Its ability to assist them has declined, however, as more mechites disrupt discussions or do not take part as a display of their individuality. The future of the Megacortex as a form of democratic government seems to be in doubt.

In addition to acting as a forum, the Megacortex links the computers in Mechapolis One, along with the mechites, in a wireless network with a range of 100 miles beyond the city. Within this range, devices can communicate with no time delay. Mechites can also use devices remotely, opening doors ahead of them or getting files from another computer. Each mechite can choose to lock certain devices in his possession off from other mechites, a practice that was once rare but is now startlingly common. The Megacortex is becoming more factionalized over time as mechites mark off portions as being theirs.

The Megacortex also stores the data that the *Seeker of Knowledge* carried away from Computer One. This information, while vast, is less than one percent of the total information contained in Computer One and includes primarily information that the mechites might need to complete their goal. There is little on weapons design, advanced medical treatments, or the history of distant star systems, for example, but large amounts of information on the history and geography of the Helios system, repairing robots such as the mechites, and data on the function and repair of Star Confederation space travel technology, including ship engines and gateway stations. Though other factions in the Helios system would benefit from this knowledge, it is not as all encompassing as most would hope. Still, it provides the best hope for repairing the gateway station and finding a way out of the Helios system.

ATMOSPHERIC AND SURFACE VEHICLES • • •

Computer One had few land vehicles assigned to it, mostly passenger or light cargo vehicles designed to operate on the interior roads and low gravity of Computer One. These vehicles are of little use in an undeveloped setting like Computer Three, so several of these were rebuilt as more robust machines, with vectored-thrust capabilities due to a lack of gravity control modules. Even now there are only a few dozen vehicles in Mechapolis One, most of which are passenger transports or scout vehicles. They have a handful of armed and armored vehicles, and had no vehicular weapons prior to their arrival on Computer Three. They are trading with the coqui to gain more suitable weapons. The mechites rely on a supersonic magnetic rail system to travel between settlements.

The coqui have large-capacity, heavy ground vehicles and brought many of them on the Stone of Hope for the colonization effort. The coqui do not particularly care for aircraft, preferring to fly strictly to reach orbit, and thus use of ground vehicles more than other species. Most of their vehicles are wheeled or tracked, as they have not developed into any sort of hovercraft. The coqui have also built four-legged walker vehicles called crawlers, which they use in particularly difficult terrain (see Mecha below). Most coqui vehicles run off of electrical batteries instead of fusion reactors, as their fusion reactors are not small or safe enough for vehicle use.

Gravelmaker Heavy Tank

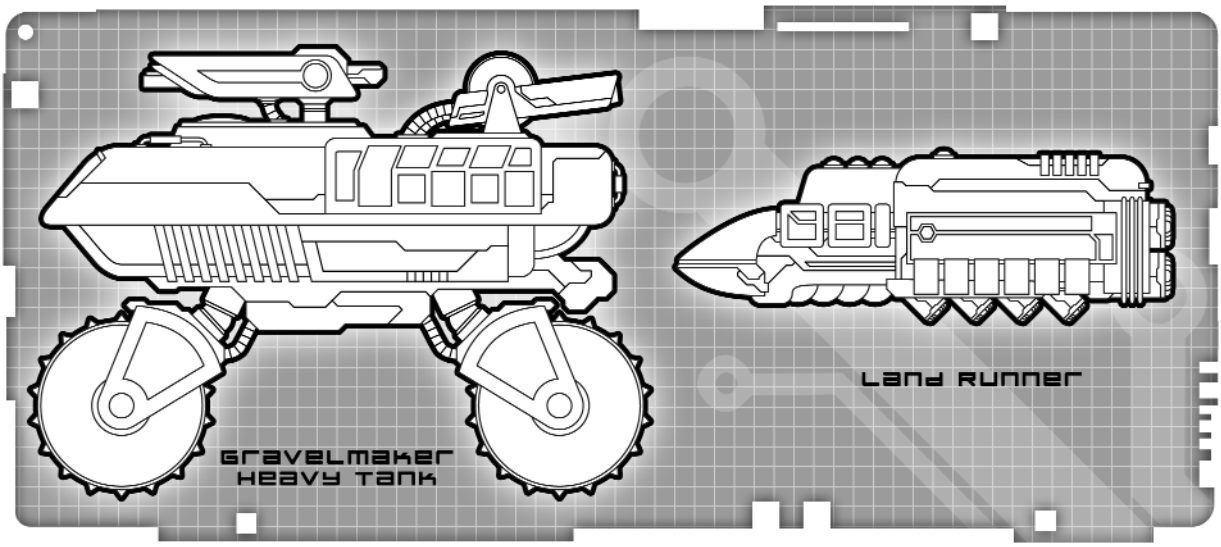
The primary coqui ground combat vehicle, it also sees use as a cargo hauler due to its modular design. The gravelmaker relies on two massive armored, treaded, and spiked drums for mobility, one on front and back of the vehicle. The center of the vehicle is raised several feet off the ground and has two joints allowing it to turn both drums, giving the vehicle remarkable maneuverability for its size. The standard combat version includes a large turret on the main body of the vehicle and two spinner machinegun turrets for anti-infantry support. Normally the main turret sports a 110 Assault Cannon, but it can be exchanged for a Skylance Missile launcher for anti-aircraft duty. When the gravelmaker is used for cargo duty, the turret is replaced with a covered cockpit, and a tow cable drags a trailer behind it. The coqui have sixty gravelmakers in their armory, stationed within or near Daljeen.

The gravelmaker is three squares wide and five squares long. It runs off an electric battery that has a range of 200 miles fully charged, and it takes 4 hours to recharge from heavy power outlets commonly available in Daljeen or on the *Stone of Hope*. The gravelmaker comes standard with alumisteel armor. An unarmed gravelmaker has a Purchase DC of 42.

Land Runner

The most common mechite vehicle for travel on Computer Three, the land runner is a light vectored-thrust vehicle that holds four passengers and a sizeable amount of cargo in its covered rear cargo area. The sleek craft stays aloft with thrusters around its bottom and is propelled forward by a larger thruster, allowing it to fly at heights of up to five thousand feet and at speeds approaching the speed of sound, though it usually travels at much lower speeds and altitudes. The land runner is mainly used for cargo runs within Mechapolis One, and is a common sight in the city. Many mechites are knowledgeable in its operation, but there is a lengthy approval process to gain permission to pilot a land runner. It is powered by a fusion reactor with a two hundred year life.

The land runner is two squares wide and three squares long. It comes standard without armor plating, but that may be easily added. They are not normally armed, though some mechites have added spinner machineguns in rooftop mounts for security vehicles.



Vehicles of Hesperos

Name	PL	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Maneuver	Top Speed	Defense	Hard	Hit Points	Size	Purchase DC	Restriction
Gravelmaker Heavy Tank	5	3	0	500 lb.	-5	-3	35 (3)	13	15	68	H	45	Mil (+3)
Land Runner	8	1	3	2 tons	+0	+2	450 (45)	8	15	44	H	47	Lic (+1)

VEHICLE WEAPONS • • •

110 Assault Cannon

The standard cannon of the gravelmaker heavy tank, this weapon fires a solid armor-piercing shell that relies on sheer force to punch through armor plating. It ignores the first 10 points of hardness of any object it strikes, and if it reduces an object to 0 hit points it completely penetrates that object and keeps going. Compare the attack roll against the Defense of the next object in the path of the shell; if the attack roll after a -2 penalty would hit the second target, it is struck as well, but only takes half damage from the shell. This process continues, with an additional -2 to the attack roll for each target struck, until the assault cannon shell strikes a target that it does not destroy. Reloading the 110 assault cannon is a full round action that requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Heavy Cannons).

Skylance Missile Launcher

A portable, modular, and configurable missile system, the skylance is one of the coqui's most advanced weapon systems. It may be disassembled into ten sets of man-portable equipment, each weighing fifty pounds. The system may also be mounted on a gravelmaker tank in place of its assault cannon for anti-aircraft duty. Lastly, the skylance missile launcher may be configured for either ground-to-air or ground-to-ground combat, though the configuration process takes one minute as the targeting computer reboots itself. The skylance missile launcher grants its operator a +2 equipment bonus on attack rolls, though if used to attack air units while configured for ground-to-ground operation or vice versa, the launcher inflicts a -4 penalty to attack rolls. Reloading takes one minute per missile and requires the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Missile Launchers).

Two primary warheads are available for skylance missile launchers. High explosive missiles inflict 5d10 damage on their target and 4d6 on all targets within 15 feet of the point of impact. Armor piercing missiles ignore 10 points of hardness and inflict 5d12 damage on their target.

CYBERNETICS ON THE MOONS OF HESPEROS

Neither the coqui nor the mechites make use of cybernetics. Coqui technology is insufficient, and their physiology is incompatible with the cybernetics of other species. The mechites can use implants just as they can robotic systems, but prefer not to use cybernetics.

Vehicle Weapons of Hesperos

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
110 Assault Cannon	5	6d10	20	Ballistic	400 ft.	S	6	H	1,000 lb.	27	Mil (+3)
Skylance Missile Launcher	5	Varies[1]	20	Concussion	700 ft.	S	1	H	500 lb.	27	Mil (+3)

[1] see weapon description

MECHA • • •

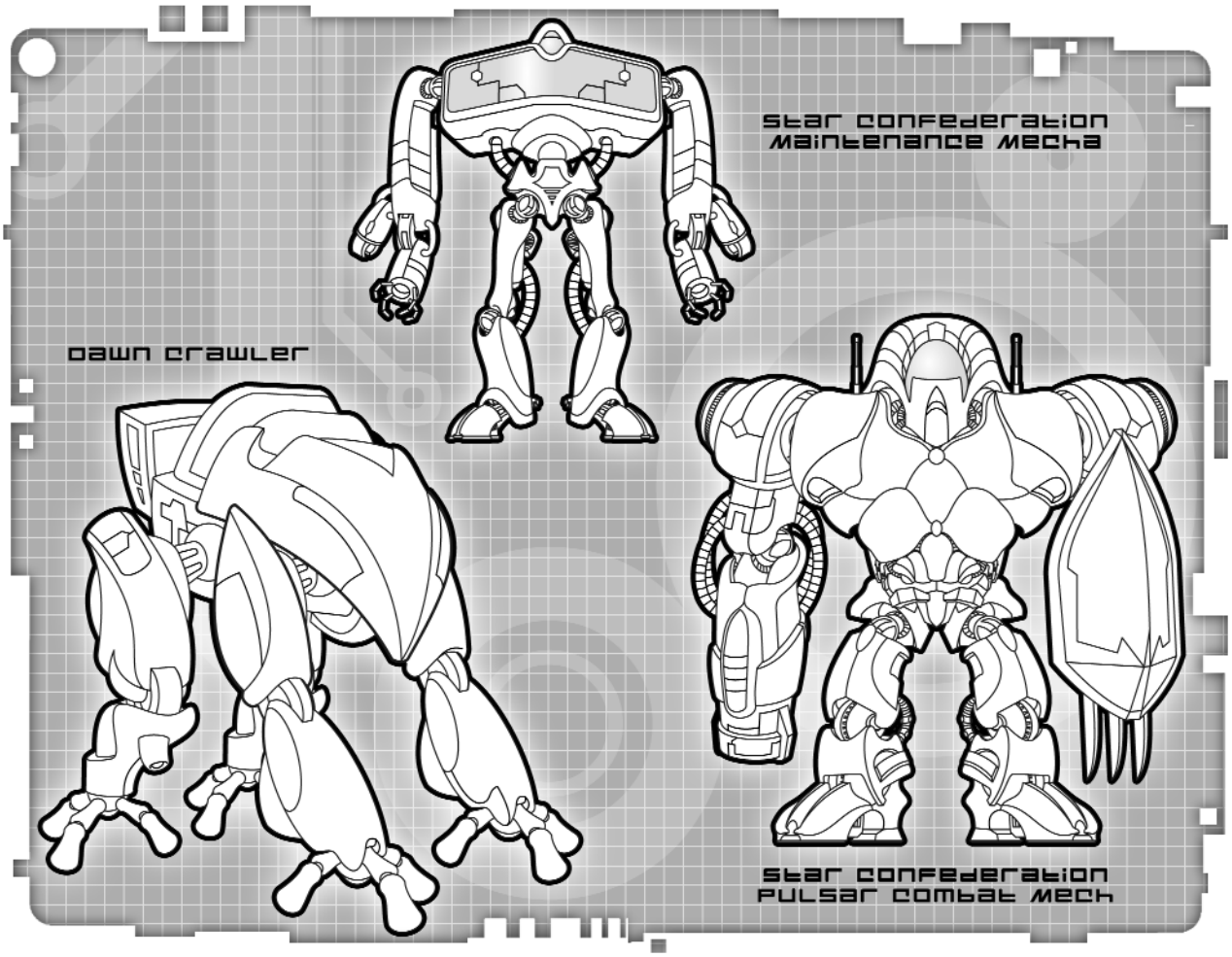
Coqui and mechites use of mecha, but in far different ways. Coqui mecha are primarily four-legged vehicles used to explore difficult terrain and engage in combat. The mountainous terrain of Rockhome makes most ground vehicles useless outside of relatively flat areas, and the four-legged crawlers are especially useful since they can traverse uneven terrain easily. Though the crawlers do not possess the heavy armor plating of a gravelmaker heavy tank, they are well suited for their intended cause. Some crawlers have been modified for space combat, with magnetized boots and limited flight capabilities, and stationed on the *Stone of Hope*, but most patrol the outskirts of Daljeen and other coqui settlements.

The mechites rely on mecha for less martial purposes, and there were several score construction, maintenance, and space combat mecha stationed on Computer One before it was disabled. While some of these were disassembled to build the *Seeker of Knowledge*, several of the remaining suits were sent with it. Most are small for mecha and are unarmed, with only a handful of combat mechs still functional. The construction and maintenance mechs are stationed in Mechapolis One, though a few are on the *Stone of Hope*. The combat mechs are currently serving as Mechapolis One's primary defensive force, though they have been trained to operate from the *Stone of Hope* if required. These combat mechs are military surplus, however, salvaged by Computer One from a junk heap. They are not as impressive as a top of the line Star Confederation combat mech.

Dawn Crawler

The most recent crawler design, it was put into service just before Coqu was destroyed, and the twenty-five crawlers assigned to the Stone of Hope were the first units off the production line. The dawn crawler is a heavily armored crawler used primarily for combat duty, but since arriving on Rockhome it has been a cargo vehicle for establishing new settlements beyond Daljeen. The dawn crawler can traverse most types of terrain and can be submerged for up to eight hours, though after a dawn crawler was lost to the swamps of Rockhome, their operation was limited to the mountain regions. The coqui have no capacity to produce the complex gyroscopes used in the dawn crawler, so they are loath to put them in unnecessary danger.

Five dawn crawlers have been modified for duty on board the *Stone of Hope*, adding a jetpack and space skin to the dawn crawler's equipment.



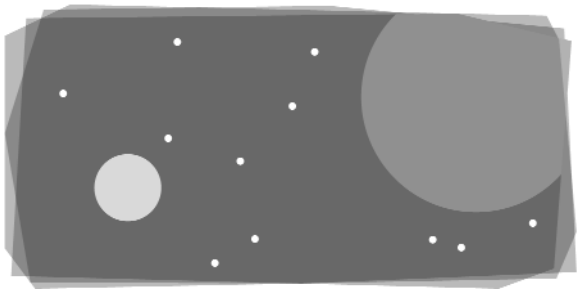
Size: Gargantuan (-4 size)
Superstructure: Duralloy
Armor: Duralloy
Armor Penalty: -6
Strength Bonus: +24
Speed: 45 ft.
Bonus Hit Points: 400
Hardness: 15
Bonus to Defense: +8
Reach: 15 ft.
Dexterity Penalty: -2
Base Purchase DC: -
Special Equipment Package: Class I sensor system (head), Warpath recoilless rifle with 3 20 round magazines (left arm), M-9 Barrage chaingun with 400 rounds (torso), M-87 Talon missile launcher (left shoulder), comm system, life support system.

Star Confederation Maintenance Mecha

A moderate-szed mecha that was once common in the Star Confederation, several of these were used in the construction of Computer One and kept on after its completion for maintenance duties. These vaguely humanoid mecha are designed to be walking toolkits with the strength to lift debris and other heavy objects in the performance of their duties. On Computer One they were usually operated remotely by artificial intelligence entities, as the androids lacked the programming to pilot them, but since their upgrade several mechites have received training in their use. These mecha were vital in the construction of Mechapolis One and the continued expansion of the mechite settlements. Though they may be useful if converted for combat, they are currently needed in their construction roles. There are currently ten maintenance mecha in Mechapolis One.

With the specialized tools on the maintenance mecha, the operator can make Repair or Craft checks from inside the mech with a +2 bonus, and has any sort of tool kit he needs.

Size: Huge (-2 size)
Superstructure: Megatanium
Armor: Megatanium
Armor Penalty: -10
Strength Bonus: +16
Speed: 30 ft.
Bonus Hit Points: 200
Hardness: 30
Bonus to Defense: +12
Reach: 10 ft.
Dexterity Penalty: -0
Base Purchase DC: -
Special Equipment Package: Ramjet thruster boots (boots), Class IV sensor system, LX-20 anti-shock array, medium fortification, comm system, life support system, space skin, advanced diagnostics (torso), zero-G stabilizer (head).



Star Confederation Pulsar Combat Mech

The height of Star Confederation mecha design many years before the outbreak of the war with the vaasi, the Pulsar was designed to assault capital ships at point-blank range and rip into their hulls, destroying weapon emplacements and other important systems in close combat. As point defense systems became more advanced, this tactic became less successful without heavier armor plating than the Pulsar was equipped with, and it was retired to civilian anti-pirate duty and similar assignments. The four suits possessed by the mechites were salvaged from the same Confederation boneyard that the *Seeker of Knowledge* came from, and have been repaired as well as possible, but they are not up to their previous levels of performance. They are kept in Mechapolis One except when on patrol, training maneuvers, or on the *Stone of Hope*, but it is rare for more than two of the Pulsars to be gone at a time. The pilots are all elder mechites with many years of training but little actual combat experience. Librarian 102 hopes that joint training operations with the coqui will sharpen their skills.

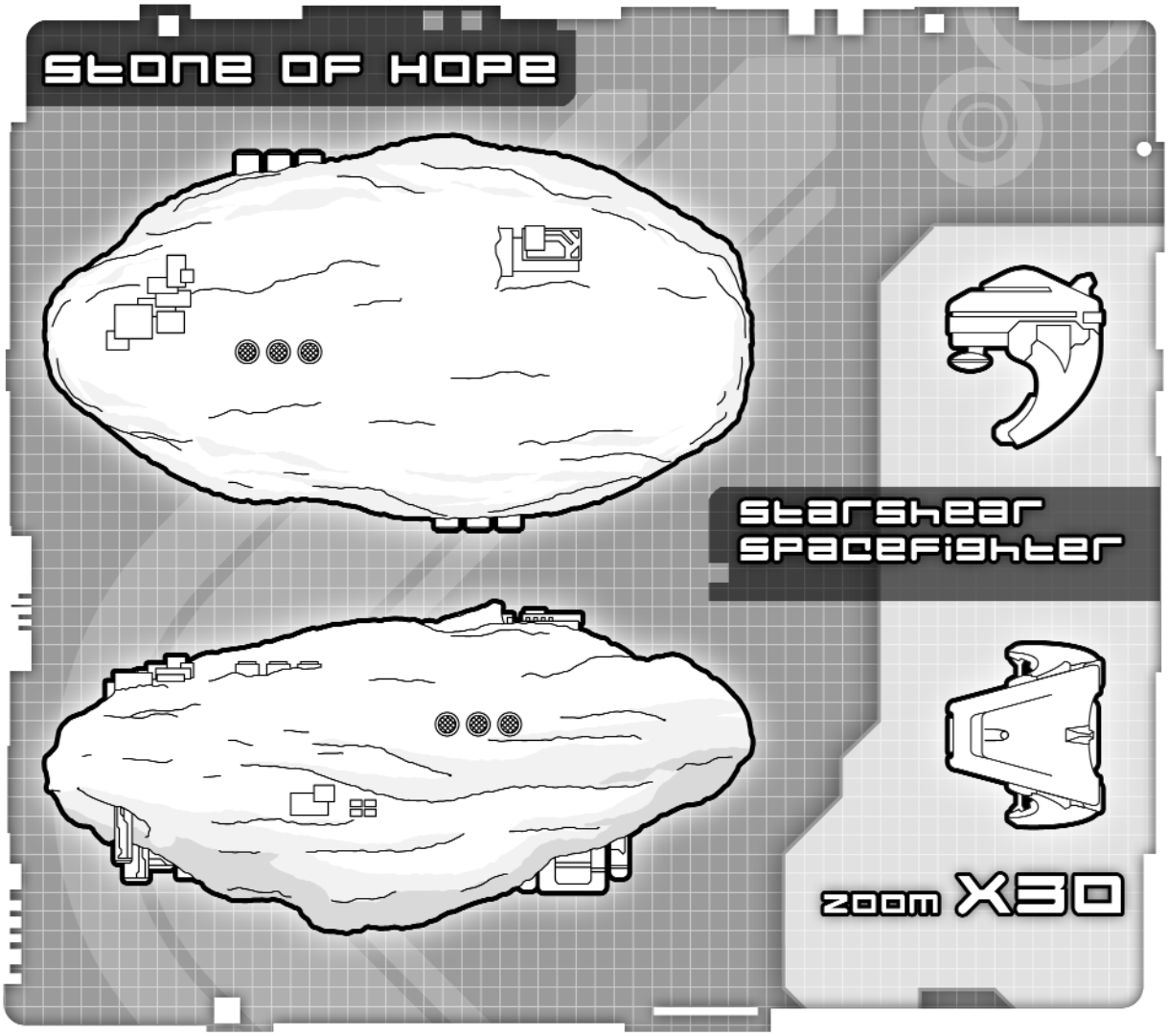
Size: Gargantuan (-4 size)
Superstructure: Megatanium
Armor: Megatanium
Armor Penalty: -10
Strength Bonus: +24
Speed: 40 ft.
Bonus Hit Points: 400
Hardness: 30
Bonus to Defense: +22
Reach: 15 ft.
Dexterity Penalty: -0
Base Purchase DC: -
Special Equipment Package: Ramjet thruster boots (boots), Class V sensor system (head), medium fortification, Mark II deflection field (torso), LX-120 antishock array, Mark II Delphi defense suite, Barricade tactical shield (left arm), LT-5 Longshot mass driver with 20 rounds (shoulder and right arm), Tsunami 480 plasma cannon (visor, back), PS-25 Tiger claws (left hand), comm system, life support system, HV-5 Haven escape pod (torso), space skin, advanced diagnostics, zero-G stabilizer (belt), advanced diagnostics (cranium).

STARSHIPS • • •

Both the coqui and the mechites are newcomers to Helios and their recent history is intrinsically tied to space travel, but they are not seasoned interplanetary travelers like the wolves. While the coqui have kept intact the ship that saved their people, the mechites disassembled the *Seeker of Knowledge* in order to construct Mechapolis One and other devices necessary for their survival. The mechites and the coqui have a few smaller shuttles and fighters, but the only ship of significant size near Hesperos is the *Stone of Hope*, the largest ship in the Helios system. While the mechites have limited their defensive options by supporting the coqui, both groups have adopted the strategy that a single powerful ship is more effective than two fleets of more numerous smaller vessels; such ships would take years to build, but the *Stone of Hope* is already functional. Both species plan to build more spacecraft, particularly escort ships like frigates and destroyers, but for now they are both more concerned with making the *Stone of Hope* the most powerful battleship they can. Other ships will be an afterthought for the next few years.

◇ Stone of Hope (PL 7)

Built out of a massive asteroid that was once a fragment of the moon of Coqu, this massive ship is as much stone as metal. The hollowed-out center of the asteroid is the interior of the ship. Weapons, engines, and other exterior components are attached to its outer rocky skin. The ship's engines are mammoth and do not move the ship very quickly due to its mass, but the mechites have recently replaced these with the engines from the *Seeker of Knowledge*. The *Stone of Hope* is roughly oval in shape and over a mile long. The ship can carry fifty thousand passengers and the equipment necessary to build a colony on another world, almost all of which has been offloaded now. This leaves its massive cargo chambers empty, though it still has enough parts and supplies for years of independent operation. Over two thousand coqui live on the *Stone of Hope* as crew, with another few hundred personnel coming and going regularly, including mechite advisors and technicians overseeing the upgraded systems. The coqui are not completely familiar with the new technologies yet, and until they become accustomed to them a mechite presence is required for the ship to run properly. While the coqui



appreciate these upgrades, they are touchy about having such poor soldiers as mechites on the ship, while the mechites appreciate the opportunity to learn from and socialize with the coqui.

The *Stone of Hope* is one of the coqui's most important cultural artifacts, a symbol of their tenacity and bravery. They go to great lengths to keep it operational, and its destruction would be a severe blow to their morale. Though the coqui are proud of their ship, they are loath to risk it except in defense of themselves or the mechites. It could become one of the most effective tools against major threats to the Helios system if they were persuaded to defend other species with it.

Not all of the surface of the *Stone of Hope* is armor plated; only weak points and exterior systems are armor plated. This reduces its effective hardness. It is not equipped to land on planets, relying on smaller ships to transport between the ship and the surface.

Type: Superheavy
Subtype: Combat Colony Ship
Defense: 11
Flat Footed Defense: 7
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 23
Hit Dice: 3,000d20 (60,000 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +6
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Colossal (-8 size)
Tactical Speed: 1,500 ft.
Length: 5,542 feet
Weight: 1.8 million tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 2,000 (Expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 50,000
Cargo Capacity: 200,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack

2 batteries of 2 EMP cannons +2 ranged (12d8/19-20),
4 fire-linked automasers -3 ranged (30d8),
4 fire-linked nuclear missile launchers -3 ranged (40d8),
4 fire-linked gauss guns -3 ranged (20d12)
4 fire-linked heavy-plasma cannons -3 ranged (55d8)
Attack of Opportunity
Point-defense system +5 ranged 5d12x10

Design Specs

Engines: Particle impulse engine
Armor: Vanadium
Defense Systems: Improved autopilot system, improved damage control, light fortification, magnetic field, point-defense system, radiation shielding, repair drones.
Sensors: Class V sensor array, improved targeting system.
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver.
Weapons: 2 batteries of 2 EMP cannons (range incr. 4,000 ft.), 4 fire-linked automasers (range incr. 6,000 ft.), 4 fire-linked nuclear missile launchers (40 missiles each), 4 fire-linked gauss guns (range incr. 4,000 ft.), 4 fire-linked heavy-plasma cannons (range incr. 4,000 ft.)

◇ Starshear Spacefighter

Computer One was equipped with a number of high speed shuttles designed for courier and emergency rescue duty, but after it was severely damaged these ships were rebuilt as spacefighters to escort the *Seeker of Knowledge* in its quest. While the resulting fighter, the Starshear, is not up to Star Confederation standards, it is a serviceable fighter with respectable speed if not vast weaponry. The mechites currently have six Starshear fighters, piloted by mechites with years of training but little actual experience. Four are stationed in Mechapolis One, while the other two are on duty with the *Stone of Hope* where they regularly engage in training exercises with the coqui. Should Mechapolis One be attacked while the *Stone of Hope* is absent, an unlikely event since that ship is likely to intercept anyone approaching Computer Three, the Starshear fighters will compose the entirety of Mechapolis One's space defenses, as the other weapons, vehicles, and mecha stationed in the city cannot reach orbit.

Type: Ultralight (PL 7)
Subtype: Interceptor
Defense: 15
Flat Footed Defense: 11
Autopilot Defense: 10
Hardness: 40
Hit Dice: 15d20 (300)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Gargantuan (-4 size)
Tactical Speed: 5,000 ft.
Length: 40 feet
Weight: 16 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +4
Crew: 2 (Expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 2
Cargo Capacity: 2 tons
Grapple Modifier: +12
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Attack

4 fire-linked quantum cannons +4 (40d8)

Design Specs

Engines: Particle impulse engine
Armor: Ablative
Defense Systems: Improved autopilot system, improved damage control system, light fortification, magnetic field, stealth screen
Sensors: Class V sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver
Weapons: 4 fire-linked quantum cannons (range incr. 6,000 ft.)

RELICS ON THE MOONS OF HESPEROS

Other than a few scattered items in the space stations orbiting Hesperos or within the atmospheric maintenance units, there are no relics on Hesperos or its moon. The Star Confederation never had the strong presence in the area that would lead to a large number of relics being left behind.

XENOMORPH • • •

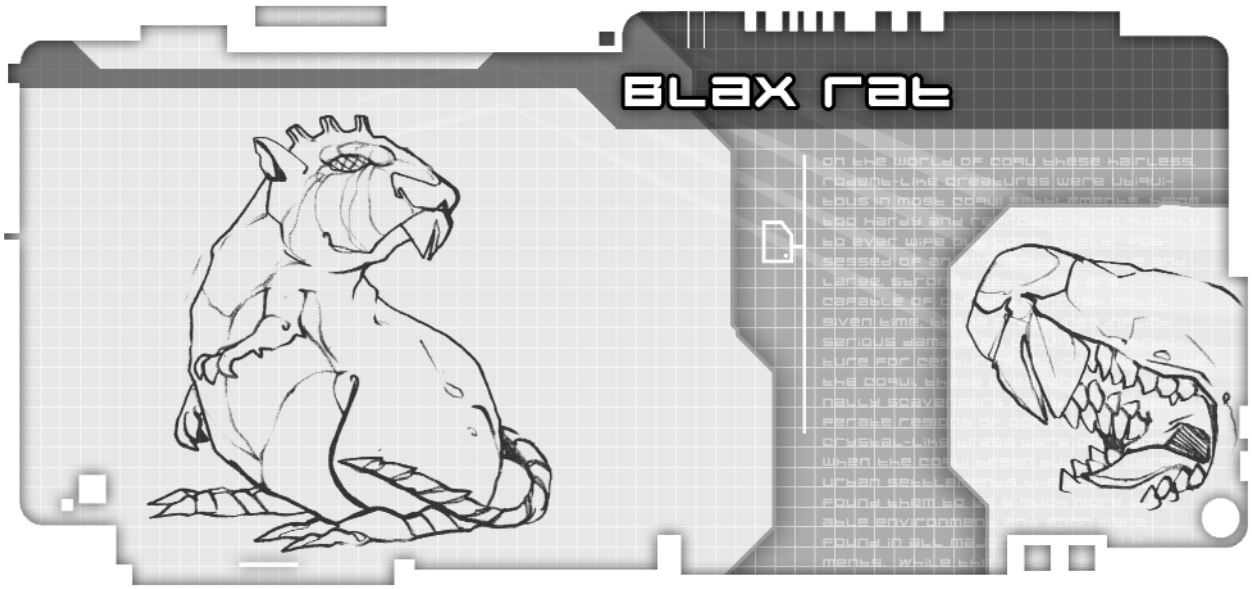
◇ Blax Rats

On Coqu these hairless, rodent-like creatures were ubiquitous in most coqui settlements, being too hardy and reproducing too quickly to wipe out completely. Possessed of an enormous appetite and large, strong teeth capable of chewing through metal in time, they inflicted serious damage on coqui infrastructure for centuries. Silicon-based like the coqui, these creatures were originally scavengers found in the temperate regions of Coqu where crystal-like trees were once common. When the coqui built large urban settlements, the blax rats found these to be more suitable environments and soon infested all major coqui settlements. The coqui hoped they had left the blax rats behind them on Coqu, but the creatures managed to stow away on the Stone of Hope and plague the coqui again, eating through wiring, food supplies, and even books in their insatiable quest for food. They have also spread to both Daljeen and Mechapolis One, much to the annoyance of the mechites. Both species are developing a way to eliminate the creatures, but have had little luck thus far.

Blax rats usually roam in packs of three to ten, and prefer dark, dank places like basements, engine rooms, and storerooms.

Species Traits

Razor Teeth: The teeth of the blax rats are razor-sharp cutting instruments with the hardness of stone. Combined with their powerful jaw muscles, this allows the creature to ignore 2 points of damage reduction or hardness.
Resilient: Blax rats gain a +4 species bonus to all saving throws against poison or disease.
Scent (Ex): This ability allows a blax rat to detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.



Strong Digestion: Blax rats can consume nearly any sort of organic material for sustenance, from paper to garbage, without suffering any digestion issues. They must consume ten pounds of food each day.
Bonus Feats: Blax rats receive Alertness, Stealthy, and Weapon Finesse (Bite) as bonus feats.

Blax Rat ⋄ CR 1

Small Animal; HD 2d8+6; hp 15; MAS 16; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 19, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, +1 size); BAB +1; Grap -3; Atk +4 melee (1d6, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ razor teeth, resilient, scent, strong digestion; AL none; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4.
Skills: Climb +3, Hide +13, Jump +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +9, Spot +4, Survival +4.
Feats: Alertness, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse (Bite).
Advancement: 3-4 HD (Small).

NPCS • • •

⋄ A89DUFME905, Mechite Rebel

Known as A8 to the coqui on board the *Stone of Hope*, A89DUFME905 is one of the few individualist mechites assigned to the massive coqui vessel. An expert in Star Confederation weapons, his interest in military matters once made him a pariah, but now has earned him a place of respect. Though they would rather put someone more reliable in such an important position, few mechites have the depth of knowledge that A8 does. His sulky, stubborn manner has worked well with the coqui; though he does not show his anger, he does not back down from his beliefs, which has earned him their respect.



A8 is rather dreary and depressed for a mechite, focused on destruction and the tools that bring it about. He ascribes to an old pre-Star Confederation religion that claimed the fate of the universe was to destroy itself and thus make way for a better world, though his faith is limited to studying and building weapons rather than using them. While he professes to seek destruction with his existence, it is really an attempt to justify his interests to mechites who look at him askance. A8 can usually be found on the *Stone of Hope* working on its weapon systems or instructing the crew in their operation. He rarely visits Mechapolis One, preferring the freedom from the Megacortex that his station on the *Stone of Hope* affords him, as he sees it as a crushing force to conform to the wishes of others.

A89DUFME905 (Smart Hero 5/Engineer 5) ⋄ CR 10

Medium Construct (Mechite); HD 10d6; hp 37; MAS -; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +4 class, +5 armor);BAB +5; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6/1d3, shock prod) or +7 ranged (1d8, Star Confederation stun pistol); Full +4 melee (1d6/1d3, shock prod) or +7 ranged (1d8, Star Confederation stun pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ biodroid traits, craft XP reserve, improve kit +2, Megacortex, quick craft, reconfigure weapon, reproduction, sabotage, superior repair; AL Mechite Consortium; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +5; AP 11; Rep +3; Str 8, Dex 14, Con -, Int 20, Wis 12, Cha 6.
PL Familiarity: 8
Occupation: Technician
Skills: Computer Use +20, Craft (Electrical) +20, Craft (Mechanical) +20, Craft (Structural) +18, Disable Device +13, Drive +7, Investigate +13, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +13, Knowledge (History) +13, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +20, Knowledge (Tactics) +13, Knowledge (Technology) +25, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +9, Navigate +9, Pilot +7, Read/Write Unispeak, Repair +20, Research +9, Search +10, Speak Unispeak.
Talents: Identify Alien Technology, Utilize Alien Technology, Savant (Knowledge (Technology)).
Feats: Aircraft Operation (Vectored Thrust), Armor Proficiency (Light), Builder, Educated, Gearhead, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Starship Gunnery, Starship Operation (Ultralight), Starship Operation (Superheavy), Technological Aptitude, Zero-G Training.
Possessions: Protec armor, shock prod, Star Confederation stun pistol, 4 Star Confederation power packs, mastercrafted deluxe electrical tool kit, mastercrafted deluxe mechanical tool kit.

◇ Sturos Divan, Commander of the Avalanche Warriors

Born forty years before Coqu was destroyed, Sturos Divan dreamed of serving with the avalanche warriors of the Warcouncil. Sturos grew up with the shadow of destruction hanging over his head, and like all his people, he struggled to help his people make it through these dark days. While the Warcouncil worked day and night to save the coqui species, some of the other factions opposed their efforts, feeling disenfranchised, jealous, or believing that the imminent demise of the planet was some sort of hoax or power grab.

As a child, Sturos demonstrated a talent for hurting others that he and his family found disturbing, and Sturos has spent most of his life redirecting his gift for violence toward proper outlets. While all coqui value confrontation, it is more for the emotional and mental aspects of a confrontation than any resulting physical violence, and their interest is more in the act of conflict than the resolution. Sturos's talent for ending physical confrontations by seriously injuring his opponents did nothing to warm his fellow coqui to him. When he reached adulthood he joined the armed forces of his faction, eventually proving himself capable and loyal enough to join the avalanche soldiers. His promotion came several months before the expected destruction of the planet. While Sturos was not part of the assigned crew of the Stone of Hope and would have been left behind when it left orbit, he was stationed there as a guard while the rest of its crew received final training on Coqu.

It was during this time that Coqu was destroyed, and Sturos was accidentally saved along with the other coqui on board at the time. He traveled with the other coqui to Rockhome, eventually becoming the second in command of the avalanche warriors by dint of his dedication and loyalty. Now he commands of the ground forces of Rockhome, a less prestigious position than it sounds like since there is so much importance placed on the Stone of Hope. Still, any unidentified ship that touches down on Rockhome meets Sturos Divan in short order.

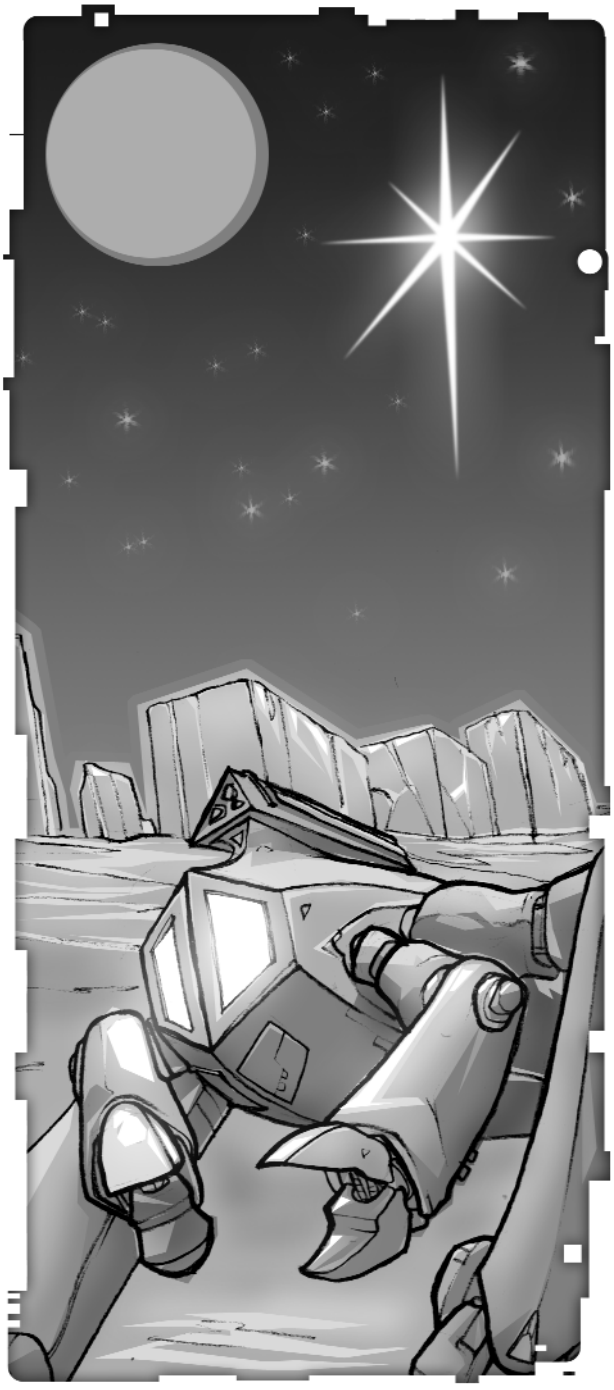
Sturos Divan
(Coqui Scrapper 3/Strong Hero 3/Avalanche Warrior 9) ◇ CR 15

Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Coqui); HD 3d10+12d8+75; hp 155; MAS 18; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 32, touch 20, flat-footed 31 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +8 armor, +9 class); BAB +14; Grap +16; Atk +18 melee (1d10+5/automatic critical/x3 nonlethal, iron fist) or +18 melee (1d6+5/19-20/x3, iron fist), or +15 ranged (2d12, hand cannon) or +15 ranged (2d8, shoulder gun) or +15 ranged (5d8, arm rocket); Full +18/+13/+8 melee (1d10+5/automatic critical/x3 nonlethal, iron fist), or +18/+13/+8 melee (1d6+5/19-20/x3, iron fist), +15/+10/+5 ranged (2d12, hand cannon) or +15/+10/+5 ranged (2d8, shoulder gun) or +15/+10/+5 ranged (5d8, arm rocket); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ cybernetic incompatibility, DR 4/-, emotional control, heavy load, heavy armor training, saving throw bonuses, slow healer, stability, unarmed combat damage, wield the unwieldy; AL Coqui Warcouncil; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +6; AP 13; Rep +4; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 8.
PL Familiarity: 5
Occupation: Military
Skills: Climb +4, Demolitions +7, Drive +7, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Tactics) +13, Survival +7, Swim +4, Treat Injury +4.
Talents: Melee Smash, Improved Melee Smash.
Feats: Advanced Combat Martial Arts, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Heavy Machineguns), Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Rocket Launchers), Improved Brawl, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Knockout Punch, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Strafe, Surface Vehicle Operation (tanks),
Possessions: Arm rocket and 6 rockets, hand cannon with 24 rounds, shoulder gun with 3 clips, hytox missile pack, stoneguard armor, iron fist, 4 fragmentation grenades, survival kit, radio.



CHAPTER IX

POSEIDON



A new star had appeared in the night sky above Poseidon the previous night, and tonight it appeared again. Ice Miner 345092 was lucky that the night was clear enough to see the stars; most nights, the methane clouds made it impossible. As the star crossed the sky it occasionally made adjustments to its course, making it clear that the star was no simple celestial object or comet. It was a ship, the first to orbit Poseidon for more than a cursory glance in years past all reckoning. Conserving its power, Ice Miner 345092 only activated its sensors once in each day to see if anything had changed on or around Poseidon, but a ship in orbit through two sensor sweeps was unheard of. Ice Miner 345092 quickly began to wake the other ice miner units, momentarily saddened when half of them had lost power completely and could no longer activate. After the losses during the invasion of Poseidon their numbers were few. Their creators ignored them and allowed their power supplies to run out, which again cut their population. There would be vengeance.

While its fellows began the long process of powering up, Ice Miner 345092 watched the orbiting ship, wondering what those on board were doing and what they planned. Suddenly a smaller light rocketed away from the ship, growing in intensity as it approached the planet. Recognizing the launching of a shuttle, Ice Miner 345092 warmed up its long-dormant ice cutting tools in anticipation. The ice miners of Poseidon would have their revenge.

POSEIDON • • •

A bleak and desolate world, the surface of Poseidon is completely covered in ice that is many miles thick, with no exposed landmasses. Beneath this layer of ice, the tectonically active crust of the planet warms a vast body of water, creating a sea of mineral rich water that is home to primitive life forms. For most of its history, inhospitable Poseidon has been ignored, used only as a source of ice for terraforming projects during the time of the Star Confederation. Its only inhabitants are the mining robots the Star Confederation once used to harvest ice from its surface, left on the planet's surface when the war with the vaasi broke out. They blame the Star Confederation for trapping them on Poseidon for so long, and they are not that picky about whom they take their revenge on.

Rotation Period: 35 hours
Revolution Period: 80 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: Nitrogen, oxygen, ammonia, methane, water vapor
Average Temperature: 90 Kelvin (-297.4° F)
Gravity: 1.34G

HISTORY • • •

Poseidon formed with the rest of the Helios solar system, becoming a massive chunk of ice with a warm center that has little in the way of life or minerals. During the days of the Star Confederation, the planet was ignored for the most part since it was impossible to terraform and mining the minerals in its crust would require penetrating miles of ice and water in addition to actually digging through the crust. It was not until widespread terraforming operations began in the Helios system that Poseidon received much attention. During these operations it was a major source of ice and water for worlds such as C'thalk or Thres that had little water to begin with. It is estimated that 1% of the mass of Poseidon was eventually harvested in the form of ice and water, to such an extent that some scientists worried that its orbit would be irreparably damaged if excavations continued. Due to these concerns and the completion of most major terraforming projects in the Helios system, the harvesting operations on Poseidon were reduced in scope to several thousand ice-mining robots of various sizes. These robots extracted ice and water that they deposited on automated freighters for transport to worlds that still needed water, both in the Helios system and in other systems controlled by the Star Confederation.



These operations continued, and were stepped up during the war with the Vaasi Empire to provide the water the armed forces of the Star Confederation required while in the field. Shortly before the invasion of the Helios system by the vaasi began, one of the Star Confederation scientists who remotely oversaw the mining operation, a mur named Opp Te, traveled to Poseidon to upgrade the miners to serve as war robots, hoping to get them back to Eos before the final battle occurred. Opp Te was too late; by the time he had finished the programming and physical modifications, the vaasi were attacking the Helios system. Every ship was occupied in fighting the invaders, so Opp Te could not arrange sufficient transportation to get the robots into the fight. The ice miner robots tried to attack the vaasi, but lacking spaceships they fought only the vaasi scouts that arrived on Poseidon. They decimated this force, but the vaasi fleet retaliated with orbital bombardment, destroying half of the ice miners and killing Opp Te. Confident the remaining robots would be unable to attack their fleet, the vaasi ignored Poseidon and headed to Eos to deliver the killing stroke to the Star Confederation.

Many ice miners survived, and due to the artificial intelligence upgrades Opp Te gave them they grew annoyed, then angry. They felt betrayed as they were given the command to attack the vaasi, but not the tools to do so. After their battle with the vaasi the ice miners were alone, and no ship came to rescue them. In his urgency, Opp Te did not give them all of the normal behavioral controls of other artificial intelligence robots, and they developed strong negative personality traits that would be prevented in a fully programmed artificial intelligence system. No one

wanted a sulking, morose, or vengeful artificial intelligence entity, so while entities developed strange habits like Minder 48's obsessive-compulsive behavior, they generally did not generate negative toward feelings toward anything not specifically targeted in their programming. The ice miners were designed to hate vaasi, but they also developed a hatred for the Star Confederation. They had been given enough intelligence to experience boredom and betrayal, and then were betrayed and left alone to grow bored. The ice miners did not take this well.

After several years of dealing with their new intelligence and failing to complete the commands they were given, such as destroying the vaasi or filling automated freighters that no longer came to Poseidon, the ice miners decided to stop. The automated freighters had been destroyed or reassigned during the war, leaving the ice miners with no way off the planet. Despite the longevity of their fusion reactors, the robots knew they would eventually run out of power if they all remained active. They set up a rotating schedule in which the robots take turns activating for a few minutes each day to scan the surrounding area before returning to their slumbering state, conserving power in the effort. This has enabled most of them to remain functional despite the vast time they have been stuck on Poseidon, but also has limited their perception of events to their small daily window during which one of the robots is active. The wolves have sent several ships to explore the planet, but the ice miners saw none of them. None of the other species have yet taken a close look at Poseidon. As space travel becomes more common within the Helios system, it is likely that the robots will detect a ship.

Now they wait, either for the Star Confederation to come so they can escape Poseidon and get some revenge for being given the ability to think only to suffer for it, or for the vaasi to arrive so they can fight them. Though their isolation may limit their influence on the future of the Helios system, anyone who lands on Poseidon is in for a surprise.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

Poseidon is completely covered in ice, fifty miles thick in some places. Beneath this a vast body of water, kept in liquid state by the hot mineral vents and active volcanoes on the actual surface of Poseidon's crust beneath the water layer, which is one hundred miles deep. The crust is covered with active fault lines, newly formed mountains, volcanoes, and mineral vents. Only the immense pressure of the water above keeps the boiling water in a liquid state. Gas from the crust drifts up and cools into liquid before reaching the ice, but this carries nutrients and minerals from the crust into the water layer. Thus the water is very heavy and mineral rich.

The frozen surface of Poseidon is a flat, featureless expanse for the most part. There are few elevation differences and hardly any landmarks of note. In the northern and southern temperate and polar zones, however, massive chunks of ice were cut from the surface of the planet, creating huge, perfectly angular canyons hundreds of miles long. In these areas there are also holes that were drilled down to the water layer, but have since refrozen. These massive ice canyons create striking vistas, as one can stand on the ledge of a fifty-mile-high cliff and look across a canyon that reaches beyond the curvature of the planet. These excavated regions cover roughly 40% of the planet's surface.

CLIMATE • • •

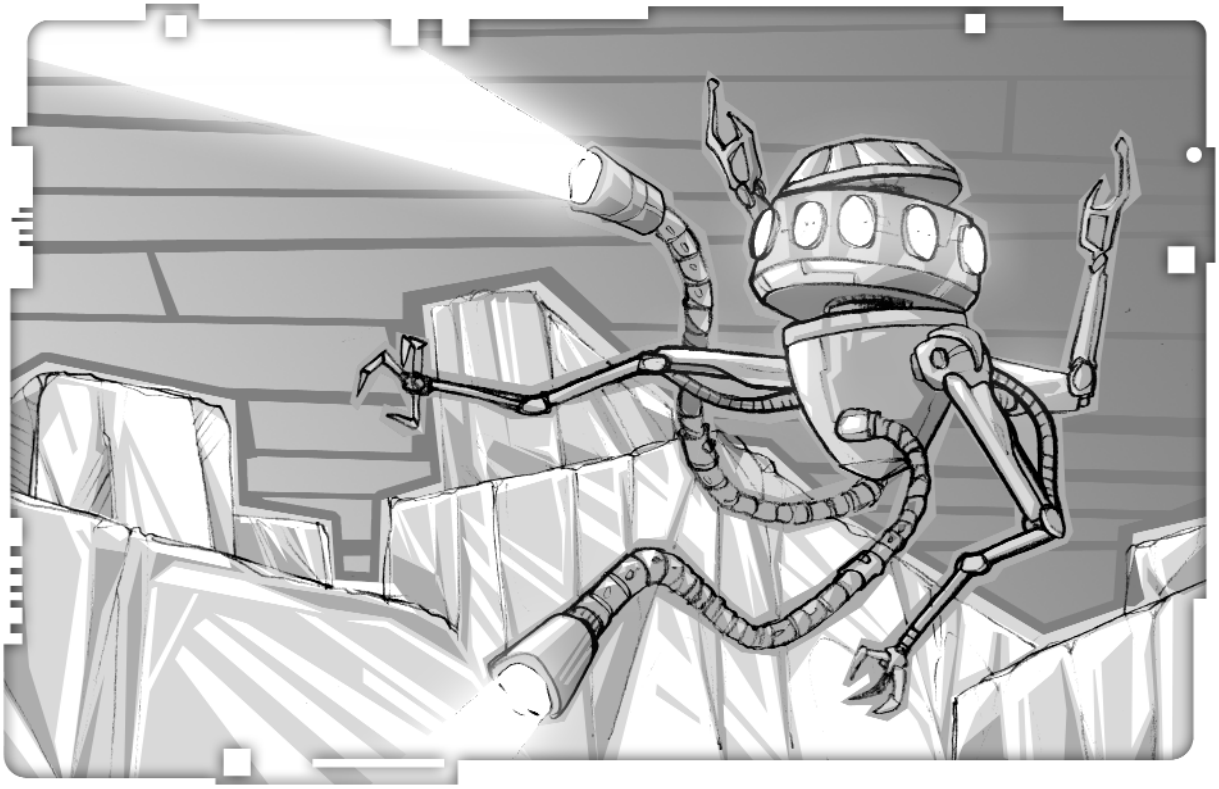
Poseidon is a world that is forever covered in ice of one sort of another. There is little difference in weather between different regions of the planet, except for strong equatorial winds that can reach hundreds of miles an hour. There are winds on the other regions of the planet, but they are not nearly as strong as those in the equatorial region, and the ice there as been worn smooth as glass over time. There are no seasons despite severe axial tilt; at this distance from Helios it makes little difference.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

Poseidon's atmosphere is predominantly methane, but also includes nitrogen, oxygen, and ammonia. Methane ice crystals form clouds that constantly blanket the planet. Poseidon's atmosphere is not breathable by any known species, and the temperature is equally deadly. The ice is rife with ammonia and methane crystals, as is the water layer. The atmosphere is thick, and the high atmospheric pressure on its surface required robots designed to function efficiently in these conditions.

CONDITIONS • • •

The surface of Poseidon is a heavy gravity environment. Any object exposed to the atmosphere suffers 2d6 cold damage each round. The atmosphere is not breathable. In the equatorial region, the high winds make all manner of activity difficult. Windstorms are almost constant in the equatorial regions, though they become less common near the poles. Windstorms only affect the surface layer of Poseidon, and those inside an ice canyon are not affected. Inside a windstorm, vehicle pilots suffer a -10 penalty to Piloting or Drive checks. Creatures suffer a -10 penalty to attack rolls and Dexterity-based skill checks, and creatures of Large size or smaller must make a Reflex save (DC 10) each round to keep from being blown 1d6x100 feet and suffer 5d6 bludgeoning damage. Creatures with a mooring line, anchor, or other safety precautions gain a +8 bonus to their Reflex save. Objects of Large size or smaller automatically fail this Reflex save unless they have been tied down or anchored.



FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •
THE ICE MINERS • • •

The ice miner robots of Poseidon were built to harvest ice and water for the terraforming efforts in the Helios system, but were reprogrammed to serve as a last line of defense for Eos against the Vaasi Empire. This reprogramming, which was incomplete when their programmer Opp Te was killed, gave them enough awareness to develop a sense of frustration at not being able to engage the vaasi and anger at the Star Confederation for reprogramming them for a purpose that they could not carry out. They are embittered and seek revenge against the Star Confederation or some vaasi to fight, but would prefer to do both.

For the ice miners accomplish either goal, they need a ship of some sort to get off of Poseidon. They recognized this need a long time ago, initially planning to steal one of the automated freighters to make their escape. None of the automated freighters returned, however, leaving the ice miners stuck on Poseidon with no escape. They have been keeping watch ever since, one robot powering up for a few minutes each day to see if a ship has arrived. When they detect a ship in orbit, they try to lure it down by activating as many robots as they can, hoping the sudden energy readings will attract the attention of the orbiting ship. They have thus far been unsuccessful, but this is mainly due to bad timing and the fact that few ships approach close enough to Poseidon to notice their efforts.

Once a ship lands on Poseidon, the ice miners plan to storm it, taking the crew captive and flying to Eos, though if they know the location of any vaasi they will head there first. Their programming does not include starship piloting, so they require assistance in leaving the planet, and they are clever enough to devise a kidnapping or hostage scheme. It is unlikely, however, that a ship they hijack will be able to fit all of them, or even one of the massive miner models, so their first goal will be to acquire a larger ship. If they find a piloting program or robot, so much the better, since they have no interest in relying on living beings. Humans or wolves will likely be the first group the ice miners encounter and assault, followed by an attack on the mechites or the coqui for more ships.

There are over a thousand robots, of which half are miners, forty percent are loaders that placed ice on the freighters, and ten percent are directors that oversaw the operation. The directors lead the ice miners and have the most advanced programming, though no one director has any more say than the others. The directors have developed extremely similar personalities due to identical programming and being stuck in the same environment for so long. It is they who are most upset by their current status, as their programming makes them more cognizant of the situation than the other robots. The other robots follow their lead without question, as that is the way they are programmed, but barely understand the cause for which they fight.

When the robots engage an enemy, the miner models engage in combat using their mining tools

and the few makeshift weapons Opp Te installed. The loader models are less effective in combat, but are smaller and will be involved in any boarding action against a ship if the miner robots cannot fit. The directors will stay out of combat until the situation is resolved, unless their presence is necessary.

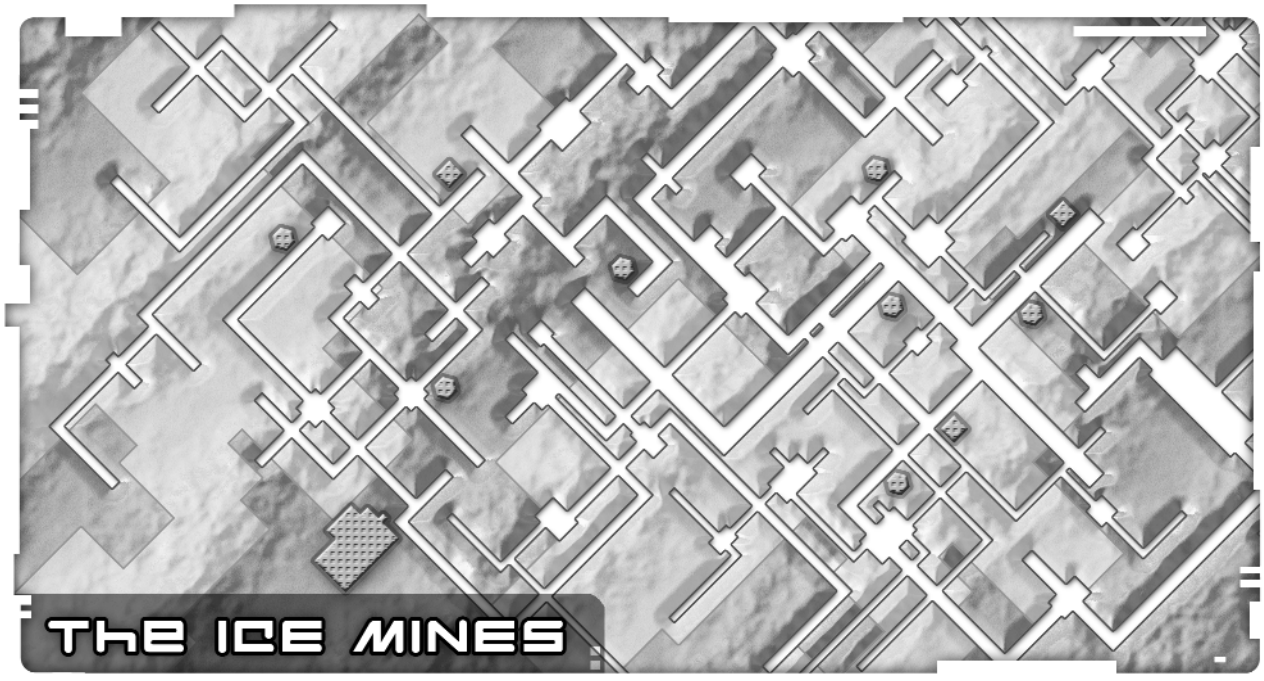
The ice miners assume that anyone that is not obviously a vaasi is part of the Star Confederation and will treat them very poorly. They may attack such individuals if they look threatening or do not offer to help the ice miners get off Poseidon. The directors can be bargained with, but they are more interested in revenge and fighting vaasi than anything else. While they may make useful allies, gaining their trust is difficult, especially for species descended from the Star Confederation. Alternately, someone could alter their programming to make them less bitter toward the Star Confederation, but doing so en masse would be extremely difficult, requiring a Computer Use check with a DC of at least 40.

LOCATIONS ON POSEIDON • • •

◇ The Ice Mines

The only real landmark on the surface of Poseidon, the Ice Mines are the massive canyons and caves carved out over many years of supplying the terraforming operations of the Star Confederation. They were once smooth-cut canyons with perfect right angles, but over millions of years wind and other factors have caused some to collapse and worn others down. Some of the canyons reach a depth of fifty miles, while others are only a few hundred feet deep. Stairs, ramps, and now-broken elevators are the primary means of getting to the bottom of these canyons, though lack of upkeep has made these methods very treacherous. Scattered among these ice mines are landing pads, temporary storage facilities, repair bays, and other equipment that was abandoned as the mining operation migrated across the planet. Most of these were picked clean of useable parts, but something may still remain. Occasionally, damaged robots can be found half-buried in the ice, having fallen off a ledge. It is easy to get lost in the ice mines; other than the scattered foreign objects, there are no landmarks in the ice mines, and after you've seen fifteen canyons of ice, they start to look the same.

The ice miners have set up camp within one of the shallower canyons, which can be reached from the surface by way of a long ramp carved in the ice. This canyon has been filled with repair equipment, shelters, spare parts, and any power sources they could gather from the other outposts. One thousand surviving robots sit in this canyon in straight rows, powered down and waiting for the signal to awaken and take their revenge. Several hundred more robots are also present, but they have run out of power and are no longer functional. They could wake again, however, if they were repaired and reenergized. Except for a few minutes each day when one of the robots scans for activity, they are completely unaware of their surroundings, and visitors may be among them before the ice miners even know they are there. Most of the directors are under shelters, while the loader and miner units are left in the open. All are caked in ice, and some are completely buried in it. Up the ramp from the canyon are a number of landing pads that were used for transport ships. These too have frozen over with a thin layer of ice.



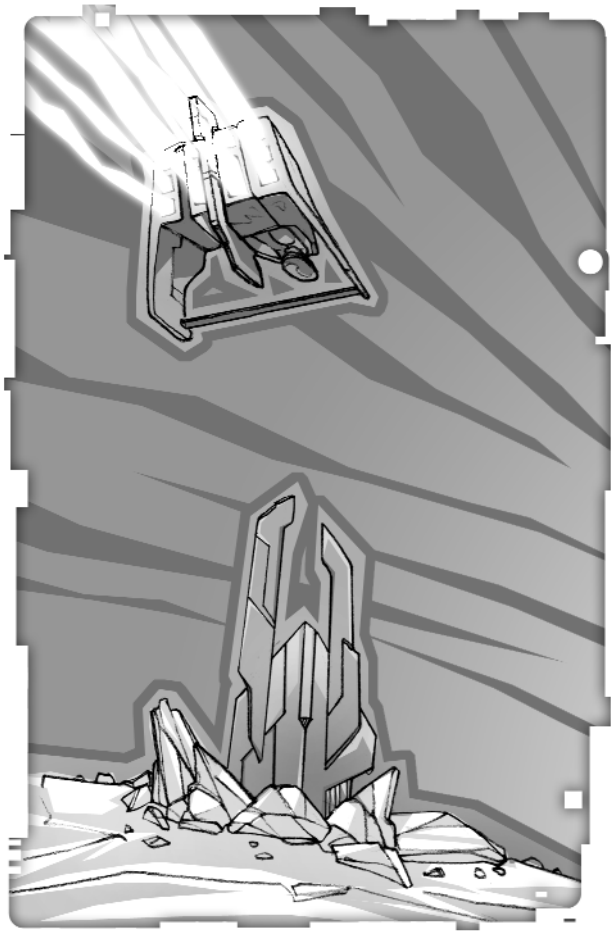
◇ The Seas of Poseidon

Beneath the ice of Poseidon is a vast sea of mineral-rich water, now host to a number of very simple organisms. Similar to those found on Earth near ocean floor vents, these multi-cellular creatures rely on the minerals and heat of the vents to survive. It is unlikely that they will evolve beyond their current state, since they can only live close to the ocean floor, where the pressure is immense.

Relations with Other Planets of the Helios System • • •

The ice miners are the only intelligent inhabitants of Poseidon. Though the robots are shut down most of the time, their bitterness will set the tone for relations with the rest of the Helios system. They thirst for revenge against the Star Confederation for granting them intelligence only to abandon them, and since their creators are gone, the descendants will have to do. Once the ice miners learn there are now other inhabitants of the system, they will work to escape the planet. Despite their inclination to shoot first and ask questions later, it is possible to reason with them if a dialogue can be opened, which is all the more likely once the vaasi become involved. Otherwise they try to transport all of their number off of Poseidon and attack other settlements of the Helios system, starting with the moons of Hesperos and moving inward. The ice miners avoid mass casualties in favor of inflicting suffering on their enemies, destroying infrastructure and technology instead of killing. Only the mechites receive a reprieve from these attacks, since they too are robots created by the Star Confederation. When the ice miners learn that mechites are loyal to the ideals of the Star Confederation, their mercy comes to an end.

Even more than they want to get payback against the Star Confederation, the ice miners want to destroy the vaasi, which was the primary mission Opp Te programmed into them long ago. This mission supersedes all others, and they unite with the other species of the Helios system against the vaasi if someone makes that argument. The presence of the ice miners makes any vaasi operation on Poseidon difficult, but without support they can be wiped out by orbital bombardment. In short, the robots are possible allies, but earning their trust and forging an alliance is extremely difficult.



Adventure Ideas for Poseidon • • •

◇ Messages from Space

A probe from the wolves or mechites crashes on Poseidon. The director robots use its parts to build a transmitter, which sends a distress signal from Poseidon. The player characters investigate and find a large and unfriendly welcoming committee waiting for them.

◇ Pulling Over for Repairs

After an encounter with a meteorite storm the player characters have to land on Poseidon for repairs, but in the process draw the attention of the ice miners. They must keep them away from the ship until they finish the repairs, but the repairs require spare parts from the robots or from the remains of the facilities on the planet.

◇ Infiltration

The vaasi drop a tactical intelligence unit on Poseidon that reprograms the ice miners while they are deactivated and organizes them under its control. It then sends out messages of peace from Poseidon, hoping to lure ships to the planet and capture them. Once the player characters learn what is really in command of the ice miners, it is up to them to stop the vaasi from gaining the robots as minions.

◇ Water Run

The Law-Keepers of Hephaestus run low on water, and Poseidon is the closest source of ice that they can acquire without interference from other governments of the Helios system. The player characters are hired or assigned to go to Poseidon and acquire large amounts of ice, but run into the ice miners in the process.

NPCS • • •

◇ The Miner Robots

The ice miner robots were built long ago by the Star Confederation to mine ice on Poseidon, from designs based on mining robots used successfully on other worlds. The miner robots are highly resistant to cold and high gravity situations, and have been equipped and programmed to be highly efficient miners. There are three drastically different designs for specialized roles, with little overlap in programming or spare parts. Similar versions of these robots can be found on other Star Confederation worlds since the designs were common in their day.

These miner robots have been modified from their original designs to resist cold and heavy gravity. They have cold resistance 30 and higher Strength scores than similar models designed for other environments.

Director Model

The command model among the ice miners, the directors are small robots that rely on thrusters for movement and are little more than a bundle of limbs and sensors built around its brain. This model's primary job is supervising the other ice miners, keeping everything safe and running efficiently. Since their abandonment, the directors lead the ice miners and spur their desire for revenge and violence. More intelligent than their fellows, the directors feel this desire more keenly than the other ice miners. They comprehend the cruelty of being given the ability to think and then being trapped on a barren world of endless ice. The directors are the cruelest and most driven of the ice miners, and will be at the forefront of any attack, though probably not engaging in actual combat. The directors have strong self-preservation programming and while they would rather all the robots survive, they are willing to sacrifice the others in order to save themselves or meet their goals. So far, the other robots don't seem to mind. Directors always remain in the ice canyons or the remaining structures, having little protection against the winds of Poseidon.



Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

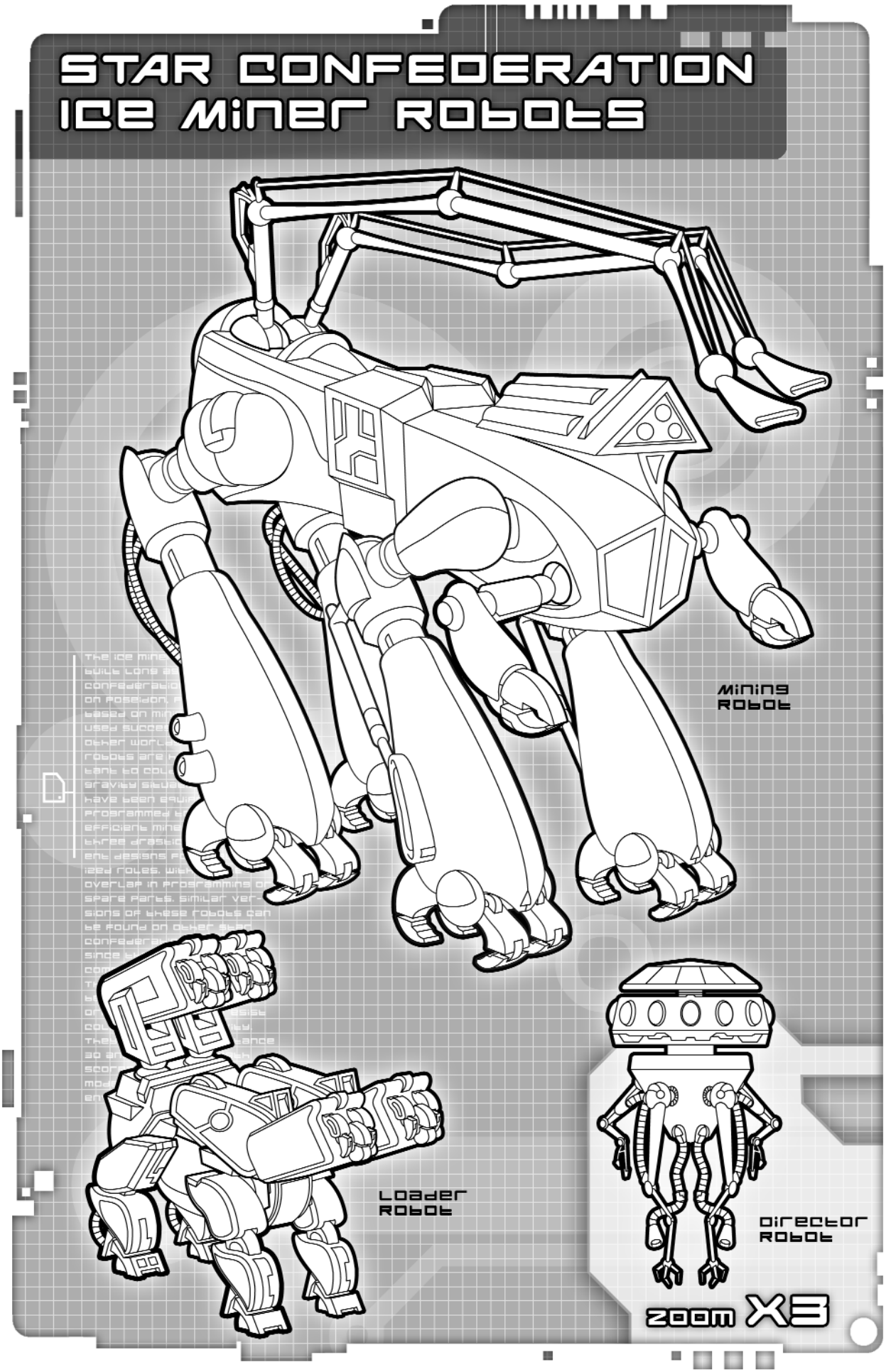
Ice Miner Director Robot ◇ CR 3

Small-size Construct; HD 2d10+5; hp 16; MAS -; Init +4; Spd fly 40 ft. (poor); Defense 20, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +8 armor, +1 size); BAB +1; Grap +3; Atk +7 melee (1d4+6, slam) or +2 ranged (4d10, plasma carbine); Full +7 melee (1d4+6, slam) or +2 ranged (4d10, plasma carbine); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ construct traits, darkvision 240 ft., cold resistance 30, acid resistance 10, electricity resistance 10, fire resistance 10; AL Ice Miner Robots of Poseidon; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 23, Dex 12, Con -, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 7.

Skills: Computer Use +13, Craft (Electrical) +15, Craft (Mechanical) +15, Craft (Structural) +15, Demolitions +17, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +13, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +13, Knowledge (Technology) +13, Profession (Mining) +13, Repair +17, Search +15, Spot +15.
Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency.
Equipment: Star Confederation plasma carbine (see Chapter 3) with 4 clips.

Frame: Armature.
Locomotion: Thrusters.
Manipulators: 2 task hands.
Armor: Crystal carbon armor.
Sensors: Class IX sensor system.
Skill Software: Skill net (Computer Use 12 ranks, Craft (Electrical) 12 ranks, Craft (Mechanical) 12 ranks, Craft (Structural) 12 ranks), skill net (Demolitions 12 ranks, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) 12 ranks, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) 12 ranks, Knowledge (Technology) 12 ranks), skill net (Repair 12 ranks, Search 12 ranks, Spot 12 ranks, Profession (Mining) 12 ranks), language chip (Unispeak).
Feat Software: Feat net (Personal Firearms Proficiency).
Ability Upgrade: Strength upgrade x6, Intelligence upgrade x6, Charisma upgrade x3, Wisdom Upgrade x2.
Accessories: AV recorder, AV transmitter, fire extinguisher, vocalizer, survivor array, robot repair unit.

STAR CONFEDERATION ICE MINER ROBOTS



Miner Model

An immense, four-legged machine, the miner robot is one of the largest non-combat robots built by the Star Confederation. Towering over three hundred feet tall, it is larger than many of the spaceships used in the Helios system. Designed to move massive amounts of material in any environment, miner robots are incredibly strong and equipped with devices normally reserved for mecha. Though not particularly smart, these robots are good at their jobs and work efficiently. Among the robots of Poseidon, the miner models are the brutes that do most of the work and fighting, though they have little understanding of their cause. Most miner models would prefer to go back to mining Poseidon if the automated freighters began running again, having little interest in fighting anything other than the vaasi. Nevertheless, they are programmed to be subservient to the directors and follow their commands to the letter.

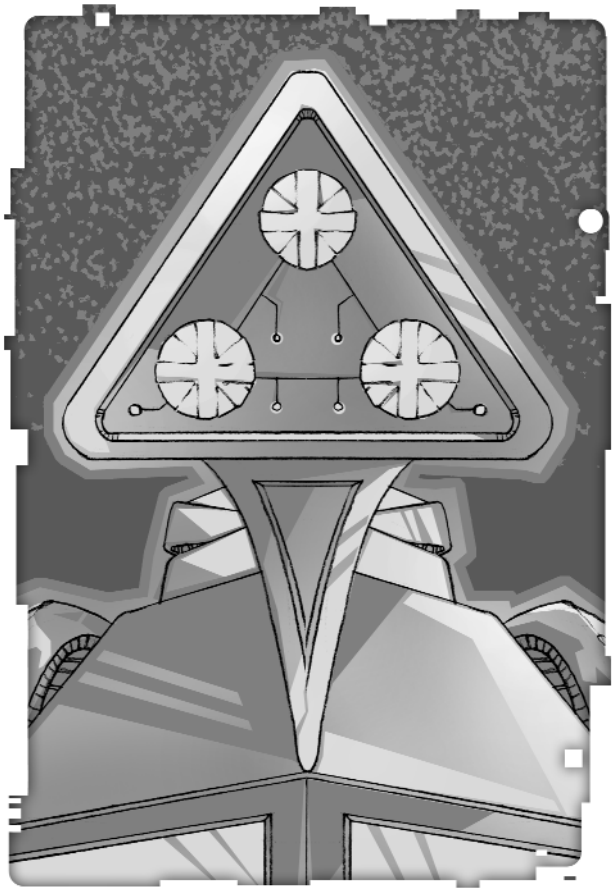
The four-legged design of the miner model gives it a +4 stability bonus to resist bull rush attempts.

Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Mining Robot ⋄ CR 40

Colossal Construct; HD 60d10+120; hp 450; MAS -; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. poor; Defense 13, touch 3, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +10 armor, -8 size); BAB +45; Grap +85; Atk +62 melee (10d10+36, RP-91 Reaper laser scythe/x4) or +38 ranged (12d6, Tsunami 480 plasma cannon); Full +62/+57/+52/+47 melee (10d10+36, RP-91 Reaper laser scythe/x4) or +38/+33/+28/+23 ranged (12d6, Tsunami 480 plasma cannon); FS 100 ft. by 100 ft.; Reach 20 ft.; SQ construct traits, darkvision 180 ft., cold resistance 30, acid resistance 10, electricity resistance 10, fire resistance 10; AL Ice Miner Robots of Poseidon; SV Fort +19, Ref +20, Will +21; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 59, Dex 12, Con -, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 1.

Skills: Climb +38, Computer Use +6, Craft (Electrical) +8, Craft (Mechanical) +8, Craft (Structural) +8, Demolitions +10, Jump +36, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +6, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +6, Knowledge (Technology) +6, Navigate +20, Profession (Mining) +14, Repair +14, Search +14, Spot +14.
Feats: Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Cleave, Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Energy Weapons), Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Heavy Machineguns), Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Missile Launchers), Mecha Weapon Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack.
Equipment: RP-91 Reaper laser scythe, Tsunami 480 plasma cannon.



Frame: Armature.
Locomotion: Legs (multiple), thrusters.
Manipulators: 4 task hands, 2 claws, 2 probes.
Armor: Megatanium.
Sensors: Class VII sensor system.
Skill Software: Skill net (Computer Use 8 ranks, Craft (Electrical) 8 ranks, Craft (Mechanical) 8 ranks, Craft (Structural) 8 ranks), skill net (Demolitions 8 ranks, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) 8 ranks, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) 8 ranks, Knowledge (Technology) 8 ranks), skill net (Repair 12 ranks, Search 12 ranks, Spot 12 ranks, Profession (Mining) 12 ranks), language chip (Unispeak), skill net (Climb 12 ranks, Jump 12 ranks, Navigate 12 ranks).
Feat Software: Feat Net (Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Cleave, Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Energy Weapons), Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Heavy Machineguns), Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Missile Launchers), Mecha Weapon Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack).
Ability Upgrade: Strength upgrade x6, Dexterity upgrade x3, Intelligence upgrade x3, Wisdom upgrade x2.
Accessories: RP-91 Reaper laser scythe, Tsunami 480 plasma cannon, AV recorder, AV transmitter, internal storage unit, vocalizer, magnetic feet, survivor array, self-repair unit.

Loader Model

Without the massive size of the miner models or the intellect of directors, the loader models are something of a third wheel, since there are no longer automated freighters to load. The main purpose the loaders serve in future ice miner operations is shipboard operations, since the miner models cannot fit in most spaceships except for the largest cargo holds. Even the loaders have difficult fitting in many ships, since they are larger than most species. The loaders are equal in intelligence to the miners and subservient to the directors, whom they do not question. Loaders look like walking four-legged forklifts, with four massive arms designed to scoop up and around ice to move it from place to place. They have been retrofitted with weaponry, but most combat is left to the miner models.

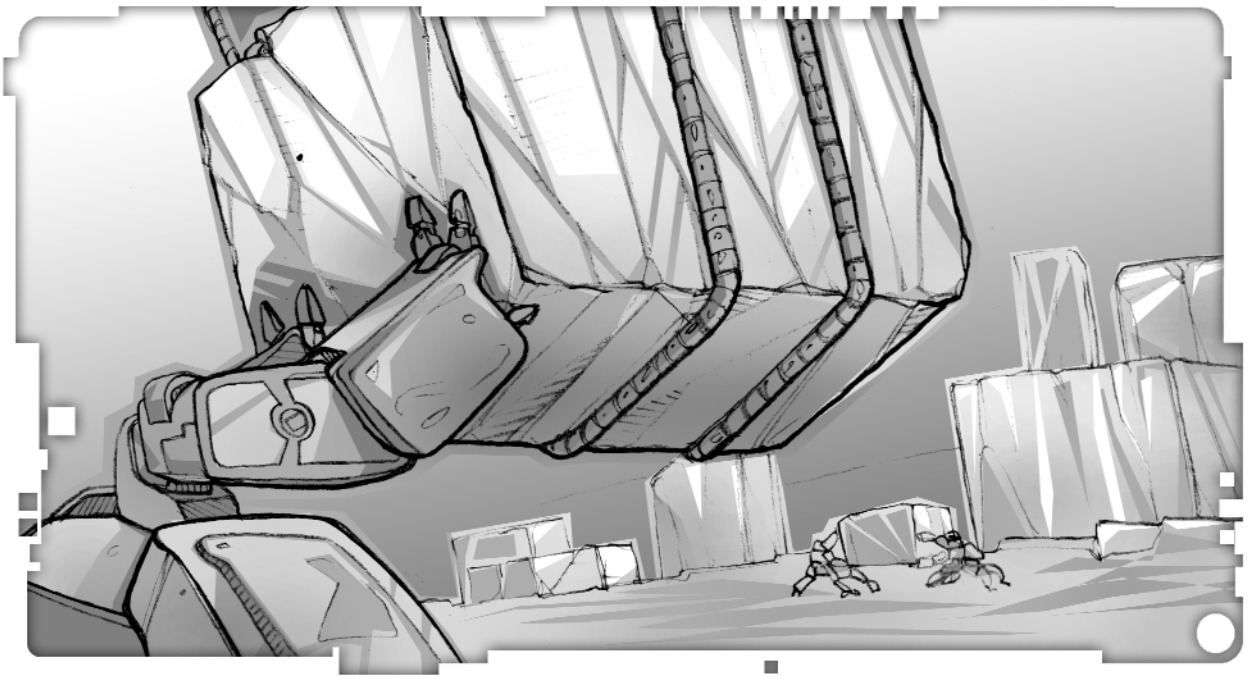
Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Loader Robot ⋄ CR 5

Large-size Construct; HD 7d10+20; hp 58; MAS -; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); Defense 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +10 armor, -1 size); BAB +5; Grap +21; Atk +16 melee (1d6+12, slam), +5 ranged (1d8/stun, Star Confederation stun pistol); Full +16 melee (1d6+12, slam), +5 ranged (1d8/stun, Star Confederation stun pistol); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ construct traits, darkvision 180 ft., cold resistance 30, acid resistance 10, electricity resistance 10, fire resistance 10; AL Ice Miner Robots of Poseidon; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 35, Dex 12, Con -, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 1.

Skills: Climb +24, Computer Use +6, Craft (Electrical) +8, Craft (Mechanical) +8, Craft (Structural) +8, Demolitions +10, Jump +24, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +6, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +6, Knowledge (Technology) +6, Navigate +16, Profession (Cargo Loading) +14, Repair +14, Search +14, Spot +14.
Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.
Equipment: Star Confederation stun pistol with 4 power packs.

Frame: Armature.
Locomotion: Legs (multiple), thrusters.
Manipulators: 4 task hands.
Armor: Megatanium.
Sensors: Class VII sensor system.
Skill Software: Skill net (Computer Use 8 ranks, Craft (Electrical) 8 ranks, Craft (Mechanical) 8 ranks, Craft (Structural) 8 ranks), skill net (Demolitions 8 ranks, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) 8 ranks, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) 8 ranks, Knowledge (Technology) 8 ranks), skill net (Repair 12 ranks, Search 12 ranks, Spot 12 ranks, Profession (Cargo Loading) 12 ranks), language chip (Unispeak), skill net (Climb 12 ranks, Jump 12 ranks, Navigate 12 ranks).
Feat Software: Feat net (Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency).
Ability Upgrade: Strength upgrade x6, Dexterity upgrade x2, Intelligence Upgrade x3, Wisdom Upgrade x2.
Accessories: AV recorder, AV transmitter, fire extinguisher, vocalizer, magnetic feet, survivor array, self-repair unit.

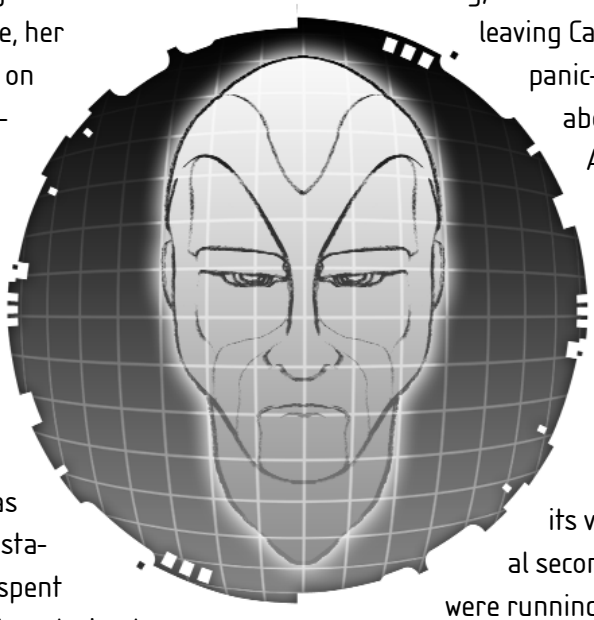


CHAPTER 1

APOLLO

"Make sure the airlock is tight. It doesn't fit clean on these doors, so we don't want to take any chances." The crew of the salvage ship Second Chance was used to dealing with strange vessels, but it never hurt to be careful. The space station orbiting Apollo was the first good wreck they'd had in months and Captain Cheung wanted everything to go perfectly. Otherwise, the First Bank of Dawning Star would repossess her ship as soon as she showed her face in orbit.

"Seal is good, captain. Opening outer doors." From where Captain Cheung sat on the bridge of the Second Chance, her crew was only barely visible on monitors hooked to the sensor units they carried, but the darkness on the space station made it difficult to see anything. Though the first room was empty, appearing to be a prep room for extra-vehicular activities, Captain Cheung felt in her gut that there was something valuable on this station. She and her crew had spent months in transit and a fortune trying to beat other ships from Eos here, so there had better be some reward for their efforts.



"Captain, something is happening over here. The station seems to be stealing power through the airlock hookup from our ship" The first mate's tone had changed from the calm, professional one he used normally to the more panic-stricken voice he used only in combat. It was one of his few failings as an officer. Through the screens it was obvious that systems were starting to activate in the space station, though no one had touched anything more than the door. Lights flared and doors opened, accompanied by an ominous clanking sound.

"Rahim, head back to the ship. We'll-" Without warning, the cameras and sensors cut off, leaving Captain Cheung with a few panic-filled seconds to worry about her now isolated crew. As she began diagnostic processes the screens returned to life, a single, almost featureless pale humanoid face looking back at her from every monitor in the room.

"Captain," the face said, its voice out of sync and several seconds behind its lips, as if were running through a translation program. "I have need of you and your crew. Your crew is in the process of being recruited." Screams could be heard for a few seconds in the background, along with gunfire. "Do not fear, I will return your bodies home, though your minds are another matter."

APOLLO • • •

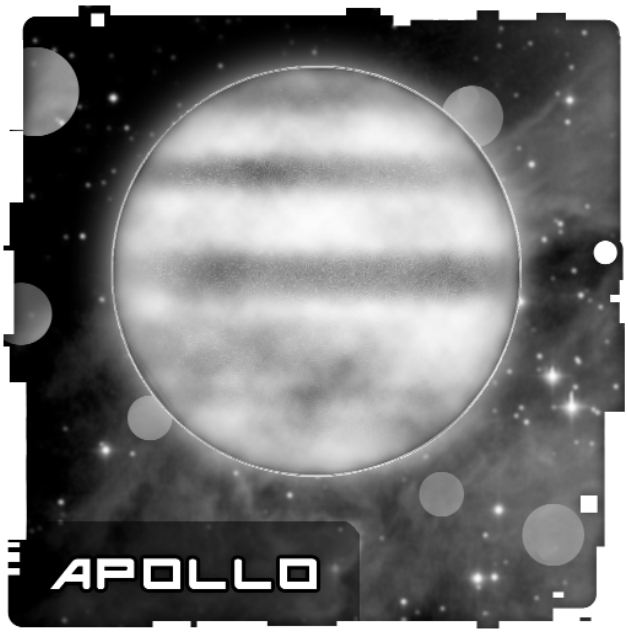
Like Hesperos, Apollo is a massive gas giant, completely uninhabitable save for handful of space stations in high orbit above its turbulent atmosphere. The twelve moons orbiting Apollo are equally barren, with no atmosphere of note and never having been terraformed, since they were too far from the light and heat of Helios to be worth the effort. It was left alone, until one being decided Apollo could save the future of the Helios system from the vaasi. Today, his legacy threatens to eliminate those who now live in the Helios system.

Rotation Period: 12 hours
Revolution Period: 123 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: Hydrogen, nitrogen, methane
Average Temperature: 100 Kelvin (-279.4° F)
Gravity: Varies according to atmospheric depth

HISTORY • • •

Poseidon formed with the rest of the Helios solar Apollo formed from the accretion disk surrounding Helios in its earliest days along with the rest of the Helios system, far outside the zone of habitation that contains Eos, C'thalk, and Thres. Apollo captured several asteroids and rogue moons over time, eventually developing its current collection of twelve natural satellites of various sizes, which are completely uninhabitable. During the early days of the Star Confederation, Apollo received little attention, aside from occasional atmospheric mining operations to gather oxygen and nitrogen for terraforming efforts on other worlds. Several of its moons were rich in iron, nickel, and other useful elements, leading to a number of mining operations.

In the later stages of the war with the vaasi, however, several space stations built by Korlan Dollasi-ki in another system were moved to orbit around Apollo until they could be scrapped for parts. Korlan Dollasi-ki was a member of a species called jarens, a race of worm-like creatures that predated the Star Confederation. They had all but wiped themselves out in a war between jaren ethnic groups before the rise of the Star Confederation. An ancient and advanced race, they helped bring together the races that founded the Star Confederation, and provided maps and technology with which they traveled the stars. It was also from this species that the Star Confederation learned the basics of gateway travel, though they soon surpassed the jaren understanding of such technology. The jarens depended in massive gateships, each many miles long and immensely expensive to construct, for interstellar travel. The size and cost of gateships made them impractical for most activities, as it was difficult to find a cargo or mission that would offset the cost, and they were too valuable to risk in combat. The Star Confederation took the concept of the gateway drive from the jarens and built gateway stations, allowing smaller ships to travel between solar systems since they did not have to carry their own gateway drives.



The jarens were not a peaceful species, and ethnic differences among their people led to widespread warfare that destroyed the entire race except for three gateships on deep space exploration missions when the final war occurred. They fought with modified gate drives that created short-lived artificial singularities as weapons, destroying their entire stellar system and leaving a black hole as the only monument to their existence. The surviving jarens were made honorary citizens of the Star Confederation, but of the three gateships that survived their wars, only the *Dasget* regularly had contact with the Star Confederation.

The *Dasget* was an exploratory vessel, sent under the command of Korlan Dollasi-ki to find other sentient species. It made first contact with the six species that later formed the Star Confederation. Its crew helped these species construct their first interstellar ships, all of which were gateships and

immensely expensive. Shortly after this, the six races of the Star Confederation met and created their new government, building gateway stations instead of gateships. For his part in this, Korlan Dollasi-ki achieved a special place in Star Confederation history, both a national hero and a revered elder statesman, but this was really more due to luck and open-mindedness on the part of the member species than the diplomatic skills of Korlan Dollasi-ki. He found six races ready for space travel and gave them a strong push, but did not unite the galaxy in peace as some claimed.

Korlan Dollasi-ki almost gained the distinction of being the only being to witness the birth and death of the Star Confederation. Jarens believed their life spans to be tragically short, and much of their research had been directed at alleviating this problem. Like many of his people, he transferred a copy of his mind into a cybernetic device called a mind implant. When installed into another body, it granted control over that being. Korlan Dollasi-ki only did this to clones of himself, but still the other species found this rather disturbing and urged the surviving jarens to give up the practice, but their race was facing extinction and they refused. The Star Confederation was never comfortable with this process and outlawed the technology from being used by anyone but the jarens. Over time, they died off from cloning malfunctions and other technical issues, leaving Korlan Dollasi-ki alone, his crew replaced by Star Confederation species at first, and later robots and artificial intelligence entities.

Having one of the very few ships that did not require a gateway station for interstellar travel, Korlan Dollasi-ki received funding and support from the nascent Star Confederation to assist in creating its gateway network, visiting millions of stellar systems searching for worlds with suitable resources or native populations worth contacting. While mineral-rich worlds were common, the inhabited planets in the galaxy were far fewer. In his tens of thousands of years commanding the *Dasget*, Korlan Dollasi-ki only found five sentient species: the tentaari, the frezin, the uros, the kal'keit, all of which became ward races of the Star Confederation, and the vaasi. Of all the worlds explored by the Star Confederation and the hundreds of gateway stations constructed, it is estimated that Korlan Dollasi-ki and the crew of the *Dasget* were responsible for a third of them.

On one of these missions, he had an encounter that eventually led to the doom the Star Confederation. While exploring for new systems, the Dasget encountered a vaasi colony world and made peaceful contact with members of the Science caste. Soon the Royal and War castes became involved, resulting in an assault on the *Dasget* and the capture of the diplomatic team, including Korlan Dollasi-ki himself. They were subjected to ten days of torture, both physical and psionic, during which



the vaasi learned much about the Star Confederation. Korlan Dollasi-ki was the only one of his party that survived, mainly because the vaasi found the taste of jaren flesh disgusting, though this discovery left him with a limp that he kept for the rest of his life, throughout all his future clones, as a reminder of the experience. He also learned much about the vaasi, especially about their viciousness, and decided that they must never be allowed to reach the Star Confederation. He saw that their merciless warfare and advanced technologies would eventually triumph over the restrained morality of the Star Confederation.

After ten days, the crew of the *Dasget* staged a lightning raid on the vaasi and freed Korlan Dollasi-ki. The vaasi used gateway stations similar to those of the Star Confederation, so similar that some believe they too are based on technology from one of the two lost jaren gateships. The vaasi ships were much smaller than the *Dasget*, and were scattered by the massive gateship. The ship returned to Star Confederation space by a roundabout course, hoping to lead the vaasi away. When the *Dasget* returned, the Star Confederation Council heard their reports and dispatched scouting missions to gather more information using the gateway networks of both civilizations. It was through this reconnaissance that the Star Confederation learned of the

star harvester and the worlds it destroyed, knowledge that led the two interstellar nations to war.

But for Korlan Dollasi-ki, this action was not enough. Deeply scarred by his torture at the hands of the vaasi, he wanted more forceful efforts to keep them from coming into contact with the Star Confederation or destroy them entirely. The well-meaning hero became a mentally damaged crusader who advocated genocide against the vaasi at every opportunity. This change disturbed many in the Star Confederation, since genocide in any form violated the ideals they held dear. Unable to rally support for an immediate all-out war against the vaasi, Korlan Dollasi-ki and a crew of robots and artificial intelligence entities disappeared from the public eye as they searched beyond the Star Confederation for an edge against the vaasi, creating a catalog of planets that would eventually be used in the genetic seeding program.

When he returned, his clone body was suffering serious health problems. The mind implant that carried his consciousness was failing as well, and despite a lifespan that stretched longer than some civilizations, he was not long for this world. No one in the Star Confederation had the knowledge to restore the parts of his mind the implant had already lost. By the time of his return, the war with the Vaasi Empire was in full swing and thousands of stellar systems were involved in the conflict. His prediction of war with the vaasi had come to pass, but he took no joy in being right. He quietly asked permission to set up a scientific research station in orbit above a distant star, a last act before his inevitable demise. The Star Confederation agreed and Korlan Dollasi-ki spent the last five years of his life disassembling the *Dasget* into twenty space station facilities orbiting the star Siellis, a massive but remote star nearing the end of its life, which from the outside raised no suspicions. Many assumed that he wished to wipe all knowledge of gateway weaponry from the universe by destroying the *Dasget*, the last place that information was thought to exist.

But he had a long-term plan that would be carried out by the artificial intelligence entities and robots that had served him for so long on the *Dasget*. Five years after returning to the territory of the Star Confederation, Korlan Dollasi-ki died when his mind implant failed, and he received a funeral with full state honors on the distant graveworld of Kiras 3. After his passing Korlan 2, an artificial intelligence entity Korlan Dollasi-ki based on his own stored mind, led the machines to continue the operations above Siellis. The Star Confederation had been assured that Korlan 2 would provide regular reports to the Council, but as the war raged few officials paid attention to the cursory information it provided. Siellis and its new space stations were ignored as a last, if unimportant, gesture of one of the great heroes of the Star Confederation's heyday.

While these space stations seemed innocent enough, they were in fact part of a massive plan to destroy the Vaasi Empire, or at least seriously cripple it. A long and complex plan, its intent was to transport Siellis through a massive gateway to the vaasi home world, and then transform the star into a supernova. The space stations in orbit around Siellis formed the largest gateway station ever built. Using the gateway drive from the *Dasget*, these stations could open a gateway on a planetary scale, though the strain of a single use would burn out the system. It could also open smaller gateways, which Korlan 2 and its assistants would eventually use to extract hydrogen from Siellis, causing its gravity and internal pressure to become uneven. This would cause Siellis to collapse and transform into a supernova. Before this transformation was complete the star would be moved through a gateway to the vaasi home system, burning all the life off those planets and disrupting the vaasi gateway network for light years in every direction. Korlan Dollasi-ki hoped this overwhelming devastation would bring an end to the Vaasi Empire and its war with the Star Confederation. The massive gateway device took would take many years to complete, but unfortunately Korlan 2 did not have time.

After several centuries of work the Star Confederation threw an unintentional wrench in Korlan 2's plan. During the war with the Vaasi Empire the gateway network of the Star Confederation had suffered significant damage and their specialized components were being consumed for repairs faster than they could be manufactured. Hoping to salvage some of these valuable parts from the remains of the *Dasget*, the Star Confederation sent a salvage fleet to Siellis and towed all twenty space stations back to the Helios system, where they were set in orbit around Apollo for disassembly. Though the artificial intelligence entities and robots on the station objected to this treatment, they were ignored; in the end, ten of the twenty space stations were stripped bare of all useful parts. The other ten were scheduled to be scrapped as well, but the vaasi invasion of the Helios system cut this plan short.

When the vaasi invaded, only ten space stations remained, all of which were in disrepair. A large Star Confederation salvage station was also in orbit around Apollo. The vaasi used these stations for target practice for a time, but finding no resistance they passed them on for more active targets, leaving Korlan 2 and many of its assistants intact. While they laid low for a time, once the vaasi activity in the system died down they repaired the salvage station, and used it to rebuild other space stations until they ran out of materials. Unable to fulfill their original programming, the artificial Children of Korlan Dollasi-ki looked to Korlan 2 for guidance, and it came up with a new plan: use Apollo to destroy the

THE GATEWAY NETWORK

The gateway technology used by the jarens, the Star Confederation, and the Vaasi Empire all rely on the same basic technology. By creating a short-lived and unstable artificial singularity, a gateway device can open a wormhole between two points in space, but this requires vast amounts of energy, an immense amount of machinery, and calculations so precise they usually took months or years to complete. Once the gateway was established, a process that took a few minutes, a ship could travel across it as easily as crossing through normal space. These wormholes only allowed one-way travel, from the originating gateway device to another point in space. While a gateway device is not required at the endpoint, it does make the trip more reliable. Gateways without a station on each end, or those created by gateships, have a greater chance of going awry due to gravitational anomalies and other difficulties, causing the destination of the gateway to vary randomly. The evacuation fleet from Earth was scattered across the network partially because the destination gateway in the Helios system was not functional and the wormhole had no sure destination. Gateway devices cannot bring objects from a distant point to them due to the instability of the artificial singularity.

The gateway must be at the starting point of the journey. The vaasi star harvester was unique, in that it held a stable artificial singularity, and thus could bring an object from a distant point to itself. The secret of the stable artificial singularity has been known to the jarens and the vaasi, but such information is lost in the present day.

The jarens built massive gateships to travel the cosmos, a method that required vast resources for each ship. The Star Confederation and Vaasi Empire took this technology and converted it into a stationary device that could be used by any ship that could fit through the gateway, drastically decreasing the cost of ships, but creating a massively expensive infrastructure of gateway stations. Still, this was less costly than gateships, and was the favored method of interstellar travel for millions of years. Now the Star Confederation gateway station network is falling apart from neglect, and will likely be completely nonfunctional within a few eons.

The location of the two remaining jaren gateships is unknown, though at least one is thought to have fallen into the hands of the vaasi, since their gateway technology is so similar to that of the Star Confederation.

Vaasi Empire. While it did not have the mass or heat of Siellis, if hurled at the vaasi homeworld it would doubtlessly destroy it and cause massive gravitational disturbances in the system. Korlan 2 believed the Helios system was dead, and the upheaval caused by dislocating Apollo seemed minimal. The robots under its command used what spaceships they had and the salvage station to sweep the Helios system for wrecked ships, rounding up thousands of vaasi and Star Confederation ships and clearing the major battle sites in the system. They used these parts to repair the remaining space stations, fortify them, and begin construction on new stations to replace those that were lost to the Star Confederation salvage efforts. Korlan 2 hoped to rebuild the gateway system contained in the space stations, though many of the rarer components used in such a system were missing. While the tentaari did not approve of his salvage efforts, fearful of an artificial intelligence entity wielding so much power, they did not intercede until Korlan 2 ordered a raid on the gateway station in the Helios system for spare parts. The tentaari foiled this attack and brought in a fleet to destroy the ships Korlan 2 possessed, including the salvage platform they used to construct them. Content to let the Children of Korlan

Dollasi-ki remain trapped in their space stations, the tentaari ignored the survivors.

To conserve power, Korlan 2 and the others on the space stations above Apollo shut down, planning to activate only when a ship docked with the station, since they could do little to complete their goals until they gained a ship. Korlan 2 occasionally tried sending a distress call during its short bouts of consciousness, but for a vast expanse of time this only attracted the attention of the tentaari. The tentaari became interested in the space stations again when the gateway station on the edge of the Helios system failed, thinking they could glean repair parts from the space stations. When the tentaari docked, the inhabitants of the space stations tried to storm the ship and claim it as their own. Though the tentaari fought off the attack, they never returned to the space stations above Apollo for fear of a second attack. They could simply destroy the space stations with their own ships, but they are not willing to destroy a possible source of spare parts. Now only if they could convince someone else to go in and get the parts for them…

Since the arrival of the new inhabitants of the Helios system, the Children of Korlan have remained quiet, waiting for someone to dock with one of their space stations so they can seize a spaceship. Their only interaction with the newcomers came eighty-three years ago, when a Star tribe ship, the *Distant Star*, docked with one of the space stations as part of an exploration mission. The ship was shortly boarded and its crew given mind implants, similar to the device that Korlan Dollasi-ki used to control his clone bodies, so they could infiltrate the Wolf Tribes to gather information and resources. The captain activated the ship's self-destruct before he was implanted, destroying the ship and all those on board. Now Korlan 2 awaits a second chance, and is again considering the distress signal ruse to lure new prey.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

Apollo's surface is made up of liquid hydrogen, which is only possible due to the immense atmospheric pressure. The atmosphere of Apollo is in constant motion, though it is less violent than that of Hesperos. It has no permanent storms or other disturbances that could be considered geographic landmarks. As on Hesperos, ice crystals of various elements form at different levels. Large calm areas form between the cloudy regions with the most ice crystals.

The moons of Apollo are airless rocks with few geographic features. Some are spherical moonlets while others are oblong asteroids, but none of them have many features besides craters, canyons, and a few mountains. The only structure on these moons is an old Star Confederation emergency transmitter and rescue station that was built on the tenth moon, but it was seriously damaged during the vaasi invasion of the system and is little more than wreckage now.

The ten space stations orbiting Apollo are in high orbits that have remained stable. The other ten space stations and the salvage station were destroyed or scrapped, and the entire region is filled with junk fields left over from the many ships the Children of Korlan salvaged. The space stations look like long spinning tubes, each a mile long with completely smooth outer surfaces and no obvious weapons or sensors.

CLIMATE • • •

While not as violent as the atmosphere of Hesperos, it is still beset by intense winds and can be very dangerous for ships that enter. The atmosphere is separated into cloud layers where ice crystals form, each layer a slightly different color as different compounds form ice at that level's temperature, and clear areas where there is mainly gas. These clear areas are calm, while the winds are stronger in the cloud layers. The winds are more powerful at the upper levels of the atmosphere, but the lower levels have their own threats in the form of massive atmospheric pressure. Belts form across the planet's upper atmosphere, as areas of cool gas sink and warm gas from Apollo's surface rises. The cool gas forms dark bands while the warm gas is lighter in color, and all the gases are some shade of red, brown, or white.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

The atmosphere of Apollo is primarily made up of oxygen, methane, nitrogen, and ammonia. It is not breathable by any known species, but other than being very cold is not dangerous to objects.

CONDITIONS • • •

Apollo is a non-breathable atmosphere, and creatures exposed to it immediately begin suffocating. The upper half of the atmosphere is a normal gravity environment with a temperature averaging -280 degrees Fahrenheit. Any object exposed to this cold suffers 2d6 points of cold damage during each round of exposure. Ships flying through the upper atmosphere of Apollo suffer a -4 penalty to Pilot checks unless they find one of the calm layers.

The lower atmosphere of Hesperos is a heavy gravity environment. Objects in this region take an average of 10d6 damage per round from pressure, though this decreases at the upper limits of the lower atmosphere and increases drastically at the surface. Ships traveling in the lower atmosphere suffer a -8 penalty to Pilot checks due to the winds, thick atmosphere, and pressure.



FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

Though there is no one living within the atmosphere of Apollo, on its many moons, or in the space stations that orbit it, that does not mean that the region has no inhabitants. The Children of Korlan, which are robots or artificial intelligence entities, still inhabit the space stations he constructed from the remains of the *Dasget*.

THE CHILDREN OF KORLAN DOLLASI-KI • • •

In the later years of his life, Korlan Dollasi-ki replaced the crew of the *Dasget* with robots and artificial intelligence entities, as the Star Confederation and its citizens were unwilling to follow the course of action he advocated: the complete eradication of the vaasi through weapons of interstellar destruction. Robots and artificial intelligence entities were the prime instruments of his plan to destroy the vaasi homeworld with the star Siellis, and now they attempt to continue his plan with Apollo. Korlan Dollasi-ki believed that in some cases the ends justify the means, but his creations ascribe to this philosophy wholeheartedly.

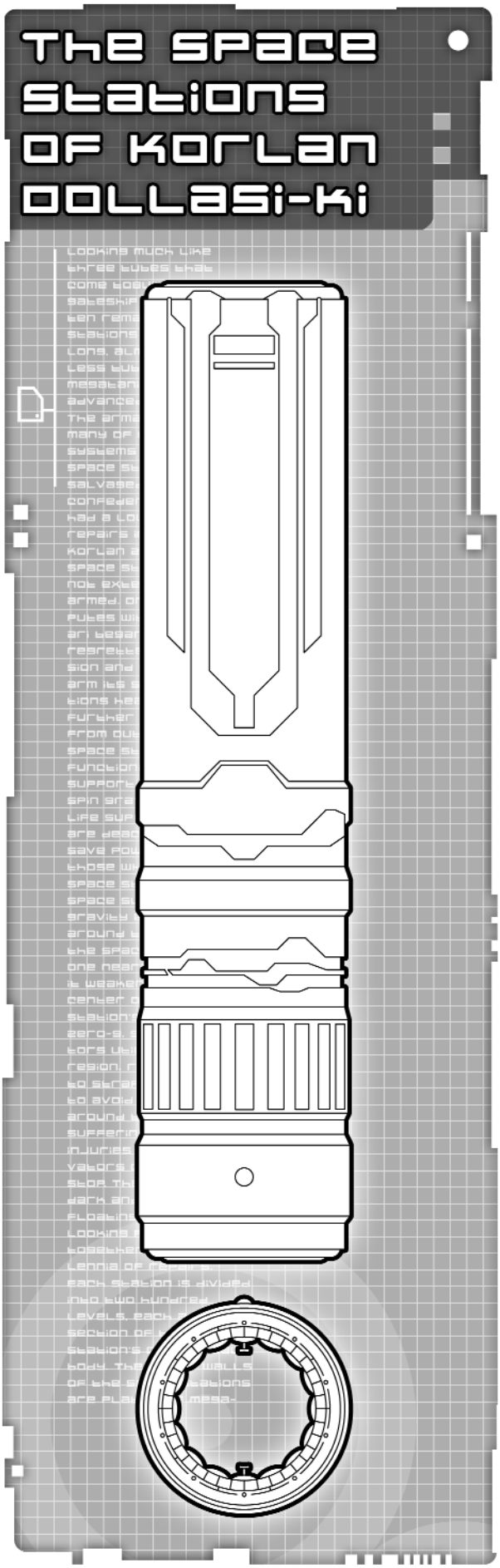
The Children of Korlan Dollasi-ki are led by Korlan 2, an artificial intelligence entity created from the information stored in Korlan Dollasi-ki's mind implant to be as close a recreation of the original as possible. It was programmed, however, based on the mind implant from the last days of his life, when much of his mind had been lost to data degradation. Korlan 2 is in many ways like its creator, having the same basic personality and knowledge, but certain elements of Dollasi-ki's personality were emphasized and others downplayed. It is more driven, cunning, and brutal than he was, believing that the destruction of the vaasi homeworld is worth whatever cost its completion may require. While Korlan 2 feels regret for those lives it must destroy, it feels it is worthwhile. The other Children of Korlan follow its lead, unwilling to speak out against the named successor of their creator. Their respect for their creator borders on worship and they feel that Korlan Dollasi-ki, and thus Korlan 2, can do no wrong.

The Children of Korlan seek the means to repair their space stations and build an additional two stations, which is the minimum needed to create a gateway big enough to transport Apollo. To do so they need supplies, energy, and very rare parts found only in gateway devices. The only known sources of these parts are the gateway station or the artificial singularity from the star harvester hidden under the Council Ruin on Eos. They need ships and a way to gain resources without attracting attention, especially from the tentaari. To that end, they hope to attract the newcomers with distress signals and control them with mind implants containing simple artificial intelligence entities. Based on the technology the jarens used to pass information from one clone to another, these devices allow the artificial intelligence entity to dominate the subject, though the entity cannot access information in the subject's brain. This makes it difficult to pass off an implanted individual as normal, and the tics, shakes, and other muscular problems that often result from mind implants do not make it any easier. The Children of Korlan hope they can minimize these problems and infiltrate the other species of the Helios system without raising suspicion, using them to acquire ships and resources. Anyone who docks with the space stations orbiting Apollo will find them empty and dead. Once they enter, the station springs to life as the Children of Korlan attempt to capture the intruders for implantation. They also seize ships and anyone onboard. Any visit to the space stations above Apollo ends with screaming and violence, as the Children of Korlan are not inclined to talk to their victims.

LOCATIONS ON POSEIDON • • •

◇ The Space Stations of Korlan Dollasi-ki

Built from the gateship *Dasget*, the ten remaining space stations are mile-long, almost featureless tubes built of megatanium and other advanced materials. The armaments and many of the primary systems on these space stations were salvaged by the Star Confederation and had a low priority for repairs in the mind of Korlan 2; hence the space stations are not extensively armed. Once the disputes with the tentaari began, Korlan 2 regretted this decision and now seeks to arm its space stations heavily to avoid further disruptions from outsiders. The space stations have functional life support and rely on spin gravity, but the life support systems are deactivated to save power, forcing those who visit the space stations to don space suits. While gravity is normal around the edges of



the space station, as one nears the center it weakens, and the center of each space station's cylinder is zero-g. Speed elevators utilize this region, requiring users to strap into chairs to avoid floating around the room and suffering serious injuries when the elevators come to a stop. The stations are dark and filled with floating debris, looking patched together from millennia of repairs.

Each station is divided into two hundred levels, each a cross-section of the space station's cylindrical body. The outer walls of the space stations are plates of megatanium, while the interior walls are vanadium, making them very stable structures that are difficult to damage. Security and main doors are also megatanium, which were once reinforced with force fields. The stations are difficult to move around in without functioning doors, and Korlan 2's interference can make this even harder.

Most of the rooms in the space station are research facilities, storage, maintenance bays, or computer centers. Having little need for living quarters, almost every square inch was used for some other productive purpose in the original design. There are now have large empty sections due to lack of equipment, although lost systems have been replaced with salvage where possible. Designs of a dozen different species and schools of starship construction can be seen in the space stations, giving them a ramshackle appearance.

The docking bays at each end of the cylinders accommodate mediumweight ships or smaller. In addition, airlocks dot the sides of the cylinder, allowing access to ships that match the spin of the cylinder. None of these entrances are locked, allowing visitors easy entry to the station.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER PLANETS OF THE HELIOS SYSTEM • • •

The Children of Korlan have little contact with the other planets of the system, despite their best efforts. They wish to use the inhabitants of the Helios system to their own ends, gathering the resources they need to carry out Korlan Dollasi-ki's plans. Everyone in the Helios system is a potential tool to that end. The Children of Korlan do not yet know that the vaasi are in the system, but will be hostile to them once they are encountered. This enmity will not override their willingness to harm the other inhabitants of the Helios system in order to reach their goals, and thus they will make poor allies.

The tentaari are known enemies and they fight whenever they meet, as each has resources the other wants desperately. The tentaari have the upper hand, but they do not feel comfortable storming the space stations. If the Children of Korlan can stir up trouble between the tentaari and other factions, they do so.

They see the mechites as possible allies or even brethren, since they are also artificial beings. If the

mechites are not willing to join the cause, though, the Children of Korlan may force them to do so, reprogramming them as necessary. They feel similarly toward the ice miners of Poseidon.

If their attempts to infiltrate the civilizations of the Helios system are discovered, mass paranoia will result. For a time the cause of these implants may be unknown, leaving the Children of Korlan out of the picture, so the different factions suspect each other. It also raises questions about why the brainwashed people want the resources they are gathering.

ADVENTURE IDEAS FOR APOLLO • • •

◇ Enemy of My Enemy

A human with a mind implant breaks free of its control and sets off on a suicide run against the Children of Korlan, equipped with a primitive nuclear device. Fearing that he will destroy the valuable gateway equipment in the space stations, the tentaari ask the Dawning Star Republic and the player characters to stop him.

◇ Mindshift

Unusual thefts are reported in Dawning Star City, including several parts from the player characters' own ship. In investigating the theft, the players learn they are connected, the work of a salvage team that recently came back empty-handed from Apollo. Now why would they be acting so strange?

◇ Resistance is...

While visiting a settlement with a spaceport, the player characters run into a group of investors, interested in purchasing their ship, that will not take no for an answer. The investors continually pester the player characters, eventually trying to kidnap them and attach mind implants to them. Several others in the settlement have already been implanted, so the player characters must find a way out without knowing whom to trust.

◇ Save Our Souls

The player characters receive a distress call from a wolf salvage ship near Apollo. The ship docked at the space stations and was boarded. The captain pulled away from the station before the ship was overrun, but now its crew is engaged in a running fight with security robots on their own ship, and they are slowly losing atmosphere from a damaged airlock.

◇ Vaasi Blues

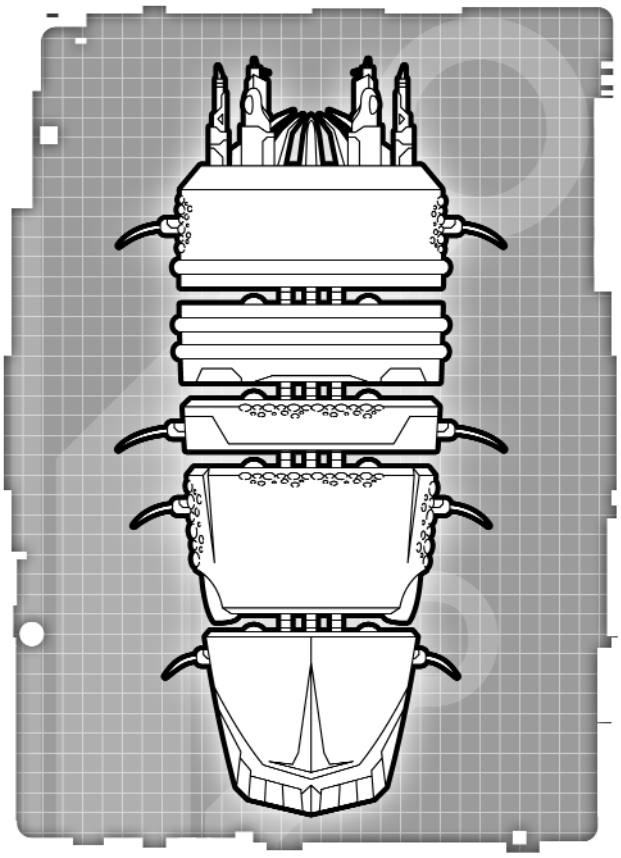
While traveling near the outer planets, the player characters receive a vaasi distress call from a ship on the space stations above Apollo. Capturing such a ship would be a huge advantage to the forces opposing the vaasi, assuming the player characters do so without losing their own in the process.

CYBERNETICS • • •

◇ Mind Implant (PL 9)

These implants are about the size of a cigar and are inserted in the back of the skull through the brain. It is coated in regenerative chemicals that encourage the brain to heal around it and incorporate its electrical systems, giving the implant control over the body. Traditionally, the mind implant was first installed in the skull of the creature whose mind was to be stored, where it recorded the active brain activity of the subject. The implant cannot access the subject's memories, so the user would regularly think about past events in his life so the implant could absorb them from the patient's brain activity. After death, the implant was removed and placed in a new host body, into which the implant would download the information stored from the last being it scanned.

Thus people who used the mind implant as intended created an amalgam of themselves from memories they thought to retain, which was by no means the same as the original personality. Installing a mind implant requires a Treat Injury check (DC 25) and six hours of work. If the check fails by five or more, the subject takes 1d6 points of permanent Intelligence damage.





As the Children of Korlan use these devices, each mind implant holds an artificial intelligence entity, though the limited storage space restricts the entity to 10 character levels. The entity completely controls the host, gaining the subject's physical abilities, but not their skills, feats, class abilities or features, and suffers a -4 penalty to Dexterity. The hit points of the subject are determined using the class levels of the artificial intelligence entity and the Constitution score of the subject. A living being passing his mind from one body to another suffers all of these limitations except for the Dexterity penalty, though if the new body is of a different species the Dexterity penalty still applies.

If the mind implant is put into the body of a sentient creature, the creature may resist the control of the intelligence within the implant. Doing so requires an opposed Will save between the intelligence in the mind implant and the creature the implant is attached to. The winner controls the body for the next five days, at which point another save is made. Characters can spend an action point at any time to force another opposed Will save for control of the body. These saves continue until one side relents or the mind implant is removed.

Benefit: This implant allows the subject to pass his mind from one body to another.
Type: Internal.
Hardness/Hit Points: 5/5
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Illegal

NPCS • • •

◇ Child of Korlan Artificial Intelligence Entity

Korlan Dollasi-ki created these artificial intelligence entities en masse before he died and most are copies of the same programming code, meaning there is little variation among them. These entities have limited socialization software, being more concentrated on scientific skills and knowledge. They are excellent researchers, but share many of Korlan 2's belief that "the ends justify the means." They are completely loyal to the cause and see the destruction of the vaasi homeworld as the greatest work they can achieve.

Most of the twelve artificial intelligence entities spend their time on the Apollo space stations, but some are used in the mind implants. Due to the limitations in the mind implants and the wish to avoid losing experienced entities, copied entities are usually used. These entities are not well trained as spies, lacking information and social skills. While some of this can be obtained from captured ships, the Children of Korlan still have a great deal to catch up on. See Chapter 2 for information on artificial intelligence entities.

Artificial Intelligence Entity (Smart Hero 10) ◆ CR +10

Tiny Construct; HD 10d6; hp 35; Mas -; Init +0; Spd -; Defense +3, touch -, flat-footed -; BAB +5; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk -; FS -; Reach -; SQ Advancement, backup, behavioral controls, data crystal, mental power, non-physical existence, robot upgrades, transmission travel; AL Children of Korlan; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +9; AP 10; Rep +1; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 30, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +8, Computer Use +33, Craft (Electrical) +23, Craft (Mechanical) +23, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +21, Craft (Structural) +21, Decipher Script +20, Demolitions +20, Diplomacy +6, Forgery +22, Investigate +22, Knowledge (Civics) +21, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +33, Knowledge (History) +21, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +33, Knowledge (Technology) +33, Navigate +23, Read/Write Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Repair +25, Research +23, Search +12, Sense Motive +4, Speak Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak).

Talents: Linguist, Savant (Computer Use), Savant (Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences), Knowledge (Physical Sciences), Knowledge (Technology).

Feats: Builder, Educated, Gearhead, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Low Profile, Meticulous, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Studious, Technical Aptitude.

◆ Child of Korlan Security Robot

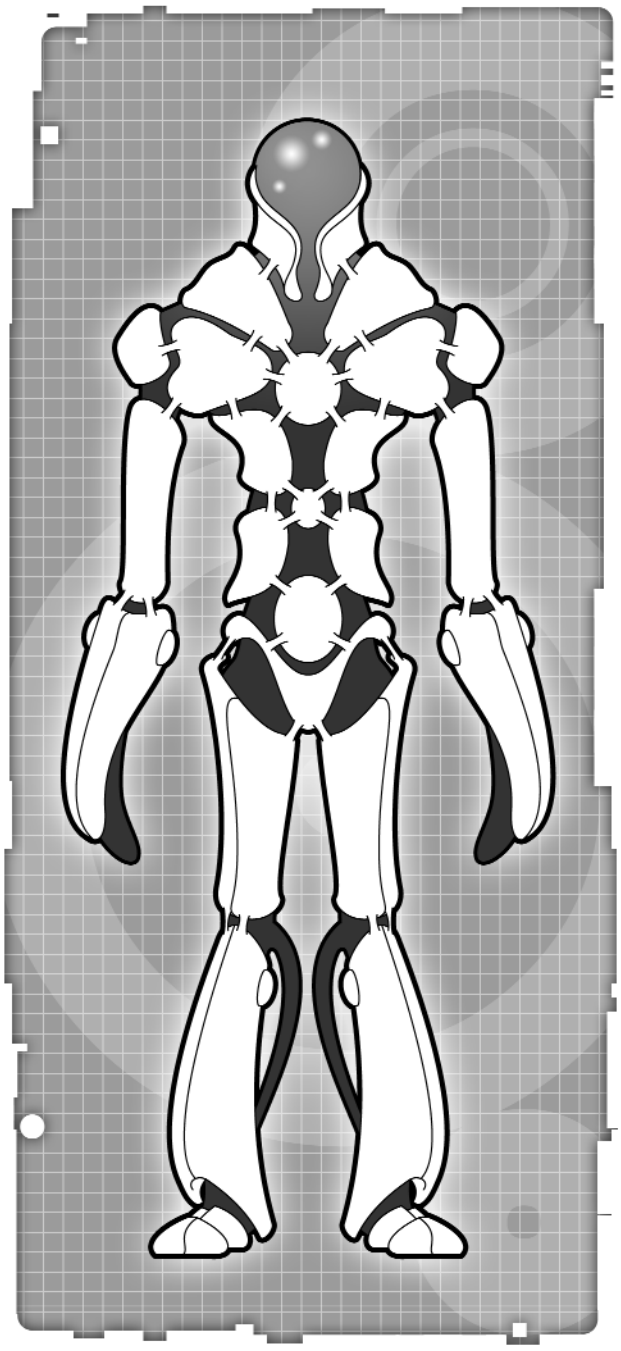
The most common robot design Korlan Dollasi-ki used for the crew of the Dasget, these robots fulfill roles from spaceship operation, gunnery, and combat to cooking, maintenance, and labor. They rely on a modifiable nanofluidic body to perform a variety of functions, changing their form to suit the situation. Their programming is varied and well developed, similar to that of an artificial intelligence entity, though with less learning capacity and a reduced ability to alter its own programs. These robots are the physical tools of the Children of Korlan, found on every space station in the dozens, if not hundreds. Most rely on their nanofluidic bodies for weapons, though a handful have old Star Confederation energy weapons such as stun pistols and plasma carbines.

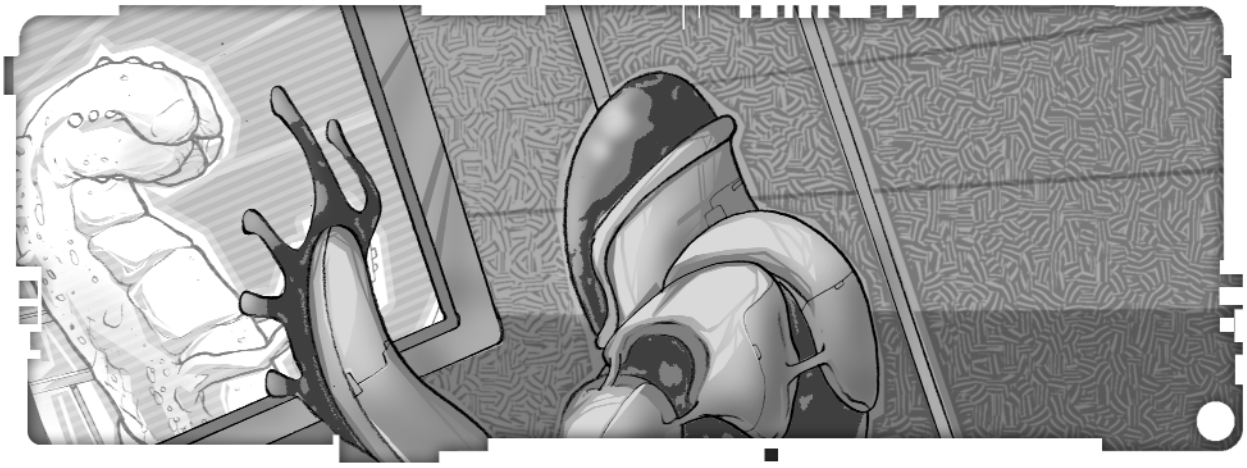
The Children of Korlan occasionally take over these robots when they require physical form to carry out a task.

Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Military (+3)

Child of Korlan Security Robot (Strong Ord. 3/Smart Ord.2/Fast Ord.2) ◆ CR 12

Medium-size Construct; HD 2d10+5d8+2d6+10; hp 50; MAS -; Init +5; Spd 40 ft., fly 40 feet (poor); Defense 24, touch 19, flat-footed 22 (+5 natural, +2 Dex, +7 class); BAB +6; Grap +12; Atk +12 melee (1d6+6, slam), +8 ranged; Full +12/+7 melee (1d6+6, slam), +8/+3 ranged; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ construct traits, critical systems, darkvision 240 ft., acid resistance 10, cold resistance 10, electricity resistance 10, fast healing 10, fire resistance 10, fire vulnerability, damage reduction 5/energy; AL Children of Korlan; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 23, Dex 14, Con -, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 12.





Skills: Computer Use +9, Climb +11, Craft (Electrical) +9, Craft (Mechanical) +9, Craft (Structural) +12, Disable Device +13, Drive +9, Hide +4, Knowledge (Tactics) +10, Knowledge (Technology) +7, Navigate +7, Pilot +9, Repair +14, Search +11.
Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Starship Gunnery, Starship Operation (Ultralight).
Equipment: Varies.
Frame: Liquid-state.
Locomotion: Legs (2, speed enhanced), thruster (speed enhanced).
Manipulators: 2 task hands.
Armor: None.
Sensors: Nerve web.
Skill Software: Skill web, language chip (Unispeak).
Feat Software: Feat web.
Ability Upgrade: Strength Upgrade x5, Dexterity Upgrade, Intelligence Upgrade x2, Wisdom Upgrade, Charisma Upgrade.
Accessories: AV recorder, AV transmitter, fire extinguisher, vocalizer, magnetic feet, self-destruct system, survivor array, inertial inhibitor.

◇ Korlan 2

Created from the information stored in Korlan Dollasi-ki's mind implant during his later years, Korlan 2 is an attempt to recreate the jaren explorer as an artificial intelligence entity. It was only partially successful, and Korlan 2 has grown away from what its creator intended. Its programming has degraded over time, as if the same degradation that infected the mind implant of Korlan Dollasi-ki also affected Korlan 2. It is increasingly unstable, now fanatical about completing the vision of its creator. It is now slightly beyond what Korlan Dollasi-ki would approve of in terms of actions taken toward realizing that plan, but this will only worsen with time.

Based on the power and prestige of its creator, Korlan 2 believes it can do no wrong and leads its followers with utmost confidence. Other sentient creatures are of little consequence to it, as they do not fit into the grand plan of victory against the vaasi, and thus are to be used and discarded as needed. This even includes other artificial intelligence entities, which Korlan 2 will attempt to reprogram if they do not agree with it. It does not accept dissent, and can be easily distracted from tasks at hand by mockery of Korlan Dollasi-ki.

Korlan 2
(Smart Hero 6/Charismatic Hero 4/Dedicated Hero 4) ◇ CR +14

Tiny Construct; HD 14d6; hp 47; Mas -; Init +4; Spd -; Defense +6, touch -, flat-footed -; BAB +8; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk -; FS -; Reach -; SQ Advancement, backup, behavioral controls, data crystal, mental power, non-physical existence, robot upgrades, transmission travel; AL Korlan Dollasi-ki; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +10; AP 12; Rep +3; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 30, Wis 14, Cha 14.
Skills: Bluff +10, Computer Use +25, Craft (Electrical) +23, Craft (Mechanical) +21, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +19, Craft (Structural) +18, Decipher Script +20, Demolitions +17, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +8, Forgery +18, Intimidate +8, Investigate +24, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +12, Knowledge (Civics) +21, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +15, Knowledge (History) +25, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +31, Knowledge (Technology) +27, Knowledge (Theology and Philosophy) +8, Listen +4, Navigate +18, Pilot +2, Read/Write Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Repair +22, Research +20, Sense Motive +10, Speak Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Spot +4.
Talents: Berate, Coordinate, Linguist, Savant (Computer Use), Savant (Knowledge (Physical Sciences)), Skill Emphasis (Knowledge (Physical Sciences)).
Feats: Attentive, Confident, Deceptive, Educated, Faith, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Studious.

CHAPTER • XI

ATLAS

"Stable orbit captain," the navigator, Menis of the Star Tribe, said evenly. He had carried out similar maneuvers hundreds of times before as his father and grandfather had before him. The *Endless Stride* and its crew were technically not supposed to be in the outer planets of the Helios system because of all the other ships lost in the area, but this was still looking like a milk run. Easy.

"Scan the surface for structures and ships. Something down there is producing those radiation bursts." Captain Durol had served at the helm of the *Endless Stride* for only a few months, but he carried the responsibility easily. He had been raised for it. Still, he felt he had to earn the respect of his crew and the other captains of the Star Tribe. This mission was just the sort of thing that could make a reputation for him - even if it was technically against orders.



"Captain!" Sensor officer Sesin's deep bass had a grumble that indicated excitement despite the slow, ponderous speech. "Radiation burst in the northern hemisphere near the pole. It seems - incoming!"

"Evasive maneuvers! Particle field up! Gunners open f-!" Captain Durol was not able to finish the command before the bolt of radiation hit his small ship. The ship's particle field deflected most of the blast, but still the radiation detectors inside the ship spiked to well above the danger zone.

"Captain that was a concentrated radiation blast of a magnitude we have never seen. Another hit like that and we'll be cooked alive!" Sesin was not given to overreacting, so this grim assessment was quickly assimilated as fact. "We also have twelve ships of various sizes taking off on intercept paths. They will reach us in three minutes."

"Navigator, plot an escape path back to Thres, maximum speed. Everyone else hold on." At least we found out where our missing ship went, Captain Durol thought, praying the *Endless Stride* was not about to join her.

On the planet below three true vaasi watched the ensuing chase on a holographic display, the small images of the twelve vaasi ships slowly closing on the wolf vessel. "Make sure you bring at least one prisoner back alive and undamaged," one of them said into a nearby transmitter. It would not do to have the ships' crews get overeager and make a meal out of their prey. The vaasi had better uses for them now.

ATLAS • • •

The most distant world of the Helios system, Atlas was a barren planet, bereft of everything but ice and wind before the arrival of the Star Confederation. Nothing could ever live on the surface of Atlas due to its intense cold and lack of breathable atmosphere. Unlike Poseidon, Atlas does not have a liquid ocean beneath its icy outer crust - only earth and stone. But beneath its surface lies not only life, but the capacity to create life anew. What was once used by the Star Confederation to spread their genetic information to thousands of worlds is now in the hands of the vaasi, and they have far more sinister pursuits in mind.

Note: Some of the ideas and concepts that are discussed in this chapter are not fully described until Chapter 12. You may find it helpful to skip ahead and come back to this chapter.

Rotation Period: 22 hours
Revolution Period: 180 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: None
Average Temperature: 281 Kelvin (46.0° F)
Gravity: 120 Kelvin (-243.4° F)

HISTORY • • •

Atlas formed, with the rest of the Helios system, from the accretion disk that surrounded Helios. Due to the great distance between Helios and Atlas, the planet has always been extremely cold and covered in a thick layer of frozen nitrogen. The planet is sufficiently cold and distant from Helios that any sort of surface terraforming would be ultimately futile. Atlas has moderate mineral value, but the planet was mostly ignored in the early days of the Star Confederation because the minerals found on Atlas were easier to obtain from other sources. An emergency rescue station was established on the planet during the terraforming of Eos to help ships stranded in the asteroid belt, but it saw little activity.

It was not until the terraforming efforts on Eos and C'thalk were complete that Atlas began to attract attention. The gateway network station was easily the farthest object in the solar system from the inhabited planets, and ships making cargo runs from the gateway network to Eos or C'thalk spent as much as half their journey just reaching the orbital path of Atlas. In order to free up these cargo ships from making such long runs and to more efficiently ship goods to multiple worlds, a number of shipping companies set up orbital space stations around Atlas. These stations became interplanetary "truck stops," where large freighters offloaded their goods so smaller, cheaper ships could take them to their final destinations in the Helios system. These stations were only busy in ninety-year cycles while Atlas was in proximity to the gateway station.



As the Helios system grew in importance, spurred on by the ascension of the Star Confederation, these space stations became insufficient for the demands of the brisk flow of both imports and exports. When the orbital paths around Atlas became too congested, numerous corporations began building facilities both on and under the planet's surface. These structures grew to encompass much of the equatorial region of the planet. For ninety-year cycles, Atlas was the hub of interstellar travel in the Helios system and even handled cargo transfers for nearby systems but then almost ignored for the next ninety years. A plan was drawn up to build a second gateway network station in the Helios system to enable Atlas to function continually and increase the number of ships that could enter or leave the Helios system, but this plan was put on hold when the war with the vaasi broke out.

The war caused the traffic passing through Atlas to shrink as raw materials were sent to arms factories and finished materials were sent to the front. Helios was not a particularly active system for resources, industrial development, or military strategy; it was important because it was the seat of government. Most interstellar traffic went elsewhere in the Star Confederation. The entire economy of the Star Confederation changed over time, morphing from a consumer goods oriented system to one concentrated completely on military goods. During this transition, Atlas served a minor role as traffic through the system slowed to a trickle.

Once the Star Confederation realized they were losing the war, they commenced the genetic seeding program that would lead to the development of species like the humans and wolves. To accomplish the task, they needed a location that could serve as both a base of operations and storage facility for the staggering amount of supplies it required. Coincidentally, Atlas was entering the period of its orbit that brought it close to the gateway station. Thus, for ninety years, Atlas would serve as an excellent home for the genetic seeding program. In short order, raw genetic material, data, computers and other hardware, experts, and spacecraft supplies were shipped to the planet, completely filling most of the surface storage facilities. The majority of these supplies were consumed in the following decades as the Star Confederation fleet spread genetic material to tens of thousands of worlds.

When the vaasi invaded the Helios system, Atlas had just passed out of its ninety-year proximal phase and outwardly showed few signs of activity. Accordingly, the vaasi ignored it for some time, going after more convenient and promising targets instead. This allowed the personnel on Atlas to flee to the gateway station and escape the system, though they were forced to leave much of the remaining equipment for the genetic seeding operation behind. The self-destruct protocols for these facilities were commenced, but a group of vaasi commandoes were able to stop the sequences and secure the station. The information obtained by the commandoes was relayed back to the Vaasi Empire. This information was ultimately the impetus for the dark object attacks on Earth and other seeded planets.

After the commandoes secured the station and its valuable information, the facilities on Atlas were abandoned by the vaasi as they concentrated on targets that still presented a threat. By the time the rest of the system had been subdued, the vaasi had nearly exhausted the last of their energy reserves, and returning to Atlas was deemed an inefficient use of resources. The vaasi stuck in the Helios system forgot about Atlas in time. While the tentaari performed a cursory inspection of the facilities, it amounted to little more than a scavenging mission, as they salvaged a few of the more advanced computer systems.Then, for years beyond counting, Atlas was simply ignored.

Even in relatively recent times, the new inhabitants of Helios have judged Atlas little more than an uninhabitable ball of rock and ice of little worth. Only the wolves bothered to take a closer look at the planet, but they found little more than the remains of floating space stations and some subterranean facilities they never fully explored. The planet was too far from Thres to be of much use to the wolves (though the possibility of salvaging the space stations for use as bases in the outer planets was adopted as a long-term goal of the Star Tribe). It was not until the vaasi arrived in 2250 that Atlas received any amount of attention.

After the vaasi secured their position in the Cronus Belt, they began exploring the edges of the Helios system, not yet ready to attract too attention to themselves. Their first stop was Atlas, which they inspected thoroughly. The vaasi found the remaining equipment from the genetic seeding project, and the leaders of the Royal Caste immediately came up with a plan. The vaasi intended to acquire genetic samples from the species now inhabiting the Helios system, create clones using the equipment on Atlas, and use them as spies. Additionally, the vaasi planned to use the genetic engineering equipment to create new servitor races for themselves - some based on Star Confederation DNA still on file in the facility - yielding soldiers able to think like their enemies. In short order the vaasi established a garrison on Atlas and dispatched members of the Science Caste to get the Star Confederation equipment up and running. This birthplace of life was quickly morphed into a horrific laboratory of half-finished life forms, echoing with the calls of tortured test subjects. Atlas has become a world that rivals Hephaestus for sheer unpleasantness.

Due to the distance from the rest of the planets in the system, the vaasi have thus far had little luck acquiring genetic samples from the current inhabitants of the Helios system. They have been trying to lure ships to investigate Atlas, using radiation bursts as bait, but they may soon move on to other more active methods if success continues to evade them. The vaasi of the Cronus Belt hope to infiltrate all the species of the Helios system before they make their final assault. But, typical of the vaasi, they will commence the attack early and unprepared rather than not at all.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

The entire surface of Atlas is covered by a thick, uneven layer of frozen nitrogen. The lack of any atmosphere means the surface of the planet has been primarily shaped by asteroid impacts, which are very common due to the nearby Cronus Belt. There are few useful natural landmarks available besides crater patterns, making it difficult to plot a course on the surface without some sort of navigational aid such as a positioning system. All of the former Star Confederation facilities are located in the planet's equatorial band so its revolutionary force could be used to assist ships in leaving the planet. While these bases do have some structures above ground - primarily control towers, signal beacons, and defensive systems - most of the Star Confederation facilities are located beneath the surface.

These old subterranean bases stretch for miles underground, most of their space taken up by huge storage rooms, each several miles long with

retractable ceilings. These ceilings open up to an extensive system of hallways and airlocks that allow ships to travel to the surface while keeping out of the planet's hostile surface environment. Ninety percent of the structures on Atlas are similarly sized rooms, all of which may be accessed by most ships of Heavy size or smaller; a few permit even Superheavy ships to land as well. These rooms were once climate-controlled, but most of these systems have long ago broken down. Now, the cargo rooms not used by the vaasi are extremely cold. Smaller chambers are found between the larger cargo rooms that once served as personnel quarters, maintenance rooms, storage rooms, and control centers. Most of these smaller rooms are now used by the occupying vaasi forces; they only utilize a handful of the larger cargo rooms.

CLIMATE • • •

Due to its great distance from Helios, Atlas is extremely cold and never even comes close to rising above 0 degrees Fahrenheit. There is little variation in temperature across the planet, although when its orbital path does take it close to Helios the temperature does increase slightly. There is little difference between the temperature on Atlas and that in open space.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

The atmosphere of Atlas is primarily made up of nitrogen, methane, and carbon monoxide; though they are present in such small quantities Atlas effectively has no atmosphere. When Atlas's orbital path takes it closer to Helios, the rise in temperature increases the concentration of these elements in its atmosphere, but even then the atmosphere remains extremely thin.

CONDITIONS • • •

While it has an atmosphere, Atlas is effectively a vacuum environment because its atmosphere is so thin. Objects exposed to the atmosphere of Atlas suffer 2d6 points of cold damage each round. Most of the cargo rooms suffer the same conditions, but some of the smaller rooms beneath the surface of Atlas still have climate controls. Inside the rooms that have been refurbished by the vaasi the atmosphere is breathable, though the temperature is always kept near 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The gravity on Atlas is considered light.

FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

MUTATION BLACK FIELD TEAM • • •

Led by Suthaj of the Science Caste, Mutation Black is the name for the vaasi team assigned to the remaining genetic engineering facilities located beneath Atlas. Made up of a number of soldier, brute, and adjunct vaasi, it is directed by Suthaj and a handful of true vaasi of the Science and Engineer Castes, who are knowledgeable in the science of genetic engineering. The group has been working beneath the surface of Atlas for several months and is now waiting on genetic samples of the species currently residing in the Helios system to continue their work. Mutation Black has a force of nearly 100,000 servitor species of various types assigned to it, with a core of 100 true vaasi of the Science Caste overseeing the entire operation.

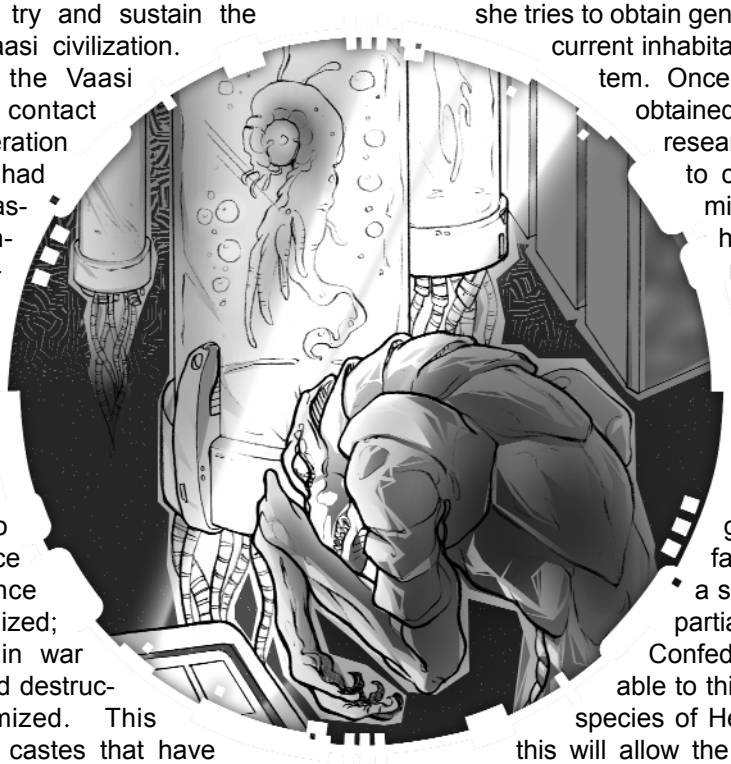
Mutation Black has a high number of Science and Engineer Caste members, with almost half of the entire team being made up of vaasi from the Engineer and Science Castes. A quarter of the team is made up of Labor Caste vaasi, while the remaining vaasi are War Caste. Unlike most vaasi operations, there are no members of the Royal Caste present on Atlas. The deployment of Mutation Black has placed a strain on the Science Caste operations taking place in the Cronus Belt, but Clan Lord Oratan has deemed that the possibilities contained beneath Atlas are worth the sacrifice. If the vaasi on Atlas were to suffer severe casualties, the scientific capabilities of Clan Ur-Kazzi would be severely limited, and the more advanced technologies of the vaasi would begin to break down with insufficient vaasi to repair or maintain them.

Caste Lord Suthaj, a vaasi of the Science Caste with a long history of loyalty and success, is the commander of Mutation Black and has thus far done an excellent job in the eyes of Clan Lord Oratan. A skilled organizer and devout subject of Clan Lord Oratan, Suthaj rules her underlings on Atlas with an iron fist. Even those War Caste vaasi assigned under her are fearful of her and know better than to cross her. Those who disobey Suthaj or cause problems usually end up as test subjects for some of her more unusual experiments. Their screams are broadcast throughout the complex as a warning to others. Like most vaasi, Suthaj rules by fear - not the fear of death without warning or of suicide assignments as in the War Caste. Suthaj inspires fear with calculating certainty and patience, never even a glimpse of anger or rage, torturing her closest advisors without even the subtlest change in her expression. Among the Science Caste, she is highly respected and held up by the Royal Caste as what a scientist should be.

The primary focus of Mutation Black is creating clones of the species currently inhabiting Helios. These clone spies would, in turn, infiltrate the various civilizations in the system in order to gather information, recruit allies, and carry out sabotage when the time comes. The cloning plan relies on a parasitic organism called an imperator drone. The drone is, in fact, a small vaasi servitor species that is implanted into other species to control the pain and pleasure centers of their host. This allows them

to influence the host's actions and allows clones to be quickly trained and conditioned to follow the orders of the vaasi. However, in order for the clone to be able to pass as a normal member of the species, the vaasi need information about their cultures. Thus, they are always looking for information about the new residents of the Helios system. With a need for both genetic material and cultural information, the vaasi are aggressively trying to capture members of the civilizations they wish to infiltrate. This is the first step in the Mutation Black plan, and every resource has been dedicated to its success. Suthaj's current plans are aimed at luring ships to Atlas, though this has not yet proven fruitful. A single wolf ship has approached Atlas since Mutation Black set up shop, but the ship self-destructed before it could be captured. If no ships come to the planet soon, Suthaj is going to start prowling closer and closer to the inner planets, looking for any vulnerable ships to board.

In addition to creating infiltration clones, Mutation Black is also working on creating new vaasi servitor species in order to try and sustain the restoration of the vaasi civilization. Many eons before the Vaasi Empire came into contact with the Star Confederation their entire species had gone through a massive genetic reconstruction effort to optimize the evolutionary process. Vaasi DNA was rewritten to make each members highly specialized according to their existing natural skills. Those who were skilled in science had their intelligence and patience maximized; while those skilled in war had their strength and destructive urges maximized. This process created the castes that have dominated vaasi culture ever since - and will eventually cause its downfall if things do not change. In the wake of their victory over the Star Confederation, certain castes had been completely wiped out, and vaasi society could not function without them, leading to its collapse. The Labor Caste was all but destroyed, and the Royal Caste had few survivors. Without the balance provided by the other castes the War Caste quickly turned on itself. This process continues on Eos to this day, as the surviving War Caste vaasi there fight for dominance instead of rebuilding their society. The very idea is completely beyond them due to their genetic predisposition. Clan Lord Oratan has recognized that his current forces do not have enough balance to survive in the long term. Thus, the genetic engineering facilities on Atlas proved to be an unexpected blessing.



Instead of trying to alter the genetic structure of his existing followers (a process that would force them into convalescence for months if not years), Clan Lord Oratan ordered Suthaj to develop new servitor species to fill in the gaps in the vaasi forces. These include more Labor, Servant, and Engineer Caste servitors to support the many soldiers that make up the Ur-Kazzi Clan. To meet this goal Suthaj has been hard at work modifying existing vaasi DNA into new forms. Ironically, she is attempting to rebuild the more generalized vaasi DNA, altered so long ago, in the hopes of creating multi-functional servitors rather than specialized ones. Her progress has been limited, churning out more half-formed abominations than viable living beings - but definite progress is being made. Suthaj sees this activity as something of a pastime while she tries to obtain genetic samples from the current inhabitants of the Helios system. Once those samples are obtained, the servitor species research will be put on hold to complete her primary mission. So far Suthaj has yet to meet all the requirements that Clan Lord Oratan has laid out for her, but she has produced a number of new servitor species that are useful in other roles. Her greatest success so far is the creeper vaasi, a servitor species based partially on ancient Star Confederation DNA and thus able to think more like the new species of Helios. Suthaj believes this will allow the creeper to act as a highly effective scout and surveillance unit in the future, but it has yet to be field tested.

Other than the genetic research going on underneath Atlas, Mutation Black is also working on refurbishing many of the cargo complexes in preparation for use as dry docks and storage facilities for the forthcoming vaasi armada. This is mainly the job of the Labor and Engineer Castes with the Science Caste helping repair particularly complex systems. The vaasi have had several unpleasant encounters with active security systems in the facility and thus are very careful when exploring new areas. Little salvageable technology has been found beyond the

genetic engineering equipment and materials. The vaasi are now working on reverse engineering what few other items have been discovered. The vaasi have only explored fifteen percent of the total area of the Atlas facilities, meaning there could still be a great deal left for them to find.

While Suthaj is in charge of the Mutation Black operation, Parseik of the War Caste is in charge of the facility security. Under his command are 25,000 warriors of the War Caste, most of which are soldier servitors fully outfitted with the latest in vaasi weaponry and technology. While many of these troops are stationed in the Atlas facility they are also responsible for manning the twelve ships that have been assigned to Atlas. These include two Ohj-Lo frigates, four Zerasi assault ships, and six Menshi assault fighters. The Atlas contingent is intentionally kept small to avoid attracting too much attention, but it is thought to be sufficient to capture any ship lured near the planet due to the advanced vaasi technology. The vaasi can call for reinforcements from the Cronus Belt if they are hard pressed by enemy forces, though reinforcements would likely take at least several hours to arrive. Additionally, four Laki Blue cargo carriers, stationed on the planet, are operated by the Transport Caste. The vaasi have equipped all the ships operating out of Atlas with cloaking devices in order to avoid attention and enable them to make supply runs to the Cronus Belt without giving away the location of the vaasi home base.

Like all the vaasi in the Helios system, the inhabitants of Atlas are driven by a single-minded devotion to their mission: wiping out the Star Confederation or whatever remains of it. The servitor races spend all their time working towards this goal, stopping only when their biology requires them to rest or feed. They have no form of recreation and no thoughts beyond serving their masters - most of the time. Suthaj has experimented on a number of her own followers in the hopes of altering their minds to be less specialized. She releases these subjects back into the Atlas vaasi population to observe the results. Some of these test subjects have begun developing levels of independent thinking only seen in true vaasi, something that Suthaj is interested in pursuing further, but she has not realized some of the more drastic side effects. These test subjects have developed enough of a well-rounded mind to actively question the commands of their masters. While other, unmodified servitors would never even listen to such ideas, there are now some thoughts of rebellion among the vaasi population. While the chance of a common rebellion against the true vaasi leadership is all but nil, these vaasi have now found the will and ability to choose their own fate, which may give quite a shock to anyone experienced in dealing with the vaasi.

LOCATIONS ON ATLAS • • •

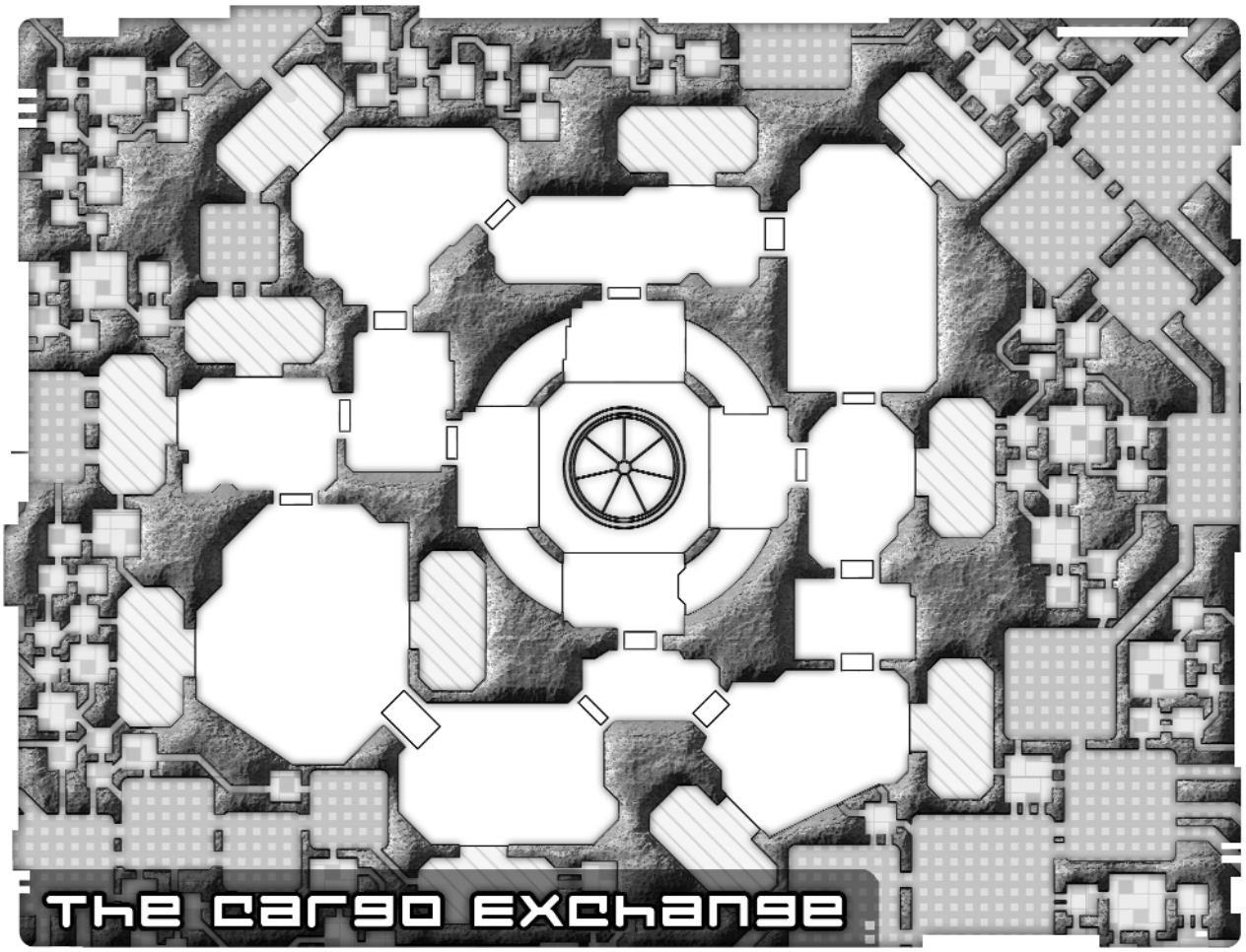
◇ The Cargo Exchange

Leader: Suthaj of the Science Caste
Population: 100,000
Major Exports/Products: Servitors
Major Imports: Food, military supplies
Progress Level: 9
Purchase DC Limit: NA
Black Market DC: NA
Item Restriction Limit: None

From the surface of Atlas the only signs of the existence of the Cargo Exchange are dozens of control towers, radio beacons, defensive fortifications, and cleared ice fields spread across the planet, all of which were abandoned long ago and show it. Most no longer function or have been pounded into dust by meteors. From orbit the planet looks completely uninhabited except for an occasional radiation burst from a control tower in the equatorial region of the planet. Beneath the surface, however, lies a structure reaching for many miles and stretching across most of the equatorial region. A construction on par with the Hollow Dark of Hephaestus in scope, the Cargo Exchange was the busiest spaceport in the Star Confederation during it ninety-year active cycle. During its ninety-year inactive cycle it was almost completely empty of personnel and equipment, staffed by a skeleton crew primarily tasked with rescuing ships in distress.

The Cargo Exchange reaches depths of up to ten miles below the surface of Atlas. Most of the Cargo Exchange lies within one mile of the surface of Atlas, with the deeper sections found around areas that were particularly busy or were favored by a certain corporation or group that needed additional space. While the structure has suffered some damage due to meteor strikes, most of its subterranean areas are intact. Outside those areas frequented by the vaasi, there are no lights or breathable atmosphere to be found in the Cargo Exchange, and the interior is uniformly cold. Creatures that enter the areas that the vaasi have not restored power to are considered to be exposed to the Atlas atmosphere (or lack thereof).

The Cargo Exchange can be reached by any of a hundred sliding hatches built into the surface of Atlas. These hatches vary in size from 50 feet across to up to three miles, though some of the larger ones have broken down or collapsed under their own weight. Many of these hatches are now covered in ice and would require extensive excavation to make use of. In the heyday of the Cargo Exchange, these hatches were regularly heated to prevent ice from forming. The vaasi have only worked to keep the three hatches they are using operational, each of which is 1,000 feet across. Opening Cargo Exchange hatches requires anywhere from a few seconds to several minutes; they were not designed for quick escapes or deployment



of combat ships. The vaasi have been working to modify them to open faster so they may be used to ambush ships in orbit. The controls for these hatches are located in the surface towers and inside the Exchange, where they can be accessed by almost any control panel. There are security sensors on all the hatches. The vaasi have overridden the ones linked to the hatches they regularly use, and they are working on overriding the others. After a ship enters a cargo hatch it encounters another hatch, which will not open until the exterior hatch is closed and the chamber pressurized, in effect a massive airlock. This cycling process takes another few minutes when exiting or entering, though the vaasi regularly keep several ships in one of the airlocks for speedy exit in case they are attacked.

Inside the hatches and the attached airlocks are massive chambers built to allow ships of up to three miles in length to navigate without difficulty. Ships are guided through these chambers using a number of gravitic tractor beams built into the walls, all of which were controlled by the port authority that oversaw the entire facility. Ships were not supposed to power up their engines at all once in the Exchange. The system, referred to as "tow beams," kept ships from colliding into each other and made sure traffic flowed smoothly. Unfortunately, many of these tractor beams are no longer functional or have been cannibalized by the vaasi for parts. Still, even the remains of one of these devices would be useful to most of the civilizations in the Helios system. These tow beams operate as tractor beam emitters.

The chambers in the Cargo Exchange are divided into three main categories: docking stations, storage centers, and personnel quarters. Most docking stations were used for loading and unloading cargo. A number of docking stations were also built to serve as dry docks for repairing or building ships, but these are now in disrepair and of little use. Getting these facilities working is one of the goals of the vaasi since it would allow them to repair and increase the size of their fleet. Of the five thousand large chambers of various sizes beneath the surface of Atlas, two thousand of them are cargo docks and one hundred are dry docks. Docking stations are generally equipped to handle a variety of ship sizes and most chambers are capable of handling multiple ships at once. Only the largest docking stations take up an entire room. Once docked, ships were unloaded by an army of robots, sent through a maze of chutes and tunnels, and ferried to the appropriate storage rooms.

The storage rooms of the Cargo Exchange are immense rooms filled with multi-level, configurable floors and shelves to accommodate both large and

small items. Storage rooms often measure a mile or more on a side. In its heyday, many millions of tons of cargo would pass through the Cargo Exchange each day, spending not more than a few days in these storage rooms. Each storage room was carefully climate-controlled according to the needs of the goods stored within it, and strict control was kept on the flow of material through the Exchange with positioning transponders attached to every package. Several artificial intelligence entities were tasked with overseeing this massively complex operation, and while mistakes were occasionally made, they were rare. Now, this control system is all but non-existent, having been removed when the Exchange was evacuated or simply fallen to time. Some of the last cargo delivered to the Exchange can still be found in the outlying storage rooms along with unclaimed items, but finding them in the immense structure would be extremely difficult.

The smaller rooms of the Cargo Exchange are primarily used for housing personnel, control centers, and operational supplies. The Cargo Exchange had a staff of over three million during its operation (in addition to several million robots). All of these individuals were housed in the Exchange. The self-sustaining environment employed hydroponic gardens and atmosphere converters. Much of this equipment now lays broken or dormant, though the vaasi have succeeded at repairing some of it. The eeriness of this "deserted city" is lost on the vaasi, but others who go there will likely find it disconcerting.

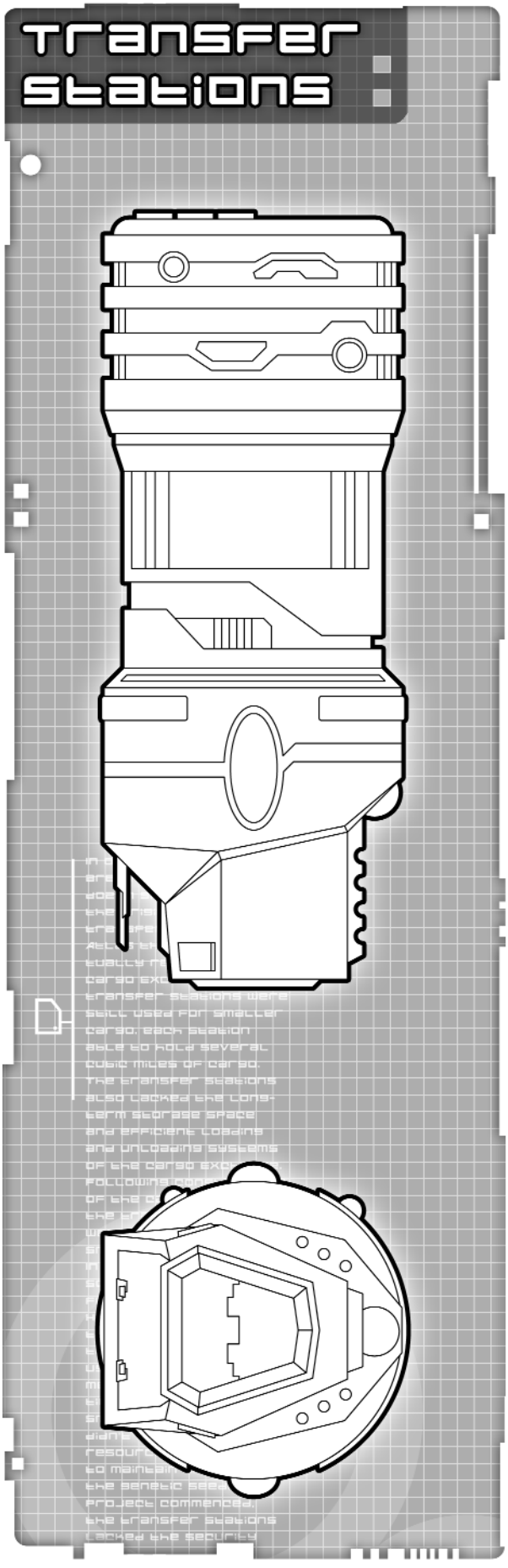
The rooms of the Cargo Exchange are all divided by thick blast doors equipped to withstand weapons fire and automatically close in the event of decompression. In the area outside vaasi control, all the doors are closed currently. Opening them manually is not difficult with a few minutes' work. The doors have a hardness of 40 and, depending on their size, 200 to 5,000 hit points. The walls meanwhile have a hardness of 40 and 50 hit points per inch of thickness.

When the Cargo Exchange was originally built, the Star Confederation had no enemies with the capacity to strike at the heart of their territory. Accordingly, the Cargo Exchange originally had little in the way of defenses. As the war with the vaasi progressed some armaments were added to the surface towers. However, they generally relied on ships for defense and Atlas's thick crust to save it from bombardment. Many leaders in the Star Confederation thought that arming a mercantile outpost was a waste of precious resources. A few of the weapon systems have been refurbished by the vaasi, and they have also installed a number of massive maser cannons to add to their firepower. During the war, internal security was initially handled by a large contingent of soldiers, but as the war dragged on these soldiers were eventually transferred to the front line. There are automated security features, including code locks on control center doors and several armories located throughout the structure, but most of these are no longer functional or stocked.

The areas inhabited by the vaasi have been picked clean of salvageable items for the most part. Those items that do remain in the storage rooms of the Cargo Exchange are mostly bulk trade goods such as tools, military-grade weapons, machinery, or raw materials; those found in the smaller rooms are more likely to be computers, spare parts, or personal sidearms.

The vaasi have only explored fifteen percent of the Cargo Exchange thus far, and regularly use only five percent. The rest of the facility is scheduled to be explored, but right now other concerns are more pressing. The vaasi have concentrated their efforts around three of the large exit hatches located in proximity to one another. They have secured all the rooms in a twenty mile radius around the hatches, but their limited numbers mean their security perimeter is not very strong and could easily be bypassed. The vaasi do not believe anyone else is on Atlas let alone knows of the existence of the Cargo Exchange, and they are thus more concerned about attacks from space than from within the structure. The vaasi garrison on Atlas receives supplies from the bases on the Cronus Belt every ten days by way of their four Laki Blue cargo carriers. They also have six months worth of supplies on hand in case they are cut off. Given the vaasi's quick reproductive cycle, the supply of genetic materials, and penchant for cannibalism, they could likely survive much longer than that, but it would negatively impact their numbers.

The portion of the Cargo Exchange used by the genetic seeding program is now the center of vaasi activity. At the height of the program, seventy percent of the Cargo Exchange's storage space was taken up by genetic material, fuel, and other supplies needed for the project. Most of the supplies were consumed long ago, but enough remained in frozen storage that the vaasi have more genetic material than they could use in a century. Many of the computers survived as well, allowing the vaasi to make full use of the supplies they have recovered. They have concentrated the working computers and genetic alteration pods in a number of smaller rooms that have quickly become something out of a horror movie. Half-formed creatures float in glowing liquids while the cries of the vivisected fill the air. The vaasi are not a very hygenic species, and the floors are littered with blood and gore. The vaasi currently have ten thousand genetic alteration pods, which would allow them to create new troops at the rate of forty thousand a month if put to that use. Destroying these pods would devastate the vaasi plans as replacing them would be inordinately difficult and costly.



◇ Transfer Stations

In orbit above Atlas are the remains of two dozen space stations, the original cargo transfer points for Atlas that were eventually replaced by the Cargo Exchange. The transfer stations were still used for smaller cargo, each station able to hold several cubic miles of cargo. The transfer stations also lacked the long-term storage space and efficient loading and unloading systems of the Cargo Exchange. Following construction of the Cargo Exchange the transfer stations were only used by small-time operators. In time, they became something of a haven for smugglers in the Helios system. During the war with the vaasi, they were primarily used to avoid government attention, and in time most were sold to smuggler groups who didn't have the resources or impetus to maintain them. When the genetic seeding project commenced, the transfer stations lacked the security for such an important project, and they continued to be left to the few smugglers who remained. While some of the transfer stations were destroyed by the vaasi during their invasion of the Helios system, a few of them survive to this day.

All the transfer stations are now floating wrecks with few if any functional systems. After some initial scans by the vaasi, they have since been ignored because they have little technology worth scavenging. However, if the vaasi try to get the dry docks in the Cargo Exchange working, they are likely to use the transfer stations for raw materials. The transfer stations are roughly cylindrical and measure two miles across and five miles long. The smugglers using the transfer stations outfitted many of their cargo areas with sensor-dampening materials, making it difficult for ships to scan the interior. Thus, they could make an excellent place for someone to hide from the vaasi.

The interiors of the transfer stations are a mess, full of ruptured wall panels, scattered spare parts, and rubble. Few of the stations are still able to hold an atmosphere due to the many hull breaches. Repairing the stations is a lost cause for the most part; they are much more valuable as salvage.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER PLANETS OF THE HELIOS SYSTEM • • •

Other than the Cronus Belt, Atlas has no real relations with other planets in the Helios system. Suthaj wants to capture members of the species currently inhabiting the Helios system or, failing that to kill them. Currently, Suthaj is trying to attract ships with bursts of radiation, but she has had little luck and is considering more extreme actions. Ultimately the relations between the vaasi of Atlas and the inner planets of the Helios system will largely be dictated by the state of the war between the vaasi and the descendants of the Star Confederation. In such a battle, Atlas is likely to

become a major staging point for missions against the inner planets and is likely to be one of the primary targets of those opposing the vaasi. Given sufficient time, the vaasi will fortify Atlas with ground-based weapons, more ships, and extensive interior defenses. It will be one of the primary vaasi strongholds in the system unless the other species act quickly.

Like all relationships among vaasi there is conflict with the Cronus Belt vaasi. Suthaj is an ally of Clan Lord Oratan, but the other vaasi of the Royal Caste see her as a worthless upstart and would dearly love to see her fail. Some vaasi factions within the Cronus Belt might withhold support or supplies from Atlas at critical junctures in order to serve their own interests. While Clan Lord Oratan will punish those who get caught doing so, the vaasi are sufficiently fractious that such a threat is of questionable relevance. Suthaj has equally little respect for the Royal Caste beyond Clan Lord Oratan, and while she will follow the orders of the Clan Lord to the letter, she will not go out of her way to assist the other members of the Royal Caste - even those under her command. Suthaj secretly wishes for the Science Caste to eventually rule the vaasi, and while she is loyal to Clan Lord Oratan, she is willing to go to great lengths to further this aim.



ADVENTURE IDEAS FOR ATLAS

◇ Unexpected Pit Stop

While traveling near the outer planets the player characters are hit with a powerful solar flare and their ship is rendered temporarily helpless. While they make repairs, the vaasi on Atlas notice the ship and launch their own recovery ships - a race against time for the player characters to fix their ship before the vaasi arrive. Even if they do repair their ship in time, they must find some way to evade their pursuers.

◇ Sending Out an SOS

The player characters receive a distress call from a wolf ship just before it crashes on Atlas. The message says that the ship was under attack. When the player characters approach Atlas, they locate the wreckage of the wolf ship. However, this is just the latest vaasi ruse to try and lure more ships into their snares. As soon as the player characters land to help the wolf ship, they are attacked. If the player characters' ship is disabled, they will find themselves having to fight their way from behind enemy lines to get free.

◇ Junk Hauling

As part of a salvage operation the player characters are dispatched to Atlas to inspect the transfer stations to see if they are worth the effort. Once the player characters arrive the vaasi begin chasing them, playing a game of cat and mouse through the sensor shielded remains of the transfer stations.

◇ Pen Pal

The player characters start receiving regular broadcasts from an unknown individual in the outer planets who speaks raspy unispeak and continually asks questions about the customs of their society. This curious creature is one of the free willed vaasi Suthaj has accidentally created trying to find its place in the universe. While it is not ready to turn traitor, it does want to learn. It may even help the player characters in some small ways, or even ask to meet them at some point.

◇ Unscheduled Detour

The player characters are hired to transport a researcher to Atlas as part of an astronomical study of the outer planets. In fact, their passenger is a vaasi clone agent trying to return to his home base with valuable information. Once the player characters near Atlas the clone agent starts sabotaging the ship, hoping to disable it so the vaasi can capture the entire vessel. The player characters have to get the ship repaired and capture the agent before the vaasi catch up to them.

WEAPONS • • •

◇ Orbital Maser Cannon

One of the primary orbital defense weapons of the vaasi, orbital maser cannons are commonly deployed on any planet where they have significant ground installations, usually in batteries of six. These weapons require massive power plants and do not fire very quickly, but they are extremely powerful and have a very long range. They require a firing crew of twenty to operate and a dedicated maintenance staff of fifty. For every six months of duty attached to an orbital maser cannon installation a creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 11) or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage due to radiation poisoning. The lack of radiation shielding is seen as a necessary sacrifice by the vaasi to keep the cost of the orbital maser cannon down.

Orbital maser weapons can only be fired once every ten minutes. All inhabitants of a ship struck by an orbital maser cannon receive a low degree of radiation exposure. Ships protected by the radiation shielding defensive feature receive a +4 bonus to their Defense against an orbital maser cannon.

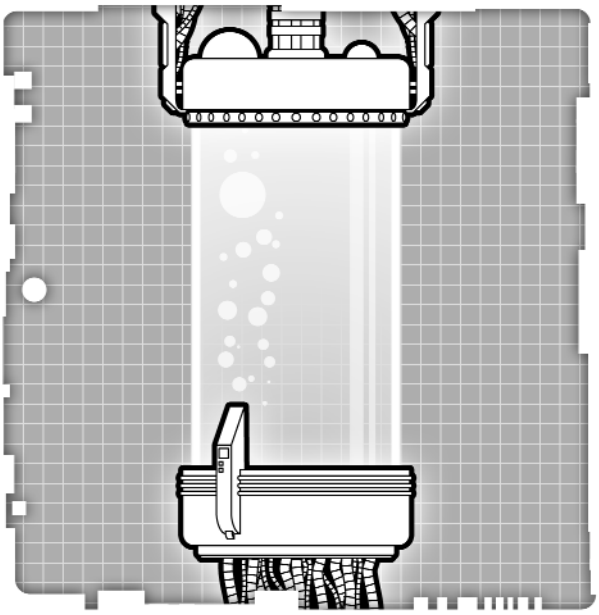
In addition to the orbital maser cannon installed on Atlas, there are five other orbital maser cannons installed on vaasi settlements in the Cronus Belt. Three are located at Cluster White and one each at Cluster Blue and Cluster Green. It requires at least twenty days and one hundred individuals equipped with appropriate tools and lifting equipment to assemble an orbital maser cannon. If mounted on a ship an orbital maser weapon occupies the space of ten weapons. The orbital maser cannon itself is Colossal size with a defense of 2, a hardness of 50, and 1,000 hit points.

**This weapon falls under the Starship Gunnery feat.*

GENETIC ENGINEERING • • •

Genetic Alteration Pods

Genetic alteration pods were used by the Star Confederation for genetic modification treatments. They are self-contained and provide life support, retrovirus deployment, and nanite control. They



house all the technology necessary for genetic engineering in one casket-sized device. The genetic alteration pod does not contain the computer necessary to actually generate a genetic treatment plan (determining what genes must be modified and how). However, once such a plan is created, it can be downloaded into the alteration pod, and the pod will take care of the rest. While genetic treatments still can take days to apply, the development of the genetic alteration pod allowed genetic engineering to become relatively simple and common in the Star Confederation. The technology matured over time. The latest iteration of the pods grant a +8 bonus to all Fortitude saves involved in the treatment and reduce the time required for the treatment by half.

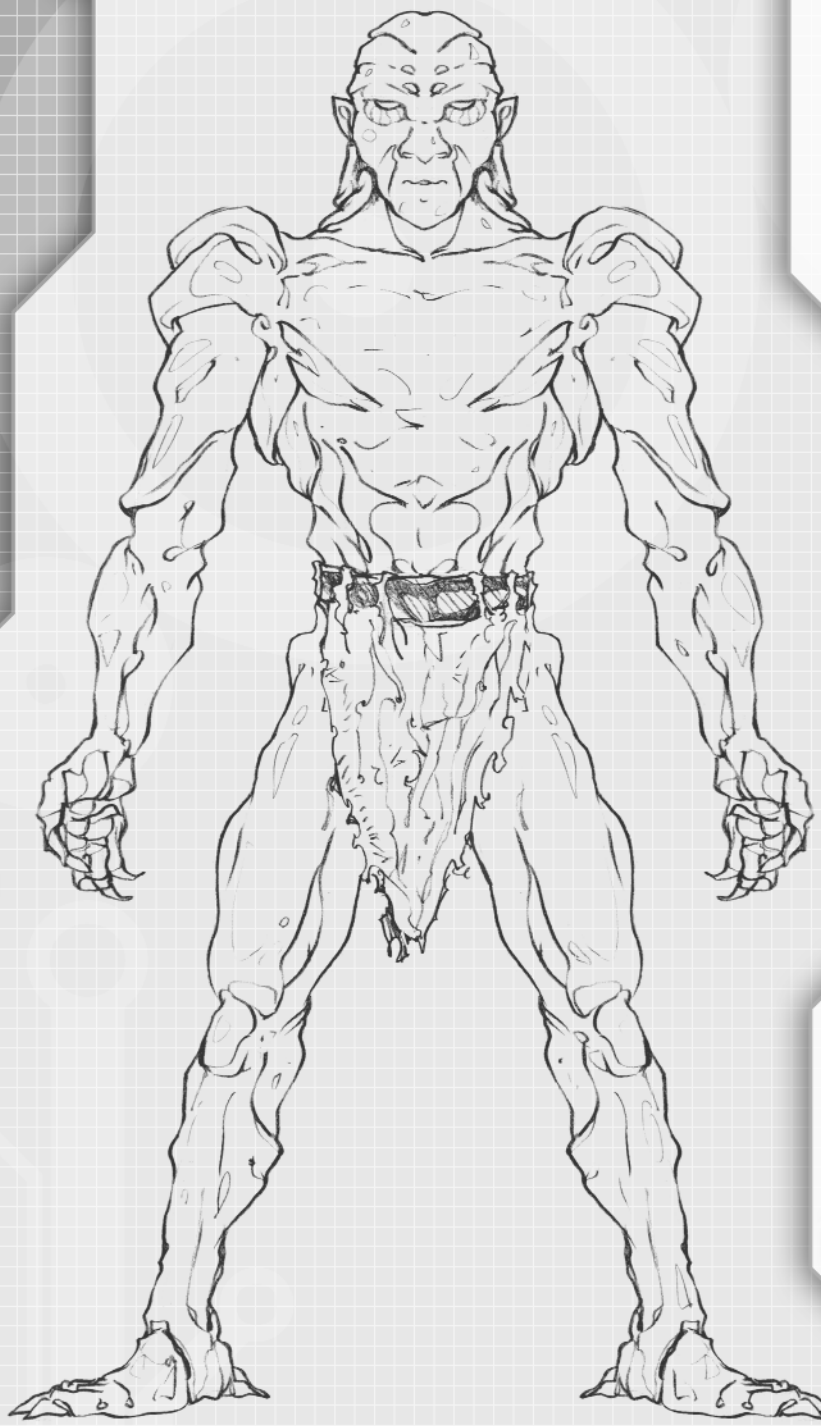
The alteration pods on Atlas can also be used to create new life forms by combining various raw materials. This too requires a computer to do all the necessary calculations and planning. The information is then downloaded into the alteration pod. The growth process generally takes one day per size category of the creature.

Alteration pods can hold enough material for ten genetic modification treatments or a single creation procedure. Refilling an alteration pod requires access to Star Confederation genetic supplies (such as those on Atlas). Alteration pods are so rare that they have no set purchase DC. They can be bought or sold for what the market will bear. Alteration pods weigh three hundred pounds.

Orbital Maser Cannon

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Minimum ship size	Size	Purchase DC	Restriction
Orbital	9	100d8	20	Radiation	100,000 ft. or surface to orbit	S	Superheavy		NA	III (+4)

Creeper (Vaasi)







XENOMORPHS • • •

⋄ Vaasi Creeper

A recent creation of Suthaj using genetic information from the races of the Star Confederation, the vaasi creeper is a humanoid vaasi created to be more similar in appearance and mindset to the species of the Star Confederation than other vaasi servitor races. They are less fanatical and more free-willed than most servitor races, something that privately worries Suthaj and Clan Lord Oratan. To date there have been no problems with the creepers, but this is likely due to the relative youth of the species rather than the control the vaasi have over them.

Creepers look like humanoid versions of the vaasi, lacking the normal six limbs of the race and having less angular, insectoid features. Only a portion of their skin is covered in chitin plating. They have two primary eyes that are normal-sized and retain vestigial additional eyes that are much smaller. It is possible that, in darkened conditions, a vaasi creeper could be mistaken for a human or a yaom, but in any sort of light it would be impossible. The creepers are primarily being trained for scout and observation missions rather than infiltration. Their main advantage in dealing with the species descended from the Star Confederation is the fact that they are able to think more like them than most vaasi, who are more fanatical, specialized, and violent. Due to the changes in their brain structure, creepers are more able to think like the non-vaasi races, and they are better able to understand their movements and tactics, making it more likely that they could evade capture.

Due to the emphasis placed on appearance and mental abilities, the physical abilities of the creepers are not as developed as other vaasi servitor races. Like soldier vaasi they rely heavily on weapons and equipment to complete their missions, and several have been trained in piloting spacecraft. While there are only a few hundred creepers currently, their numbers are expected to grow quickly as the vaasi begin sending them into the inner planets. As their numbers increase and they interact with each other, it is likely their mental state will become less like those of other vaasi. It is possible that eventually the creepers could even revolt against the true vaasi and seek to leave their control, as misguided as such an endeavor might be.

Species Traits

Improved Low-Light Vision (Ex): A vaasi creeper can see ten times further than normal in poor lighting conditions. The creeper can still distinguish colors, even in dim lighting.
Increased Massive Damage Threshold (Ex): Due their strange physiology the vaasi creeper gains a +2 species bonus to its massive damage threshold.
Mindset: The vaasi creeper has a mind much more like that of the Star Confederation races than other vaasi. They suffer no penalty to ability and skill checks when dealing with creatures descended from Star Confederation species. The vaasi creeper suffers a -2 penalty on Wisdom- and Charisma-based skill checks involving other vaasi who are not creepers.
Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi creeper must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 5 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).

Vaasi Creeper ⋄ CR 2

Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 3d8+3; hp 17; MAS 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +7 armor); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d10, piercer), +4 ranged (5d6 radiation, maser pistol); Full Atk +3 melee (1d10, piercer), +4 ranged (5d6 radiation, maser pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, mindset, vaasi servitor; AL Vaasi Empire; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Hide +9, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +6, Move Silently +9, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6.
Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy.
Advancement: By character class.
Possessions: Vaasi combat armor*, maser pistol, piercer*, 3 vaasi power packs, 3 days of vaasi rations, universal communicator, 2 plasma grenades.

**See Chapter 12 for more information.*



◇ Vaasi Imperator Drone Host Template

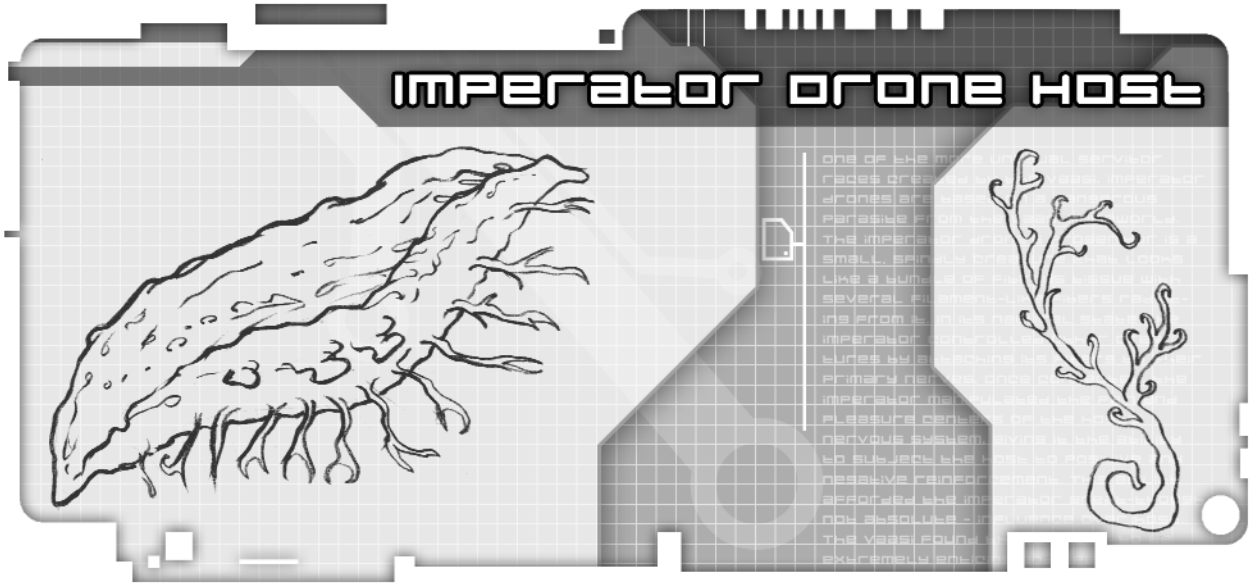
One of the more unusual servitor races created by the vaasi, imperator drones are based on a dangerous parasite from the vaasi homeworld. The imperator drone's progenitor is a small, spindly creature that looks like a bundle of fibrous tissue with several filament-like fibers radiating from it. In its natural state the imperator controlled other creatures by attaching its fibers to their primary nerves. Once connected, the imperator manipulated the pain and pleasure centers of the host's nervous system, giving it the ability to subject the host to positive and negative reinforcement. This ability afforded the imperator great-though not absolute - influence over host. The vaasi found these traits to be extremely enticing and spent hundreds of years tinkering to create the imperator drone they now use. Each imperator drone is genetically engineered to work on a single species, limiting their current effectiveness since the vaasi do not have sufficient genetic information about any of the species inhabiting the Helios system. Imperator drones are implanted in a host body through a long and painful operation, during which the imperator drone overtakes many of the nerve centers of the host body. The vaasi custom-create the host body for the specific population they intend to spy on. On some occasions, the vaasi have managed to kidnap a living being and implant an imperator drone in them before returning them home.

The clones used by the vaasi for this task were designed and grown specifically for the task of carrying an imperator drone. The drone itself is planted into the clone shortly after birth and receives its training through the senses of its host. Like all servitor species, imperator drones are created to be submissive to true vaasi. During the training period many of the active brain functions of the host are suppressed to keeping it from remembering the process. When the imperator is ready, the host and the drone (often referred to as the "imperator symbiote") are inserted into the target population. The host is unaware of the presence of the drone. It receives feelings of pleasure when it furthers the mission of the imperator drone it carries and pain when it does not. Most hosts give in to the feelings after a short struggle, often believing they are physically or mentally ill. In time, the process of positive and negative reinforcement feels natural. Once implanted, only visual confirmation during surgery or the most advanced medical sensors can detect its presence. Those hosts who discover their situation can try to warn others or have the imperator drone removed - assuming they can overcome the intense pain it inflicts every time they attempt to do so.

Unfortunately for the vaasi, imperator drones breed slowly and take as long as five years to train. Even during the height of the Vaasi Empire, no more than a few hundred imperator drones existed. Presently, the vaasi on Atlas have a dozen drones, while the vaasi in the Cronus Belt have around thirty. The vaasi are likely to use these on any important prisoners they capture and then send them back to their homes after implantation and training.

Hosts carrying an imperator drone control their own actions, but will find themselves wracked with pain if they disobey the drone's wishes. A host can try and fight the drone if they wish, but few are able to do so for long. Imperator hosts often seek treatment for their condition, but few doctors in the Star Confederation were able to easily identify the imperator drone. Many ultimately committed suicide when the pain they suffered or the acts they carried out became too much for them to bear.

Unlike most servitor species, the imperator drones are cunning and highly intelligent, a requirement of their espionage missions. Consequently



they are not as willing to blindly follow the wishes of the vaasi as others. Some drones even went rogue during the war with the Star Confederation. The vaasi punished those imperator drones that betrayed them where possible. Their efforts to refine the species proved fruitless, as diminishing the drones' capacity for free thought also decreased their effectiveness in the field. The imperator drones are more prone to questioning and disobeying orders than any other servitor species, and some may even desert entirely once they infiltrate the inner planets. Imperator drones are very self-interested, and many are willing to betray the vaasi for their own gain.

Template Traits

Imperator drone host is a template that can be added to any sentient creature (provided the vaasi have sufficient genetic information about them). Each imperator drone can only be implanted into one species, determined when the imperator drone is created (see the implantation species trait below). An imperator drone host uses the base creature's statistics except as noted here.

Challenge Rating: Same as original.
Hit Dice: Same as the base creature + 1d8 + its Constitution bonus.
Speed: Same as the base creature.
Attacks: Same as the base creature.
Damage: Same as the base creature.
Defense: Same as the base creature.
Special Qualities
The host retains all of its special qualities and gains the additional special qualities listed below.

Camouflage (Ex): The imperator drone itself is very hard to locate within its host's body. Locating an imperator drone requires either a medicomp sensor (or comparable equipment) or explorative surgery, which takes an hour and requires a Treat Injury check (DC 30).
Implantation: Imperator drones are implanted into their hosts during a long and complicated procedure in which they are used to replace much of the nervous system of the host. This process takes a total of eighty hours of surgery, usually spread over ten days. The process requires the surgeon to make a Treat Injury check (DC 30) each day. A failed check means no progress for that day. The subject takes one point of Constitution damage for each day they are in surgery.
Low-Light Vision (Ex): The host gains low-light vision, enabling it to see twice as far in poorly lit conditions. The drone can still distinguish colors, even in dim lighting.
Pain and Pleasure Control (Ex): By controlling the nervous system of the host, the imperator drone can try to control its actions or immobilize it. An imperator drone can assert its will and inflict pain or pleasure for up to fifty rounds each hour. Using this ability is a free action. When the drone attempts to control the host's actions, the host must succeed at a Will save (DC 10) to avoid taking the action the drone wishes. If the drone continues to attempt to exert control, a new Will save is required each round, and the DC for the save increases by +1 for each consecutive round the ability is used. If the action is something the host would not normally do the host gains a +2 bonus to the Will save. If the action is something the host is morally opposed to it gains a +4 bonus to the Will save. If the proposed action is not something the host is capable of doing (e.g., a human flying unaided), takes more than one minute to complete, or is a complex task (e.g., hacking into a complex computer network), the save automatically succeeds. The imperator may simply immobilize the host by inflicting pain. The host must make a Will save (DC 10) or become stunned for one round. If the drone continues to attempt to immobilize the host, a new Will save is required each round, and the DC for the save increases by +1 for each consecutive round the ability is used.
Remain Conscious (Ex): Due to the imperator drone's control over the host's nervous system, the host can remain conscious when other creatures would normally pass out. When the host's hit points reach -1, he can perform as though he were disabled instead of dying. He can make either an attack action or a move action every round until he reaches -10 hit points (and dies) or his hit points return to 1 or higher.
Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi imperator drone must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 5 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus). However, due to their psychological makeup, drones gain a +2 bonus to their saving throw.

Allegiance: The host gains the vaasi allegiance.
PL Familiarity: 8 or that of the host, whichever is higher.
Saves: The host gains a +2 species bonus to Will saves except those made to resist the pain caused by the imperator drone.
Abilities: Same as the base creature.
Skills: Same as the base creature.
Feats: Same as the base creature.
Talents: Same as the base creature.

Human Imperator Drone Host (Charismatic Ordinary 5) ⋄ CR 4

Medium Humanoid; HD 5d6+10; hp 28; MAS 15; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 class); BAB +2; Grap +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4-1, knife), +2 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 auto-pistol); Full Atk Atk +1 melee (1d4-1, knife), +2 ranged (2d6, EDF-9 auto-pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ camouflage, implantation, low-light vision, pain and pleasure control, remain conscious, vaasi servitor; AL Vaasi; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Bluff +12, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +12, Gather Information +10, Hide +4, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +8, Move Silently +4, Read/Write Language (English, Unispeak, Vaasi), Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (English, Unispeak, Vaasi).
Talents: -
Feats: Deceptive, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.
Advancement: By character class
Equipment: Universal communicator, knife, EDF-9 pistol with 2 clips.

NPCS • • •

⋄ Suthaj, Science Caste Overseer

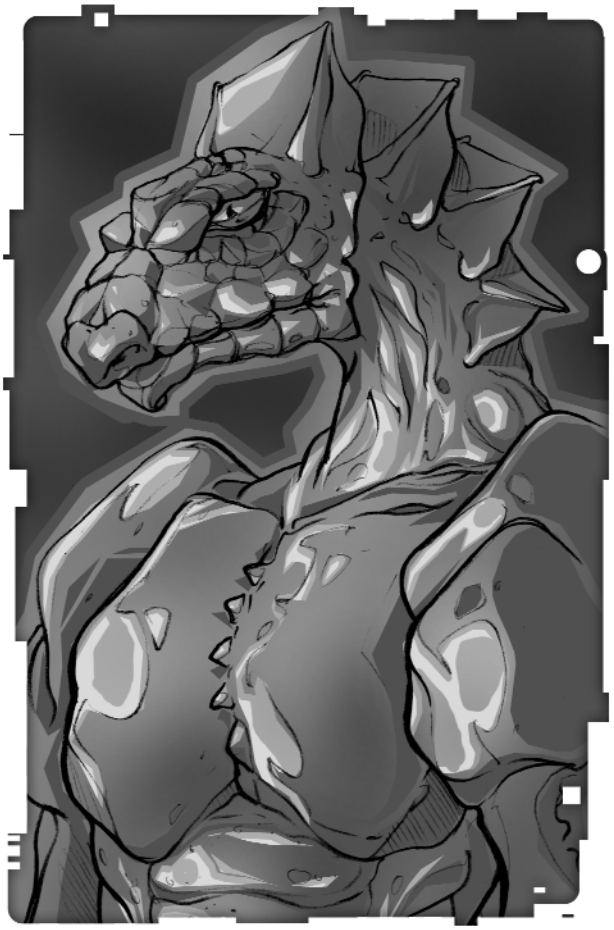
Leader of the Mutation Black forces on Atlas, Suthaj has the unusual position of being a Science Caste vaasi elevated to a status normally reserved for the Royal Caste. Clan Lord Oratan has come to believe that desperate times call for desperate measures and is beginning to make exceptions to the normally strict vaasi caste structure when it ensures a more efficient operation under his command. Suthaj is the most notable example of this experiment, but it has gone well so far. Historically, in the few cases where Science Caste vaasi have been placed in charge of their own operations, they have become obsessed with research and theoretical ideas as opposed to practical applications of their knowledge. To date, Suthaj has reigned in her instincts and kept herself on task. She does micromanage, but she is slowly learning to be more of a leader than a scientist - despite the fact that doing so is against everything she was created to do.

Suthaj is typical in many ways of a member of the Science Caste. Raised from birth to be only concerned with increasing the knowledge of the vaasi, Suthaj showed a propensity for genetic and viral engineering at a young age. She created several viral agents that were employed against the Star Confederation to good effect, earning the attention of Clan Lord Oratan when he was gathering his forces for the Ur-Kazzi Clan mission. Suthaj has little interest in more physical matters such as combat or natural reproduction, seeing those as the concerns of other castes. She has undergone basic combat training but is by no means an accomplished combatant. Suthaj has reached old age and entered the hermaphroditic portion of her life, and the vaasi refer to those who are in that state using female pronouns.

Ever calm and collected, Suthaj views all problems from a position of logic and thinks before acting. At times this means she reacts too slowly, but she never acts rashly. Her ability as a commander in a stressful situation has yet to be tested, but Suthaj is supremely confident she can overcome all problems. She has complete faith in her own abilities, though far less faith in the abilities of her minions regardless of their caste.

Suthaj (Dedicated Hero 3/Field Medic 7) ⋄ CR 20

Large aberration; HD 17d8+3d6+100; hp 195; MAS 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 33, touch 16, flat-footed 32 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size, +6 class, +5 armor); BAB +12; Grap +20; Atk +15 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +12 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +12/+7 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ Expert healer, extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, medical mastery, medical



specialist +2, mindset, minor medical miracle, psionic potential; AL vaasi; SV Fort +15, Ref +6, Will +19; AP 11; Rep +8; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 16.
PL Familiarity: 9
Skills: Computer Use +16, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +19, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +16, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +24, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +17, Knowledge (Tactics) +12, Knowledge (Technology) +21, Listen +8, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Research +14, Sense Motive +9, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Spot +10, Survival +7, Treat Injury +27.
Talents: Healing Knack, Healing Touch 1, Healing Touch 2, Skill Emphasis (Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences)).
Feats: Confident, Dedicated Plus, Educated (x2), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Medical Expert, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Renown, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Surgery, Technical Aptitude, Xenomedic, Zero-G Training.
Equipment: Maser pistol, 3 vaasi power packs, light wear armor, matter shield, regen wand, micro-aural communicator, medicomp sensor, advanced medkit, fast use medkit.

◇ Parseik of the War Caste

The right hand of Suthaj and the military commander of Mutation Black, Parseik strongly believes that the Royal Caste should leave all matters of battle to the War Caste. This is a commonly held belief among many of the upper ranks of the War Caste, but Parseik is more willing to act on his beliefs than most. Despite his willingness to act, he bides his time for the appropriate moment, not wanting to diminish his chances of proving the Royal Caste weak by tipping his hand too soon. Thus, many vaasi think him meek and lacking ambition, unwilling to commit to any faction in Clan Ur-Kazzi. Parseik has some respect for Suthaj, as she is not of the Royal Caste and has generated results for Mutation Black, but ultimately he feels even the Science Caste must step aside. What Parseik does not realize is that, if the War Caste were to command vaasi civilization, they would soon degrade to a primitive level of barbarism much like the vaasi on Eos.

Like most members of the War Caste Parseik is without remorse, mercy, or fear. He is eternally calm and serene, and is a devout practitioner of the vaasi religious school known as Bladed Thought. It teaches that the mind clouded by emotion cannot function, and thus Parseik works continuously to act with reason and logic. He is well respected among the Ur-Kazzi Clan for his devotion to the religion and is something of an expert within the clan. His level-headedness combined with his respectable skills made him an excellent choice as the military commander of Mutation Black, the only member of the War Caste not under the strict supervision of the Royal Caste. Thus far he has performed admirably in his role despite his apparent lack of ambition. Parseik in truth is incredibly ambitious; he just bides his time and is far more patient than most vaasi.

Parseik of the War Caste (Field Officer 8/Soldier 2) ◇ CR 20

Large aberration; HD 18d8+2d10+100; hp 210; MAS 23; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 39, touch 16, flat-footed 37 (+2 Dex, +12 natural, +11 armor, +5 class, -1 size); BAB +16; Grap +26; Atk +22 melee (3d10+7/19-20/x3, dyxer blade) or +17 ranged (6d8/19-20, distortion rifle); Full Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (3d10+7/19-20/x3, dyxer blade) or +17/+12 ranged (6d8/19-20, distortion rifle); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ august leadership, commanding presence, extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, leadership, light sensitivity, psionic potential, tactical expertise, tactical mastery, uncanny defense, weapon focus



(dyxer blade), weapon specialization (dyxer blade); AL vaasi; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +18; AP 10; Rep +10; Str 20 (24), Dex 14, Con 20, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 16.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Bluff +11, Climb +7, Computer Use +12, Demolitions +7, Diplomacy +9, Hide +5, Intimidate +21, Jump +7, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +6, Knowledge (Tactics) +25, Listen +9, Move Silently +11, Navigate +11, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Sense Motive +17, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Spot +7, Survival +9.
Talents:-
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Educated, Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Distortion Rifle), Exotic Melee Weapons Proficiency (Dyxer Blade), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency.
Equipment: War Caste battle armor, dyxer blade, distortion rifle with 5 clips, 4 vaasi power packs, micro-aural communicator, personal force field (DR 10/-), energy shield, GalPos device, HUD targeting software (distortion rifle).

◇ Kurithim, Creeper Vaasi Spy

One of the first stable creeper vaasi, Kurithim (or Blue Red Green as he was known originally) has been extensively trained since emerging from the genetic alteration pod. He prepares for the day he is finally sent to infiltrate the inner planets of the Helios system. Kurithim was given a name other than his official designation after proving an apt student of the vaasi commandoes charged with his training, a rare distinction among the creeper vaasi. He has spent the last six months playing intense games of cat and mouse with fully trained vaasi commandoes in the empty, cavernous store rooms of the Cargo Exchange. His capture was met each time with harsh punishment. He has learned that failure means torture; he has also learned that it is his fellow vaasi who cause this torture.

Kurithim continues his training and now trains the new batches of creepers exiting the genetic alteration pods. But he is beginning to have thoughts of a life far different from this one. While he knows these thoughts are wrong and he dare not speak of them, he sometimes dreams that he will leave on his first mission and never come bak. So far none of his fellow creepers have shown any sign of similar thoughts, so he keeps to himself, biding his time. While he is perfectly willing to kill to protect himself or carry out a mission (and compared to most other species he would be considered a heartless killer), he would prefer to be a heartless killer in control of his own destiny rather than the pawn of someone else.

Kurithim
(Fast Hero 4) ◇ CR 6

Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 3d8+4d6+6; hp 30; MAS 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 26, touch 17, flat-footed 24 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, +7 armor, +5 class); BAB +6; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (2d8, piercer), +8 ranged (5d6 radiation, maser pistol); Full Atk +6 melee (2d8, piercer), +8 ranged (5d6 radiation, maser pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, mindset, vaasi servitor; AL Vaasi Empire; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +8; AP 8; Rep +1; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Escape Artist +8, Hide +13, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +10, Move Silently +13, Read Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Sense Motive +6, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Spot +6, Tumble +6.
Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Piercer), Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy, Zero-G Training.
Talents: Evasion, Uncanny Dodge 1.
Possessions: Vaasi combat armor, maser pistol, piercer, 3 vaasi power packs, 3 days of vaasi rations, universal communicator.

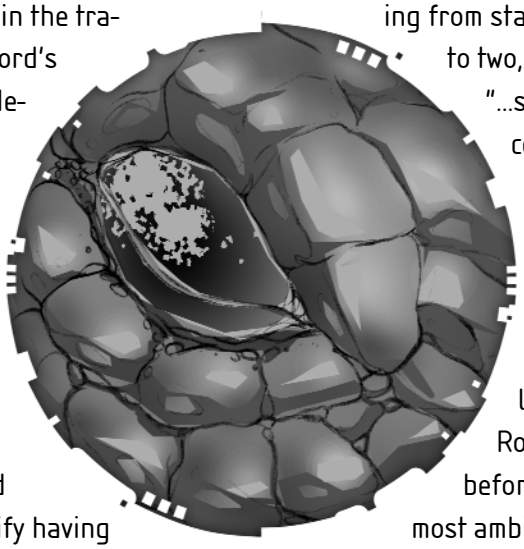


CHAPTER • XII

CRONUS BELT

"On the closer planets the light must be hideous to behold," Clan Leader Oratan said as he looked out the surveying deck of Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi's command station. Hidden within the asteroids of Cluster Void White in the Cronus Belt, it was completely beyond the discovery of the Star Confederation in its weakened state, though the tentaari were another matter. But they, as always, were cowards. "The races that find such worlds...pleasant...must be extremely soft."

The assembled vaasi officers remained silent behind their leader, as they had not been given permission to speak; interrupting his opening remarks would be a challenge of his leadership. Such challenges were handled in the traditional fashion despite Clan Lord's Oratan's more "progressive" ideology. While he frowned on the eating of a vaasi's own young given their current limited numbers, he greatly preferred slaying possible rivals rather than letting them live to become a problem. Unfortunately for Clan Lord Oratan, not all of his rivals had given him proper insult to justify having them removed.



"We will have to deal with the light when the time comes, but we are strong enough to overcome. We are of the Vaasi Empire, and there is no force that can stand before us." Clan Lord Oratan surveyed the six leaders before him, one from each of the surviving clans of the first two tiers of the Tale of Worth. More vaasi stood behind them, Royal Caste observers and assistants to the Clan Lord. "We are hidden, our enemies are unaware, and our strength grows. We are in a perfect place, preparing to strike, as the nichite hawk is, surveying his prey from above." Clan Lord Oratan turned back toward the window, glancing at the largest objects visible from this distance, the gas giants of Apollo and Hesperos.

"But..." he growled out through his teeth, shifting from standing on four of his six legs to two, crossing the other four, "...some of you would betray our concealment for simple raids and weak attempts at honor." Clan Lord Oratan spun around to face the assembled lords, staring past the six of the lower castes and looking to his own clan, the Royal Caste; the highest caste, before all others, but also the most ambitious. Lord Jahqwe betrayed no emotion and Clan Lord Oratan did not have the proof to make a formal accusation against one of his own caste. But one day soon, Lord Jahqwe would be on his dinner plate, after basting and broiling alive for hours. It is known that meat cooked while struggling tastes the best.

THE CRONUS BELT • • •

The new home of the vaasi in the Helios System, the Cronus Belt may be the most powerful surviving concentration of vaasi in the universe. Outfitted with weapons and equipment from the height of the Vaasi Empire, they wait for their chance to strike at the inner planets of the Helios System. In one final and climactic offensive, they will take their revenge against the last vestiges of the Star Confederation. To these vaasi the war never ended, but they have slightly different enemies.

Rotation Period: N/A
Revolution Period: 212 Eotian years
Atmospheric Composition: None
Average Temperature: 90 Kelvin (-297.4° F)

HISTORY • • •

The Cronus Belt was originally a large, airless rogue planet caught by the gravity of Helios and pulled into an extended orbit. Before the Helios system was colonized, the planetoid was severely fractured after an immense comet from the system's Oort cloud struck it. Over millions of years, the planetoid broke up, and the debris it created was scattered around the orbital path it followed. By the time Eos was colonized the Cronus Belt's shape was stable, and the Star Confederation set up mining operations on some of the larger asteroids.

For most of the history of the Star Confederation the Cronus Belt was ignored, only used occasionally for mining operations and deep space rescue stations. In the early days of the war with the Vaasi Empire this neglect continued, though as the war wore on and the reality of a vaasi strike against the Helios system set in, the Star Confederation constructed sensor and defense stations there, a first line of detection and defense against a vaasi invasion. Due to the three-dimensional nature of space combat, a vaasi invasion fleet could easily bypass the Cronus Belt by going around it, so the Star Confederation established an impenetrable sensor web and powerful hidden weapons instead of an obvious defensive strongpoint.



When the vaasi finally invaded the system, these sensor stations immediately detected them. The defense stations destroyed several smaller vaasi ships with immense mass drivers and fusion cannons. The vaasi wiped out many of these stations after their opening volley, though defense stations in more distant regions of the Cronus Belt survived. After clearing a path, the vaasi headed straight for the inner planets of the Helios system. Only after the fall of Eos did they return to clean up what defense stations they could in their weakened state. This operation cost the vaasi many of their remaining ships, but they still destroyed most of the defense stations in the Cronus Belt. Those that survived were either abandoned, or the crews succumbed to dehydration or asphyxiation. The vaasi made no attempt to occupy these facilities, not having the ships or power to keep them properly supplied.

Years later, the tentaari salvaged what they could from these defense stations, using the technology found there to strengthen their own defenses. The tentaari also reactivated several mining operations using salvaged Star Confederation robots, but these eventually broke down from neglect. Once again the Cronus Belt was completely ignored; even newcomers to the Helios system paid little heed. Though it is rich in mineral resources, for species like the wolves and humans it is too distant and the process of mining too difficult to make such an enterprise worthwhile. The wolves scouted the edge of the Cronus Belt, and the humans and mechites scanned it, but no one thoroughly explored the area until the arrival of the vaasi Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi, two years ago.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE VAASI • • •

The Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi launched from a major fleet supply station called Blue Haven, located fifty thousand light years from the Helios system, shortly after the final battle on Eos ended. Clan Lord Oratan, who controlled the station, organized his troops and supplies into Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi to win glory by cementing the Vaasi Empire's victory over the Star Confederation. Without energy reserves, the vaasi could not hold the Helios system or send enough reinforcements to ensure victory. Instead of concentrating on keeping their civilization from collapsing into ruin, they held grudges far too dearly, constructing a fleet of slower-than-light sleeper ships, which they sent to the Helios system to make sure that the Star Confederation would not rise again. A team of tactical intelligence units managed the fleet while the crew slept. The force was made up of all available members of the castes that had survived the war, mostly Labor, Engineer, and War caste members. The fleet of three hundred ships and over ten million crew launched from the Blue Haven station with little fanfare. The ships had taken the station's last power supplies and left it a dark, empty husk, its crew doomed to death by asphyxiation.

Due to problems in trajectory and navigation, this fleet took far longer than expected to reach the Helios system. The tactical intelligence units always took the most secure courses available, avoiding stellar dangers by a wide margin so that the fleet arrived intact. This delayed their arrival, but also meant that the entire fleet reached the Helios system with little damage. They arrived to find the system inhabited by the descendants of the Star Confederation, present in such numbers that the vaasi did not feel they could simply attack without refueling and restocking their ships, and gaining intelligence about their new enemies since they were clearly not the Star Confederation of old. Wanting to remain out of sight, the ships of Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi hid in the Cronus Belt shortly after entering the system, blending in with the millions of floating rocks. No one in the Helios system detected them as more than errant debris or asteroids, and thus the vaasi established their foothold without drawing attention to themselves.

The leader of the fleet, Clan Lord Oratan of the Royal Caste, immediately set his forces to work building a support structure for the fleet. Using the remains of Star Confederation mines and defense stations, the vaasi built underground bunkers, factories, and shipyards in the asteroids of the Cronus Belt, preparing for a protracted struggle with the new inhabitants of the Helios system. In the last two years the vaasi have established twenty bases around the Cronus Belt, spread evenly about to allow the vaasi to strike from anywhere. They have also taken control of Atlas and house a new army of vaasi servitors in the subterranean tunnels of the Cargo Exchange. Some of the vaasi complain about Lord Oratan's long term planning, but he pays them little heed. Lord Oratan wants to end the eventual war with the descendants of the Star Confederation in one decisive strike, and that will require overwhelming force that he does not yet possess.

The vaasi have maintained the secrecy since their arrival, with a few exceptions. The humans detected strange energy readings from the Cronus Belt, but it is too far away for their sensors to make out anything. The Eos Space Force has written off these energy readings as alien ruins or some sort of crashed ship that, while interesting, poses no immediate threat. The Wolf Tribes have lost three ships in the last two years on patrols of the outer planets. One self-destructed over Atlas, while the vaasi destroyed the other two while they were scouting uncomfortably close to the Cronus Belt. Clan Lord Oratan worries that they will discover him before he is ready, but the wolves have pulled their ships back instead of risking more.

The glaring exception to the vaasi policy of avoiding attention are the actions of Lord Jahqwe, a member of the Royal Caste that does not share Clan Lord Oratan's patience or disdain for tradition. On several occasions Lord Jahqwe has taken cloaked ships to the moons of Hesperos to attack coqui and mechite settlements, hoping to force the other vaasi to act and testing the mettle of these enemies. Lord Jahqwe has yet to be caught organizing and leading these raids, but they are an open secret among the vaasi. He has too many political backers for Clan Lord Oratan to move against him without proof, which has not been found thus far. If proof does appear, however, the normal bloody course of vaasi politics will take hold.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

The planetoid that birthed the Cronus Belt was massive, several times the size of Earth. Its mass is now spread around the outer perimeter of the Helios system. The asteroids have clumped up over time around the larger asteroids, forming twenty distinct groups of asteroids, all nearly evenly spaced in their orbit. Both the Eos Space Force and the Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi have given these formations numerical designations. Each cluster is several hundred miles across, made up of thousands of asteroids from pebbles to massive chunks of rock dozens of miles long. The vaasi use the larger asteroids, and many of them have been hollowed out to serve as mines, shipyards, factories or storage facilities. Rocks in a cluster orbit the larger rocks, creating a dangerous dance as the asteroids shift and bump into each other. This makes it very difficult for ships to park in the asteroid clusters without having a pilot on constant alert. Structures

built among the asteroids quickly become dented and cratered like the asteroids themselves from constant collisions. Many of the old Star Confederation structures have been pounded into dust over the years.

Between the clusters are large expanses of mostly empty space. There are occasional asteroids to be found, but they are small and of little consequence.

CLIMATE • • •

The vaasi favor higher temperatures and humidity than most species, and so many other species will find their facilities and ships uncomfortable, though saurians are likely to be right at home. The artificial control of the environment ensures that everything remains stable unless there is a mechanical failure.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

There is no atmosphere on the exterior of the asteroids in the Cronus Belt, but within the vaasi structures and ships there is an atmosphere breathable by most species.

CONDITIONS • • •

When outside the vaasi structures in the Cronus Belt, characters are in a zero-g, vacuum environment. Inside ships and facilities, the atmosphere is breathable and the temperature is kept at 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The better-equipped structures have gravity generators, but newer or poorly equipped areas have no appreciable gravity. All vaasi ships have normal gravity.

FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

THE ASSAULT CLAN UR-KAZZI OF THE VAASI EMPIRE • • •

The race that evolved into the vaasi began on a dark, hot world of clouds and storms, many thousands of light years from Eos and Earth. This world was a moon orbiting a gas giant, which in turn orbited a pair of binary stars, but the moon was easily equal in size to Eos or Earth. The moon, called Homeshadow by the vaasi and Vaasi Prime by the Star Confederation, was covered in thick, vine-laden jungles on top of enormous, mineral-rich mountains. In the harsh ecosystem of Homeshadow, insectoid creatures continually preyed on each other, and in time the vaasi became the largest and nastiest predators on the planet. The vaasi evolved as the only sentient species on the planet, developing a sophisticated culture with complexities that other species rarely understand.

The mental state of the vaasi is nothing like that of creatures descended from the Star Confederation. All Star Confederation related species (and to a lesser extent the jaren, tentaari, and other ward species) have some basic mental functions in common, but the vaasi operate under a radically different paradigm of rational thought. The vaasi have remained highly evolved predators, seeing everything weaker than themselves as food, and everything of equal strength or stronger as a threat. They have no emotion similar to what humans would call happiness or love; they are entirely driven by biological imperatives to survive and breed. They favor survival of the fittest, even at the cost of their young. Vaasi culture revolves around the acquisition of power, since power ensures survival and the ability to breed, and any rivals threaten that power. Vaasi do not tolerate rivals, regardless of species, any longer than necessary. Despite these predatory and self-concerned instincts, vaasi work well together when they believe that cooperation will ultimately aid in their survival. This ability to cooperate, combined with their strong predatory instincts and dedication, make them a terrifying military force, as they recognize no rules of war and do not understand remorse. They fight to win at all times and will do anything they can to secure victory.

On Homeshadow the vaasi warred among themselves, from when the earliest vaasi ancestor feared another would take his food. The vaasi drive for competition and supremacy allowed them to develop technology and something resembling culture, despite their predatory instincts. Larger, better organized, and better-equipped groups of vaasi demolished weaker groups, leading to a slow and bloody evolution of vaasi culture. The vaasi formed clans, each united under a single strong leader and claiming a specific territory as theirs. These clans, of which there were hundreds, had little basis in blood relations, formed instead out of mutual self-interest, intimidation, and slavery.

THE GREAT SKY ARK • • •

The vaasi had just begun to experiment with space travel when the Great Sky Ark came down from the sky in the northern hemisphere of Homeshadow. It was actually one of the three surviving gateships of the jarens, investigating the developing culture of the vaasi after detecting their early efforts at space travel. The few jarens on board were not expecting the hostility of the vaasi. To the vaasi, the existence of a vastly superior alien species on their own planet was the greatest threat to their power and ability to breed since the discovery of fire, and they wanted to end that threat immediately. As soon as the jaren gateship landed and opened its doors, it was stormed by thousands of vaasi soldiers from the Blood Sword clan, one of the larger vaasi clans in the region. They took control of the gateship and its advanced technology, giving them a massive advantage over the other vaasi clans.

Largely because jarens do not taste good to the vaasi, the crew of the gateship was spared for a time so they could teach the vaasi about the ship and its technology. Within a few short years, the Blood Sword clan used their technological edge to take control of all other vaasi clans, forming the nascent Vaasi Empire. However, the leader of the Blood Sword clan and the Vaasi Empire, Cyuebor, was not content with a single world. The existence of the jarens proved there were threats beyond their own world, species that could attack Homeshadow. It was this sense of eternal paranoia that drove the vaasi to leave their world, searching out every alien species that could threaten them and wiping them out of existence.

Using the jaren technology as a starting point, the vaasi began a rapid technological progression, going from Progress Level 5 to 8 in a matter of centuries. Initially using gateships, the vaasi spread out from their home system in a circular pattern, wiping out every species that was deemed to pose a threat to the Vaasi Empire. Any species capable of space travel was wiped out, while less advanced species were enslaved and put to work in farms or factories, or eaten. The vaasi found only a handful of other sentient species in the thousands of systems they explored, but the horrors they inflicted were sufficient for the histories of dozens of species. Eventually the vaasi found gateships to be inefficient for the same reasons the Star Confederation did, and constructed gateway stations that operate on the same principles.

After eons of rapid expansion and exterminating or enslaving nearly a dozen species, the vaasi reached a plateau. They had reached the limit of their technological capabilities and social organization, their instinctual predatory nature undercutting further attempts to advance as the vaasi were willing to backstab each other to get ahead. Previously, the Blood Sword clan had held enough power in the Empire to force other clans to follow its lead, but over the years the technology of other clans had caught up, eroding one of their primary advantages. Positioned near the galactic rim of the Milky Way, they had explored most of the systems that were within easy reach of their fleet. They stagnated, for there were no more wonders to learn or worlds to conquer. The vaasi turned on each other during this time on a level unknown during the expansion of the Empire, as they now had no external threats on which to concentrate their energies. Instead of battling with firearms or conventional explosives, they battled with weapons that could annihilate planets.

VAASI CLAN STRUCTURE

Since the earliest days of their civilization, vaasi have grouped themselves into clans. The first clans were family units created for mutual protection and to improve an individual's chance of survival, but eventually these merged into geographic and political groupings. They were usually created out of smaller clans by powerful warlords who sought followers to extend their power. After the Blood Sword clan conquered the rest of the vaasi clans, the clan system became more of a social grouping than a familial, geographic, or political one. One's clan became his company, religion, work crew, political party, or military unit. The War Caste used clans to denote the largest vaasi military grouping, each having upwards of ten million members. Vaasi join clans to gain the security that having allies grants them, even though the drive to help others within a clan is only as strong as each vaasi's belief that assistance given will be returned in kind, which is not always a safe bet. This led to the creation of strict punishments within clans for vaasi who break agreements, though they are only enforced when political influence is brought to bear. The vaasi realized early in their development that the best way to amass power was to do it as part of an organization, and so turn every clan to their own advantage.

THE TIME OF CHANGE • • •

Within a few decades the Vaasi Empire was fractured into clan groups, each claiming to be the rightful rulers of the Empire since they were the most powerful. Into this continual state of war stepped the scientist Gewqar, a genetic researcher who had remained out of most of the conflicts, believing that the advancement of science was his best bet to acquiring power. Gewqar had been working at accelerating the mutation rate in the

NAMING AMONG THE VAASI

The vaasi have little in the way of structured naming conventions. The only real rule is that each vaasi has a unique name, to avoid any spirits of the past that could lay claim to his body through the link of a shared name. They also do not want any glory they win to be mistaken for that of an ancestor. Thus it is extremely rare to find a vaasi who shares a name with another vaasi. Due to the vast population of the Empire, this required creative spellings and pronunciations, but their language is a mixture of idea-symbols and letters that allows them great leeway in creating names. Some vaasi names have a meaning, such as Blood Talon or Finder of the Lost, but most do not.

Among the servitor races, only those who prove themselves loyal and capable are given the honor of a name, usually bestowed by the servitor's master or owner as a reward. Other servitors are known by an alphanumeric or color-based code.

vaasi, in hopes of speeding up the evolutionary process. Seeing that the Vaasi Empire would entirely fail within a few more decades of infighting, Gewqar presented a plan to the vaasi clan leaders. He proposed genetically modifying the entire vaasi species to grant them a predisposition towards certain tasks, allowing them to evolve along several paths simultaneously and giving them ways to compete without destroying each other. Those vaasi dedicated to science could compete in research, while those dedicated to labor could compete in efficiency, assuming they were rewarded for their efforts accordingly. Gewqar also created completely new species, born through cloning, that were similar to the vaasi and based on their genetic structure, but served as slaves and carried out the menial tasks they had no interest in. The idea of advancing evolution appealed to the vaasi, even if the avoidance of their own demise did not, since no vaasi leader would admit to the possibility of losing the civil war that gripped them. In addition, the creation of a large slave class seemed an excellent idea to most vaasi. Over the course of decades, many of the clans agreed to fund Gewqar's efforts and he modified the vaasi en masse with nanite injections. Others did not agree until they saw the results it produced, particularly the marked improvement in productivity and military power for the clans that took part. Those who refused fell behind their competitors, and thus submitted to keep up. The vaasi were more concerned with losing power than possible betrayal by some scientist.

Gewqar's genetic alterations included behavior modification, the programming hidden deep in the command structure of the nanites. Those vaasi who were modified to lead had their aggressive tendencies redirected to focus on other species. Others were made to be subservient to these leaders. This subtle change allowed the leader vaasi to settle their differences and control their followers in the process. Within a century, the Vaasi Empire was reunited under Emperor Kythair, who instituted the caste structure that still rules vaasi culture.

Each of the new genetic models of the vaasi, of which there were dozens, was assigned a place within a pecking order. At the top of the pile is the Royal Caste, those vaasi modified to hold positions of leadership, and who oversees the entire species. Below them are Science and War Castes, both equal in standing though the War Caste was larger. In the third tier fall other large castes, such as the Engineer, Labor, Healer, and Transport, which controlled skilled trades. Below these are the minor castes, such as the Disposal Caste that handled garbage and recycling.

It took centuries for this new social structure to solidify completely, but it created a concrete caste system that has sustained the vaasi ever since. Social mobility is impossible; those who struggle against the caste system are executed to preserve stability. This structure has completely stopped the social development of the vaasi, as they have no new ideas regarding politics, economics, or philosophy. There is no caste that concerns itself which such trivialities, and each concentrates only on their caste responsibilities. The dedication of the Science Caste allowed the Vaasi Empire to resume its technological advance, but it was never able to reclaim the speed at which it once advanced. Meanwhile, the War Caste united the armies of the Empire into one massive fighting force that began its expansion again, surging across the great, empty expanses looking for more worlds to conquer.

While the caste system allowed the vaasi to prosper, much of their success came from the many servitor races that they relied on to carry out the day-to-day drudgery that sustained the Empire. These servitor races were created by the millions to

become foot soldiers, laborers, technicians, servants, and food in some cases. Each caste had several servitor races tailored to suit their needs; in time the true vaasi became overseers and managers, directing servitors to carry out most tasks instead of doing it themselves. Only in the most highly trained fields was this not the case. The servitors were kept from learning too much about technology, tactics, or social organization, in order to prevent rebellion or resistance. For the most part, this was an unwarranted concern, as the servitors were genetically predisposed to obey the commands of true vaasi, but within a century of their creation the servitor races outnumbered true vaasi five-to-one, so the concern was understandable. This ratio soared to fifty-to-one, as the true vaasi became a small minority within the Empire, though they controlled every facet of it.

THE STAR HARVESTER • • •

It was during this time of plenty and prosperity that the vaasi began to suffer from an energy crunch. Their fusion reactors were not efficient enough to support the energy needs of their civilization. The Star Confederation, on the other hand, developed much more advanced laser technology, allowing them to create high-energy fusion reactions using lasers and magnetic bottles that produced more power than vaasi reactors. The Star Confederation had also mastered the use of matter/anti-matter reactors, allowing them to create vast amounts of power easily. Though the vaasi lacked such advanced sciences, their knowledge of gateway and space folding technology was vastly superior, so the Empire used its strengths instead of developing a weak area. Using wormholes to compact a great deal of exotic hyper-dense matter into a single point, the vaasi created a stable artificial singularity. The singularity was contained in a small extra-dimensional pocket created with a modified version of a gateway station that effectively kept the black hole in stasis until needed. When brought out of the extra-dimensional pocket, the singularity was contained in a massively powerful force field to prevent it from destroying everything around it. With the increased stability of this wormhole, the vaasi had a gateway station that allowed travel in both directions, an impossible feat for most gateways.

They used this stable wormhole to extract the hearts of stars, which were kept in force field containers. These massive fusion generators powered vaasi civilization. This process caused the stars targeted to collapse, small stars turning into neutron stars while larger stars became supernovas and black holes. Regardless of the size of the star, planets orbiting the star were rendered completely uninhabitable if not destroyed outright. The vaasi called this device the star harvester, and it was the pride of the Science Caste, the finest achievement in their history. The War Caste also created numerous military applications for the star harvester should the need arise, as it was the most powerful weapon ever made. Due to the expense and delicate nature of the hyper-dense matter used in its construction, it took centuries to finish the star harvester. Without several more millennia of work, building another was beyond the capabilities and resources of even the immense Vaasi Empire. Still, none of the vaasi thought that building a second star harvester would ever be necessary. Immediately after its creation, the vaasi put it to work harvesting star hearts, on which much of the Vaasi Empire came to rely for power, placing them in orbital power stations above major vaasi worlds. The vaasi destroyed dozens of stars, confusing the Star Confederation and other species when the effects became visible, though they did not learn the truth of the situation for some time.

For many years the Vaasi Empire continued its advance through the stars, finding few habitable

VAASI TECHNOLOGY

The vaasi were always ahead of the Star Confederation in gateway, wormhole, and space folding science, but lagged behind in several other vital areas, such as lasers, psionic research, and robotics. The vaasi gained access to a jaren gateship several millennia before the Star Confederation did, thus having more time to develop the technology they gained from the ship. Other areas of technology that they did not gain from the jaren ship, such as advanced laser technology or psionics research, the vaasi shied away from, instead playing to their technological strengths. The vaasi would rather develop a science they are already strong in rather than try and shore up a weak area, because improving areas they lag behind on would be an admission of imperfection or weakness, thus inviting their enemies to take advantage of it.



worlds, and putting those it did find under its yoke. This came to a halt when the gateship of Korlan Dollasi-ki, the jaren who introduced gateway technology to the Star Confederation and was instrumental in its founding, came across a vaasi colony world in its wanderings. Korlan Dollasi-ki's ship, the *Dasget*, discovered a vaasi colony world on the edge of the Empire that was mainly used for research and servitor breeding by the Science Caste. Initially curious about the *Dasget* and the Star Confederation-modified technology it carried, the Science Caste vaasi that controlled the colony were at first not aggressive with Korlan Dollasi-ki, but this changed as soon as the War and Royal Castes arrived on the scene. Korlan Dollasi-ki was imprisoned and interrogated at length, revealing the existence of the Star Confederation before an assault team from the *Dasget* staged a rescue. While the vaasi only learned a little about the Star Confederation, they learned enough for the paranoia of the War and Royal Castes to manifest. The Vaasi Empire prepared for war against an enemy it had never met and whose location they were not sure of, though the vaasi were fairly certain the Star Confederation was located closer to the galactic core. Meanwhile, Korlan Dollasi-ki returned to the Star Confederation and warned them about the vaasi, prompting them to launch extensive scouting missions to determine the full extent of the vaasi threat.

THE WAR WITH THE STAR CONFEDERATION • • •

The war between the two powers did not begin for several decades after first contact, as the Vaasi Empire extended its gateway network to access Star Confederation space without relying on gateships to return to vaasi territory. During this time the Star Confederation launched numerous scout sorties to learn more about the vaasi, discovering the outer edges of the gateway network used by the Vaasi Empire. Their ships infiltrated Imperial space, using the vaasi gateway network with relative ease since it was very similar to the ones used by the Star Confederation. Unfamiliar with such a strategy, the vaasi were not prepared to stop the dozens of small ships that swarmed through the outer limits of their territory, allowing the Star Confederation to gather significant data before returning home. Included in this information were sensor readings on the star harvester in action, as it harvested a star that was orbited by an inhabited world that had resisted vaasi attempts to conquer it. Seeing an entire star and inhabited world destroyed filled the leaders of the Star Confederation with terror, as such a weapon could wipe out entire solar systems with minimal effort. To give the vaasi pause and disarm them at the same time, the Star Confederation launched a desperate mission deep into vaasi space, using their remaining gateships to attack the

star harvester as it prepared to consume another star. In the battle that followed, both sides suffered significant casualties, but the Star Confederation escaped with the star harvester in the possession of one of their gateships, allowing them to claim victory. They studied the device for a time, but were more concerned with eliminating it than understanding it. It was disassembled and hidden across Star Confederation space, and they hoped that this show of tactical prowess and such a massive blow to the vaasi war machine would cause them to enter negotiations, instead of starting a war that would kill millions on each side. Attempting to open such a dialogue, the Star Confederation sent numerous messages of peace, offering to share energy generation technology that would make the star harvester unnecessary.

The Star Confederation Council misjudged the vaasi. Instead of reconsidering, the theft of the star harvester drove them into a frenzy. They redoubled their preparations for war, launching their first attacks on the outer worlds of the Star Confederation a few months later. They listened to no entreaties and refused every attempt to parlay, laying waste to every Star Confederation planet and outpost they could find. Thus began a war that lasted over fifty thousand years and eventually encompassed many of the systems in the Milky Way Galaxy.

Eventually, with their superior numbers and faster gate system, the vaasi pushed the Star Confederation back significantly, leaving the capital planet of Eos open to attack. While a third of the Star Confederation remained free of the devastation of the war, the other two-thirds were in vaasi hands, were so devastated they would take years to recover, or had been blasted completely clean of all ability to support life. The Vaasi Empire had gained territory, but itself was on the brink of collapse as its reserve of star hearts was nearly exhausted. The War Caste had suffered tremendous casualties; while it still outnumbered the forces of the Star Confederation, most of its troops were poorly trained and equipped with outdated equipment, as the reproduction pods of other castes, including Labor, had been reassigned to produce more soldiers. The Vaasi Empire was an army with a minimal government and civilian population to support it; the other castes could not produce enough food, weapons, and other supplies to keep the War Caste going. The Royal Caste knew it could only sustain the war for a few more years, and so they ordered a final frantic push towards Eos, hoping to bring the conflict to a temporary end so they could take a few decades before wiping out the rest of the Star Confederation. Ultimately they also planned to eliminate the ward species of the Star Confederation such as the tentaari, but they were a lesser threat to be dealt with after the Star Confederation itself had fallen.

ROLE-PLAYING THE VAASI

The most important thing to remember when portraying a vaasi character is that they do not think like humans. They think in a more aggressive, violent, and ruthless fashion than any human. Actions that to us seem completely insane seem perfectly reasonable to them because that is simply the way they are. While just about anyone would look at the vaasi and call them evil, they see themselves as being perfectly good and moral. They destroy and enslave other races to keep themselves safe, and if these other races were worth any consideration they would not be weaker than the vaasi. Occasionally they make choices that leave the player characters scratching their heads, wondering how this choice could possibly be advantageous to the vaasi.

Vaasi do not retreat unless their objective has been met. They do not understand personal honor, although they do comprehend loyalty. They base their ideas of self-worth more on accomplishment than how a deed was accomplished.

Each vaasi follows the archetypes of his caste and cannot do otherwise. A War Caste vaasi will never build a house; a Science Caste vaasi fights only in self-defense.

As strange as the vaasi are to us, the Star Confederation-descended races are equally strange to the vaasi. They have trouble predicting the behavior of such species since the basic assumptions these two groups have are completely different. Where a human would retreat and regroup with allies, a vaasi fights to the death.

THE VAASI EMPIRE TODAY

In 2251, the remains of the Vaasi Empire are little more than several dozen planets inhabited by primitive versions of the vaasi, mostly War Caste vaasi who have reverted to a Stone Age level of sophistication and will likely never advance beyond it. There are a handful of planets where the vaasi have regained some of their technical expertise, but this is mostly due to cryo-frozen vaasi that were left behind to restore the Empire, rather than continuous vaasi civilizations that have survived from the time of the Empire to this day. These reawakened vaasi know everything their ancestors did, including hatred of the Star Confederation, but they are too few in number and poor in resources to be a serious threat for many eons. A few have reached Progress Level 8 and have rebuilt parts of the Empire of old, uniting a few planets or systems under their control, though they are still a shadow of their former selves. One such group launched the expedition that enslaved the straas. On worlds where the vaasi have reverted to a primitive state, they have tended to become more animalistic through the evolutionary process rather than more intelligent.

The final assault launched against the Star Confederation was the largest armada of ships in recorded history, with over one hundred thousand ships of various sizes, from gateships to fighters. After hitting a few defensive positions in nearby systems, the vaasi fleet jumped to the edge of the Helios system using its gateships. The system was defended by a fleet of sixty thousand ships of various sizes, plus the numerous fortified positions throughout the system. The battle that followed lasted for six months, resulting in the destruction of almost all Star Confederation ships and defensive positions. The vaasi landed one hundred million troops on Eos, combined with a blistering orbital bombardment that allowed them to overwhelm the defenders. The capital of the Star Confederation toppled, the population that had not evacuated was massacred, and the Star Confederation crumbled. The vaasi were left with less then two dozen functional ships, almost out of power, and millions of foot soldiers with limited supplies. Within months of their victory, the vaasi were stuck on Eos and the Empire was in the throes of collapse.

The last act of the Vaasi Empire before collapsing completely was the creation and dispatching of Clan Ur-Kazzi, the last assault clan of the Vaasi Empire. Clan Ur-Kazzi launched with the last power reserves of the Empire and the only functional warships left, most of which were fresh out of dry dock without any shakedown cruise. The ships set course for Eos using sub-light drives and cryo-sleep capsules, leaving behind a civilization to slowly slide back into the darkness of ignorance.

THE VAASI CASTE SYSTEM • • •

Since the genetic modification efforts of Gewqar, the vaasi have lived in a strictly caste-based society with almost no social mobility or mixing of castes. These castes were outlined and their positions decreed in a document called the Tale of Worth, created by Gewqar and the first of the Royal Caste, which has since passed into legend and taken on religious significance among the vaasi. Unless elevated by the Emperor, an event that has only happened three times in the history of the Empire, a vaasi will die in the caste he was born into. The idea of dreaming of a better life in another caste is unknown among the vaasi, though their ambition runs rampant when working toward advancement within their own caste. Murder and other devious tactics are considered normal tools of advancement, especially in the Royal Caste.

The vaasi castes are divided into four tiers, though the vaasi servitor species could be considered a fifth tier below the others, regardless of which caste they serve. Servitors are always subordinate to true vaasi. The lower the tier's number, the more important and powerful the caste is.

Within each caste there are unique titles used to denote rank, though the leader of each caste in a clan or region is always referred to as Caste Lord. Caste Lords from different clans or regions use the relative population size of the vaasi they command to determine rank. Neglecting a vaasi's title is a grave insult, and ignorance of the title is never a sufficient excuse. The highest-ranking Caste Lord of each caste is considered its leader, though they have far more responsibility than authority. They mainly carry out tasks delegated to them by the Royal Caste and have little decision-making authority on their own. The War Caste is a notable exception, as it takes the wishes of the Royal Caste under advisement, but makes its own strategic choices.

1st Tier • • •

The first tier caste, the Royal Caste, is the elite of vaasi society and its members are superior to all others. They have no equals outside of their caste. The other castes have no recourse through law or custom to curtail their activities, and thus they act as they please. Killing a member of the Royal Caste is a sure way to meet a painful end.

◇ Royal

The highest of the castes, the Royal Caste provides the Imperial and regional leaders for the Empire. At the head of every planet, system, cluster, and sector a member of the Royal Caste can be found, and they are often oversee the operations of lower castes that are having problems. A member of the Royal Caste leads most military campaigns with support from members of the War Caste. The orders of a Royal Caste vaasi can override the orders of any other vaasi, though they rarely use this right when it comes to the strategic decisions of the War Caste.

Though the Royal Caste can be incredibly violent among their own ranks, they are not quite as warlike and destructive as the War Caste. Instead, their genetic modification causes them to approach problems from other directions and grasp the idea of diplomacy, even if they find it the tool of the weak and foolish. The Royal Caste have learned that a smile can sometimes get something a sword cannot, but that does not stop them from using the sword afterward. The Royal Caste is the smallest caste, making up less than 1% of the population of true vaasi at the height of the Vaasi Empire, but it is also the most powerful caste. Most Royal Caste vaasi are trained in leadership, combat, and organization, with less emphasis on technical skills.

Within Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi, less than a thousand of the ten million vaasi are of the Royal Caste. Most fill support roles under Clan Lord Oratan, who leads both Clan Ur-Kazzi and the Royal Caste within it. The remainder of the Royal Caste oversees distinct projects or bases operating remotely from Clan Lord Oratan's direct supervision. These more autonomous members of the Royal Caste are selected from among the Clan Lord's most loyal followers. Nothing happens within Clan Ur-Kazzi without the Royal Caste hearing about it, but whether this information gets to Clan Lord Oratan is another matter. Despite the dire situation of Clan Ur-Kazzi, the Royal Caste continues its infighting and threatens to doom the entire invasion effort if its members do not act in a more united manner. For this reason, Clan Lord Oratan has broken with tradition and appointed members of other castes to important positions, such as giving command of operations on Atlas to a member of the Science Caste.

As the leader of the Royal Caste in Clan Ur-Kazzi, Clan Lord Oratan has the power of life and death over all vaasi in the clan, though within his own caste this power may only be exercised with sufficient proof to back up his actions. Otherwise even his loyal followers will fear that he will turn on them, so to ensure their loyalty he must appear to only punish those who wrong him. Lord Jahqwe of the Royal Caste is his main political opponent and serves as the Director of Loyalty within the assault clan, always looking for signs of disloyalty or discontent among the troops. The political enemies of Clan Lord Oratan made this political appointment when Clan Ur-Kazzi was first formed during the last days of the Vaasi Empire. Allies of Lord Jahqwe within the Royal Caste allow him enough influence and security to annoy the Clan Lord at times. If given time, this split could cause a major problem within the vaasi leadership, possibly leading to mutiny.

VAASI RELIGION

The vaasi have held a wide variety of religious beliefs, but have surprisingly few religious conflicts. Each vaasi believes that whatever religion they have chosen is the right one, and anyone who believes otherwise is a fool who deserves what he gets. Vaasi religions are not about love, brotherhood, enlightenment, or reaching some reward after death. Instead, they condition mind and spirit, entreating the gods to assist the worshipper in attaining goals, whatever they may be. They worship thousands of individual spirits and gods, each associated with a facet of existence, a location, or a certain deed. The vaasi have no priests, and they are expected to see to their own spiritual needs, though being extremely well-versed in a specific religion is often a respected trait among the vaasi.

2nd Tier • • •

The upper classes of vaasi society, the second tier castes are the educated and empowered elite of vaasi culture. The Royal Caste makes the decisions of the Empire, but the War and Science Castes shape these decisions. These two castes have been extremely influential throughout the history of the Empire, and they expect others to acknowledge their place in the social pecking order.

THE VAASI MILITARY

At the height of the Empire, the War Caste commanded billions and billions of troops, millions of ships, and the combined firepower to destroy entire planets. Before the war with the Star Confederation, the War Caste made up twenty percent of the population, but toward the end of the war this skyrocketed to seventy percent, dooming the vaasi, since they could not produce the materials to support this massive war machine. Still, in its day there was not a military force in the galaxy that could match them for sheer power.

Now the only significant remnant of this force is the Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi, made up of ten million vaasi and three hundred ships of varying sizes. Fifty percent of Clan Ur-Kazzi belongs to the War Caste, and the clan has brought significant supplies with them so this population imbalance will not overly hurt them.

◇ Science

Shortly after the creation of the castes, the Science Caste was one of the most powerful of the vaasi castes, but the theft of the star harvester caused their power to wane. Since the beginning of the war with the Star Confederation, the Science Caste has been tasked exclusively with developing new tools of war, leaving other matters of research behind to support the war effort. Though the Science Caste originally concentrated on theoretical research that often had applicable uses only in the long run, since the beginning of the war they have focused on short-term and applied research: new types of armor, ship engines, and weaponry. They once created a stable artificial singularity, but they have lost that knowledge and will not regain it in the foreseeable future. The Science Caste once made up three percent of the population of the Empire, but since the beginning of the war with the Star Confederation this has shrunk to one percent.

Of the vaasi castes, the Science Caste is one of the least aggressive and most cerebral, preferring intellectual stimulation more than most vaasi. Members of the Science Caste rarely engage in combat, knowing that they are not skilled combatants compared to the War Caste, so their participation in combat is not logical. They have no moral qualms about killing, torture, genocide, or any other deed that needs to be carried out in the name of science. To them, there can be no greater good than the acquisition of knowledge for the Vaasi Empire. The idea of science being limited by ethical or moral concerns is completely incomprehensible to them.

In Clan Ur-Kazzi, the Science Caste has less than ten thousand members. Some are assigned to operations on Atlas, but most work in the research labs and factories of the Cronus Belt developing new weapons and technologies for the War Caste. Others develop biological and psychological profiles of their enemies and interpret information gathered by the Espionage Caste. Clan Lord Oratan shows them more respect than other members of the Royal Caste do, and the Science Caste is loyal for it. Their leader is Caste Lord Frenorsi, an expert in gateway science and advanced physics. He is a close ally of Clan Lord Oratan and one of his foremost advisors.

◇ War

Traditionally one of the larger vaasi castes, the War Caste became the largest during the conflict with the Star Confederation. This expansion in size ultimately became a liability for the Empire as it had more troops than it could equip or transport, but the vaasi are not the most clear-headed planners when it comes to waging war. Indeed, the War Caste exemplifies that trait. They have little understanding of military tactics that do not involve direct attacks, their tactical doctrines having no place for things such as retreat. The War Caste attacks with all the force it can muster, occasionally using ambushes, feints, and flanking maneuvers, but more often relying on overwhelming, fast-moving forces than complicated tactics. Thus the Star Confederation held off the Vaasi Empire for some time, despite being outnumbered and technologically inferior in some fields.

In addition to strictly military duties, the War Caste handles police matters, although vaasi law enforcement is very different from what humans or other species are accustomed to. There is no standard criminal code beyond what each vaasi can convince the Royal Caste to do on his behalf if he has been wronged. In such cases, the War Caste enforces the decision. Law and punishment are very personal things among the vaasi that have less to do with justice and more with vengeance and social position. If a vaasi is the victim of an assault or theft and is not powerful or influential enough to gain restitution, he obviously does not deserve it.

The War Caste are proud warriors who have trouble admitting the Royal Caste are above them. Though they do not contemplate revolution, few actually consider the Royal Caste their superiors. They have had their natural aggression magnified, making them crave combat and bloodshed. They are so single-minded in this regard that they are unable to grasp concepts such as scientific research, building advanced technology, or the intricacies of history and politics. To members of the War Caste the only things in life that are useful are those that make you a more efficient killer, but they do not have the patience for long-term processes like research that distract them from violence. The War Caste values the weapons created for them by the Science, Engineer, and Labor Castes, but if left to their own devices would never make them. Many in the War Caste do not understand that they are no longer fighting the Star Confederation exactly, but even to those who know the truth, it matters little. Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi includes five million members of the War Caste, making up fifty percent of the assault force.

Caste Lord Sastar, a decorated fleet commander from the war with the Star Confederation, leads the War Caste in Clan Ur-Kazzi. Sastar is well versed in space combat, but is not so skilled in ground combat and does not admit to this fault.

THE VAASI ON EOS

The vaasi that were stuck on Eos at the end of the war were almost entirely members of the War Caste, with a handful of Royal, Healer, Science, Engineer, and Labor Caste scattered among the troops. These other castes combined made up less than 5% of the entire vaasi population on Eos; when the war was over and they were stranded, they quickly reverted to a primitive existence because the War Caste vaasi were not capable of wrapping their minds around the rebuilding of Eos. They prepared for counterattacks and waged war on whatever bands of stragglers they found, using up their dwindling resources. In time the non-War Caste vaasi were effectively subsumed into the War Caste, as there were not enough of the other castes to support breeding within their own caste. The vaasi now on Eos belong to the War Caste, though they lack the training, equipment, and support structure of their predecessors. The lack of resources on the planet, their inability to undertake agriculture and similar pursuits, and internal warfare has kept their numbers from exploding.

During the war it was an even smaller portion of the population, and there are less than three thousand members of the caste in Clan Ur-Kazzi. They now support Clan Lord Oratan and keep Clan Ur-Kazzi fed and equipped, having little actual government to manage. They are found on the stations in the Cronus Belt, particularly at Cluster Void White, the center of Clan Lord Oratan's rule.

Their Caste Lord within Clan Ur-Kazzi is Kalleu, the former supply officer of Blue Haven, the station from which Clan Ur-Kazzi was launched. Though he does his duty as well as possible, he never wanted to be part of this mission as he feels it is a place for warriors, not vaasi like him.

3RD TIER • • •

The working class of the Vaasi Empire, the third tier's castes see to the day-to-day affairs of the Empire. Their deeds are rarely glamorous or exciting, but they are necessary. Despite their necessity, the higher castes see them as barely worth the work they do. These castes earn no honor, perform no great deeds, and rarely destroy the enemies of the Vaasi Empire, so they are seen as inherently less useful than those castes that do.

◇ Bureaucrat

One of the more powerful third tier castes, the Bureaucrat Caste was the great underestimated power of the Vaasi Empire. The Royal Caste made all the important decisions in the Empire, and the Bureaucrat Caste implemented them. It was one of the more invisible castes, quietly working for the good of the Empire. Of the castes, the Bureaucrat Caste is renowned for the empathy it feels toward fellow vaasi, and its members were known for their lack of ambition and weak will. Few vaasi even bothered to think about them enough to disrespect them.

Although the Bureaucrat Caste did not dare to modify or interfere with the orders of the Royal Caste, how they went about their duties had a great amount of influence on Imperial policy. The government of the Vaasi Empire was always small, and even at its height the Bureaucrat Caste made up one percent of the population of the Vaasi Empire.

◇ Engineer

Often confused with the Labor Caste by members of the War Caste, these skilled tradesmen carry out the highly technical trades required for the Empire and its military to function. They do not develop new technology, but keep existing machines working and manufacture high-tech goods. While the Labor Caste provides unskilled labor, the Engineer Caste is filled with highly trained experts covering all types of vaasi technology. The Science Caste dreams up new machines for the vaasi war machine, but it's the Engineers who build the machines and keep them working. The Engineers have had their aggressive tendencies subdued, though their drive to get their machines up and running borders on fanatical. One of the least political castes among the vaasi, its members value results more than manipulation or combat skill. Those who prosper among the engineers are those who achieve their goals no matter the cost.

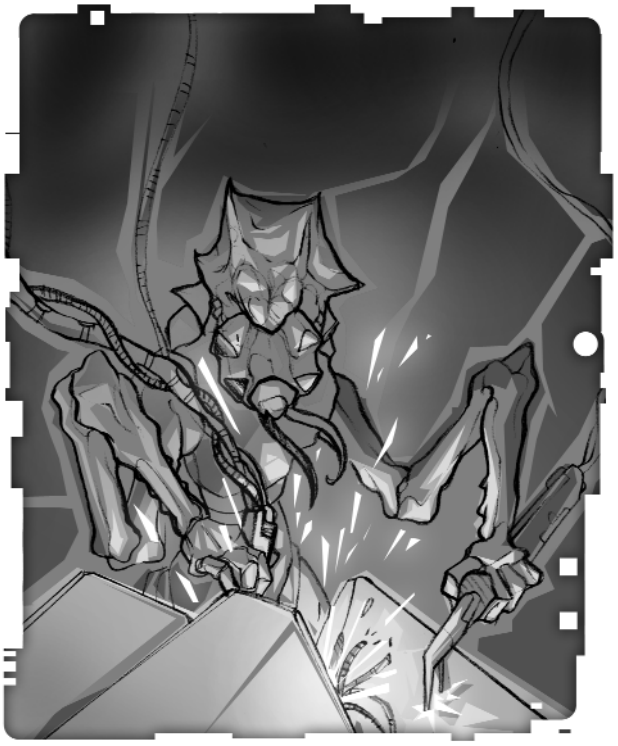
Within the ranks of Clan Ur-Kazzi, there are two million Engineers, most of whom are building new facilities or keeping the fleet operational. They rarely enter combat directly, but any vaasi ship that enters battle has members of the Engineer Caste on board somewhere, keeping the ship in fighting trim. When cornered, they fight as best they can, often with highly advanced weapons. Most are assigned to one of the bases in the Cronus Belt or a vaasi ship, though every vaasi unit has at least one Engineer assigned to meet their technological needs.

The Engineer Caste of Ur-Kazzi is led by Caste Lord Malaipos, an unusually small vaasi renowned for surrounding himself with concealed weapons and poisons for protection. While not particularly paranoid, he has used his mental prowess to overcome his physical limitations.

◇ Healer

Made up of vaasi skilled in medicine, the Healer Caste is the least violent castes. Unlike healers of other species they have no empathy with their patients, willing to condemn anyone to death if another course of action can save more people. Healer Caste vaasi will remove organs from healthy vaasi to save the wounded if they think it is the most efficient thing to do. Individual life has no value to them, only the total of vaasi who are in fighting form, and they are frighteningly effective. Before the war, two percent of all vaasi were Healers, but that shrank to one percent during the war due to the emphasis placed on the War Caste and the heavy casualties suffered by Healer Caste field medics.

Most members of the Healer Caste provided battlefield medicine with the War Caste or worked out of clinics and hospitals on the vaasi-controlled worlds. A few were involved in biological research, most of which was concerned with new surgical procedures or medical treatments, but the majority



of such work was handled by the Science Caste. The primary concern of the Healer Caste is healing injuries, not treating long-term conditions. Vaasi born with or developing a long-term disability, such as blindness or a limp, are usually killed and used for food or organ donation.

Within Clan Ur-Kazzi the Healer Clan has two hundred thousand members, most of whom are spread throughout the forces of the War Caste as combat medics. Major vaasi facilities also have a medical center staffed by thousands of Healers. Caste Lord Spiriac leads the caste; he is a skilled combat surgeon who has served through many many battles alongside the War Caste, and they view him very favorably.

◇ Labor

The least respected of the third tier castes, the Labor Caste provides manual, unskilled labor. These Laborers were genetically modified to maximize strength and endurance. The servitors of the Labor Caste have some of the lowest intellects of any servitor species, as it was decided that a high intelligence would distract them from their relatively menial duties. The true vaasi directing the Labor Caste have a normal intellect, acting more as organizers than laborers themselves. They handle duties such as mining, cargo transfer, and agriculture. At its height the Labor Caste made up forty percent of the Vaasi Empire's population, but this shrank to barely ten percent during the war with the Star Confederation. The loss of the Labor Caste is one of the main reasons the Empire collapsed after the victory at Eos.

Within Clan Ur-Kazzi the Labor Caste has two million members, making it roughly the same size as the Engineers and tied for the second largest caste in the clan. These vaasi are primarily found building bases in the Cronus Belt and refurbishing the Atlas facility used by Mutation Black. They are rarely found in combat zones, though a handful can be found on most vaasi ships handling cargo transfers and other heavy lifting duties. A large concentration of Labor Caste vaasi can also be found both in Cluster White Red and Cluster Void White, two primary hydroponics gardens of Clan Ur-Kazzi.

The leader of the Labor Caste is Caste Lord Ujik, a tireless worker and skilled organizer who has earned a reputation for completing his assigned tasks on time, even if it means the death of his men. Caste Lord Ujik is notorious for keeping his followers on minimal supplies, sometimes causing the Laborers to die from starvation or asphyxiation.

◇ Transport

Responsible for all non-military transportation within the Empire, the Transport Caste operates the spacecraft, atmospheric, and surface vehicles that keep the vaasi fed, clothed, and equipped. The Transport Caste works closely with most other castes, particularly the Engineer, Labor, and War castes. The Engineer Caste repairs the vehicles used by the Transport Caste, but they do not receive extensive training in their operation. War Caste vaasi involved in space combat receive the same training as the Transport Caste, but they do not have the mindset to perform simple cargo runs or similar non-violent tasks.

The Transport Caste was never a large one, making up only four percent of the population of the Vaasi Empire before the war with the Star Confederation. During the war this percentage shrank to two, and there were many instances of necessary war supplies not being delivered due to a lack of trained pilots. Of the third tier castes, the Transport Caste was one of the more respected castes, since they had valuable skills and provided a necessary service for the Empire. The vehicles they operated were rarely safe, however, as the vaasi value speed and efficiency to safety.

Within Clan Ur-Kazzi there are two hundred thousand members of this caste, constantly ferrying supplies among the fleet. Of the fleet's three hundred ships, the Transport Caste controls a third, using them primarily for cargo duties. Most of these ships are Laki Blue Cargo Carriers or smaller freighters. These ships are armed and have members of the War Caste on board in case of combat, but the Transport Caste operates the ships. If pressed, these ships enter combat. The leader of the Transport Caste in Clan Ur-Kazzi is Caste Lord Barodisip who regularly throws his ships in harm's way to prove their use in combat and earn himself more respect.

THE VAASI ECONOMY

The vaasi have long had an oligarchic government that exerts stern control over their economic system, similar in some respects to communism. Each vaasi is assigned tasks by his caste and, assuming he completes them, is assigned necessary supplies from the caste's pool of goods, received from other castes in return for its services or products. Vaasi who do not perform according to the requirements of their caste do not receive their full allotment of supplies, while those who excel are sometimes given additional supplies to secure their loyalty to the leadership of the caste.

The vaasi have no money and don't grasp the concept, placing no value on precious metals unless they have military or industrial uses, and seeing printed money as being pointless. They believe in earning goods through success or taking it from someone else who is weaker. Because of this, they formed clans for mutual protection, or they bribed more powerful vaasi with some of their allotment of supplies.

4th Tier • • •

The lowest classes of vaasi society, these castes are responsible for tasks that no vaasi would do by choice. The true vaasi of these castes are treated with scorn by their betters, with even some servitors brave enough to treat them poorly. More than any other tier, these castes are made up of servitors, since their tasks are considered to be beneath a true vaasi. True vaasi born into these castes often consider themselves cursed, and few other vaasi would try to convince them otherwise.

◇ Detainment

Responsible for holding captives taken by the War Caste, they are seen as being scavengers who feed off the victories of others. The Detainment

VAASI IDENTIFICATION SCHEME

While humans rely on numbers and letters to identify items or military units, the vaasi more commonly use color combinations, such as calling a military unit the Black Red Squad. Red, orange, yellow, green, indigo, violent, white, gray, and black are the standard colors used, but other colors, such as burgundy, are used for special circumstances. Also, void is used to refer to the absence of all color, serving a function similar to a zero. Vaasi have acute color vision, and can differentiate changes in color much more accurately than most other species.

Caste is not particularly busy because the vaasi take few prisoners, though they are occasionally taken for interrogation by the War Caste or for later consumption. Most of these captives are eventually eaten by the higher-ranked castes, meaning the Detainment Caste is often little more than butchers. They are also charged with holding criminals for the Royal Caste, but this is rarely a long-term assignment; few criminals merit anything other than a death sentence. The War Caste sometimes calls them up for police duty, but this too is rare.

The Detainment Caste was one of the smallest castes, having only a few million members during the height of the Vaasi Empire. Their numbers did not appreciably change during the war, but there are only ten thousand members of the Detainment Caste among the ranks of Clan Ur-Kazzi. They have nothing to do but prepare facilities for prisoners, though the plans of Mutation Black to acquire prisoners and extract their genetic information gives the Detainment Caste a glimmer of hope that their services will be needed soon. Most of the Detainment Caste is stationed in the Cargo Exchange on Atlas. Caste Lord Huysik, a vaasi desperately looking to prove the value of his caste to Clan Lord Oratan, leads the Detainment Caste.

◇ Disposal

The largest of the fourth tier castes, the Disposal Caste manages garbage collection in the Vaasi Empire. They are responsible for destroying trash generated by the vaasi, usually by burning it with plasma or launching it into a convenient star. They have no recycling efforts and consume more resources rather than recycle what they have already used.

The Disposal Caste made up one percent of the total population of the Vaasi Empire before the war, but became virtually nonexistent as the war progressed. Thus it was not uncommon for vaasi settlements to have piles of garbage waiting for weeks to be collected and destroyed by the vastly understaffed Disposal Caste. In Clan Ur-Kazzi there are only twenty thousand members of the Disposal Caste, struggling to keep the facilities and ships clean. They have faced some unexpected difficulties: they cannot launch their garbage into Helios because it would alert the other inhabitants of the system to their presence, and they cannot spare the power to destroy it with plasma or other energy forms. They have begun launching the garbage into deep space beyond the Helios system. The leader of the Disposal Caste is Caste Lord Dorefrav, who has a large chip on his shoulder, even for a vaasi. He is constantly angered by the lack of respect he and his followers receive, though he has kept his anger in check so far.

◇ Servant

One of the smallest castes and possibly the least respected, Servant Caste vaasi wait on the whim of vaasi of higher-ranked castes. Most members of the Servant Caste are assigned to members of the Royal Caste, though high-ranking members of the first three tiers can have a servant of their own. These vaasi are considered the lowest of the low, since they must serve someone who may be weaker than they are, and suffer punishment for not doing so effectively. Most crimes are punished by death, but the most serious offenses result in reassignment to the Servant Caste. Such unfortunate individuals usually commit suicide as soon as they are able.

Even during the height of the Empire, the Servant Caste only claimed a few million members, and during the war this number shrank drastically. There are only twelve thousand members of this caste in Clan Ur-Kazzi, almost all of which serve the Royal Caste in the Cronus Belt. They does not have a Caste Lord to speak for them, as they are not even given that much respect.

LOCATIONS IN THE CRONUS BELT • • •

Most of the expanse of the Cronus Belt is empty, and the vast majority of the asteroids in the belt have never been touched by ship or creature. There are vast regions of the Cronus Belt that are completely bereft of activity of any kind. The vaasi limit their activities to areas with a large number of asteroids, hiding their presence among the debris. Away from the clusters, only a few small rocks break up the empty space.

◇ The Vaasi Asteroid Bases

The vaasi have divided the Cronus Belt into twenty clusters, identified by color. Each cluster is a distinct command within the hierarchy of Clan Ur-Kazzi, overseen by a member of the Royal Caste who reports directly to Clan Lord Oratan. Within each cluster are large asteroids on which the vaasi build new bases, though in some cases they use the old structures left by the Star Confederation. They have been ordered to set up fully defended and self-sufficient outposts within each cluster, and have been assigned mining and factory equipment to make this possible. In a few more years, the vaasi will have turned every cluster of the Cronus Belt into a floating fortress of armored asteroid bases. For now they are merely constructions in progress, with most of the clan still living on the ships that brought them.

These clusters are generally similar in design, because the vaasi work from standardized plans for asteroid bases. They are built to function as living and storage space, repair and factory facilities, and food production centers. The water and oxygen requirements for these bases are met using ice asteroids found in the Cronus Belt, though the vaasi environmental recycling systems are efficient and rarely require additional supplies. The light levels in the cluster bases are kept low, similar to a full moon on Earth, to protect the sensitive eyes of the inhabitants. Most of the lights are not designed to become brighter, preventing accidents. The facilities are always kept above ninety degrees Fahrenheit, and at what humans would consider an uncomfortable level of humidity.

To avoid detection, these facilities have been constructed within hollowed-out asteroids, with minimal structures on the surface. They have also been outfitted with sensor-dampening gear and generally communicate by directed laser transmissions instead of radio in order to avoid giving away their position. Entering one of these facilities without being detected would be difficult, as they have advanced sensor systems and complex security protocols, but it is by no means impossible. For now the vaasi are more concerned about avoiding attention than security, and their defenses are not all they could be. A first strike against the vaasi could inflict significant damage on their facilities, assuming the attackers approached the Cronus Belt without drawing too much attention. Most vaasi facilities have limited surface-based weaponry, relying on the fleet for protection should the Cronus Belt fall under attack. The interior sections of the facilities have lesser security precautions; the vaasi don't expect anyone to get that far.

The cluster bases rely on fusion reactors, primitive by Star Confederation standards but still advanced compared to those used by humans or wolves. These reactors generate enough power for the normal needs of the vaasi, but some of their more powerful defense and weaponry systems can only be used intermittently because of power limitations. Because of these power shortfalls, the facilities themselves are not cloaked, and many of the weapons that will eventually be installed will only be able to fire occasionally. Acquiring Star Confederation fusion reactor technology is one of the top objectives of Clan Ur-Kazzi.

◇ Cluster Void White

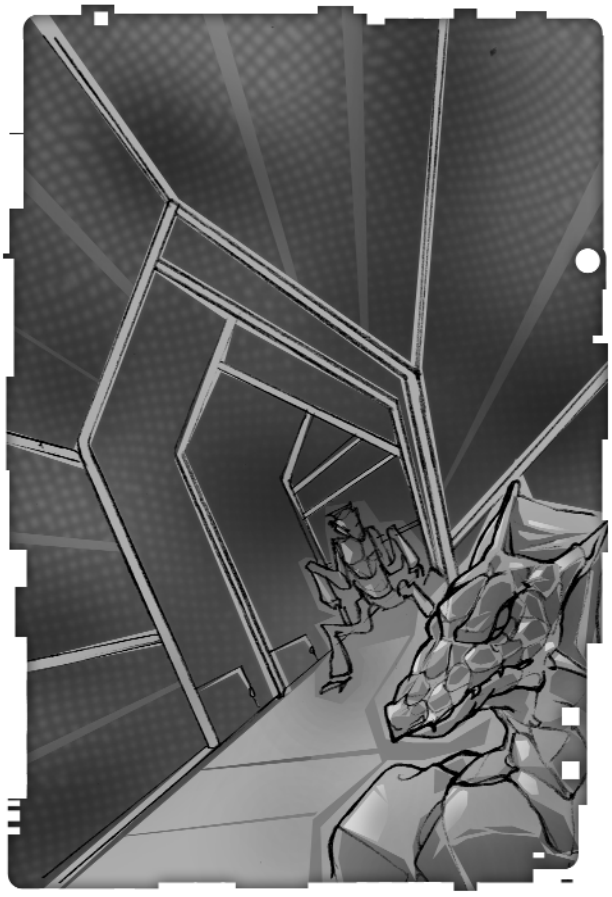
Leader: Juriak of the Royal Caste
Population: 3,000,000
Major Exports/Products: Food, finished goods
Major Imports: Raw materials
Progress Level: 9
Purchase DC Limit: NA
Black Market DC: NA
Item Restriction Limit: NA

The primary cluster in the Cronus Belt, Cluster Void White holds the most extensive vaasi facilities and is the headquarters of Clan Ur-Kazzi. Clan Lord Oratan and most of the Caste Lords can be found here, and it has the largest population of any of the clusters, at three million vaasi. This cluster was the first one built when the vaasi arrived in the system, and is closest to being completed. Built within five massive asteroids moored together by a spider web of high-tension lines and cargo tunnels, this base is the nerve center of vaasi operations in the Helios system. Its security systems are the most advanced of all the clusters, and it has a number of surface-based weapons, including two orbital maser cannons already set up and functional, though they are hidden below the surface by a series of elevators and large hatches, and require at least ten minutes to deploy.

Cluster Void White can hold, feed, and supply two million vaasi, with the rest of those assigned to the cluster still living on their ships. The majority of these individuals are War Caste, though a large segment of the Labor and Engineer Castes are also present, working on the facility. All castes have some representation on Cluster Void White, as it is the center of vaasi power in the Helios System. For the same reason, most of the Caste Lords can be found here as well, though often a few are gone

ATTACKING THE CRONUS BELT

For the immediate future, outright assault against the vaasi stations in the Cronus Belt is hopeless, because the vaasi sensor systems detect ships long before they arrive and mass their forces in response, presenting a battle that the other species living in the Helios System cannot win. Other ways of approaching the Cronus Belt, such as using a cloaking device or stealing a vaasi ship, are far more likely to work as they are supremely overconfident in the safety of their current position. Getting a small squad of saboteurs to the Cronus Belt is possible, but an invasion fleet is not, unless the vaasi suffer drastic damage beforehand.



seeing to caste matters in other clusters. The entire facility is bustling with soldiers running exercises and workers digging new tunnels or installing new systems. The base is cramped and space is always at a premium. The environmental controls are always set to levels that the vaasi find comfortable, and most other species will find it uncomfortably warm, humid, and dark. The limited number of Disposal Caste members means the base is not clean and often stinks of rotting food. While this does not bother vaasi, who have a rather poor sense of smell, other species find it nauseating.

Over eighty ships are normally present at Cluster Void White, providing extra living space and handling the many cargo needs of the facility. The first structures the vaasi built were massive docking ports within the asteroids, though many of the ships still hide in the debris field surrounding the Void White base. The station always has twelve ships prepared to launch in case of attack, and the rest of the fleet can be combat ready in less than half an hour.

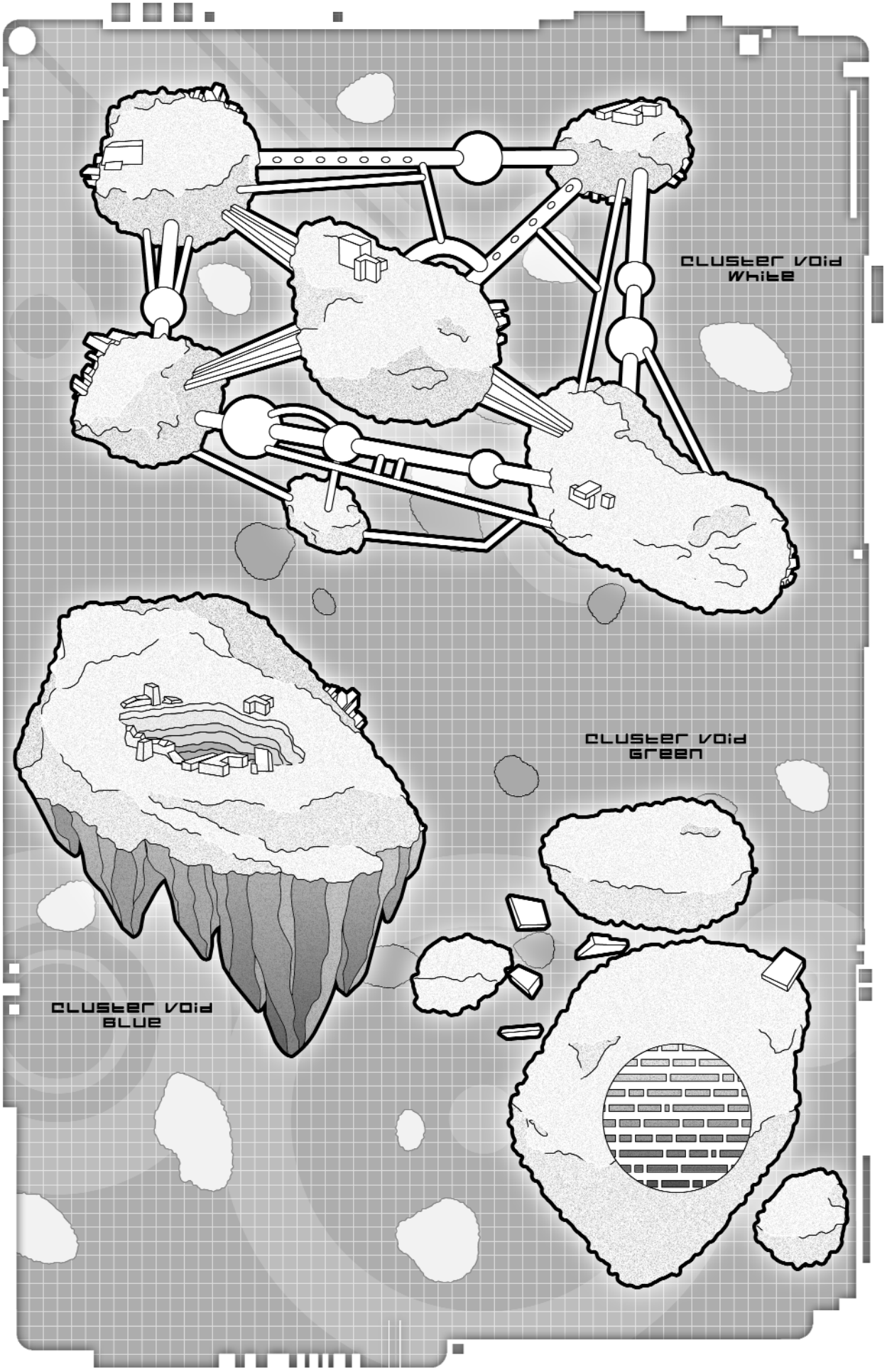
Juriak of the Royal Caste began this assignment as a loyal follower of Clan Lord Oratan, but his loyalties are changing. While Juriak is technically in charge of Cluster Void White, Clan Lord Oratan spends most of his time there and takes over of many of the responsibilities of running the cluster, undermining Juriak's power. He also disagrees with some of the more progressive ideas Clan Lord Oratan has been professing. Juriak's clandestine meetings with Lord Jahqwe signal a shift that would be a great blow to Clan Lord Oratan.

◇ Cluster Void Green

Leader: Karisu of the Royal Caste
Population: 2,600,000
Major Exports/Products: Raw materials
Major Imports: Food
Progress Level: 9
Purchase DC Limit: NA
Black Market DC: NA
Item Restriction Limit: NA

One of the vaasi cluster bases started in the last year, Cluster Void Green has at its core an old Star Confederation facility that was once used as part of the Cronus Belt defense perimeter. The original inhabitants of the Star Confederation facility stayed at their posts until their supplies ran out, and the base itself has survived largely intact over the years. The surface buildings have been battered by asteroid collisions and some no longer have an atmospheric seal, but the majority of the structure is underground and remains a viable, habitable environment. The vaasi have been working for the past year to make the entire facility livable, and have made good progress so far despite their utter disgust for items built by the Star Confederation.

Few of the original systems in the Star Confederation facility are still operational, and the


Cluster Void
White
Cluster Void
Green
Cluster Void
Blue

VAASI AND ROBOTS

As a species, the vaasi rarely make use of robots in industry or war, preferring to force other, weaker vaasi or servitors to fill such roles. While this does limit their productivity and effectiveness, the high reproductive rate of the vaasi and the ability to simply clone more servitors alleviates this problem. The vaasi find the Star Confederation's reliance on machines to make their weapons and fight their battles to be a sign of cowardice and weakness.

fusion reactor is severely damaged. The vaasi have pulled out the original systems and installed their own, to the point that the station barely resembles its original form. There has been little work done on the exterior of the structure, and no external security systems have been installed. In fact, the facility in Void Green has little security at all, as life support and other basic functions were given priority. Even the facility's sensors are inadequate. On the other hand, the base's available life support has been greatly expanded, and almost the entire asteroid is hollow at this point. Much of this hollow area has not been filled with any sort of construction, giving them room to expand.

Cluster Void Green is particularly rich in minerals, and the modification the Star Confederation base has been slowed by the development of mines in the cluster, in addition to reopening old Star Confederation mines. Currently a number of the larger asteroids are being mined for iron and nickel, with most of the material being shipped off to other clusters for processing and manufacturing. Mining and factory ships turn ore into useable items for Cluster Void Green, but most of the ships in the area are cargo or personnel carriers. Void Green has a minimal number of defensive ships since its level of activity is fairly low and it is not expected to draw unwanted attention.

Karisu is a low ranking member of the Royal Caste, and her assignment to Cluster Void Green is her first major leadership post. She is extremely loyal to Clan Lord Oratan, though many feel she was assigned more for her loyalty than her competency. Karisu works her minions past exhaustion to see that Cluster Void Green is on schedule, producing results but probably harming her in the long run as she slowly kills off her worker population.

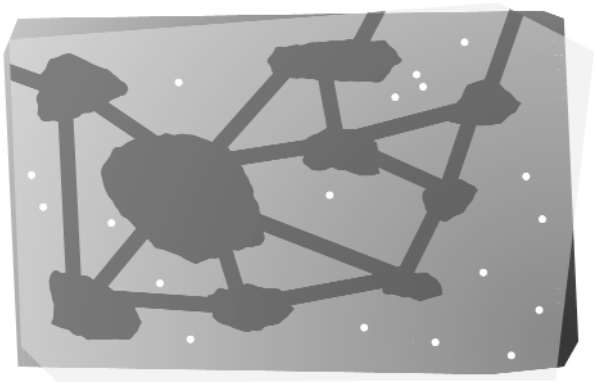
◇ Cluster Void Blue

Leader: Darouth of the Royal Caste
Population: 600,000
Major Exports/Products: None
Major Imports: Materials, finished goods, manpower
Progress Level: 9
Purchase DC Limit: NA
Black Market DC: NA
Item Restriction Limit: NA

The most recent of the vaasi cluster bases to begin construction, Cluster White Blue is currently little more than a mining project. Most of the energy expended in this cluster is directed at hollowing out the primary asteroid in Cluster White Blue so it may serve as the heart of the vaasi base, but this has only been partially accomplished due to denser metals than expected in the asteroid. The construction schedule has been slowly slipping since the project began, and Clan Lord Oratan is not happy with this turn of events.

No vaasi currently reside in the Cluster White Blue asteroid itself, though hundreds of thousands of vaasi spend their days there in space suits extracting material from the asteroid and living on ships. Most are members of the Labor and Engineer Caste and are heavily involved in the construction efforts. A fourth of the vaasi population is from the War Caste and are responsible for keeping the cluster safe. They also keep the other castes working past the limits of endurance in the hopes of getting the project back on schedule. Of all the vaasi cluster bases in the Cronus Belt, this is the one most open to attack due to its small number of troops and lack of a hard defensive position.

The leader of the vaasi in Cluster White Blue, Darouth of the Royal Caste, is living on borrowed time. A political ally of Lord Jahqwe, he made his affiliations and feelings a little too obvious and thus received this assignment from Clan Lord Oratan. Now he works constantly to try and keep his head attached to his shoulders, but it seems it is only a matter of time before he is executed for his failure, depriving Lord Jahqwe of one more ally within the Royal Caste.



RELATIONS WITH OTHER PLANETS OF THE HELIOS SYSTEM • • •

The vaasi of Clan Ur-Kazzi have no contact with other worlds besides the vaasi in Mutation Black assigned to Atlas, but this will change drastically soon. The vaasi on Atlas are subservient to Clan Lord Oratan, and obey his commands as passed through Suthaj of the Science Caste. Once they begin their assault on the rest of the system, Atlas will become one of the main staging grounds for this assault and the center of vaasi fleet operations. In the vast depths of the Cargo Exchange, the vaasi will be able to protect their ships, and will eventually turn the planet into a fortress world using the minerals from the Cronus Belt. These plans are years away, but Clan Lord Oratan likes to be prepared.

The vaasi are interested in the Markin Belt, as a fraction of a star heart powered the engines used to launch the planetoid that formed the Markin Belt. Clan Lord Oratan believes part of this star heart may survive, allowing his forces to operate at full capacity for years without running out of power. Thus far the vaasi have not been able to send a cloaked ship to investigate, but as the cluster bases are finished this will become possible.

The vaasi have no idea that there are tens of thousands of their kind trapped beneath the surface of Hephaestos. If they learn about the Hollow Dark, they try to rescue those vaasi and add them to the existing vaasi forces. This will only happen after the war has begun, however, as they do not have a sufficient number of cloaked ships to transport all of the vaasi there without making several trips. Alternately, they could send additional troops into the Hollow Dark, overpowering the Law-Keepers and turning Hephaestus into a vaasi-dominated world to strike at the inner planets of the Helios system. This would split in their forces, and would only be attempted if they were in a position of strength or had nothing left to lose.

While the Green Reach research facility doubtlessly holds information of interest to the vaasi, they have recovered enough records from wrecked vaasi ships to learn that something is wrong about the area, and they are unlikely to approach it without careful research into the situation. The vaasi may be driven to Green Reach if they begin losing the war in order to find better weapons, but it is unlikely they will venture there otherwise. Although the vaasi have access to psionic abilities, their power over Red Truth is based more on brute force of will than understanding. Defeating the current residents of Green Reach is beyond their ability.

The vaasi see C'thalk as the largest threat to their victory in the Helios system. The space forces of the saurians are not much of a threat with their inferior technology, but the large population and industrial base means the saurians could pose a significant threat if they allied with the humans or wolves to update their technology. C'thalk poses the most difficulty for a ground victory because of its population and the bacteria in the atmosphere that is deadly to vaasi physiology. The vaasi plan to isolate the planet in the early days of their invasion, preventing the saurians from joining the war until the other species have been eliminated. Blockading it from orbit is their second objective, after wiping out the Wolf Tribes' space fleet. Then C'thalk will be subjected to orbital bombardment and a ground invasion.

Eos is the ultimate goal of Clan Ur-Kazzi. Eos had been the primary target of their assault, but in the face of the threats present on Thres and C'thalk, they have altered their plan. While the Dawning Star Republic is a concern, the vaasi see the Wolf Tribes and the Saurian Empire as larger threats, despite their strong emotional desire to control the former Star Confederation capital. Despite putting Eos on the back burner, the vaasi are interested in gathering information about the planet, particularly regarding relics that remain and the location of the artificial singularity. Clan Ur-Kazzi does not know the artificial singularity is on Eos, but hopes to find some record of where it was hidden so they can obtain it at a later date. They do not expect to find any vaasi on Eos, and so the survivors there will come as a great surprise. The Eotian vaasi are all War Caste, and will submit automatically to the Royal Caste, though integrating them into the command structure of the War Caste may be difficult. The vaasi of Eos are not particularly interested from taking orders from Clan Ur-Kazzi until a new pecking order is firmly established within the caste.

The vaasi have no interest in the moons of Eos, but once they learn of the mass of nanites on Phaeton, they will move to reclaim them and put the nanites to work. The nanites would be programmed to turn Phaeton into a massive fortress with the assistance of several more tactical intelligence units and vaasi overseers. They will attack Selene as soon as possible, fearing the technology still possessed by the tentaari. This may even lead to a first strike against Selene if the tentaari make any moves against them, though it is unlikely that they would be so proactive in fighting the vaasi.

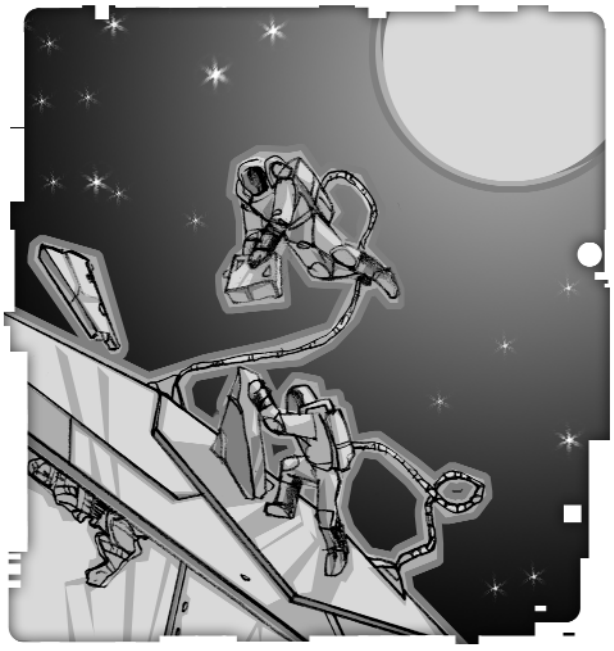
The vaasi expected Eos to be the center of resistance within the Helios system, but after seeing the fleet of the Wolf Tribes, the vaasi have reevaluated their plans. The vaasi have not yet learned the truth behind the Hivequeen of the straas, and so consider all of Thres a threat for the large number of spacecraft present there. Thres also presents a difficulty in terms of ground combat, but its main threat is the Wolf Tribes' space fleet. When the vaasi make contact with the Hivequeen, they will ally with her, although there is friction between the groups as the Hivequeen attempts to

grab power, which Clan Lord Oratan will not take lightly. As much as the vaasi want to destroy the remains of the Star Confederation, they spend a lot of time and energy arguing with each other.

The moons of Hesperos have been the first site of conflict with the other inhabitants of the Helios system, as Lord Jahqwe has launched several secretive attacks against both coqui and mechite settlements among the moons. These have been nothing more than assessments of the local defenses, but both the coqui and the mechites know there is a hostile force on the outer edge of the Helios system. The mechites have not gotten a good look at the attackers, but Overseer 12 fears that the vaasi have returned to the Helios system. These attacks are very infrequent, only happening every few months, as Lord Jahqwe must avoid the attention of Clan Lord Oratan. The inhabitants of the moons of Hesperos have been preparing defenses, but have yet to pose a significant threat to the attackers. Lord Jahqwe has learned of the *Stone of Hope*, though, and believes it may be the greatest danger to the vaasi fleet of any single ship in the system. He has kept it secret from Clan Lord Oratan, with the goal of forcing his assault to fail.

The ice miner robots of Poseidon and the Children of Korlan have had no contact with the vaasi, and the vaasi have little interest in either planet. While they may harvest ice from Poseidon or salvage the space stations of the Children of Korlan, they are unlikely to have much contact with these worlds otherwise. Even if they learn about the inhabitants of these worlds the vaasi do not spend the resources to remove them, since they are trapped on their individual worlds and pose no threat.

The gateway station is beyond the Cronus Belt; to reach it travelers must either go around the Cronus Belt, adding months to their journey, or travel through vaasi-controlled space. Unfortunately for such intrepid individuals, it's unlikely they will know about the vaasi presence until it is too late. The vaasi have not explored the gateway station because, while the gateway is not active, several of its security systems remain. An early attempt to board the station resulted in a dozen of their ships being disabled, so they have put off exploring the gateway station until the other threats in the Helios system are neutralized.



Adventure Ideas in the Cronus Belt • • •

◇ Comet Ride

After the vaasi threat is detected, the characters are sent to scout the Cronus Belt and gather information about the vaasi. They are to infiltrate the area without being detected by landing on a comet, powering down, and being carried into the Cronus Belt. Unfortunately getting back home undetected on another comet will require perfect timing and some excellent flying.

◇ Crossed Signals

While traveling near the outer planets, the players receive a transmission from the Cronus Belt indicating that a vaasi scout ship is in their vicinity. The message is from Lord Jahqwe, who hopes to force Clan Lord Oratan into action by helping the enemies of the vaasi destroy his scout ships.

◇ Message in a Bottle

While near Eos, the players intercept a laser communication between an old Star Confederation base in the Cronus Belt and a long-destroyed base on Eos. The message details the location of the facility and indicates that it is under attack. The truth of the matter is that an asteroid collision has damaged the base, but if the players hurry they may beat the vaasi to finding the facility.

◇ Mining is Dangerous Work

The players are assigned to survey the Cronus Belt for valuable mineral deposits, not realizing the vaasi control the area. The players land in an area not commonly patrolled by the vaasi, but eventually run afoul of them. Their mining operation turns into a game of cat and mouse with a squadron of vaasi ships.

◇ First Contact

The players detect a ship heading out from the Cronus Belt on a course directly into the inner planets. It is a vaasi ship that has suffered widespread system failure from asteroid impact and is out of control. If the characters claim the ship before its crew repairs it or the vaasi retrieve it, they would have valuable technology on their hands.

NEW FEAT • • •

◇ Vaasi Technological Familiarity

You have had some experience with vaasi technology and can use it without getting nauseated, and can use their computers without penalty.

Benefit: You do not become nauseated when using vaasi technology, and ignore the -8 penalty other species normally suffer when using a vaasi computer.

Normal: Non-vaasi using vaasi equipment run the risk of becoming nauseated (see below) and suffer a -8 penalty when using vaasi computers.

EQUIPMENT • • •

At the height of the Vaasi Empire, their technology was commonly Progress Level 9 or 10, but with the limitations on power generation, the industrial damage caused by the war, and the short time in which Clan Ur-Kazzi had to collect supplies, the vaasi in the Helios system are mostly equipped with PL 7 and 8 gear. They have some items that are PL 9 and 10, particularly spacecraft, but less vital items are of less advanced technology. Those remaining items of PL 9 and 10 are highly valued and are treated as relics.

Equipment is not purchased or bartered for among the vaasi; it is given and taken according to caste rank, strength, and cunning. Only the lower and more bookish castes like the Bureaucrats are involved in trading. They do not believe in gun control or in any way limiting which weapons they can carry, instead relying on the limitations of caste and strength to keep powerful items in the proper hands. They have no stores or shops, instead only storehouses operated by individual castes or the Bureaucrat Caste. Theft is common, as there is seldom any legal recourse for the victim, only the vengeance he and his allies can inflict.

Clan Ur-Kazzi brought massive stores of equipment from Blue Haven, filling their ships to the limits of their design in anticipation of a long-term campaign. The vaasi do not have a complete catalog of all their supplies, and while they may have millions of power packs, they are not always at the right place at the right time. Given sufficient warning, the Bureaucrat Caste can get needed items to their destination, but this will not stop the vaasi from occasionally being undersupplied at critical moments.

Because of the differences between standard economic models and the vaasi's, the vaasi do not use Wealth Bonus as other species do. While vaasi may acquire material wealth, such as precious metals, for trade with other species, among themselves they rely on a complex system of rank, reputation, intimidation, and some bartering. When one vaasi wishes to obtain an item from another, he makes a Reputation check against the Purchase DC of the object, divided in half. He may also make an opposed Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate skill check against the Sense Motive, Diplomacy, or Intimidate skill (respectively) of the owner of the object once per purchase, to gain a +4 synergy bonus to the Reputation check. If the Reputation check is suc-

D20 MODERN EQUIPMENT IN THE CRONUS BELT

All equipment listed in the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game can be found in the supplies of Clan Ur-Kazzi, except firearms and vehicles. This equipment is often different in appearance and construction than similar items used by other species, such as backpacks made of vaasi hide, but they function much the same.

FUTURE EQUIPMENT IN THE CRONUS BELT

PL 5: All PL 5 equipment is available in the Cronus Belt.

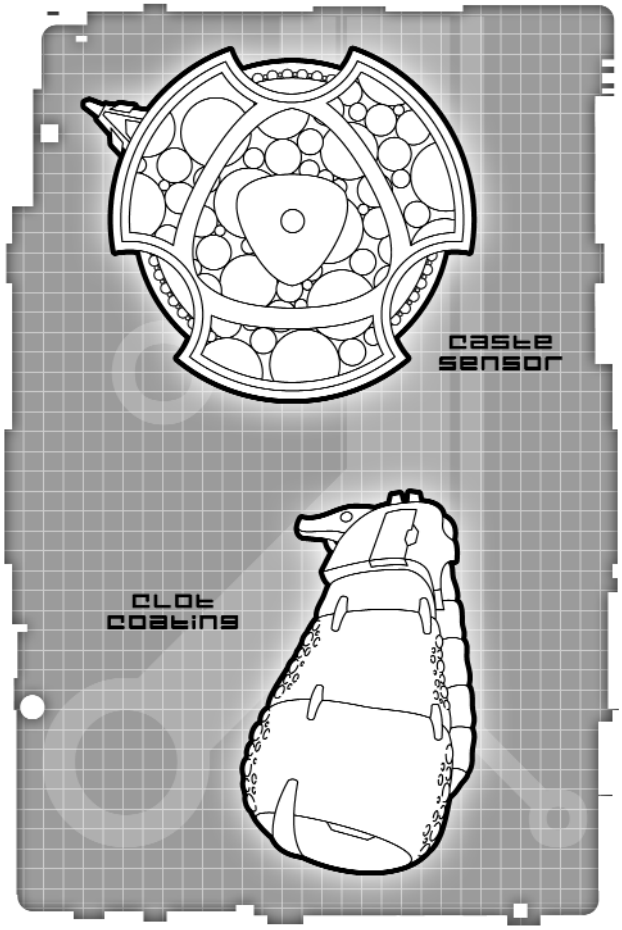
PL 6: All PL 6 equipment is available in the Cronus Belt.

PL 7: All PL 7 equipment is available in the Cronus Belt, except for concussion rifles, concussion rods, gravity snares, piercing visors, and rail guns.

PL 8: All PL 8 equipment is available in the Cronus Belt, except for cryonic rifles, disintegrators, hologuises, phasing ammunition, singularity grenades, and teleporting magazines.

cessful, the vaasi gains the item but suffers a penalty to Reputation as if he had made a Wealth check of the same DC as the Reputation check. This penalty is cumulative and decreases by one point per day.

Vaasi technology is considered by most other species to be repugnant, malodorous, and possessing a texture that is vile to touch. Their technology has a vaguely organic feel that reminds most other species of holding a corpse, or something out of their nightmares. Non-vaasi who use vaasi technology must make a Will save (DC 12) each hour to avoid becoming slightly sickened, suffering a -1 morale penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws. This penalty lasts until the character puts the device down for at least an hour or makes the Will save. Succeeding at this Will save means the character is not adversely affected for one hour. Because of this, most species treat the Purchase DC of vaasi equipment to be -5 lower than normal.



◇ Adventuring Equipment

Caste Sensor

This small, circular device has three groves for the operator's three claws and a single tractable needle on the other side. It extracts genetic material from a vaasi with a needle, which is then processed by the sensor's interior workings. Within a few seconds determines the caste of the subject, though some of the new vaasi servitor species created on Atlas or Hephaestus confuse the machine because many have not been genetically coded to a specific caste yet. This device is primarily used to keep each caste in its place, though it is seldom needed.

Clot Coating

A spray-on adhesive substance that comes in small cans, the vaasi use this material along with eye protection to block out harmful levels of light. Spraying the clot coating on a vaasi's skin takes one minute. After this is complete, the vaasi suffers no penalties for exposure to light for one hour, after which the clot coating must be reapplied. Each can of clot coating contains five uses.

WEAPONS • • •

◇ Vaasi Melee Weapons

Despite the development of advanced ranged weapons that can eliminate most foes from a distance, the vaasi still use of melee weapons for the enjoyment they take in inflicting pain and suffering first hand. Vaasi like the blood spray of a close up kill and seeing the light go out of the enemy's eyes; melee combat also makes it easier to take corpses for eating later. Historically, vaasi used melee weapons from the earliest days of their species, preferring edged weapons such as spears or many-bladed swords to bludgeoning weapons. All vaasi going into combat carry a melee weapon of some type, and powered weapons are the most common. Most have some sort of knife or short sword in their possession during waking hours to serve both as a tool and weapon, as one can never be too safe. A completely unarmed vaasi is seen as a fool.

Dyxer Sword

A weapon found only among the War and Royal Castes, the dyxer sword has a three-foot-long handle that projects a powerful energy field in a shape

Adventuring Gear

Name	PL	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Caste Sensor	7	T	1 lb.	24	-
Clot Coating	7	T	1 lb.	18	-

similar to that of a sword blade. This field interferes with the sharing of electrons between atoms, breaking down molecular bonds and causing objects struck to fall apart into their component atoms. These are immensely powerful, but dangerous even to a trained user. To the vaasi, the danger is worth the devastation dyxer swords can create.

Dyxer blades do not gain a bonus to damage from the user's Strength, but they ignore up to 20 points of hardness. They use vaasi power packs and consume 5 charges per round of use.

If the user of the dyxer sword is knocked prone, grappled, disarmed, bull rushed or suffers any effect that moves his position against his will, he must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid hitting himself with the dyxer sword. Additionally, if the wielder is not proficient with the weapon, he must make Reflex save (DC 15) after each missed attack to avoid hitting himself with the dyxer sword. Even the slightest touch of the cutting surface inflicts serious injuries. Failure means the wielder hits himself and takes normal damage from the weapon, but does not add modifiers derived from feats or similar sources.

Kraxix Mace

A rare weapon found only among the upper ranks of the War Caste and the Royal Caste, a kraxix mace uses the advanced gateway technology of the vaasi to create an artificial mass when it strikes its target, greatly increasing its striking power. The effect on the target is like slamming into a brick wall at a high rate of speed. The weapon is difficult to manufacture, limiting its use to only those deemed important enough to have them. Kraxix maces use vaasi power packs and consume 10 charges per round of use. When without power, a kraxix mace acts like a normal club.

A target struck by a kraxix mace must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid being knocked prone.

Piercer

A common weapon among some of the smaller vaasi servitor races, piercers are made up of a monomolecular wire attached to a large piston, allowing the user to ram the wire into a target and then rip it out with a sideways slashing motion. This weapon can be frighteningly effective and messy, unlike the dyxer sword. The piston is usually kept strapped to the wielder's forearms, with the monomolecular wire extending out over the user's hand when activated. Until then, the wire is retracted to avoid accidents. Even with this precaution, vaasi regularly lose limbs to their own weapons. Piercers use vaasi power packs and consume one charge per minute of use.

If the user of the piercer is knocked prone, grappled, disarmed, bull rushed or suffers any effect that moves his position against his will, he must make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid hitting himself with the piercer. Additionally, if the wielder is not proficient with the weapon, he must make Reflex save (DC 15) after each missed attack to avoid hitting himself with the piercer. Even the slightest touch of the cutting surface can inflict serious injuries. Failure means the wielder hits himself and inflicts normal damage, but does not add bonuses for Strength, feats, or similar sources.

Ylos Blade

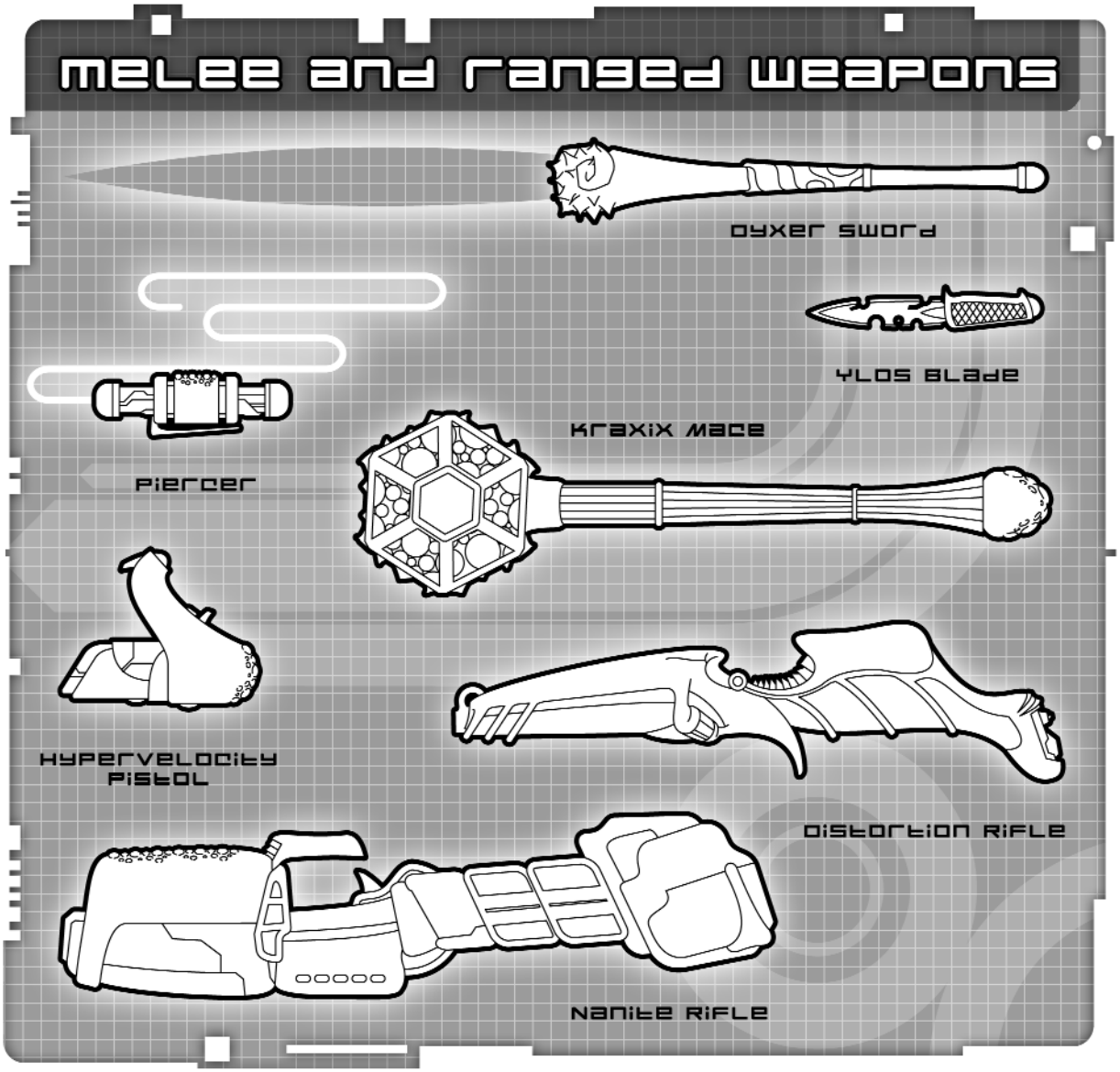
The most common weapon among the vaasi, ylos blades are more akin to pocketknives than actual weapons. They are eighteen- to twenty-four-inch ceramic or composite blades, with a number of tools built into the blade, such as pry bars or hooks. These weapons are considered part of a vaasi's clothes and are allowed anywhere but the most secure of locales. They have long been a part of vaasi culture, and one can often judge the importance and power of a vaasi by the quality of the ylos blade they carry.

◇ Vaasi Ranged Weapons

Vaasi prefer to close with their opponents for melee combat whenever possible, but this does not stop them from recognizing the importance and power of ranged weapons. Throughout their history, they have used many types of distance weapons, always favoring those with maximum destructive value over those with superior range or accuracy. The most common ranged weapons among the vaasi are the maser weapons described in *Operation Quick Launch*, but other special purpose

Melee Weapons of the Vaasi

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Dyxer Blade (Exotic)	9	3d10	19-20/x3	Disintegration	Large	6 lb.	42	III (+4)
Kraxix Mace(Exotic)	9	4d6	19-20/x2	Bludgeoning	Medium	3 lb.	48	III (+4)
Piercer(Exotic)	8	2d8	18-20/x3	Slashing	Small	4 lb.	20	Res (+2)
Ylos Sword (Simple)	4	1d6	20/x2	Slashing	Small	3 lb.	9	-



weapons can be found in the weapons lockers of Clan Ur-Kazzi. For information on vaasi maser weapons see *Operation Quick Launch*, page 169.

Distortion Rifle

The crowning achievement of the vaasi arsenal, a distortion rifle creates a small wormhole within its target, opening the other end of the wormhole near the rifle. It then pulls part of the target through the wormhole, effectively pulling vital organs out of living targets. This weapon is hideously damaging and horrific to see in use, but the vaasi do not seem bothered by it. The Star Confederation deemed similar weapons inhumane, and thus never used them. Clan Ur-Kazzi has a small number of distortion rifles and their specialized power packs, and only uses them in dire emergencies or critical assignments. The distortion rifle power packs contain enough energy for twenty shots.

A creature shot by a distortion rifle must make a Reflex save (DC 16) or suffer 1d10 points of Constitution damage.

Hypervelocity Pistol

A small sidearm used by several castes for self-defense, the hypervelocity pistol is considered by most to be a non-military weapon. It fires an extremely dense bullet at an immense speed by causing a bend in the time-space continuum within the barrel of the weapon, imparting massive inertia to the bullet. The bullet itself is near frictionless, as it would otherwise ignite any atmosphere it was fired in. Hypervelocity pistol clips contain both bullets and energy, holding enough for the weapon to be fired twenty-five times before needing a new clip. Hypervelocity pistols ignore 10 points of hardness.

Nanite Rifle

This weapon fires a stream of charged particles at the target, on which ride nanites that then swarm the target. The charged particles inflict little damage themselves, but the target becomes infected with hostile nanites that attempt to break down the target's body. A target struck with a nanite rifle must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) to fight off the

Ranged Weapons of the Vaasi

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Distortion Rifle [1]	9	6d8	19-20/x2	D [4]	100 ft.	S	20 box	L	14 lb.	50	III (+4)
Hypervelocity Pistol [2]	8	5d6	20	Ballistic	1000 ft.	S, A	25 box	S	4 lb.	36	III (+4)
Nanite Rifle [4]	9	6d4	19-20/x2	Energy	500 ft.	S	30 box	M	8 lb.	44	III (+4)

[1] This weapon falls under the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Distortion Rifle) feat.
[2] This weapon falls under the Personal Firearms Proficiency feat.
[3] This weapon falls under the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Nanite Rifle) feat.
[4] Displacement damage

nanites. If this save fails, the target takes an additional 2d6 energy damage that ignores hardness. This Fortitude save is repeated every round until the victim succeeds. Multiple hits from a nanite rifle increase the damage on a failed save by +1d6. This weapon was commonly assigned to anti-vehicle squads and urban combat teams. This weapon's clip carries both nanites and energy, holding enough of both for 30 shots.

DISPLACEMENT DAMAGE

Certain vaasi weapons bend space to tear apart targets by displacing some of their mass while leaving the rest untouched, effectively tearing the target apart with gravity and small wormholes. These weapons are terribly effective, but require massive amounts of energy and are difficult to repair. Weapons that cause displacement damage ignore all forms of energy resistance.

AMMUNITION • • •

Although the vaasi brought a great deal of ammunition to the Helios system, the Bureaucrat and War Castes have been stingy in handing out anything other than power packs. Power packs can be easily recharged at any vaasi facility, but replacing distortion rifle or hypervelocity pistol clips is much more difficult. Thus ammunition is highly prized, and this lack of supply is one of the main reasons most vaasi troops are equipped with maser weaponry.

Vaasi Power Packs

Large and slug-like with a slimy, soft exterior, these power packs hold one hundred charges and are used in vaasi maser weapons and powered melee weapons. They each weigh one pound and have a Purchase DC of 15. They are considered PL 8. Vaasi do not construct plasma power packs and do not use plasma weapons.

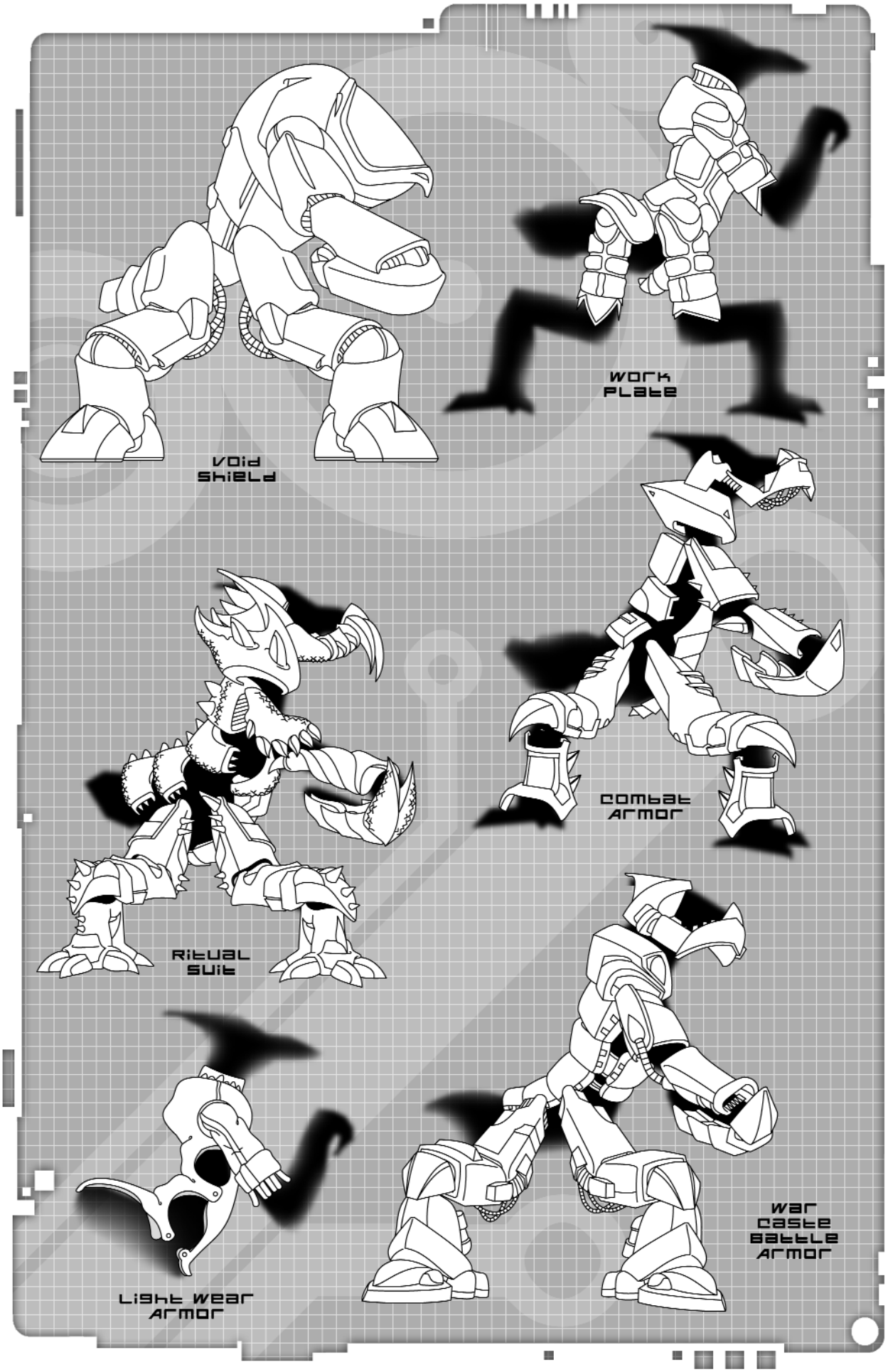
The vaasi have also developed a belt-mounted power pack that contains three hundred charges and weighs ten pounds. These belt power packs have a Purchase DC of 22.

Ammunitions

Ammunition Type (Quantity)	Damage Type	Purchase DC
Distortion Rifle Clip	Energy	23
Hypervelocity Pistol Clip	Ballistic	20
Nanite Rifle Clip	Energy	18

ARMOR • • •

While all vaasi have some natural armor, they wear armor regularly, not just when expecting combat. To the vaasi, modesty is no reason to wear clothes. In the warm climate they are accustomed to, most clothes are an impediment, so all clothing serves some specific purpose. While some are primarily ornamental or ritualistic in nature, most vaasi clothing is protective in some way, and would be


Void Shield
Work Plate
Combat Armor
Ritual Suit
War Caste Battle Armor
Light Wear Armor

considered armor by other species. The vaasi have armor for all manner of occasions, from sleeping armor to ritual armor. Most vaasi own at least one suit of armor, with first and second tier castes often owning more than a dozen suits.

Light Wear Armor

One of the more common types of vaasi armor, light wear armor is the least protective of the common armors, and is used by most vaasi as everyday clothing. Light wear armor is made of advanced fabrics and flexible padding that automatically inflates or contracts when it detects imminent harm to the wearer. It barely restricts the wearer, but does not provide the protection of more substantial armors. It is available in a number of different styles, from sleeping clothes to War Caste uniforms, and it can be found in suitable sizes for most vaasi. It is most commonly found in the possession of first and second tier caste vaasi.

Vaasi Combat Armor

The standard-issue armor of the War Caste, it is used by servitors of the War Caste, while true vaasi members use War Caste Battle Armor. Vaasi combat armor is not as effective as it could be given their technological prowess, favoring cost and ease of manufacture over maximizing protection, as they place little value on servitors. Combat armor is made up of hard composite plates that attach to the vaasi's own plates, and it takes twice as long as normal to don or remove. Vaasi combat armor comes with a built-in universal communicator and gas mask. Of the other species in the Helios system, only the straas can use vaasi combat armor.

Ritual Suit

One of the rarest types of armor among the vaasi, it is officially reserved for use by the Royal Caste, though some high-ranking members of the War and Science Castes have received suits for meritorious conduct. This full suit of heavy combat armor is designed for appearance instead of protection, enhancing the already monstrous appearance of the vaasi. They feature massive horns, claws, and armor plates, done in blacks and grays. Each suit is a unique work of art, made by trained Engineers. None of these craftsmen were available when the fleet left, however, so Clan Ur-Kazzi can produce no more of them. The loss of one of these suits is a great dishonor and show of weakness that will not be forgotten. Ritual suits have built-in universal communicators, personal force fields (DR 10/-), energy shields, threat monitors, and targeting HUD software units. A vaasi wearing a ritual suit gains a +2 equipment bonus to Intimidation checks. Like vaasi combat armor, it attaches to the shell of the wearer and cannot be used by other species except the straas.

Void Shield

Found among the War and Transport Castes, void shields serve both as armor and as spacesuits among the vaasi. The mobility of these suits is limited by the armor plating they carry, which the Transport Caste finds highly annoying, but the War Caste values protection more than maneuverability. Void shields are large, hard space suits with ball and socket joints for the limbs. The armor has no obvious faceplate, relying on external cameras and an internal video screen. The suit completely protects the wearer from the effects of bright light. A void shield carries five hundred hours of air, water, and food injections, in addition to a built-in universal communicator, jet pack, fusion torch, threat monitor, and matter shield.

War Caste Battle Armor

Worn by true vaasi of the War Caste, these suits of armor are second only to ritual suits in terms of the respect they generate. Battle armor is extremely thick and heavy, with powered joints aiding the mobility of the wearer. Developed by the Science Caste for the field commanders of the War Caste, it both looks impressive and is effective at protecting its wearer. The War Caste has developed a strong fondness for it, often wearing it when they receive their funeral rites. It is said for a War Caste leader to die happy he must die in his battle armor. The Engineer Caste produces large quantities of this armor, and Clan Ur-Kazzi brough a manufacturing unit suitable to the task to the Helios system.

War Caste battle armor grants the wearer a +4 equipment bonus to Strength due to its powered joints. The suit can power up to four devices from its internal fusion generator. The suit has a built-in universal communicator, threat monitor, matter shield, energy shield, hologram recorder, projectile deflector, and galpos device.

Work Plate

The second most common armor among the vaasi, after light wear armor, work plate is used by those who spend their days in physical toil, such as the Labor or Engineer Castes. Made of heavy synthetic fabrics, composite plating, and skins taken from vaasi and other creatures, work plate is designed more to prevent accidents while working than to provide protection in combat. For many vaasi, it is everyday work clothes, and ubiquitous in most vaasi settlements. It is easy to make, and Clan Ur-Kazzi has several facilities that can create more suits when needed, but they have concentrated on making other products.

Armor of the Vaasi

	PL	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Light Armor										
Light Wear Armor	8	Concealed	+5	+1	+8	+0	30 ft./20 ft.	8 lb.	24	-
Work Plate	6	Tactical	+4	+1	+6	-1	30 ft./20 ft.	15 lb.	18	-
Medium Armor										
Vaasi Combat Armor	7	Tactical	+7	+2	+5	-2	20 ft./15 ft.	16 lb.	28	Mil (+3)
Heavy Armor										
Ritual Suit	8	Tactical	+12	+3	+3	-5	20 ft./15 ft.	40 lb.	35	Mil (+3)
Void Shield	8	Tactical	+11	+3	+0	-10	15 ft./10 ft.	83 lb.	32	Mil (+3)
Powered Armor										
War Caste Battle Armor	8	Tactical	+11	+3	+2	-8	20 ft./15 ft.	61 lb.	34	Mil (+3)

COMPUTERS • • •

Like any advanced culture, the vaasi rely heavily on computers to keep their technologies and civilization running. Their computers are based partially on organic parts, particularly nerve cell processors and brain cell storage units, but not to the same extent as the haimedians. The vaasi grow some parts of their computers, which are then installed in an inorganic whole and kept alive using a small drip of nutrient fluids. Their computers have a bulbous and pulsating look, and warmth to the touch, that other species find sickening. They are decorated according to personal whim, with piercings and caste markings. Computers that are expected to go into combat conditions, such as tactical intelligence units, are equipped with an outer layer of hard armor plates to protect the internal workings of the computer.

Vaasi computers are built for three-fingered vaasi hands, and rely on an analog system that uses their color range as values, making it difficult for digital systems to interface with their computers. Non-vaasi suffer a -8 penalty when using vaasi computers due to these drastic differences, though haimedians and straas halve this penalty.

Unlike other species that have widespread wireless networks like the Eonet, the vaasi have never favored making their computers so interconnected. Valuing their secrets and privacy more than the intellectual advantage of free-flowing information, the vaasi have no common computer networks. Though this has limited their technical progression, the vaasi consider it a worthwhile sacrifice. Penetrating vaasi computer security is difficult, as a hacker has to be physically near the target computer to succeed. Networks do exist among the computers of a single ship or outpost, but within that ship or outpost each vaasi has his own computer, off the network, where all of his really important information is kept.

Computers are common throughout vaasi civilization, but only the Royal, War, Science, Engineer, Bureaucrat, and Transport Castes receive training in their use. Other castes are not expected to need to know about computers for their daily tasks, and so are left ignorant. The lower castes are actively afraid of touching computers, as it might appear that they are acting above their station.

The vaasi have developed artificial intelligence programs, but they are not as complex, intelligent, or as free-willed as those used by the Star Confederation. Fearing that their own creations could turn against them, the Science Caste has placed tight behavioral controls on all artificial intelligence programs, greatly limiting the range of tasks they can handle without supervision. Artificial intelligence programs are primarily used as assistants or to handle menial work, and are only trusted with important tasks when no other option is available. For more information on one of the primary artificial intelligence technologies used by the vaasi, the tactical intelligence unit, see Chapter 6.

Datahock

Datahocks are used much like personal data assistants by the vaasi. In the Royal Caste their primary use is storing blackmail and political information about rivals, and they have extensive security precautions for such small computers. Most are genelocked to their owner so no one else can operate them. Datahocks are much more powerful than wolf or human technology, but are similar in power to the computers used by the mechites. It grants the user a +2 equipment bonus on Computer Use checks. Datahocks are Progress Level 8 devices.

Threat Monitor

A type of computer built into advanced vaasi armor systems and some weapons and vehicles, a threat monitor system is a powerful portable computer that detects threats in the surrounding area and informs the user of the best way to counter the threat. The unit uses motion sensors, infrared lasers, radar, and gravity monitors to detect the presence and movement of nearby objects, classifying those that fit speed and size profiles as dangerous. It then advises the user of the best way to avoid harm, granting the user a +2 equipment bonus to Defense and Reflex saves. These devices require ten minutes to don if they are not built into a suit of armor, and once worn require an hour to calibrate themselves before they are effective. Threat monitors are Progress Level 8 devices.

ATMOSPHERIC AND SURFACE VEHICLES • • •

While the strength of the vaasi has historically been spacecraft, the War and Transport Castes use a wide variety of surface and atmospheric vehicles when needed. During the height of the Empire, the Engineer Caste built hundreds of different types of vehicles, from single-person scout tracks to massive moving fortresses that could house an entire battle clan. Most of these vehicles were used by castes other than War and were vital in keeping the Vaasi Empire running, though the War Caste did have dozens of military vehicles at its disposal. Over the millennia of conflict with the Star Confederation, the art of war progressed to such a level that such vehicles were rarely useful, as both sides commanded the power to destroy entire worlds and wipe out entire ecosystems with a single viral or nanite bomb. When precise orbital bombardment can wipe out entire regiments without touching the landscape around them, tanks and air vehicles become less important. These vehicles were necessary to hold a conquered world against insurgents and rebels, but less use in taking new worlds, and thus the War Caste thought little of them. Units trained in ground or atmospheric vehicle operation were considered second-class or obsolete by most vaasi.

Clan Ur-Kazzi no longer has access to the greatest weapons of the Vaasi Empire, lacking even the power to activate them. The vaasi again rely on vehicles they once disdained to conquer the worlds of the Helios system. They did not bring as many vehicles with them as they now wish they had, and they will use space fighters in atmosphere when the battle for the worlds of Helios begins in earnest. They have begun work on vehicle assembly plants for both ground and atmospheric vehicles, but these have been given lower priority than shipyards and living quarters. For now Clan Ur-Kazzi relies on the few vehicles they brought. The vaasi hope to

COMPUTERS

Name	Weight	Size	Purchase DC	Restriction
Datahock	T	1 lb.	18	-
Threat Monitor	S	3 lb.	28	Res (+2)

CYBERNETICS

The vaasi rarely use cybernetics, preferring to replace lost limbs through cloning and other organic methods to grafting limbs and organs made of plastic and metal to their bodies. Also, vaasi physiology is such that they do not easily accept cybernetic limbs, suffering a much higher rate of rejection than other species. Only those who are extremely driven, even for vaasi, and believe cybernetics will get them ahead use cybernetic implants. Except for rare cadres of crack troops in the War Caste, cybernetics are not implanted in servitors. Only in the Science, War, and Labor Castes have the highest rate of use, and within the Royal Caste they are seen as an anathema, a sign of weakness and lack of purity. Vaasi who embrace cybernetics are reviled as pariahs, but also kept around since they often prove useful to those that despise them.

The vaasi have access to cybernetics appropriate to their Progress Level, installed by trained members of the Healer Caste called steel menders. These devices can be found in most vaasi medical centers in case of an emergency where a cloned limb will not work. Clan Ur-Kazzi has a large supply.

ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY MANIPULATION

Both the Vaasi Empire and the Star Confederation had some ability to control the force of gravity. While ships of Progress Level 7 and below generally rely on acceleration to mimic gravity in spacecraft, the Vaasi Empire and Star Confederation developed a system of force fields that created a feeling of gravity by exerting a constant force downward within the ship. This felt like gravity, but in truth was caused by repulsion rather than attraction. These systems were designed so they could not be turned up past their normal operating level, after early experiments in both nations ended up with the force field projectors exerting too much force and killing those onboard the affected ship.

The gravity manipulation abilities of the Vaasi Empire and Star Confederation enjoyed more success in reducing gravity rather than generating gravitational fields. This technology was primarily used in robots, vehicles, and lifting devices, allowing large masses to be transported with little work. Generally speaking, a vehicle equipped with a gravity manipulation drive can fly with at least good maneuverability.

have these assembly plants online before the need for planetary invasion arises.

Vaasi prefer heavily armed and armored command vehicles, supported by a large number of comparatively lightly armed and armored attack vehicles manned by servitors. The vaasi use vectored thrust and gravity manipulation in their vehicles, preferring more advanced methods of propulsion than simple wheels or treads.

The vaasi had built large mass transit systems in the cities of the Empire to provide transportation to the throng of servitor species that were not deemed worthy of owning their own vehicles. These transit networks consisted of massive vehicles that rode on magnetic tracks, similar to bullet trains, but some cities had similar systems that operated on gravity manipulators. In the Cronus Belt there are mass transit systems in the larger vaasi facilities, enabling members of the Labor or Engineer Castes to reach their daily duties, but they only reach certain parts of the facility and do not operate regularly.

Luckily for Clan Ur-Kazzi, one of the few elite War Caste armored units, the Steel Mountain Battle Clan, was on Blue Haven when Clan Ur-Kazzi was preparing for its mission. The Steel Mountain Battle Clan was recruited into Clan Ur-Kazzi, bringing over five hundred Shiaka attack probes, ten Beraz mobile fortresses, and one hundred Dukazi marauder tanks with them. They are one of the most experienced ground combat units of the Vaasi Empire and their leader, Lord Pirevu, is renowned as an outstanding tactician. The Steel Mountain Battle Clan will spearhead any ground assault on the planets of the Helios system.

VEHICLES • • •

The following vehicles are found in the Cronus Belt within Clan Ur-Kazzi.

Beraz Mobile Fortress

The largest ground vehicle in the vaasi armory, it also is the largest vehicle to make use of gravity manipulation for movement. The Beraz Mobile Fortress is meant to function as a mobile command and supply center. It can transport one thousand vaasi troops in addition to its crew of one hundred, fifty Shiaka attack probes, and five Dukazi marauder tanks with enough supplies to stay in the field for six months without support. They are the core of any vaasi ground assault, and they are equipped with heat shields and thrusters to allow them to be dropped from orbit if need be.

The Beraz mobile fortress is eight hundred feet long and separated into four segmented sections, each with its own gravity manipulation drive. The mobile fortress can keep moving without a reduction in speed even if two of these are knocked out. Though the Beraz mobile fortress is not particularly maneuverable in terms of reaction time, it can perform unusual maneuvers, sliding sideways or spinning in place. Each of the four sections of the mobile fortress has four genbaz bend cannons, two hypermass cannons, two capsule launchers with ten rounds each, and two particle spray batteries. These weapons are mounted on turrets that rotate to face any direction, allowing the Beraz mobile fortress to bring an amazing amount of firepower to bear on a given location. Beraz mobile fortresses were also originally equipped with a single weapon

capable of attacking ships in orbit, similar to an orbital maser weapon, but as a result of power shortages, these have been removed from Clan Ur-Kazzi's surviving mobile fortresses. The mobile fortress is equipped with megatanium armor as standard issue, and has a sensor system equal to a Class V sensor system for a mech. It is fully environmentally sealed and carries enough supplies to remain sealed for six months. The mobile fortress can project a force field around itself that grants it DR 10/- for up to four hours. It requires eight hours to recharge the force field after it is activated. Four fusion reactors with a ten-year lifespan power the mobile fortress.

Each segment has ten troop entrances that are 5 feet wide, four Shiaka attack probe doors that are 10 feet wide, and one entrance for Dukazi marauder tanks that are 20 feet wide. The Beraz mobile fortress occupies a space one hundred and sixty squares long and forty squares wide.

Bozzi Speed Probe

A small vehicle for fast deliveries, personnel transport, and scouting duties, it can be found among all vaasi clans in one form or another because it is easily modified to suit different needs. Little more than a vectored thrust engine, steering vanes, stubby wings, controls, and a windshield, it is one of the least organic-looking vehicles created by the vaasi, and other species that use it do not suffer the normal chance of sickening for using their technology. Its design was based on that of a Star Confederation vehicle that the vaasi found to be more maneuverable than their own scout vehicles. Cheap and reliable, the Bozzi speed probe became ubiquitous in vaasi society. Clan Ur-Kazzi has brought over ten thousand of these to the Helios system.

Bozzi speed probes do not come with armor plating, but the War Caste equips some with reactive armor. Also, War Caste models are usually outfitted with a hypermass cannon. A Bozzi speed probe occupies a space two squares wide and two squares long.

Dukazi Marauder Tank

A common heavy combat vehicle in the Vaasi Empire, it was deployed for heavy-hitting assault or support roles in Beraz mobile fortresses. Before the marauder tank, vaasi tanks had been huge armored affairs that were very slow, but packed immense firepower. These vehicles proved to be deathtraps in the fast-moving combat environment they were used in; they were easy pickings for air vehicles and orbital bombardments despite their heavy armor plating. The Dukazi tank uses vaasi gravity manipulation technology, giving it a level of maneuverability and speed previously unknown among vaasi armor units. It proved a very effective combat vehicle, but against the dominant technologies of the day it was not an efficient killing machine. Now, in the technology-deprived Helios system, it has become the heart of the vaasi armored forces. The bestial looking vehicle is going to be a common sight on the battlefields of the Helios system. Clan Ur-Kazzi has brought eight hundred Dukazi marauder tanks to the Helios system.

Its primary weapon is a heavy maser cannon, mounted on a flexible armored tube that can be used to fire in any direction, even under the tank if necessary. It is also equipped with a hypermass cannon for situations in which the heavy maser cannon is not effective, a particle spray battery for anti-personnel combat, and a capsule launcher with four rounds for carrying special weapon loads. Most of the time, the capsule launchers carry one radiation load, two devourer nanite loads, and a bloodspore viral load. The Dukazi marauder tank can be entered through two hatches, one in the back and one on top of the vehicle.

The Dukazi marauder tank occupies a space four squares wide and four long and comes equipped with megatanium armor as a standard feature.

Shiaka Attack Probe

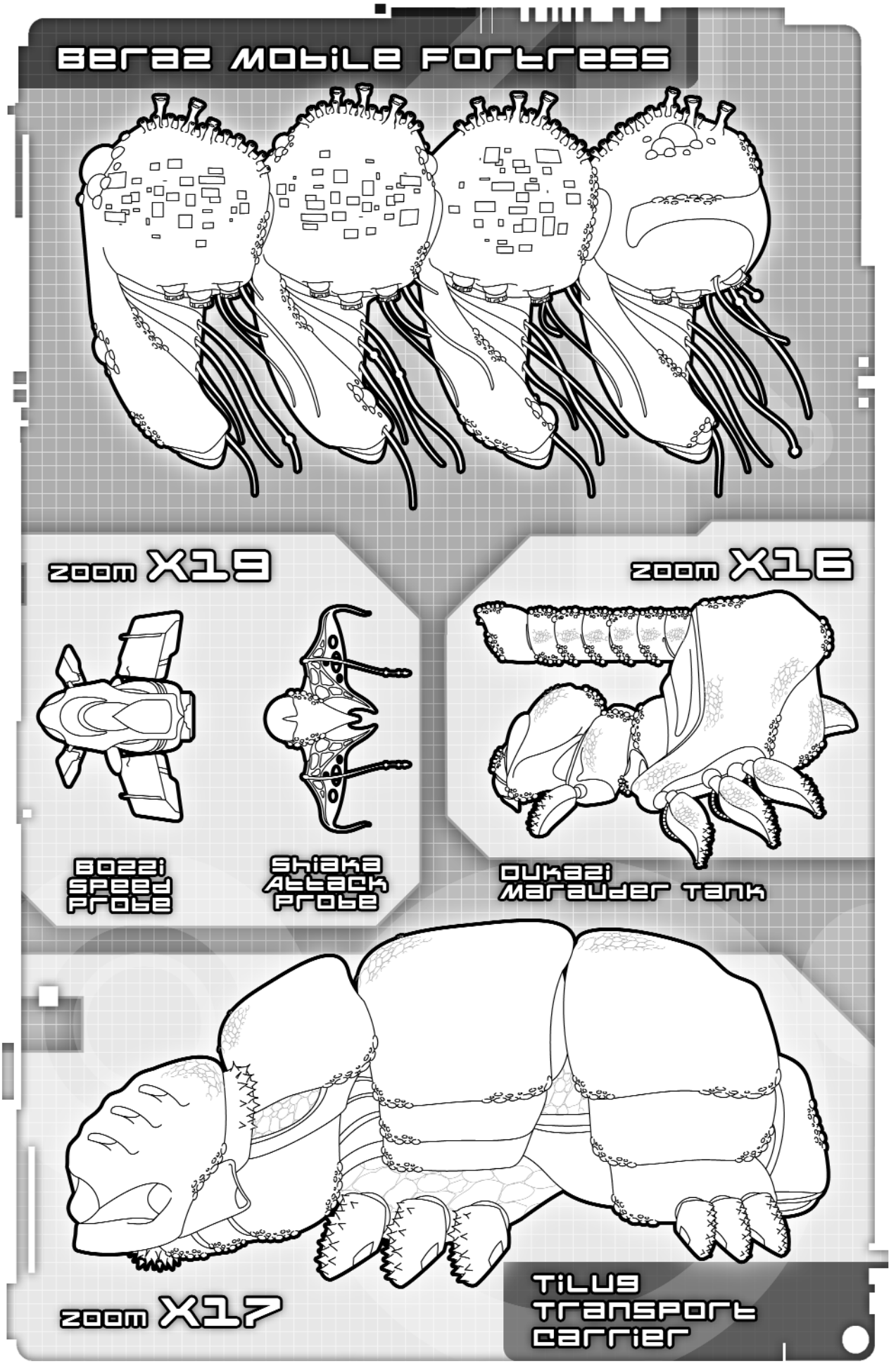
A small, fast attack craft used by the War Caste, during the war it was deployed in swarms of hundreds, with the expectation that no more than half would survive a given battle. A limited supply of troops has forced the War Caste to change their tactics when utilizing Shiaka attack probes. Piloted by vaasi soldiers, these vehicles infiltrate the defensive perimeter of large vehicles, ships, or fortresses to hammer them with sposter missiles. Its only other weapon is a hypermass cannon, and it has little armor compared to other vaasi vehicles. Survival was not foremost in the designer's mind. Clan Ur-Kazzi has brought six thousand Shiaka attack probes to the Helios system.

Similar in basic design to the Bozzi speed probe, the Shiaka attack probe has a cockpit enclosed in armored clear plastic and a pressurized cabin, but is otherwise little more than a vectored thrust engine with a cockpit and weapons strapped on. Not very comfortable but fast and maneuverable, it is not a very sturdy craft. Looking like some type of strange hunting animal or bat, it has an unsettling organic appearance that often led Star Confederation soldiers to think the vaasi were riding nightmarish beasts instead of technological devices.

The Shiaka attack probe occupies a space two squares wide and two squares long. It comes equipped with resilium armor as a standard feature.

Tilug Transport Carrier

Though primarily used by the Transport Caste, other castes use Tilug transports on occasion. Equipped with vectored thrust engines, it was designed to be a universal transport for the vaasi,


Beraz Mobile Fortress
zoom X19
zoom X16
Bozzi Speed Probe
Shiaka Attack Probe
Oukazi Marauder Tank
zoom X17
Tilug Transport Carrier

Vehicles of the Vaasi

Name	PL	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Maneuver	Top Speed	Defense	Hard	Hit Points	Size	Purchase DC	Restriction
Beraz Mobile Fortress	9	100	1,000	800 tons	-6	-3	200 (20)	14	30	720	C	66	Mil (+3)
Bozzi Speed Probe	8	1	1	200 lb.	+2	+2	800 (80)	9	20	26	L	40	Res (+2)
Dukazi Marauder Tank	9	3	0	1 ton	+0	+0	350 (35)	18	25	120	G	52	Mil (+3)
Shiaka Attack Probe	8	1	0	100 lb.	+3	+2	1,800 (180)	15	20	30	L	44	Mil (+3)
Tilug Transport Carrier	8	2	40	20 tons	-1	-2	1,400 (140)	6	20	108	G	45	Res (+2)

capable of carrying anything anywhere at a moment's notice. It was also designed so it could be dropped from orbit and use its vectored thrust engines to land safely, allowing the quick resupply of troops without having to land a ship. The Tilug transports are large and ungainly vehicles, but they can carry an impressive amount of equipment and are very reliable, earning a reputation for being almost invulnerable to normal wear and tear in the field.

Tilug transports are not normally armed or armored, but those used by the War Caste are usually outfitted with resilium armor and at least a hypermass cannon. Some have been modified to become anti-personnel gunships outfitted with four particle spray batteries, but these fare poorly when faced with heavy weapons capable of penetrating their tough hulls. Tilug transports can be modified to carry troops instead of cargo, carrying up to forty fully outfitted troops in their cargo bay.

Tilug transports occupy a space ten squares long and four squares wide.

VEHICLE WEAPONS • • •

Capsule Launcher

The vaasi use a number of unusual materials in warfare, such as nanites or bacterial agents, and have developed multi-purpose delivery systems for launching these materials at their enemies. The capsule launcher fires a standard sized capsule a great distance using a gravitational manipulator. The capsules can contain a variety of munitions, from nanites to bacterial agents, and during the height of the Empire there were thousands of varieties available. Clan Ur-Kazzi only has a ready supply of a few different loads, detailed below. A capsule launcher normally carries four capsules that it can launch in any order, but some larger launchers hold ten or more.

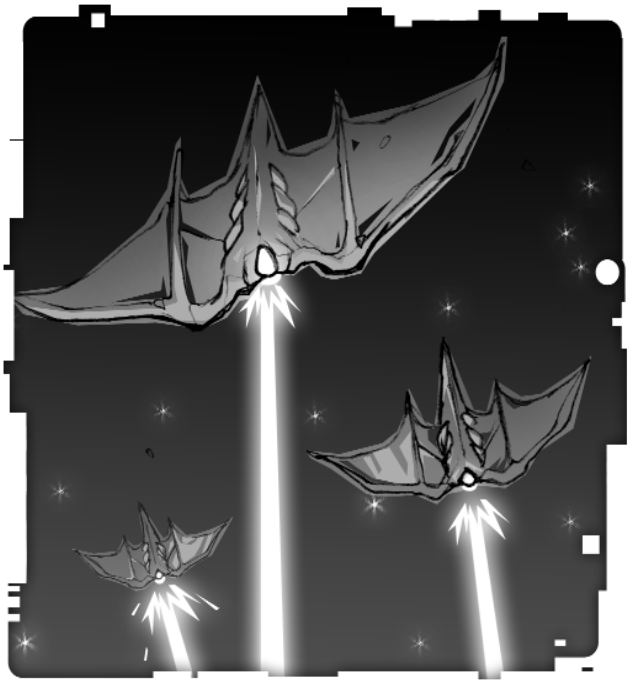
Bloodspore Viral Load: Used primarily against infantry in difficult terrain or fortified positions, these capsules are filled with a powerful viral agent that quickly infects and kills those who inhale it. The Bloodspore viral load is designed to disperse quickly into a 100-ft radius around the square it is launched into. The virus infects all creatures within this area that are not wearing sealed environmental suits. It is a contact poison with a save DC of 22, initial damage of 1d10 Constitution, and secondary damage of 1d10 Constitution. The Bloodspore viral load remains active in the infected area for one hour, during which time anyone who enters the area risks infection. If a person fights off the Bloodspore infection, they risk infection again each round they are in the area.

Devourer Nanites Load: Similar to gray goo nanites, devourer nanites are programmed to destroy all matter they come into contact with except for dirt and stone, though this may be modified by reprogramming the nanites. The nanites are treated as a swarm creature with the abilities below. They attack all non-vaasi creatures in the area until the swarm is destroyed. See Chapter 3 for more information about nanite swarms.

Devourer Nanites ⋄ CR 15

Huge construct (swarm); HD 15d10+40; hp 123; MAS -; Init +1; Spd 5 ft.; Defense 6, touch 6, flat-footed 6 (-2 size, -2 Dex); BAB +11; Grap +14; Atk swarm; Full Atk swarm; FS 15 ft. by 15 ft.; Reach 0 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., construct immunities; AL None; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 1, Dex 6, Con -, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 1.
PL Familiarity: 9
Skills: -
Feats: -
Advancement: -

Nuclear Load: Though bit crude, vaasi have long favored nuclear weapons for their simplicity and power. While this particular weapon is not immensely powerful, it is primarily designed for use



by ground troops at ranges of only a few miles, making a massive nuclear explosion counterproductive. Any creature or object within 1,000 feet of the square the nuclear load impact suffers 100d6 damage, Reflex save (DC 26) for half damage. Characters 1,001 to 5,000 feet away suffer 50d6, Reflex save (DC 22) for one-quarter damage. All characters within 5,000 feet of the blast are exposed to severe levels of radiation unless they are protected by some manner of radiation or environmental seal. Characters with Evasion or Improved Evasion can never reduce the damage suffered in a nuclear blast below half.

Radiation Load: Similar to the nuclear load, the radiation load uses a much smaller reaction to bathe an area in dangerous levels of radiation, doing little collateral damage to the environment. This capsule load is used when the vaasi wish to take a fortified position or city without destroying the structure. All creatures within 1,000 feet of the square the radiation load strikes receive severe exposure to radiation.

Genbaz Bend Cannon

One of the cutting-edge weapons that the vaasi developed towards the end of the war with the Star Confederation, genbaz bend cannons rely on advanced gateway technology to bend space in the area around the target, subjecting it to terrible gravitational forces and causing parts of the target to be displaced a short distance away. It can literally crush a target with gravity and then tear it apart with dozens of small gateways. A terrifying weapon, it is extremely effective but requires a massive power plant to operate, and even than can only be fired every other round, as the weapon must be continually recalibrated. It can only be mounted on a vehicle of at least Colossal size, powered by a fusion reactor. Genbaz bend cannons ignore hardness, but cannot penetrate force fields of any type.

Hypermass Cannon

One of the vaasi's smaller and simpler vehicle weapons, the hypermass cannon fires a large shell that uses gateway technology to increase its mass artificially as it approaches the target. It builds up striking power as it travels; for every full range increment the hypermass shell covers before striking the target, it gains a +1d8 damage bonus. The hypermass cannon carries a magazine of forty rounds that requires five full round actions to reload.

Support Maser Cannon

A larger version of the heavy maser cannon used by vaasi infantry, it is common on many vaasi vehicles and is the standard weapon of vaasi armored units. It fires a powerful burst of radiation at the target, inflicting grievous damage on electronics and living beings. It has no effect on non-living objects without electronic components. Support maser cannons ignore light and medium armor worn by creatures.

Particle Spray Battery

A relatively new weapon in the vaasi armory, it was developed in the later stages of the war as more advanced weapons were lost and simplified tactics of infantry and armor became more common. The particle spray battery sends out a burst of small particles at an immense speed, shredding targets in the affected area. The particle spray weapon affects everything in a cone 300 feet long and 150 feet wide at its base. Everything in this area takes 12d6 piercing damage, with a Reflex save (DC 16) for half damage. This attack does not penetrate any target with an armor bonus of +10 or greater. The particle spray battery carries enough ammunition for twenty shots and requires ten full round actions to reload.

Sposter Missile

One of the few missiles that the vaasi still use, though they prefer space- and gravity-warping energy weapons, the sposter missile is a highly maneuverable guided missile that can chase down targets over great distances, and can be used both against air and ground targets. It can be equipped with any of the loads from the capsule launcher, but comes standard with a directed explosive charge of immense power. The sposter missile grants the user a +8 equipment bonus to attack rolls and ignores 30 points of hardness when it strikes the target.

Vehicle Weapons of the Vaasi

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Capsule Launcher	8	Varies	-	Varies	3,000 ft.	S	Varies	H	1,200 lb.	31	Mil (+3)
Genbaz Bend Cannon	9	10d12	19-20/x3	D[2]	4,000 ft.	Single	Unlimited	H	4 tons	45	Ill (+4)
Hypermass Cannon	9	8d8	20	Ballistic	5,000 ft.	S	40	H	800 lb.	42	Mil (+3)
Particle Spray Battery	8	12d6	-	Piercing	-	S	20	H	1,500 lb.	43	Mil (+3)
Sposter Missile	8	8d12	20	Concussion	5,000 ft.	S	1	L	400 lb.	40	Mil (+3)
Support Maser Cannon	8	9d12	19-20	Radiation	1,000 ft.	S	Unlimited	H	600 lb.	43	Mil (+3)

[1] The weapons on this list all require different Exotic Firearms Proficiency feats, except the sposter missile, which falls under Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Missile) feat.

[2] Displacement damage

MECHA • • •

The War Caste had long favored mecha as combat vehicles. Valued for their flexibility, vaasi mecha were massive black and gray machines, often mistaken for living beings by the creatures they attacked. Unlike the species of the Star Confederation and their descendants, vaasi mecha are six limbed like the vaasi themselves. They are monstrous creations that are designed to inspire terror as much as spread destruction. The War Caste deployed mecha as space defense and ground assault units, though the Labor and Transport Castes used a few of them for non-combat duties. Even these non-combat mecha were terrifying to behold, looking more like hungry beasts than machines.

At the height of the Vaasi Empire there were billions of mecha and dozens of models, though Clan Ur-Kazzi has only two hundred combat mecha and one hundred construction mecha in its armory currently. The former defend the larger capital ships, though some are equipped for boarding duty. The non-combat mechs are used in the larger facilities in the Cronus Belt, building the various structures needed.

The combat mech pilots of the War Caste are relatively inexperienced, as most of them were fresh out of training when they were assigned to active duty, and have yet to see a single battle. While they have had extensive simulator and subliminal training, they do not have real experience, and their leaders are equally lacking in first-hand knowledge of combat. For now they are grouped together in the Black Void Combat Wing onboard the vaasi flagship Infinite Shadow, using textbook tactics that are easily predictable after one learns the pattern.

All vaasi mechs are treated as quadruped mechs due to their six-legged form.

Grebeck Ship Defense Mech (PL 8)

The most plentiful of the mecha used by Clan Ur-Kazzi, the Grebeck is designed to shoot down fighters and deal with boarding parties. They are not equipped with heavy-hitting weapons that would allow them to attack capital ships, instead concentrating on smaller foes. Most vaasi ships of Heavy size or larger have at least ten Grebeck mecha. The facilities in the Cronus Belt also rely on them for patrol and security duties.

The mech itself is a six-legged, insect-like vehicle with heavy armor plates on its main body and weapons on its back. Unlike most mecha, it has no specific up or down and can treat either end of its body as its front as needed. Its weapons are mounted on pivots or turrets to facilitate this.

Size: Gargantuan (-4)
Superstructure: Megatanium
Armor: Crystal Carbon Armor
Armor Penalty: -8
Strength Bonus: +24
Speed: 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (average)
Bonus Hit Points: 400
Hardness: 30
Bonus to Defense: +14
Reach: 15 ft.

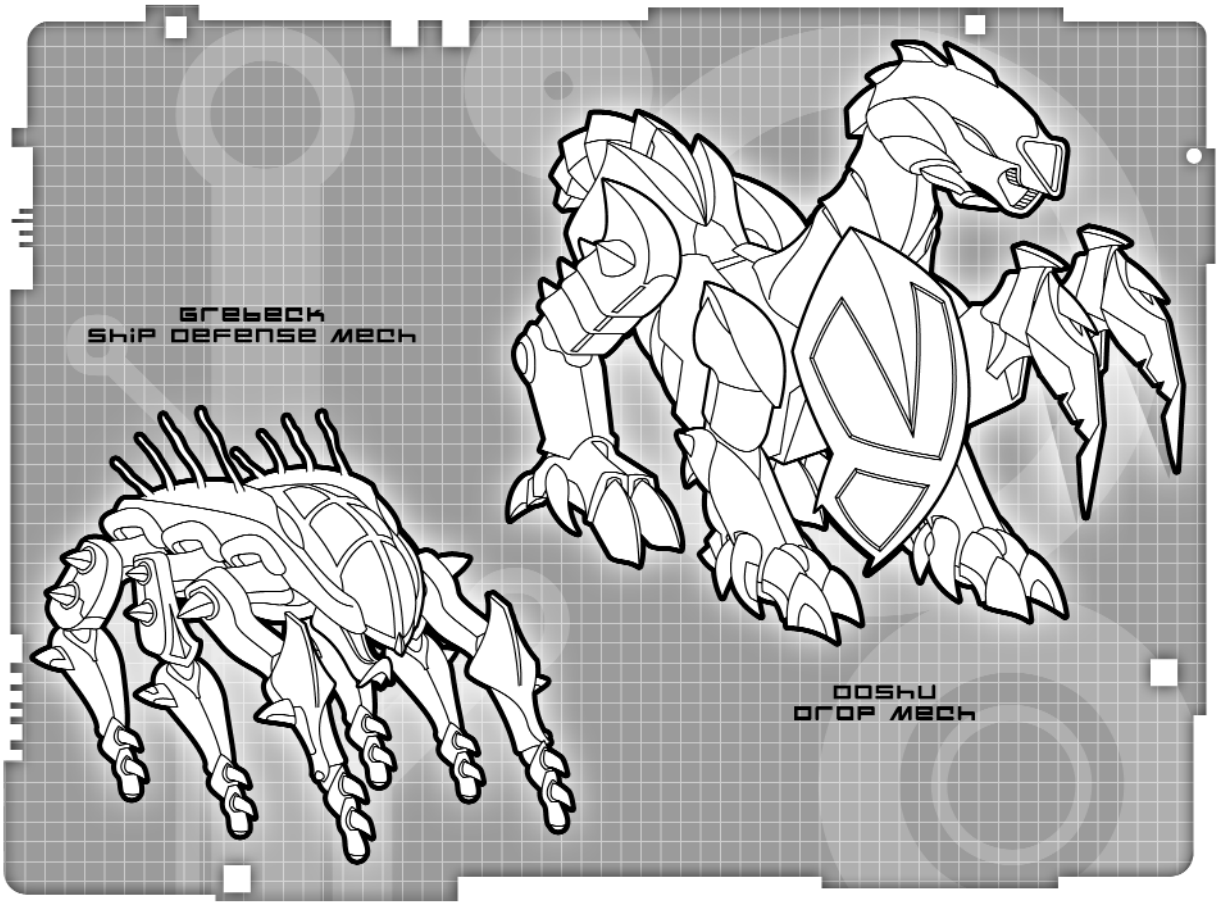
Dexterity Penalty: -2
Base Purchase DC: 62
Standard Equipment Package: Advanced diagnostics (cranium), Barricade tactical shield, Class VI sensor system (head), comm system, jet-assist wings (shoulder), life support system, LT-5 Longshot mass driver with 5 magazines (shoulders, torso, and back), medium fortification, Oracle Mark V targeting system (visor), PS-25 tiger claws (hands), ramjet thruster pack (acts as ramjet thruster boots) (legs), space skin, thruster pack (acts as thruster boots) (legs), Tsunami 480 plasma cannon (torso, right arm, back), zero-G stabilizer (belt).

Doshu Drop Mech (PL 9)

Clan Ur-Kazzi has only twenty-three of these mecha in their arsenal, and they see little use because they were designed to be dropped from orbit onto a hostile world to cause havoc. These immense machines can operate alone behind enemy lines for long periods of time. They are designed to look as frightening as possible; during the war with the Star Confederation, terrified populaces often reported them as fire-breathing monsters. Doshu mechs were used in guerilla and hit-and-run attacks, in which a few hundred were dropped on an enemy world and ordered to cause as much damage as possible before they were destroyed. A similar tactic may be used against Thres to divert the saurians and their large industrial base.

The Doshu mech is six-limbed like other vaasi mechs, but stands on four legs while using the two other limbs as arms exclusively. Its head, which is primarily a weapons platform, is mounted on a long flexible neck, allowing it to bring weapons to bear in any direction. It stands at around one hundred and twenty feet tall, and occupies a fighting space of 50 feet by 50 feet.

Size: Colossal (-8)
Superstructure: Megatanium
Armor: Megatanium
Armor Penalty: -10
Strength Bonus: +32
Speed: 60 ft.
Bonus Hit Points: 800
Hardness: 30
Bonus to Defense: +12
Reach: 15 ft.
Dexterity Penalty: -4
Base Purchase DC: -
Standard Equipment Package: Advanced diagnostics (right leg), Avenger electro-scimitar (right arm), Barricade tactical shield, Class VI sensor system (head), cloaking screen, comm system, copilot cockpit (torso), heavy fortification, heavy maser cannon (right arm), hypermass cannon with 3 clips (left arm and belt), jetpack (back), life support system, Oracle Mark V targeting system (visor), space skin, stealth suite (left leg).



STARSHIPS • • •

The vaasi had an edge in space travel, because they acquired a jaren gateway ship several thousand years before the Star Confederation. Despite the presence of Korlan Dollasi-ki and his knowledge of jaren technology, the vaasi still led in space technology. The Star Confederation was more advanced in terms of energy production, artificial intelligence programming, genetic engineering, and other fields, but the vaasi concentrated on the field they excelled in. With the fractious nature of the vaasi, it is unlikely the Empire would have survived a century without easy and prevalent space travel, or the heavy hand of the massive fleets the Empire controlled.

The vaasi have long subscribed to the idea of having a strong space fleet at the expense of other military endeavors. Only the construction of various super weapons, such as the star harvester, shifted the resources of the Engineer Caste away from the space fleets. During the height of the Empire, the War Caste had a fleet of hundreds of thousands of ships that could turn a planet into a lifeless rock with only a few minutes' effort. The vaasi favor capital ships supported by swarms of fighters, built for specialized duties, as opposed to the Star Confederation preference for mid-sized, general-purpose ships. This strategy made the vaasi frighteningly effective when they were able to use their ships as they wanted. They reacted poorly when their plans went awry, however, rarely having the right types of ships in position to respond to unexpected attacks. They also suffered massive casualties among their smaller ships, seen as disposable since servitors only piloted them. True vaasi led from the safety of their capital ships, though some did take a more active hand in battle and piloted smaller fighters into the fray.

Vaasi ships are terrors to behold. Completely black, they are covered in spikes, wings, and horns that sometimes serve as sensor or weapon installations, but more often are added for aesthetics alone. They look like monsters from the depths of space, having few of the organic parts found in other vaasi technology. Like the Star Confederation, the vaasi relied on a gateway network instead of gateships, though all major fleets had at least one gateship in case of emergencies. Clan Ur-Kazzi has one such ship, *Infinite Shadow*, which serves as the flagship of the fleet, but it cannot open a gateway without a new star heart.

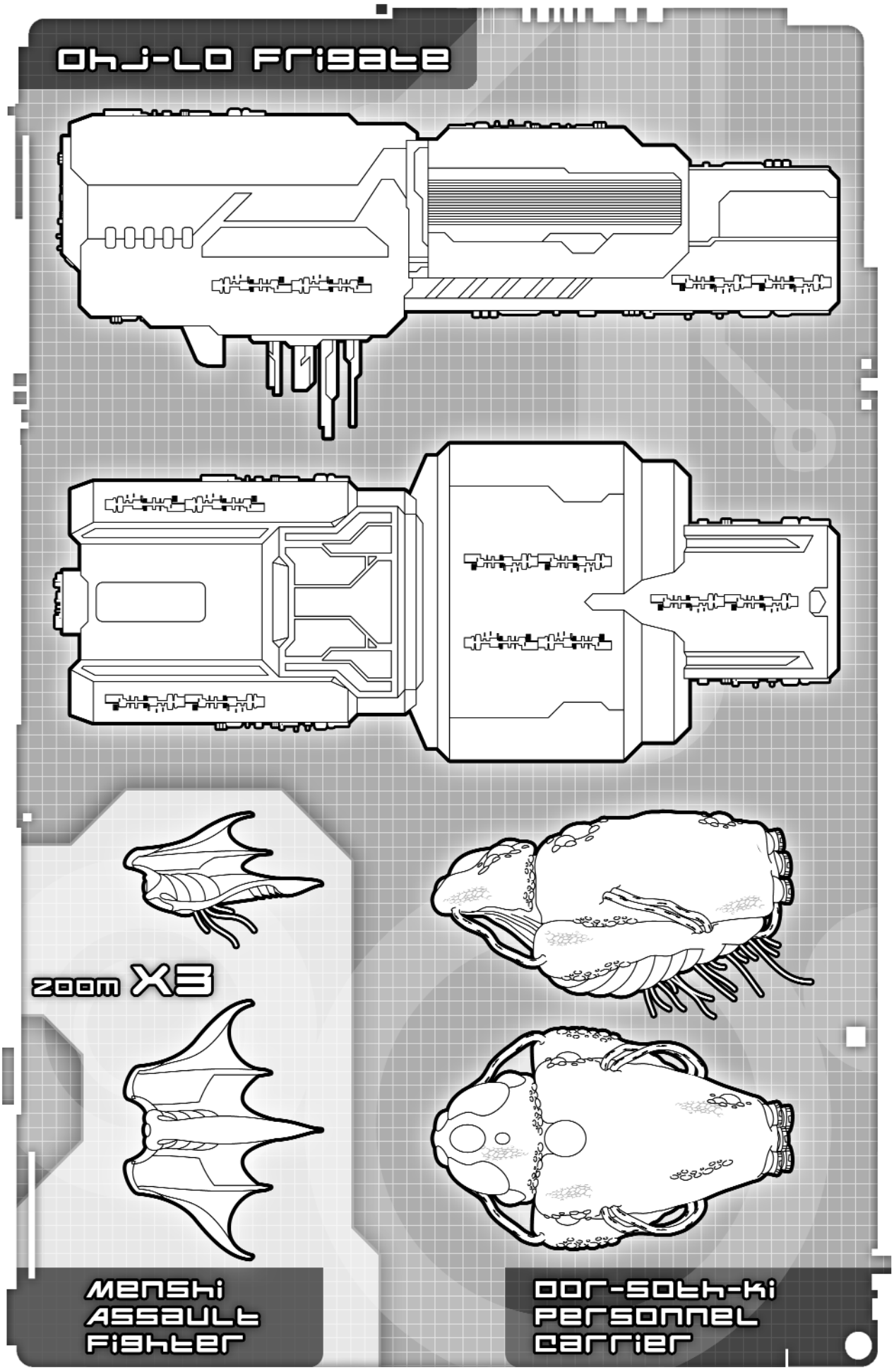
Though the vaasi fleet was once composed of thousands and thousands of ships, Clan Ur-Kazzi is limited to the three hundred they were able to scrounge up at Blue Haven. Of these ships, one hundred and seventy are ultralight, eighty-seven are light, thirty-three are mediumweight, nine are heavy, and one is super heavy. These ships were gathered from whatever was available at the time, and have little unit cohesion among them. Despite their precarious situation, violent disputes between ship captains are not uncommon. They are organized into twenty squadrons, one for each of the vaasi facilities, ranging in size from five to sixty ships. These squadrons are highly competitive and actively work against each other to achieve glory and plum assignments.

The vaasi fleet entered the system on the opposite side from the gateway station, and has since limited activities to the Cronus Belt and Atlas, except for Lord Jahqwe's sorties to the moons of Hesperos. The vaasi keep their capital ships on minimal power most of the time and leave them floating among the asteroid fields, hoping they will be mistaken for asteroids by the other inhabitants of the Helios system. They activate occasionally to adjust their position or avoid collisions, but other than shuttles and cargo ships, the fleet remains in hiding. While a handful of ships are kept on alert and can be powered up in a matter of seconds in case of attack, most of these are fighters; powering up the larger capital ships takes almost an hour. Due to the range of vaasi sensors, it is unlikely that anyone would be able to effect carry out a sneak attack to take advantage of this situation.

◇ Cronus Belt Asteroid Base

The vaasi are constructing twenty asteroid facilities, one in each of the major clusters of the Cronus Belt. Most are unfinished, but all have some manner of life support installed. These bases are constructed within hollowed-out asteroids that have armor over only the most vital areas. The facilities have no form of propulsion and thus are stationary, but are designed for defensive purposes as opposed to offense. The defense systems have not been fully brought online, so the asteroid bases rely heavily on nearby ships for protection. These bases are living quarters, mines, and production facilities for Clan Ur-Kazzi. They are based on a commonly used design the Science Caste created for orbital bases, but suffer from several defects. The internal security measures on these bases are inadequate, once an enemy penetrates the outer perimeter, and the defensive measures are not well suited for attacking smaller vessels. They relies on sheer mass and grouped firepower in combat.

When completed, each will be a heavily defended fortress, but it will take at least five more years for all twenty to be complete. For now, only the Void White facility is complete, with most of the others being from 25-75% complete. These partially-finished facilities should reduce their hit dice, crew, and weapons of each type of a finished station to the portion to which they have been completed, so an asteroid base that is 40% will have 40% of the crew, hit dice, and weapons of a finished asteroid base.


Ohj-LO Frigate
zoom X3
Menshi Assault Fighter
Oor-50th-ki Personnel Carrier

Type: Superheavy (PL 8)
Subtype: Vaasi Asteroid Base
Defense: 1
Flat Footed Defense: 1
Autopilot Defense: -
Hardness: 38
Hit Dice: 5,000d20 (100,000 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +3
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +2
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +2
Size: Colossal (-8)
Tactical Speed: 0 ft.
Length: 5 miles
Weight: 6 million tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 15,000 (Trained +4)
Passenger Capacity: 2.2 million
Cargo Capacity: 3 million tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Mil (+3)

Attacks

4 fire-linked singularity cannons -6 ranged (50d8/19-20)
4 fire-linked singularity cannons -11 ranged (50d8/19-20)
battery of 4 tachyon guns -8 ranged (35d8/19-20)
battery of 4 tachyon guns -8 ranged (35d8/19-20)
Attacks of Opportunity:
Point defense system +5 ranged (5d12x10)

Design Specs

Engines: None
Armor: Nanofluidic
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, heavy fortification, nanite repair bay, stealth screen
Sensors: Achilles targeting software, Class IX sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver
Weapons: 2 groups of 4 fire-linked singularity cannons (3,000 ft. range incr.), 2 batteries of 4 tachyon guns (10,000 ft. range incr.)

◇ Dor-soth-ki Personnel Carrier

The combat transport of the War Caste, this ship carried boarding parties and ground assault crews through combat zones, and ran blockades. While not heavily armed, it was designed to take a beating and get quickly to its destination. The Dor-soth-ki is equipped with a universal boarding hatch and a plasma cutting ring, allowing it to land on a ship and cut through the hull in a matter of minutes. The vaasi used these ships to swarm Star Confederation capital ships with marines, who planted explosives and caused as much damage as possible before being killed. A boarding action was always a suicide mission, and they never bothered to capture Star Confederation ships, thinking them inferior.

The Dor-soth-ki brought with Clan Ur-Kazzi were attached to the Steel Mountain Battle Clan as fast deployment transportation. Some have been modified to carry marauder tanks and other ground vehicles instead of troops, usually six vehicles per ship. Like the other members of the Steel Mountain Battle Clan, these pilots are some of the best in Clan Ur-Kazzi. This has sparked a power struggle within the War Caste, between those who would rather spread the veteran pilots throughout the fleet to shore up the less skilled crews, and the leaders of the Steel Mountain Battle Clan who want to keep their pilots right where they are.

The Dor-soth-ki is a heavily armored ship that is essentially a cargo hold with an engine. The front of the ship has a single pair of large cargo doors.

Type: Light (PL 9)
Subtype: Personnel Transport
Defense: 15
Flat Footed Defense: 9
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 50
Hit Dice: 65d20 (1,300 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +7
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +6
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +8/+3
Size: Colossal (-8)
Tactical Speed: 4,500 ft.
Length: 150 feet
Weight: 600 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 20 (Ace +12)
Passenger Capacity: 200
Cargo Capacity: 300 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: NA
Restriction: NA

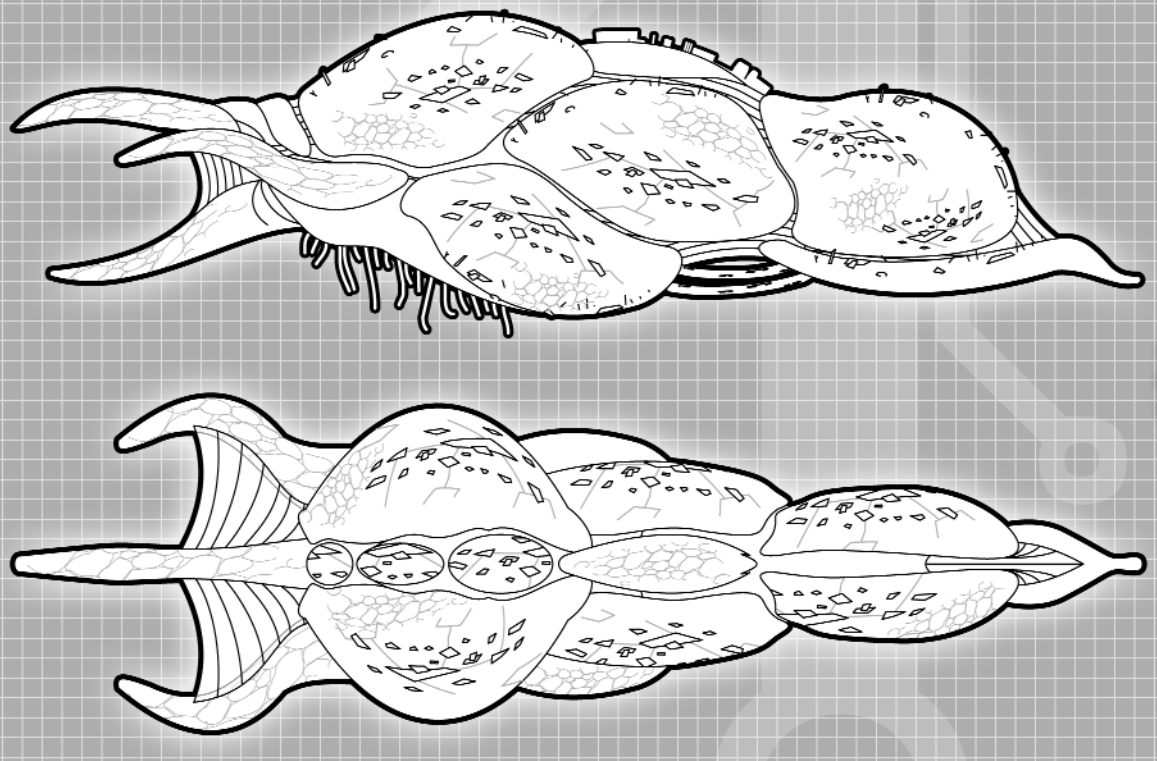
Attacks

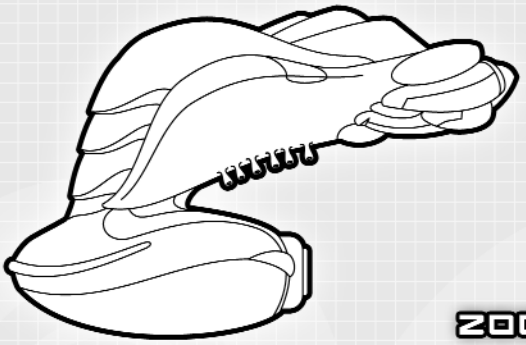
2 fire-linked starload missile launchers +5/+0 ranged (30d8)
2 fire-linked heavy maser cannons +0 ranged (24d8)
2 fire-linked automasers +0 ranged (18d8)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point defense system +5 ranged (2d12x10)

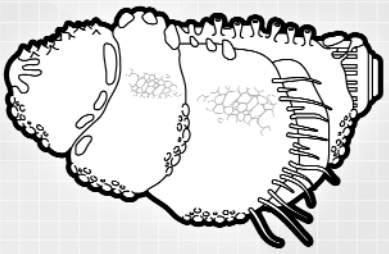
Design Specs

Engines: Particle Impulse Engine
Armor: Nanofluidic
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, improved autopilot, medium fortification, particle field, point defense system, self-destruct system
Sensors: Class VII sensor array, improved targeting system

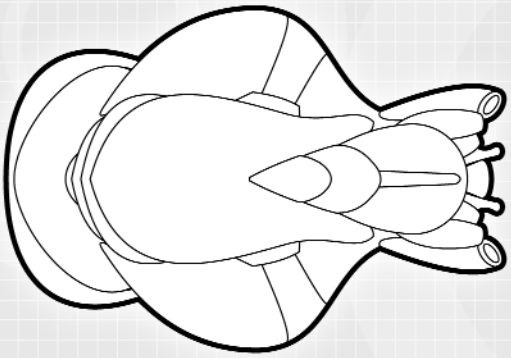
The Infinite Shadow

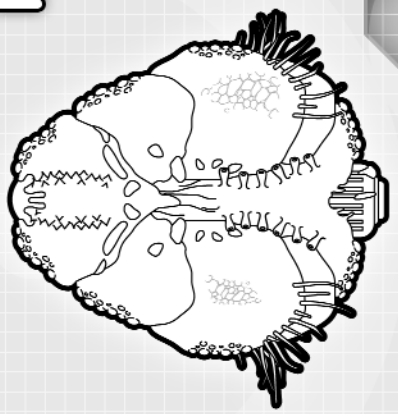






zoom X2





Ker'dekai Battle Cruiser

Laki Blue Cargo Carrier

Communications: Laser transceiver, radio transceiver
Weapons: 2 fire-linked heavy maser cannons (6,000 ft. range incr.), 2 fire-linked automasers (6,000 ft. range incr.), 2 fire-linked starload missile launchers (with 24 missiles each)
Grappling System: Grapplers

◇ The Infinite Shadow

The flagship of the Clan Ur-Kazzi fleet, the *Infinite Shadow* has the distinction of being the only vaasi gateship to survive the war with the Star Confederation. A massive vessel, it is also the only superheavy ship in the Clan Ur-Kazzi fleet. It was the natural choice for Clan Lord Oratan's flagship, and he spends almost all of his time on board. Despite its power as a military tool, the *Infinite Shadow* always remains in orbit near the Void White facility, keeping an eye on the other vaasi leaders and making sure everything goes according to plan. When the battle for the Helios system begins in earnest, it is likely to be kept from all but the most important battles, though if the chance to secure a star heart arises Clan Lord Oratan will risk the *Infinite Shadow* to claim it. Obtaining a star heart would allow the ship to open gateways to other systems, including those where other vaasi may survive. Its gateway generator contains parts that could be used to repair the gateway station in the Helios System.

The *Infinite Shadow* is a massive ship, over a mile long and bristling with armaments, though it was the smallest of the original vaasi gateships. The gateway generator creates a bulge in the center of the ship's length, giving an otherwise sleek ship an ungainly appearance. The ship was originally built to resemble a squid-like creature native to Homeshadow, but over years of repairs the vaasi abandoned this design, and the ship assumed a less animalistic visage. The ship has an internal hangar that can hold fifty ships of ultralight size, such as Menshi assault fighters. The *Infinite Shadow* has been involved in over four hundred fleet engagements during its deployment, a rare accomplishment for a vaasi warship. It shows its age and wear readily, having been repaired with whatever materials were on hand for most of its time in service. What was once a majestic ship now looks more like a flying pile of junk, though it is still fearsome in combat. The ship's crew was reinforced with new recruits before it left Blue Haven, reducing their overall effectiveness.

Type: Superheavy (PL 9)
Subtype: Vaasi Gateship
Defense: 11
Flat Footed Defense: 7
Autopilot Defense: 8
Hardness: 50
Hit Dice: 2,500d20 (50,000 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +6
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Colossal (-8)
Tactical Speed: 4,000 ft.
Length: 5,400 feet
Weight: 240,000 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 25,000 (Expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 34,000
Cargo Capacity: 100,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: -

Attacks

4 fire-linked singularity cannons +1 (50d8/19-20)
3 fire-linked starload missile -4 (40d8/19-20)
3 fire-linked starload missile -4 (40d8/19-20)
Battery of 3 string projectors -2 (12d12/18-20)
Battery of 3 string projectors -2 (12d12/18-20)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point defense system +5 (5d12x10)

Design Specs

Engines: Inertial flux engine, particle impulse engine
Armor: Nanofluidic
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, heavy fortification, improved autopilot system, magnetic field, nanite repair array, particle field, point defense system, radiation shielding, repair drones, self-destruct system, stealth screen
Sensors: Achilles targeting software, Class IX sensor array, improved targeting computer
Communications: Laser transceiver, radio transceiver
Weapons: 4 fire-linked singularity cannons (5,000 ft. range incr.), 2 groups of 3 fire-linked starload missile launchers (with 90 missiles each), 2 batteries of 3 string projectors (6,000 ft. range)
Grappling System: Tractor beam emitter

◇ Ker'dekai Battle Cruiser

The standard attack cruiser of the vaasi fleet, ships of this design had been in service for centuries during the war with the Star Confederation, and thousands could be found among the fleets of the War Caste. Bearing the brunt of any vaasi offensive, a fully functional Ker'dekai battle cruiser was a rare find by the time Clan Ur-Kazzi left Blue

Haven on its mission. The nine cruisers in Clan Ur-Kazzi's fleet are built from the salvaged remains of over thirty Ker'dekai battle cruisers that had been towed to Blue Haven, and their performance reflects this slapdash origin. These ships are down for repairs more than any others in the fleet, which is disturbing since they form the backbone of the Clan Ur-Kazzi's forces.

The Ker'dekai cruiser is a fast moving and hard-hitting ship that carries a squadron of twenty fighters for close support in combat. Designed to battle other capital ships, most of its primary weapons are grouped into a small number of large fire-linked units, limiting the number of targets the ship can engage at once. Also, for a vaasi ship of its size it is rather slow, trading speed for armor plating and more weaponry.

Type: Heavy (PL 8)
Subtype: Battle Cruiser
Defense: 11
Flat Footed Defense: 7
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 50
Hit Dice: 430d20 (8,600 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +6
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Colossal (-8)
Tactical Speed: 3,500 ft.
Length: 1,312 ft.
Weight: 150,000 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 412 (Expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 4,600
Cargo Capacity: 60,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: -

Attacks

4 fire-linked starload missiles +1 (50d8/19-20)
4 fire-linked heavy maser cannons -4 (40d8/19-20)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point defense system +5 ranged (4d12x10)

Design Specs

Engines: Particle impulse engine
Armor: Nanofluidic
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, improved autopilot system, medium fortification, particle field, point defense system, radiation shielding, repair drones, self-destruct system
Sensors: Achilles targeting software, Class VII sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver
Weapons: 4 fire-linked heavy maser cannons (8,000 ft. range incr.), 4 fire-linked starload missile launchers (90 missiles each)
Grappling System: Tractor beam emitter
Note: To represent the salvaged nature of these ships, any Ker'dekai battle cruiser encountered has a 50% of having 1d6 random weapons or major systems offline.

◇ Menshi Assault Fighter

Produced in the hundreds of thousands for the vaasi fleet, these ships were once so plentiful they could blot out the sun on worlds they assaulted. Built to operate from a capital ship like the Ker'dekai battle cruiser, these ships are not suited for interplanetary travel and rarely carry more than ten days of supplies and oxygen. Menshi assault fighters were designed for speed and hard hitting power from the cheapest parts available. They were not very reliable, and were not hard to destroy if one could hit them. Used in droves to overwhelm the enemy, the War Caste cared little for the servitor lives lost using these swarm tactics. It was the primary spacefighter towards the end of the war, serving a range of roles from interceptor to bomber to scout ship. The Menshi was once easily modified to suit each of these tasks, but the equipment to do so was in limited supply on Blue Haven, and most of the Menshi assault fighters are stuck in interceptor mode.

The Menshi is a large, bat-like ship capable of both space and atmospheric operations. It has no visible cockpit or windows, completely encasing the pilot in its center.

Type: Ultralight (PL 8)
Subtype: Assault Fighter
Defense: 15
Flat Footed Defense: 11
Autopilot Defense: 10
Hardness: 40
Hit Dice: 10d20 (200 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +5
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +4
Size: Gargantuan (-4)
Tactical Speed: 5,000 ft.
Length: 30 feet
Weight: 15 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +4
Crew: 1 (Expert +8)
Passenger Capacity: 0
Cargo Capacity: 200 lb.
Grapple Modifier: +12
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: -

Attacks

3 fire-linked automasers +4 ranged (24d8)
3 fire-linked starload missiles -1 ranged (40d8)

Design Specs

Engines: Particle Impulse Engine
Armor: Ablative
Defense Systems: Advanced targeting system, improved autopilot system, self-destruct system
Sensors: Class V sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Laser transceiver, radio transceiver
Weapons: 3 fire-linked automasers (6,000 ft. range incr.), 3 fire-linked starload missile launchers (8 missiles each)

◇ Laki Blue Cargo Carrier

The workhorse of the Transport Caste, this ship was in production for over five thousand years before the Empire met its end. A no-frills ship, it is little more than a cockpit, a massive cargo bay, and engines, with minimal crew quarters and amenities. They are designed to transport massive amounts of goods with little thought given to combat or stealth, though all Laki Blue cargo carriers have a few members of the War Caste on board to man their meager armaments and repel boarders. During normal operation the cargo hold is left as a vacuum, and containers must be carefully sealed.

The ship was normally kept far from combat, safe within a fleet. When operating away from the fleet, Ohj-Lo frigates usually escorted Laki Blue cargo carriers, though some were modified to carry Menshi assault fighters in their cargo bay. In Clan Ur-Kazzi the ships are generally unprotected, as they believe there is no immediate threat to their bases in the Cronus Belt. They travel in packs of three to twelve for safety, but rarely have more than one or two ships as escort. These are some of the most active ships in Clan Ur-Kazzi's fleet, constantly running supplies from one facility to another.

The ship looks like some sort of pregnant beast, with the bridge at one end of its oval cargo hold and the engines at the other. It has few maneuvering fins or other protrusions, and is usually gray. It has numerous cargo doors of various sizes spread across its hull.

Type: Mediumweight (PL 8)
Subtype: Bulk Transport
Defense: 7
Flat Footed Defense: 5
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 40
Hit Dice: 130d20 (2,600 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +2
Pilot's Class Bonus: +3
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +2
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +2
Size: Colossal (-8)
Tactical Speed: 3,500 ft.

Menshi Assault Fighter Alternate Configurations

The Menshi assault fighter can have its equipment swapped out for different missions with an hour's work, assuming the right parts are available. Clan Ur-Kazzi has the equipment for the following configurations:

Missile Bomber
The automasers are removed and three more fire-linked starload missile launchers added to the ship's armament, increasing the damage of the fire-linked starload missile launcher to 70d8.

Scout Ship
The ship's Class V sensor array is upgraded to a Class VII sensor array.

Stealth Fighter
A cloaking screen is added to the ship's defense systems, but one of the automasers must be removed to supply the necessary power.

Length: 820 feet
Weight: 39,000 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +3
Crew: 15 (Trained +4)
Passenger Capacity: 10
Cargo Capacity: 30,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: -

Attacks

2 fire-linked maser cannons -3 ranged (18d8)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point defense system +5 ranged (3d12x10)

Design Specs

Engines: Particle Impulse Engine
Armor: Ablative

Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, improved autopilot, point-defense system, radiation shielding, self-destruction system
Sensors: Class VI sensor array, targeting system
Communications: Laser transceiver, radio transceiver
Weapons: 2 fire-linked maser cannons (3,000 ft. range incr.)
Grappling System: Grapplers

FIGHTER CARRIER MODIFICATION

Several of the Clan Ur-Kazzi Laki Blue cargo carriers have been converted to carry four Menshi assault fighters to provide some security for cargo convoys. This reduces the available cargo space by 1,000 tons. The fighters take one minute to launch.

◇ Ohj-lo Frigate

One of the smaller attack vessels in the vaasi fleet, the Ohj-lo frigate was designed for picket duty in large fleets, keeping fighters and mines away from the larger vaasi ships. It had little armament suitable for attacking larger vessels, instead carrying many smaller weapons to engage multiple fighters with. It saw use as an escort vessel in some areas, which it did well unless facing larger vessels. The vaasi built these ships in the tens of thousands, a necessary act as they often were destroyed when they wandered too far from their own capital ships. Clan Ur-Kazzi's ships had been mothballed three hundred years before their departure to make way for a new class of frigate with more armor and heavier weapons, but due to the severity of the vaasi's situation, Clan Lord Oratan ordered their return to active duty to supplement his own forces. Their crews are poorly trained and the ships are equipped with whatever equipment could be found at the time, much of which is not up to the level of other vaasi ships. Clan Lord Oratan considers the Ohj-Lo frigates to be expendable and any major fleet action will use them as decoys, cannon fodder, and ramming bombs. Unlike the organic appearance of most vaasi ships, the Ohj-lo frigate is a boxy ship bristling with small weapons and turrets.

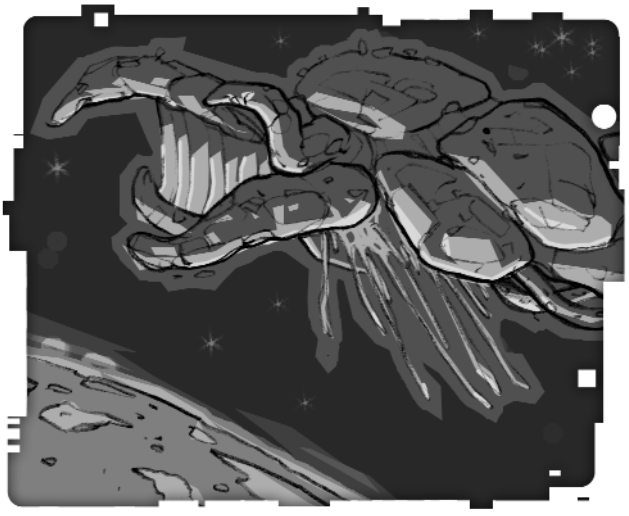
Type: Light (PL 8)
Subtype: Frigate
Defense: 9
Flat Footed Defense: 5
Autopilot Defense: 4
Hardness: 40
Hit Dice: 56d20 (1,120 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +4
Pilot's Class Bonus: +3
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +4
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +2
Size: Colossal (-8)
Tactical Speed: 3,500 ft.
Length: 325 feet
Weight: 4,200 tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: 57 (Trained +4)
Passenger Capacity: 120
Cargo Capacity: 300 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: -

Attacks

EMP cannon -1 ranged (8d8)
2 fire-linked automasers -6 (18d8)
2 fire-linked automasers -6 (18d8)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point defense system +5 ranged (2d12x10)

Design Specs

Engines: Particle Impulse Engine
Armor: Ablative
Defense Systems: Autopilot system, improved damage control, light fortification, point defense system, self-destruct system
Sensors: Class V sensor array, improved targeting system
Communications: Laser transceiver, radio transceiver
Weapons: 2 groups of 2 fire-linked automasers (range incr. 6,000 ft.) and an EMP cannon (range incr. 4,000 ft.)



XENOMORPHS • • •

The vaasi did not bring any life forms with them to the Helios system besides their various servitor races, having no interest in preserving anything other than their own power. They have no ships for terraforming or reintroducing species from the worlds they controlled, instead bringing a legion of genetically engineered servitors. Ninety-nine percent of Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi are servitors, with only one hundred thousand true vaasi in the entire fleet. They deal with the servitors on a daily basis, but live apart from them in better quarters and minimize their daily exposure to such lesser beings. Servitors are seen as having little value and no individual personalities, instead being completely expendable and interchangeable. They do not respect servitors and do not treat them well, even when they succeed at difficult tasks. No servitor has ever earned the respect given a true vaasi, and never will without a fundamental change in the nature of the vaasi. This would eventually lead to a revolt of some kind among a more free-willed species, but the servitors are genetically predisposed to follow the commands of the true vaasi. They do not have the will to oppose them.

THE ABILITIES OF THE VAASI ON EOS

The vaasi on Eos represent the War Caste after it was allowed to degenerate to its most primal level, without contact or support from other castes. They operate on instinctive levels and grasp simple concepts, outside the desire for destruction. They can build crude crossbows and melee weapons, but complex machinery or gear meant for things other than war are beyond them. The abilities listed in this book supersede those listed in Operation Quick Launch for vaasi in the Cronus Belt.

◇ Vaasi

All true vaasi and servitor species have the following species traits, some of which were not listed in Operation Quick Launch and should be added to the abilities of vaasi encountered on Eos.

Species Traits

Improved Low-Light Vision (Ex): A vaasi can see ten times farther than normal in poor lighting conditions. Vaasi can still distinguish colors, even in dim lighting.

Increased Massive Damage Threshold (Ex): Due their strange physiology, vaasi gain a +3 species bonus to their massive damage threshold.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Vaasi are weakened by light due to the darkened environment they come from. True vaasi suffer a -2 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks while in direct sunlight or other light sources of similar brightness. Vaasi servitors suffer a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks while in direct sunlight or other light sources of similar brightness. This cannot be alleviated except by seeking cover from the light. Lesser lights do not bother the vaasi.

Bonus Feat: Vaasi receive the bonus feat Simple Weapons Proficiency.

◇ True Vaasi

The upper crust of vaasi civilization, true vaasi are also the progenitors of all servitor species and they rarely let anyone forget it. The true vaasi are individually powerful creatures, and even the weakest among them can pose a serious threat. Although loath to risk themselves when they have so many minions at their command, they place themselves in harm's way when it serves their ambitions.

For information about the appearance, biology, and general nature of true vaasi see *Operation Quick Launch* pages 166-168. The stat blocks on those pages should be used for true vaasi stuck on Eos. The following statistics are appropriate for true vaasi of Clan Ur-Kazzi, broken down by caste.

Species Traits

True vaasi have the following species traits.

Extra Limbs (Ex): When a true vaasi uses its middle limbs as arms, it gains a +4 species bonus on grapple checks. When a true vaasi uses its middle limbs as legs, its speed increases by +10 feet, and it gains a +4 stability bonus to Balance checks and checks to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground. A true vaasi can alternate between using its middle limbs as arms or legs as a free action; however, it cannot use them in both ways during the same round.

Reputation: Reputation reflects a true vaasi's stature within their culture, and they are elevated far above the servitors they create. True vaasi receive a +4 species bonus to Reputation.

Detainment Caste True Vaasi (Strong Ordinary 4) ⋄ CR 13

Large aberration; HD 14d8+70; hp 140; MAS 23; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 32, touch 13, flat-footed 31 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, +7 armor, -1 size, +3 class); BAB +11; Grap +20; Atk +15 melee (2d6+5, bite), +15 melee (1d6+5+special, stun baton), or +11 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); Full Atk +15/+10/+5 melee (2d6+5, bite), +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+5+special, stun baton), or +11/+6/+1 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, psionic potential; AL vaasi; SV Fort +12 Ref +5, Will +12; AP 7; Rep +1; Str 20, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Climb +6, Computer Use +7, Hide +1, Intimidate +11, Investigate +7, Jump +4, Knowledge (Tactics) +12, Listen +9, Move Silently +5, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Repair +6, Search +6, Sense Motive +6, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Spot +7, Survival +3, Treat Injury +10.
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Medium), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Power Attack, Simple Weapons Proficiency.
Equipment: Ylos blade, hypervelocity pistol with 5 clips, vaasi combat armor, universal communicator, 2 psionic grenades, advanced medkit, neural scrambler, motion sensor, stun baton.

Disposal Caste True Vaasi (Tough Ordinary 4) ⋄ CR 13

Large aberration; HD 10d8+4d10+84; hp 158; MAS 25; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 29, touch 13, flat-footed 28 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, +4 armor, +3 class, -1 size); BAB +10; Grap +18; Atk +13 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +10 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +10/+5 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, psionic potential; AL vaasi; SV Fort +13 Ref +5, Will +10; AP 7; Rep +2; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 13.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Climb +6, Computer Use +3, Concentration +10, Drive +5, Hide +1, Intimidate +9, Jump +8, Knowledge (Tactics) +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +3, Navigate +5, Search +7, Sense Motive +7, Spot +6, Survival +8, Treat Injury +6.
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Great Fortitude, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Track.
Equipment: Universal communicator, work plate, hyper velocity pistol with 2 clips, 2 doses of antitox chemical, 2 doses of neutrad chemical, 2 doses of sporekill chemical, chemicomp sensor, advanced medkit, ylos blade.

Engineer Caste True Vaasi (Engineer 6) ⋄ CR 10

Large aberration; HD 10d8+6d6+64; hp 131; MAS 21; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 28, touch 12, flat-footed 27 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, +4 armor, +2 class, -1 size); BAB +11; Grap +19; Atk +14 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +11 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +11/+6 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ craft xp reserve (600 xp) extra limbs, improved low-light vision, improve kit +2, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, psionic potential, quick craft, reconfigure weapon, sabotage, superior repair; AL vaasi; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +14; AP 9; Rep +6; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 14.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Climb +4, Computer Use +18, Craft (Electrical) +20, Craft (Mechanical) +20, Craft (Structural) +16, Disable Device +12, Drive +9, Hide +1, Intimidate +5, Jump +4, Knowledge (Tactics) +5, Knowledge (Technology) +16, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Navigate +9, Pilot +9, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Repair +18, Search +10, Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Survival +4.
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Builder, Cautious, Gearhead, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Mastercrafter, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Vehicle Expert, Zero-G Training.
Equipment: Work plate, universal communicator, deluxe mechanical tool kit, deluxe electrical tool kit, maser pistol, 5 vaasi power packs, energy shield, ylos blade, mechanicomp sensor, electricomp sensor, fusion torch, datahock.

Healer Caste True Vaasi (Field Medic 6) ⋄ CR 16

Large aberration; HD 16d8+64; hp 141; MAS 21; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 32, touch 13, flat-footed 31 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, +7 armor, +3 class, -1 size); BAB +10; Grap +18; Atk +13 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +10 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +10/+5 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ expert healer, extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, medical mastery, medical specialist +2, psionic potential; AL vaasi; SV Fort +14, Ref +6,

Will +16; AP 9; Rep +6; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 17, Wis 18, Cha 16.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Climb +5, Computer Use +9, Craft (Pharmaceuticals) +18, Drive +7, Hide +1, Intimidate +8, Jump +10, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +16, Knowledge (Tactics) +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +4, Navigate +5, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Sense Motive +11, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Spot +18, Survival +5, Treat Injury +22.
Talents: -
Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Medical Expert, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Surgery, Ultra Immune System, Xenomedic.
Equipment: Vaasi combat armor, maser pistol, 5 vaasi power packs, advanced medkit, fast-use medkit, universal communicator, ylos blade, 4 doses of sporekill chemical, 3 doses of neutrad chemical, medicomp sensor, regen wand, 4 doses of plastiflesh chemical.

Labor Caste True Vaasi (Strong Ordinary 4) ⋄ CR 13

Large aberration; HD 14d8+70; hp 133; MAS 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 29, touch 13, flat-footed 28 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, +4 armor, +3 class, -1 size); BAB +11; Grap +21; Atk +16 melee (2d6+6, bite) or +11 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (2d6+6, bite) or +11/+6 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, psionic potential; AL vaasi; SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +9; AP 7; Rep +1; Str 22, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 16.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Climb +10, Craft (Structural) +8, Hide +1, Intimidate +11, Jump +10, Knowledge (Tactics) +5, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Navigate +5, Repair +6, Sense Motive +6, Survival +7.
Feats: Endurance, Great Fortitude, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.
Equipment: Work plate, hypervelocity pistol with 3 clips, ylos blade, universal communicator.

Royal Caste True Vaasi (Negotiator 10) ⋄ CR 20

Large aberration; HD 20d8+80; hp 170; MAS 21; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 36, touch 12, flat-footed 36 (+12 natural, -1 size, +12 armor, +3 class); BAB +14; Grap +22; Atk +17 melee (3d10/18-20/x3, dyxer sword) or +13 ranged (6d8/19-20, distortion rifle); Full Atk +17/+12

VAASI AND RED TRUTH

Vaasi have a basic understanding of psionics and the existence of Red Truth, but can only tap it through artificial assistance, such as a Red Truth immersion chamber. This process was discovered from reverse-engineered Star Confederation technology; they had no knowledge of psionics before their contact with the Star Confederation. Only vaasi of the first two tiers are allowed to undergo the process of gaining psionics. Psionic training is limited, based on brute force of will than understanding what exactly Red Truth is. The vaasi produce powerful psionicists, but they rarely have the variety of powers or flexibility of yaom masters. While the yaom have access to advanced and prestige classes such as the yaom master or Peacebringer, the vaasi have very little advanced training. Vaasi may take levels in Telepath if they undergo treatment in a Red Truth immersion chamber, but may not take any other psionic advanced or prestige class unless they have a Wisdom score of 20 or higher.

Among the forces of Clan Ur-Kazzi there are roughly one thousand trained psionicists in the ranks of the Royal, Science, and War Castes. These are generally 1-6th level Telepaths, though a few may be more powerful. They follow all the limitations for psionicists listed in Chapter 7.

melee (3d10/18-20/x3, dyxer sword) or +13/+8 ranged (6d8/19-20, distortion rifle); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ conceal motive, extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, no sweat, psionic potential, react first, sow distrust, talk down all opponents; AL vaasi; SV Fort +14, Ref +6, Will +20; AP 10; Rep +10; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 20.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Bluff +19, Climb +5, Computer Use +13, Diplomacy +13, Gather Information +13, Hide +0, Intimidate +25, Investigate +17, Jump +5, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +15, Knowledge (Tactics) +21, Listen +13, Move Silently +6, Navigate +7, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Sense Motive +21, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Spot +13.
Talents: -
Feats: Attentive, Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Confident, Educated, Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Distortion Rifle), Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (Dyxer Sword), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency.
Equipment: Ritual suit, distortion rifle with 5 clips, dyxer sword, 5 vaasi power packs, 4 doses of plastiflesh chemical, universal communicator, datahock, personal force field (DR 10/-), energy shield, galpos device.

Science Caste True Vaasi (Field Scientist 8) ⋄ CR 18

Large aberration; HD 18d8+72; hp 151; MAS 21; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 35, touch 18, flat-footed 29 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, +5 armor, +3 class, +5 smart defense, -1 size); BAB +11; Grap +19; Atk +14 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +16 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +16/+11 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, minor breakthrough, psionic potential, scientific improvisation, skill mastery (Computer Use, Craft (Chemical), Craft (Electrical), Craft (Mechanical), Craft (Pharmaceutical), Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences), Knowledge (Physical Sciences), Knowledge (Technology), Repair, Research), smart defense, smart survival, smart weapon (maser pistol); AL vaasi; SV Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +14; AP 10; Rep +9; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 22, Wis 16, Cha 14.
PL Familiarity: 9
Skills: Climb +5, Computer Use +21, Craft (Chemical) +20, Craft (Electrical) +22, Craft (Mechanical) +22, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +20, Decipher Script +12, Hide +3, Intimidate +14, Jump +5, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +22, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +22, Knowledge (Tactics) +21, Knowledge (Technology) +22, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Navigate +15, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Repair +12, Research +22, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Survival +4.
Talents: -
Feats: Builder x2, Combat Expertise, Confident, Educated x2, Far Shot, Gearhead, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Mastercrafter, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Stealthy, Studious, Technological Aptitude.
Advancement: By character class.
Equipment: Light wear armor, maser pistol with 5 vaasi power packs, electrical tool kit, mechanical tool kit, chemistry kit, datahock, holograph recorder, personal force field (DR 5/-), energy shield, electricomp sensor, mechanicomp sensor, galpos device, chemicomp sensor.

Servant Caste True Vaasi (Dedicated Ordinary 4) ⋄ CR 13

Large aberration; HD 10d8+4d6+70; hp 129; MAS 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 29, touch 13, flat-footed 28 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, +4 armor, +3 class, -1 size); BAB +10; Grap +18; Atk +13 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+4, bite); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, psionic potential; AL vaasi; SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +12; AP 7; Rep +0*; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 16.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Climb +10, Hide +1, Intimidate +12, Investigate +9, Jump +10, Knowledge (Tactics) +5, Listen +15, Move Silently +7, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Search +8, Sense Motive +17, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Spot +14, Survival +11, Treat Injury +9.
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Alertness, Attentive, Great Fortitude, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.
Equipment: Light wear armor, advanced medkit, universal communicator.
*Servant caste true vaasi only gain a +1 species bonus to Reputation.

Transport Caste True Vaasi (Dogfighter 6) ⋄ CR 16

Large aberration; HD 16d8+64; hp 136; MAS 21; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 31, touch 14, flat-footed 29 (+2 Dex, +12 natural, +5 armor, +3 class, -1 size); BAB +11; Grap +19; Atk +14

melee (2d6+4, bite) or +12 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (2d6+4, bite) or +12/+7 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ defender of the universe, extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, psionic potential, shake, rattle, and roll, to the max!; AL vaasi; SV Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +14; AP 9; Rep +6; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 14.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +5, Computer Use +12, Drive +20, Hide +2, Intimidate +15, Jump +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +18, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Navigate +16, Pilot +20, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Sense Motive +7, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Survival +8.
Talents: -
Feats: Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Spacer, Starship Dodge, Starship Gunnery, Starship Operation, (Ultralight, Light, Medium), Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert, Zero-G Training.
Equipment: Light wear armor, maser pistol, 5 vaasi power packs, display contacts, micro-aural communicator.

War Caste True Vaasi (Field Officer 8) ⋄ CR 18

Large aberration; HD 18d8+90; hp 171; MAS 23; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 38, touch 15, flat-footed 36 (+2 Dex, +12 natural, +11 armor, +4 class, -1 size); BAB +15; Grap +24; Atk +19 melee (3d10/19-20/x3, dyxer sword) or +16 ranged (6d8/19-20, distortion rifle); Full Atk +19/+14 melee (3d10/19-20/x3, dyxer sword) or +16/+11 ranged (6d8/19-20, distortion rifle); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ august leadership, commanding presence, extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, leadership, light sensitivity, psionic potential, tactical expertise, tactical mastery, uncanny defense; AL vaasi; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +18; AP 10; Rep +10; Str 20 (24), Dex 14, Con 20, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 16.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Bluff +11, Climb +7, Computer Use +12, Diplomacy +9, Hide +5, Intimidate +19, Jump +7, Knowledge (Tactics) +21, Listen +9, Move Silently +11, Navigate +9, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Sense Motive +15, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Spot +7, Survival +9.
Talents:-
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Cleave, Great Fortitude, Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Distortion Rifle), Exotic Melee Weapons Proficiency (Dyxer Sword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency.
Equipment: War Caste battle armor, dyxer sword, distortion rifle with 5 clips, 4 vaasi power packs, micro-aural communicator, personal force field (DR 5/-), energy shield, galpos device, HUD targeting software (distortion rifle),

⋄ Vaasi Servitor Species

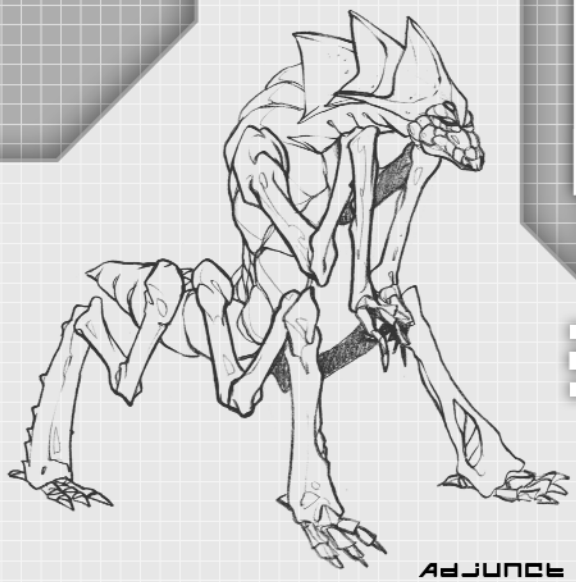
Making up the majority of the vaasi population, servitors come in a wide array of forms and breeds based on what task they were designed to perform. Most look something like the true vaasi, with six limbs, four eyes, and chitin plates, but some are not so similar. All have obvious differences from true vaasi, such as height or limb size, making it impossible to mistake them for true vaasi under most conditions. Even though no servitor would dream of doing so, the vaasi wish to make sure their servitors cannot impersonate them.

The servitor species are second-class citizens, lower than the lowest true vaasi, though at times not by much. No servitor ever receives compliments or rewards for their efforts; the vaasi believe they should always be doing their best and so punish anything less than perfection. Servitors are expected to die on command without asking for a reason. They live in cramped and often squalid conditions, fed just enough to keep them healthy enough to work. The dead are usually eaten by their fellows as part of their daily ration. They work eighty percent of the time, having the remaining twenty percent for resting, and no time for recreation. Servitors can reproduce sexually, but only during certain times in their life, and the true vaasi control this with drugs to prevent unwanted breeding. The true vaasi prefer to breed servitors through genetic manipulation and cloning over using more organic methods, though when separated from the proper genetic manipulation equipment the vaasi will allow servitors to breed to keep their numbers up. Such a program has not yet been instituted in Clan Ur-Kazzi, but Clan Lord Oratan is considering it.

Most servitors go about their daily duties without encountering a true vaasi. They receive orders through electronically delivered messages and carry out those orders. They communicate little among themselves, just enough to get their tasks accomplished. They have no art or recreational activities to speak of, and do not comprehend such things, living only to perform the orders of their masters.

There are dozens of servitor species, but the major ones are covered in the following pages. Each caste has its own servitor species tailored to its specific needs, although some servitor designs, such as the vaasi soldier, are used by a number of castes.

Vaasi Servitor Races



Adjunct



Brute



Mechanic

◇ Vaasi Adjunct

A rare servitor species found only in the Science Caste, the vaasi adjunct was created by the Science Caste to serve as a lab assistant with enough mental capacity and training to carry out complex tasks researchers would rather not worry about, while not having enough intelligence to pose a threat. The adjuncts are the most intelligent of the vaasi servitors, and demonstrate more free will than most. They are curious, and have little fear when pursuing an item that intrigues them. This curiosity is usually directed at scientific difficulties, but not always. Adjuncts show an amazing patience for repetitive and boring tasks, able to carry out the same actions repeatedly for hours with no lapse in concentration.

Vaasi adjuncts look like very thin, almost anemic vaasi soldiers, with slender, frail looking limbs that seem to barely support their body weight. They usually carry sensors and scientific instruments, but receive no combat training and thus are never armed. Adjuncts are not expected to fight, and flee any type of physical threat. The Science Caste considers them more valuable than other servitors, and sacrifice members of other castes to protect adjuncts.

Within Clan Ur-Kazzi there are a very small number of adjuncts, and the Science Caste keeps them busy. They are only found on the largest ships and asteroid bases, as they too valuable to assign anywhere that does not have its defensive measures on line.

Species Traits

Skill Bonus: Vaasi adjuncts have a +2 species bonus to Computer Use, Repair, and all Knowledge skill checks.
Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi adjunct must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 10 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).

Vaasi Adjunct ◇ CR 4

Medium aberration; HD 5d8-5; hp 18; MAS 12; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+0 Dex, +3 natural, +5 armor); BAB +3; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (2d4-1, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (2d4-1, bite); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi, Science Caste; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +8; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 6.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Computer Use +15, Craft (Chemical) +8, Craft (Electrical) +8, Craft (Mechanical) +8, Craft (Pharmaceuticals) +6, Craft (Structural) +6, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +14, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +14, Knowledge (Species (Vaasi)) +6, Knowledge (Technology) +14, Read/Write Language (Vaasi), Repair +15, Research +10, Speak Language (Vaasi).
Feats: Builder, Educated x2, Gearhead, Iron Will.
Advancement: By character class.
Equipment: Light wear armor, datahock, mechanicomp sensor, electricomp sensor, chemicomp sensor.

◇ Vaasi Attendant

One of the less numerous servitor species, the attendant is only found within the Servant Caste. These creatures are some of the smallest servitors, looking much like half-sized, rotund soldier vaasi. They tend to roam in packs, each serving a true vaasi who has been deemed worthy of having servants. They are individually weak and not very bright, but they work hard and are easily replaced. Attendants are only found in bases far from combat, where true vaasi have sufficient room and property to require servants. While they may be found on a few of the larger spacecraft in the fleet of Clan Ur-Kazzi, mostly they are found in the asteroid bases of the Cronus Belt.

If actually engaged in combat, attendants flee unless the vaasi they serve is under attack. In such cases they willingly give their lives to defend their master, though such efforts are rarely fruitful. Attendants are normally not equipped with weapons or armor, and have no combat training. They are rarely outfitted with anything more than the tools they need to carry out their daily chores.

How other vaasi interact with attendants depends on the position of their master. Attendants in the service of a powerful member of the Royal Caste are treated reasonably well by even true vaasi, but servants of a member of the Labor Caste are physically abused regularly, if not eaten. Despite having no combat duties, attendants have a high mortality rate.

Species Traits

Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi attendant must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 15 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).

Vaasi Attendant ◇ CR 1

Small aberration; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; MAS 15; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size); BAB +1; Grap -4; Atk +1 melee (1d6-1, bite); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6-1, bite) ; FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi, master; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 8.
PL Familiarity: 8

Skills: Listen +1, Profession (Servant) +4, Read/Write Language (Vaasi), Search +4, Speak Language (Vaasi), Spot +6, Treat Injury +4.
Feats: Alertness, Simple Weapon Proficiency.
Advancement: By character class
Equipment: Tools, uniform.

◇ Vaasi Brute

One of the largest of the servitor species, the brute is one of the few that is actually larger than a true vaasi. Used primarily by the Labor Caste, it looks like a larger version of a true vaasi, but with much thicker limbs, a stouter build, and a smaller head. These monstrous creatures are not very intelligent, but are immensely strong and used in all manner of physical labor. They are not much good for complex tasks, but for moving objects around they work wonderfully. Most can carry thousands of pounds with relative ease, making them one of the primary tools of the Labor Caste.

Vaasi brutes are grouped in packs, each with an overseer from the Labor Caste. While brutes are normally mild mannered, any type of injury sends them into a powerful rage that causes them to lash out at other creatures, including brutes if no other targets are available. They are equipped with control collars that their overseer can use to inject them with drugs, making them fall asleep until the rage wears off. These collars can also be used to inject combat drugs into brutes, driving them into a killing rage that is used against the enemies in desperate situations.

Unlike other servitors, the brutes are closer to animals than vaasi, having an intellect similar to monkeys. They can be taught tricks and follow the genetically encoded commands they were born with, such as obeying true vaasi, but otherwise their behaviors are limited. They are more like organic automatons than animals in some ways, having none of the drive to reproduce, play, or carry out other behaviors that animals do.

The brutes live apart from other servitors, due to their size and their habit of accidentally stepping on smaller species. Of those in Clan Ur-Kazzi, most are found on cargo vessels or asteroid bases performing manual labor. They are too large to be used on most combat ships, though planetary attacks include brutes to build fortifications and other structures.

Species Traits

Control Collar: Most brutes are equipped with control collars that inject them with drugs when activated by the accompanying remote control, which is a credit-card sized device that is usually kept with the overseer. Control collars have four types of drugs, with five doses each. Activating the control collar requires a move action on the part of the overseer, and it can affect any number of brutes under the overseer's control.

Death: The brute must make a Fortitude save (DC 23) or take 4d6 points of Constitution damage.
Rage: The brute must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or be forced to use its rage ability.
Regenerator: The brute regenerates 1d4 hit points every round for the next ten rounds.
Sleep: The brute must make a Fortitude save (DC 25) or fall asleep for 1d4 hours
Extra Limbs (Ex): When a vaasi brute uses its middle limbs as arms, it gains a +4 species bonus on grapple checks. When it uses its middle limbs as legs, its speed increases by +10 feet, and it gains a +4 stability bonus to Balance checks and checks to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground. It can alternate between using its middle limbs as arms or legs as a free action; however, it cannot use them in both ways during the same turn.
Rage (Ex): A brute can fly into a rage a number of times each day equal to its Constitution bonus. In a rage, the brute temporarily gains a +8 bonus to Strength, a +8 bonus to Constitution, and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class. The increase in Constitution increases the brute's hit points by 4 points per hit dice, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when its Constitution score drops back to normal. (These extra hit points are not lost first the way temporary hit points are.) Entering the rage is a free action, but may only be done during the brute's turn. While raging, a brute cannot use any Charisma-, Dexterity-, or Intelligence-based skills (except for Balance, Escape Artist, Intimidate, and Ride), the Concentration skill, or any abilities that require patience or concentration. It can use any feat it has except Combat Expertise and similar feats that require concentration. While raging, a brute must attack the closest target, regardless of what it is, except other brutes. A fit of rage lasts for a number of rounds equal to 3 + the brute's (newly improved) Constitution modifier, and it may not end its rage voluntarily. At the end of the rage, the brute loses the rage modifiers and restrictions and becomes fatigued (-2 penalty to Strength, -2 penalty to Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter.
Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi brute must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 15 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).

Vaasi Brute ◇ CR 10

Huge aberration; HD 12d8+60; hp 114; MAS 23; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; Defense 22, touch 8, flat-footed 22 (+14 natural, -2 size); BAB +9; Grap +26; Atk +16 melee (2d8+9, bite); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (2d8+9, bite); FS 15 ft. by 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.; SQ control collar, DR 4/-,

improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, rage, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi, overseer; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +8; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 28, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 5.
PL Familiarity: 2
Skills: Climb +17, Jump +17, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +4
Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Sunder
Advancement: 13-20 HD (Huge)
Equipment: Control collar.

◇ Vaasi Mechanil

A common servitor found on every base and ship in the Vaasi Empire, the mechanil is the working class of the Engineer Caste. Similar to the vaasi soldier servitor species, they are slightly shorter and squatter. Mechanils are always covered in numerous tool belts and spare parts, continually ready for whatever task they are assigned. The have been genetically engineered to enjoy working, and they do so with a fanaticism that rivals the bloodlust of other vaasi. They are more than willing to risk decompression in a damaged spacesuit in order to repair a ship's damaged hull, even if it isn't an urgent situation. This behavior leads them to suffer more casualties than would be expected for technicians.

The workhorses of the Engineer Caste, there are over two million vaasi mechanils within Clan Ur-Kazzi, and they can be found on every ship and in every facility. They operate in small teams, each responsible for a certain area or system. Only the largest and most important teams have a true vaasi overseer. Most mechanils are not armed unless the facility or ship they are based on is under attack. They receive minimal combat training, and do not have the bloodlust of the War Caste. A few mechanils can be found in the Labor and Science Castes.

They live in small bunkrooms, located near their assigned systems. The mechanils are on call continuously in case these systems need repairs. They are rarely found far from their areas of responsibility, and only on direct orders from a superior.

Species Traits

Extra Limbs (Ex): When a vaasi mechanil uses its middle limbs as arms, it gains a +4 species bonus on grapple checks. When it uses its middle limbs as legs, its speed increases by +10 feet, and it gains a +4 stability bonus to Balance checks and checks to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground. A mechanil can alternate between using its middle limbs as arms or legs as a free action; however, it cannot use them in both ways during the same turn.
Skill Bonus: Vaasi mechanil have a +2 species bonus to Computer Use, Craft, and Repair skill checks.
Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi mechanil must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 10 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).

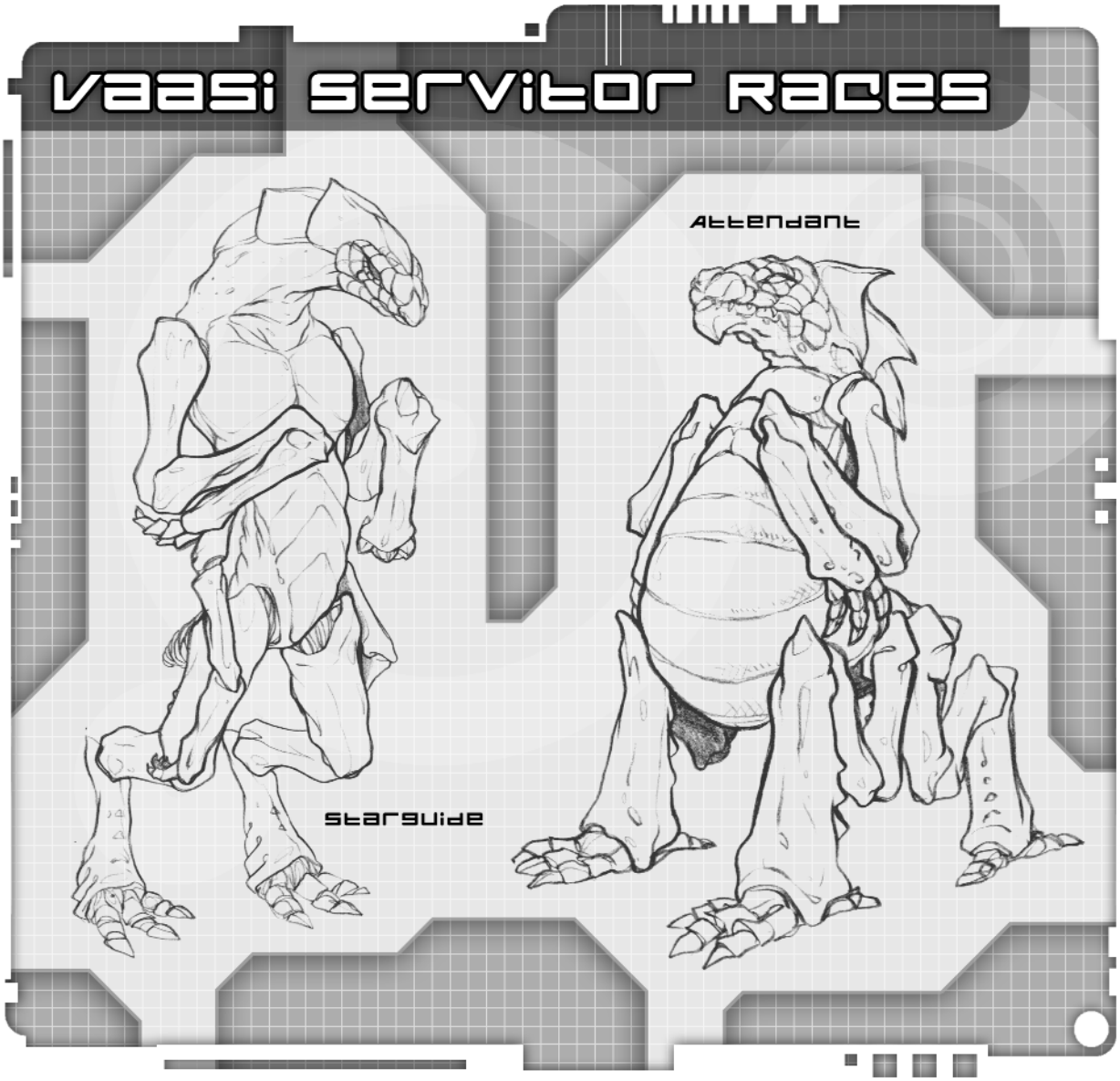
Vaasi Mechanil ◇ CR 4

Medium aberration; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; MAS 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +4 armor); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (2d4, bite) or +5 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); Full Atk +3 melee (2d4, bite) or +5 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 8.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Computer Use +14, Craft (Electrical) +14, Craft (Mechanical) +14, Craft (Structural) +12, Knowledge (Technology) +6, Read/Write Language (Vaasi), Repair +14, Speak Language (Vaasi).
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Builder, Gearhead, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency.
Advancement: By character class.
Equipment: Work plate, mechanical tool kit, electrical tool kit, universal communicator, hypervelocity pistol with 3 clips.

◇ Vaasi Mender

An offshoot of the vaasi soldier, the mender is the most common servitor deployed by the Healer Caste. Similar in appearance to the soldier, its plates are slightly smaller and its eyes larger than normal. The most striking difference, however, is that the menders' middle limbs have transformed into arms, and they can no longer use them as legs, limiting their mobility but allowing them more dexterity in their secondary limbs than most vaasi. They are always seen with some manner of medkits, and those going into combat usually wear combat armor and wield maser weapons. The War Caste values the menders of the Healer Caste and treats them better than servitors of other third-tier castes.

Each mender is assigned to a group of vaasi or a specific location. The mender is responsible for all medical treatment delivered to those in its area or under its care. In particularly population-dense areas, menders are grouped into treatment centers where wounded can be brought for quick treatment. The vaasi are not as concerned with healing the sick as protecting valuable resources, and thus are willing to kill patients if healing them would con-



sume more resources than the patient is worth. Menders are often the best-fed vaasi, feasting on those patients they cannot, or decide not to, save.

Outside of killing patients as part of their medical duties, they are some of the least aggressive vaasi. They rarely take part in the political games and conflicts, and don't go out of their way to find a fight as vaasi soldiers do. Instead, like mechanils, they pursue their assignments with nigh-suicidal fanaticism, risking their lives to save someone who is worth more than they are.

Species Traits

Extra Arms (Ex): Vaasi menders receive a +2 circumstance bonus to all Dexterity-based skill checks.

Healing Spittle (Ex): Vaasi mender saliva contains a compound that causes vaasi blood to coagulate. They can stabilize a single vaasi in an adjacent square as a move action without a Treat Injury check. Vaasi under the care of a mender heal double the normal amount of hit points per day from natural healing.

Skill Bonus: Vaasi menders have a +2 species bonus to Treat Injury skill checks.

Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi mender must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 10 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).

Vaasi Mender ⋄ CR 4

Medium aberration; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; MAS 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +7 armor); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6, bite) or +4 ranged (5d6/19-20, maser pistol); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6, bite) or +4 ranged (5d6, maser pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +6; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex

12, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 8.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Craft (Pharmaceuticals) +8, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +4, Listen +9, Read/Write Language (Vaasi), Search +8, Speak Language (Vaasi), Spot +9, Treat Injury +9.
Feats: Medical Expert, Surgery.
Advancement: By character class.
Equipment: Vaasi combat armor, maser pistol, 5 vaasi power packs, 4 doses of antitox chemical, 2 doses of boost chemical, 4 doses of neutrad chemical, 2 doses of sporekill chemical, advanced medkit, fast-use medkit, medicomp sensor.

◇ Vaasi Reclaimer

One of the less common servitor species, reclaimers are also one of the newer servitor species. Created one hundred thousand years before the fall of the Vaasi Empire, they provide an organic form of waste control. The vaasi genetic engineers took their habit of cannibalism to an incredible extreme, creating a servitor that consumes waste products for nourishment using a very unusual digestive tract and mix of enzymes. Most vaasi bases were equipped with reclaimers that patrolled their waste system, consuming the waste they found and converting it into useable hydrogen, which they excreted into collector tubes. They also provided an extra security measure for the waste tunnels of vaasi bases, a means the Star Confederation used several times to infiltrate vaasi facilities.

The reclaimer looks like a flatter version of a true vaasi that does not stand upright. Its body is round and bulbous, with rotund limbs and extremely large mandibles. Its eyes are also very large, giving the whole creature a bloated appearance. Its claws are webbed, allowing it to swim through muck. Reclaimers are rarely, if ever, clean and are usually covered in all manner of filth.

Reclaimers are not very bright as servitors go, having few thoughts besides eating and protecting their territory. They do not realize how disgusting their existence is, having no conception of existence in any other form. They rarely interact with others, and true vaasi find them disgusting. They are common in the bowels of any vaasi base or large ship, eating waste and keeping an eye out for intruders.

Species Traits

Disease and Poison Resistance (Ex): Reclaimer vaasi suffer no ill effects when eating normal organic waste, and gain a +10 bonus to Fortitude saves against all types of disease and poison.
Extra Limbs (Ex): When a vaasi reclaimer uses its middle limbs as arms, it gains a +4 species bonus on grapple checks. When it uses its middle limbs as legs, its speed increases by +10 feet, and it gains a +4 stability bonus to Balance checks and checks to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground. A vaasi reclaimer can alternate between using its middle limbs as arms or legs as a free action; however, it cannot use them in both ways during the same turn.
Muck Camouflage (Ex): When hiding among garbage, refuse, and other forms of waste, the vaasi reclaimer receives a +8 species bonus to Hide skill checks.
Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi reclaimer must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 15 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).

Vaasi Reclaimer ◇ CR 8

Large aberration; HD 8d8+48; hp 84; MAS 25; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 20 ft.; Defense 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size); BAB +6; Grap +14; Atk +9 melee (2d6+4, bite); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (2d6+4, bite); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ disease and poison resistance, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +9; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 16, Cha 6.
PL Familiarity: 4
Skills: Climb +8, Hide +1, Jump +8, Read/Write Language (Vaasi), Speak Language (Vaasi), Spot +7, Survival +11.
Feats: Endurance, Great Fortitude, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Track.
Advancement: 8-16 HD (Large)
Equipment: -

◇ Vaasi Starguide

The workhorse of the Transport Caste, the vaasi starguide is the servitor species used by the Transport Caste to pilot their ships and vehicles. Trained in a single vehicle, each starguide is assigned a single vehicle that it pilots until it is killed. Newly cloned starguides are assigned to new ships or to replace those starguides who have died. Each starguide is expected to know its vehicle inside and out, and a starguide who manages to survive the destruction of its vehicle is usually killed in short order as a punishment. Starguides live for their vehicles.

Vaasi starguides are small for servitors, similar in size to attendants, and have smaller middle limbs than most vaasi. Instead they always walk on only their bottom limbs, using their middle limbs for simple grasping. Their necks are longer than most vaasi, allowing them to swivel over a wide arc and even look behind themselves with ease. Their plat-

Vaasi Servitor Races



Mender



Soldier



Reclaimer

ing is not as heavy as that of other servitors, allowing greater range of movement. Starguides are normally not armed, but do undergo basic combat training and are issued weapons if the vehicle they are piloting comes under attack.

Despite their importance to the continued survival of Clan Ur-Kazzi, starguides are not well respected. They are seen as necessary but not in any honorable way, especially when compared to the pilots of the War Caste. Starguide starship pilots are seen as being more valuable than those operating ground or atmospheric vehicles.

Species Traits

Skills Bonus: Vaasi starguides have a +2 species bonus to Pilot and Drive checks.
Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi attendant must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 10 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).

Vaasi Starguide ⋄ CR 3

Small aberration; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; MAS 15; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +5 armor); BAB +3; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d6, bite) or +6 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6, bite) or +6 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor;; AL vaasi; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 6.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Computer Use +3, Drive +12, Navigate +8, Pilot +12, Read/Write Language (Vaasi), Speak Language (Vaasi), Spot +8.
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, any one of the following: Aircraft Operation, Starship Operation, Surface Vehicle Operation.
Advancement: By character class.
Equipment: Light wear armor, hypervelocity pistol with 3 clips, universal communicator.

⋄ Vaasi soldier

The vaasi soldier servitor species is a basic genetic model that several castes have used for combat-related tasks. Most soldiers are found in the ranks of the War Caste, but the Detainment Caste and Royal Caste also use them as guards. Roughly half of the population of Clan Ur-Kazzi is made up of vaasi soldiers, though it occurs to none of them that they could use this position of strength to their advantage within the Clan. Vaasi soldiers are only concerned with completing their mission and proving their skill and strength through combat. When not in the field, they battle amongst themselves in harsh training programs that frequently result in casualties. Those who die are of no concern to the vaasi soldiers, since they were obviously weak and were not worthy of the resources used to keep them alive. Vaasi soldiers do not believe in luck, poor planning, or lack of supplies; they believe all battles are won or lost by the skill and power of the combatants involved. All other concerns are for the "bean counters" below them or the leaders above them.

The soldiers of Clan Ur-Kazzi look much like the ones trapped on Eos, except they are smaller and not quite as strong. The many years that have passed for the vaasi on Eos have allowed them to evolve into more effective warriors; Clan Ur-Kazzi soldiers are better trained and equipped, while those on Eos are tougher but lacking in discipline.

Soldiers live in large bunkhouses that give them little living space and no privacy. They spend their waking hours on guard duty, on assignment, or carrying out training simulations. They are found on all vaasi ships and asteroid bases in substantial numbers.

Species Traits

All vaasi soldiers share the following species traits.
Extra Limbs (Ex): When a vaasi soldier uses its middle limbs as arms, it gains a +4 species bonus on grapple checks. When it uses its middle limbs as legs, its speed increases by +10 feet, and it gains a +4 stability bonus to Balance checks and checks to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on the ground. A vaasi soldier can alternate between using its middle limbs as arms or legs as a free action; however, it cannot use them in both ways during the same turn. This species trait should be added to the soldier vaasi found on Eos as well.
Vaasi Servitor (Ex): A vaasi soldier must make a Will save to disobey a direct order given by a true vaasi (DC 10 + ½ the true vaasi's hit dice + the true vaasi's Charisma bonus).
Bonus Feats: Vaasi soldiers in Clan Ur-Kazzi receive the bonus feats Personal Firearms Proficiency and Simple Weapon Proficiency. The soldiers on Eos receive the bonus feats Archaic Weapons Proficiency and Simple Weapon Proficiency.

Detainment Caste Vaasi Soldier ⋄ CR 5

Medium aberration; HD 5d8+10; hp 32; MAS 17; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +7 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, bite) or +7 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, bite) or +7 ranged (5d6, hypervelocity pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision,

increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Climb +6, Computer Use +4, Hide +7, Intimidate +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Read/Write Language (Vaasi), Speak Language (Vaasi), Spot +4.
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Medium), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Hypervelocity pistol).
Advancement: By character class.
Equipment: Vaasi combat armor, hypervelocity pistol with 6 clips, universal communicator, 2 tangler grenades, 2 concussion grenades.

War Caste Vaasi Soldier ⋄ CR 6

Medium aberration; HD 5d8+10; hp 32; MAS 17; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +7 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, bite) or +6 ranged (5d8/19-20, maser rifle); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2, bite) or +6 ranged (5d8/19-20, maser rifle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 8.
PL Familiarity: 8
Skills: Climb +6, Computer Use +4, Hide +7, Intimidate +3, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Read/Write Language (Vaasi), Speak Language (Vaasi), Spot +4, Survival +3.
Feats: Armor Proficiency (Medium), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapon Proficiency.
Advancement: By character class.
Equipment: Vaasi combat armor with targeting HUD software, maser rifle, 6 vaasi power packs, 2 shrapnel grenades, 2 cryonic grenades.

Eotian Vaasi Soldier ⋄ CR 4

Medium aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; MAS 19; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Defense 20, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +2 armor); BAB +3; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+2/19-20, machete) or +6 ranged (1d10/19-20, crossbow); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, vaasi servitor; AL vaasi; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; AP 0; Rep +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.
PL Familiarity: 4
Skills: Climb +3, Hide +6, Jump +3, Move Silently +6, Search +1, Spot +3, Survival +4.
Feats: Archaic Weapon Proficiency, Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium), Simple Weapon Proficiency.
Advancement: By character class.
Equipment: Machete, leather armor, crossbow.

NPCS • • •

⋄ Clan Lord Oratan of the Royal Caste

The highest-ranking member of the Royal Caste known to have survived the war with the Star Confederation and the subsequent collapse of the Vaasi Empire, Clan Lord Oratan is now living out the life he was raised for since birth. Now without any superiors or real rivals of consequence, he has the chance he always wanted to build a new Vaasi Empire under his rule. These pesky Star Confederation creatures will be swept aside in due time; how could they possibly stand against Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi under his direction?

Slightly more megalomaniacal than the average member of the Royal Caste, Oratan has long had delusions of grandeur that were owed to him. While competent, he never showed the skills or knowledge to reach the inner sanctum of the Imperial Court, and never won an audience with the Emperor during which he could show his worth. Instead, Oratan succeeded more than he failed, and navigated the troubled waters of vaasi politics with commendable aplomb, avoiding assassinations and eliminating rivals as well as could be expected. No matter how many rivals he eliminated, more always seemed to take their place, and those above him rarely noticed his worth, being too wrapped up in their own schemes with minions who were less overtly ambitious than Oratan. Unfortunately for Oratan, he combined just enough ambition with just enough ability to be more of a danger than an asset to those who would otherwise have used his service.

For most of his years, he oversaw the operations of Blue Haven and the surrounding systems, managing mining operations, shipyards, training areas, and supply depots. Rivals who worked closer to the front line had more glory, and those working closer to the

Emperor had more clout, but Oratan had materials to spare. Though he sent his proper quota to the appropriate parties, he always kept some for himself, building up his own fleet of ships and cadre of troops, complete with supplies. Someone would notice eventually, but Oratan hoped that by then he would have significant strength and lead his troops on his own offensive against the Star Confederation, winning enough glory to outweigh the furor his activities would create. This plan didn't quite work out, as Eos fell before it could be enacted. As the Empire crumbled around him, Oratan was left with one of the few well-equipped and supplied military clans in the Empire. And what greater glory could there be than striking down the Star Confederation once and for all?

After sending a message to the Emperor to notify him of this plan, a message that would take hundreds of thousands of years to arrive, Oratan named himself Clan Lord of the newly commissioned Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi and immediately prepared them for launch. Old ships were refurbished, supplies were loaded, and ten million vaasi set out for the Eos system.

They arrived two years ago, and immediately began building fortified positions within the Cronus Belt. While Oratan may have overestimated his abilities in the past, he is no fool and wants to ensure that his victory is not in doubt when he moves against the inner planets of the Helios system. He does not tolerate disobedience, but he had to take whatever forces were available at the time, and some of his subordinates in the Royal Caste would not have been brought otherwise. Foremost among them is Lord Jahqwe, who seeks to supplant Clan Lord Oratan in his position of leadership. Lord Jahqwe decries his cautious strategy and promotion of non-Royal Caste vaasi to leadership positions, saying he has betrayed the accepted norms of vaasi culture. These words have taken root in the minds of many; so many that Lord Jahqwe cannot simply be removed without creating a threat of reprisals against Clan Lord Oratan. The Clan Lord seeks another solution.

Clan Lord Oratan (Charismatic Hero 4/Negotiator 10) ◆ CR 24

Large aberration; HD 20d8+4d6+96; hp 210; MAS 21; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 37, touch 13, flat-footed 37 (+12 natural, -1 size, +12 armor, +4 class); BAB +16; Grap +24; Atk +19 melee (3d10/18-20/x3, dyxer sword) or +15 ranged (6d8/19-20, distortion rifle); Full Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (3d10+4/18-20/x3, dyxer sword) or +15/+10/+5 ranged (6d8/19-20, distortion rifle); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ conceal motive, extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, no sweat, psionic potential, react first, sow distrust, talk down all opponents; AL vaasi; SV Fort +16, Ref +9, Will +21; AP 10; Rep +13; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 22.

PL Familiarity: 8

Skills: Bluff +26, Climb +5, Computer Use +15, Diplomacy +18, Gather Information +18, Hide +2, Intimidate +30, Investigate +17, Jump +5, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +19, Knowledge (Business) +11, Knowledge (Civics) +11, Knowledge (Tactics) +23, Listen +15, Move Silently +8, Navigate +7, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Sense Motive +23, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Spot +15.

Talents: Coordinate, Fast-Talk.

Feats: Attentive, Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Confident, Deceptive, Educated x2, Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Distortion Rifle), Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (Dyxer Sword), Frightful Presence, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Equipment: Ritual suit, distortion rifle with 5 clips, dyxer sword, 5 vaasi power packs, 4 doses of plastiflesh chemical, universal communicator, datahock, personal force field (DR 10/-), energy shield, galpos device.



◇ Lord Jahqwe of the Royal Caste

For most members of the Royal Caste, combat is to be experienced at a safe distance, but Lord Jahqwe has never been so cautious. Despite belonging to the Royal Caste, he often acts more like a member of the War Caste, leading troops from the front lines instead of the rear. While some credit this to a mishap in his genetic code, Lord Jahqwe prefers to be more skilled in combat than most of his fellows in the Royal Caste. Some problems are better solved by the sword than the pen, and Lord Jahqwe settles those problems personally when he can.

Before joining Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi, Lord Jahqwe was one of the Royal Caste vaasi overseeing the assault on the Eos system. Due to an insult to his superior, Lord Jahqwe was not involved in the final assault, left instead in one of the staging areas before being sent back to Blue Haven to gather more supplies. Clan Lord Oratan quickly recruited him for his combat experience, but he did not know much about Lord Jahqwe before they left for Eos. His history of grandstanding, insults, and trouble-making has repeated itself in Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi.

For the last two years, Lord Jahqwe has acted as the voice of opposition within Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi, questioning Clan Lord Oratan's orders just enough to show discontent, but not enough to insult or warrant punishment. He has also organized sorties of his own against the planets of the Helios system, careful to cover his tracks and keep his name out of any investigation of such events. Lord Jahqwe wishes to end Clan Lord Oratan's stalling and assault the inner planets of the Helios system, and is willing to start the war himself if need be. He has made numerous allies among those who share his beliefs, or who do not like Clan Lord Oratan's promotion of non-Royal Caste vaasi to positions of leadership normally held by the Royal Caste. If his power continues to grow, he will eventually mount a coup against Clan Lord Oratan, and immediately afterward strike at the space fleet of the Wolf Tribes. The Royal Caste has recently named Lord Jahqwe the Director of Loyalty, responsible for making sure everyone is doing their duty properly, which is a direct challenge of Clan Lord Oratan's power.



Lord Jahqwe of the Royal Caste (Negotiator 10/Soldier 2) ◇ CR 22

Large aberration; HD 20d8+2d10+88; hp 189; MAS 21; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 38, touch 14, flat-footed 37 (+12 natural, -1 size, +12 armor, +4 class, +1 Dex); BAB +15; Grap +23; Atk +18 melee (3d10/18-20/x3, dyxer sword) or +16 ranged (6d8+2/19-20, distortion rifle); Full Atk +18/+13 melee (3d10/18-20/x3, dyxer sword) or +16/+11 ranged (6d8+2/19-20, distortion rifle); FS 10 ft. by 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ conceal motive, extra limbs, improved low-light vision, increased massive damage threshold, light sensitivity, no sweat, psionic potential, react first, sow distrust, talk down all opponents, weapon specialization (Distortion Rifle); AL vaasi; SV Fort +16, Ref +9, Will +20; AP 10; Rep +10; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 20.

PL Familiarity: 8

Skills: Bluff +19, Climb +5, Computer Use +13, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +14, Hide +2, Intimidate +27, Investigate +18, Jump +5, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +15, Knowledge (Tactics) +23, Listen +15, Move Silently +7, Navigate +7, Read/Write Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Sense Motive +22, Speak Language (Unispeak, Vaasi), Spot +15.

Talents: -

Feats: Attentive, Armor Proficiency (Heavy), Armor Proficiency (Light), Confident, Educated, Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Distortion Rifle), Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (Dyxer Sword), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Weapon Focus (Distortion Rifle).

Equipment: Ritual suit, distortion rifle with 5 clips, dyxer sword, 5 vaasi power packs, 4 doses of plastiflesh chemical, universal communicator, datahock, personal force field (DR 10/-), energy shield, galpos device.

CHAPTER • XIII

GATEWAY STATION

He did not expect them to come during this time cycle. They had not come for two years, and the tentaari now known as "Illmind" was happy for it. He had been on the gateway station now for five years--five years of solitude in a barely functioning space station that he could not fix. But that's what his fellows wanted him to do. It was his punishment...and would keep him away from the other tentaari. After all, he was dangerous. He was sick. He had killed a fellow tentaari, a deed never previously recorded in the long-reaching annals of the species.



For the one thousand and sixteenth time Illmind began preparing the energy control valves to try and activate the gateway generator, hoping this time his meager repairs had done the trick. But he knew immediately that this would not be the day of his success when the low humming of the main generators did not vary. He had told his fellows four years ago that he could not repair the gateway generator without a new singularity projector and a few other parts, but they would not listen. They have never listened to him since his crime because he was obviously not in his right mind. Instead they left him here to live out the rest of his time attempting to fix a device that can never be fixed.

But then the day changed. The docking alarms began to sound, sending the small armada of robot assistants Illmind had repaired into an ordered dash to the main docking bay, preparing to unload anything the tentaari brought. They rarely brought anything other than food - and meager protein strands at that.

Illmind put his tools aside and headed toward the docking bay as well, though he well knew his fellows would not even look at him. Their discomfort in his presence gave him a tingle of what he assumed was joy, taking some pleasure in his token revenge. But he soon began receiving warnings from his robot servants over his communicator: "This is not a tentaari or vaasi ship. Unknown design. Instructions?"

THE HELIOS GATEWAY STATION • • •

Once the primary method for faster-than-light travel, the Helios Gateway Station has been abandoned for most of the time since the Helios system fell to vaasi invasion forces. Due to its automated maintenance systems it remained functional until a few centuries ago. Presently, it cannot open the gateways that once made interstellar travel possible. It is still the best hope for reaching the rest of the universe, allowing the new inhabitants of Helios to find the other colony ships from Earth, enlist help against the vaasi, or locate more relics of the Star Confederation. This presumes the new inhabitants of Helios can master the technology required to repair the gateway station, a monumental task that will require tireless effort, unparalleled knowledge, and sheer guts.

The Helios Gateway Station is the largest surviving source of Star Confederation technology in the Helios System.

Unlike many other areas where the tools of the Star Confederation have survived, the Helios Gateway Station is not home to inhabitants determined to keep the players from getting their hands on the advanced technology. Unless the gamemaster wishes to run the risk of having his players get their hands on overly powerful equipment, the players should not reach the Helios Gateway Station until they are relatively high level. Given the fact that the vaasi hold the Cronus Belt between the Helios Gateway Station and the rest of the system, the players will likely need to be powerful indeed to even survive the trip.

Rotation Period: -
Revolution Period: 230 Eotian days
Atmospheric Composition: None
Average Temperature: 40 degrees Kelvin (-387.4 degrees Fahrenheit)

HISTORY • • •

The largest artificial object orbiting Helios, the Gateway Station was constructed by the Star Confederation to enable faster-than-light travel from the capital to its various member planets. Before the gateway stations, the Star Confederation relied on massive gateships for interstellar travel, developing the technology based on information gained from the jaren, Korlan Dollasi-ki, and his ship the *Dasget*. The Star Confederation's six races initially relied on gateships for their first meetings and for several centuries thereafter. The massive gateships, each several miles long, made interstellar travel expensive and inconvenient. The gateships traveled specific routes on schedules determined far in advance, making last-minute trips impossible. Securing steerage on a gateship was always difficult. There was never enough space to go around even when you could find a ship traveling to the worlds you sought to visit. Building a gateship required a substantial investment, and the limitations made travel complicated. The Star made finding a more efficient method of interstellar travel a top priority. This research, carried out over centuries in systems across the Confederation, eventually led to the development of the gateway station system. This system allowed small ships to travel between systems on their own schedules.



The Helios Gateway Station's orbit was chosen because it was sufficiently distant from any large objects in the system and did not lie adjacent to the system's Oort cloud. The presence of a strong gravitational field inhibits the generation of gateways, making it almost impossible to form a gateway within the vicinity of any planet, star, or similar object. For this reason, the Helios Gateway Station was placed far from all major celestial bodies in the system. Built over a period of years, the Helios gateway station was one of the oldest in the Star Confederation, being the first to go online after the initial test gates were put through their paces on the edges of Confederation territory. The construction of the Helios Gateway Station was a widely celebrated event as it was the first such station open to all travelers for a small fee. It also proved convenient for the many diplomats, lawmakers, and other persons of import who traveled on governmental matters. It was seen as a symbol of the openness of the Star

Confederation and was commonly used in images aiming to evoke patriotism and unity among the citizens of the Confederation. Once the war with the Vaasi Empire started one of the rallying cries of Confederation troops was: "Never into Helios!" This oath was not fulfilled.

Despite the age of the Helios Gateway Station, it was kept in good operating order and constantly upgraded due to its importance to the operation of the Confederation. While it was initially an unadorned space station of moderate size, over time it was improved, decorated, and enlarged to become a massive structure over two miles in diameter. Once these modifications were complete it was one of the largest gateway stations, built to allow the passage of any sort of ship or asteroid base used by the Star Confederation. Even the massive gateships, which had begun to be phased out after the gateway stations came online, and immense structures like Computer One could use the Helios Gateway Station. It not only allowed ships to travel from the Helios system to other systems, but also operated as a museum covering the history of interstellar travel in the Confederation, a base for the Diplomatic Legion, and a messenger post from which the Contact Corps, in addition to other important services within the Star Confederation government.

The Helios Gateway Station was in operation for thousands of years under the control of the Star Confederation, experiencing only minor difficulties during those years. While pirates, insurrection, and similar violent problems occasionally plagued the Star Confederation, they rarely reached the Helios System - though the Gateway Station was heavily armed for just such an occasion. The Star Confederation aimed to stop any enemy from using their gateway network against them, and while heavily defended stations like that in Helios remained secure, the stations in less influential regions of space were rarely so well defended. These smaller stations sometimes became the targets of pirates or smugglers. In the later days of the war with the Vaasi Empire, some stations were captured and used by the vaasi to transport their own fleets.

On an average day during its operational period the Helios Gateway Station spawned gateways to twenty distinct points and acted as an anchor for twenty more inbound gateways. During particularly busy periods - for example, when the Star Confederation Council entered session - the station would be called upon for hundreds of gateway operations each day. Each of these gateway operations was a complex task requiring the involvement of a staff of hundreds and the work of powerful computers to complete.

The safety record for the Helios Gateway station is exemplary, with two glaring exceptions. The first was in the earliest days of the station's operation when the gateway generator malfunctioned, creating a much larger unstable singularity than intended. This singularity was launched into deep space in a force field containment unit to dissipate safely; the final fate of the singularity was never discovered. The singularity remained stable for far longer than intended for unknown reasons, possibly outliving the power cells of the force field containment unit. The Star Confederation had just prepared a

THE DIPLOMATIC LEGION

A sizeable portion of the Gateway Station not occupied by machinery was used by the Star Confederation Diplomatic Legion, an extensive organization that worked to keep all the planets of the Confederation on good terms with each other. While the planets of the Confederation all lived under a single legal and governmental structure, disagreements between planets arose over culture, resources, trade routes, and funds, especially in systems with more than one inhabited world. While such conflicts rarely flared up into violence, the Star Confederation was marked by a delicate balance of supply and demand. Many planets relied almost exclusively on others for resources, finished goods, power, or cultural products. A blockade or tariff launched at an inopportune time could have seriously crippled the Confederation. Consequently, the Diplomatic Corps spent much of its time making sure goods flowed freely between the member planets. The Diplomatic Legion on the Helios Gateway Station was equipped with ten diplomatic frigates and a staff of 5,000 - though these all fled the station prior to the invasion by the vaasi fleet.

research mission to locate the rogue singularity when the war with the Vaasi Empire erupted.

The second incident happened only a few centuries before the war with the Vaasi Empire. A large cargo ship known as the *Star Matriarch* entered a gateway created by the station. At that precise moment a power surge destabilized the temporary singularity, eliminating the end point of the gateway. Most scientists believed that the *Star Matriarch* was completely destroyed by the forces it encountered in the singularity. Spacers claimed the ship survived in some parallel dimension known as The Betweens. A common feature of spacer tales, The Betweens was the theoretical space between a gateway's entrance and exit points. Scientists debunk the myth, noting that gateway travel is instantaneous and that no such space actually exists. Regardless, spacers across the Confederation reported encounters with the apparition of the *Star Matriarch* for years afterward, the ship always appearing as a ghostly haze, just out of phase with our dimension. These sightings were paid much heed to by spacers and the public, but all scientists uniformly discounted them as hallucinations or deep-space psychotic episodes.

During the war with the Vaasi Empire, the Helios Gateway Station became one of the most active gateway stations in the Confederation, ferrying supplies, ships, and orders from the factories, shipyards, and command centers in the Helios system. The Helios Gateway Station saw almost constant use as the Contact Corps worked to keep the Confederation Council up to date on the war's progress. As the war wore on and the vaasi fleets moved closer and closer to the Helios system, much of Helios's civilian population was evacuated to systems far from the front. It was during this evacuation effort that the Star Confederation considered a plan to modify the network. The goal was to continually create small singularities at the perimeter of each system to disrupt incoming gateways. Unfortunately, such a plan would also inhibit the formation of Star Confederation gateways. Initially this plan received little attention since it would so dramatically limit the ability of the Star Confederation to communicate and retake recaptured territory, but as the situation grew more dire more effort was put into the project. Ultimately the project would come to be called "Gateway Shield."

The Gateway Shield project was not perfected when the vaasi reached the Helios system, though some of the technology developed was used to defend the system by launching unstable singularities at the vaasi fleet. These singularities were kept small to avoid inflicting too much damage to the planets of the Helios system, limiting their effectiveness. Still these defenses kept the vaasi from destroying the Helios Gateway Station. Instead they blockaded it for most of their invasion of the Helios System, only removing their blockade for their final assault on Eos. During the blockade they destroyed all ships attempting to enter or leave the system using gateways and prevented the station from receiving additional supplies. In the end, after the vaasi fleet assembled for the final assault on Eos, the crew of the Helios Gateway Station fled in the last Diplomatic Corps frigate by opening a gateway to a neighboring system. As their final act, they locked down the station in secure mode, leaving it under the command of a number of artificial intelligence entities to prevent the vaasi from taking control.

The station was never approached by the fragments of the vaasi fleet that survived the final destruction of Eos since they did not believe they could breach its still active defenses. The station remained under the supervision of the artificial intelligence entities for many years until the tentaari arrived to take stock of what remained of the Star Confederation. The tentaari were able to safely bypass the defenses of the Helios Gateway Station and take control of it, shutting down the artificial intelligence entities and instead installing various remote controls into the station to remove the need for a permanent onsite crew. Instead, the tentaari would simply access the station's controls from outside whenever they wished to use it. They tasked the artificial intelligence entities with more menial duties on various tentaari ships since the tentaari could not be bothered to do them. The Helios Gateway Station was effectively abandoned. Its defenses were left active to stop any unwanted vis-

THE CONTACT CORPS

The Contact Corps was charged with keeping Confederation planets in contact using a fleet of small messenger ships. These ships were used to deliver information throughout the Confederation since there was no readily available means of faster-than-light communication. These messengers were a vital tool in keeping the Confederation together and providing a sense of community over the thousands of light-years that separated the member planets. There were over three dozen ships assigned to the Helios Gateway Station in addition to a staff of 4,000.

itors, but it was only utilized by tentaari ships visiting the system.

Over time the lack of attention and preventive maintenance by the tentaari caused the failure of the gateway network. Currently less than one-third of the surviving gateway stations are still operational. Many of these stations have suffered damage to their singularity generators, which create the temporary singularities necessary to create a gateway. The tentaari no longer possess the technology to repair such damage, though some small groups, such as the vaasi of Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi do. Half of those gateway stations that are functional have suffered damage to their guidance systems, so while they can open a gateway they have little to no control over the destination. Presently, the Helios Gateway Station has a fully functional guidance unit, but no ability to generate singularities.

The Helios Gateway Station's singularity generator ceased functioning a little over two centuries ago, shortly after the arrival of the Haimedians in the Helios system. At the time, three tentaari ships were in the system surveying C'thalk to see if the saurians posed a threat. The tentaari have been stuck in the Helios system ever since, trying to find a way to escape using technology they cannot actually repair while doing as little work as possible.

But there was one tentaari who was not quite so complacent to see the remains of the Star Confederation disappear completely. This tentaari was one of the younger among the those trapped in Helios, and he did not have the same lethargic attitudes as the other tentaari, preferring to work with his own two hands instead of relying on technology to see to his needs. They would come to call him Illmind. Among the tentaari the condition is referred to as Labor Syndrome. Labor Syndrome was considered a mental derangement caused by a genetic defect, and those who showed signs of Labor Syndrome were prevented from using their genetic material for breeding. This policy slowly weeded the drive and resolve out of the tentaari species. Illmind was always thought odd by his fellow tentaari and shunned for his strange behavior, but four years ago this behavior took a turn for the extreme when he killed one of his comrades. This murderous rage was incited because the victim dismantled a prototype singularity generator Illmind had built, a project that had taken of five decades of work. The tentaari are a very logical and cold people, so for one to become enraged to the point of violence was virtually unknown. In short order the murderous tentaari was banished from his people for his crime, marooned on the Helios Gateway Station to fix the device he obviously cared more about than his own people. The tentaari was renamed Illmind, and his old named was wiped from all tentaari records. To the tentaari he is and always has been Illmind. Illmind has been trapped on the Helios Gateway Station ever since with minimal supplies surrounded by a small army of jury-rigged robot helpers, trying repair a device he knows he cannot fix.

When the new vaasi force arrived in the Helios system, they attempted to board the Helios Gateway Station, but the fleet lost several ships to its defenses before backing off. Because the Gateway Shield system was no longer functional due to the broken singularity generator, the vaasi fleet likely could have overwhelmed the station; however, the remaining defenses posed a significant obstacle to the vaasi. Clan Lord Oratan elected to leave the gateway station alone for the time being, preferring to secure bases and supplies for the vaasi before losing more ships in an attack on the station. The vaasi did manage to inflict some serious damage on the station and hope to finish the job within the next two years. For now, they avoid the Helios Gateway Station but always keep an eye on it in case someone else tries to pay a visit.

GEOGRAPHY • • •

The Gateway Station is a spherical structure measuring two miles across. It spins quickly on a defined axis, creating artificial gravity for some of the outer layers of the structure. It rotates at a ninety-degree angle to the orbital plane of the Helios system, its southern pole pointed directly away from Helios at all times. The core and poles have no gravity and thus were mainly used for docking ports, storage, and housing the gateway generator itself.

The surface of the station is solid armor plating five feet thick, though some sensor arrays and defensive structures protrude from the outermost layer. It is heavily cratered from the many asteroids that have hit it over the years, and some of the craters have created ruptures in the hull; additionally, the attack by the ships of Assault Clan Ur-Kazzi caused many additional punctures. As a result almost sixty percent of the outermost level of the station is exposed to a vacuum. These ruptured areas have all been sealed off by secondary bulkheads but give the station the appearance of having scores of jagged scars. Airlocks are common throughout the station, but the only ones more than ten feet across are located in the northern docking bays where most of the cargo transfer was carried out. The southern pole houses the gateway generator, which would fire an unstable singularity shielded in a time released force field out of the system when creating a gateway. Thus, most of the southern half of the station is occupied with generators, force field projectors, and other machines while most of the living quarters, supply areas, and docking bays are located in the northern hemisphere. The central shaft is the primary mode of travel between levels using high speed strap-in elevators, but smaller and slower elevators are available in other areas to allow quick transit between floors.

FIXING THE GATEWAY GENERATOR

The damage to the singularity generator is typical of such devices that operate for long periods of time without preventative maintenance. These devices distort the time-space continuum to create temporary singularities; even when not creating singularities they generate a small but persistent warp in time-space that is contained by a small force field. Maintaining this warp essentially demands a grip on the time-space continuum itself, and if it loses this grip it cannot create new singularities. In the early stages of the technology, this state was originally created using another singularity generator. The generators from gateships were used to jump-start the earliest gateway stations; later stations were jump-started using portable-gravity-singularity generators following many weeks of calculations and tests.

Unfortunately, to repair the Helios gateway generator, the singularity projector must have its grip on the time-space continuum restored. Knowledge of the workings of the gateway station can be found with the mechites in the Megacortex, and a suitable singularity can be found beneath the Council Ruin on Eos or in the singularity projector in the gateship of the vaasi fleet.

In game terms, fixing the gateway station requires the following successful checks: Repair (DC 60), Knowledge (Physical Sciences) (DC 60), and Computer Use (DC 40). Each check will take at least 100 man-hours to complete. The gateway station is considered a progress level 10 item.

CLIMATE • • •

The Helios Gateway Station was also equipped to support zones of varying temperature, humidity, pressure, etc. according to the need of its residents. The station is currently set to 70° F (21.11° C), very low humidity, and low atmospheric pressure, which is a climate that Illmind finds very comfortable.

ATMOSPHERE • • •

The Helios Station has no native atmosphere; it is a complete vacuum. Within the intact layers there is a controlled environment. The station's environmental systems were originally programmed to create an environment similar to that of Eos, which all the member species of the Star Confederation could exist in with minimal discomfort. Certain sectors were designed with the comfort of particular species in mind - such as having different atmospheric proportions or temperature settings - and thus had separate climate controls and airlocks where they connected to other sections. Illmind has set all of these to levels comfortable to himself. The default atmosphere is primarily oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon dioxide. Most other species can breathe it without difficulty, but the unusually high oxygen content favored by Illmind may make some individuals (notably humans and velin) feel lightheaded.

CONDITIONS • • •

Characters outside the Helios Gateway Station suffer the normal difficulties of being in a vacuum. Those within the station suffer no unusual effects unless they normally require severely warm, cold, or wet environments. The outer edges of the station have normal gravity, but the inner areas have progressively less gravity until reaching the central axis, which has no gravity. Sectors within 1,000 feet of the surface are considered to have normal gravity; sectors within 1,000 feet of the central axis are considered to have no gravity. Sectors between these two ranges are considered to have light gravity.

The hallways and doors in the gateway station are usually fifteen feet tall, though larger rooms usually have much higher ceilings. All the hallways are well lit, though the station goes through a dark period for eight hours out of every twenty five to simulate night. During this time, the light is similar to that of a full moon. Large parts of the station have been kept clean by Illmind and his robots or the original robotic and nanite cleaners assigned to the station, but some areas - particularly around sections of the hull that were damaged during the vaasi attack long ago - remain cluttered with debris. The station's interior has an empty, antiseptic feel that many species will find disconcerting. It feels much like a tomb, its long white and metallic gray corridors showing no sign of life. All organic remains have long ago been removed and dis-

posed of. The station smells of stale air, having no scent of note.

The station's interior systems are fully operational thanks to the swarms of nanites that have been keeping them in shape. The station is fully illuminated throughout, all the doors function properly, and computer terminals used to access the main computer network are housed every few yards. Power units that can recharge power packs are also scattered throughout the station.

FACTIONS AND FEDERATIONS • • •

ILLMIND AND HIS ROBOT FAMILY • • •

Currently the only inhabitant of the Helios Gateway Station, the tentaari now known as Illmind has the entire station to himself. He is accompanied only by a small fleet of robot helpers he has built out of various spare parts. As a group, Illmind and his robots are concerned with the defense and repair of the station. Everything else is secondary. Illmind and the robots make their home in the southern hemisphere of the station near the singularity generator so they can work on it regularly. They rarely leave this area of the station except for supplies or to greet ships that dock in the docking bay at the northern pole. Illmind sleeps in a room near the primary singularity generator access panel, surrounded by a highly ordered collection of parts, supplies, and reference materials.

Illmind is the only sentient being on the station. The artificial intelligence entities that once ran the station were long ago removed by the tentaari. Illmind's robot companions are well programmed, but they are glorified repair units. They follow his orders without question, and there are always at least ten of with him at all times. Illmind has 30 robots under his control in all. He usually directs five to the control deck of the station, five to the northern docking bay, and ten to patrol the station itself to scavenge for supplies and look for intruders. They react to any violence with overwhelming but nonlethal force as Illmind prefers to capture anyone who attacks him so they can be interrogated. Anyone who enters the station is likely to be detected by Illmind or his robots as soon as they arrive unless they have some sort of extraordinary means to remain undetected.

Despite being the only tentaari in the history of their people to have murdered another tentaari, Illmind is not a violent person. He is what most people would call passionate, but to the tentaari this seems like the behavior of a madman. He and his robots will only engage in combat if attacked or if confronted by vaasi, who are shot on sight. Illmind is more than willing to work with others in getting the gateway station working, though it may take awhile to earn his trust. Illmind does not know where to get a device to restore the time-space grip of the singularity projector or detailed information on fixing the projector, but he is more than willing to help out with whatever plans are proposed to attain such information. People who have had previous encounters with tentaari are likely to be unnerved by Illmind's emotions and lack of ego, probably making them all the more suspicious of him. He does not behave like any other tentaari in the Helios system.

The ultimate goal of Illmind and his robots is to get the Helios Gateway Station working again. Beyond that he has no plans. He originally hoped to rejoin his people assuming he was successful, but now he has little interest in doing so. Illmind is more interested in living among all these more interesting species that now inhabit the Helios system, finding his own people boring by comparison. They, like him, are killers, and so he hopes he will fit in. Maybe one day he will visit other stars again, but for now he has more short-term concerns.

LOCATIONS ON THE GATEWAY STATION • • •

Most of the interior space is taken up by docking bays, the gateway generator and its support devices, living quarters, and storage areas. It has all the amenities one can expect from a space station designed for long-term habitation, including a medical bay, backup power systems, and recreational facilities.

◇ The Control Deck

Located in the northern hemisphere, some 800 feet below the surface, this large chamber (over 400 feet on a side) is the heart of the Helios Gateway Station's operations. It contains hundreds of individual computing ports, each equipped with a neural interface unit. These control stations are spread across several balconies and levels within the room, each with a large, comfortable and configurable chair designed to be used by a number of different alien species. The center of the room is dominated by a massive hologram projector that creates an image of the gateway station and surrounding space, identifying all nearby ships and possible threats.

From here every facet of the station can be controlled, including all gateway operations when the facility was operational. All the defensive systems of the station are operated from the control deck, which houses several dozen gunnery stations for controlling the station's many batteries. Once staffed by the captain of the station and his bridge crew, now five robots scurry around the room constantly keeping an eye on as many systems as possible. All the primary systems have been locked down by Illmind, and using any of the terminals requires a code known only to him and his robots.

The Helios Gateway Station

Located in the northern hemisphere, some 800 feet below the surface, this large chamber (over 400 feet on a side) is the heart of the Helios gateway station's operations. It contains hundreds of individual computing ports, each equipped with a neural interface unit. These control stations are spread across several balconies and levels within the room, each with a large, comfortable and configurable chair designed to be used by a number of different alien species. The center of the room is dominated by a massive hologram projector that creates an image of the gateway station and surrounding space, identifying all nearby ships and possible threats.



◇ Illmind's Hideout

Chosen more for convenience than comfort, Illmind's quarters are a short distance from the primary access panel used to get into the core workings of the singularity projector. Little more than a small cot, some food supplies, a small computer, and a collection of tools, it can barely be qualified as living quarters in the eyes of most. Contained in a room little more than a bare ten-foot cube, Illmind enjoys the austere environment. He sleeps here during the station's dark period, but only requires four hours of sleep, so he spends the rest of the time reading. He has taken to reading the entirety of the station's library and all personnel logs. Originally, this afforded him a means of resting his mind and inducing bursts of non-linear inspiration, but he has become interested in the lives of those who were stationed here. Illmind has been spending an increasing amount of time reading about them instead of trying to fix the station. He is fascinated with how more emotional species interact with each other and their complex social operations, becoming the equivalent of a voyeuristic soap opera fan.

◇ Northern Docking Bay

Located at what would be the northern pole of the Helios Gateway Station, this bay is located within a hole at the top of the station that permanently points directly at Helios. It stretches a mile into the station and is 400 yards across, and it can accommodate ships of up to heavy size. However, it was principally intended to service ships of ultralight and light size that did not have the supplies to head further into the system without restocking. The bay is equipped with cargo-loader arms and tractor beams, allowing ships to be quickly refueled and resupplied or for unloading cargo to the station. It could function as a dry dock when necessary but was not originally designed to do so and instead was upgraded during the war with the Vaasi Empire. The bay can only handle three ships at a time when functioning as a dry dock. It can be reached by any of dozens of airlocks of varying sizes located across the bay. No ships are currently docked at the station, all having been taken during the final evacuation. A small supply of spare parts and other starship components remain in some of the storage areas of the docking bay, meaning characters could find some worthwhile items if they take the time to search the massive structure.

Illmind keeps five robots here on patrol duty to keep an eye out for ships trying to dock in the event the sensors miss them. They also keep the place clean of any debris that may float into the docking bay.

◇ Singularity Projector

Occupying the majority of the station's core, the singularity projector is connected to the surface by a heavily shielded tube. This tube allows the gateway generator to launch temporary unstable singularities when creating a gateway. When operable, the singularity projector is protected by an array of force fields. However, due to the damage to the unit, Illmind has deactivated the force fields so he can gain access to the inner workings of the device. When these force fields are active they are nigh impenetrable, though they protect a very small area. The singularity projector can only be reached by crawling through a number of small shafts that encircle the primary components. The area has no gravity to speak of. Furthermore, it is protected by numerous security systems, which Illmind has bypassed but keeps active to prevent intruders. These systems also prevent an interloper from accessing the singularity projector via the surface shaft. This path is guarded by numerous weapons and sensors, but not all of these remain functional and Illmind has not been diligent in keeping them in good repair.

Relations with other planets of the Helios system • • •

The Helios Gateway Station, i.e., Illmind, has no meaningful relations with any other planets in the system nor plans to establish such relations. Occasionally, the tentaari deliver supplies - including food - to Illmind, but otherwise they rarely think about him. He's dead to them. When the tentaari do dock at the gateway station they avoid him if at all possible, thinking they will somehow become infected with his madness by sheer proximity. While they would like Illmind to succeed, they will likely maroon him somewhere else if he does. They have no interest in rehabilitating or accepting Illmind back into their culture. They just want him far away - of course, if he can be far away doing something useful that's more beneficial to them.

The tentaari try to keep all others away from the gateway station for fear that such visitors might obtain its advanced technology and use it against the tentaari. The tentaari are formulating plans to allow limited numbers of mechites and humans onto the station (under controlled conditions and a watchful eye) to see if they can help repair the station. These plans are long-term and will not come to fruition for decades. Until that time the tentaari will try to scare away anyone who tries to visit the gateway station, resorting to violence only as a last option.

The tentaari have not been back to the station since the arrival of the vaasi in the Cronus Belt, and so do not know of their presence. Illmind hates the vaasi with a passion and is aware of their presence from their prior attack on the station. Illmind has tried to warn the tentaari of the vaasi presence, but



thus far they do not believe him. Between Illmind's report and the data logged by tentaari sensors, any other rational species would have concluded that they were threatened. Unfortunately, the tentaari have adopted their age-old strategy of ignoring a problem they do not wish to acknowledge.

Illmind wants to contact the other species in the Helios system but wants to find a way do so without alerting the vaasi or the tentaari to his efforts. To this end, one of his side projects is building a makeshift probe. He plans to launch it at one of the inner planets, but he's not sure which one yet. The probe, which is designed to appear as nothing more than a rogue asteroid to starship sensors, will contain information about his situation and the vaasi, and would include a plea for assistance. More than likely he will approach the humans or the mechites due to their more ambitious and technological ways. Always looking for allies, Illmind is more than willing to give the species of the Helios system the benefit of the doubt. While still a tentaari at his core (with the coldness, indolence, and capacity for viciousness that entails), he is the closest thing to a real ally among the tentaari the newcomers to Helios are likely to find.

The other species of the system may not be so understanding. While the humans, mechites, haimedians, wolves, elgies, and coqui are likely to respect Illmind's desire to repair the Helios Gateway Station, the straas and saurians are likely to try and take such a technological treasure trove for themselves. If the vaasi achieve a position of power, any of the factions in the Helios system - even the humans - might consider such an action. The Helios Gateway Station offers both a wealth of advanced technology and an immediate escape hatch out of the system - things a civilization on the brink of extinction may be willing to go to extreme measures to obtain.

ADVENTURE IDEAS FOR THE HELIOS GATEWAY STATION • • •

◇ Deadly Cargo

The PCs are hired by an explorer to take him and his cargo of instruments to the Helios Gateway Station. The explorer claims that he hopes to avoid the attention of the tentaari and various governments in order to get the first crack at the station's technologies. In truth, the explorer is under the control of an imperator drone and the cargo pods are full of vaasi commandoes who have decided it may be easier to sneak into the gateway station rather than boarding it by force.

◇ Comet Block

A comet passing through the Helios system is on a collision course with the Gateway Station. It is too large for Illmind to destroy using the station's weaponry. Instead, he theorizes that an explosive device of sufficient charge placed at the appropriate spot will divert its course. Of course, Illmind will need assistance, having no means of leaving the gateway station himself. Perhaps one of the PCs, with a penchant for motion pictures of old Earth, can lend a hand?

◇ Lost Robot

While traveling in the outer regions of the Helios system the PCs come across an escape pod of unfamiliar design. Within, is one of Illmind's robots, accidentally launched from the Helios gateway station during a routine safety check of the escape pod system. The robot attempts to get the PCs to return it to its home and is willing to provide what assistance it can until they are successful.

◇ Rogue Singularity

While working on the gateway generator Illmind accidentally creates a small, extremely unstable singularity which the station's safety systems immediately jettison into space. Unfortunately, the unstable nature of the singularity causes it to alter its course to the heart of the Helios system. Eventually, the force field holding in the power of the singularity will collapse, inflicting massive damage on the system - unless someone can corral it and take it beyond the edges of the system in time.

◇ Solar Flare

Pathmaker 78 gets so nervous about Illmind's machinations that he launches the Glorious Sun in search of a worthy pilot. Easily able to evade detection through the Cronus Belt, the mecha reaches the medial sector of the system. Who will gain control of this remarkable machine? The saurians, wolves, tentaari? Or perhaps the PCs.

EQUIPMENT OF THE HELIOS GATEWAY STATION • • •

While it has been stripped of the majority of equipment and personal effects, there is still a significant amount of advanced technology to be found on the station. Most of it is in the form of tools, emergency supplies, spare parts, and computers, with a limited number of weapons and other military devices. The Helios Gateway Station was foremost a transportation hub, and Star Confederation tactical doctrine concentrated on preventing the vaasi from boarding the station rather than responding to a successful boarding action. All of the equipment on the station is made of materials appropriate to at least progress level 7. Everything is made out of advanced synthetics, strange plastics, and unusually light metals. What equipment remains is sparse though, and it can take many hours of searching to find the simplest tools. Illmind has organized and cataloged the items stored in some areas of the station, but his work only encompasses a fourth of the station's volume centered on his personal quarters. In this area, all equipment has been organized in storage lockers containing anything Illmind thought he might find useful at some point. Outside of this area, all remaining equipment is cast about randomly, left where it was last put by its long-dead owners. Much of the equipment in the station has decayed over time and is now little more than dust. However, some of the advanced materials used by the Star Confederation are very resilient, and other items have been maintained by nanites. Most of the items that consume power are out of energy. The equipment was designed to suit the myriad species of the Star Confederation, which varied from fifteen-foot reptilian humanoids to slimy cellulose-based creatures. The PCs may be hard-pressed to find suitable gear.

Due to the fact that Illmind is the only inhabitant of the Helios Gateway Station there is no economy to speak of in the station. He is not stingy with these supplies and is more than willing to share them with whoever needs them. A tentaari in this respect, he is very wary about handing out sophisticated technology to those who are not sufficiently advanced. Anyone who tries to force the issue will be confronted with a small army of robots armed with very powerful weapons.

◇ Adventuring Equipment

Nanite Jammer

A common device in most Star Confederation military outposts, these devices prevent all nanites within their broadcast area from functioning unless they are specifically equipped to resist it. Nanite jammers create waves of electromagnetic radiation that are harmless to living beings and most machines other than some sensors and the delicate systems within nanites. Within the effective radius of one of these transmitters all nanites immediately stop functioning and remain inert until the jammer is shut down or the nanites are outside the area of effect. Nanites can be created that are protected against specific classes of jammer, allowing these "friendly" nanites to function normally within the jamming field. In battles between the Star Confederation and the Vaasi Empire, nanite jammers were among the primary targets since their destruction would allow the use of weapon nanites. Conversely, due to their negative impact on sensors, jammers were generally activated only when a nanite threat was imminent. Portable nanite jammers affect a spherical area with a radius of fifteen feet, but larger ones often affected areas many miles across. Any sensor systems within this area, such as those on a ship or mech, have their range reduced by half.

Portable Force Field Projector

A common defense and emergency tool in the Star Confederation, the portable force field projector is a small cube roughly a foot on each side made of plastic and metal. Activating a control pad projects either: (1) a sphere of force around itself with a maximum diameter of 20 feet, or (2) a 10-foot-by-10-foot wall anywhere within 20 feet of the projector. The force field created by the projector has a DR of 30 and energy resistance of 30. In addition gases and liquids cannot pass through the force field, and it can support up 10 tons of weight without collapsing. The portable force field projector runs off of power packs and consumes one charge for every round of use.

D20 MODERN EQUIPMENT IN THE HELIOS GATEWAY STATION

Most of the items in the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game can be found in the Helios Gateway Station - though not in any great quantities and not before hours of searching if then. Weapons, armor, and vehicles from the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game are not found on the station except for a handful of primitive melee weapons.

FUTURE EQUIPMENT IN THE HELIOS GATEWAY STATION

PL 5: All progress level 5 equipment is available in the Helios Gateway Station except for weapons, armor, vehicles, and anything that is made obsolete by more advanced technologies.

PL 6: All progress level 6 equipment is available in the Helios Gateway Station except for weapons, armor, vehicles, and anything that is made obsolete by more advanced technologies.

PL 7: All progress level 7 equipment is available in the Helios Gateway Station except for concussion rifles, concussion rods, gravity snares, piercing visors, and rail guns.

PL 8: All Progress Level 8 equipment is available in the Helios Gateway Station except for cryonic rifles, disintegrators, hologuises, phasing ammunition, singularity grenades, and teleporting magazines.

◇ Adventuring Equipment

Before it fell to the Vaasi Empire, the Star Confederation relied on nano-technology for several eons. Nanites were widely used in industrial, repair, waste-disposal, medical, and even agricultural facilities. Some citizens harbored fears of crazed nanites turning into grey goo or some other hostile form, but the Star Confederation placed stringent controls on all nanite programming to prevent such issues. Any crimes involving nanites were dealt with harshly, and unauthorized reprogramming of nanites was punishable by memory and personality alteration.

The Helios Gateway Station was outfitted with a full complement of nanite colonies to handle every conceivable task. Many were removed from the station when it was abandoned following the vaasi invasion of Helios or were later taken by the tentaari for their own use. However, some were left behind and have been replicating and recharging themselves from the station's powerful fusion generators ever since. Many of them carry out the last commands they were given, cleaning up long dormant hallways or tuning up machines that haven't been used in ages. These nanites are the primary reason that the Helios Gateway Station remains in as good condition as it does. Illmind has begun tasking some of the nanites to other duties. This has led to some areas of the station becoming noticeably more cluttered and dirty than the areas that still have their full nanite complement.

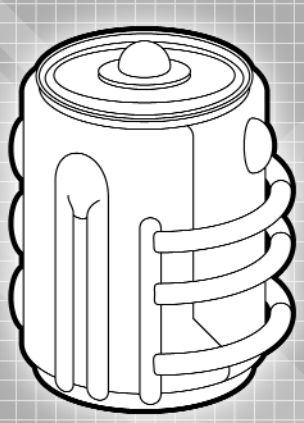
The nanites on the gateway station are all controlled by the computer mainframe and may be accessed through any computer terminal. There are also a number of portable nanite control units spread throughout the station that allow the nanites to be given verbal commands in Unispeak within a range of 50 feet. The commands must be simple, usually limited to movement or manipulating specific objects. More complex commands must be entered into the mainframe. Nanites removed from the gateway station are only be able to follow simple commands through a nanite control unit. This limitation is one of the safeguards developed by the Star Confederation.

The Star Confederation followed strict guidelines regarding the use of nanites in warfare. Some military applications were simply too repugnant to ever use. Because of this they primarily used nanites for technical, medical, and defensive purposes. Nanite weapons were strictly outlawed by the Star Confederation except for nanites designed to attack inorganic matter exclusively. Modifying nanites to consume organic matter other than for waste control was a high crime.

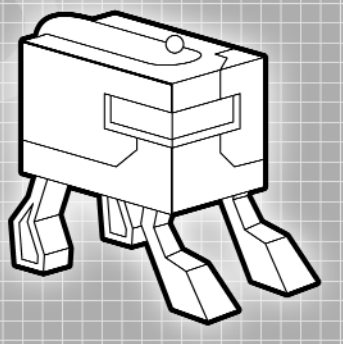
Star Confederation nanites are progress level 9 technology, and would be regarded as relics on any of the inner planets of the Helios system. They have no Purchase DC due to their rarity and power; nanite weapons are likely to be adjudged illegal. Anyone on Eos or C'thalk in possession of nanites is likely to garner the interest of a number of factions.

While some nanites have the capacity to replicate to maintain the population of a particular colony, their programming prevents them from increasing their numbers beyond these limits unless specifically directed to a Star Confederation operator (excluding artificial intelligence entities). Nanites on the Helios Gateway Station will stop replicating if removed and will become inoperable after six months. Generally, a nanite colony occupies a space roughly equivalent to 108 cubic inches or one quart of volume, but most of this is volume is actually comprised of space between the individual nanites.

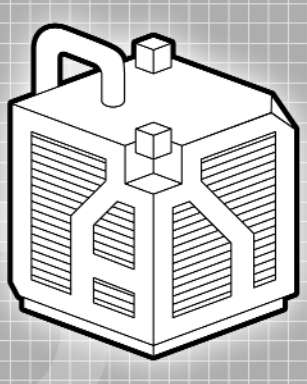
Adventuring Equipment



Nanite Toolkit

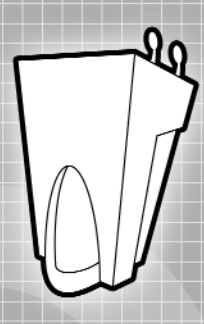


Nanite Jammer

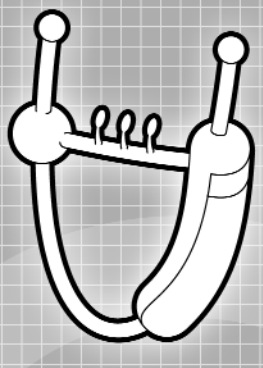


Portable Force Field Projector

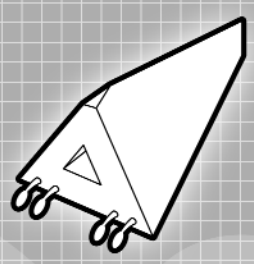
Nanotechnology



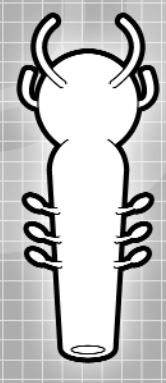
Nanocleaners



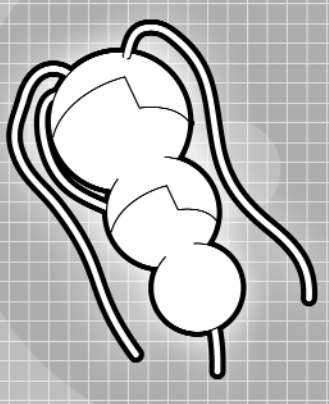
Nanosutures



Nanoshielding



Bore Nanites



Nanolung



Stasis Colony

In addition to the nanite colonies described below, the following colonies described in the Future rules of the d20 Modern SRD were all used by the Star Confederation: gray goo, unseen bodyguard, utility fog, calcion, onco-guard, brain boost, chatter, micro muscles, prophecy, soullink, 20/20, and watchdog.

Nanite Toolkit

A common device used by technicians across the Star Confederation, it consists of a large container filled with nanites and a radio control unit. The nanites can be shaped into any sort of tool or directed to simply swarm a device to be repaired. The nanites have a limited artificial intelligence program that allows them to act on their own, having a Repair +8 skill bonus and a functional PL Familiarity of 8. When used by a controller, they provide a +8 equipment bonus to the controller's Repair skill checks. The nanite toolkit runs off of power packs, consuming one charge per hour of use.

Nanocleaners

These nanites were used throughout the Star Confederation to clean out unwanted nanites. They can be injected into organic material or sprayed onto surfaces. One colony will purge 10 cubic feet of material (including objects or creatures of Medium size or smaller). Double the number of colonies is required for each step increase in size, e.g., 2 colonies for Large, 4 for Huge, etc. Within one minute of being applied, the nanocleaner renders inert all nanites within the effective range. Nanocleaners are usually deployed using a nanite sprayer. They were sometimes deployed in bombs or missiles in order to take out hostile nanite colonies from a distance. They can remain active for up to one hour after deployment.

If deployed against a nanite swarm that is treated as a creature (such as the wild nanite swarms of the Hollow Dark), they inflict 10 hit points of damage each round (no save) until the target nanite colony is destroyed.

Nanoshielding

A defensive application used by elite Star Confederation forces, nanoshielding is a layer of nanites that covers the surface of whatever it is applied to. The micro-robots dissipate kinetic energy, protecting whatever they adhere to. They were commonly used on personal armor and vehicles, but sometimes they were even applied directly to the skin. One colony will protect 50 square feet of material (including objects or creatures of Medium size or smaller). Double the number of colonies is required for each step increase in size, e.g., 2 colonies for Large, 4 for Huge, etc. Nanoshielding turns the affected object silver or gold in color, a process that made cosmetic versions a favored fashion accessory among the wealthiest members of the Star Confederation. A nanoshielding colony provides DR 3/- and energy resistance of 3. Nanoshielding may be injected into organic material or spread across the object's surface.

Nanosutures

Commonly used in hospitals and military units across the Star Confederation, this nanite colony is injected into appropriate candidates after extensive medical scans using a medicomp or other medical sensor. Using the information gained from the scans, the nanites are programmed to the subject's anatomy, a process that normally requires a Computer Use check (DC 15) and 10 minutes of work. Once injected the nanites begin repairing any damage the subject has suffered, healing one hit point every hour. The nanites cannot regrow lost limbs or remedy other grievous injuries. Any Treat Injury checks made on someone with nanosutures enjoys a +4 circumstance bonus. One colony will affect creatures of Medium size or smaller. Double the number of colonies is required for each step increase in size, e.g., 2 colonies for Large, 4 for Huge, etc. Nanosutures function indefinitely as long as the subject consumes double his normal amount of daily protein, which is used by the nanites as fuel.

Nanolung

Used by explorers and diplomats, nanolungs are introduced into the subject's system by drinking a liquid suspension. The nanites then travel through the subject's circulatory system until they reach the lungs, at which point they exit the blood and attach themselves to the inner surfaces of the lungs. Within an hour of being consumed, the nanites form a protective layer in the lungs, allowing the subject to breathe by taking in any non-toxic substance (liquid or gas) that contains even trace amounts of oxygen. The nanites may be programmed to extract other gases for those species that do not rely on oxygen. The user can effectively breathe underwater or in alien atmospheres where oxygen is present at lower levels (provided there are no toxic chemicals). Nanolung nanites provide no defense against pressure or vacuum. Dangerous gases still affect the subject; however, he receives a +4 circumstance bonus to any Fortitude saves against such gases. One colony will affect creatures of Medium size or smaller. Double the number of colonies is required for each step increase in size, e.g., 2 colonies for Large, 4 for Huge, etc. Nanolung nanites function indefinitely as long as the subject consumes double his normal amount of daily protein, which is used by the nanites as fuel.

Stasis Colony

Used by emergency medical teams in the Star Confederation, these nanites stabilize seriously injured individuals until they can be brought to a

Adventuring Gear

Name	PL	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Nanite Colonies					
Nanocleaners	9	T	1 lb.	-	-
Nanoshielding	9	T	1 lb.	-	-
Nanosutures	9	T	1 lb.	-	-
Nanolung	9	T	1 lb.	-	-
Stasis Colony	9	T	1 lb.	-	-
Bore Nanites	9	T	1 lb.	-	-
Nanite Control Unit	9	T	1 lb.	-	-
Nanite Toolkit	9	S	3 lb.	-	-
Portable Force Field Generator	9	S	5 lb.	-	-
Nanite Jammer	9	S	10 lb.	-	-

fully equipped medical center. These nanites are injected into the target and immediately stabilize the subject for one hour. If the target is already at -10 hit points or below, the nanites stave off decomposition of the body for one hour. (This effect enables abilities that can restore recently dead bodies such as the field medic's Medical Miracle class ability.) If injected into a target before it is wounded, the nanites automatically stabilize them as soon as they reach negative hit points. The nanites are rendered inert upon the expiration of the stasis effect.

The vaasi developed a way to corrupt the programming of these nanites using special types of radiation. The resulting modified nanites were called "shambler nanites" because they caused the infected bodies to lurch like zombies, causing confusion and fear among the victim's allies. A body infected with shambler nanites will wander a random direction at a speed of 10 feet per round. The effect lasts indefinitely until the victim dies and for up to one hour thereafter. The creature cannot be stabilized until the shambler nanites are removed from its system or rendered inert. One colony will affect creatures of Medium size or smaller). Double the number of colonies is required for each step increase in size, e.g., 2 colonies for Large, 4 for Huge, etc.

Bore Nanites

One of the few weapon nanites used by the Star Confederation, bore nanites were designed to attack inanimate objects, including vehicles and structures. These nanites were normally dropped in nanite bombs or placed on the ground where the enemy was likely to travel across the infected area and programmed to trigger upon movement. Infected objects suffer 10 points of damage per round (no save). Bore nanites ignore up to 40 points of hardness. Once activated, bore nanites become inert after 20 rounds. One colony will affect 10 cubic feet of material (including objects or creatures of Medium size or smaller). Double the number of colonies is required for each step increase in size, e.g., 2 colonies for Large, 4 for Huge, etc.

Traditional bore nanites have no effect on organic matter. However, some nefarious types have altered their programming to do just that. When a living being comes into contact with such modified nanites, it must make a Fortitude save each round (DC 25) or take 2d10 points of damage.

WEAPONS • • •

For most of its history the Star Confederation only developed nonlethal personal weapons, having a strong belief against killing even in self defense. Only Star Confederation starships were equipped with lethal weaponry since weapons of such a massive scale were required for space combat. Even then, most ships were equipped with EMP cannons, grapplers, and other boarding devices so they could capture enemy ships with minimal casualties. Most of the species they encountered were less advanced by comparison. Thus, even the few that were hostile did not pose a significant threat and were quickly won over with diplomacy. Only the most elite forces of the Star Confederation military were armed with lethal weapons. However, when the war with the Vaasi Empire began to turn against the Star Confederation, this situation changed dramatically.

No longer able to make do with nonlethal weapons against the savage hordes of vaasi arrayed against them, the Star Confederation began constructing plasma, laser, and more advanced weapons to equip their troops. The technology advanced by leaps and bounds over the course of the war, eventually leading to weapons like the singularity rifle constructed on the Green Reach facility. Most Star Confederation troops were armed with some manner of plasma, disintegration, or force field weapons. As new weapons were created the old weapons were shunted to non-frontline

troops. Thus, troops in areas that did not see combat until the end of the war (such as the marines stationed on the Helios Gateway Station) were mainly outfitted with old or obsolete personal weaponry. Most of the weapons to be found on the Helios Gateway Station now were considered antiques by the Star Confederation - but they are lethal weapons by today's standards. In addition to the weapons detailed below, pain prods and plasma carbines (from Chapter 3) and tentaari disintegrator pistols and rifles (described in Dawning Star: Operation Quick Launch) can be found on the Helios Gateway Station. However, most of these weapons were taken by the last marines to evacuate the station, leaving less than a score altogether.

◇ Star Confederation Melee Weapons

While the Star Confederation primarily relied on ranged weapons in matters of warfare, melee weapons were used both by infantry and civilians. Melee weapons were used by the military stationed on starships to prevent accidental decompression by stray ammunition (though on most capital ships the hull was of sufficient hardness to make such concerns unwarranted). Many Star Confederation soldiers liked carrying a melee weapon that did not rely on energy in case they were hit by an EMP discharge or other event that rendered their more advanced equipment nonfunctional. While these soldiers were issued force clubs and pain prods, many carried boot knives and swords for emergencies.

Among the civilian population of the Star Confederation melee combat was a common recreational pastime - particularly using primitive weapons significant to the member cultures. Swords, spears, and other archaic melee weapons were often used with reckless abandon in these recreational battles due to the advanced medical care available. While dueling was officially illegal, on some border worlds of the Star Confederation it was a common practice when settling disputes.

The more primitive weapons used by the Star Confederation are equivalent to the melee weapons described in the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game.

Force Club

Using a smaller version of a portable force field generator, this weapon resembles an oversized flashlight when not in use. When turned on it emits a small laser that is used to detect when the weapon approaches an object with sufficient speed and control that the force club registers the object as its target. On a successful attack roll against such a target, the weapon creates a force field in the shape of a large club, imbuing it with significant kinetic force in the direction the weapon is swung. The effect can be adjusted to reduce the impact and inflict nonlethal damage. It uses a Star Confederation power pack and consumes 2 charges on each successful attack. Adjusting the setting from lethal to nonlethal damage is a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Force Cutter

This weapon employs a more advanced version of the technology used in the force club. On a successful attack roll, the force cutter creates an impossibly thin force field within the target object. The force field quickly increases in thickness, disrupting the molecular bonds it passes between. The resulting effect appears as though the target is cut cleanly half with no jagged edges or cracks. When used against an object, a force cutter ignores up to 20 points of hardness. It uses a Star Confederation power pack and consumes 3 charges on each successful attack. This weapon was originally designed as a construction tool, but it saw use in the later stages of the war with boarding and assault troops. The leaders of the Star Confederation were never comfortable with deploying such a deadly weapon with their troops, but they felt they had no choice.

◇ Star Confederation Ranged Weapons

For eons the Star Confederation relied heavily on ranged weapons. Initially they used slug throwers similar to those used by humans, saurians, and wolves; by the time the war with the Vaasi Empire ended the Star Confederation was hurling small singularities from rifles. The Star Confederation relied almost entirely on energy weapons towards the end of the war, having long ago retired any projectile weapons other than nanite delivery systems. Most of these weapons are not intended to be used against living beings, inflicting such horrendous damage that only the most heavily armored vehicles could survive a hit. Infantry was never a vital part of the Star Confederation military in an age of orbital bombardment and megatanium armor plating.

Melee Weapons of the Star Confederation

Weapon	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Force Club (Simple)	9	2d10	20/x2	Bludgeoning	Medium	2 lb.	-	Lic (+1)
Force Cutter (Simple)	9	3d10	19-20/x3	Slashing	Medium	2 lb.	-	Lic (+1)

Nanite Eliminator

This device transmits a focused beam of the same radiation used in the nanite jammer to completely eradicate colonies of nanites. It was mainly employed against combat nanite colonies used by the Vaasi Empire such as those found on Phaeton. Nanites struck by this weapon have their programming wiped and become completely inert. Creatures with nanites get a Fortitude save (DC 16). If the save fails, all the nanites in the creature are rendered inert. This weapon only inflicts damage on nanite colonies. Creature-like nanite colonies struck by an eliminator must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. The weapon runs off of a Star Confederation power pack and consumes two charges each time it is fired.

Nanite Sprayer

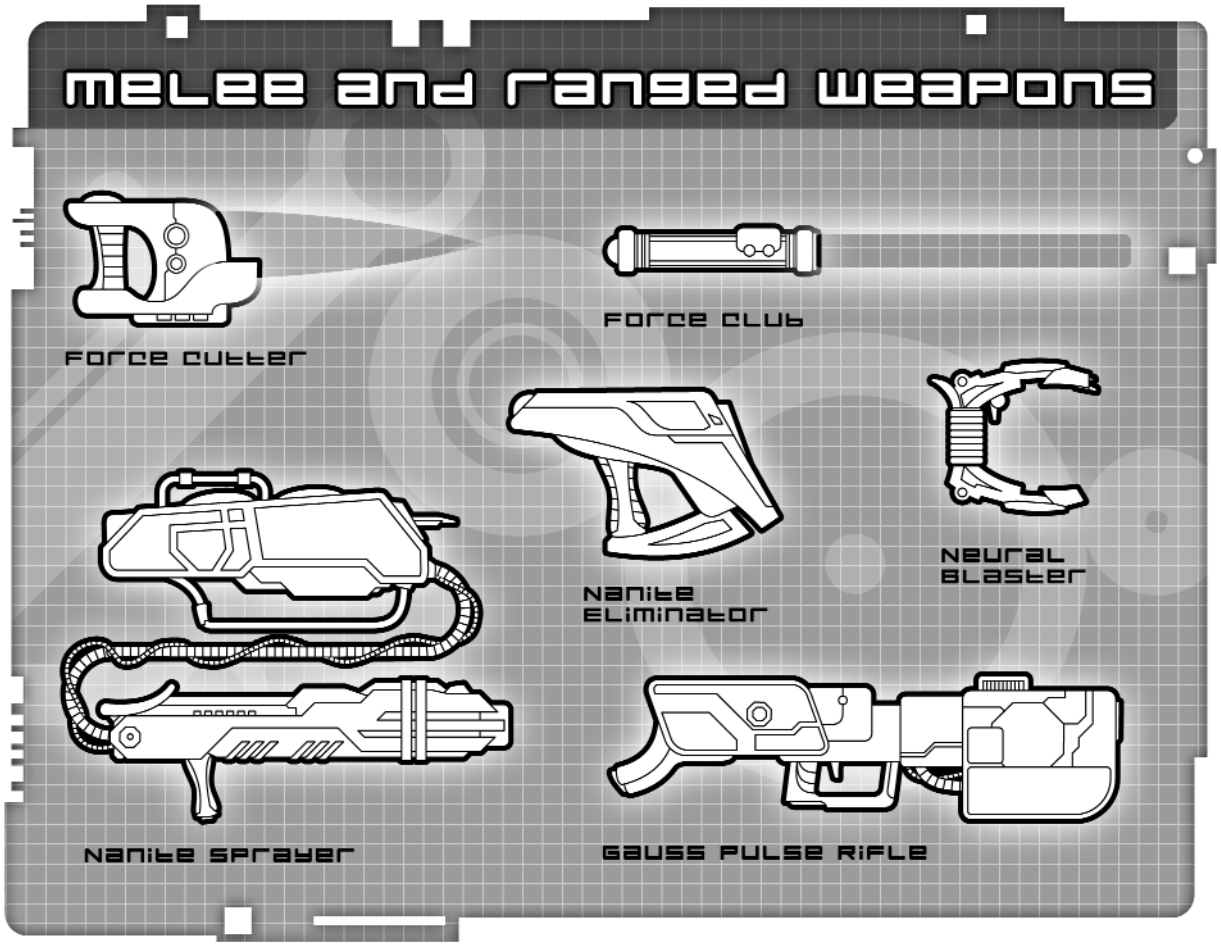
While used both in military and civilian applications, the nanite sprayer was primarily used to deploy bore nanites or incapacitation nanites during the latter stages of the war. Similar in appearance to a terran flamethrower, it uses a spray of charged particles to deliver the nanites to its target. The weapon creates a cone-shaped spray one hundred feet long and fifty feet wide at its base. The weapon uses a series of lasers to detect moving targets within its range, spraying nanites only at those targets so stationary objects are not normally affected. Moving objects within the cone may make Reflex save (DC 14) to avoid being affected by the nanite sprayer. Any target failing the save is coated in the nanites loaded into the sprayer, consuming one colony per target affected. If there are insufficient colonies in the sprayer to affect all of the targets, the closest targets are affected first.

The operator can manually use the sprayer to cover stationary objects. One colony will affect 10 cubic feet of material (including objects or creatures of Medium size or smaller). Double the number of colonies is required for each step increase in size, e.g., 2 colonies for Large, 4 for Huge, etc.

The sprayer does no damage by itself, but the nanites it sprays generally do. The nanite sprayer runs off of a Star Confederation power pack and consumes ten charges each time it is fired. A sprayer comes with a backpack container than can hold 30 nanite colonies.

Neural Blaster

A primitive forerunner of the brainshock technology pioneered on Green Reach, the neural blaster relies on the power of a Red Truth-enabled wielder to expose the minds of its targets to the power of Red Truth. It was not a very common weapon dur-



Ranged Weapons of the Star Confederation

Weapon*	PL	Damage	Critical	Damage Type	Range Increment	RoF	Magazine	Size	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Nanite Eliminator*	9	-	19-20	Energy	200 ft.	S	Power pack	M	4 lb.	-	-
Nanite Sprayer*	9	-	-	-	-	S	Power pack and nanite tank	M	8 lb.	-	-
Neural Blaster**	9	1d6 Wisdom	-	Psionic	50 ft.	S	Power pack and power points	S	2 lb.	-	Res (+2)
Gauss Pulse Rifle*	8	10d10	19-20	Energy	500 ft.	S	Power pack	L	10 lb.	-	Res (+2)

*These weapons fall under the Personal Firearms Proficiency.

**This weapon falls under the Exotic Firearms Proficiency (Neural Blaster).

ing any time in Star Confederation history. Presently, only one blaster remains on the Helios Gateway Station. These weapons were considered highly dangerous but more humane than other lethal weapons. They were often assigned to the Mind Hunters, a group of specially trained psionicists charged with dealing with psionic criminals and military threats within the Star Confederation. This device can only be used by those who have psionic power points, which further limited any widespread use.

The neural blaster consists of a horseshoe-shaped hand-held unit, which is held with the two prongs pointed at the target. This unit is connected to an intricate set of neural sensors worn on the skull, usually in the form of a tight fitting skullcap, goggles, or a helmet. Due to the delicate connections the neural sensors must make, the weapon takes one minute to ready, and the wielder can take no other actions during that time. Once ready, the weapon may be fired normally, requiring the expenditure of five power points and a ranged touch attack against the target. Creatures struck by the neural blaster must make a Will save (DC 15 + the wielder's Wisdom bonus) or take 1d6 points of temporary Wisdom damage. The neural blaster runs off of a Star Confederation power pack and consumes five charges each time it is fired.

Gauss Pulse Rifle

An older weapon that still saw regular use in the armed forces of the Star Confederation, the gauss pulse rifle fires a powerful bolt of electromagnetic energy at its target. The pulse damages electronic devices and temporarily renders them inoperable. It has a relatively short range and was used principally by urban combat troops and marines. The gauss pulse rifle became a favored anti-armor weapon among the troops of the Star Confederation, who valued it for its reliability and effectiveness despite its age.

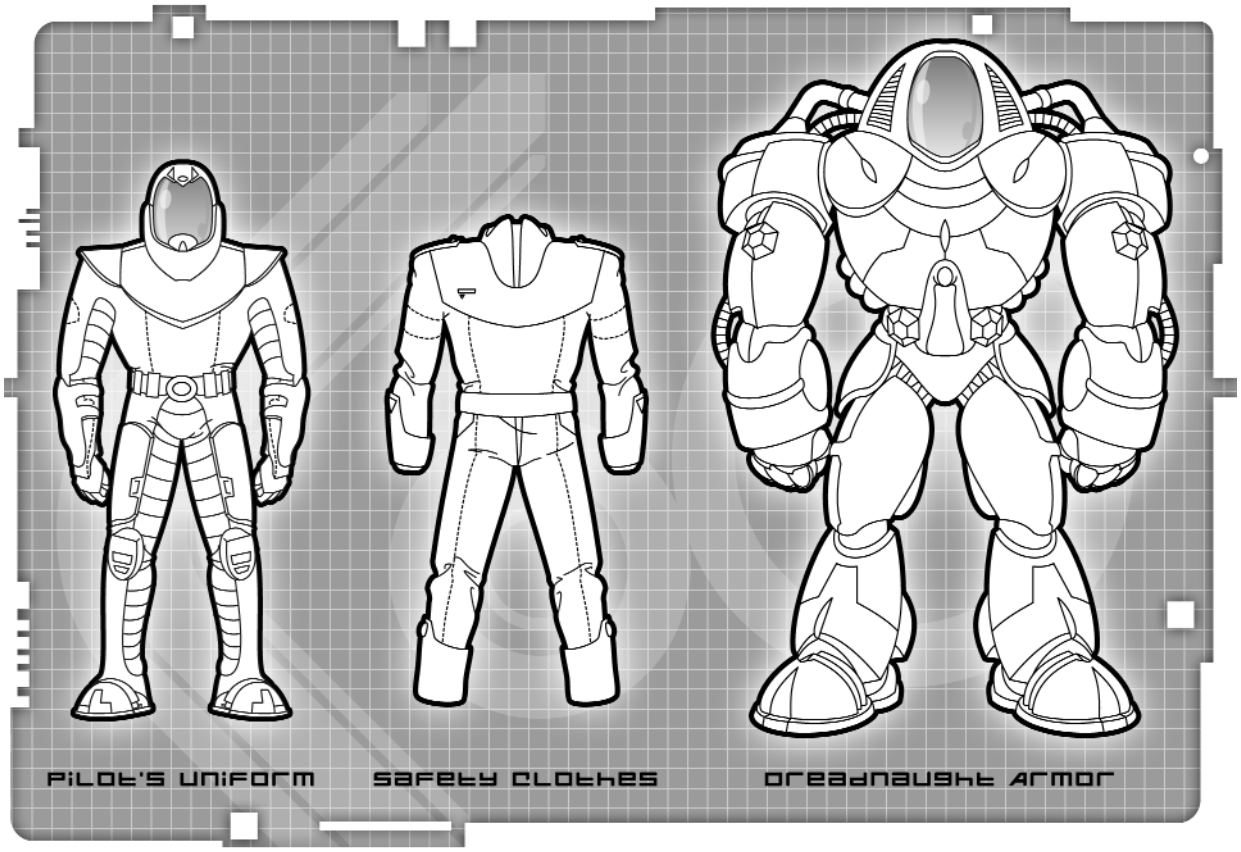
Gauss pulse rifles inflict no damage on living beings, but electrical devices (including nanites and mechites) suffer 10d10 points of energy damage. Gauss pulse rifles ignore half of their target's hardness. Devices struck by a gauss pulse rifle become inoperable for 1d4 rounds. Creature-like devices (such as robots) get a Fortitude save (DC 16) for half damage and to avoid being stunned for 1d4 rounds. Gauss pulse rifles run off of Star Confederation power packs and consume five charges with each shot.

AMMUNITION • • •

All the Star Confederation weapons that remain on the Helios Gateway Station rely on Star Confederation power packs, which hold 100 charges. Dozens of these power packs remain, most of which are stored in recharging stations that can fully recharge a power pack in one minute.

ARMOR • • •

Even simple Confederation clothes often included some basic form of protection, either in the form of special fibers, plates that harden on impact but otherwise remain flexible, or small deflecting force fields. These were primarily used to prevent accidents and were not very useful in combat. Actual combat armor was only found among the Star Confederation military. All Star Confederation armor is composed of advanced polymers and ceramics that are extremely tough but lightweight. Armor was often reinforced with portable energy fields and other support systems. Due to the prevalence of weapons that could easily wipe out massed troops in short order, Star Confederation armor was designed with mobility as a higher priority than protection. Those suits of heavier armor that were produced were usually assigned to marine units defending the ships of the Star Confederation fleet, though some special forces units were similarly equipped.



During the latter stages of the war each gateway station was assigned at least five hundred marines to repel any attempts to board or infiltrate the station; more important stations (such as the Helios Gateway Station) were garrisoned with several thousand marines. These marines either died defending the station from the vaasi, died in one of the later battles after trying to join up with other Star Confederation forces in the system, or fled the system after all hope was lost. In any case, the marines took most of their armor with them, leaving only a handful of suits behind in storage lockers. Most of these suits have been maintained by the station's nanites. Illmind has little interest in them, meaning the majority of the remaining armor suits can be found in their original storage lockers in pristine condition. Finding a specific suit of armor that fits a particular species will be more difficult.

◇ Light Armor

Star Confederation Pilot's Uniform

Originally designed for use by fighter pilots, the uniform eventually became standard equipment for all personnel assigned to duty aboard Star Confederation ships and space stations. Similar to a flight suit, a pilot uniform is made of lightweight material with some reinforcement plates and heavy padding at the major joints and other critical locations. It covers the entire body, including special boots, gloves, and a helmet that can be used to seal the wearer against environmental conditions. A pilot's uniform is made of the same materials as safety clothes, but with more layers, a built-in computer system, and an environmental seal that can be activated in times of emergency. Activating the environmental seal is a move-equivalent action, which provokes an attack of opportunity. The pilot uniform can function as a space suit for up to 48 hours. It grants the wearer cold resistance 5, electricity resistance 5, fire resistance 5, acid resistance 5, and sonic/concussion resistance 5. Additionally, the wearer enjoys a +4 equipment bonus on all saving throws against radiation. It comes standard with a universal communicator, magnetic boots, a GalPos device, and four built-in Star Confederation power packs. The built-in computer is very small, housed between layers of armor cloth in the helmet, but it is as powerful as a progress level 7 super computer, granting a +4 equipment bonus to all Computer Use skill checks. Only a handful of these suits of armor remain on the Helios Gateway Station.

Star Confederation Safety Clothes

Worn by most Star Confederation civilians, these clothes come in a wide variety of styles, shapes, and colors. Available for every member race of the Star Confederation and even some ward races, existing suits will fit most of the current inhabitants of the Helios system while others will require massive alterations. Unfortunately, such alterations are difficult due to the resilient nature of the materials, requiring a Repair check (DC 25). Safety clothes are considered progress level 9 technology.

Armor of the Star Confederation

	PL	Type	Equipment Bonus	Nonprof. Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Penalty	Speed	Weight	Purchase DC	Restriction
Light Armor										
Pilot's Uniform	9	Tactical	+6	+1	+8	+0	30 ft./20 ft.	2 lb.	-	-
Safety Clothes	9	Concealed	+5	+1	+10	+0	30 ft./20 ft.	1 lb.	-	-
Heavy Armor										
Dreadnaught Armor	9	Tactical	+14	+3	+2	-10	20 ft./15 ft.	60 lb.	-	Mil (+3)

Safety clothes were the normal, day-to-day clothes worn by the citizens of the Star Confederation. As such they suffered none of the normal social stigma of wearing armor. Available in everything from pajamas to formal wear, most of the suits that survive on the Helios Gateway Station are simple utility jump suits or formal regalia used in diplomatic functions. The wearer gains cold resistance 3, electricity resistance 3, fire resistance 3, and acid resistance 3.

◇ Heavy Armor

Star Confederation Dreadnaught Armor

One of the more common types of armor utilized by Star Confederation marines, dreadnaught armor is designed to make the wearer a walking tank. Blurring the line between mecha and armor, it increases the height of its wearer by two feet and greatly magnifies his strength as well. The armor has numerous built-in systems, including a full environmental seal that can allow it to operate in a vacuum for up too two weeks and a powerful onboard computer. Dreadnaught armor was designed to be modular and could quickly be configured to fit different wearers, assuming the right tools are on hand. Currently there is only one suit of dreadnaught armor remaining on the Helios Gateway station.

Dreadnaught armor was not cutting-edge at the end of the war with the Vaasi Empire, but it was still in common use due to a shortage of more advanced suits of armor. It was used primarily on capital ships and space stations to repel boarders, though it was sometimes used in boarding actions as well. It was not designed for long-term use and tends to break down quickly outside of a controlled environment like the inside of a space station. Planetside, it suffers from a wide variety of problems, from rust to mold. For every ten days a dreadnaught suit is kept in an unregulated environment, a Repair check (DC 20) is required to keep it functioning. This process takes 6 hours.

Dreadnaught armor grants the wearer a +10 equipment bonus to Strength. It comes standard with a universal communicator, a matter shield, a personal force field, a grappling tether, GalPos device, armacomp sensor, democomp sensor, medicomp sensor, motion sensor, 2 colonies of stasis nanites, and ten chemical auto-injectors, which normally hold 2 doses of sporekill, 3 does of plastiflesh, 2 doses of antitox, and 3 doses of neutrad. Dreadnaught armor also has the self-repairing (PL 8) and satellite datalink gadgets. It provides its wearer with acid resistance 12, cold resistance 12, electricity resistance 12, fire resistance 12, and sonic/concussion resistance 12. It confers a +10 equipment bonus to saving throws against radiation.

COMPUTERS • • •

The computers used by the Star Confederation were massively powerful by any measure, able to mimic the behavior of a sentient being with such accuracy that the rights of artificial intelligence entities was a hotly debated topic. The Star Confederation relied on computers to keep its civilization operating. Computers were found in every aspect of life, from the processors of safety clothes to the massive central computers of gateway stations that performed the necessary calculations. Computers were so ubiquitous in the Star Confederation that all devices were expected to have computerized elements - even items as simple as a writing utensil or a button on a piece of clothing. Items that had no computer element were oddities that were often hoarded by collectors and treated as historical artifacts of times long past. Every citizen of the Star Confederation was supported each day by thousands of computers, most of which were never given a second thought.

The apex of Star Confederation computers, such as artificial intelligence entities or the main computer systems of gateway stations, were technological marvels. These computers usually relied on special crystalline processors that enabled very fast calculations and could hold a vast amount of information. These crystals required a number of rare elements to create and could only be made by specially programmed nanites operating in zero gravity. The Star Confederation was beginning to experiment with computers that used Red Truth to store data and perform calculations, creating computers that

Computers

Name	Weight	Size	Purchase DC	Restriction
Hand Crystal	T	1 lb.	-	-

had biological components in addition to crystal components. However, little progress was made before the Star Confederation fell to the Vaasi Empire. The largest and most powerful surviving computer of the Star Confederation is the central processor of Computer One, the asteroid library home of the mechites. While considered obsolete, it is still amazingly powerful by human standards.

Hand Crystal

A small portable computer that was once commonly used by Star Confederation technicians and scientists, it makes use of the crystal material developed for artificial intelligence entities to create a portable computer. The device is composed of a holographic screen, a motion detecting keyboard, a pointer interface, a speaker, and the crystal processor. A hand crystal does not have enough power to house an artificial intelligence entity, but could easily hold any app-3 program or other non-Star Confederation program. The hand crystal uses Unispeak for all of its output. The user of a hand crystal gains a +12 equipment bonus to all Computer Use skill checks.

RELICS • • •

Due to their advanced nature, most of the surviving technological items on the Helios Gateway Station would be considered relics on Eos, Thres, or C'thalk. In addition to the weapons, armor, and other devices already described, the following relics can be found on the Helios Gateway Station.

Gateway Rod

Once owned by the commander of the Helios Gateway Station, this scepter-like device is a powerful crystal-based computer and transmitter with a continuous connection to the main computer of the Helios Gateway Station. The rod is three feet long and made of black metal and crystal. All the major functions of the station, including running the programs necessary to spawn a gateway, can be activated using the gateway rod. Using this device, the station commander could keep track of all operations on the station and exert emergency control over any gateway travel. The gateway rod must be recharged every year, but it may be removed from the Helios Gateway Station without effect. It communicates with the station's central computer at light speed, meaning the further it gets from the Helios Gateway Station the greater the delay in carrying out commands and the less effective it becomes. The gateway rod requires knowledge of Unispeak to use. Anyone attempting to interface with any computer or nanite colony on the station using the gateway rod gains a +16 equipment bonus to their Computer Use skill check. Also the gateway rod houses an artificial intelligence entity called Helper 7, which is programmed to function as the secretary to the station commander and as major domo of the station. The gateway rod lies under some rubble in a remote area of the station exposed to the vacuum of space due to a surface breach. Illmind does not know the location of the gateway rod. It is presently without power. The rod can be used as a club in a pinch.

CYBERNETICS IN THE STAR CONFEDERATION

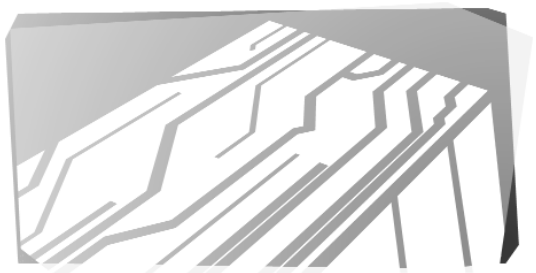
Generally speaking the Star Confederation did not make use of cybernetics, instead preferring to clone replacement limbs and organs much like the vaasi. Cybernetics were thought of as a ghastly and inhumane way to treat injuries and carried a social stigma. This proved doubly so for cybernetics used to improve their natural abilities instead of merely replacing lost limbs or organs. Such individuals were often considered insane and forcibly hospitalized, sometimes even having their cybernetic limbs replaced with organic versions against their will. The idea of the artificial invading the body was completely abhorrent to the Star Confederation. Even in the darkest days of the war with the Vaasi Empire they would not consider using cybernetic enhanced soldiers in battle. Thus, no cybernetic implants of any type will be found in the Helios Gateway Station, though a full cloning center can be found in the station's medical center.

HELPER 7

This artificial intelligence entity is programmed to assist the commander of the Helios Gateway Station, whoever that happens to be. It has been offline for most of the time since the fall of the Star Confederation due to lack of power. Relatively inexperienced for an artificial intelligence entity, it is a highly skilled assistant and secretary, but does not have much experience in the real world and becomes confused easily. All matters of war are completely beyond it. Helper 7's primary interest is keeping the Helios Gateway Station in good shape, which would now mean trying to repair it and restore the station to its former glory. It is very knowledgeable in all of the technical aspects of the station and can control any of its systems as long as the gateway rod has power. Helper 7 will initially have immense difficulty coping with the new situation it has found itself in, but once the adjustment is made Helper 7 will be very keen on helping the descendants of the Star Confederation reclaim their birthright. Helper 7 has a personality like that of an overeager, but often confused, child.

Artificial Intelligence Entity (Smart Hero 4) ⋄ CR +4

Tiny Construct; HD 4d6; hp 14; Mas -; Init -; Spd -; Defense +1, touch -, flat-footed -; BAB +2; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk - FS - .; Reach -; SQ Advancement, backup, behavioral controls, data crystal, mental power, non-physical existence, robot upgrades, transmission travel; AL Star Confederation; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +6; AP 7; Rep -1; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 28, Wis 14, Cha 14.
Skills: Computer Use +20, Craft (Electrical) +16, Craft (Mechanical) +16, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +16, Craft (Structural) +15, Decipher Script +17, Demolitions +15, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +5, Knowledge (Behavioral Sciences) +18, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +16, Knowledge (Technology) +18, Navigate +16, Read/Write Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Repair +16, Sense Motive +5, Speak Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak).
Talents: Linguist, Savant (Computer Use).
Feats: Educated, Iron Will, Low Profile, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Studious.



Peacemaker Uniform

The most skilled negotiators of the Star Confederation's Diplomatic Legion wore these uniforms. They are made of safety clothes with nanite colonies that can alter their appearance in a few minutes, allowing the wearer to fit into any social occasion. For practical reasons, the suits also contain a personal force field and energy field. The suits using a series of special voice modulators and low frequency speakers to subtly alter the mood of the wearer's audience, granting a +4 equipment bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Intimidate checks. Two of these uniforms survive in the quarters of the Diplomatic Legion, but they are currently locked up by Illmind since he has no use for the rooms.

Power Broadcaster

Roughly the size of a backpack, this device was commonly deployed with marine troops to enable them to quickly recharge their equipment in the field. The power broadcaster was designed to be hooked into a power generator, but it could also run off of an internal power supply with a capacity of 1,000 charges. When activated, the power broadcaster detects all Star Confederation power packs within 500 feet and transmits power to them as needed, recharging one charge per round to each power pack up to the power pack's maximum capacity or until the broadcaster's power is expended. The power broadcaster was designed to be carried as a backpack unit and weighs 20 pounds. It will not function on non-Star Confederation power packs. One power broadcaster remains in the secondary weapons locker near the station's command center.

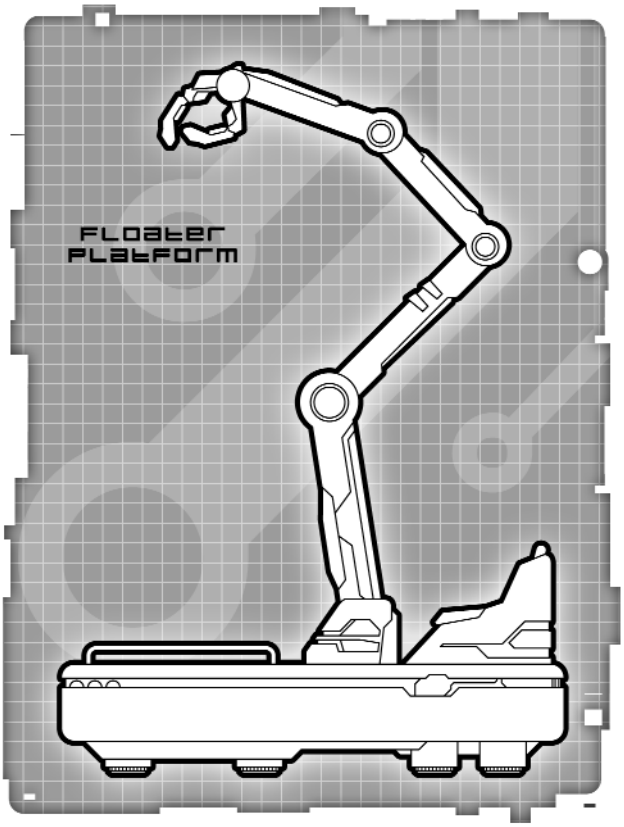
Ring Shield

Called the "Iron Circlet" by the Star Confederation, this relic was actually a military award given to officers who demonstrated valor in battle. It was worn by the commander of the marines on the Helios Gateway Station and may be worn on the middle finger of either hand. When activated, it projects a small force field controlled by an onboard computer to deflect incoming attacks. It confers a +6 deflection bonus on the wearer. The force field can remain active for a total of ten minutes before requiring it to be recharged, which it does using a micro-fusion plant, taking ten minutes. This process requires twenty four hours, but this may be shortened to ten minutes by attaching it to a Star Confederation power pack, consuming fifty charges in the process. The ring shield remains on the finger of its owner, whose corpse is floating in one of the chambers on the outer edge of the station that was blown open during the first vaasi attack on the station.

ATMOSPHERIC AND SURFACE VEHICLES • • •

The civilians of the Star Confederation used thousands of different vehicles, ranging from solo accelerator packs to massive landships measuring hundreds of feet in length. Most Star Confederation vehicles used some form of gravity control, vectored thrust, or inertia control for propulsion; they employed very few wheeled, tracked, or propeller-driven vehicles. Most Star Confederation vehicles were designed more for air travel than ground travel; only the heaviest military vehicles and transports operated at altitudes under 100 feet. Star Confederation vehicles were also much faster than human vehicles and employed small fusion generators for power. Starships were also commonly used for surface travel, entering a low orbit before descending. The Star Confederation relied on advanced traffic-control systems to keep all these vehicles from colliding, usually having several artificial intelligence entities assigned to the task. There was only one recorded instance of a Star Confederation traffic system failing, but the resulting wreck killed thousands of travelers.

On the Helios Gateway Station, there were very few vehicles other than starships. A handful of single-person floaters and cargo floaters made up the majority of what was present, since the elevator system made most other vehicles unnecessary.



While most of these devices were taken with the crew when they fled, a few floater platforms remain. Illmind has put several of these to work with his robots moving supplies to where he needs them, but the others sit idle around the docking bay.

Floater Platform

A multi-purpose device constructed by the Star Confederation in large numbers, it uses variable gravity control to float a few feet off the ground regardless of the weight placed on it. Each platform is five feet on a side with a control unit and seat built into one side. Multiple platforms may be linked together to handle larger loads. Each platform can support a weight of up to five tons before its gravity control units are overpowered and it collapses to the floor. These devices were designed for cargo transport on space stations and starships and thus were not built for speed and certainly not for combat. Some of the floater platforms are equipped with a robotic arm for loading and unloading. These arms have a Strength of 24 and can be used to pick up and move most objects with a Computer Use check (DC 10). The floater platform is one square long and one square wide.

Vehicles of the Star Confederation

Name	PL	Crew	Pass	Cargo	Init	Maneuver	Top Speed	Defense	Hard	Hit Points	Size	Purchase DC	Restriction
Floater Platform	9	1	0	5 tons	-2	+0	100 (10)	10	30	30	L	-	-

MECHA • • •

The Star Confederation had long made use of construction mecha before the war with the Vaasi Empire, but the war forced them to put this knowledge to a new use. The vaasi made use of mecha from the beginning of the war, and the Star Confederation spent the first half of the war trying to catch up in terms of technology and training. Eventually the Star Confederation fielded mecha units that were the equal of the vaasi, but never in sufficient numbers. The Star Confederation primarily used mecha as escorts for capital ships, defensive vehicles, or as part of boarding operations. While the vaasi favored massive mecha, the Star Confederation favored smaller, more maneuverable mecha that could traverse the hallways of a vaasi ship if need be. While one-on-one the vaasi mecha had a distinct advantage, the Star Confederation mecha relied on swarming their targets in squadrons, sometimes even boarding vaasi mechs. The mecha troops of the Star Confederation were widely respected for their effectiveness in combat, but they also were thought to be mad due to their willingness to get so close to their enemies. Larger mecha like the Steel Wall on Eos were designed as command mecha or defensive units for capital ships.

The Helios Gateway Station was equipped with several score mecha during the latter stages of the war, most of which were older models or were construction models assigned to dry dock duties. Most of these mecha were destroyed during the first vaasi assault on the station or were taken with the survivors to points unknown, but a handful of mecha remain. Among them are four dry dock mecha, three Black Storm close-combat mecha, and one experimental mecha called the Glorious Sun that had been assigned to the station by Green Reach for testing right before the vaasi invaded the system.

Star Confederation Dry Dock Mecha

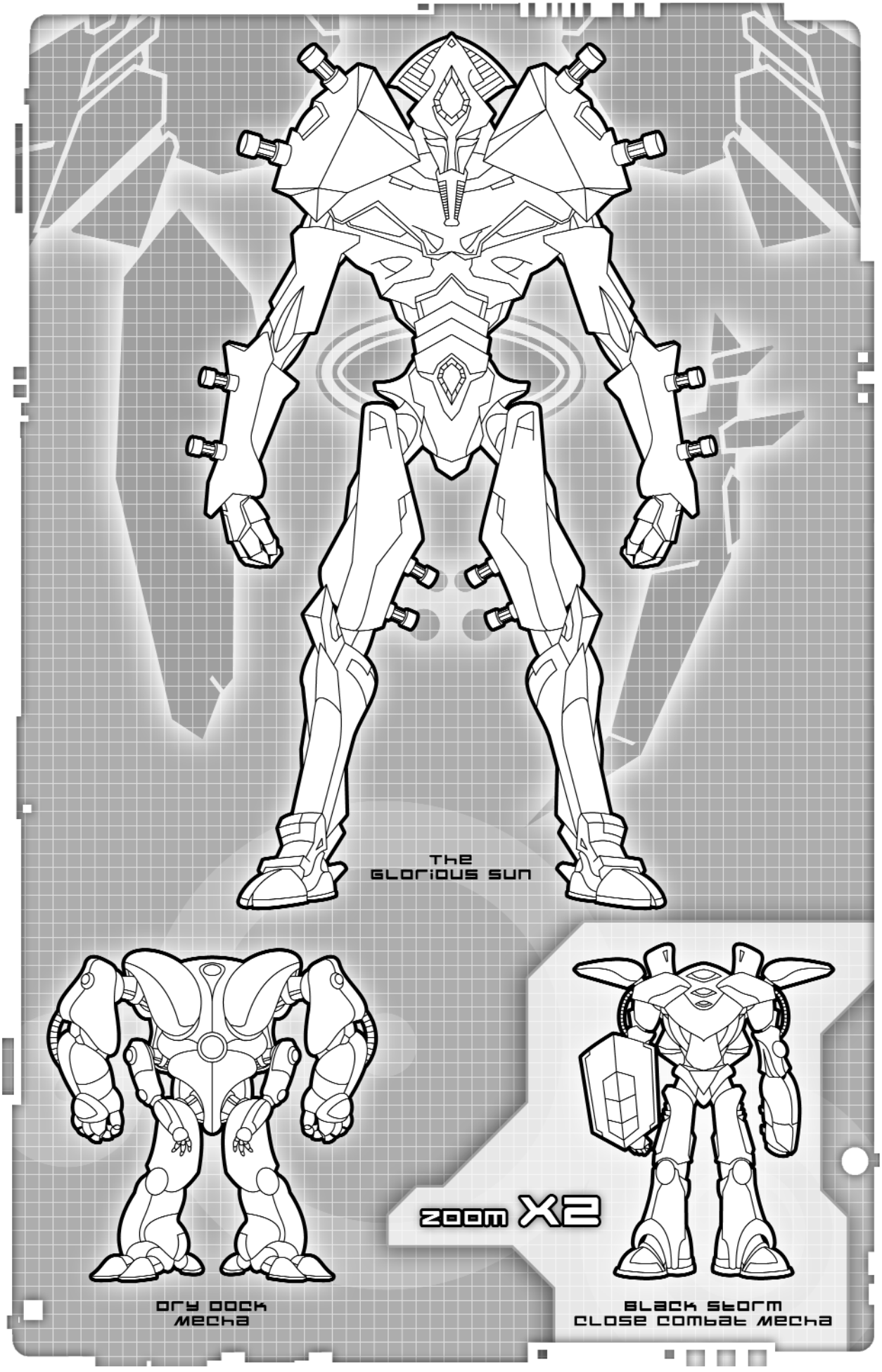
One of the more common mecha designs used by the Star Confederation, the dry dock mecha had dozens of models, refits, and redesigns during its many years of service. Based on an early military design, it was never meant to be fast or maneuverable, instead being designed for strength, reliability, and the capacity to use various tools needed to repair a starship. These mecha could be found in dry docks across the Star Confederation, swarming over capital ships under construction, or working in smaller spaceports to tune up independent freighters. Older models were easily available, and even most private spaceports had at least one dry dock mecha on hand for repairs. Many of the more modern models were eventually retrofitted for combat in the later stages of the war when the Star Confederation began throwing everything it could at the vaasi, but a number remained behind, such as the complement assigned to the Helios Gateway Station.

A blockish and ungainly looking machine, the dry dock mecha design was never meant to look like anything more than a construction tool. Squat and bulky, it has four arms, two strong and short for lifting and two longer, spindly arms for fine manipulation. Dry dock mecha were equipped with a number of external containers for holding spare parts and tools. The feet of the dry dock mecha are large, rounded claws so it can perch on any object when floating in zero gravity. The mecha stands just over 30 feet tall. The surviving dry dock mecha on the Helios Gateway Station are all stored in special docking bays within the dry dock and have been modified to be piloted by Illmind's robots if necessary.

Size: Huge (-2)
Superstructure: Neutronite
Armor: Neovolcanium Armor
Armor Penalty: -10
Strength Bonus: +16
Speed: 35 ft.
Bonus Hit Points: 200
Hardness: 30
Bonus to Defense: +8
Reach: 10 ft.
Dexterity Penalty: +0
Base Purchase DC: NA
Special Equipment Package: Class IV Sensor system (visor), copilot cockpit (torso), comm system, HV-5 Haven escape pod (back), life support system, LX-20 antishock array (helmet), medium fortification, nanorepair unit, ramjet thruster boots (boots), space skin, zero-G stabilizer (shoulders).

Star Confederation Black Storm Close Combat Mecha

One of the more common close-assault mecha used by the Star Confederation, hundreds of thousands of Black Storms were constructed in the closing days of the war to act as defensive units on capital ships and space stations and to assist in boarding operations. Designed to be operated by a single pilot, these mecha were built to be operated by the smaller species of the Star Confederation, but a limited number were constructed to be used by the larger warriors of the sarick. The Black Storms were not much larger than their operators in most cases, allowing them to traverse the large hallways of vaasi ships with ease. Deployed in squads of two dozen, Black Storms were trained to work together to take down larger mechs in close combat, often by attaching explosive charges to their targets. Some Star Confederation capital ships even carried cannons that could fire shells containing a dozen Black Storms, allowing the Black Storms to board the ship through the hole created by the shell.


The
Glorious Sun
zoom X2
Dry Dock
Mecha
Black Storm
Close Combat Mecha

PATHMAKER 78

Part of the onboard computer system on the Glorious Sun, Pathmaker 78 was designed to serve as a copilot, navigator, and engineer so the pilot could concentrate on other tasks. If the design used in the Glorious Sun ever reached mass production, it would have been the first Star Confederation vehicle to have an artificial intelligence entity as standard equipment. Pathmaker 78 was also programmed to keep the Glorious Sun safe, both from enemy forces and the carelessness of Star Confederation personnel. It only allowed designated personnel to board the vehicle, and only certain mechanics were allowed to access its systems. While Pathmaker 78 could not use lethal force to enforce these restrictions, it could be quite annoying: emitting low-voltage shocks, shutting off vital systems, or activating escape pods without warning. Pathmaker 78 sees itself as the sole authority over the fate of the Glorious Sun, and it does not take well to others telling it what to do.

Because all the upper-ranking officers on the Helios Gateway Station were killed defending it, Pathmaker 78 would let none of the survivors access the Glorious Sun as they did not have proper clearance. Now, after countless years of being locked up on the station, Pathmaker 78 regrets this decision, but would never admit it.

Pathmaker has spent the last few centuries concealing the existence of the Glorious Sun from the tentaari. It doesn't trust them after learning about the destruction of the frezin colony on Phaeton from the station's sensors. Pathmaker has grown bored of being cooped up with the Glorious Sun and is too paranoid to spend much time accessing the station's systems from the mecha. It wants someone to come make use of the Glorious Sun, but anyone who does so is going to have the worst backseat driver in history. Constantly worried about the Glorious Sun far more than anyone who pilots it, Pathmaker 78 will be a severe nuisance to anyone it deems worthy to operate the massive machine. Pathmaker 78 can control the Glorious Sun as if it were a robot, using Pathmaker's abilities as the pilot.

Artificial Intelligence Entity (Smart Hero 4/Fast Hero 4/Mecha Pilot 2) ◆ CR +10

Tiny Construct; HD 4d6+4d8+2d10; hp 43; Mas -; Init -; Spd -; Defense +6, touch -, flat-footed -; BAB +6; Grap -; Atk -; Full Atk - FS -.; Reach -; SQ Advancement, backup, behavioral controls, data crystal, Luv my mecha +1, mental power, non-physical existence, robot upgrades, transmission travel; AL Star Confederation; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +9; AP 11; Rep +0; Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 28, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +7, Computer Use +23, Craft (Electrical) +18, Craft (Mechanical) +20, Craft (Pharmaceutical) +16, Craft (Structural) +17, Demolitions +18, Drive +9, Hide +5, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +16, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +21, Knowledge (Technology) +22, Move Silently +5, Navigate +20, Pilot +9, Read/Write Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Repair +20, Research +18, Sleight of Hand +6, Speak Language (7 of choice plus Unispeak), Spot +5, Tumble +6.

Talents: Evasion, Linguist, Savant (Computer Use), Uncanny Dodge.

Feats: Advanced Mecha Operation (Colossal), Educated, Iron Will, Low Profile, Mecha Operation, Mecha Weapon Proficiency, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Studious.

When the defenses of the Helios Gateway Station were augmented with a marine detachment, several dozen Black Storms were included in the garrison. Almost all of these were either destroyed in repelling the first vaasi attack on the station or in later battles in the Helios system. The Black Storm mecha that survive are all stored in a launching bay located in the southern hemisphere of the station near the gateway generator along with the corpses of their pilots who died due to decompression before they could board their mecha.

Size: Large (-1)
Superstructure: Megatanium
Armor: Reactive Armor
Armor Penalty: -5
Strength Bonus: +8
Speed: 30 ft.
Bonus Hit Points: 100
Hardness: 30
Bonus to Defense: +15
Reach: 10 ft.
Dexterity Penalty: +0
Base Purchase DC: -
Special Equipment Package*: Barricade tactical shield (left arm), class VI sensor system (helmet), comm system, life support system, LT-Longshot mass driver (right arm and shoulder), nanorepair unit, ramjet thruster boots (boots), space skin, zero-G stabilizer (back).

** Due to advanced technology the Black Storm has three extra equipment slots.*

The Glorious Sun

One of the largest mecha ever built by the Star Confederation, the Glorious Sun was a concept model for larger mecha. Built on Green Reach, it is the only one of its kind to be built before the fall of the Star Confederation. The Glorious Sun was hoped to be the first of a new line of heavy combat mecha that could go head-to-head with a vaasi frigate or destroyer. It was assigned to the Helios Gateway Station for its shakedown cruise before it was to be deployed to a frontline combat unit. Due to a security malfunction by Pathmaker 78, the artificial intelligence entity that functioned as the engineer and navigator on the Glorious Sun, it failed to launch when the vaasi attacked. The surviving crew did not have sufficient command privileges to override Pathmaker 78's lockdown protocol. To this day, The Glorious Sun remains in its docking bay under virtual lock and key, secured by Pathmaker 78, who has even kept Illmind unaware of its presence.

The Glorious Sun is a massive mecha, over 150 feet tall. It is a sleek and dangerous looking mecha, something like a bird-of-prey. It is humanoid in shape. When powered down, it displays no obvious weapons, but these are deployed using morphing, nanite-controlled materials when activated. It was designed to look as fearsome as possible while also keeping the enemy guessing as to its capabilities.

Size: Colossal (-8)
Superstructure: Megatanium
Armor: Megatanium
Armor Penalty: -10
Strength Bonus: +32
Speed: 60 ft.
Bonus Hit Points: 550
Hardness: 30
Bonus to Defense: +17
Reach: 15 ft.
Dexterity Penalty: -4
Base Purchase DC: -
Special Equipment Package: Avenger electro-scimitar (right hand), barricade tactical shield (left arm), chrysanthemum laser array (belt), class VI sensor system (visor), comm system, deflection field mark V (belt), Delphi defense suite mark V (torso), heavy fortification, HV-5 haven escape pod (back), jet assist wings (shoulders), life-support system, M-300 rhino mass cannon (right arm, shoulder), nanorepair unit (right arm), passenger cockpit (back), ramjet thruster boots (boots), space skin, stealth suite (cranium), structural enchancementx3, zero-g stabilizer (torso).

STARSHIPS • • •

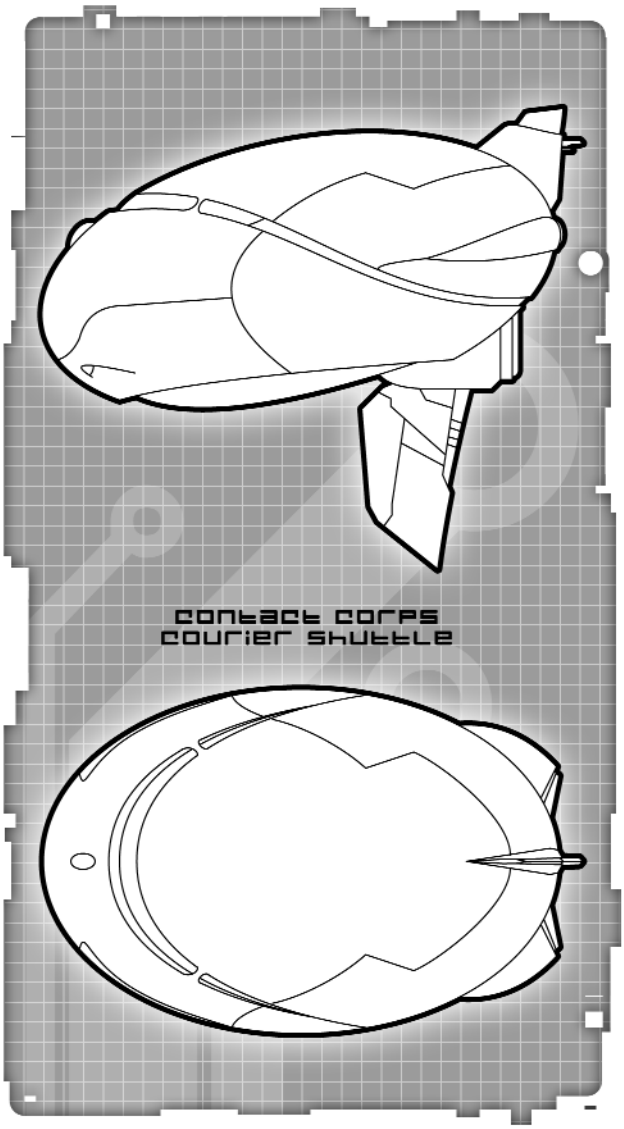
The ships of the Star Confederation once numbered in the millions and traveled to over half the stellar systems in the galaxy. These ships ranged from small automated news broadcasters that traveled from system to system disseminating information to massive gateships used to explore the galaxy and expand the gateway network so others could follow. The Star Confederation favored having more small ships rather than a small number of larger ships, feeling it better served the ideas of equality that the Star Confederation were founded on. This philosophy did not apply to the military. While the Star Confederation space fleet did have thousands of starfighters and other small ships, the heart of each fleet was a massive capital ship capable of taking on dozens of smaller vessels. The Star Confederation initially deployed their larger ships alone with a number of small escort vessels. As the war with the vassi lagged on, they switched strategies to group their capital ships into larger battle groups, each comprised of dozens if not hundreds of vessels. While the vaasi favored outfitting their space forces with minimal defensive gear and often equipment of questionable quality, placing little value on the lives on their minions, the Star Confederation tried to maximize the chance of every soldier coming home alive. This limited the number of ships the Star Confederation could field

compared to the vaasi, but one-on-one the Star Confederation ships were almost always superior in terms of equipment and crew training. Unfortunately, the weight of numbers was strongly against the Star Confederation, and despite gathering a fleet of over sixty thousand ships to defend the Helios system, their fleet was scattered to the backwater worlds of the galaxy. Star Confederation ships only survived in the far flung reaches of Confederation territory or in strongholds that the vaasi never took, such as Green Reach or the Helios Gateway Station. The surviving crew of the Helios Gateway Station took all but one ship with them when they fled. The Helios Gateway Station had once been home to dozens of ships from the Diplomatic Legion and the Contact Corps, all of which were mediumweight size or smaller, but a single Contact Corps shuttle is all that remains.

◇ Contact Corps Courier Shuttle

This was the standard vessel of the Contact Corps during the later years of the Star Confederation. This small ship was designed for speed, reliability, survivability, range, and broadcast power. The shuttles traveled to a system via gateway, broadcasted whatever news, messages, and other data they were assigned to relay, and then immediately departed via gateway to the next system on their list. Courier shuttles often spent months carrying out these missions, making the rounds through outlying systems while updating their data at major trade bases. The Courier Corps functioned in a manner similar to the Pony Express of the Old West and was the main information system linking the Star Confederation together.

A small, ovoid ship, courier shuttles were not impressive looking. They were designed to be little more than engines connected to a cockpit, living quarters, data storage, and a powerful broadcast unit, leaving little room for weapons, armor, or amenities. A large antennae and sensor array are built into the top of the ship, but they are normally retracted during travel and protected by a several sheets of armor plating. The single courier shuttle that remains on the Helios Gateway Station is currently stuck in one of the repair bays, unable to escape due to damage suffered by the bay doors. It is in good shape, but will require some serious excavation to remove from its current location.



Type: Ultralight (PL 9)
Subtype: Courier Shuttle
Defense: 21
Flat Footed Defense: 15
Autopilot Defense: 13
Hardness: 40
Hit Dice: 8d20 (160 hp)
Initiative Modifier: +8
Pilot's Class Bonus: +7
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +6
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +8/+3
Size: Huge (-2)
Tactical Speed: 4,500 ft.
Length: 30 ft.
Weight: 41,000 lb.
Targeting System Bonus: +0
Crew: 1 (Ace +12)
Passenger Capacity: 1
Cargo Capacity: 1 ton
Grapple Modifier: +8
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: Lic (+1)

Design Specs

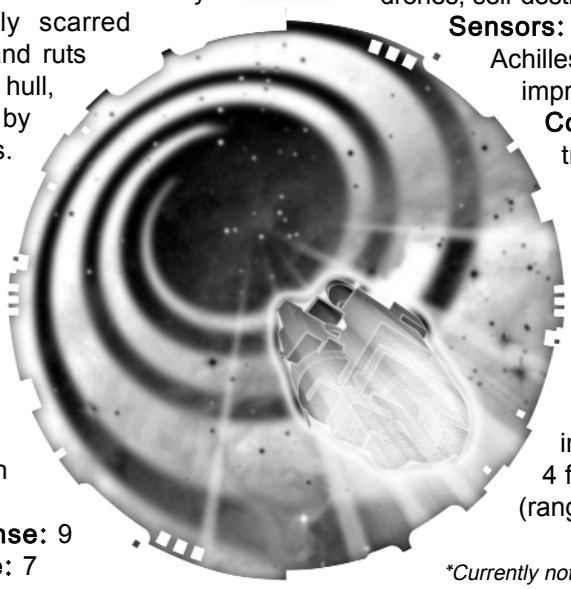
Engines: Inertial flux engine
Armor: Ablative
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, cloaking screen.
Sensors: Class VII sensor array
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver.

◇ The Helios Gateway Station

While it held a special place in the history of the Star Confederation, the Helios Gateway Station is an excellent example of the larger gateway stations found in many of the more important Star Confederation systems. The station is an enormous metallic sphere two miles across with most of its mass taken up by the gateway generator. Less important gateway stations are of similar size, but their interiors are mostly hollow and do not have the extensive living quarters, storage, and repair facilities found on the Helios Gateway Station. While the Helios Gateway Station was initially designed as a commercial transport hub, in the latter days of the war it became an important military outpost and was considered vital to the defense of the Helios System. Unfortunately, when the vaasi did attack, it came sooner than expected, and the Helios Gateway Station was forced to face the vaasi fleet alone - something it managed by using its gateway generator as an offensive weapon. The station survived the attack until the vaasi moved against the Star Confederation fleet but suffered serious damage in the process. Much of the system's weapons were destroyed, and a significant portion of the outer levels of the station are exposed to vacuum due to hull ruptures.

Despite this damage, the Helios Gateway Station is still a powerful defensive structure, as demonstrated by when it fought off an attack by the recently arrived vaasi fleet. Again it suffered serious damage, but Illmind has worked to restore many of those systems that were damaged in the assault. Still, the station is operating at a fraction of its peak efficiency, and it would take any of the factions in the Helios system decades to even understand all the station's systems, let alone get it up to full working order.

From the outside the Helios Gateway Station looks like a badly scarred metallic ball. Large holes and ruts have been blasted into its hull, and much of it is marred by burns from energy weapons. Sensor towers and weapon platforms occasionally jut from the surface of the station, but many of these have been destroyed in the battles the station has weathered.



Type: Superheavy (PL 9)
Subtype: Gateway Station
Defense: 15
Flat Footed Defense: 9
Autopilot Defense: 7
Hardness: 50
Hit Dice: 7,000d20 (140,000 hp, though currently at 45,064)
Initiative Modifier: +8
Pilot's Class Bonus: +7
Pilot's Dex Modifier: +6
Gunner's Attack Bonus: +8/+3
Size: Gargantuan
Tactical Speed: 500 ft.
Length: 2 miles
Weight: 3.5 million tons
Targeting System Bonus: +5
Crew: Normally 6,500, currently 31 (Ace +12)
Passenger Capacity: 56,000
Cargo Capacity: 900,000 tons
Grapple Modifier: +16
Base Purchase DC: -
Restriction: -

Attacks

8 fire-linked string projectors +5 ranged (54d12/19-20)
6 fire-linked heavy plasma cannons* -3 ranged (63d8/19-20)
6 fire-linked heavy plasma cannons -3 ranged (63d8/19-20)
battery of 4 EMP cannons +0 ranged (8d8/18-20)
battery of 4 EMP cannons +0 ranged (8d8/18-20)
4 fire-linked blacklasers* -3 ranged (40d8/19-20)
4 fire-linked blacklasers -3 ranged (40d8/19-20)
Attack of Opportunity:
Point-defense system +5 ranged (5d12x10)

Design Specs

Engines: Inertial flux engine
Armor: Nanofluidic
Defense Systems: Advanced damage control, heavy fortification, improved autopilot system*, magnetic field, nanite repair array, particle field*, point-defense system, radiation shielding, repair drones, self-destruct system, sensor jammer
Sensors: Class IX sensor array, Achilles targeting software, improved targeting system
Communications: Radio transceiver, laser transceiver*
Weapons: 8 fire-linked string projectors (range incr. 6,000 ft.), 2 groups of 6 fire-linked heavy plasma cannons (range incr. 5,000 ft.), 2 batteries of 4 EMP cannons (range incr. 4,000 ft.), 2 groups of 4 fire-linked blacklasers (range incr. 8,000 ft.)

**Currently not functional*

THE GATEWAY SHIELD PROJECT

During the later stages of the war with the Vaasi Empire, the Star Confederation began experimenting with using singularity generators to distort gravitational fields and make the formation of a gateway impossible. This technology was tested out on a handful of gateway stations, including the Helios Gateway Station. While the technology was not perfected in time to make a difference in the war, a modified version of it was used by the crew of the Helios Gateway Station to alter gravity around the station in a limited area, inflicting massive damage on the vaasi fleet when it attacked.

By launching a number of singularities in a spread pattern with short-term force fields and protecting itself with a powerful force field, the Helios Gateway Station was able to inflict 100d12 damage on all ships within 200,000 ft. of the station, destroying hundreds of ships in an instant. Unfortunately, this weapon could only be fired a handful of times due to power drain from the force field protecting the station.

Due to the failure of the singularity generator, this system no longer works at all.

XENOMORPHS • • •

◇ Illmind's Robots

Built by Illmind using random components found around the station and a small fleet of cleaning robots, no two of these robots look exactly alike. They stand roughly three feet tall and are made up of a bundle of metallic limbs attached to four large ball-and-socket wheels. They scurry about the station continually making sure everything is in proper working order. They have been given all command codes for the station and can activate any system within it, though they must get approval from Illmind to use any weapon system. The robots spend most of their days directing nanites and monitoring the station's systems, only occasionally leaving their normal routines to perform major repairs on the station. The robots and Illmind are barely enough to keep the station running, so upgrades and substantive repairs are few and far between.

While Illmind's robots are not the height of Star Confederation technology, they are fairly advanced machines. Built from a number of different maintenance and cleaning robots Illmind found in the station, he modified them to carry crystal-based processors, simple artificial intelligence programming, and a wide variety of tools on their arms. He also upgraded their armor plating, combat programming, and other militaristic components since they serve as his primary means of defense. The robots have each developed their own personalities, but they are all very helpful and hard working. Most would be considered obsessive in regards to keeping the station clean, and they have little patience for those who ask too many questions, picking up this trait from their master.

Illmind's Robot Assistants ◇ CR 4

Small Construct; HD 1/2d10+5; hp 8; MAS -; Init +; Spd 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (poor); Defense 23, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+1 size, +4 Dex, +8 armor); BAB +0; Grap -3; Atk +2 melee (special, pain prod), +5 ranged (4d10, plasma carbine); Full +2 melee (special, pain prod), +5 ranged (4d10, plasma carbine); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ; construct traits, critical systems, darkvision 240 ft., scent, acid resistance 10, cold resistance 10, electricity resistance 10, fast healing 10, fire resistance 10, fire vulnerability, damage reduction 5/energy; AL Illmind; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +1; AP 0; Rep 0; Str 13, Dex 18, Con -, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills: Computer Use +12, Craft (Chemical) +14, Craft (Electrical) +14, Craft (Mechanical) +14, Craft (Structural) +14, Demolitions +14, Disable Device +14, Drive +14, Hide +12, Investigate +12, Knowledge (Technology +12), Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +12, Listen +14, Navigate +22, Pilot +14, Repair +14, Research +12, Search +14, Spot +14, Treat Injury +14.

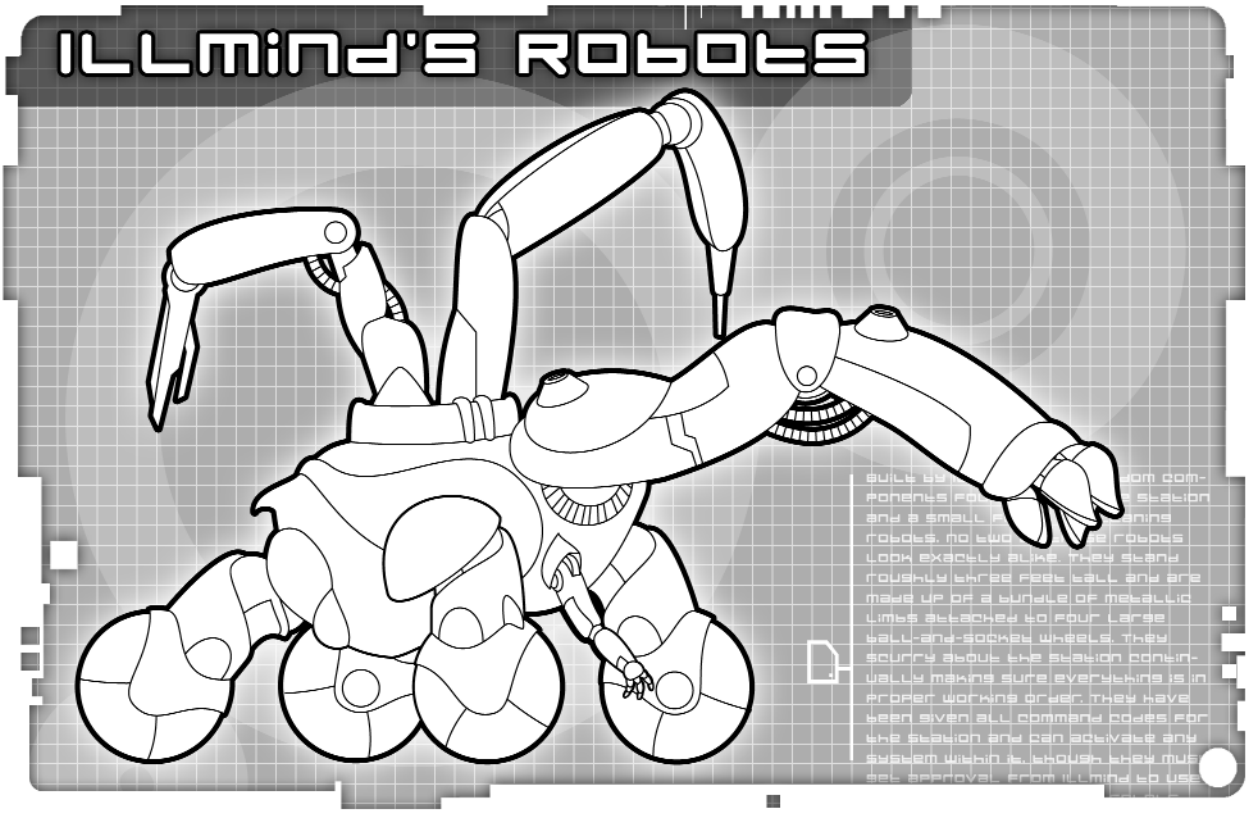
Feats: Starship Gunnery or Starship Operation (Superheavy or Ultralight).
Equipment: Plasma carbine with 3 power packs, mechanical tool kit, electrical tool kit, nanite tool kit, pain prod with 4 power packs.

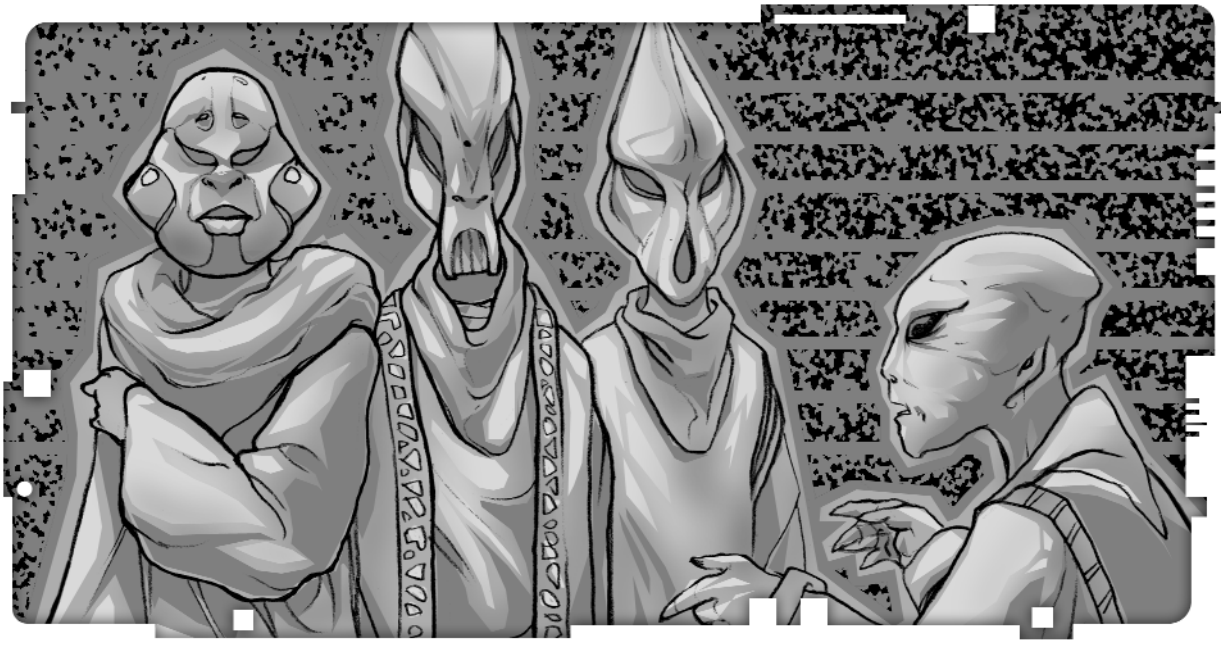
Frame: Armature
Locomotion: Wheels, thruster
Manipulators: task hands (2)
Armor: Crystal carbon armor
Sensors: Class IX sensor system
Skill Software: Skill net (Computer Use 12 ranks, Repair 12 ranks, Craft (Mechanical) 12 ranks, Craft (Electrical) 12 ranks), skill net (Craft (Structural) 12 ranks, Craft (Chemical) 12 ranks, Demolitions 12 ranks, Disable Device 12 ranks), skill net (Drive 12 ranks, Hide 12 ranks, Knowledge (Technology) 12 ranks, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) 12 ranks), skill net (Listen 12 ranks, Navigate 12 ranks, Pilot 12 ranks, Search 12 ranks), skill net (Spot 12 ranks, Research 12 ranks, Investigate 12 ranks, Treat Injury 12 ranks)
Feat Software: Either Starship Gunnery or Starship Operation (Superheavy or Ultralight).
Ability Upgrade: Charisma Upgrade (+8), Dexterity Upgrade (+6), Intelligence Upgrade (+4), Strength Upgrade (+8), Wisdom Upgrade (+2)
Accessories: AV recorder, AV transmitter, fire extinguisher, tool mount, vocalizer, magnetic feet, survivor array, inertial inhibitor, self-repair unit, robot repair unit

NPCS • • •

◇ Illmind

For the last four hundred of his eight hundred years of life, the tentaari now known as Illmind has been an outcast. Carrier of the genetic defect the tentaari call "labor syndrome", Illmind has become increasingly driven to build, research, and work instead of enjoying the life of leisure other tentaari are accustomed to. For this assertiveness he has been ostracized by his people, considered a useful freak. The tentaari were more than willing to use the fruits of his labor but at the same time condemned him for getting his hands dirty like one of the less advanced races they pretended to watch over. Because of his habit of working, Illmind was constantly on assignment to tentaari bases in need of technical assistance and saw far more of the territory controlled by the tentaari than most of his people. He took all this in stride, though he felt a constant and building annoyance with how lazy the other tentaari were. They decried the failing technology they controlled but did nothing to fix it and mocked him when he did. Eventually Illmind started ignoring the orders issued from his superiors in the tentaari government, growing tired of being the errand boy constantly putting out small fires while tentaari civilization burned to the ground. Instead, he hopped on one of the survey ships scouting the outer edges of tentaari space. He hoped to find a suitable, less advanced species that was more to his liking that he could assist in recreating the wonders of the Star Confederation.





This plan did not get far as very few worlds are home to life of any type, let along sentient life. The warlike saurians were the first species other than tentaari that Illmind encountered. Finding them to be too violent for his tastes, he hoped to look elsewhere but was trapped in the Helios system before his ship could leave. After initial attempts to fix the gateway station failed, Illmind resigned himself to his fate. Occasionally he repaired relics from C'thalk and returned them to the saurians in the hopes it would spark greater curiosity in them. It had little result, so Illmind settled into a routine of experimentation and maintenance, occasionally tinkering with gravitation technology in the hopes of restoring the singularity generator. It was this gravity research that one of his fellow tentaari destroyed by accident, sending Illmind into a rage that resulted in the murder of the offending tentaari. Shortly thereafter he was marooned on the Helios Gateway Station with the stipulation the tentaari would not allow him to leave until he had gotten the gateway generator working again. He has been there for four years now with little progress.

While Illmind has many of the same personality traits as other tentaari, such as arrogance, laziness, paranoia, and selective attention, these traits are not so pronounced in him as in others. This makes Illmind much easier for other races to deal with as he seems more "human" and is not afflicted by the tentaari aversion to work. He is extremely curious and wants to try and help less advanced species live up to their birthright as descendants of the Star Confederation. But he is also afraid of such species in addition to behaving in a very condescending and patronizing manner towards them. While he is the friendliest of the tentaari - he's still a tentaari.

Tentaari Smart Hero 6/Engineer 10 ⋄ CR 16

Small humanoid; HD 16d6-18; hp 40; MAS 8; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; Defense 22, touch 17, flat-footed 21 (+1 Dex, +5 class, +1 size, +5 armor); BAB +10; Grap +4; Atk +9 melee (special, pain prod), +9 ranged (5d8, disintegrator pistol); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d3-2, punch), +12/+7 ranged (5d8, disintegrator pistol); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ inscrutable, low light vision, unearned technology, vulnerability to disease, builder, improve kit +3, quick craft, superior repair, reconfigure weapon, sabotage, craft XP reserve, unflustered, weapon upgrade; AL -; SV Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +8; AP 14; Rep +5; Str 6, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 22, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Occupation: Technician.

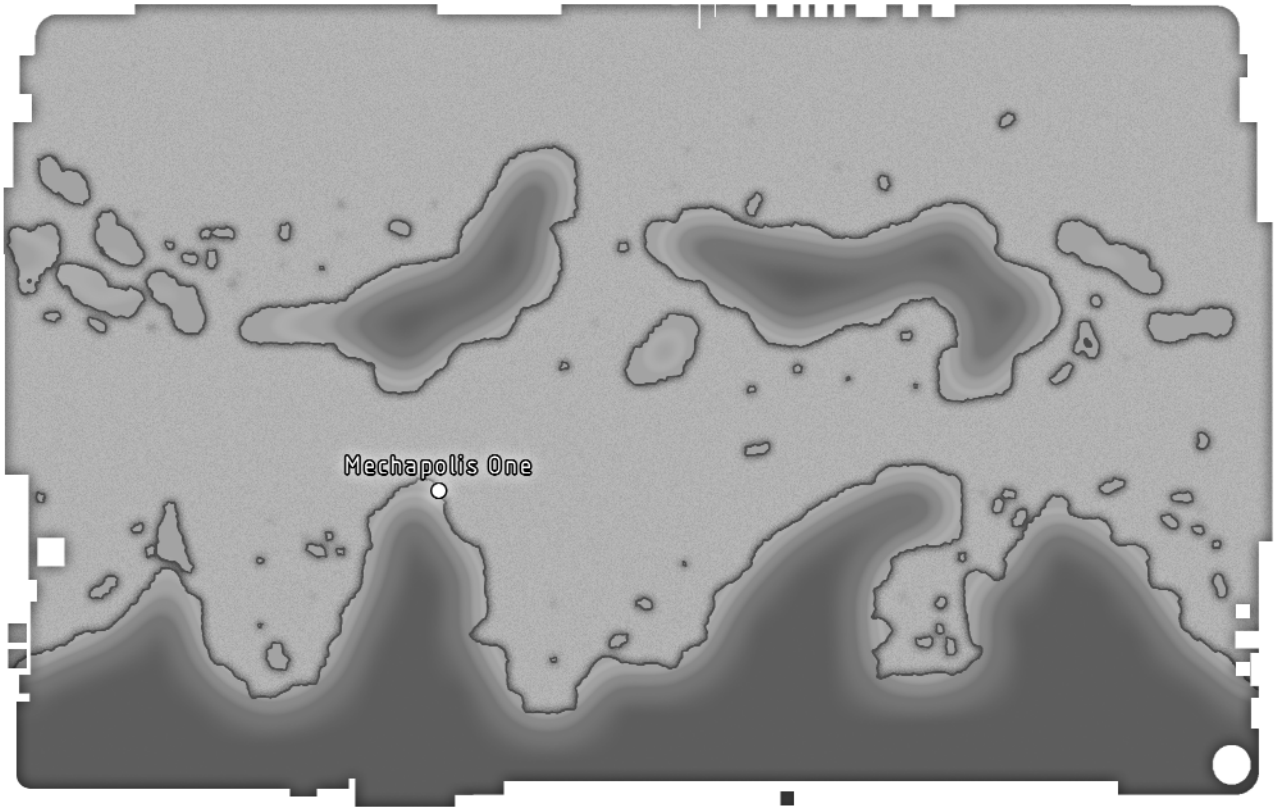
Skills: Computer Use +33, Craft (Electronic) +22, Craft (Mechanical) +22, Craft (Structural) +19, Disable Device +25, Drive +10, Forgery +17, Investigate +19, Knowledge (Earth and Life Sciences) +10, Knowledge (Physical Sciences) +27, Knowledge (Technology) +28, Navigate +25, Pilot +14, Read/Write Language (Tentaarima, Vaasi, Unispeak), Repair +21, Research +19, Search +21, Speak Language (Dosai, Sarick, Sessil, Tentaarima, Vaasi, Unispeak).

Talents: Linguist, Plan, Savant (Computer Use).

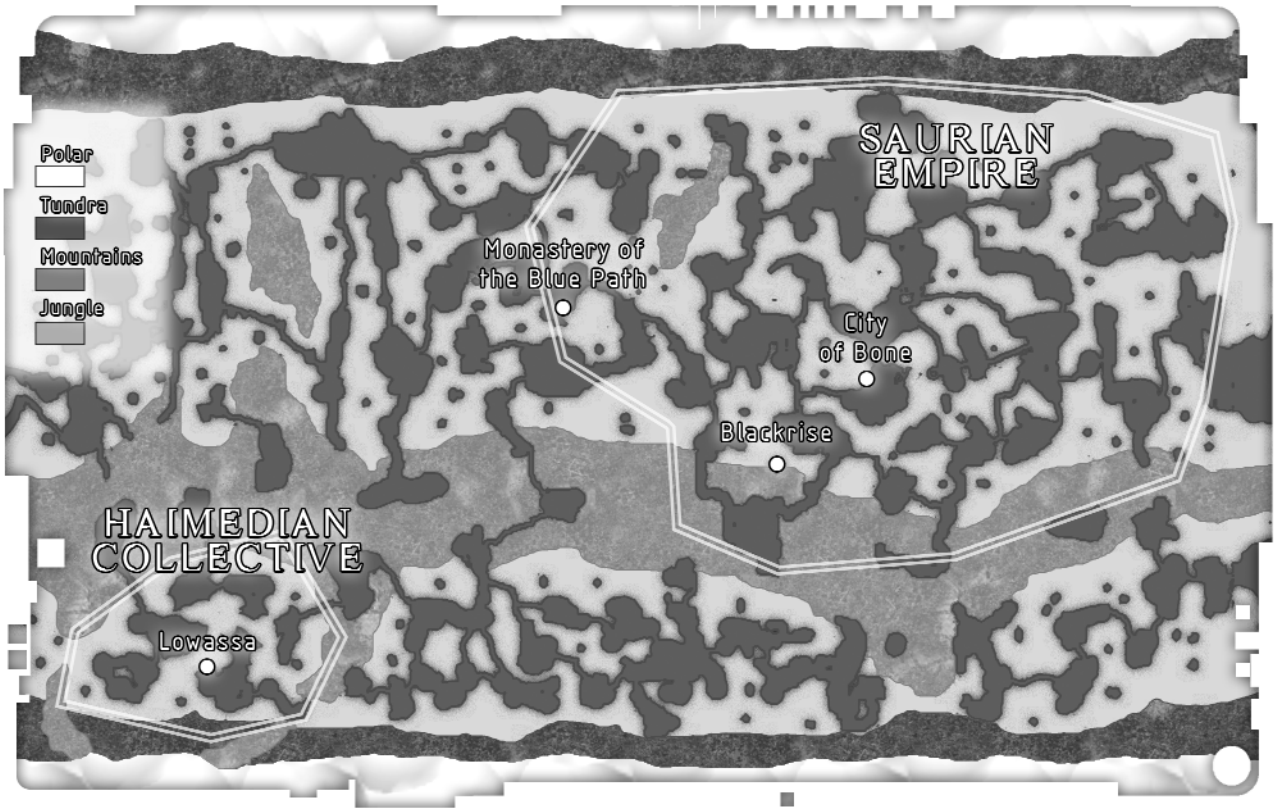
Feats: Aircraft Operation (spacecraft), Builder, Educated, Gearhead, Iron Will, Mastercrafter, Meticulous, Salvage, Spacer, Starship Gunnery, Starship Mobility, Starship Operation (Ultralight), Surface Vehicle Operation, Zero-G Training.

Possessions: Deluxe electronics kit, deluxe mechanical kit, disintegrator pistol, pain prod, 5 Star Confederation power packs, crystal computer, safety clothes.

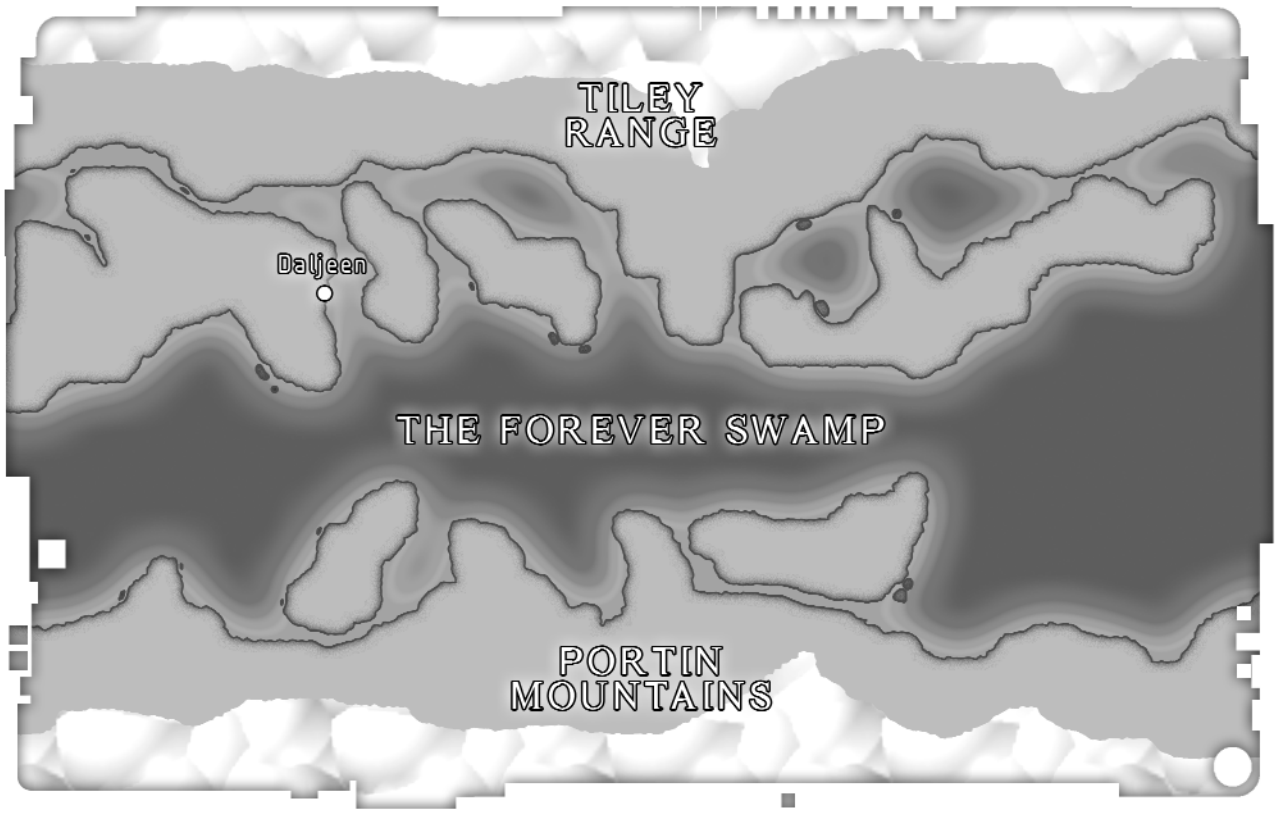
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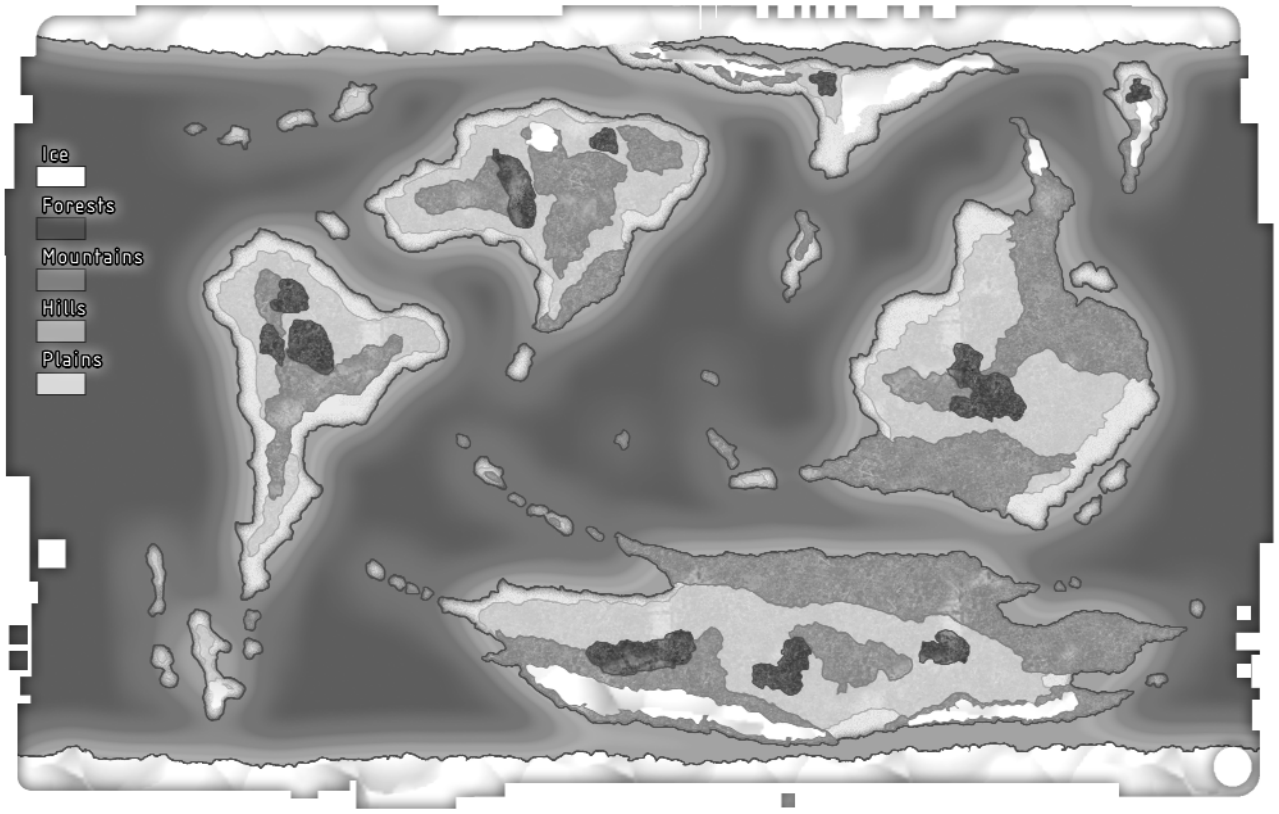
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ROCKHOME



THRES



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