

STARFINDER



THE THREEFOLD CONSPIRACY
ADVENTURE PATH

FLIGHT OF THE SLEEPERS

BY OWEN K.C. STEPHENS



STEWARD BANSHEE FA FRIGATE

TIER 5

Medium explorer

Speed 10; **Maneuverability** good (turn 1); **Drift** 2

AC 18; **TL** 18

HP 65; **DT** —; **CT** 13

Shields light 80 (forward 30, port 15, starboard 15, rear 20)

Attack (Forward) heavy laser cannon (4d8; 10 hexes)

Attack (Turret) linked heavy laser cannons (8d8; 10 hexes)

Power Core Pulse Green (150 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Booster; **Systems** basic computer, budget medium-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 3 armor, mk 3 defenses; **Expansion Bays** brig^{PW}, guest quarters (2, common), medical bay

Modifiers +1 Piloting; **Complement** 6 (minimum 1, maximum 6)

CREW

Captain gunnery +9 (5th level), Diplomacy +11 (5 ranks), Intimidate +11 (5 ranks), Piloting +11 (5 ranks)

Engineer Engineering +16 (5 ranks)

Gunners (2) gunnery +10 (5th level)

Pilot Piloting +16 (5 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +16 (5 ranks)

The Banshee FA (fast attack) frigate is a well-known Steward vessel produced under contract with ATech, manufacturers of the Immortal. Although on the small side, this starship is designed to be fast, stealthy, and hard hitting. The standard crew comprises a half-dozen well-trained Stewards, but Banshees have seen field duty with as few as two people—an arrangement made easier by the fact that the ship's weapons are concentrated in a turret and one forward mount. The typical Banshee can also carry a small contingent of marines for boarding actions and airborne assaults.

Because the Stewards are so often stretched thin across the Pact Worlds, the marines aboard a Banshee are commonly chosen from vetted mercenary companies with units specializing in close-quarters combat. As a military ship, the Banshee is equipped with a state-of-the-art medical facility and brig. It's not unusual for Stewards to employ Banshees on medical-emergency missions, conveying doctors, nurses, and other emergency technicians to outbreak sites.

The Banshee has multiple decks. A conning tower houses the bridge and the laser turret, while the marines and medical staff are housed on a lower deck with their own galley. Everything else is on the main deck, including the power core, thrusters, Drift engine, crew quarters, medical lab and operating room, brig, and small crew lounge. This lounge is more of a gathering place than entertainment center, with none of the recreation equipment that other vessels often feature. For this reason, Stewards in command of a Banshee keep marines occupied with drills and ship maintenance, which makes an assignment to a Banshee unappealing to many.

When a Banshee moves to apprehend a criminal or pirate vessel, the target has only one chance to surrender, extended by the Steward captain. While the captain parleys with the enemy, the Banshee's crew prepares for potential conflict by lining up shots with the vessel's three heavy laser cannons. The Banshee's forward shields are often especially reinforced to facilitate direct-attack runs in these situations.

STARFINDER

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This book refers to other Starfinder products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Starfinder hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at sfrd.info.

Alien Archive 2 AA2

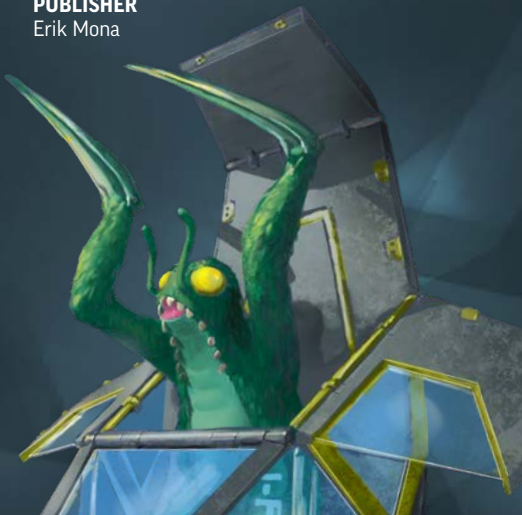
Armory AR

Pact Worlds PW



ON THE COVER

This cover by artist Tomasz Chistowski shows the terrible, two-headed quantum troll that rampages through Outpost Omicron.



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THE THREEFOLD CONSPIRACY

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FLIGHT OF THE SLEEPERS

PART 1: UNDER OBSERVATION

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Upon escaping the *Chimera*—a strange mock starship—the PCs find themselves in Outpost Omicron, a gray research facility from which the heroes must escape!

PART 2: THE EXPERIMENTS AWAKEN

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Fighting their way out of Outpost Omicron's observation labs, the PCs enter the facility's research and development lab and meet new dangers along with potential allies—a team of elite Steward agents.

PART 3: MELTDOWN

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Sealed inside Outpost Omicron with the reactors melting down, the PCs aim to shut down half of the power system while their Steward allies attempt to do the same in another sector.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Flight of the Sleepers" is designed for four characters.

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The PCs begin this adventure at 3rd level.

4

Before reaching the reactor sector, the PCs should be 4th level.

5

The PCs should be 5th level by the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

After working long and hard to uncover the reptoids influencing the Pact Worlds' government and population, the gray mysteriarch Zaxo had his team orchestrate a plan to replace the reptoid agents and observe the results. Zaxo ordered clones of the infiltrators from Outpost Omicron, a gray research facility hidden in an asteroid belt in the Foergrim System in Near Space. Foergrim is a mostly uninhabited system, apart from the dwarf planetoid called Stopgap (which is described in more detail on page 62), whose businesses have a high rate of turnover in personnel and visitors, making the area an effective hiding spot for the grays. Gray starships are rarely seen in the system, and when they are, they're often dismissed as vessels belonging to low-profile smugglers or struggling miners.

The PCs are the very clones Zaxo ordered. They are unaware of this fact and have been secretly subjected to training for their intended roles in Zaxo's plan. The first step was gaining experience in recognizing shapechangers and skinwalkers, such as reptoids and dycepskians. As such, they believed themselves to be aboard a transport called the *Chimera*, stuck within the Drift and faced with a series of mysteries and challenges. Before the grays could extract the test subjects at the end of the mission and wipe their memories, Outpost Omicron came under attack. The PCs escaped from the elaborate ruse, but the grays had more pressing matters to deal with first.

The attackers are members of a cell of reptoids who tracked down gray equipment and life-forms manufactured in this secret facility that nearly derailed some of their own plans. Disguised as Steward Ops agents, the reptoids recruited a band of mercenaries, keeping their true nature a secret by explaining any irregularities as "classified information." The reptoids intend to destroy Outpost Omicron and any dangerous technology within while recovering more information about the grays' plans.

However, due to the bombs the reptoids dropped on the facility's exterior, many of the grays' experiments have escaped and or gone haywire. The false Stewards become trapped within the complex along with the PCs, but the wily reptoids see this as an opportunity to learn more about who they are and what the grays want with them. The reptoids attempt to manipulate the confused heroes into aiding them, promising to "rescue" the PCs from their gray captors. They plan to then take the PCs to their own hidden base in the Pact Worlds. All the while, a mutated and vicious troll prowls through the gray facility, eventually standing between the PCs and any hope of escape.

PART 1: UNDER OBSERVATION

At the end of "The Chimera Mystery," the PCs believed they escaped from the doomed *Chimera* inside a set of escape pods, only to be discover they were exiting an elaborate simulation. The fake pods are delivered to a retrieval bay in Outpost Omicron's observation labs, where they would normally have been recaptured and sedated by gray scientists. Given the reptoid attack, though, the grays had no time to retrieve their valuable clones before they fled or were killed.

Before the PCs can prise their ways out of their escape pods, the vessels "dock" at the retrieval bay (area **A1**). At your discretion, the PCs can take a full 8-hours rest within the pods, recuperating from the final few fights of the previous adventure. Once they step outside of the escape pods, however, this adventure truly begins.

OUTPOST OMICRON FEATURES

Outpost Omicron has several common features that can be assumed unless the text in a specific location differs. Game mechanics for structures can be found on page 408 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*.

Ceilings: Because the grays often deal with equipment and creatures larger than they are, most ceilings are 15 feet high. They are paneled to conceal electrical and atmospheric conduits that power and provide breathable air for the facility. Above these conduits, the ceiling consists of the flinty stone of the unnamed planetoid in which Outpost Omicron is hidden.

Computers: The computers in Outpost Omicron store and relay data in a way that transcends language much in the way telepathy does. A PC need not understand Aklo to glean information from and manipulate computers here.

Directions: Outpost Omicron is on a planetoid too small to have a strong magnetic north. However, one of the gray power plants built into the planetoid (and beyond the scope of this adventure) generates a magnetic field strong enough that it acts as north. This "north" is the source of the cardinal directions used on this adventure's maps. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Physical Science check while using a device to find north can tell that the fluctuations in the magnetism suggest the field is artificial rather than natural in origin.

Doors: The doors are either airlock-quality double doors, each one about 10 feet high and 4 feet wide, or steel panel doors. Most doors are unlocked, but the airlocks must be opened from control panels near them, set about 3 feet from the floor. The single doors are steel panel doors that open and close automatically, but they still have control panels that can

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be used to lock or unlock their average locks or hold them open. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Computers check can hack a control panel to unlock a locked door. Alternatively, a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Engineering check can permanently disable the locking mechanism.

Gravity: The gravity, though artificial, is normal.

Gray Corpses: Most of the grays in Outpost Omicron died as a result of the Stewards' bombardment or its aftermath. Identifying these grays requires a PC to succeed at a DC 16 Culture check (to recall popular conspiracy theories) or Life Science check (to identify them scientifically).

Cortex bombs detonated within these grays' brain stems after their deaths, destroying their brains and blowing holes in the back of their skulls. Even if the PCs don't realize these are deceased grays, any PC who examines the corpses and a succeeds at a DC 10 Medicine check or DC 15 Life Science check can determine the damage came from something bursting out from within each skull, rather than trauma impacting the skull from the outside. Success on the same check indicates they were exposed to caustic materials far more potent than the vapor remaining in the room. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC knows that a cortex bomb, a cybernetic augmentation intended to prevent interrogation after capture and render magic such as *speak with dead* unreliable, caused the damage to each gray's head.



GRAY OBSERVER ROBOT

Lighting: Due to damage from the Stewards' attack, lighting in the facility flickers and can blink out without warning. This intermittent and brief darkness does little to hamper exploration. Combat, however, is a different situation. Each round of battle, roll a d20. On a 1, the lights go out for that entire round, and on a 2 through 5, the light becomes dim. The lighting for any one area can be fixed using control panels near the doors with 10 minutes of work and a successful DC 15 Engineering check. The lighting for the entire facility can be fixed in area **B9**.

Walls: Walls here function as starship bulkheads.

Windows: These windows are made of 1-foot-thick transparent aluminum.

Workstations: Grays used the workstations in the outpost. Therefore, each desk's surface is a mere 2 feet off the ground. Each chair is designed for a creature no more than half the size of a human.

A. OBSERVATION LABS

The grays used the various laboratories in this area to monitor and test many of their experiments.

A1. RETRIEVAL BAY (CR 3 AND CR 3)

The walls, floor, and ceiling of the sterile-looking room just outside where the phony escape pods docked are made up of spotless plates of dull metal. Narrow windows set about three feet from the floor provide a view of a cavernous hollow carved into dark rock. The space is illuminated by oscillating purple lights mounted on tubes leading to hatches on the eastern wall. To the west is a double bulkhead door similarly outlined in flashing purple lights. A series of symbols flash on a screen in the center of the double door.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check notices a tiny camera built into the door's control panel. This device tracks anyone approaching the door. The camera normally allows a gray within in the chamber to give a hand signal that causes the door to open, though that system is now malfunctioning (see Trap on page 5).

A PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Perception check notices a hatch in the center of the ceiling, flush with the surrounding metal. To open the hatch, a PC must succeed at a DC 29 Engineering check, revealing an airlock-quality iris door set in the stone above and locked from the other side. Disabling this lock requires a successful DC 35 Engineering check, although doing so causes warning lights to flash around the iris door. Opening the unlocked door (a move action) triggers the decompression hazard (page 5).

Creatures: A minute after the PCs exit the escape pods, two sleek observer-class security robots emerge from a ceiling hatch (this happens quickly enough to not trigger the hazard). Sensing that the PCs are intruders, the robots attack.

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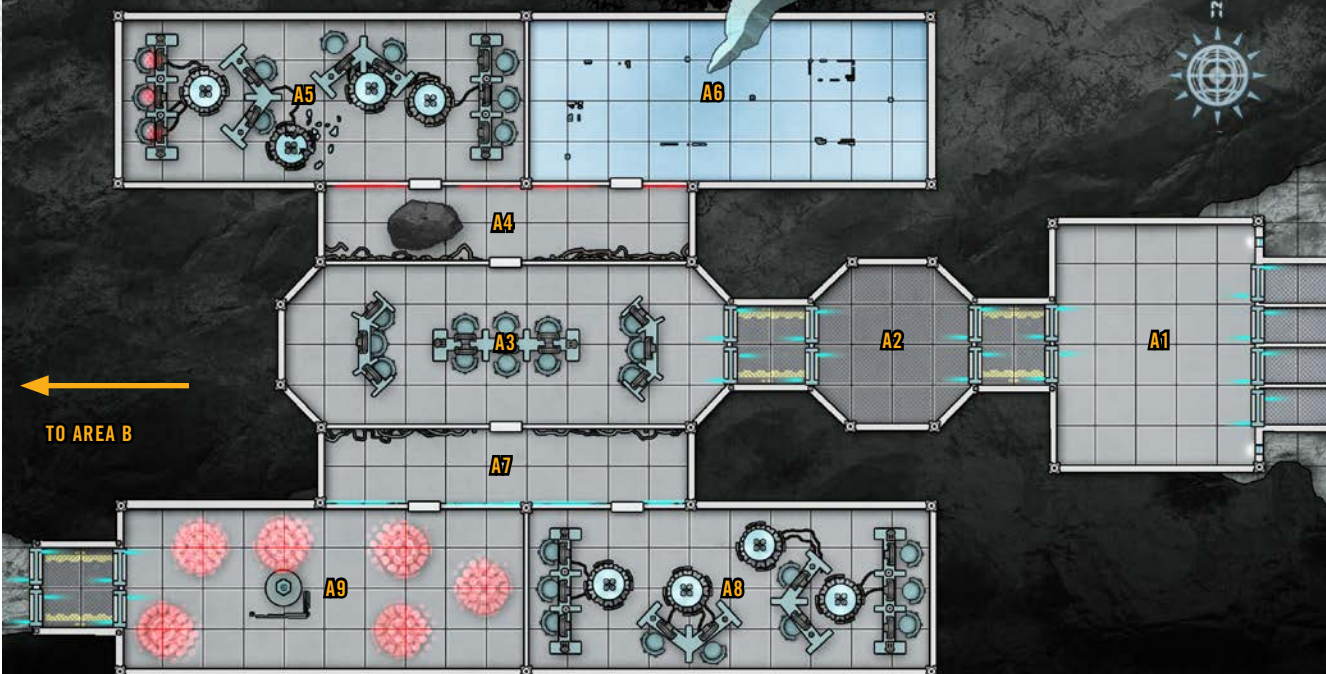
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TO AREA B

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

GRAY OBSERVER ROBOTS (2)

CR 1

XP 400 each

Observer-class security robot (*Alien Archive* 94)

HP 21

TACTICS

During Combat The robots try to subdue the errant experiment subjects, preferring to attack with pulse casters and stickybomb grenades.

Morale The robots attack until destroyed or their targets are subdued.

Hazard: The airlock iris door opens to a rough stone tube 2-1/2 feet wide. The tube connects to area **B4**, but also passes near the airless surface of the planetoid, where the reptoids' bombs have caused it to crack. Because of this, the room decompresses when the iris opens for longer than 1 round.

DECOMPRESSION HAZARD

CR 1

XP 400

Type analog; **Perception** Engineering DC 16 (interpret the warning lights are for an airlock with vacuum on the other side); **Disable** Engineering DC 16 (close the iris door despite air pressure)

Trigger location (opening the iris door); **Reset** each round the iris door remains open and unobstructed and when the iris door closes.

Effect multiple targets (creatures inside area **A1**); target closest to iris door pulled into opening (1d6 B and

grabbed [DC 16 to escape; 1d6 B each round the target fails to escape and the target is unable to breathe]); other targets pulled up and slammed against the ceiling (1d4 B) and if the target closest to the iris door is pulled in or the iris closes, they drop again (1d6 B); Reflex DC 12 negates either effect, as does being secured or holding onto an immovable object. Those able to move while the hazard is active can do so only at half speed.

Trap: The illuminated door out of the room is trapped. Its flashing purple lights are gray emergency beacons set off when sensors recording the experiment on the *Chimera* detected its destruction. The flashing symbols would normally alert any gray observer in the chamber and give response categories the gray is trained to understand. However, the computer controlling the alert system is damaged and displaying random gibberish.

A character that closely observes the symbols can succeed at a DC 15 Culture check to recognize that every symbol can be made by one five-fingered hand with an opposable thumb—part of a specific glyph system based on sign language. In truth, the language is a code system designed for Outpost Omicron and other secret gray installations. If a PC discovers the system uses hand signs, the group gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Computers checks to hack any hazard, lock, or trap in Outpost Omicron that uses such a hand-symbol bypass, such as

the electrified containment door trap here. Essentially, the hacker spoofs random signs until one triggers the bypass.

A PC can attempt to disable the trap by manipulating the control panel near the door or hacking the camera there.

ELECTRIFIED CONTAINMENT DOOR CR 3

XP 800

Type technological; **Perception** DC 24; **Disable** Engineering DC 19 (disable the control panel in 2d4 rounds)

Trigger touch; **Reset** immediate; **Bypass** security hand sign given to camera near the door (Computers DC 19 to hack as 1 full action)

Effect electrical discharge (6d6 E); Reflex DC 14 half

Development: With Outpost Omicron damaged and security protocols engaged, if a robot isn't already inside area **A1**, security robots enter this chamber from a ceiling hatch every 1d4 hours it is occupied by the PCs or other beings who aren't the facility's gray scientists. Roll d%. On a 1-75, one observer-class security robot enters. On a 76-100, two observer-class security robots enter. If the PCs seal the ceiling hatch, the robot breaks the hatch open with slam attacks after 1d4+1 rounds.

A2. DECONTAMINATION CHAMBER (CR 2)

This octagonal chamber is made of dull metal plates. Several flickering purple lights and five small inverted pyramids three to four inches across are set into the ceiling. The grates comprising the floor have been secured with heavy octagonal bolts. Each of the eight walls has a single alcove that holds a three-foot diameter fan protected by a series of bars. Double airlock doors are set in the east and west walls, each with a control panel near it.

The *Chimera* experiment occurred in Outpost Omicron's most secure testing bay. As a result, entering or leaving it requires going through decontamination to ensure no microbes contaminate any sensitive experiments held in the bay, and that nothing dangerous makes it out of the testing bay into the outpost. This decontamination chamber runs a cleaning and disinfecting cycle every time either door is opened and shut, cleaning anything within the chamber. It also ensures that both double doors cannot be opened at the same time.

Determining that this room is a decontamination chamber likely to activate when both sets of doors close requires a PC to succeed at a DC 10 Engineering check. A successful PC also understands that one airlock double door can be opened only once the other is closed. Determining the threat of the decontamination system before it activates requires an observer to succeed at a DC 18 Engineering check. The successful PC also discerns that the decontamination system can be disabled most easily via the control panels while one double door is still

open. Once the process activates, a PC must succeed at a DC 18 Engineering check to determine that hacking the control panels is a possible way to reconfigure the process. Bypassing the system to open one double door while the other is also open requires a PC to succeed at a DC 35 Engineering check.

Hazard: Once both double doors close while any creatures are inside this room, the decontamination process begins. Heavy jets of pressurized antiseptic spray from the inverted pyramids (which are nozzles) 12 feet up on the ceiling, and the fans activate to swirl the antiseptic into every nook and cranny. This process takes 5 rounds, during which time any creature without active environmental protections or some other breathing device cannot breathe (for more information see Suffocation and Drowning on page 404 of the *Core Rulebook*). The process can be hacked from the control panels near either door, and the bypass prevents those on the floor from taking damage from the spray.

DECONTAMINATION JETS CR 2

XP 600

Type technological; **Perception** DC 23; **Disable** Engineering DC 18 (take 1 minute to disable process while one door is open) or Engineering DC 12 (disable one of five ceiling nozzles as a standard action)

Trigger both doors shut; **Reset** 5 rounds and either door opens; **Bypass** reconfigure spray to aim at walls (Computers DC 18 to hack as 1 full action)

Effect jet spray (1 B and knocked prone); Fortitude DC 12 negates; multiple targets (each creature in area **A2**); each nozzle disabled reduces the DC by 1

A3. LAB HUB (CR 1)

Wires, tubes, and bits of complex machinery hang from broken panels in the ceiling, swaying in falling dust and streams of thin vapor issuing from some of the open pipes. Shattered viewscreens cover many walls, and stations made up of chairs and computer terminals occupy much of the room's center. Sparks of electricity issue from deep cracks in the ceiling and north wall. A heavy airlock double door is set in the east wall, and sliding panel doors are centered in the north and south walls.

If the PCs don't have the environmental protections of the armor active when they first open a door to this area, they find the air slightly irritating. A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Life Science or Medicine check before the PCs enter can determine the vapor spewing into the room is caustic and potentially dangerous before the PCs enter. The effects of this acidic gas are described in the Hazard section on page 7.

This area originally served as the central hub of the observation labs, where gray scientists and technicians

oversaw various experiments, wrote reports, and maintained this section of Outpost Omicron. During the same attack that disabled many of the systems in area **A1**, the Stewards' starship fired directly upon an external exhaust port, causing the systems here to overload. A PC who succeeds at a DC 16 Engineering, Physical Science, or Piloting check—or that of a relevant profession, such as Profession (architect) or Profession (military officer)—can tell the damage here was likely caused by bombardment rather than a direct assault on the room.

Three dead and severely burned gray scientists sprawl amid the workstations. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Life Science, Medicine, or Physical Science check can tell a caustic substance burned the bodies.

Hazard: Acidic vapor fills the room. The attack that caused the leaks also damaged the room's venting systems. While most of the room's computers and machines are destroyed, a PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Engineering check finds a control panel for the room's ventilation system on the western console that is merely broken. This check can be repeated until it succeeds; each check requires a PC to take a full action.

For each round a PC remains in this room, they take 1d4 acid damage from the caustic gas. A successful DC 12 Fortitude saving throw halves this damage, and a PC who has the environmental protections of their armor active gain a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

A PC can repair the broken control panel with a successful DC 20 Engineering check that takes a full action. Once repaired, the system automatically begins pulling the acidic vapor from the room, making the area safe.

Treasure: One gray has a security keycard made of a strange metal, but it is malfunctioning. If Inquestor Extiomi's keycard also malfunctions (described in area **A9**), the PCs can cobble together a working keycard from the two with a successful a DC 15 Engineering check. A working keycard grants the PCs access to area **B**.

Story Award: If the PCs repair the broken control panel, award them 400 XP.

A4. MAINTENANCE CORRIDOR RED (CR 2)

This wide corridor runs east to west, with one door in the middle of its southern wall and two spaced evenly along its northern wall. Panels, tubes, strangely shaped metal boxes, and thick cables cover the southern wall. Bright red lines make complex, circuit-like patterns on the north wall. The ceiling is dull gray stone riddled with cracks, and dust drifts down from the fissures. An enormous chunk of rock sits in the western end of the corridor beneath a gap of similar size in the ceiling.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Engineering check can tell the access panels, gauges, and systems that cover the southern wall are mostly secondary systems, such as monitoring devices and pumps for rooms in this sector. Damage dealt to the facility has severed these systems from the machines and devices they normally control and interact with. A PC who succeeds at this check can identify that the red patterns on the north wall are likely to be an unlabeled map of the systems and their connections, but deciphering

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the functionality is impossible without guidance or long study. However, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture or Physical Science check can follow the red patterns to two concealed hatches, one by each door on the north wall (see Treasure below). A PC searching the corridor can find these hatches with a successful DC 20 Perception check. Those who already succeeded at identifying and finding similar features in area **A7** automatically succeed at identifying or finding those features here.

Creature: The damage to the corridor has released materials and energies that were never designed to blend, especially not at random in an uncontrolled environment. They have joined to create a ferrofluid ooze, which lurks in the hallway behind the chunk of the ceiling that has fallen to the floor. The ooze remains still and silent until it attacks. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Perception check can act during the surprise round.

FERROFLUID OOZE

CR 2

XP 600

HP 25 (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 3 34)

TACTICS

During Combat Instinct drives the ooze to attack the closest creature.

Morale The ooze has no sense of self preservation and attacks until destroyed.

Treasure: Each hidden hatch contains 500 UPBs, stored here for repairs. In addition, a mk 2 culinary synthesizer (*Starfinder Armory* 129) is built into the wall here. A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Engineering check can remove the synthesizer and keep it in a functional state; each check takes 2d4 rounds.

A5. BEHAVIORAL LAB (CR 4)

Flashing, spinning purple lights in the ceiling illuminate this room, creating leaping shadows. Four clear cylinders form an uneven row along the center of the chamber, each with complex machinery connecting it to the floor and paneled ceiling. The second tube from the western wall is broken, with shards of its clear material scattered around it. Several workstations with computer terminals and chairs stand in the room. Most show no sign of power or function, but those at the western edge emit light from their holographic viewscreens, which bear strange symbols. One door allows entrance or exit from the east edge of the south wall.

This behavioral lab tests devices designed to change how creatures act or reason. It is currently set up to test a "fear frequency," a sound that invokes fear but is below the audible hearing range of most sapient creatures. That experiment is still running (see Hazard below).

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Perception check notices a tiny camera built into the door's control panel, much like

the one in area **A1**. PCs who have already found the camera in area **A1** gain a +4 circumstance bonus on this check, and any PC specifically looking for such a camera finds it.

Creature: Vrex, a bolida miner kidnapped from a mining party based in Stopgap (page 62), hides near the eastern workstations. A PC can spot them before they attack with a successful DC 17 Perception check. They have been exposed to the fear frequency for weeks. Sadly, the nonstop fear has driven the bolida into a state of extreme paranoia. Vrex broke out of their containment chamber, retrieved the gear the grays had been examining in the same room, and hunkered down. When the PCs enter the room, Vrex becomes convinced the intruders are the source of the fear. Vrex has the exhausted and shaken conditions. If the shaken condition is removed with magic or the fear frequency ends, Vrex passes out from exhaustion and stress. Regardless, at the end of the fifth round after Vrex starts behaving aggressively, a cortex bomb planted by the grays goes off in their brain, killing them.

VREX

CR 2

XP 600

Male bolida miner (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2 20)

HP 25

TACTICS

During Combat The paranoid bolida throws a grenade first, then prefers melee combat. They cry out in Common, first threatening the PCs, then begging the newcomers to stop the fear. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Sense Motive check can tell Vrex is under extreme duress, and if the hazard starts to affect the PCs, the source of this distress becomes apparent to anyone who succeeds at a DC 17 Life Science or Medicine check.

Morale Vrex attacks recklessly unless the PCs calm the bolida, which can't be done without magic while the fear frequency is active.

Hazard: Computers along the western wall emit the fear frequency from speakers attached to them. One speaker is hidden in each corner of the room. Each speaker has AC 5, hardness 8, and 1 HP. In addition, the active computers can be used to deactivate the trap, or the room's camera can be hacked with a spoofed emergency hand signal (with any bonus the PCs have from learning hand signs in area **A1**). The system information on the frequency can be found in AKlo or Lashunta. Based on the translation data, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture check can discern the grays stole the basis for the psychic fear frequency from lashuntas. The specifics of who or where it was stolen from aren't in this dataset.

FEAR FREQUENCY

CR 2

XP 600

Type hybrid; **Perception** DC 21 (find one speaker) or

Computers DC 21 (find the trap info in the computer as part of hacking it); **Disable** Engineering DC 12 (disable one speaker as a full action) or Computers DC 19 (security hand sign given to camera near the door and hack as 1 full action) or Computers DC 19 (hack the west computers, taking 2d4 rounds)

Trigger location (area **A6**); **Reset** none, although the effect is constant each round until deactivated

Effect shaken 1 round (mind-affecting, sense-dependent [hearing]); Will DC 12 negates for 1 round; multiple targets (each humanoid lacking the gray or lashunta subtype in area **A6**)

A6. RUINED LAB

A jagged crack splits the northern wall, extending onto the floor and ceiling. The room is frigid. Pale ice fills the crack in the wall, which looks like a demonic grin full of flat, serrated, icy teeth. Bolts, mounts, and wires show where other objects might have once been placed in the room, but those objects aren't here now.

The Steward starship's attack opened a crack a few inches wide that runs from this room to the surface of the planetoid housing Outpost Omicron. The damage smashed everything in this lab to pieces, then the exposure to vacuum caused those pieces to be blown into space. Emergency sealant filled the hole, freezing within the vacuum. From this evidence, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering or Physical Science check, or check using an appropriate profession, such as Profession (architect), can piece together these events in general terms (an external attack rather than a specific starship, for instance).

If someone casts *detect magic* here, the room has a faint aura. A PC who senses this magic and succeeds at a DC 20 Mysticism check can tell the magic is extraplanar and tainted with supernatural evil. If the result of the check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the PC can tell the energy is Abyssal in nature. It's likely that something demonic was once here but is now gone.

If the PCs break through the sealant, which is as tough as a concrete wall, they risk decompressing this room in a manner like the hazard in area **A1**. If the outer door is open, targets are pulled into the room from as far away as 10 feet from that door. Those who fail the DC 12 Reflex save smash into the northern wall for 2d6 bludgeoning damage. A creature can pull itself or another creature out of the room while the trap is active with a successful DC 16 Athletics check for each move action, moving at half speed. Failing the check by 5 or more means the creature must repeat the Reflex saving throw or be slammed back against the wall. Making it out of the room and allowing the automatic sliding door to close allows a PC to escape the depressurization, but they are still subject to it if they reenter.

A7. MAINTENANCE CORRIDOR BLUE

This east-west corridor has one door in the middle of its northern wall and two spaced evenly on its southern wall. Panels, tubes, odd metal boxes, and thick cables pack the northern wall. Bright blue lines make complex, circuit-like patterns on the southern wall. The ceiling is stone.

This area is very similar to area **A4**, including the hidden panels near each southern door. Identifying the area and finding its hidden features requires the same checks detailed in area **A4**, granting the same automatic success for having already identified features and found the secrets of area **A4**.

Treasure: Each hidden hatch contains 500 UPBs. The hall also contains another built-in culinary synthesizer that can be retrieved as the one in area **A4**.

A8. WEAPON TEST LAB (CR 3)

Flashing purple lights in the ceiling illuminate the disarray of this room. Workstations here have been wrecked, cubicles damaged, chairs broken and overturned, and computer terminals smashed. Broken glass is scattered across the floor from shattered transparent cylinders that form a jagged line down the lab's center. Each has the twisted remains of a robotic arm attached to the ceiling above it, and smashed and mangled electronics connect the arms to the bottom. Three of the cylinders have misshapen, fleshy lumps within them. Glistening puce goo containing strips of skin and lumps of flesh forms streaks across much of the floor and the south wall.

The grays used this space to experiment with creatures and objects before seeing if such projects could be scaled up.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check sees that some of the smeared goo runs up the wall to a fire suppression system pipe only 1 inch in diameter. The nozzle is torn off. A PC who examines the trail and succeeds at a DC 15 Survival check can tell whatever made this smear headed into the pipe, rather than came out of it. A similar successful Survival check is enough for a PC to tell that the tubes were broken from within, and whatever was inside them made the smeared goo trails. These trails come from escaped troll polyps—lumps of trollflesh animated with a cruel sentience; the PCs will likely encounter them in area **B**.

The fleshy lumps that remain in the wrecked tubes are remains of cloned humanoids. Most of the remains are beyond recognition except for one, which has a face visible in the goo. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Culture check notes that the face looks like Diamond Dias, a lashunta shock-broadcaster popular in the Diaspora infosphere. The last the PCs knew, Dias was very much alive.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check finds a battered datatag marked "Living Transmutation Matrix,"

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LIVING TRANSMUTATION MATRIX

The living transmutation matrix is a unique level 5 technological item that can take the form of any basic or advanced melee weapon or small arm of item levels 1 through 3 of light bulk or less. It is currently programmed with all appropriate options from the *Core Rulebook* and *Armory*. A PC can program a new schematic into the matrix by spending 1 hour with the matrix, as long as they have the weapon they wish the matrix to be able to copy in hand. The highest item level of weapon the living transmutation matrix can be programmed with equals the matrix's item level - 2.

The living transmutation matrix gains all the statistics of the chosen weapon (including critical effects and weapon special properties), though it always has the living weapon special property (*Armory* 29). The weapon still requires any appropriate ammunition; any inappropriate ammunition in the matrix when it transforms is ejected into a free hand of the wielder (or onto the ground if the wielder has no free hand). The living transmutation matrix can't benefit from a weapon fusion or fusion seal.

The living transmutation matrix can have a maximum of two "readied" forms (the readied forms of the matrix the PCs find in area **A8** are a survival knife and a vapor cavitation pistol [*Armory* 15]), and can be switched between the two as a full action taken by the wielder. Changing the two readied forms (choosing from all the weapons programmed into the matrix) requires 10 minutes of programming.

The living transmutation matrix can be upgraded with UPBs and a successful Engineering or Life Science check (DC = 15 + 1-1/2 × the living transmutation matrix's current item level); this takes 4 hours. Its new item level, which can be no higher than the number of ranks in Engineering or Life Science the PC attempting the check has, is determined by the number of UPBs spent at the time of upgrade (as shown on the following table).

NEW ITEM LEVEL	UPBS	NEW ITEM LEVEL	UPBS
6	4,000	14	65,000
7	6,000	15	105,000
8	9,000	16	150,000
9	12,500	17	235,000
10	17,500	18	350,000
11	24,000	19	525,000
12	32,000	20	800,000
13	48,000		

with further information encoded in a small computer chip, near one large shattered tube. A comm unit, hacking kit, or computer can read the encoded information stored in the tag, which consists of several reports about the living transmutation matrix's capabilities filled with dry, scientific notation. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering, Life Science, or Physical Science check can surmise this experiment involved cloned and mutated astrazoan cells forced to take the shape of an object. Further entries note that the grays have discovered a way to make the matrix function as a weapon, and that it might be possible to improve such a weapon's capabilities.

Creature: A single troll polyp remained behind here, hiding near the eastern workstations. The polyp waits about 1 minute before attacking. PCs who fail a DC 18 Perception check are surprised when it attacks.

LIVING TRANSMUTATION MATRIX

TROLL POLYP

CR 3

XP 800

HP 35 (page 61)

TACTICS

During Combat Barely sapient, the troll polyp focuses its attacks on anyone who damages it in a way that stops its regeneration. It risks attacks of opportunity to do so. Barring that deciding factor, it attacks the closest foe.

Morale The troll polyp attacks until it is destroyed.

Treasure: A PC who glances behind one of the intact cylinders finds a vapor cavitation pistol (*Armory* 15) in mint condition. This pistol is the living transmutation matrix mentioned above. The first time a PC touches it, the living transmutation matrix morphs briefly into a survival knife and then back into a cavitation pistol.

A PC who examines the pistol, compares their observations to those found within the data tag, and succeeds at a DC 22 Engineering, Life Science, or Physical Science check learns all of the living transmutation matrix's abilities, as described in the Living Transmutation Matrix sidebar.

A9. DATA FOUNDRY (CR 4)

Six glowing red holographic displays of strange symbols and mathematical terms slowly revolve around the edges of this room, while the data on them churns and rearranges itself. Projectors in the ceiling flicker and whir as they spin and move along tracks to keep the displays in motion. A podium in the center of the room is surrounded by shifting, shining

surfaces covered in buttons and touchpads. A mechanical arm attached to the ceiling spins around the podium, holding a sheet of transparent material that displays smaller copies of the rotating holographic displays. To the west is a double airlock door.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Computers check recognizes this room is a data foundry, a place where scientists use unique metrics and logarithms to analyze data. The central podium is where the detailed analysis and control of the data flow takes place, since someone there can initiate analyses, offload the running calculation onto a secondary holographic display, and then begin new data and analysis procedures. Grays use this foundry to study test results, and one of them is still here.

The whirl and spectacle of the holographic displays render anyone in the room outside of the podium dazzled. A successful DC 12 Will saving throw negates the effect, and someone who is affected can attempt a new saving throw at the end of each of their turns. Grays in this outpost, used to the displays, ignore this effect.

Creature: Inquestor Extiomi has heard explosions and alarms, but the data foundry is unharmed, and no one has warned him of a threat. As a result, he continues to analyze data and record information on the fear frequency (area **A5**) and living transmutation matrix (area **A8**). He is extremely distracted, and the PCs can surprise him if they succeed at DC 14 Stealth checks before attacking. Extiomi assumes the PCs are test subjects, but he doesn't know they are clones.

As a move action, Extiomi can move the transparent aluminum screen to any of the four squares around the podium. It provides cover from any attack that has a line of effect that moves through or into its current square. A character other than Extiomi in a square adjacent to where the screen leaves or arrives when it moves each round must succeed at a DC 10 Reflex save or take 1d4 bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

If the central podium is broken (AC 7, hardness 8, 25 HP), the holographic displays and transparent aluminum screen stop. The screen can also be attacked directly (AC 7, hardness 10, 15 HP), as can the six ceiling projectors (AC 10, hardness 8, 10 HP). Any of these devices cease functioning when destroyed.

EXTIOMI**CR 4****XP 1,200**

Male gray

HP 43 (*Alien Archive* 56)**OFFENSE****Melee** touch +6 (probe) or

static shock pad +6 (1d4+4 E; critical staggered)

Ranged advanced numbing beam +8 (1d8+4 C; critical staggered)

Gear gray skinsuit (functions as basic lashunta tempweave), advanced numbing beam^{AR} with 2 batteries (20 charges each), static shock pad^{AR} with 1 battery (20 charges), gray security keycard

TACTICS

During Combat Only when the PCs make aggressive moves does Extiomi realize something is awry and attempts to put the PCs down as "unruly subjects outside their proper parameters." He first locks the western airlock as a move action—the PCs can see him activate something and hear the lock engage. The Inquestor then attacks. Initially disdainful and superior in attitude, he prefers to disable the PCs using *deep slumber* or his nonlethal weapons. When he has fewer than 25 Hit Points, he retaliates with *mind thrust* and uses his shock pad to lethal effect.

Morale The Inquestor refuses to back down. He has a cortex bomb implanted in his brain to ensure the

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secrets he knows are never acquired by anyone outside his organization. If he is reduced to 0 Hit Points or becomes helpless due to an external force, this bomb detonates, killing Extiomi and destroying his brain. If Extiomi believes he might be captured without the automatic failsafe detonating the cortex bomb, he can activate it as a swift action that requires only that he be able to take mental actions. If Extiomi's cortex bomb detonates, the intact gray security keycard he carries also malfunctions.

STATISTICS

Skills Computers +15, Engineering +10, Sense Motive +15

Treasure: A compartment in the podium holds 500 UPBs, a hacking kit, and an engineering toolkit (for building maintenance). If Inquestor Extiomi's security keycard is malfunctioning like the one found in area **A3**, it can be repaired with a successful DC 15 Engineering check (which requires the PCs to have access to the other broken keycard).

Development: The airlock to the west of this room leads into the research and development section of Outpost Omicron (area **B**).

The airlock door has a tiny observation camera like those found elsewhere in this section of the outpost. A PC must succeed at a DC 19 Perception check to find the camera but receives a +4 circumstance bonus to notice it if a similar camera has already been found, and automatically finds the camera if specifically looking for it.

The airlock can be unlocked from the central podium with an intact (or repaired) security keycard, provided the podium is still functional. Without a keycard, a PC must succeed at a DC 30 Computers check. Alternatively, the door can be opened by disabling the lock with a successful DC 30 Engineering check or bypassed with a successful DC 25 Computers check. Remember that a hacker gains a +2 circumstance bonus if they know about the gray hand signals.

PART 2: THE EXPERIMENTS AWAKEN

The grays of Outpost Omicron designed new projects and created experimental prototypes in the research and development labs—the once-beating heart of the facility. During the Stewards' bombardment and resulting destruction, a few grays were wounded or killed, but even more lost their lives when their more dangerous experiments escaped and began to rampage through the corridors. The deadliest of these is a two-headed quantum troll, a mutated brute who seeks only to destroy gray equipment and wreak revenge on its creators.

B. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

This area once bustled with gray scientists; those who weren't killed have managed to escape the damaged facilities. The hallways are now deserted, except for the wandering escaped experiments.

PHASE ENCOUNTERS

The malfunctioning quantum replicator in area **B6** has created a "phase field" that caused some creatures to phase out of reality in this area. As the PCs explore area **B**, portions of these fields collapse, returning the affected creatures to this reality. As a result, twice before the PCs repair the replicator, dangerous creatures suddenly appear in proximity of the PCs. Each PC and creature in these encounters must succeed at a DC 15 Perception check to act during a surprise round. Driven berserk by the bizarre phase shift, the creatures are hostile, but their presence isn't exactly stable. As described in each encounter, the creatures might disappear and reappear at certain points in the fight. The PCs receive full XP for any creatures they battle that vanish and never return, even if those creatures weren't completely defeated.

After one such an encounter occurs, a PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Mysticism or Physical Science check can tell these creatures were out of phase with normal reality for some reason and phased back in temporarily. Successful PCs can surmise something in the nearby environment is causing this effect.

Pick from among the following encounters. You can use additional encounters to help the PCs earn more XP if they skip encounters in other areas. As evidenced by the trails of mucus in area **A8**, the troll polyps might also be found in other areas of the outpost even after the quantum replicator is repaired.

DINOSAUR ATTACK (CR 6)

Three alien dromeosaurids, long-necked bipedal dinosaurs with triangular heads and sensory appendages growing from their backs and heels that look like mushrooms, appear approximately 30 feet away from the PCs. These creature were created as part of an unsuccessful uplifting experiment by the grays. Once they sense the PCs, the dromeosaurids pounce.

The dromeosaurid that has the fewest Hit Points at the start of round 2 disappears into the phase field but returns at the start of round 4, replacing the one with the most Hit Points (who never returns). After the fight, the dinosaurs' corpses vanish.

DROMEOSAURIDS (3)

CR 3

XP 800 each

HP 45 each (*Alien Archive 2 38*)

TACTICS

During Combat Each dromeosaurid pounces on a different PC.

Morale These dinosaurs fight to the death.

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**LASER WOLF PACK (CR 5)**

A mated pair of tashtaris, three-legged canine creatures with glowing chests and the ability to shoot beams of energy from their muzzles, appear directly in front of the PCs. The grays were attempting to develop a more efficient battery by analyzing the tashtaris' photoenergetic node within their throats.

Both tashtaris disappear into the phase field and never return at the end of round 5, dead or alive.

TASHTARIS (2)**CR 3****XP 800 each****HP 40 each** (*Alien Archive 2 38*)**TACTICS**

During Combat One tashtari uses bristle flash at the start of combat, while the other uses this ability on its turn during round 3. Otherwise, these predators work together against one foe at a time.

Morale If one tashtari falls, the other retreats while firing on the PCs with its muzzle beam.

POLYP MASS (CR 5)

Two troll polyps, disgusting masses of irradiated and mutated troll flesh, appear flanking the PCs. The grays were studying their physiology in area **A8**, but this pair escaped

into the facility's ventilation system when they broke free from their containers.

The most wounded troll polyp disappears at the end of round 2, only to reemerge at the start of round 5 (after regenerating for 2 rounds). Both polyps or, more likely, their remains disappear again after 1 minute. One reappears near the PCs when the quantum replicator is repaired or used for the first time, and if it happens to be alive, the polyp convulses and dies on its turn before acting.

TROLL POLYPS (2)**CR 3****XP 800 each****HP 35 each** (see page 60)**TACTICS**

During Combat The troll polyps vent their rage on the closest PC or on anyone who stops their regeneration in that round.

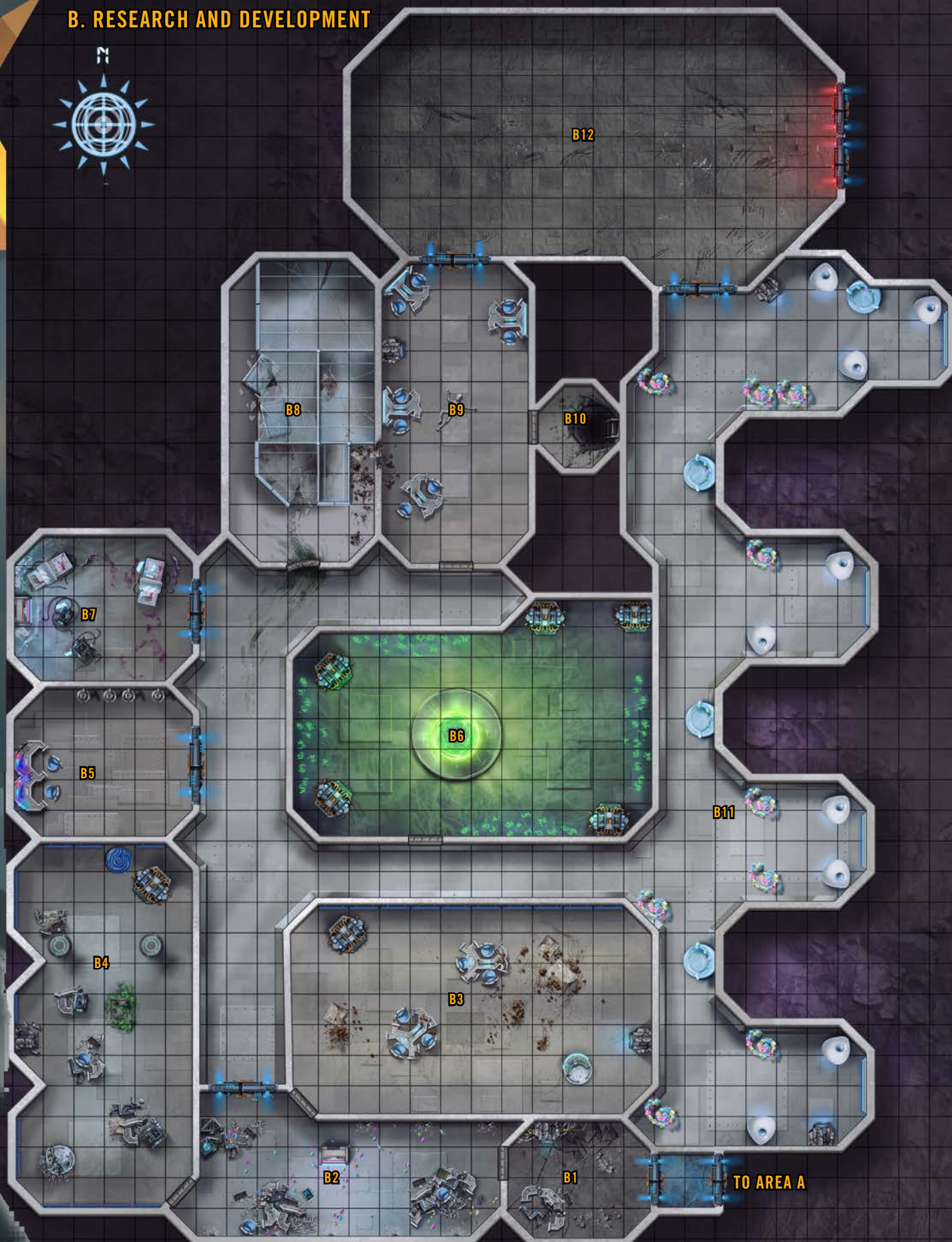
Morale The troll polyps attack until they are destroyed.

B1. COMM HUB (CR 4)

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs open the airlock door in area **A9** to reveal this room.

Dust hangs thick in the air in this roughly octagonal room, and cracks run through the smooth stone ceiling and floor, as

B. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

well as north wall, which is paneled in dull metal. Stone debris and rubble are scattered across the area. A hollow frame of gold and silver wires running from floor to ceiling, twisting in intricate patterns and forming several hollow hemispheres along its length, rests along the north wall. A machine made of shards of smoky crystal anchors this framework, each crystal arranged in a tightly fitted pattern. Motes of blue light form in the crystals, and then move throughout the wires, which disappear into holes in the wall or floor, only to and loop back to the crystal machine. In the southwest corner is a chair and desk with a computer workstation, all smashed. A humanoid form lies crumpled among the wreckage.

This administrative room tracked grays as they move between outpost sections and provided communications.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Life Science or Medicine check can tell a Large creature killed the gray here, using fangs, claws, and raw strength to tear things apart. The gray's cortex bomb then went off. Someone who succeeds at a DC 20 Engineering check can tell the same creature smashed the workstation. Given the debris, a PC who attempts to learn about this creature and succeeds at a DC 20 Survival check can tell by its tracks that the creature was a Large humanoid with clawed, bare feet. It's also clear the creature could move somehow without touching the ground. (This foreshadows the quantum troll's ability to teleport.) Any PC who can see the tracks after they're found and succeeds at a DC 22 Life Science check can surmise some variety of troll made them, although not one the PC has ever heard of.

The device of wire and crystal in this room is a specialized gray comm unit built for Outpost Omicron (see the Gray Comm Unit sidebar). This system-wide version is made to communicate on a secure channel within the outpost and to gray starships in the nearby system with specific tuning devices. Any PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Engineering or Mysticism check can determine this device's function. It can't be used elsewhere without removing it from the facility and it is prohibitively bulky. However, its metallic parts can be scavenged (see Treasure below).

Creature: A gray boulder, a quadrupedal "watchdog" kept in many gray facilities, hides here behind the wrecked workstation, having avoided the quantum troll's wrath. When it sees the PCs emerge from the airlock without any accompanying grays, the gray boulder attacks.

GRAY BOUNDER

CR 4

XP 1,200

HP 42 (see page 55)

TACTICS

During Combat The gray boulder telepathically "shouts" simple accusations and questions about the location of its gray masters at the PCs who "do not belong."

Morale The gray boulder fights until slain.

GRAY COMM UNIT

As a telepathic species that doesn't speak, the grays don't use normal comms. They have constructed telepathic comms attuned to their thought patterns and telepathy. These comms are extremely rare outside gray facilities, available only through underground or gray-market channels. Their prices reflect this rarity.

GRAY COMM UNIT

LEVEL 3-14

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM

MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	BULK
Planetary	3	1,500	1
System-wide	8	9,000	40
Unlimited	14	72,000	120

A gray comm unit, a bizarre device made of smoky crystal and wires of gold and silver, functions like a normal comm unit (*Core Rulebook* 218), except it sends only telepathic signals. You must identify the receiver, who must also have a gray comm unit, which notifies the receiver of an incoming message. To send or receive the message, you must have limited telepathy or telepathy, or you must cast *mindlink* (an exception to that spell's normal targeting) or *telepathy* targeting the gray comm unit. Either spell retains its other parameters, such as duration. A mystic using the *mindlink* class feature can target a gray comm unit with the spell any number of times per day, even if the message comes from or goes to the same creature. Three kinds of *gray comm unit* units see use.

- **Planetary (Level 3):** This bulky handheld unit can reach another unit on the same planet or on an object orbiting the same planet.
- **System-Wide (Level 8):** A gray comm unit with a system-wide range typically takes up 10 or so cubic feet, much of it a network of wire and crystals set within a wall unit.
- **Unlimited (Level 14):** Few have seen these massive gray comm unit units, which take up a small room and hijack Drift beacons to transmit their telepathic signals across interstellar distances.

Treasure: The gray boulder wears an ornate collar of blue metal. Connected to the collar is a dark loop adorned with several switches. This unusual loop is an empty *mk 1 null-space chamber*.

Although the crystals making up the gray comm unit aren't valuable, the gold and silver wires are. A character trained in Physical Science can easily identify the metals without a check. If the PCs take 10 minutes to collect these materials, gray comm unit is rendered unusable. The gold and silver wires are worth 1,250 credits and weigh 5 bulk.

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B2. POP CULTURE RESEARCH (CR 3)

This room has been heavily damaged, leaving cracks in the walls and ceiling. Small chairs and delicate desks have been overturned. Glistening green stains spatter the stone ceiling. Pieces of what might have been models or similar craft projects, tangles of metallic wire, and crystal pebbles of many hues are scattered across the floor, mixed with detritus broken from the furniture. A pristine vending machine, marked in Common as a Fusion Fizz dispenser, sits in the room's center, and a few ripped and crushed cartons of boxed plush shirren dolls are piled against the western wall.

The grays used this chamber to research (and occasionally weaponize) various physical ephemera of pop culture within the Pact Worlds and beyond. The quantum troll damaged many of these projects as it rampaged through here, but a few are still intact.

Unpowered and empty of the bubbly concoction it normally dispenses, the Fusion Fizz vending machine is

otherwise normal. PCs recognize the machine and this brand of carbonated, sweet energy-beverage in an edible can without a check.

The plush dolls are Bug Furry Friend brand dolls, as the box labels indicate. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture check remembers that these iridescent shirren-shaped toys were part of a set sold by Key Toys (a division of AbadarCorp). They were recalled after discovering some children were allergic to their authentic skittermander fur, which was harvested from paid volunteers and originally marketed as a feature. However, these original toys are somewhat valuable to collectors (see Treasure on page 17).

A character who analyzes the green stains must succeed at a DC 17 Life Science or Medicine check to identify it as blood. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC identifies the blood as troll blood. The blood is slightly radioactive, a fact the PCs can learn using the right tools, such as an advanced medkit or chemalyzer, or magic.

Creature: One of the Bug Furry Friend dolls is a weaponized devil-in-a-box. Its container looks like a typical commercial display box for the toys, but it's armored. When anyone pokes through the pile of boxed toys, the creature leaps out from its packaging and attacks. Since it looks like a normal toy until it pounces, any PC who fails a DC 22 Perception check cannot act in the surprise round.

BUG FURRY FRIEND

CR 3

XP 800

Weaponized devil-in-a-box (*Alien Archive* 3 132)

HP 40

TACTICS

During Combat The devil-in-a-box first attacks any foe touching the toys. It then identifies anyone who retaliates as a foe to be dispatched.

Morale This devil-in-a-box keeps fighting until all creatures identified as foes are slain or it is.

Treasure: Anyone trained in Engineering, Physical Science, or Mysticism can tell the wires, semiprecious stones, and crystals scattered about the room are valuable. It takes 10 minutes to gather up the lot, which weighs 5 bulk, and can be used as 2,500 UPBs for crafting hybrid or magic items.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering or Mysticism check, or someone using spells such as *detect magic* or *arcane eye*, can tell a tangle of wires and crystal among the odds and ends is some kind of device. This item is known as an eldricarnum (see the Eldricarnum sidebar). It currently has a *spell gem of magic missile* wired into it. Four gems piled with the eldricarnum are spell gems, one each of *caustic conversion*, *microbot assault*, *overheat*, and *supercharge weapon*.

Fifteen Bug Furry Friend dolls remain intact, weighing 1 bulk. The PCs can easily sell them for 10 credits apiece. If they work to find a collector later, they can make 25 credits for each doll.



In addition, one sealed carton contains 32 undamaged Fusion Fizz cans. One can, worth 1 credit, provides all the nutrition and moisture a creature needs for the day. The full carton weighs 1 bulk, although a can is of negligible bulk.

B3. LABORATORY OMA (CR 4)

Read or paraphrase the following text when the PCs can see the door.

This door differs from others in this facility. A bright stripe of alternating purple and black outlines the exterior. Four large toggle switches, two on each side, can lock the door from this side, but none of the toggles are locked. A smashed viewscreen is set in the door, roughly three feet off the ground. Above the viewscreen is a circular disk of bright blue metal that displays a holographic image of a stylized fishlike creature turning in a circle, its head near its tail, with arcs of electricity coming from its mouth.

Provided the PCs know Outpost Omicron is a gray-run facility, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Culture or Life Science check can tell the hologram on the door is a gray thought figure, meant to indicate this area's importance as a place of study. The sigil itself is unimportant and most likely unrelated to the room's contents, but the figure's uniqueness allows grays who know of this place to refer to it telepathically without revealing more to potential eavesdroppers who have no such inside knowledge. Those who have succeeded at the check to identify the nature of the symbol on the door to area **B4** automatically succeed at this check. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture or Life Science check can tell the symbol here depicts a stylized oma (*Alien Archive* 88).

This door is steel. Engaging or disengaging one of the door's toggles takes a move action and a successful DC 20 Athletics check. If a toggle is engaged, opening the door requires a successful DC 24 Athletics check or Engineering check. Each toggle locked after the first increases these DCs by 2.

Read or paraphrase the following text when the PCs first see the room's interior.

This roughly rectangular chamber has uneven, paneled walls. Set into the northern wall is a plate of blue metal with that displays a holographic symbol like that on the outside of the door, only larger. At the southern end of the room is a podium covered in colored buttons and touchpads. Near the eastern wall is a frame of gold and silver wires with hollows built into it, like small cages. All these wires run into a machine made of smoky crystal. Two workstations, each with three desks and chairs, sit in the center and northern third of the room. In the northwestern corner is a raised section of tubes, wires, and vapor-clouded pipes, the whole array humming and occasionally hissing. The ceiling is cracked, twisted metal panels bending downward into the room. Rock and other debris litters the floor.

ELDRICARNUM

Some grays experiment with the boundaries between technology and magic, and between weapons and tools. The eldricarnum is one result of such out-of-the-box thinking that allows non-spellcasters to take advantage of spell gems.

ELDRICARNUM

LEVEL 4

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM	PRICE 2,500	BULK 1
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A mass of metallic wires and small crystals of bright hues, this device can be worn like a glove. You can wire a *spell gem* into the eldricarnum (this process takes 1 minute) and use the gem as if the device were a weapon with the *spellthrower* fusion. You are proficient with the eldricarnum and wielding it as a weapon for this purpose. The gem also functions as the item's battery.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering, Life Science, or Physical Science check can tell this area has been used as a laboratory. The humming and hissing machine is an energy and heat sink, distributing excess energy from larger apparatuses elsewhere in the facility to prevent it from reaching a dangerous concentration in one area. The PCs also immediately spot the Monitor (see Creature) in front of the workstations. Only a PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Engineering or Mysticism check realizes this bizarre and temporarily quiescent construct is a creature.

The corpses of two grays are sprawled near the workstations. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Life Science of Medicine check can tell these grays were killed in the same fashion as the ones in area **B1**, with their implanted cortex bombs damaging their corpses even further.

The podium is a tier 3 computer (Computers DC 25 to hack) with two control modules a hacker can find, one to communicate with the robotic Monitor and one to control the room's planetary gray comm unit. If accessed, the computer contains data that reveals this lab focused on research and development for projects not yet ready for extensive testing. Dates suggest projects here have been put on hold to allow focus on the "Chimera Project." The computer also holds data detailing the four experiments the Monitor has on hold (see Creature on page 18).

If hacked, the Monitor's control module can send commands to the Monitor. As a standard action, a PC who succeeds at a DC 18 Computers check can send the Monitor a command. If the command is in keeping with the Monitor's current intentions, such as attacking a specific foe among a group of enemies the Monitor currently faces, the Monitor follows that command for 1 round. Otherwise, it ignores the command, but based upon how much the Computers check to issue the command succeeded by, the Monitor gains a condition from the list that follows (page 18) for 1 round.

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MARGIN OF SUCCESS	CONDITION
0	Flat-footed
1	Off-target
2	Shaken
3	Staggered
4	Confused
5+	Stunned

A PC who has access to the gray comm unit control module and has limited telepathy or telepathy can sense that the gray comm unit can send telepathic commands to the Monitor. Doing so functions like sending commands using the Monitor's control module but allows a PC to use Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate rather than Computers. The PCs can succeed at only one check (either Computers or the Charisma-based skills listed above) to issue a command to the Monitor.

Creature: The Monitor is a bizarre robot made up of two sets of spinning, spiked concentric rings, each covered in Aklo runes and multihued crystals. Spiderlike limbs and

spikes emerge from an orb at the center of the rings. Four are for locomotion, but several others are tipped with pincers, syringes, clamps, applicators, and other tools.

The Monitor overloaded when the lab was damaged and forgot it was on standby. It contemplates the PCs' arrival, and unless otherwise disturbed it activates a few minutes after the PCs enter (giving them time to hack the computer) or if they attempt to leave, and telepathically welcomes them as "new test subjects," demanding they submit to its four tests. It assures the newcomers the tests are harmless, which it truly believes, but the robot does not take "no" for an answer.

If the PCs agree, the Monitor insists on one subject per test, choosing those that seem most likely to benefit from the effects. When the tests have been administered, the Monitor asks the PCs to wait in the laboratory for 10 minutes while it observes and records their reactions and conditions over time. The Monitor then allows them to leave. If the PCs fail to comply with any of these steps, the Monitor attacks them to force them to submit to its tests.

The tests are as follows.

Project ACS Gamma—Credstick Gene Tracker: The Monitor hands the PC a credstick issued by AbadarCorp and asks them to use a mock infosphere to make purchases. However, this credstick takes a sample of the holder's genetic material and records it, using the same encrypted data a credstick uses to securely log credit transactions. It sends that data along with electronic purchase records to a secret database, and if the purchaser changes infospheres, the records attempt to link via comm units that normally send such data among infospheres. The location of the database, which could potentially be used to track an individual, is outside the scope of this adventure. A PC who observes the use of this credstick and succeeds at a DC 25 Computers check can see the extra data it sends. On a success by 5 or more, the observer can determine the true nature of the data transmission. The credstick burns up after 1 minute, dealing the holder 2d4 fire damage (Reflex DC 14 for half).

For the rest of the adventure, the PC who received the credstick has a bizarre affinity for sensing creature genetics and understanding cryptic data structures, receiving a +2 insight bonus on checks to identify creatures, checks to recall knowledge, and Computers checks.

Project FF Alpha—Chiller: The Monitor produces an 11-ounce can of Fusion Fizz, and directs a willing PC to open the can and sip from it. The can is room temperature but marked as having "New and Improved Self-Chilling Technology!" Indeed, if the PC pops the can's pull tab open, the can chills its contents to just above



THE MONITOR

freezing and a thick vapor pours out of the aperture, filling the immediate area with an overpowering fruity scent.

The liquid is Fusion Fizz laced with nanite-directed psychotropic drugs. Anyone who first sips the liquid feels extremely relaxed and energized for the rest of the adventure, gaining a +2 insight bonus to Will saving throws and saving throws against fatigue or exhaustion. For 1 hour, the subject is also unfocused, taking a -1 penalty to attack rolls, Perception checks, and any check that takes more than a standard action to complete. For the rest of the adventure, this penalty resurfaces for 1 round whenever the subject misses with an attack or fails one of the checks the original effect penalized.

After one subject takes a sip, the nanites in the Fusion Fizz eat through the can 1 round later, dealing 1d4 acid damage per round for up to 4 rounds to any creature holding the can. When the damage starts, a holder who succeeds at a DC 13 Reflex saving throw takes only 1 acid damage before dropping the can.

Project PS Epsilon—Radiant Dentin/Chitin Psychotropic: The Monitor produces a brush that hums as paste oozes up onto the brush bristles. This device appears to be a "Photon Shine Tooth-and-Carapace Polish Travel Applicator," a popular on-the-go polish and brush in one. If the subject is willing, the Monitor instructs them to scrub their teeth or hard epidermis vigorously. Nanites in the paste are designed to radiate strange electromagnetic waves that make sapient creatures susceptible to suggestion. The subject gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Charisma-based checks and enchantment spell save DCs for the rest of the adventure. For 1 hour, the subject takes a -2 penalty to Will saves and Sense Motive checks, and for the rest of the adventure, this penalty resurfaces for 10 minutes if the subject fails a Will saving throw or Sense Motive check.

The brush has only one application of the paste, which also disintegrates the brush over the course of 1 minute, dealing 1d4 acid damage per round for up to 4 rounds to any creature holding the brush. When the damage starts, a holder who succeeds at a DC 13 Reflex saving throw takes only 1 acid damage before dropping the brush.

Project PG Zeta—Shade Walking: The Monitor produces sunglasses of the high-end Pinely brand and instructs the PC to put them on. The glasses allow the PC to see into a hypothetical fifth dimension for 2d4+5 rounds before disappearing into that dimension forever, lost. While the PC can see into this theoretical dimension, and provided the PC isn't carrying more than their maximum load, the PC can teleport up to their land speed to any unoccupied space they can see. Doing so is a move action. However, after arriving, the PC must succeed at a DC 13 Will saving throw or take 1d4 damage as this hyperperception overwhelms the mind.

After the glasses disappear, the PC can still glimpse the fifth dimension for some time afterward. For the rest of the adventure, whenever the PC rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll,

skill check, ability check, or saving throw while in combat with a significant opponent, they regain the ability to teleport as if wearing the glasses, with the same potential for damage when doing so, until the end of their next turn.

THE MONITOR

CR 4

XP 1,200

N Medium construct (magical, technological)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +10

DEFENSE

HP 50

EAC 16; **KAC** 18

Fort +4; **Ref** +4; **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities integrated weapons; **Immunities** construct immunities; **SR** 15

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee slam +10 (1d6+5 B, P, or S plus test applicator)

Ranged integrated zoologist injector pistol +13 (1d8+2 P plus sedative [1d4 nonlethal])

TACTICS

During Combat The Monitor chooses a new target once it has administered a given test to one "recalcitrant subject." Once it has administered all four tests, it suggests the subjects "settle down for 10 minutes for observation." If the PCs cease hostilities, so does the Monitor. However, it attacks again to restrain any subject who attempts to leave before the test is over.

Morale Dedicated to its duty, the Monitor attempts to administer its tests and defends itself until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +5; **Con** -; **Int** +3; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Computers +15, Engineering +10, Sense Motive +15

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language); telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities unliving

Gear zoologist injector pistol^{AR} with 20 darts and a cartridge with 20 doses of tier 1 sedative

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Test Applicator (Ex) When the Monitor hits with its slam, the target is also subjected to one of the Monitor's tests, the effects of which are described in the Creature section above. If the applicator lodges something in the target, someone can remove that object with a successful DC 20 Medicine check. Doing so is a full action that provokes attacks of opportunity. The Monitor has only four tests, as follows.

Project ACS Gamma—Credstick Gene Tracker: The target takes 1d6+7 slashing damage, and the Monitor jams the credstick into the wound, then seals the opening with sprayflesh. The stick transmits for 1 minute, then incinerates, dealing the subject another 2d6 fire damage (no save).

Project FF Alpha—Chiller: The slam deals bludgeoning damage, and the Fusion Fizz can break onto the target,

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dousing the target in a large enough amount of the liquid to affect it as if it took a sip. Being doused means the nanites that would have disintegrated the can instead attack the target, dealing 1d4 acid damage each round for 4 rounds (no save). As a full action, someone can douse the target in water, alcohol, or a similar liquid, allowing the target a DC 14 Fortitude saving throw to end the damage.

Project PS Epsilon—Radiant Dentin/Chitin Psychotropic: The slam deals piercing damage, as the Monitor stabs the brush into the target's mouth or carapace. The paste sprays onto a localized area with its normal effects. The brush disintegrates over 1 minute, dealing the target 1d4 acid damage each round for the first 4 rounds of the process (no save).

Project PG Zeta—Shade Walking: The Monitor forces the shades onto the target, who must succeed at a DC 13 Will saving throw each round or teleport to a random location within range.



Treasure: If the Monitor is destroyed, the PCs can find one of each experiment the robot had yet to test. These objects enter their destruction or loss phase the round after they are removed from this room.

The gray comm unit can be scavenged for 1,250 credits worth of metal wires, which weigh 5 bulk.

Story Award: If they cooperate with the Monitor to complete its experiments, award the PCs XP as if they defeated the robot in combat.

B4. LAB KYOKOR (CR 5)

Read or paraphrase the following text when the PCs can see the door.

This door differs from others in this facility. A bright stripe of alternating purple and black outlines the exterior. Four large toggle switches, two on each side, can lock the door from this side, but none of the toggles are locked. A dark viewscreen is set in the door, roughly three feet off the ground. Above the viewscreen is a circular disk of bright blue metal displaying a holographic image of a stylized biped with broad spiked shoulders, a long tail, and an armored head.

This door can be identified as the one in area **B3**; though a PC who has already identified the nature of the hologram on the door to area **B3** automatically succeeds at this check. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Culture or Life Science check can tell the symbol here depicts a stylized kyokor (*Alien Archive 72*). The toggle locks on this door work just as they do on the door to area **B3**.

Read or paraphrase the following text when the PCs first see the room's interior.

This roughly rectangular chamber has uneven walls with three shallow niches to the west. A cracked, circular impression remains in the northern wall, from which a twisted plate of blue metal, like that on the door, has fallen to the floor. At the southern end of the room is a smashed podium, the debris of colorful controls scattered around it. In a niche on the western wall is a heap of twisted and melted gold and silver wire amid a pile of shattered smoky crystal. The remains of smashed workstations litter the room, and amid the debris stand two pedestals. At least one corpse can be seen in the wreckage. In the northeastern corner is a large raised section of tubes, wires, and vapor-clouded pipes, the whole array humming and occasionally hissing. A small hatch is set into the floor's center, amid splotches of glistening green goop.

The scientists of this lab, which is similar in many ways to area **B3** (along with the room's energy sink), moved the major experiment being worked on here to the observation lab for

testing before the reptoids' attack. It doubles as the security robot workshop.

It's clear the broken machines and structures here were attacked by something that dented and slashed them. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering or Life Science check can tell a Large creature inflicted this damage with natural weapons and brute strength. PCs who successfully identified the evidence of a troll in area **B1** can guess the same creature is responsible for this damage. Two dead grays lie amid the debris, one mostly buried. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Life Science of Medicine check can tell these grays were also the victims of the troll. Shortly after their deaths, their implanted cortex bombs further damaged their heads.

The green splotches are slightly radioactive troll blood, which those who identified the blood in area **B2** can recognize instantly. Otherwise, to identify the substance here, a PC must succeed at a DC 17 Life Science or Medicine check, succeeding by 5 or more to identify the species (some kind of troll). Detecting the radiation requires the right tool or magic.

To open the hatch in the floor, a PC must succeed at a DC 29 Engineering check, revealing a cubic niche 5 feet on a side. The bottom of the niche features an airlock-quality iris door, which is locked from the other side. Disable this lock requires a successful DC 35 Engineering check, although doing so causes warning lights to flash around the iris door. Opening the unlocked door (a move action) triggers the Hazard (see below).

The pedestals here slowly create robotic nanites, which augments the nanite repair ability of robots that already have it and provides that ability to robots and other technological constructs who lack it. A creature that has nanite repair doubles the Hit Points it regains from that ability while within 5 feet of a pedestal. A technological construct or item that lacks the nanite repair ability regains 1 Hit Point every 2 hours while within 5 feet of a pedestal. A PC who spends 1 minute examining the pedestals and succeeds at a DC 21 Engineering check can tell what they do. The pedestals are an obvious feature of a machine installed in the whole floor of this chamber. Removing them while retaining functionality is impossible without a construction-scale effort.

Creatures: A damaged patrol-class security robot stands between the pedestals, within 5 feet of one. This robot attacks any non-grays who enter here. Two observer-class security robots rest on the pedestals. One is severely damaged and inactive, while the other is in a low-power mode, healing thanks to the nanites in the pedestal. It awakens at the start of the third round of combat and attacks, but it lacks grenades. (If the PCs examine the robots after the battle, they can determine the troll damaged these constructs in the same way they can identify the source of the damage to the room.)

OBSERVER-CLASS SECURITY ROBOT CR 1

XP 400

HP 8 (normally 21; *Alien Archive* 94)

OFFENSE

Gear pulsecaster pistol with 1 battery (20 charges)

TACTICS

During Combat This robot engages in melee combat to deal lethal damage.

Morale The robot remains aggressive until destroyed.

PATROL-CLASS SECURITY ROBOT CR 4

XP 1,200

HP 39 (normally 52; *Alien Archive* 94)

TACTICS

During Combat The robot tries to subdue one foe at a time.

If reduced to fewer than 20 Hit Points, it switches to lethal force.

Morale This robot fights until destroyed.

Hazard: The iris door opens to a rough stone tube 2-1/2 feet wide. The tube connects to area **A1**, but also passes near the airless surface of the planetoid, where the reptoids' bombs have fractured it. Because of this, the room decompresses when the iris opens for longer than 1 round. A character familiar with the hazard in area **A1** can see and interpret the similarities here.

DECOMPRESSION HAZARD CR 1

XP 400

Type analog; **Perception** Engineering DC 16 (interpret the warning lights are for an airlock with vacuum on the other side); **Disable** Engineering DC 16 (close the iris door despite air pressure)

Trigger location (opening the iris door); **Reset** each round the iris door remains open and unobstructed and when the iris door closes

Effect multiple targets (creatures inside area **B4**); target closest to iris door pulled into opening (1d6 B and grabbed [DC 16 to escape; 1d6 B each round the target fails to escape and the target is unable to breathe]); other targets pulled up and slammed against the ceiling (1d4 B) and if the target closest to the iris door is pulled in or the iris closes, they drop again (1d6 B); Reflex DC 12 negates either effect, as does being secured or holding onto an immovable object. Those able to move while the hazard is active can do so only at half speed.

Treasure: The inactive observer-class security robot also has a functional pulsecaster pistol with 1 battery. The fused wires of the smashed gray comm unit here can be salvaged for a total of 4 bulk that is worth 1,000 credits.

B5. SECURITY STATION (CR 5)

As the PCs move toward this door, they can glimpse the smashed door to area **B8**.

Bright purple, red, and blue lights blink in a repeating pattern on a computer console mounted on the wall across

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MEETING THE STEWARDS

It's essential the PCs meet the Stewards. If they don't contact the Stewards in area **B5**, another system-wide comm unit can be found in area **B9**. A few alternatives also exist. While the phase field from area **B6** is active, the PCs might pick up the Stewards on personal comms. The phase field might also cause PCs, especially telepathic ones, to sense the messages, particularly near any gray comm unit.

from the doorway, and whistling emanates from the console every few seconds. Part of the console is dark, though, and the wall is scorched behind it. A series of poles jut up from the floor just in front of the northern wall, each topped with a metal collar and lined with a dozen smaller cuffs running its length on two sides. In the northwest corner stands a machine with a spherical base connected to a narrow apparatus that bears an illuminated strip on top.

Any PC who is trained in Computers or Engineering recognizes the console as a standard, high-end AbadarCorp security station. If the PC succeeds at a DC 15 check, they can see the console has no modifications. If result of this check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the PC realizes the machine in the northwestern corner is an AbadarCorp "Gatekeeper" guardian robot often packaged with this console. In rest mode, this model of guardian robot can fold in its limbs to appear to be an inert machine. The camera monitoring portion of the station has suffered catastrophic damage. Illuminated is a system-wide comm, which the PCs can see shows numerous warnings and a few hailing attempts written in Common.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture check, Life Science check, or a check with a Profession such as bounty hunter, law enforcement, or lab technician, can identify the poles along the northern walls as pillories. These devices, made of a nanotech infused alloy like steel, can be altered and used together to bind creatures from Tiny to Huge size, including those with numerous appendages. A control panel on the wall nearby allows someone who succeeds at a DC 10 Computers check to change the configuration of one or more poles. A creature bound in one of these devices must succeed at a DC 45 Acrobatics or Athletics check to escape or break free. Each pillory has AC 7, hardness 20, and 60 Hit Points.

Creature: The guardian robot attacks non-grays 1 round after they enter this room. If the PCs failed to recognize the robot as a creature, it surprises them. The grays modified its slam attack so

it deals lethal damage, and it has an injector pistol and a nyfiber net instead of the other weapons guardian robots normally have.

GUARDIAN ROBOT

CR 5

XP 1,600

HP 70 (*Alien Archive 3 86*)

OFFENSE

Melee slam +12 (1d6+8 B; critical knockdown)

Ranged integrated zoologist injector pistol +13 (1d8+2 P plus sedative [1d4 nonlethal]) or nyfiber net +15 (entangle)

Gear zoologist injector pistol^{AR} with 20 darts and a cartridge with 20 doses of tier 1 sedative, nyfiber net

TACTICS

During Combat Programmed to kill or subdue creatures other than grays, gray bounders, and other robots, the guardian robot uses lethal force at first to even the odds. If half of the PCs are reduced to 0 HP, the robot attempts to subdue the others and imprison them in the pillories for later retrieval.

Morale The robot not only fights until unable to do so but also

pursues PC who flee.

Development: Once the PCs have a chance to check the hails on the comm station, they can call up a few messages.

The display depicts a thin, pale woman, her brown hair shaved in a modern fashion on the sides and left long on the top, revealing her pointed ears. Tattooed or painted under her right eye in gold is the symbol of Weydan, and gold piercings decorate her opposite eyebrow, nose, and lip. She says something sternly, then repeats it. As she speaks, her neckline becomes visible. She's wearing light combat armor with the Steward symbol on the collar.

The communication is in Aklo. If any PCs understand that language, they understand the woman's words during the first broadcast, as follows.

"This is Steward Ops Special Agent Narla Yalamis. Your operation has been identified as the source of illegal activity in Pact Worlds space. Surrender, and you will not be further harmed. Please transmit compliance on this frequency."

The second transmission is a variation on the first one, but the third transmission is as follows.



NARLA YALAMIS

"Once again, this is Steward Ops Special Agent Narla Yalamis. Our scans indicate your facility is in deteriorating condition. We will soon be entering your premises. Be warned, any resistance shall be met with lethal force. Repeat, resistors shall be killed. We recommend surrender. Prisoners shall be treated fairly, in accordance with Steward protocols and Pact Worlds law."

If the PCs don't understand Aklo, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Culture check can get the gist of the messages from words that are the same in Common and Aklo, such as Agent Yalamis's name, that of the Steward organization, and the mention of the Pact Worlds.

In any case, the PCs have the frequency to respond to the Stewards. If they do so, they reach the Stewards' Banshee parked near Outpost Omicron. Upon receiving a message from non-grays, the Steward agent in charge, Narla Yalamis, is amazed and concerned. She asks who the PCs are and what they're doing here.

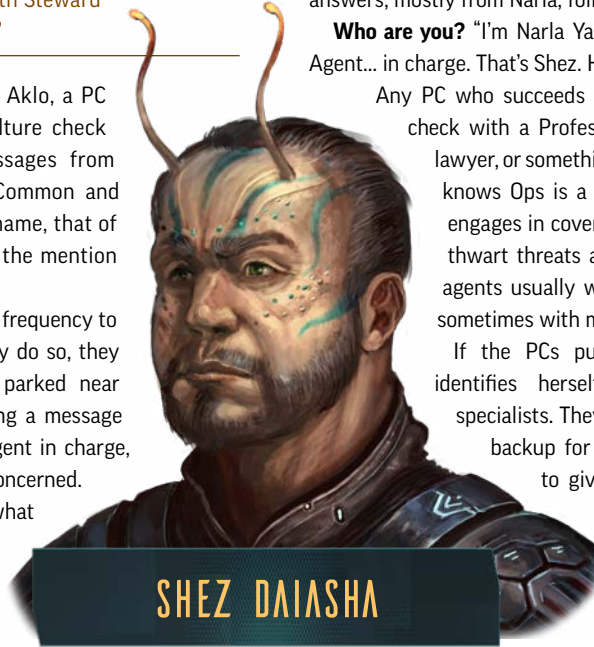
If the PCs don't contact the Stewards, or just after they do, the team inside the base calls the Banshee while the PCs are listening in, as follows.

The round face of a balding damaya lashunta man with military-cut black hair and a trim black beard appears on the comm station. He says, "Yalamis, we have a problem. Blast doors closed behind us, station-bulkhead quality. They cut off our retreat to the landing bay. The computer here reads that the facility is on an emergency sanitization procedure. Two reactors, Yalamis. Both going critical within the next twelve hours or so. There's an access tunnel that leads to both, according to the schematics. I'm already down one person, and judging by what we've seen so far, I'd say it's iffy whether we get through this horror show to reach both reactors."

The man is Shez Daiasha, another supposed Steward Ops agent. Narla and Shez are reptoids playing a long game posing as Steward agents. They have mercenaries with them, but these mercs believe the two are genuine, well-funded Steward agents.

If the PCs haven't contacted the Stewards yet, they have another opportunity to do so. When Shez realizes the PCs are potential allies, he says the following.

"Maybe we just caught a break here. Listen, if your group can reach one of the reactors, my team can take the other. Shut 'em both down and we can open those blast doors. Maybe we'll all live through this, after all."



The PCs have an opportunity to talk to the Stewards further. Narla is friendly. Shez is gruff and anxious, taking every pause to urge the PCs to stop talking and act. He becomes more insistent the longer the conversation drags on, although Narla largely ignores him. Some likely questions and answers, mostly from Narla, follow.

Who are you? "I'm Narla Yalamis, a Steward Ops Special Agent... in charge. That's Shez. He's my partner."

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture check or check with a Profession such as bounty hunter, lawyer, or something related to law enforcement knows Ops is a branch of the Stewards that engages in covert missions to investigate and thwart threats against the Pact Worlds. Ops agents usually work alone or in small teams, sometimes with mercenary help.

If the PCs push for more details, Narla identifies herself and Shez as technical specialists. They have mercs as "muscle" and backup for this mission. She's unwilling to give more details only because she can't be sure the PCs aren't agents of the grays. Working to help the Stewards can show them the PCs are who they say.

What are you doing here? "We tracked some illicit tech to this base, which we've fingered as an illegal operation, at the very least."

Who's in charge of this facility? "We have our suspicions, but we're not sure. Best not to speculate at this point. Shez and his team are supposed to find out the particulars during their mission."

Narla won't confirm or deny gray involvement at this point. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Sense Motive check can tell she's being coy but isn't trying to hide that fact. If pressed, she says she wants to compile more evidence before making a call.

Then, Shez interjects, "Grays. We think we're dealing with grays here."

Narla says, "Yeah... grays."

Did you attack this place? "Yep. They fired on us. We responded with bombardment to show them we mean business."

If the PCs mention this bombardment might have killed them, Narla says, "Sorry, but we couldn't have known you were in there. Besides, we only caused a few decompressions. Looks like you made it this far."

Bombardment with what? "Our little Banshee, the *Voidcrier*. It's a fine ship."

Anyone who succeeds at a DC 22 Culture or Engineering check, or a DC 17 Piloting check, knows about the Banshee class fast-attack frigate ATech makes for the Stewards. See the inside front cover for more information.

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Where are we? "Strange question, friend. You're on a little planetoid in the Foergrim System, Near Space. You're inside some sort of secret tech lab. More than that, I can't exactly say with any certainty. You and Shez know more than I do."

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Culture check has heard of the Foergrim System, which is described in more detail on page 62. More importantly, a PC who knows about the Stewards also knows they have jurisdiction only within the Pact Worlds and its protectorates. Operating in Near Space is very unusual but not unheard of. Much of what Narla and Shez have revealed suggests this operation is unusual, and PCs who know about Ops also know the branch's agents sometimes take on covert missions. All this information foreshadows the Stewards' false nature, which is revealed in the next adventure, but nothing about the current situation should make the PCs too suspicious.

If questioned about the jurisdiction issue, Yalamis shrugs and sincerely says, "Sometimes borders and technicalities can't be more important than getting the job done. Am I right?"

Do you know why we're here? "Another weird one, eh? Nope. Once we get back to the Pact Worlds, or maybe on the way, we can try to get all that sorted. But let's be frank, I doubt it's all good news, especially seeing as you don't seem to know what's what."

The false Stewards have no idea why the PCs are inside Outpost Omicron. These reptoids surmise (correctly) that the PCs are linked to the gray's plans for opposing the reptoids' larger plots. Therefore, Narla and Shez sincerely want the PCs to survive, although their true motivation is to evaluate any potential gray threat the PCs might be part of.

What's the situation? Shez replies, "Like I said, the scum here locked down their base and set it to sanitize. That means the reactors are going to go boom in a few hours. I'd like to be out of here before that happens, but blast doors cut us off from the *Voidcrier*. We need to shut down the main power to get those doors open, and seeing as we need to shut those reactors down anyway, it's a win-win. That said, I'd feel a lot better if one strong team made their way to each reactor. Plus, that strategy likely cuts mission time to tolerable levels, since we can't be sure we actually have all the time we think. You're elected on account of us having no other candidates."

If the PCs ask why Shez thinks they're a strong team, he says, "You're still alive."

What should we look for? Shez says, "The reactors are on a lower level than the main facility. Assuming your sector is similar, you need to look for a shaft down. That shaft should have a bypass tunnel that leads to the sector we're in."

What's in it for us? Narla responds, "Well, normally we'd be happy to give you a lift, but those little problems Shez mentioned got you just as trapped as him. Frankly, I'd like to get us all out of here in one piece. How's that work? You like living, right?"

The Stewards make no other offers and promise nothing. Yalamis makes it clear she can offer a ride back to Pact Worlds space, and that's it. She's willing to suggest that making an ally of Steward Ops might have its perks.

Where do we need to go? Shez says, "You'll need to go to the control center in the reactor sector nearest you. Shut that bad boy down. Then contact me so we can meet up. The rendezvous should take place in the landing bay, which is beyond some massive blast doors, presupposing you're in the same situation we're in. We can maintain comms on this channel, or another if you like. Let me know when you find access to the shaft to the reactor on your side. You should find it in or near a control room, with lots of computer workstations in it."

Further Interactions: The PCs can keep in contact with Narla and Shez as much as you allow. Before the PCs find area **B10**, Shez and his team make it to their drop shaft. Shez doesn't want the PCs to come to him and observe him setting his reactor to reactivate and explode on a delay, so when he's sure the PCs are going to make it to the reactor, he reminds them the Stewards are on the other side of the bypass tunnel door. They don't need help; they need the PCs to do their part of the job. Since the only interactions the PCs have with the Stewards until near the adventure's conclusion is via comm unit, no statistics are provided or should be needed for them. The PCs interact directly with these reptoid agents and their unassuming allies in the next adventure, "Deceivers' Moon."

B6. QUANTUM LAB (CR 5)

A dull green glow suffuses this oddly shaped chamber. A five-foot-diameter platform stands in the center of the room, with a column of green light projecting from it up to a matching area in the ceiling. A swirling, undulating dark mass floats in the center of this column of light, small arcs of electricity flickering over its ever-changing surface. Circuitry patterns cover the walls, and eldritch runes and shifting symbols are worked into these designs. In the five corners are large raised sections of tubes, wires, and vapor-clouded pipes, each array humming and occasionally hissing.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering, Life Science, or Physical Science check can identify the hissing apparatuses as energy sinks, even if the PCs failed to do so elsewhere. Their function is more apparent here. If the PCs decipher the other machinery here, they also understand the function of the energy sinks.

This chamber is a prototype quantum synthesizer. The circuitry patterns on the walls act as controls to manipulate the mass in the green light here, which is quantum matter in flux. This can be used to create any other object, provided the user has a clear concept of that object.

Although the quantum synthesizer is designed to respond to gray telepathy, the control surfaces can read the minds of anyone touching them and respond telepathically. A PC who takes 10 minutes to examine the structures and phenomena here and succeeds at a DC 25 Engineering or Mysticism check can guess what the synthesizer is supposed to be and how it operates. If multiple characters work together, the same information can be acquired with separate successful DC 15 checks in both of these skills. If the result of any of these checks exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the PC attempting that check spots energy fluctuations in the field from the machinery near the ceiling. Part of the synthesizer is out of alignment. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Engineering or Mysticism check can fix this misalignment with 10 minutes of work, and up to four PCs can aid with this task. If the PCs use the synthesizer before repairing it, the energy discharge and arrival of the gremlins (see Creatures below) causes this DC to decrease to 20.

Once the device's purpose is understood, any PC who identified the phase field during the phase encounters knows this device could be the source of the phasing and must be malfunctioning in some way. Such PCs can reattempt the checks to identify the synthesizer's misalignment with a +4 circumstance bonus to the checks.

Those who understand the synthesizer can also control it to create items. Doing so takes 10 minutes per item created. Any item of item level 4 or lower can be created with a successful DC 15 Computers, Engineering, or Mysticism check. An item with an item level of 5 can be created with successful checks made by two different characters using two different skills. An item with an item level of 6 can be created by three different characters using all three of the skills. The quantum synthesizer has enough matter in flux and energy to create non-consumable items worth a total of 4,000 credits, after which it requires more matter to convert into quantum matter. Any item can be placed in the column of green light for 10% of its value, functioning like UPBs. Actual UPBs and other raw materials, such as the gold and silver from the gray comm units, provide their full value.

Creatures: The Stewards' attack had little apparent effect on this room, but it created a surge that suffused the area, causing feedback that wrought havoc in the fake *Chimera* and throughout the outpost. The glitching quantum synthesizer has created a phase gate, a randomly appearing portal between the Material Plane and alternate realities, causing creatures to phase in and out throughout the outpost. Using the quantum replicator before repairing it or attempting a repair causes the misaligned machinery to put out a brief, harmless, and highly visible electromagnetic discharge of undulating violet and green color.

Hobkins gremlins then appear in this room near the energy sinks, and they can attempt to hide before the PCs spot them. They cause mischief for the PCs until spotted, then they attack.

HOBKINS GREMLINS (4)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

HP 11 each (*Alien Archive* 3 94)

TACTICS

During Combat The gremlins swarm a couple different targets, flanking with each other if possible.

Morale While the malefactor is alive and present, the gremlins fight on. If the malefactor flees, so do they.

HOBKINS GREMLIN MALEFACTOR

CR 4

XP 1,200

HP 43 (*Alien Archive* 3 94)

TACTICS

Before Combat The malefactor casts *reflecting armor* on itself soon after it arrives and hides.

During Combat This gremlin sees *fear* as a good way to separate the PCs and sow the most chaos. It then prefers *mind thrust* to direct attacks, allowing its minions to tie the PCs up in melee.



QUANTUM REPLICATOR

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Morale If reduced to 20 Hit Points or fewer, the gremlin flees. It then shadows the PCs, causing trouble for them whenever possible.

Treasure: The players can determine the treasure they receive from the quantum synthesizer. If such "shopping" in the middle of the adventure is too time-consuming or something you or the players prefer not to do, pick items the synthesizer makes for the PCs. Instead of functioning perfectly, the synthesizer pops out items from the users' subconscious and hidden desires. It's also up to you whether the synthesizer can make further items with more raw materials.

B7. PLANNING ROOM (CR 4)

As the PCs move farther down the hall toward this room, they can see the broken door to area **B8** clearly. See its description on page 27.



EXPERIMENTAL NANOBOT MIMIC

A crack splits the paneled western wall and part of the stone ceiling here, but pale ice fills the gap. Technological junk, images on translucent film, wires, circuitry, pinkish ooze with clear shards in it, smashed furniture, and mutilated body parts are scattered about this cold chamber. A Fusion Fizz vending machine sits against the wall across from the door, apparently untouched by the violence here.

The outpost staff used this room to organize information about the cloned PCs and the experiments with them. When the Stewards bombarded the outpost, this room decompressed when the rock split. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering, Physical Science, or appropriate Profession (such as architecture) check can tell the room decompressed.

If the PCs search the room, they find a holographic image that depicts the PC with the highest Charisma score. The picture shows the PC smiling, moving through a crowd at a social event. Not much more can be gleaned from the image's details. However, the PC depicted in the image has no memory of the event, and is sure they don't even own the clothes they are wearing in the picture.

The pinkish ooze is a nutrient paste, which a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Life Science or Medicine check can tell. The shards are a container this paste must have been in. If the PCs can analyze the chemical nature of the paste, they find it is much more potent than normal nutrient paste, like that used for nourishing people who have severe injuries and helping them recover. Although the PCs have no way to learn this fact, the substance is part of the grays' cloning process.

Creature: The Fusion Fizz machine appears to be identical to the one in area **B2**. This one, however, is an advanced nanobot mimic that has escaped from one of the nearby labs. It attacks when a PC moves next to it, or at another dramatic moment.

EXPERIMENTAL NANOBOT MIMIC CR 4

XP 1,200

Variant nanobot mimic (*Starfinder Adventure Path #19: Fate of the Fifth* 56)

N Fine construct (swarm, technological)

Initiative +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +10

DEFENSE **HP** 52
EAC 16; **KAC** 16

Fort +4; **Ref** +4; **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities swarm defenses;
Immunities construct immunities, swarm immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (Ex, perfect)

Melee swarm attack (1d4+7 P)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Offensive Abilities distraction (DC 13), metal morass

TACTICS

During Combat The experimental nanobot mimic tries to swarm as many PCs as possible.

Morale The experimental nanobot mimic is fearless. It fights until dispersed and pursues anyone who flees.

STATISTICS

Str +3; **Dex** +5; **Con** –; **Int** +0; **Wis** +1; **Cha** –1

Skills Acrobatics +10 (+18 to fly), Disguise +10 (+20 to mimic an object), Stealth +10

Other Abilities mimic fixture

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Metal Morass (Ex) The experimental nanobot mimic surrounds foes it shares a space with, making it hard for them to escape. A creature that starts its turn in the same space as the mimic must succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save or become entangled for 1 round.

Mimic Fixture (Ex) The experimental nanobot mimic can observe and register into its internal memory up to 2 furnishings of size Medium or smaller (such as a chair or a vending machine). As a full action, the mimic can arrange itself into one item it has registered, taking on the appearance of that item but not its function. While in this form, the nanobot mimic loses its swarm defenses and swarm immunities, has EAC and KAC 10, hardness 9, and gains a +10 bonus to Disguise checks. While in this form, the mimic can assume its swarm form as a move action or a reaction to taking damage.

B8. SPECIMEN CELLS

When the PCs can see the door, read or paraphrase the following.

This metal door has been cut open in several places, crumpled, and partially melted. The door frame is also severely damaged. Smears of dark liquids run on the floor from the room beyond and into the hallway, lessening and then disappearing as they go.

Once the PCs can see into the room, read or paraphrase the following.

A walkway runs along the southern and western walls of this room, with nested chambers of clear material with similar doors taking up the rest of the space. Many of the clear walls are cracked or broken, and a few of the doors have been ripped off. Some of the metal paneling on the walls has been dented, slashed, burned, or torn down to reveal the dull rock underneath. In the southernmost chamber, dark ichor and bright red fluids spatter the clear walls, floor, and wrecked door. Smears from the cell lead toward the door. Above some rock debris, the stone ceiling has a long fissure in it, which widens as it approaches the eastern wall.

During the reptoids' bombardment, the specimens in this menagerie escaped. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture or Life Science check, or a check of a relevant profession such as Profession (farmer), Profession (lab technician), or another related to keeping living specimens—can tell this area has been used primarily for isolating and containing living creatures. In addition, a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Survival check can tell that one larger creature clearly must have escaped first, then dealt a lot of damage to the rest of the area, which freed other creatures. These freed specimens likely tromped through the smeared fluids, each ruining any chance of a clear trail from the others. However, if the PC succeeds by 5 or more, they can tell some of the escaping creatures seem to disappear midstride. A PC who then succeeds at a DC 21 Mysticism check can speculate the creatures either teleported, or something teleported them. PCs who have encountered creatures in the facility as they “exit” the quantum field not only gain a +6 circumstance bonus on this check, but they can also conclude that this phenomenon is the likely cause of the disappearances.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Life Science or Medicine check can tell the fluid stains are biological fluids, mostly blood from various species. If the PCs have the means to analyze the fluids, they can identify troll blood, tashtari blood, and ikeshti blood, among other substances, with a successful check. Such analysis also indicates the blood is contaminated with inert nanites, and a PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Engineering check can tell these nanites are part of a larger grouping (they are from the experimental nanobot mimic in area **B7**).

The fissure on the eastern wall is about 2-1/2 feet wide and deep into the ceiling—large enough for most humanoid creatures to easily fit inside. This gap leads to area **B9**. If the PCs spend a long time or make a lot of noise in this room, the skreelings from area **B9** might wander in here.

B9. CENTRAL CONTROL (CR 5)

Four double workstations suitable for small humanoids line the walls of this area, three to the west and one to the northeast. Sprawled atop the floor in the center of the room is a small humanoid who has been mutilated. Between the two northwesternmost stations is a machine of smoky crystal with an array of gold and silver wire running onto the wall near it and to each western workstation. An airlock double door is set into the north wall, and lighter alloy doors are set in the east and south walls.

A PC who knows what the gray comm unit here is and succeeds at a DC 16 Engineering or Piloting check, or a DC 21 Culture check, can tell this room is a communications and control station.

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The corpse is that of a gray technician. In addition to the damage from a cortex bomb, this gray has been partially eaten. A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Life Science or Medicine check can tell small predators did the eating, and recently. If the PCs examine these wounds, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to spot the skreelings here (see Creatures on page 29).

Leading into area **B12** is a security airlock door that is locked with eight vault-grade mechanisms (DC 40 to unlock or hack each), the panel flashing a red warning symbol. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture or Engineering check can guess that the symbol indicates an emergency seal. PCs who have already talked to the Stewards, learning that part of the base is sealed, gain a +4 circumstance bonus on these checks. This door can be opened from one of the computer terminals here.

Each of the functional computers at the workstations is tier 2, although the outpost's network is mostly nonfunctional, so only the local modules are accessible. A PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Computers check to hack one of these terminals can see the control module for basic facilities in areas **A1** to **B12**, data containing the schematics for those areas (including the bypass tunnel between areas **B10** and **C1**), and a firewall that isolates the control module for the airlock doors to area **B12** from this area and those in area **B11**. Another firewall isolates the control module for the small airlock door in the bypass tunnel in area **B10**. With this basic access, a hacker can stabilize the outpost's lighting, or turn it off or on, and change the air temperature and flow, provided they remain in safe, comfortable levels. Accessing a firewalled module requires the hacker to succeed at a DC 23 Computers check. If the PCs consult with Shez, he asks them not to bother with the firewall to the bypass tunnel airlock—he and his team are already on the other side.

A reactor overload warning is also displayed on the station, confirming Shez's description of the situation on the outpost. The schematic shows the way to the reactor, via area **B10**.

The northeastern workstation also has a normal system-wide comm installed, a redundancy to the one in area **B5**. If the PCs didn't contact the Stewards in area **B5**, they can do so here.

Creatures: Two skreelings moved from their cell in area **B8** to this room. They spend most of their time here, huddling together near the workstation in the northeastern corner. They attack a few rounds after the PCs enter. A PC who looks around for danger and succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check spots the skreelings before they attack. Otherwise, the skreelings surprise the group as they leap into the air to attack.

SKREELINGS (2)

CR 3

XP 800 each

HP 35 each (*Alien Archive* 3 98)

TACTICS

During Combat The skreelings pick the strongest-looking PC and focus on flanking and killing that target. They then move to the next-strongest-looking PC, and then repeat. However, if someone deals either skreeling serious damage, the creatures attack that foe instead.

Morale If either skreeling drops to 10 or fewer Hit Points, both attempt to flee to area **B8** through the western ceiling gap.

Treasure: The gold and silver wires of the gray comm unit here are more extensive than other gray comm units found within the facility and can be salvaged with 20 minutes of work; the collection weighs a total of 8 bulk and is worth 2,000 credits.

B10. DROP SHAFT ONE

This small, octagonal chamber has an open rock shaft with a narrow metal ladder attached to the eastern side. Dark green fluid is spattered on the floor around the entrance to the shaft.

This ladder is clearly designed for Small humanoids. The shaft descends 40 feet to the reactor sector (area **C**), but the ladder continues through the ceiling of area **C1**, extending another 15 feet to the floor of that room. Therefore, the PCs must climb down 55 feet.

The radioactive troll blood here can be analyzed as in areas **B2** and **B4**, including the automatic success if the PCs have identified or analyzed this substance before.

About 20 feet down the shaft, a 3-foot-wide, 5-foot-tall, 75-foot-long east-west access tunnel (not on the map) opens to the east, with lighting strips that turn on as someone moves down the passage. If the PCs explore the east-west tunnel, they find it connects to an airlock door 1 foot smaller than the surrounding tunnel. This door is locked as the door in area **B10** and can be unlocked only from there. A window in the door shows another similar tunnel heading east into the darkness. This tunnel leads to another section of the lab, where the Stewards are.

Shez set two motion detectors in the 75-foot tunnel on that side of the door 25 feet from the shaft. These detectors have a range of 30 feet. If the PCs have made it past the firewall and opened the door, any PC who succeeds at a DC 29 Perception check spots the detectors attached to the wall. They can be disabled with a successful DC 24 Computers or Engineering check. If the PCs insist on going to this section of Outpost Omicron, Shez likely receives an alert before they can disable the motion detectors. When he does, he asks the PCs via comms whether his motion detectors are sensing the PCs. If the PCs affirm, with some exasperation, Shez asks them what they are playing at and tells them they need to go to their reactor "ASAP." If the PCs

don't confirm, Shez alerts his team to prepare for incoming hostiles from the bypass tunnel.

In any case, if asked why he put detectors in the tunnel, Shez says, "Watching my backside."

If the PCs find Shez despite all this, the section the false Stewards are in is a mirror image of the reactor sector mapped in this adventure. Shez and his team have dealt with the threats in this sector, which were mostly robots and a gray engineer. By the time the PCs make it through this section, Shez's team has reached the reactor and are locked inside.

B11. LIVING QUARTERS (CR 4)

The PCs can see a few alcoves in this area from the hallway between areas **B3** and **B6**.

This long hall has twenty-foot deep alcoves every twenty feet. Each alcove has one or more egglike pods set in it. Each pod is four feet long and has an opening on the top. The alcoves also contain one or more slowly rotating spirals of colored boxes. Between the alcoves are broad arches of light blue material that looks like ceramic, each hanging over platforms of similar material. These arches are festooned with small spheres of various size and color.

These are the living quarters for the gray staff of the outpost, who live communally. A PC who sees this area and succeeds at a DC 21 Culture check can identify its nature. The egglike chambers are sleep pods, lined with a gel that cradles a Small or smaller creature and maintains a

comfortable temperature. A form of gray personal storage, the rotating boxes are spiral cabinets. The blue arches are sonic showers, a lot like those typical of Pact Worlds starships and space stations.

The double door to area **B12** is a security airlock identical to the door in area **B9** and can be opened only from the console in that area.

Creature: One of the gray test subjects, a tiny but dangerous vermin known as a flayer leech has been gathering body parts in the northernmost alcove, but it has yet to gather enough skin to fashion a makeshift effigy. It attacks any PC poking around in or near its makeshift lair.

FLAYER LEECH

CR 4

XP 1,200

HP 50 (*Alien Archive* 3 36)

TACTICS

During Combat If faced with multiple foes, the flayer leech first performs its mandible dance. It then aims to kill one target before moving to another, repeating the dance to keep some of its opponents at bay.

Morale If reduced to 25 or fewer Hit Points, the flayer leech flees and attempts to hide. It remains in this area if it survives, cautiously returning to its lair in the northern alcove 10 minutes after it senses no more activity from the PCs.

Treasure: The spiral cabinets contain knickknacks, such as cheap but unusual jewelry taken from probe victims, soft cloths

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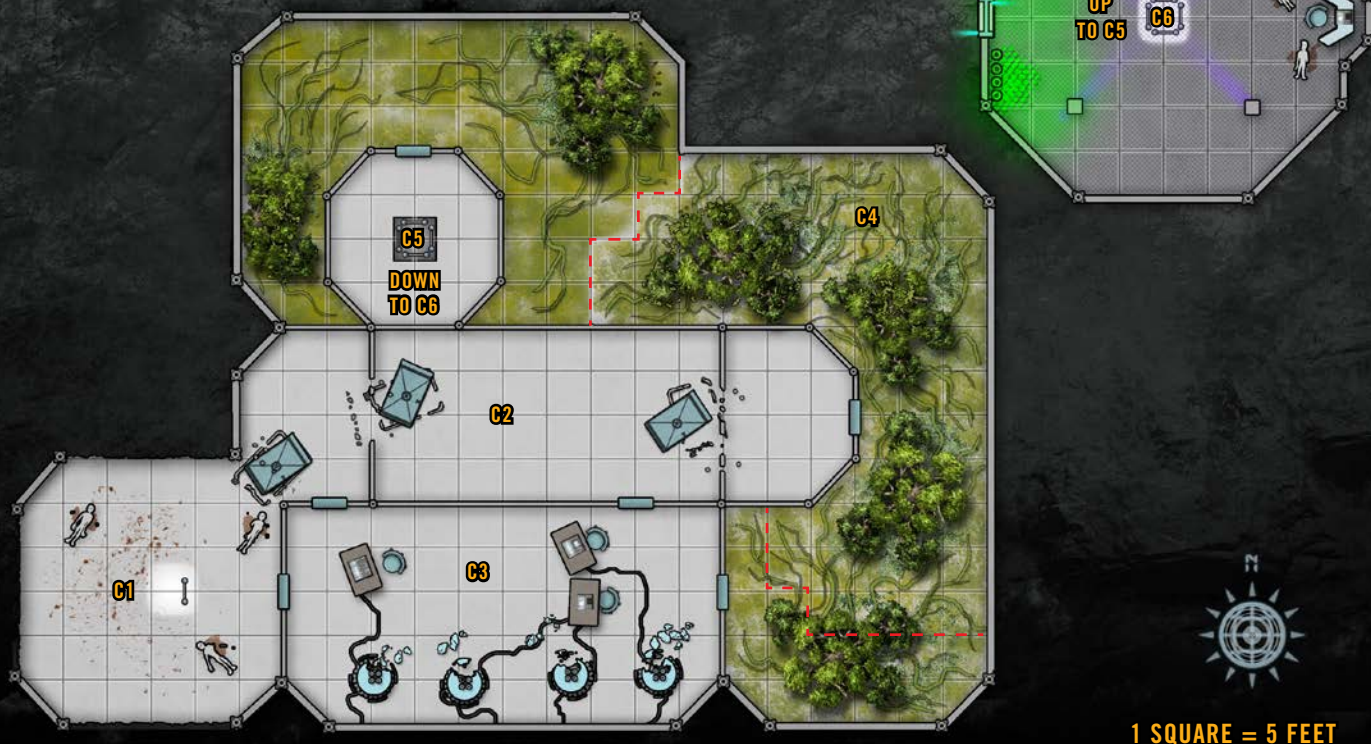
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for rubbing down a gray's skin with oils and ointments, which are also stored in the cabinets. Although a PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Culture check understands what many of these objects are, the PC also understands the items are worthless.

However, while searching each alcove, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check also finds an unusual trinket left behind by the grays. There is one item in each alcove and two in the northernmost alcove. Though grays are not sentimental creatures by nature, the curious scientists who lived here found these objects (as listed below, all of them stolen from various test subjects throughout the years) to be worthy keepsakes, occasionally staring at them for several minutes before a sleep cycle. Each is a curiosity worth 250 credits, although PCs who work to find a collector might be able to negotiate twice as much.

- A luminous blue crystal that increases the light level by one step within a 5-foot radius. It brightens and dims with one of the holder's biorhythms, such as their heartbeat or breathing.
- A small metal disk that imparts the mental impression of a human woman holding an alien feline and a slight feeling of joy to anyone who touches it. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Culture or Sense Motive check can guess this object is a memento mori.
- A set of seven top-like spindles with seven flat sides, each marked with the Ysoki numbers 1 through 7. A PC who

succeeds at a DC 15 Culture or Profession (gambler) check can tell these are randomizers, possibly for a board game or a gambling game.

- A coil of flexible, iridescent silk string, as thick as a human hair but 50 feet long (AC 11; hardness 1; 10 damage to cut or break, but the string is immune to acid, cold, and electricity damage).
- A hinged clip with two soft pads. If the pads are clipped onto a smelling or tasting organ, they cause the wearer to recall a pleasant smell or taste. The recalled impression lasts for 1 minute, until the clip is removed, or until the wearer desires another sensation, at which point the smell or taste changes to a new, enjoyable one from the wearer's past.

B12. EXIT HALL

This hall of is made of hewn stone forty feet wide and thirty feet high, with beveled corners where the walls meet ceiling or floor. The stone surfaces are gouged in long, even rows five feet wide and up to twenty feet at a stretch. A massive double door, nearly twenty feet in height and width, takes up most of the eastern wall, the hologram of an angry red symbol flashing before the seam between the doors. Two smaller airlock double doors exit to the south.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Engineering or Profession (miner) check can tell an enormous automated digging machine cut this tunnel.

The massive doors to the east are the emergency blast doors that dropped when the reactors began their meltdown. Each is as strong as a starship interior wall and locked with eight bars (sixteen total to open the double door), each bar requiring a successful DC 45 Engineering check to disable. They are automatic, and they open only when the PCs shut down the reactor in their sector. The warning symbol on the door is a gray glyph for the reactor hazard.

PART 3: MELTDOWN

With Outpost Omicron's reactors going critical, the PCs don't have much time to spare to shut them down. While there is no actual countdown, the players should feel a sense of mounting pressure to get the job done.

C. REACTOR SECTOR

Outpost Omicron's reactor sector, which sits just above the reactor core, is heavily shielded in addition to the 40 feet of rock and the narrow tunnel that separates it from the research and development labs.

REACTOR SECTOR FEATURES

This area shares features with the rest of the facility, with some differences noted here.

Doors: All the doors on this level are 5-foot-wide airlock-quality doors, with multiple latches. They function much like airlock doors elsewhere in the facility and aren't locked.

Lighting: Most of this area has normal light. The PCs occasionally catch glimpses of a dull green glow with shimmering motes. A PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Physical Sciences check can determine that quantum variance in the higher background radiation is causing the phenomenon. If the PCs have the means to measure the radiation, they learn it's safe, but a PC who succeeded at the previously mentioned check knows the fabric of reality must be stressed if the radiation is bleeding into the visible spectrum.

C1. REACTOR SECTOR LANDING

The ladder runs from a hatch in the ceiling about fifteen feet down into the center of a large, lozenge-shaped chamber carved in dull stone. Only the east wall and corners are paneled in dark metal, some of which is dented or torn. A door of similar material, ten feet wide and fifteen feet tall, is set in the east wall. One was likely in the northeastern

corner, but it has been ripped from its frame and smashed. Dark stains spatter the ladder, the floor, and both doors. Three mangled small humanoids are crumpled in various parts of the room.

Three grays died here, fleeing from their escaped specimens. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Life Science or Medicine check can tell a Large creature killed them with tooth and claw, and great strength. Each also has the telltale signs of a cortex bomb explosion.

A PC who is trained in Engineering, Physical Science, or Profession (architecture) can tell the plating here is different than elsewhere in the facility. If the PC succeeds at a DC 15 check in the skill, they ascertain this plating is radiation shielding. The damage to the door and walls was caused by impacts from something big and strong, as well as claws or similar natural weapons.

The stains are blood from a troll, an ikeshti, and grays. Discovering this fact works as it does in area B8.

C2. OBSERVATION ROOM (CR 5)

This room is covered in thick panels of dark metal, many showing signs of scratches and gouges. To the north is a broken doorway, much like the one near the entry shaft. Bright light illuminates the area beyond this opening, revealing plant life. To the east is a thinner wall with a broken section where a door might have been and a narrow strip of transparent material, like a long window, about three feet from the floor. To the south is another large closed door. To the east is another broken interior wall with a similar window, beyond which is another sturdy door.

Panels in this room shield it against radiation as those in area C1. The broken interior walls are not similarly shielded, but again, something large and powerful damaged them.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Life Science check can tell the broken wall with the window is intended to provide a safe observation point for the space between the two walls.

Creature: An ikeshti rivener named Hrog broods in the easternmost section of the room. PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Perception check might hear him mumbling to himself there. The grays manipulated Hrog's cognitive functions to see if they could reverse a rivener's mental degeneration. Thus, this miserable creature is aware of what he once was and the potential life he lost due to his transformation. Hrog is a clone, but he doesn't know that. He thinks he was once a real Akitonian gladiator (see Development on page 32).

When Hrog senses the PCs, he panics and attacks them, snarling in Akitonian, "I won't go back in that cage!" Any PC who succeeds at DC 17 Culture or Life Science check knows Hrog's ability to speak clearly and honed battle skills are unheard of for normally bestial riveners.

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HROG**CR 5****XP 1,600**Male variant ikeshti rivener soldier (*Alien Archive* 64)**HP** 67 (normally 84)**OFFENSE****Ranged** hurl debris +11 (1d8+5 B; critical knockdown)**Offensive Abilities** fighting style (hit-and-run), nimble fusillade, opening volley**TACTICS**

During Combat Hrog uses his Opening Volley feat to hurl debris, then uses nimble fusillade to move half his speed and close with a foe to make a claw attack as part of a full attack. Thereafter, while ranting about his lost glory, Hrog tries to keep as many of his foes as possible within his reach. He uses nimble fusillade to maneuver while making frenzied full attacks.

Morale If the PCs give him no reason to calm down, Hrog fights to the death, saying, "Yes, kill me! Release me from this hideous form!" However, if all the PCs forgo attacking and someone tries to calm Hrog, they must succeed at a DC 27 Diplomacy check to cause the rivener to pause. Intimidation doesn't work, because Hrog wants to end it all. PCs who manage to stop Hrog from attacking can talk to him (see Development below). If the PCs don't calm Hrog, he fights until slain, pursuing those who retreat from him.

STATISTICS**Int** +0**Languages** Akitonian, Common

Development: To completely calm Hrog, a PC needs to talk to him for 1 minute and succeed at another DC 22 Diplomacy check. If this check fails, or if any PC threatens Hrog, the rivener keeps fighting.

If he talks, Hrog doesn't know his captors were grays. However, he can explain that he remembers being a gladiator on Akiton who thought he had passed the age where becoming a rivener was possible. He seems frustrated and confused regarding the nature of his transformation.

When Hrog tells the PCs his name, a PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Culture check recalls an ikeshti gladiator who was a minor star in a popular Akitonian holo series called *Akiton's Arena Warriors*. Hrog disappeared 4 years ago in an incident that was widely believed to be related to organized crime and insider gambling.

Hrog warns the PCs of a "two-headed troll that can teleport." He fought the troll and lost, after they smashed through some of the doors and walls here. Hrog fled when the troll paused as if it sensed something nearby (the higher background radiation from the reactor) after some of the doors broke.

The rivener knows little more about Outpost Omicron. He truthfully claims he has a spotty memory, and mostly recalls flashes of medical tests, pain, and imprisonment.

Hrog doesn't want to live on as a rivener, and so he refuses to accompany the PCs. However, if the PCs run afoul of the corrovox in area **C3** after befriending Hrog, he might help defeat the creature.

Story Award: If the PCs talk Hrog down, award them XP as if they defeated him in combat.

C3. SWARM LAB (CR 3)

Heavy, reinforced panels cover this chamber's walls. Four broken, clear cylinders form a line along the south wall, complex machinery attaching them to the floor and ceiling. Insectile humanoids with purple chitin lie among the wreckage. Three workstations are arranged around the room, their terminals lifeless. Two heavy doors are set near the corners on the northern wall, while a similar door is in the center of the east and west walls.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 19 Culture or Life Science check can identify the dead Swarm corrovoxes here. Each lacks its head, as if slain by a particularly potent cortex bomb.

Creature: One Swarm corrovox stands amid the wreckage of its tube, staring blankly until the PCs enter this room. When they do, it attacks after 1 round or when attacked. This corrovox is part of a gray cloning experiment. Various cybernetics have been implanted within this cloned Swarm component as part of an attempt to discover a method for controlling the Swarm.

MODIFIED SWARM CORROVOX**CR 3****XP 800**Cybernetic Swarm corrovox (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 150, 110)

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Initiative +4; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 30 ft.; darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +13**DEFENSE****HP 40****EAC** 14; **KAC** 16**Fort** +5; **Ref** +7; **Will** +4**Defensive Abilities** integrated weapons; **Immunities** acid, fear effects**Weaknesses** vulnerable to electricity**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** integrated red star solar brand +9 (1d6+6 E & F)**Ranged** integrated 6-notch forked pistol +12 (1d3+3 E & F; critical burn 1d4)**Offensive Abilities** phasic self-destruct (2d6 E, DC 12)**TACTICS**

During Combat The corrovox focuses its attacks on other insectile creatures in such an obvious and overly aggressive way that the PCs should notice.

Morale When near death, this corrovox moves so its self-destruct can harm as many of its foes as possible.

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**STATISTICS****Str** +2; **Dex** +4; **Con** +1; **Int** -2; **Wis** +1; **Cha** -3**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Athletics +8 (+16 to climb), Stealth +8**Languages** Shirren; telepathy 100 ft.**Gear** 6-notch forked pistol^{AR} with 1 battery (20 charges), red star solar brand^{AR} with 1 battery (20 charges)**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Phasic Self-Destruct (Ex) This corrovox self-destructs when reduced to 0 Hit Points, dealing 2d6 electricity damage in a 10-foot-radius burst, but this damage phases among realities and has the force descriptor. A creature can attempt a DC 12 Reflex saving throw to reduce this damage by half. This self-destruct destroys the corrovox's head and the cybernetics on it.

Development: Given the observable evidence, a PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Life Science or Medicine check can say with some certainty that the cybernetics somehow influenced the corrovox's behavior, keeping it quiescent until disturbed.

G4. BOTANY BAY (CR 2)

Plant life of numerous varieties flourishes in this warm room under bright grow lights built into the ceiling. Trees, brush, moss, and fungi grow out of thick loam that covers the floor. Dense vines and creepers obscure the stone walls.

The PCs recognize some of the plants and fungi here as native to Pact Worlds planets, such as Castrovel and Triaxus. Others are alien to them. Potentially problematic plants, bell-like and triple-cupped violet blooms, grow in the eastern part of the room, immediately affecting PCs who enter through the door from area **C3** (see Hazard on page 34).

From the western edge of this room, the PCs see a clear trail through the brush and on the soil. A PC who succeeds at a DC 10 Survival check can tell it belongs to one massive humanoid creature with clawed feet. If this check succeeds by 5 or more, the PC also finds the tracks and blood of the gray who faced the troll here, gaining a +4 circumstance bonus to any check to find that gray's corpse. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Life Science check can identify the tracks as those of a troll. PCs who have previously identified the troll's tracks in area **B1** automatically succeed at these checks (but not the Perception check to spot the gray's corpse below).

The remains of a slain gray, dismembered and mangled, lies in the brush in the northeast corner near **C5**. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check spots the body.

PCs who entered through the door from area **B2** and approach the door to area **C5** or the gray corpse can see the hazardous blooms in the eastern section of the room.

Hazard: The violet blooms on the woody plants on the east side of the room are alluring and fill the area

shown on the map with a paralytic toxin. PCs with active environmental protections are protected against this inhaled poison. The area contains 13 blooms that must be destroyed to end the hazard. Each bloom has AC 11 and 2 Hit Points.

Once the PCs escape this hazard, provided any blooms remain, a PC who succeeds at a DC 21 Life Science check can identify these blooms as akin to those of the *vracinea*, a sentient, carnivorous plant from Castrovel (*Alien Archive* 3 130).

EXPERIMENTAL VRACINEA BLOOMS CR 2

XP 600

Type analog; **Perception** automatic; **Disable** kill the blooms
EAC 11; **KAC** 11; **HP** 2 per bloom (13 blooms); **Fort** +2;

Ref automatic failure; **Will** as an object; immune to mind-affecting effects

Trigger proximity (visual); **Reset** immediate

Effect Any living creature within 120 feet of the blooms and able to see them finds them alluring and must succeed at a DC 13 Will save at the start of its turn or the creature must use 2 move actions each round to move toward the blooms at full speed. The creature must maintain line of sight to the blooms as it moves. An affected creature within 5 feet of a bloom becomes fascinated by it. Once a creature saves against this effect, it is immune to this hazard's alluring ability for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting, sense-dependent (visual) effect.

A living creature that enters or starts its turn within 15 feet of a bloom must succeed at a DC 13 Fortitude saving throw or become paralyzed for 1 round. Once a creature saves against this effect, it is immune to this hazard's paralyzing ability for 24 hours. This is an inhaled poison effect.

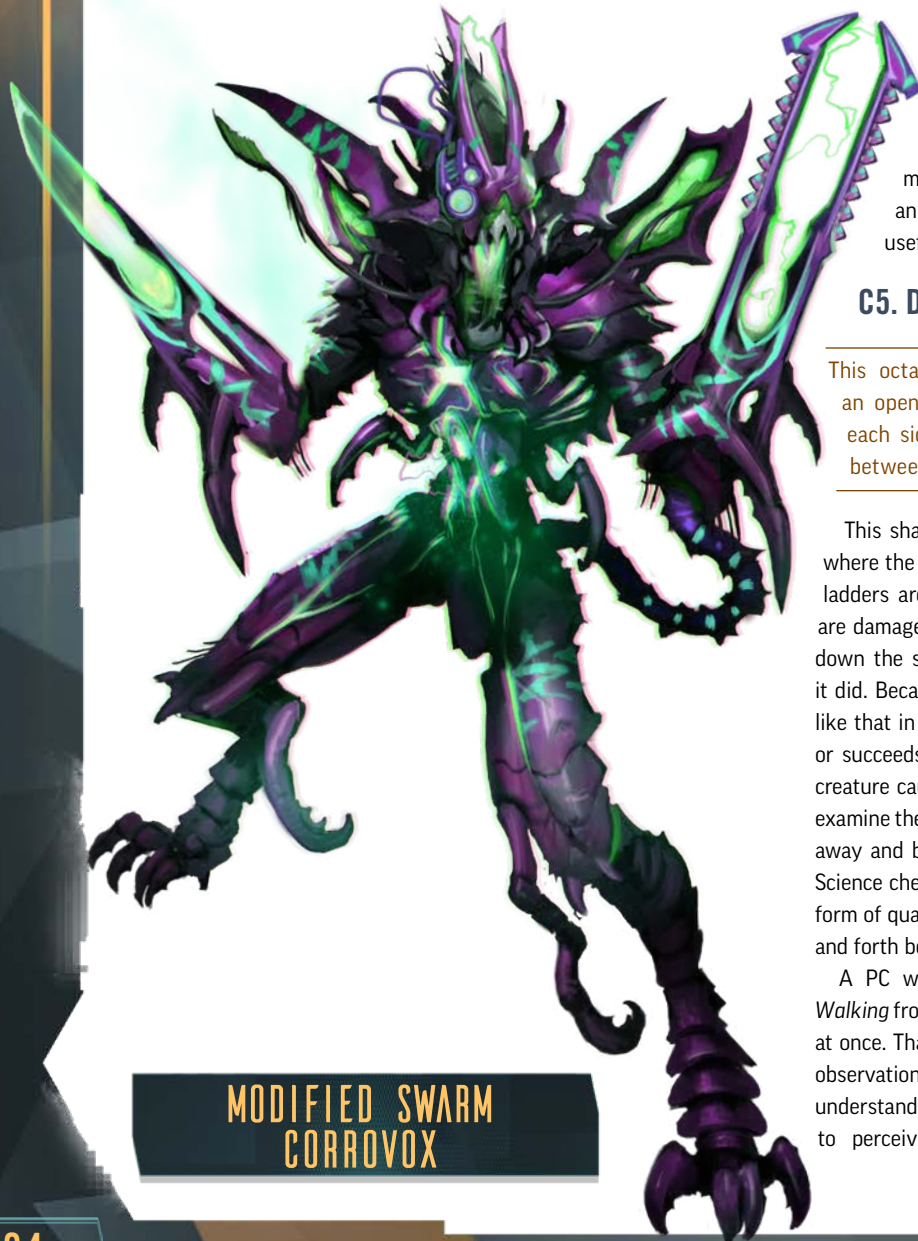
Treasure: The gray's corpse contains a needler pistol with 18 darts, one dose of blue whinnis poison, and two mk 1 pheromone grenades (*Alien Archive* 3 131). PCs who identified the blooms and the pheromone grenades can guess the grays likely used these experimental blooms to make the grenades without having to deal with an animate *vracinea*. The blooms might have proven useful in controlling lab specimens, as well.

C5. DROP SHAFT TWO

This octagonal room, paneled in dark metal, contains an open shaft, about five feet wide with a ladder on each side. The ladders are narrow, as is the distance between rungs.

This shaft leads 30 feet down to the ceiling of area **C6**, where the ladders descend another 20 feet to the floor. The ladders are designed for the Small grays, and all of them are damaged at one point or another. The quantum troll fell down the shaft more than climbed, denting the ladders as it did. Because of several spatters of troll blood, identifiable like that in areas **B2** and **B4**, a PC who is aware of the troll or succeeds at a DC 19 Life Science check can tell a Large creature caused this damage by falling. However, those who examine the blood see it shift position when they blink or look away and back again. A PC who succeeds at a 22 Physical Science check can theorize the patterns change due to some form of quantum superposition in which the blood hops back and forth between different realities.

A PC who is still affected by *Project PG Zeta-Shade Walking* from area **B3** can see all of the blood-spatter patterns at once. That PC or someone to whom that PC describes the observation must succeed at a DC 20 Mysticism check to understand that the prototype sunglasses allow the wearer to perceive all of the blood's quantum superpositions



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simultaneously, essentially gaining a glimpse into various alternate realities.

C6. REACTOR CORE (CR 6+)

PCs spot the pulsing violet light well before they arrive in the reactor core. The ceiling in the reactor core is 20 feet high.

The four ladders emerge out of the shaft in the center of the room, dropping down into an enormous octagonal space. Two sets of bright purple lights alternate in this chamber, creating constant, if pulsating, illumination. Four heavy columns stand spaced evenly around the room. A niche in the east wall contains a wire framework of gold and silver anchored to a smoky crystal machine, connected to which is a computer workstation. Two small humanoids lie crumpled there in pools of blood. Small hemispherical nodules cover the walls, and the floor is a gridwork of heavy metal grates. The west wall has a series of large glowing rods running floor to ceiling, each emanating a hum. An airlock door is set, centered in the wall, between two of the glowing rods. Deep gouges mark this door.

The quantum troll (see Creature on page 36) slew the two grays here. Then their cortex bombs went off.

A special gray comm unit blares a psychic alarm throughout this area. A PC who has telepathy or limited telepathy, or the mindlink mystic feature, is aware the alarm warns of the impending reactor meltdown. A PC who lacks telepathic ability experiences a vague and growing sense of dread upon entering this area. Such a PC must succeed at a DC 10 Will saving throw at the start of each of their turns or take a -1 penalty to attack rolls and skill checks for 1 round. A PC who succeeds at this save is immune to the distraction for 24 hours thereafter. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

A series of 5-foot-square grates form a gridded alloy framework that functions as the floor. As anyone trained in Engineering or Profession (architect) knows, these grates can be lifted out of their framework, as they are designed to allow access to machinery and conduits in the floor for the reactor and its controls. Such PCs also know such grating often has associated prybars to lift them. Under the grates is a 4-foot-tall crawlspace. As a move action, a PC who succeeds at a DC 11 Strength check can lever a grate open or move it back into place. Each 5-foot section of grate provides improved cover against attacks from the other side, and the troll's melee attacks can't hit someone on the opposite side of a grate. The troll is simply too big. However, the troll can lift the grate sections; each section of grate has hardness 15 and 60 Hit Points.

While the reactor is melting down, it floods this entire area with low radiation every 2 rounds (activating the troll's fast healing).

It's assumed that the PCs don't attempt to hack the workstation computer during the fight with the quantum troll. However, if the

PCs pay attention to the workstation during combat, they might receive useful information. First, an alarm and override flashes on the workstation control panel just before each radiation spike. Any PC adjacent to the workstation can, as a reaction, attempt a DC 10 Dexterity check. On a success, the PC presses the override button and prevents that round's radiation spike. Once the PCs learn of the spike's predictability, the PC attempting to press the override button gains a +2 circumstance bonus to do so. Second, the workstation has three special prybars attached to it, which PCs looking for these tools easily find. Otherwise, a character who examines the station and succeeds at a DC 15 Perception check sees these bars aren't merely a bizarre feature of the workstation. These tools grant a wielder a +2 circumstance bonus to lever up a floor grate, and all three can be used on one grate, allowing two users to aid a third, the prybars granting +2 to the aid another attempts in this case.

The tier 3 computer that controls the reactor is designed with a failsafe to ensure only grays can operate it, so it requires telepathic and manual input. The gray comm unit here connects to the workstation to facilitate this process, and any PC trained in Computers or Engineering notices this unusual connection upon examining the workstation. However, to decipher the meaning of this connection, the PC must succeed at a DC 25 Computers or Engineering check. If they don't succeed at the check, anyone hacking the computer discovers the significance of the connection after the first attempt to hack without telepathic aid automatically fails (and sets off a countermeasure—see Trap on page 36).

If someone takes a full action to connect to the gray comm unit with telepathy, limited telepathy, or *mindlink*, the hacker can attempt to gain access. Once the hacker has access, each time someone repeats the connection to the gray comm unit to aid the hacker, that PC receives a +4 circumstance bonus to the next Computers check made to hack the computer. However, if the hacker fails a Computers check, they and anyone who last connected to the gray comm unit to help take 1d10 damage from the psychic feedback.

Once the PCs access the computer, they also have access to the control module for the reactor. Shutting down the reactor so it won't overload is the only way to get the blast doors in area **B12** to open. Setting the reactor to shut down requires the hacker to succeed at a DC 25 Computers check as a full action. However, the hacker also has the option to set the reactor to shut down then power up again after a predetermined cooldown time. The reactivation can be set to emergency sanitization, too, which causes the reactor to meltdown later.

The airlock door, which has a control panel, is the emergency access to the reactor fuel room. It's locked. A PC who only has access to the control panel must succeed at DC 40 Computers check to hack the electronic lock or Engineering check to disable it. Opening this door while the reactor is set to meltdown, however, floods the whole

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area with severe radiation. Each round the door is open, creatures not immune to radiation in this room take 2d6 fire damage. Once the reactor is functioning normally or shut down, opening this door exposes the area to only low radiation.

Trap: The computer has an active defense grid that activates only if someone fails a Computers check to hack the computer. This trap can be turned off only by someone who finds the control module behind its firewall, then hacks the grid to shut it down. This system comprises of six retractable lasers, each mounted behind a hatch in the ceiling. These fire at anything in this area that the computer identifies as an intruder, which includes everyone here that isn't a gray. The system sees the quantum troll as a tracking glitch and ignores it.

However, the defense grid sends a confirmation order to the computer terminal at that start of each round it's active. As a result, it is possible to block the confirmation order. Doing so requires a hacker with access to succeed at a DC 19 Computers check, or a PC connected to the gray comm unit to succeed at a DC 19 Bluff check. Each attempt takes a reaction. If any attempt to block the confirmation order exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the successful PC can designate each attack's target.

Each laser has AC 11, hardness 8, and 5 Hit Points. A PC trained in Engineering can also disable each laser's hatch and mechanism.

LASER DEFENSE GRID

CR 3

XP 800

Type technological; **Perception** DC 24 (spot the six ceiling hatches for the lasers); **Disable** Computers DC 27 (bypass firewall) and Computers DC 25 (shut the grid down), or Engineering DC 16 (disable one laser)

Trigger touch (failed hacking attempt); **Init** +8; **Reset** immediate; **Bypass** counter start-of-round confirmation order (Computers DC 19 or Bluff DC 19, as a reaction)

Effect laser +9 ranged (1d4 F); up to six targets (can target one creature more than once)

Creature: Having escaped from its containment and rampaged throughout the research and development labs, the quantum troll squats in this room, taking a brief rest after attacking the airlock to the reactor fuel room. It attacks anyone who enters the reactor core.

QUANTUM TROLL

CR 6

XP 2,400

HP 80 (page 61)

OFFENSE

Ranged hurl floor grate +11 (2d6+6 B; critical knockdown)

TACTICS

During Combat The troll attacks the nearest target, preferring targets between it and the airlock door it

has been trying to open or someone who hurt it the most during the last round. It ignores targets under the grates, unless such targets are the only ones available. In that case, the troll lifts and tosses grates to get at its attackers.

Morale The troll sees the reactor core as its territory and fights until interlopers flee or it dies. It pursues anyone who attacks it from the shaft into this room, running such a threat down until it is eliminated. Otherwise, the troll is content to be left alone here to eventually break into the reactor.

STATISTICS

Languages Aklo

Treasure: If the PCs disassemble the wires of the gray comm unit here, they salvage 7 bulk of material that is worth 1,750 credits.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs shut the reactor down, they can contact Shez, who tells them to get back to area **B12**, where the blast doors should be open. When the PCs meet Shez and his team in that room, read or paraphrase the following.

Shez, a stout and muscular lashunta dressed in dark military armor, awaits just beyond the blast doors with a team of similarly dressed soldiers.

He gives a nod and a slight grin, saying, "Great work! Let's get out of here, eh? I sent my drone ahead, and the way's all clear to the *Voidcrier*."

The Stewards lead the way as they walk into a wide hallway that slopes up. Eventually, the passage opens into a landing bay in which a sleek, dark warship sits. A gangway ramp already stands open in the mid-forward section of the ship.

"Permission to come aboard?" says Shez.

"Shut up and get your butts in here. We need to roll, Shez," says Narla Yalamis over the comm unit.

Shez grins and grunts, and then he moves toward the gangway, the others following.

If the PCs refuse to board the *Voidcrier*, Shez informs them that his team damaged the reactor they were meant to shut down and that the facility is about to explode. He doesn't want the PCs to get left behind to die.

Assuming the PCs board the *Voidcrier*, they and the Stewards prepare for departure. Narla welcomes the PCs on the bridge. When the vessel takes flight a few moments

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later, read or paraphrase the following, which assumes the PCs are with the false Stewards at the bridge's viewscreen.

The *Voidcrier* lifts off and lurches as the thrusters engage. The viewscreen shows a dull gray chunk of stone receding among other asteroids as the starship speeds up. Suddenly, part of the asteroid detonates, followed by a second and equally massive explosion that starts to tear the place apart. The explosion then pauses, turns green, and reverses, folding the asteroid in on itself. It shrinks to a single, bright green point and blinks out of existence—no debris, no residue, and no hint it ever existed.

"That's that," says Narla.

The bizarre annihilation of Outpost Omicron reminds the PCs of the energy put out by the quantum replicator (assuming they discovered that device's purpose). A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Mysticism or Physical Science check can guess the odd phenomenon they just witnessed is related to the quantum experiments the grays were conducting, which resulted in the existence of the quantum troll. Outpost Omicron imploded into quantum space.

The PCs feel the shockwave from the explosion even if they aren't on the bridge or looking out a viewport. The *Voidcrier* rocks a bit for a few seconds and is then still again.

Any PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Piloting or Physical Science check knows the turbulence was from a nearby detonation. Narla contacts the PCs from the bridge shortly after to tell the PCs that the asteroid they were just rescued from has been destroyed.

If asked about it later, Shez admits that instead of simply shutting down the second reactor, he planted a bomb inside and set the reactor to restart a few minutes later, causing the detonation. Narla and Shez agree that the outpost, which they confirm was a gray installation, posed a risk to the Foergrim system's inhabitants and possibly the Pact Worlds. The false Stewards justify their actions by positing that had they done something else, the grays might have tried later to retake the facility or others with ill intent, such as space pirates, might have found the place and used it for nefarious purposes. Consequently, Narla and Shez insist it was too risky to allow the base to remain intact. If the PCs did something similar with their reactor, Shez laughs heartily and pats them on the back.

Narla and Shez assure the PCs they'll do their best to find out what happened to them. Narla notes that the *Voidcrier* is on course to the Pact Worlds planet of Bretheda. Once there, they can start to get to the bottom of what's going on. However, the PCs will soon find out they are being lied to in the next adventure, "Deceivers' Moon!"



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You find scars and bruises on your body but don't recall an injury, enter a room and forget why you're there, surf holovids for what feels like only five minutes but an hour has passed, or are quite certain you completed a task only to find it unfinished. These are symptoms of an encounter with the grays. They involve themselves in every aspect of your life, but you've never heard of them. They watch you constantly, but you've never seen them. They're the nightmare of an intruder that you can't recall. They prod and probe, but you forget. Remember! Make yourself REMEMBER!

—From the personal journal of Steward Reyard Maldun

The following are excerpts from the personal journal of Steward Reyard Maldun, discovered in a locked box behind a false panel in an apartment leased to “K. Carlock” almost 2 years after Reyard’s disappearance on 2 Rova, 317 AG.

WHO ARE THE GRAYS?

That’s the first question most people ask: Who are they? Let’s start with what we know. Grays are named for their gray-skinned bodies because no one knows what else to call them. They have a basic humanoid shape with a symmetrical body, a single pair of arms, and a single pair of legs. Their hands and feet are strikingly similar to those of humans, though generally smaller and more delicate, with elongated fingers. Their stature is like that of a ysoki or a human child, but each has a bulbous head on a small, wiry frame. A gray’s face is a stoic mask with two relatively large, black, emotionless eyes and an almost nonexistent nose with two nostrils no larger than a data port. Their mouths are tiny and slit-like, which makes one wonder what they eat.

Grays have no trouble maintaining balance with precise grace, despite their over-large heads. Reports say they sometimes stand in perfect stillness for several moments before acting all at once, each movement perfect as if choreographed and well rehearsed. The movement of a gray is so deliberate and agile, it would rival that of a finely tuned robot, yet their flesh is certainly organic.

Frenik Mahr, a pahtra from Vesk-6, reports she sliced a gray open with her augmented claws before it escaped. She said it felt like cutting through soft rubber, yielding and uniform yet resiliently spongy. She reported it seemed to exhibit humanoid musculature from the outside, but just uniform flesh on the inside rather than individual muscle groups, and an abundance of black blood spilling from the wound. I was lucky enough to detail this report before it disappeared from the infosphere.

That’s another thing we know. Grays erase all digital data about themselves within minutes of it hitting an infosphere. Write it down and hide your records. Keep hard copies—a virus can’t delete a paper notebook. I even transferred some of Frenik’s files to an offline computer with all the countermeasures you could dream of. Every bit of data I collected was gone the next day.

Don’t waste time with digital technology—use analog only. Pick up a pen or a piece of charcoal, and scratch down whatever you remember after encountering them. Keep multiple copies: one in plain sight for them to steal or redact, and another for long-term records.

Get mechanical locks for your abode, the kind that can be opened only from inside. Anything electronic can be overridden, bypassed, or remotely controlled by a technomancer fresh out of the Arcanamirium; the grays have even less trouble. Go analog, ditch the digital. Being off the grid is the only way to hide from them, and even that won’t work for long. They will come and search for you if you start digging.

Buy a pet. Frenik said they smell bizarre, unlike anything you’ve ever smelled before, which is why small animals such as squoxes make such good early-warning systems against them. If you do get a pet, don’t get too attached. Just like any common burglar, grays disable the alarm systems before they break in, and the little critters are never the same after that. A gray will leave them alive, but they’re traumatized for sure. Maybe their memory tricks work only on sapient beings, or maybe the grays don’t bother wiping the minds of such simple creatures. Either way, you’ll at least get some notice that a gray is nearby when hearing your squox’s howl turn into a yip and then silence. Use those few seconds to grab an arc pistol, and fire at anything that moves.

Don’t try to reason with them. They don’t speak, at least not through those tiny, useless mouths. Some people have reported hearing strange voices inside their heads during their encounters. Grays likely have some form of telepathy that they use to communicate with one another, which makes them difficult to surveil even if we knew where to look. I recently read about an engineer who was working on some hybrid device that’s supposed to record telepathic communication in an area, but certain shirren interests are blocking her progress.

One of the prototypes was able to pick up a few words that we think are gray communication. Linguistics databases tagged the words as Aklo, which is usually associated with some of the settlers on Aucturn, and there’s a note in the system about the Dominion of the Black (that’s a lead I still need to follow up on). So, unless you happen to be from Aucturn, you’re unlikely to be able to communicate



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with them. While they may pause for a moment to hear what you have to say, they don't respond. Grays will just listen to your words with callous curiosity before abducting you for whatever experiments they have planned.

That's right: abductions. The most common interaction a person will have with a gray is being kidnapped for a brief period of time before being returned to where they were found. These abductions most often happen when a person is alone or sleeping, and they usually don't remember the encounter. Most people just wake up with a strange bruise or scar from an unknown medical procedure. If the grays are careless, or they think we won't check, they leave behind an implant. I get a full-body medical scan every 20 to 30 Pact Standard days just to have a consistent baseline. If they abduct me, we'll know. I suggest you do the same.

Sometimes the grays' victims remember their encounters, and this is how we know as much as we do. Many report being awake but unable to move, like sleep paralysis, and an array of bright lights overhead, shining down on them. These accounts usually include seeing silhouettes of the grays' overlarge craniums nearby as the aliens use otherworldly medical instruments on their abducted patients without anesthesia. The general parameters of these procedures are

consistent across multiple species in multiple systems, from the Pact Worlds to the Vast.

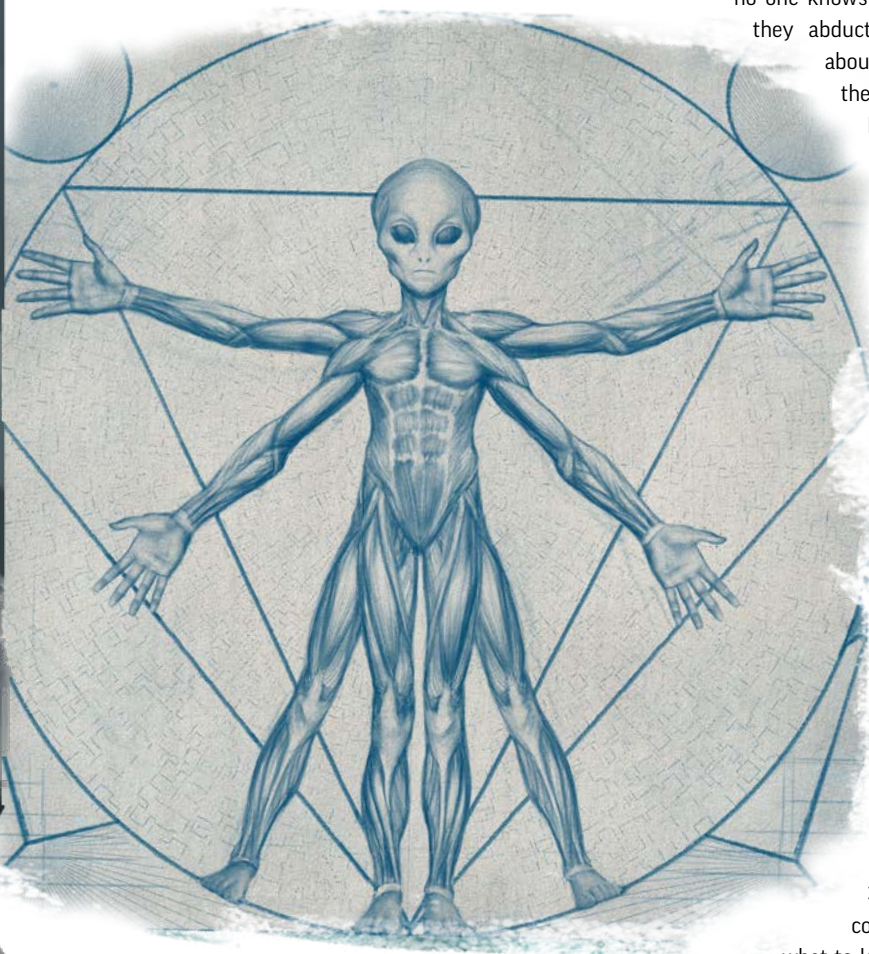
Occasionally abductees remember other situations, such as being confined in a cramped, lightless space or being displayed before a small gathering of grays while naked and unable to move. In all interactions with the grays, what remains consistent is their casual disregard for the pain they cause and their ignorance or ambivalence toward the lack of dignity they allow their subjects. Grays treat their abductees as little more than interesting specimens for study and give no regard to their sapience or independence.

And yet, grays often return these people to the same location they were abducted from, with little more than minor wounds, if that. They seem to depend on erasing victims' memories to relieve them of any psychological trauma. However, gray memory technology must be imperfect: as many as one in four victims remembers something about their time while abducted, though they usually try to convince themselves it was a nightmare or neurotic episode. Why do grays return their victims? Why heal their victims' wounds and erase potentially traumatic memories?

To avoid discovery. Grays' entire manner of operating is stealth and secrecy. They take great steps to ensure that no one knows about them. They wipe the minds of those they abduct, they eradicate all recorded information about themselves, and they try and leave places they've visited exactly as they've found them. But why hide themselves if they're not up to something nefarious?

What are they trying to accomplish with their abductions and experiments? They could just as easily present themselves to the Stewards and gain diplomatic access to Absalom Station's datastores of records on medical knowledge and biology, so why stay hidden and steal the knowledge? Is their probing just the aberrant curiosity of an alien mindset so different from our own that we can't conceive of their goals? Perhaps they're looking for weaknesses or taking steps toward some long-term goal. Some of my contemporaries will suggest invasion. They think they're ramping up for a full-blown attack on the Pact Worlds and all other worlds in the galaxy.

Perhaps they're right. Gray activity has increased drastically since the discovery of Drift travel. Obviously, we don't have records from the Gap, but there is an approximately 10 times as many recorded encounters with the grays per year after 3 AG as there were before that. Those numbers continue to increase as either we are learning what to look for or the grays are getting bolder. In the



past 50 years there have been four major events where grays are confirmed to have been present.

The VisTour corporation has been plagued with disasters caused by, or at least involved with, the grays. In 282 AG the VisTour space liner *Gossamer* went missing somewhere between Liavara and Bretheda. Survivors were found on life boats, unconscious and adrift in space, along the *Gossamer's* navigation route. Most of the survivors don't remember anything past the departure from Liavara, but 12 percent of them reported seeing small, gray aliens aboard the ship before blacking out and waking up on the life boats. Only 60 percent of the passengers and crew survived, and neither the *Gossamer* nor the missing people onboard were ever seen or heard from again.

In 296 AG, VisTour lost another space liner—the *Ostog*—this time in the Diaspora. Only one life boat was recovered, and the two shirrrens onboard reported seeing small, gray aliens just before the general alarms sounded. They immediately fled from the grays and boarded the nearest life boat. The shirrrens report that the *Ostog* vanished moments after their life boat ejected. Four years after the incident, dwarven miners in the Diaspora discovered half of the *Ostog* completely encased inside of an enormous asteroid, including the interior compartments. No remains were found onboard or within the asteroid.

In 311 AG, a third VisTour space liner went missing. The *Stardream II* vanished near the sun, and a handful of survivors were discovered in the Radiant Cathedral in the Burning Archipelago. Each of them was a passenger and yet was discovered unconscious, healthy, and wearing a VisTour staff spacesuit. Of these 12 survivors, four of them recall seeing small, gray aliens aboard the *Stardream II*.

These are not completely isolated incidents. Twenty years ago, in 297 AG, a tiefling drifter witnessed a gray alien and a green-skinned alien having a shoot-out in the Puddles on Absalom Station. She immediately went to tell Patrol Officer Harrak what she'd seen but became inexplicably unable to speak. She must have had some telepathic abilities, because she was able to touch him and transmit this account before she fell into a coma. She is now in a Stewards-run hospital under supervision, but she has yet to regain consciousness, and we've been unable to identify her.

Only 10 years ago, several starships that match suspected gray designs were spotted in the Diaspora near Archon's Halo and Havinak's Vortex, not far from where the remains of the *Ostog* were discovered. Perhaps the grays were trying to return to the *Ostog*? The sightings lasted only a couple of weeks, and the Stewards were never able to intercept the mysterious ships.

We are certain the ships belong to the grays, however. Since that happened, I've been monitoring reports of starships shaped like a flat round disc, often with a semitransparent dome near the top. There's been a high correlation between these "saucer" ship sightings and gray encounters over

the past few years. Last Rova, a sleek disc-shaped vessel ambushed the *Penitent III*, a Knights of Golarion Squire-class starship scouting the Drift. The Knights' craft was disabled and boarded by the grays, but they were able to send encrypted footage of the entire battle to another nearby craft before losing contact. No one has heard from the *Penitent III* since. Battle footage shows use of tractor beams, EMP weapons, and other tactics designed to subdue and capture rather than destroy. It seems the grays are determined to preserve life, if only so they can study and experiment on it.

One subject that we have almost no information on is the grays' home world. Where did they come from? How did they spread themselves so pervasively throughout the galaxy? There's been a lot of activity around the Jezper Cluster, so some think they're from that region of the Vast. We've also seen evidence that they can phase through solid objects, suggesting otherworldly origins. Are they from a different plane of existence? One of the Outer Planes, perhaps? Maybe another dimension entirely? Their outlandish way of acting suggests thought that is completely incompatible with our own rational view of reality; this would support an alternate dimension as an origin. The Knights of Golarion insist that grays are secretly working with Eoxian agents to conquer the Pact Worlds. The final theory is that they are organic constructs, acting on the order of creatures who either can't interact with us directly—or who can but choose not to. Perhaps they've created the grays as puppets to do their bidding on the Material Plane. If this is true, who sent them? Who's giving them their orders?

Some of the reports suggests a social or military hierarchy, with some grays acting as leaders. Theorists like myself use the term "mysteriarch" to refer to such grays. There's enough circumstantial evidence to suggest any number of things that the grays might be up to, some of them contradictory. Either not all of these plots are connected to grays, or there are different factions of grays who are each working on their own agendas. Until we can find more information, most of this is just guesswork. Agents in my line of work lump these unconfirmed conspiracy theories together and attribute them to a group called the Unseen. Whether the Unseen is one organization or many, we may never be certain, but I intend to devote the rest of my life to discovering the truth.

PLOTS AND PLANS

That brings us to the next questions people usually ask: What do they want? What are their plans? We don't really know, but there are several theories, each with their own evidence to consider. While they can't all be true, it's possible that there's some truth to each of these theories.

GALACTIC INVASION

Invasion is the most common theory. The grays already have biological, political, and tactical data on most of the galaxy, so why not invade? What's stopping them from turning our

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weapons against us and taking over? What greater power is keeping them in check? I don't know that there is one, other than the gods, and they're not giving us any answers about the grays. By abducting individuals from most sapient species, the grays could design bioweapons to target us and obliterate us all at once. Their ships tend to favor stealth and evasion, so a subtle weakening of our populace is more likely than all-out assault.

Of course, they could also plan on leaving us healthy and just take over by manipulating our thoughts and actions through the various infospheres and other media. A prevailing theory by the barathu Conclusion is they're installing undetectable biological implants in abductees to control their actions while simultaneously altering infosphere data and holovid feeds. This lets them change the cultural framework over generations to be more in line with their view of how we should be living. Be skeptical of all news media and "documentaries." Do your own research. Don't trust "holovid scientists," who have never done lab work. Get peer-reviewed sources and look at the data yourself.

If this is the grays' plan, it is already starting to work. There are already pockets in every culture that revere grays and welcome abduction. These are usually individuals who had incurable medical conditions before being abducted.



GRIMBLE TUCKETTEN

After being taken by the grays, their maladies have suspiciously vanished. There is a group of barathus that suffered from a rare but deadly fungal infection. Several of them show signs that they were abducted by grays, and each of those barathus is now fungus-free and healthy. It's almost like the grays were trying to keep that population healthy, but for what end goal? Why do they have a vested interest in keeping those barathus alive?

A group calling themselves the Anti-Redeemers think grays will use a combination of invasion and media manipulation to manufacture a foe that's a danger to all civilized systems, then swoop in at the last moment and "save" us from the very threat they created. The Anti-Redeemers believe that grays altered shirrrens into the Swarm, instead of shirrrens being an offshoot of the Swarm. This theory states that grays took shirrrens, a species with natural instincts for cooperation, and manipulated their brain chemistry with synthetic hormones, making them violent and aggressive. Their tendency to work with one another means that they won't harm other Swarm creatures but will attack the rest of the galaxy. The grays' plan is to bide their time until the Swarm threat seems impossible to overcome, then come in with a bioengineered super-virus and wipe them out. They would be heroes and the galaxy would fall to their knees, treating the grays as their saviors. We have evidence that such a virus could already exist after the deadly outbreak on the shirren colony of Mirisal-4.

But there's a problem for the grays' plan if this theory is correct: shirrrens broke free from the grays' manipulations and re-formed a semblance of their society in the Pact Worlds. Now the grays can't release their super-virus without committing genocide against peace-loving shirrrens, which would make them look like villains. Knowing this, they've been manipulating groups like the Exo-Guardians and Knights of Golarion to be able to withstand the inevitable onslaught of the Swarm. Meanwhile, what about the super-virus? What if it falls into the wrong hands or is accidentally released on a major population hub like Absalom Station?

I've been compiling data all the way back to the Gap on potential invasion plans, where they might strike, and what we can do to defend against them. To keep this information out of the hands of the grays, I've heavily encrypted the data, split it into multiple segments, and hidden it in long-standing computer stations around Absalom Station, making it look like garbage code within the system. I have also hidden a cipher in a separate hiding place; those who have followed my research will know where it is.

ALIEN HYBRIDS

There's another camp that believe grays aren't from this dimension and potentially can't survive here. Either our space is somehow toxic to them, or they are able to visit for only brief periods of time. They believe that the grays abduct specimens of different species from all over the galaxy to find a genetic match to their DNA. Grays want to

find a way to splice their extradimensional DNA with that of another species to create a hybrid capable of existing in both their dimension and ours. If they can find this key, then they can enact their plans of either invading and controlling this galaxy or potentially colonizing worlds as an extension of their empire. Biotech firms on Bretheda have made astounding advances in bioaugmentations and genetic resequencing. Where do you think they got this tech from? Groups like the Augmented have started using short-lived nanobots to regulate their augmentations and remove any cancerous cells or foreign DNA. It's a painful process, but having it done every 40 to 60 days can ensure your DNA is not being mutated by gray recombinator rays.

Evidence of their genetic experiments can be found through many abduction stories. Though some abductees are healed of injuries and maladies, including chronic illnesses, others have reported cancerous growths and cells forming after their abduction. This could be an attempt at splicing gray DNA into an individual directly. Perhaps grays believe their manufactured cancer will consume the host body and rebuild it with the new gray DNA included. Obviously this isn't working, as those patients usually die or have the cancer removed, but if gray physiology is so alien as to not be able to survive in this dimension, they may not fully understand our various mitosis cycles.

BIOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTS

Frenik Mahr believes that the gray form we see is only an exoskeleton, like a biomechanical suit of powered armor that the real alien wears. It could account for the expressionless faces, the lack of speech, the strangely spongy flesh, and most grays' seeming aversion to clothes. They're usually remembered as not wearing anything on their bodies and mostly looking identical to one another. If they're just bio-armor made in some alien factory, they would have the tendency to look the same. It's also possible that grays just don't have the same ideas about clothing and nudity that some galactic civilizations have.

This leads to another theory that states that grays are not aliens at all, but automatons created by real aliens who control the grays from a remote dimension. This would explain their perfectly graceful movements, sudden changes between inaction and action, and complete lack of empathy. Those factors also line up with the bio-armor theory. Either could be true. Frenik wrote a paper on the green, lizard-like suits the grays sometimes supposedly wear, calling them reptoid suits. Apparently, they can change shape to mimic other humanoid creatures. She's working on ways to shut down the suits using directed EMP blasts and ionizing mists.

GALACTIC EXPERIMENT

Ptashi Yora, a korasha lashunta who lives on the colony of Thardanis in the Vast, believes the grays are responsible for all evolution of sapient life in our galaxy. She thinks that

they have been here longer than any other species and have been guiding the development of civilizations since the dawn of time. Ptashi is an abductee who favors the influence of the grays, pointing to the fact that the grays tend to want to observe and heal. She claims they abduct individuals and perform medical experiments on them for fully beneficial purposes, and it's mere coincidence when some abductees are diagnosed with cancer or tumors after gray manipulation. I suppose occasional implants and changes could be there to guide species evolution or behavior towards some grand goal. Grays could also be just "poking the renkroda" and seeing how we'll respond to different stimuli, much as any scientist would with an observational experiment. If this is true, what could their goals be for this grand design?

A more extreme version of this increasingly popular theory is the idea that not only have they been manipulating the entire galaxy, but we don't even exist. Ponderous-127, an android from Aballon, believes we're all part of a simulation on some grand network of supercomputers being run within the grays' reality. They think we are simply a vast collection of AIs running in a virtual environment and that the grays are essentially computer technicians performing routine maintenance on the program. They state in their paper "Reality Rebooted: A Subjective Observation of 'Material' Existence" that the gods are simply project managers for this simulation, manipulating indirectly to achieve some sort of goal for their department. Ponderous-127 also thinks that magic is the simulation learning to hack its own reality, but that the programmers thought this was interesting enough to leave these loopholes open and see what we do with it.

Ponderous-127's theory goes far beyond what the grays are doing and into full-blown paranoia about Triune being the agent of a hacking group trying to take control. Ponderous-127 thinks that the reason Drift travel pulls parts of the planes into itself is due to some poorly written hacker code that reallocates existing memory on the servers without initializing it. "Typical sloppy hacker stuff," according to them. There's also the Gap to consider, but Ponderous-127 justifies that as well. They think the end of the Gap was the beginning of the simulation; we can't remember our history before that because there wasn't any history. Their "Reality Rebooted" theory states the grays initialized this simulation with data they collected from the real Golarion, then extrapolated what an advanced society would look like with Golarion as a framework. The Gap represents all of the backlogged history they didn't bother writing, instead just starting us off with advanced technology.

This all seemed absurd to me, until I considered how many species there are in the galaxy with arms and legs, usually two of each. Perhaps most species are just derivatives from a base template for sapient life, potentially modeled off the grays themselves. There's also the suspicious behavior of Triune mysteriously granting identical Drift technology to all sapient life in the galaxy all at once. What was their goal

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of such a direct manipulation in cultural and technological advancement across the entire universe? Surely it can't be just to make us all neighbors. There's also no other good theory for the Gap at the moment, so "unprogrammed computer simulation history" might as well be correct.

REPLICANTS

One theory I don't even like to think about is bioidentical individual replacement. Some believe that the grays are targeting specific individuals, abducting them, then replacing them with clones, which we sometimes refer to as replicants. For the most part, people who have been abducted seem to be their normal selves when returned. Occasionally, bioscans will reveal changes in a person, but these changes are usually the addition or removal of a malady. Unfortunately, psychological changes aren't as closely monitored, but some behavioral changes are expected in people who can remember their abduction. What we have observed is that in rare instances, a person's personality seems to change in ways not consistent with trauma. It's possible this is because they were replaced with a clone, or replicant, that follows the grays' commands and fulfills their agenda.

If this is true, we could have entire governments or companies controlled by grays without our knowing about it. Evidence for this is thin at best, but in 292 AG the Zeffrac Science Platform orbiting Nchak was destroyed in an accident. Autopsies of the Wise Council members show that each of them was infected by a strange fungus that was interfering with their thought patterns and motor functions. If the grays are trying to influence our society, they're more likely behind this fungal mind control plot than using full-on reprogrammed clones. Oolahm Burbiss, a morlamaw friend of mine, says that the fungus is actually an intelligent alien parasite she calls the dycepskians, who are out for galactic infection and domination of all life. I find it far more likely that they're just another tool the grays use to subtly manipulate the populace.

NANOBOTS

Grimdle Tucketten, a ysoki acquaintance, has a lot of wild theories, but his most recent is that grays are using UPBs to control all technology in the galaxy. He says that they've managed to infect the processing plants for most UPBs with subatomic nanobots that lie dormant and generally survive the transformation into processed goods. These nanobots

wait for commands from a gray on subspace frequencies to activate and either return an item to its initial UPB state, which looks a lot like disintegration, or control its specific functions. They've used this to fire weapons, lower shields, and disable security systems.

His notes suggest that the grays use technology similar to that of Drift engines to shrink down the autonomous robots to a submolecular level, then self-replicate and spread through all technology with the ultimate goal of replacing all organic life. He said that androids are just a prototype of this technology and that assembly oozes show what happens when such nanobots go out of control. According to Grimdle, there's a secret factory hidden in the Drift that creates this tech. Absurd.

GRAY EQUIPMENT

Very few pieces of gray technology have been captured and cataloged by other species. The following are extremely rare examples of gray equipment that the Stewards or other organizations have managed to get their hands on. This technology usually sits in a protected vault or secret lab, but occasionally gear goes missing and is sold on black markets for exorbitant prices.

GRAY WEAPONS

Most grays focus on controlling their enemies and usually try to escape when confronted with violence. However, when given no choice but to fight, their weapons can be as deadly as any in the galaxy.

BINDING BLASTER

Gray guards positioned around secret labs often wield these devices to contain rogue specimens. They fire a sphere-shaped matrix of energy that electrically adheres to other matter, interfering with mobility. Creatures report a sticky, tingling sensation when struck with these weapons and often find strange markings on their flesh from where the energy matrix attached.

REALITY PISTOL

Grays often fire on escaped abductees with these pistols, which can scramble the thoughts of those targeted, muddling recent memories and causing erratic behavior. Targets who are hit with these weapons multiple times often lose connection with reality altogether.

REALITY RIFLE

The longarm equivalents of reality pistols, these rifles are often used in gray facilities with longer corridors and more wide-open spaces.

RECOMBINATOR RAY

Grays created this nightmarish weapon to defend themselves against incursions into their territory. This rifle looks like



RECOMBINATOR RAY

a long, silver cylinder that ends in two long prongs. When it's fired, lasers ionize the air between the prongs to send a charge at the target that disrupts cellular bonds. The current is powerful enough to penetrate armor but has no effect on nonliving material, leaving equipment lying in a puddle of organic sludge.

GRAY GEAR

The grays seem to be masters of technology, especially when it comes to manipulating memories and information. Other devices they have created take advantage of their studies of the galaxy's many life forms.

ERASURE WORM

Whenever you attempt to save information about the grays to an electronic device, it seems like it mysteriously goes corrupt, is deleted, and is removed from backups. The grays use a sophisticated combination of magic and technology to try to ensure their existence is a secret.

ERASURE WORM		LEVEL 15	
HYBRID ITEM	PRICE	110,000	BULK –
This 3-inch-long plastic tube contains an array of sentient magical computer code suspended in a gel. When the gel is squeezed directly onto a computer terminal, the code coalesces into a finger-length worm made of light. As a standard action, you can tell the worm a name or description of a person, place, thing, or event you would like it to erase. The worm then rapidly makes its way into the computer's system, attempting to corrupt or delete any information regarding the name or description it was given.			

If the computer system it is released into doesn't have access to this information or root access, the *erasure worm* sits dormant until any user unlocks the system and gains access. The worm then usurps the access and starts erasing any data it finds that matches its target description. If the computer infected with an *erasure worm* connects to any other computer, including through an infosphere, the worm

travels to that computer once it has deleted all target information on its current computer.

An *erasure worm* can function for up to 30 days before the magic that binds it dissipates. It takes the worm 1 minute to erase all target data on a single computer system, 1 day to erase all target data on most large networks, and 2d6 days to erase all target data on most infospheres. If the gel is squeezed from the tube onto any other surface or object, it immediately becomes inert and evaporates in 1 hour.

The existence of an *erasure worm* in a computer system can be discovered with a successful DC 41 Computers check and can be eliminated with two consecutive successful opposed Computers checks; an *erasure worm* has a total Computers bonus of +31. Each opposed check takes 1 minute, and while it is battling in this way, the *erasure worm* isn't eliminating data.

OOZE STASIS CHAMBER

The grays use various types of oozes for many functions. Enterprising grays often carry a few around in these portable containers for use when needed.

OOZE STASIS FLASK		LEVEL 5	
TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM	PRICE	2,800	BULK 1
An ooze stasis flask is a transparent cylinder 12 inches long and 3 inches in diameter. One end of the cylinder features a latched and hinged flap. Designed to contain an ooze, the flask is reinforced on the interior with invisible force fields that harmlessly compress such a creature, which is usually inserted via the means of a funnel or other implements (a prod is often required to force the ooze to comply).			

An ooze stasis flask can hold one Medium or smaller ooze of CR 3 or lower. When the flask is sealed, the contents are placed in a stasis field, preventing the ooze from aging or needing any sort of sustenance. An ooze stasis flask can be thrown as an improvised grenade-like weapon as a standard action, or manually poured out as a full action. If thrown, the flask is destroyed and its contents immediately expelled.

An ooze stasis chamber uses a standard battery and expends 1 charge per day.

TABLE 1: SMALL ARMS

ONE-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
UNCATEGORIZED									
Binding blaster, orb	5	3,100	1d6 B	30 ft.	Bind ^{AR}	20	2	L	Force ^{AR} , stun
Reality pistol	7	7,000	1d10 E	30 ft.	Confuse ^{AR}	40	8	1	Mind-affecting ^{AR} , stun, subtle ^{AR}
Binding blaster, globe	9	13,900	2d6 B	30 ft.	Bind ^{AR}	40	4	L	Force ^{AR} , stun

TABLE 2: LONGARMS

ONE-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
UNCATEGORIZED									
Recombinator ray	8	9,500	2d10 A	60 ft.	Corrode 1d6	80	8	1	Antibiological ^{AR}
Reality rifle	10	19,000	2d12 E	80 ft.	Confuse ^{AR}	40	8	2	Mind-affecting ^{AR} , stun, subtle

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"Look, no one cares what happened to the researchers who previously owned this engine. Y'know why? Because this thing stops freakin' time, that's why! Picture this. You're cruisin' through the Diaspora in your Vagabond, just mindin' your own business, when your sensors ping a gunship filled with pirates screamin' in at full burn, gyrolasers hot. But you got this, because you made a savvy purchase from ol' Pogo before you left this station. Your engineer turns one lousy knob, and boom! That enemy ship locks in place like it's caught in a tractor beam! Meanwhile, your crew's buzzin' around the deck as if you spiked their morning coffee with liquid thasteron! Who's got the drop on who now, scum suckers? Arm the plasma torpedoes—it's time to make pirate paste!"

—Pogo Quick, ysoki tech broker

While modern scientific and engineering knowledge might appear to cover nearly all aspects of life, hundreds of intellectual questions remain unanswered. Though Triune granted access to the blueprints of Drift technology, no one has yet ascertained why using this technology rends a portion of a random plane into the Drift. The union of magic and technology has solved many modern problems, but travelers continue to experience dilemmas related to perfecting interspecies communication, understanding astronomical phenomena, overcoming biological diseases that may accompany first contact with alien creatures, and myriad other obstacles.

When mainstream science is unable to explain the origins of mysterious phenomena, the curious open their minds to more radical explanations, hoping to find even a trace of plausible explanation in an expanse of doubt. These practitioners often participate in what some call “fringe science,” a generic term for fields of study that diverge from the theories generally considered to be rudimentary by experts within a specific discipline. To traditional scientists, fringe science is a fool’s errand, as it usually relies on premises that may have been previously refuted and can often be performed by someone with no academic background. While this is true in some cases, some fringe scientists use methods that are just as statistically significant and reproducible as their more traditional counterparts. Fringe scientists often remind others that many disciplines, such as interplanetary communication or cybernetic and biological augmentation, were once considered little more than fantasies before true genius unlocked the power behind their mysteries.

The following disciplines represent fringe science practiced within the Pact Worlds and systems beyond, as well as some equipment associated with these fields.

ALGORITHMIC CLAIRVOYANCE

In a universe riddled with uncertainty, and with magical prophecy being unreliable, scientists have continually sought to predict the future. As a result, many technologists have attempted to create “clairvoyant algorithms,” mathematically based equations or problem-solving processes that analyze the past and present to generate a highly (if not completely) accurate model of the future, which in turn could be used to make decisions with far more advantageous results.

To date, the most successful example of predictive modeling processes in the galaxy aren’t algorithms used by machines in the traditional sense, but rather the cognitive subroutines of a rare gestalt biotechnological creature called Nekrall the Seer, whose cognitive abilities are believed to be far superior to the computational prowess of the most advanced Pact Worlds supercomputer. Most know that the barathus of Bretheda have demonstrated the ability to dramatically manipulate their genetic code, even fusing with other barathus to create shared neurological

physiologies that far exceed the cognitive capabilities of a single barathu. Brethedan legend holds that Nekrall was once a single barathu who, after awakening after the end of the Gap, assimilated an advanced bioprocessor with a series of advanced predictive algorithms into their own genetic code. Soon after, the creature called several other barathus to join with them as an aggregate entity, leveraging the mind of each much like a supercomputer draws upon additional processors for computing power. Over time, Nekrall shaped itself into an ever-growing, ever-evolving biotechnological organism that could closely examine the historical events of the past and present, cumulating data into a comprehensive predictive model that they believed could be used to accurately and precisely predict the future. In their first year of existence, Nekrall predicted that a god would grant sapient creatures the technology to quickly and efficiently travel to other worlds—a prediction that was proved accurate by Triune’s gift of Drift technology in 3 AG. Nekrall has also taken credit for predicting the death of millions as a result of the Stardust Plague of 67 AG, first contact with shirrens in 83 AG, the arrival of the *Idari* worldship in 240 AG, and even the Swarm invasion in 291 AG.

Today, Nekrall is a collective, starship-sized mass composed of integrated biotechnology and hundreds or perhaps thousands of barathus who have fused together. Nekrall continues to evolve as they accumulate more barathus, transforming their genetic structure to withstand the perils of a vacuum, developing a form of tentacle-based locomotion that allows them to easily move through space, and assimilating a Drift engine into their structure to facilitate Drift travel. Nekrall is often accompanied by an organization that refers to itself as the Veil of the Seer, a small armada of ships constructed by several different organizations that act as Nekrall’s ambassadors or study the being’s cryptic predictions and collected data. Some Starfinders have found rare pre-Gap technology in their explorations. However, they receive transmissions from emissaries of the Veil that claim Nekrall forecasted the tech’s discovery and demand the Starfinders hand it over so that the barathu collective can assimilate it into their form. Others claim the Veil hires persuasive and worthy adventurers to warn others of impending doom forecasted by Nekrall before it’s too late.

Nekrall recently made intergalactic headlines as members of the Veil have released a prediction indicating that a planet within the Pact Worlds system will be destroyed by a cataclysmic event in 323 AG, though there is no indication as of yet of which one.

EYES OF THE SEER

A set of *eyes of the seer* is a biotech augmentation that is derived from Nekrall’s DNA and imparts a kind of predictive sight. This augmentation is highly sought after but sold only to those who have earned the trust of members of the Veil of the Seer.

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EYES OF THE SEER

SYSTEM
Eyes

AUGMENTATION BIOTECH

PRICE 26,000

LEVEL 11

A set of translucent nictitating membranes is implanted within your visual sensors. When the membranes are open, they can be spotted as small, lavender, triangular muscles just inside the corner of your visual sensors with a successful DC 21 Perception check. When the membranes are closed, you see the world through a dark-purple haze that softens the edges of the figures you see but outlines them with a series of complex equations and algorithmic formulae that define their relationships with the world. In essence, you see the world almost as if you were viewing it as lines upon lines of computer code, allowing you some small insight into the way the future may resolve.

You can open or close these membranes as a swift action, and all must open or close simultaneously. When the membranes are closed and your eyes are open, you can scan your surroundings using your newfound sight as a move action. Roll a d20 and record the result; as a reaction until the start of your next turn, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to use this result for any attack roll, skill check, saving throw, or ability check attempted by a creature you can see (enemies and allies alike) as if they had rolled this value themselves. This reaction must be declared before the creature rolls the check, and all normal modifiers apply to the roll that uses the substituted value.

While the membranes are closed and your eyes are open, you take a -2 penalty to Perception checks and initiative checks and can't take any reactions other than the one described above. If you fail a saving throw against a mind-affecting effect while the membranes are closed, you become confused until the end of your next turn (in addition to any other normal results of the mind-affecting effect).

BLACK HOLE WEAPONIZATION

When a star collapses and implodes under the pressure of its own gravity, it can form a singularity: an infinitely compressed point in space with a gravitational pull so strong that even light is unable to escape. Known as black holes within the Pact Worlds and systems beyond, gravitational singularities remain some of the galaxy's most enigmatic and powerful forces. Most scholars of the Pact Worlds believe that replication of black holes is currently impossible, as the reactions needed to generate them could be achieved only by using a particle accelerator, a machine that uses electromagnetic fields to propel particles at high speeds, with the ability to produce collisions of particles moving near or beyond the speed of light.

In 291 AG, an Aballonian transmission from anacites identifying themselves as the colonization-minded Those Who Become was posted to the infosphere by an anonymous source. The intercepted message contained

data that appeared to be collected from what the anacites referred to as a mobile particle accelerator spanning over 20 miles in length, constructed aboard an AI-controlled space station orbiting a previously unknown planet the machines referred to as Anodyne. Notes from several experiments in the sector also claimed that Those Who Become had used the accelerator to generate several microscopic black holes in an array connected to nodes that could sustain each singularity's gravitational forces and siphon the light radiation from within. In essence, the anacites had produced the first self-sustained mass-energy system powered by black holes, and were using it as an energy source for their colonization efforts on Solace.

While no one was able to verify the authenticity of the message in the wake of the Swarm invasion the same year, multiple factions, corporations, and governments dispatched research teams to locate the Solace space station and observe the singularity-based energy matrix in action, hoping to glean some application of the technology to deploy against their insectile enemies. Despite numerous requests for more information from Aballon, representatives from each anacite faction denied the existence of Anodyne, claiming the message was a fake. However, researchers from AbadarCorp, Verces, the church of Triune, and many other organizations were determined to reproduce this technology and immediately devoted significant resources to its replication. The decade from 291 to 301 AG is sometimes referred to as the Dark Harvest, a period when powerful companies and subsidiaries frantically attempted to produce prototypes of energy-producing, singularity-powered devices.

In the 16 years that followed the end of the Dark Harvest, an anonymous research collective that posts its work to obscure sites on the infosphere and calls itself the Lightbringers—a name that many believe was chosen to mock corporate efforts to use black holes as sources of infinite energy—published several reports that indicate its members are actively working on the development of weapons technology that incorporates a particle collider weapon small enough to generate gravitationally stable black holes. These weapons, the Lightbringers claim, must be developed as a deterrent to what they predict will be an anacite invasion of the rest of the Pact Worlds system, primarily supported by anacite-developed singularity weapons and reactors the group believes the anacites have been hiding. For the most part, the Lightbringers' claim that prototypes of weapons equipped with singularity-projectors capable of producing micro black holes have been created as recently as 314 AG has been mostly laughed off—that is, until an extremist group calling itself Akiton Now! released a recent transmission. In the broadcast, the group claimed responsibility for commandeering a frigate loaded with hundreds of Lightbringer weapon prototypes and threatened to take radical action against the citizens of Akiton if rule

of the world, once promised to them by their witchwyrd progenitors, is not ceded to them immediately.

VOIDHAMMER

A voidhammer is a modified swoop hammer integrated with a miniaturized projector that, when activated, creates a small gravitational anomaly on its head. This faux black hole crushes those struck with the hammer and can even pin them to the ground. Black market sellers of voidhammers claim to have “liberated” them from the Lightbringers, who crafted them from anacite technology supposedly found on Anodyne. Voidhammers have the immobilize critical hit effect.

Immobilize

The target must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or be knocked prone and gain the pinned condition. The target can escape the pinned condition by succeeding at an Acrobatics check (DC = 20 + 1-1/2 × the weapon's item level). The pinned condition ends automatically if the weapon's wielder either moves or attacks with the weapon again; the penalties from the pinned condition still apply to the target if the wielder uses the weapon to attack the pinned target.

CLONING

In the quest for a postdeath galactic society, cloning has been viewed by many as a way of ensuring the survival of species that may have been devastated or endangered by disease, calamity, war, famine, or overpredation, such as ghorans (*Alien Archive 2* 56) and phentomites (*Alien Archive 2* 96). Cloning experiments are as diverse in nature as the species they could potentially aid; while some fringe scientists concern themselves with cloning whole “persons”—that is, bringing into existence a new member of a species without using that species' natural reproductive mechanisms—others seek to clone only portions of a creature's physiological structure.

In the Veskarium, military scientists have been able to successfully grow new limbs for soldiers who have lost them in battle, as the genetics of vesk and other reptilian creatures has so far proven to be receptive to successfully bonding with cloned cells. Transplanting organs or limbs grown in labs has been only partially successful in mammalian species such as humans; about 30 percent of cloned-tissue recipients eventually become afflicted with a

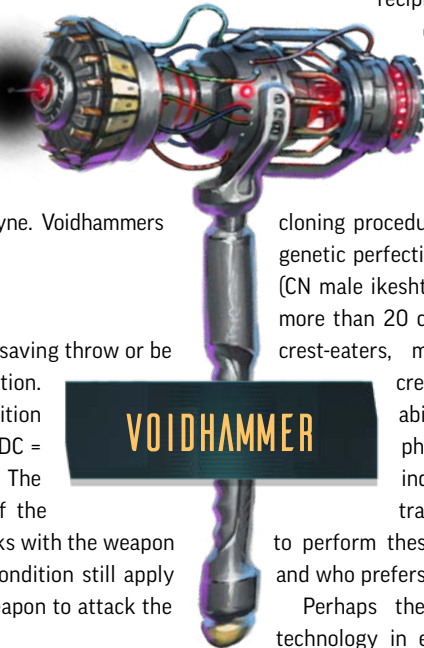
disease called clone rot, a necrosis that rapidly decomposes both the original and replicated tissues that had been fused together. Still other species, such as those with regeneration or fast healing, seem immune to partial-

cloning procedures altogether. In a personal quest for genetic perfection, the Arl resident **Serabesk Keshtkal** (CN male ikeshti) claims to have been the recipient of more than 20 cloned tissues from creatures including crest-eaters, mountain eels, tashtaris, and other creatures, granting him extraordinary abilities based on the donor creatures' physiologies. Interviews with Serabesk indicate he attributes the success of his transformation to a local biohacker willing

to perform these dangerous experimental procedures and who prefers to remain anonymous.

Perhaps the most successful full-body cloning technology in existence is that used by the human women living within the Simar Communion of Absalom Station (*Pact Worlds* 46). It is believed that every member of the communion is in fact a clone of the same person, as they all appear to be genetically identical to one another. Members of the floating commune, however, remain tight-lipped about the origin of their technology, though they have alluded to the creators drawing on scientific mastery of genetics, psychology, and even phrenic capabilities, such as telepathy.

According to unreliable sources on various infospheres, reptoid operatives once used their shapeshifting abilities to infiltrate the Simar Communion and steal one of the devices the women used to produce identical genetic clones of themselves. Nothing more was ever learned about the



VOIDHAMMERS [TWO-HANDED ADVANCED MELEE WEAPONS]

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	BULK	SPECIAL
UNCATEGORIZED						
Voidhammer, primordial	6	4,200	2d6 B	Immobilize	2	Powered (capacity 20, usage 1), reach, unwieldy
Voidhammer, stellar	10	18,000	6d6 B	Immobilize	2	Powered (capacity 40, usage 2), reach, unwieldy
Voidhammer, intermediate	14	76,000	10d8 B	Immobilize	2	Powered (capacity 40, usage 2), reach, unwieldy
Voidhammer, supermassive	18	390,000	12d10 B	Immobilize	2	Powered (capacity 80, usage 4), reach, unwieldy

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incident, as the reptoids supposedly perished in a shuttle explosion just outside of Bretheda's orbit. Rumors posit that while a team of Simar operatives was responsible for the reptoids' deaths, the device was never recovered, and the technology might still be somewhere out there. Others believe another group caused the explosion in order to secure the cloning apparatus and is now using it to unknown nefarious ends.

ANALEPTIC TABLET

Veskarium military scientists who specialize in cloning techniques have created a form of medicine to help soldiers heal from afflictions faster. Analeptic tablets speed up the recovery process by analyzing damaged tissue and then "printing" replacement material within the body. The treatment

is sometimes said to be as painful as any cause, so analeptic tablets aren't widely available outside of the Veskarium.

ANALEPTIC TABLET

LEVEL 6

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM

PRICE 600

BULK –

This 2-inch-long oblong tablet contains a miniaturized scanner and 3D printer wrapped in a smooth, protective shell. An analeptic tablet must be ingested by a living creature (a standard action) or fed to an unconscious character with a full glass of water (a full action). The tablet automatically activates if the creature has already taken any ability score damage or is suffering from the effects of an affliction; otherwise it sits inactive within the creature's stomach until the creature takes ability score damage or is affected by an affliction. One hour later, the analeptic tablet heals the target of all ability damage or moves the creature one step toward healthy on any affliction track they are on (this doesn't cure the affliction, so unfortunate victims of fast-acting poisons might die before the analeptic tablet can do its work).

When it's activated, the analeptic tablet 3D prints cloned tissue that matches perfectly to the affected creature and repairs any damage done to the creature's body. During this process, the creature undergoes intense pain and gains the sickened condition until the creature gets a full 8 hours of uninterrupted rest. This condition can't be removed by any means during the hour the analeptic tablet is healing the creature but can be alleviated by magic or other means after that time. Once the analeptic tablet finishes healing the creature that swallowed it (or 1 week after it has been swallowed, whichever comes first), the item breaks down into harmless components that eventually pass out of the creature's body.

MULTIVERSE THEORY

With their reality-defying magic, witchwarpers have demonstrated that alternate universes that mirror their own can somehow be tapped into and manipulated to extraordinary effect. But to date, no formal theory has been accepted by the scientific community at large to explain this phenomenon. However, a collection of fringe scientists studying what they call multiverse theory say the possible existence of alternate realities could be explained by combining principles of quantum entanglement with those of physical science. The renowned multiverse theorist **Jhanessa Leshacht** (NG female osharu^{AA2}) suggests that alternate realities can be explained by borrowing principles of string theory, which maintains that all realities may be connected with fundamental strings of energy that produce different particles based on their vibrations, and inflationary cosmology, which theorizes that the universe was born from an outward rush of particles in a quantum field in what some refer to as a "big bang." Connecting these ideas, Jhanessa believes that the particles that led to the sudden birth of the universe could have vibrated the strings of reality, creating a potentially exponential number of alternate realities at the same time. The Stewards report that



SERABESK KESHTKAL

numerous attempts on her life perpetrated by “one reality” extremists and multiverse deniers have been thwarted discretely at several of Jhanessa’s speaking engagements and public appearances, although Jhanessa has never personally confirmed those reports.

The multiverse theorist **Nemen-5** (N agender android) perhaps more infamous than most. Assisted by a research collective that many outsiders view as a cult, Nemen-5 conducts most of their explorations into the existence of alternate realities aboard a heavily modified Kevolari Venture. Adding to this general paranoia is that these researchers often refer to themselves as the Quantum Children and Nemen-5 as “the Originator.” The Quantum Children are well known for building (sometimes dangerous) prototypes in an attempt to prove the existence of alternate realities. The famous actor **Azaleah Onik** (CG female damaya lashunta) spent some time aboard Nemen-5’s starship, and for 2 years she was an active proponent of the Quantum Children’s efforts. However, in 316 AG, she abruptly left the group and publicly disavowed many of their claims. She now stands trial for the murder of her manager in Qabarat. Onik maintains her innocence, claiming that she didn’t commit the crime, but that an identical version of herself from another dimension did.

MULTIVERSE MIRRORS

These full-length panes of reflective material are lined with piezoelectric crystals that vibrate on a subatomic level when a charge is passed through them. Such a reaction causes the mirror to phase ever-so-slightly out of the viewer’s dimension and show a reflection of the viewer from another reality. Many believe the multiverse mirrors found within the Pact Worlds are pale imitations of powerful devices the Quantum Children have created aboard their starship that can pull objects (and even people) from the viewed alternate dimension.

MULTIVERSE MIRROR

LEVEL 3

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM

PRICE 1,300

BULK 10

Until it is activated, a multiverse mirror functions as normal full-length mirror. When activated, the reflective surface vibrates slightly, blurring the image. Once per day, you can spend 1 minute focusing on an activated mirror while contemplating a skill in which you have no ranks. As you do so, the image comes into focus, showing you a different version of yourself (presumably from an alternate reality) who is trained in that skill. The quantum energy released via the mirror briefly entangles you with this parallel self. Until the next time you take a full night’s rest, you can attempt one check with the chosen skill as if you had a number of ranks in that skill equal to your level. For that same period of time, the first time you roll a natural 20 for a skill check in a skill you are trained in, you must reroll that check and take the second result.

NEUROLINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING

Neurolinguistic programming is the use of spoken or written language to “program” a listener without their own knowledge. It is, in essence, reliable and complex subliminal messaging, and the field has expanded through a strange convergence of two very different streams of research. Among civilian anthropologists, there is an ongoing search for a so-called “Ur-Common,” a theoretical first language from which all other languages in the galaxy are ultimately derived. This thesis would seem nonsensical in a universe without magic and gods, where parallel development of language among species separated by light-years was the norm. However, in a galaxy where deities have interstellar reach and a vested interest in sharing their sacred texts from world to world, the anthropologists posit that there was, at one time, only a single language—spoken by the gods and their servants, then passed down to mortal species. This field of study has been pioneered



MULTIVERSE MIRROR

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by **Xekika** (NG male shirren), a scholar teaching at the Qabarat University of Xenoarcheology and Xenoanthropology.

The second strand of research leading to advances in neurolinguistic programming is sponsored by military research and development embedding coded transmissions into elements of popular media, such as advertisements, songs, and children's shows. The goal of these R&D teams is to "activate" covert agents placed in civilian population through something as innocuous as a holo vid commercial or jingle. Ideally, these covert agents would not even be aware of their own programming; they would perform their programmed task and then return to deep cover with no memory of the actions they took while activated. The success of these programs has been limited; the extensive conditioning required for covert agents to respond to such subliminal commands is so thorough and deep-rooted that it leaves the subject mentally traumatized. Hellknight commander **Telsa Holagin** (LE female human soldier) has had the most success, and is reputedly in control of dozens of agents throughout the Pact Worlds trained in lethal hand to hand combat but completely unaware of their own nature as Hellknight thralls.

The convergence of these two efforts has led to the development of an artificial coded language that attempts to emulate the theoretical characteristics of Ur-Common, the theorized origin language. The phonemes of this coded language are not simply heard; when a sapient brain perceives words spoken in this code, the language reacts with the creature's physiology and brain, stimulating obedience. Advocates of neurolinguistic programming insist Vox, as this artificial language is called, taps into the shared genetic code of all sapient species, mimicking obedience compelled by gods among their earliest followers. Military research teams, in turn, have figured out how to conceal Vox inside ordinary Common, so that most listeners never realize they're listening to anything unusual.

Critics of neurolinguistic programming insist this entire theory is nonsense; that there is no single genetic element shared by all sapient species, let alone a shared language. If there were a "divine language," it would be based on Celestial, Infernal, or some other language of the planes, not Common. This criticism has been bolstered by the fact that no proponent of neurolinguistic programming has been able to reliably replicate the obedience supposedly compelled by Vox or a theoretical Ur-Common. But scholars and military intelligence personnel insist the language is simply too complex and subtle for most creatures to speak. Paranoid citizens of the Pact Worlds have begun to insist on speaking in local and species languages, out of mistrust of Common, which has threatened a slow-down in interstellar trade while also boosting the appreciation of local customs and cultures.

VOICE ENCODER

There are signs of progress in this field, however. While the sapient mind has proven unable to learn the layered

inflections of Vox, especially when concealed inside Common, it is possible to program computers that, when granted partial control over the speaker's throat and voice, can speak in a way that seems to prove the Ur-Common theory.

VOICE ENCODER

SYSTEM
Throat

AUGMENTATION CYBERNETIC

MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE
Primal	4	2,250
Sophisticate	11	27,500

A voice encoder, often simply called a voxbox, is a cybernetic augmentation of your throat. When activated, the device takes control of your voice, speaking instructions in the artificial language known as Vox. This instruction is concealed inside a conventional Common phrase. A primal voice encoder allows you to use *command* as a spell-like ability. A sophisticate voice encoder allows you to use *suggestion* as a spell-like ability. Using a voice encoder is a standard action. You can use a voice encoder once per day, though you can spend 1 Resolve Point to use it again immediately.

Before you can use a voice encoder, it must be programmed at a computer that can communicate with the voxbox wirelessly, through a datajack, or some other direct means. Programming a voxbox takes 1 minute. You program the device with the specific command or suggestion, as well as the Common phrase in which the instruction is hidden. (For example, the suggestion "Kill Raia Danviri" might be hidden behind the phrase, "I'm from the Stewards. Let me show you my badge.") Until the voice encoder is reprogrammed, it can be used only to give the chosen command or suggestion, which is always concealed within the same Common phrase.

TIME CONTROL

In a galaxy so defined by the broken histories resulting from the presence of the Gap, it's natural that many have sought to better understand principles related to controlling or manipulating the flow of time. Primary among them is the fringe field of time control, often referred to as chronomanipulation, which encompasses exploration into time travel, the absence of time, temporarily stopping or distorting time, and several other similar topics. Many who support multiverse theory also believe that the Gap was a quantum ripple effect caused by Drift technology. They believe one of the earliest uses of a Drift engine tore out a piece of the Dimension of Time, and the resulting catastrophe caused the universal period of amnesia, and perhaps entangled their timeline with those of alternate universes.

The most prevalent theory that is core to understanding chronomanipulation posits that the Gap may be the only known instance of time entanglement in the history of the galaxy and thus should be studied. However, it is next to impossible to study that which resists categorization, so a few scientists have theorized it might be possible to replicate, albeit on a smaller scale, the excision of a piece

of the Dimension of Time via Drift technology they believed caused the Gap. This conjecture has been the subject of great debate, often shifting from whether it would be possible to whether it should ever be attempted. Opponents of Drift-event chronomanipulation call it “temporal ripping” for short, to derogatorily signify at a glance what they feel are real dangers posed by meddling with forces not many fully understand. Supporters of extraplanar conservation claim that attempting to direct the effect Drift engines have on other planes is reckless and short-sighted, and could potentially result in a catastrophic event. In particular, the Xenowarden Circle of Keepers has issued several public statements condemning any practical experimentation of chronomanipulation, and there have been reports of Greenguards and Wildknights harassing and attacking scientific vessels equipped with prototypes of this technology. The priests of Triune theorize that increased reports of time dimensionals (*Alien Archive* 3 117) on the Material Plane are the result of some group successfully testing their theories.

Other leading thinkers in the field of chronomanipulation prefer to examine possibilities for time travel and time manipulation that seem far less risky than relying on manipulating extraplanar rifts. An optical engineer residing on Absalom Station named **Taliskal Nerssk** (LN host shirren) has suggested that the key to traveling back in time may be the development of light-speed capable vessels that could “ride backwards” along the photon trails left by the movement of stars over thousands of years. To attempt to “see” such trails and validate this theory, Taliskal and other scientists have attempted to bathe stars in electromagnetic fields. So far, these photonic experiments have done little more than attract the usually unwanted attention of ravais (*Alien Archive* 2 106) who reside within the stars being experimented upon. Not all instances of these interactions have been antagonistic, as some researchers of light-based methods of chronomanipulation have reported working in collaboration with these fey to better understand the phenomenon.

TEMPORAL RIPPER

A temporal ripper is a complex technological device the size of a common vehicle motor, designed to interface with a ship's Drift engine. These prototypes were constructed largely as an experiment to test whether or not temporal manipulation could be achieved by directing the Drift engine to specifically target the Dimension of Time. The resulting temporal energy is stored within the temporal ripper and can be activated to produce a short burst of what some scientists call “anti-time.”

Installing a temporal ripper within or removing one from a starship's Drift engine requires a successful Engineering check (DC = 10 + 5 × the Drift engine's engine rating); each attempt takes 1d4 days. A temporal ripper costs 35 Build Points and consumes 50 PCU.

With a temporal ripper installed, a crew member can attempt an Engineering check to open the device to temporal energy when the starship engages its Drift engine to enter or exit the Drift (DC = 15 + 1-1/2 × the starship's tier). This check can't be attempted if the temporal ripper has already been charged. Succeeding at this check charges the temporal ripper with temporal energy, causing the ripper's containment unit to emit a crimson glow. However, by attempting this skill check, there is a 25% chance the Drift engine opens a planar tear near the starship no matter where it is. To determine the effect of the planar tear, roll 1d4 on the table below. Many of the following effects worsen depending on whether the result of the Engineering check was a failure, failed by 5 or more, or failed by 10 or more.

1D4	EFFECT
1	A pulse of electromagnetic energy issues from the tear. Each battery aboard the starship is drained of 1d6 charges (2d6 charges if a failure, 2d6+4 if failed by 5 or more, and 2d6+8 if failed by 10 or more).
2	Extraplanar debris from the tear strikes the starship (phasing through any shields), applying the glitching critical damage effect to one of the starship's systems, randomly determined (the critical damage effect is increased to malfunctioning if failed by 5 or more and wrecked if failed by 10 or more).
3	A flare of cosmic energy bursts from the tear, exposing everyone aboard the ship to low radiation (medium if a failure, high if failed by 5 or more, and severe if failed by 10 or more).
4	A wave of mystical force from the tear engulfs the starship. All hybrid items aboard the vessel gain the broken condition.

During starship combat, a crew member in the engineering role can spend an action during the engineering phase to activate a charged temporal ripper to release its stored energy, creating a massive wave of anti-time; to all crew members aboard the temporal ripper's ship, the other starships seem to move in slow motion. For the remainder of the current round of starship combat, each of the other crew members can take one extra action in their role and can take the same action twice. In addition, the pilot of the temporal ripper's starship automatically gets to move their starship after any other starships in the combat (as though they had rolled the highest on the opposed Piloting check). If more than one starship in the combat has a temporal ripper and they are activated during the same round, the pilots of the effected starships roll opposed Piloting checks at the beginning of the helm phase, comparing those results to each other (though these pilots all move their starships after vessels not affected by temporal rippers).

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ALIEN ARCHIVES

Local superstitions on the frozen world of Mobulen tell of a three-hooved “devil” that appears in the night and moves inexorably in a single direction, charging over rocky terrain and walking straight up the sides of buildings. Bad luck and worse fall upon those who stand in the creature’s way, especially those who wear heavy metal armor. Records show that multiple Mobulen devil sightings have occurred simultaneously across the planet, with each creature moving toward magnetic north. Unfortunately scholars have yet to determine the true nature of these migrations.

—Excerpt from *Galactic Tales and Legends* by
Dr. Borogrand Traceter

GRAY BOUNDER

CR
4XP
1,200

NE Small aberration (gray)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 30 ft.; **Perception** +10**DEFENSE****EAC** 14; **KAC** 16**Fort** +6; **Ref** +6; **Will** +5**Defensive Abilities** phase**HP** 50**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** bite +12 (1d6+7 P plus psychic terror) or
tail +12 (1d4+7 P plus psychic terror)**Offensive Abilities** pounce**STATISTICS****Str** +3; **Dex** +5; **Con** +1; **Int** -3; **Wis** +0; **Cha** -1**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Athletics +10, Sense Motive +10,
Stealth +10**Languages** Aklo (can't speak any language); telepathy 30 ft.**ECOLOGY****Environment** any**Organization** solitary, pair, or conspiracy (3-8)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Phase (Su)** Gray bounders exist slightly out of phase with the Material Plane. A gray boulder can pass through walls or material objects (but not corporeal creatures) if it begins and ends its turn outside a wall or obstacle.

In addition, a gray boulder benefits from a 20% miss chance against attacks and effects targeting it directly and takes only half damage from area effects. Force effects, however, function normally against a gray boulder.

Pounce (Ex) When a gray boulder charges, it can make a full attack in place of the normal melee attack.**Psychic Terror (Su)** An aggressive gray boulder infects its prey with psychic fear. A creature hit by a gray boulder's melee attacks must succeed at a DC 13 Will saving throw or become shaken for 1d4 rounds. A target that fails the saving throw effect becomes immune to any gray boulder's terror for 1 hour or until any gray boulder scores a critical hit against the target. This is a mind-affecting, emotion, and fear effect.

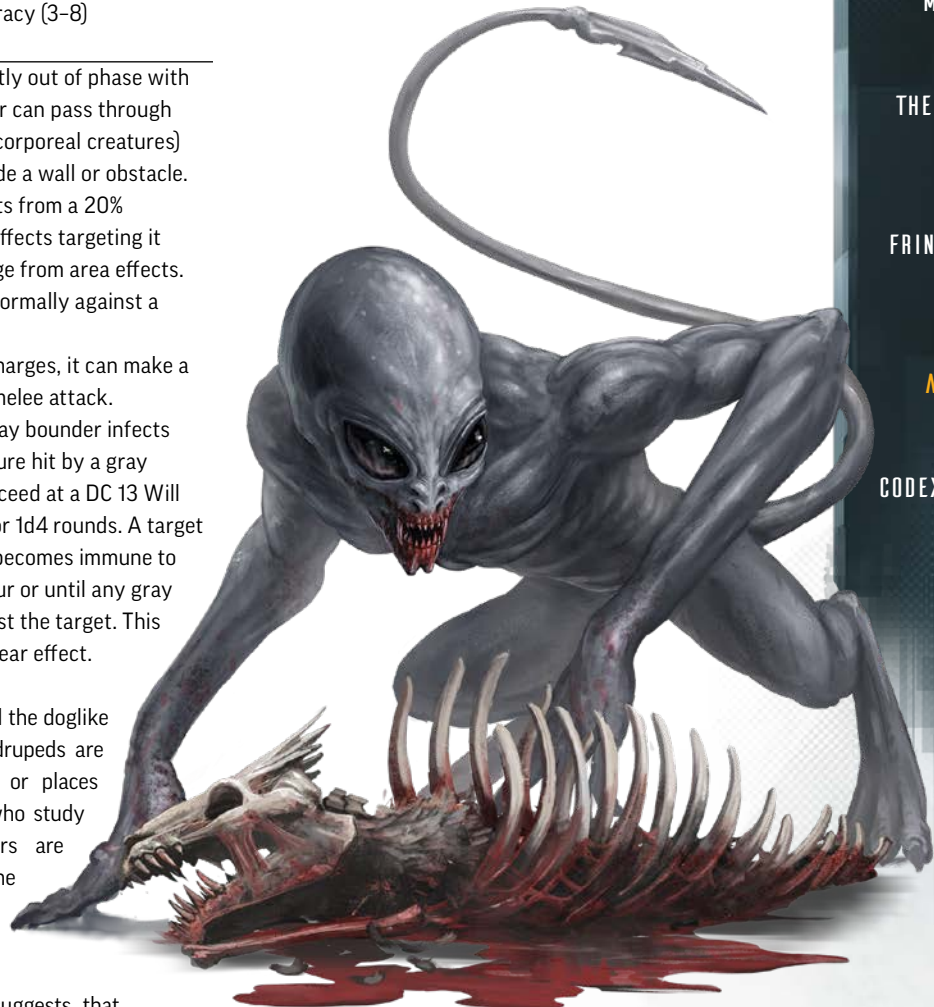
Few know of what some theorists call the doglike gray bounders, but these alien quadrupeds are rarely encountered far from grays or places where grays have been. Scientists who study grays theorize that gray bounders are native to the gray home world. The species are similar and share genetic material. While specific bounders might show signs of augmentation or bioengineering, some evidence suggests that

bounders were naturally domesticated by grays for their own nefarious purposes.

Gray bounders are more cunning than dogs, though, and far more malevolent. Unlike their gray masters, gray bounders are muscular, fast, and agile. They move with little of the deliberation a gray normally employs. Instead, gray bounders are jittery and in near-constant motion, as though endlessly looking for a position from which to leap on potential prey. When they stalk or strike prey, gray bounders can be cruel, toying with targets for as long as possible before finishing them off.

Gray bounders can't speak or make vocalizations of any kind, much like grays. These monstrosities are, however, clever enough to carry out complex plans and improvise based on what they know of their masters' inscrutable plans.

A typical gray boulder stands 3 feet tall at the shoulder and weighs 90 pounds.



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KUNNID

CR
5

XP
1,600



N Large magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +11

DEFENSE

EAC 17; **KAC** 19

Fort +9; **Ref** +9; **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., spider climb

Melee gore +15 (1d6+10 P; critical bleed 1d4)

Ranged magnetic beam +12 (1d8+5 B plus shift [DC 13])

Offensive Abilities magnetic beam, relentless

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +3; **Con** +2; **Int** -4; **Wis** +2; **Cha** +0

HP 72

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +11, Survival +16 (+24 to orienteering)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or migration (3-20)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Magnetic Beam (Su) As a ranged attack, a kunnid can emit a crushing magnetic beam with a range increment of 20 feet.

Relentless (Ex) A kunnid can charge without taking the normal penalties to its attack roll and AC and can charge through difficult terrain.

Shift (Su) If a kunnid hits with its magnetic beam attack, it deals normal damage. If the kunnid's attack roll hits the target's KAC + 4, the target must succeed at a DC 13 Fortitude save or be moved 5 feet in a direction of the kunnid's choosing. This distance increases to 10 feet if the kunnid's attack roll hits the target's KAC + 13. The kunnid can't move the target past an obstacle. If the target is wearing, wielding, or carrying any metallic objects (including starmetals), it takes a -4 penalty to its save.

Rarely seen and frequently misunderstood, kunnids are nomadic creatures that wander planetoids across the galaxy in an inexorable journey toward areas where the planetoids' external magnetic field is strongest. A kunnid has three legs with hooved feet, irregular hornlike growths protruding from its skull, and dozens of prehensile tendrils that dangle from its swollen body. The average kunnid stands 10 to 12 feet tall at the shoulder and weighs 1,200 pounds. Many other species on these worlds never glimpse a kunnid in the flesh; frequently, the only evidence of a kunnid's presence is odd, cloven-hooved tracks marching in straight lines around settlements. Locals frequently attribute these tracks to cryptids and incorporate them into their superstitions.

Many researchers believe that kunnids were created by another intelligent species as living tools for exploration. Others maintain that kunnids belong to an independent lost culture. Some even think that kunnids are the spirits of deceased explorers. With few hard facts about how or why they appear on a world, kunnids' existence has fueled many conspiracy theories.

When on a planet, kunnids travel relentlessly in straight lines toward magnetic north. They are generally peaceful creatures unless their journey is obstructed or confused by unnatural magnetic fields, at which point they lash out. Once at a world's magnetic north pole, kunnids establish lairs and mate. However, this never seems to result in an increase in kunnid populations, as groups of kunnids often mysteriously disappear overnight.



LINYF

CR
3XP
800

N Large plant

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense (heat), low-light vision;**Perception** +8**DEFENSE****HP** 38**EAC** 14; **KAC** 16**Fort** +7; **Ref** +5; **Will** +2**Immunities** fire, plant immunities**Weaknesses** cold**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft., climb 10 ft.**Melee** fiber lash +11 (1d6+4 S plus fibrous growth and grab)**Offensive Abilities** silken snare (DC 12)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**STATISTICS****Str** +1; **Dex** +4; **Con** +2; **Int** -2; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Stealth +13, Survival +8**ECOLOGY****Environment** any temperate**Organization** solitary, growth (3–5), or colony (6–300)**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Silken Snare (Ex) As a move action, a linyf can secrete sticky, threadlike fibers in a 10-foot-radius burst. This area counts as difficult terrain for all creatures except for the linyf, and the linyf gains a +4 circumstance bonus to attack rolls to grab or maintain a grapple on a creature in the area of the silken snare. Creatures exposed to a linyf's silken snare who aren't wearing protective gear (such as armor) must attempt a DC 12 Fortitude save to avoid contracting fibrous growth. A linyf's silken snares remain until it moves.

FIBROUS GROWTH**Type** disease (injury); **Save** Fortitude DC 12**Track** physical; **Frequency** 1/day**Effect** no latent state**Cure** 2 consecutive saves

Linyfs are invasive plants with unusual life cycles. Their translucent seeds travel alongside charged particles with the solar winds that move across the void of space, frequently attaching to starships or falling in a near-invisible rain onto a planet. In the presence of light, moisture, and heat, the seeds germinate into wide masses of silky strands with solid cores of plant matter. Linyfs are driven to grow and reproduce. They are highly susceptible to cold, and significant drops in temperature often kill budding linyf colonies.

A linyf is a collection of thick, translucent vines that resemble tentacles, surrounding

a central mass. These vines sprout sticky fibers that can transmit a deadly disease. Curious creatures who inspect a linyf lying in wait notice that it radiates a pleasant warmth but is extraordinarily sticky to the touch. The vines then reach out to slash at the victim, who soon discovers that their wounds eventually close up, though not as a result of the healing process. The affliction initially causes transparent fibers to sprout from the creature's skin, suturing the damaged tissue. But after a period of sickness and constant itching as more threads burst out of the creature's body, the victim typically falls comatose and dies.

Despite the aggressive affliction their fibers induce, linyfs aren't carnivorous and receive their nutrition through photosynthesis, like most other plants. Several months after maturation, a healthy linyf produces a few dozen seeds that it propels into the atmosphere with amazing force and speed. Most of these seeds return to the surface of the same world (with a few catching currents of wind), but a few achieve exit velocity and go on to infest other planets.



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WORLDS

CR
7

XP
3,200



N Large ooze (shapechanger)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 60 ft., sightless;

Perception +15

HP 100

EAC 19; **KAC** 20

Fort +12; **Ref** +4; **Will** +4

Immunities ooze immunities

Speed 20 ft.

Melee slam +15 (1d8+11 B)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Str +4; **Dex** +2; **Con** +5; **Int** —; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Athletics +15, Bluff +20, Disguise +20, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +15

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language)

Other Abilities mimic corpse, mindless

Environment any

Organization solitary

Mimic Corpse (Ex) A replicant ooze can engulf the adjacent corpse of a Large or smaller creature as a full action. Over the course of the following 10 minutes, the ooze consumes the corpse, apart from its brain (or similar organ), while shaping its own biomass into a replica of the creature. After this time, the replicant ooze looks like an exact duplicate of the dead creature, though without any major visible trauma, and compressing any excess ooze material within itself. While in this form, the replicant ooze loses the blindsense, mindless, and sightless abilities and gains the consumed creature's size, reach, natural attacks, non-magical move speeds, languages (as well as ability to speak all languages it knows), and memories, as well as an Intelligence modifier equal to that of the creature consumed minus 1. Also, the replicant ooze has the skills the creature had in life, using the creature's total skill bonus with a –5 penalty. This ability otherwise functions as change shape. When a replicant ooze loses more than half of its total Hit Points, it immediately reverts back to its Large ooze form. When this happens, the ooze can't use this ability again until it regains all its Hit Points.

Grays bioengineered the first replicant oozes during their first attempts to create full clones. While the grays found that the protoplasm could be shaped into the forms of sapient creatures through liberal use of electric shocks, the resultant shape was essentially still an ooze, requiring actual brains to be able to function. Once the grays incorporated brains into the protoplasm, they realized that the altered oozes took on the personality and memories of the "donors." Grays then began to use these oozes as quick, albeit messy, ways to replace subjects who accidentally perished from too-rigorous experimentation.

A replicant ooze requires a fresh brain (or similar organ) to be able to believably impersonate a victim, usually requiring the ooze to consume the corpse within minutes after it has died. When a replicant ooze duplicates a person, it often doesn't realize it is an impostor and attempts to live out the victim's daily life. After a while, though, the victim's friends and family begin to suspect that something is wrong, as the replicant ooze is usually less intelligent and socially adept than the original.

Though replicant oozes are eventually found out if left out in the field for too long, gray agents use them as stopgap measures. Eventually, grays usually abduct the replicant ooze and replace it with a true clone, using memory extraction and implantation technology to copy any memories the replicant ooze might have formed into the clone's brain.



SCOURING SWARM

CR
2XP
600

N Fine aberration (swarm)

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense (organic material) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +7**DEFENSE**

HP 26

EAC 13; **KAC** 15**Fort** +6; **Ref** +4; **Will** +1**Defensive Abilities** swarm defenses; **Immunities** swarm immunities**Weaknesses** vulnerable to oxygen**OFFENSE****Speed** 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (Ex, average), swim 30 ft.**Melee** swarm attack (1d4+2 A)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.**Offensive Abilities** devour organics, distraction (DC 11)**STATISTICS****Str** -2; **Dex** +4; **Con** +2; **Int** -3; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Athletics +7, Stealth +12**Other Abilities** death cloud, no breath**ECOLOGY****Environment** any**Organization** solitary or sanitation (2-6)**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Death Cloud (Ex) When a scouring swarm dies, its component creatures decompose in 1 round, leaving behind freezing neon gas. At the end of this round, all creatures within 30 feet of the scouring swarm's final position take 1d6 cold damage and gain the sickened condition for 1 minute. A successful DC 11 Fortitude save halves the damage and negates the sickened condition. Active environmental protections from armor protect against this sickened condition.

Devour Organics (Ex) A scouring swarm's swarm attack deals acid damage that harms only organic material. Entirely inorganic creatures are not harmed by a scouring swarm's attack. The environmental protections of most light and heavy armor provide no defense against a scouring swarm, but powered armor with active environmental protections protects against a scouring swarm. A scouring swarm leaves no trace of organic material in any square it moves through. It can completely consume a Large or smaller corpse by spending 1d4 rounds in the corpse's space, leaving behind only the creature's inorganic gear.

Vulnerable to Oxygen (Ex) A scouring swarm cannot survive in atmospheres that are at least 10% oxygen (this includes atmospheres that most species consider

breathable, including thick, thin, and some toxic atmospheres). A scouring swarm in such an environment takes 1d6 damage at the beginning of each of its turns. In an atmosphere of 100% oxygen, this damage is doubled.

Each component of a scouring swarm is a slimy, silver gnat with three hook-like legs, a short spout for spraying acidic digestive compounds, and a long proboscis used to slurp up liquefied food. Alone, it is a mere irritant that rapidly perishes in a breathable atmosphere. But despite having no trace of reproductive biology, when two or more are left alone in an oxygen-free environment with plenty of food to consume, they rapidly multiply into a swarm of several thousand creatures.

The swarm appears as a roiling cloud of glittering silver foam, consuming massive amounts of organic material in minutes. Grays—who are believed to have created these creatures—use canisters full of scouring swarms to erase evidence of their presence, even destroying microscopic traces of DNA.



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11BS

TROLL, QUANTUM

CR
6

XP
2,400



CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsense (scent) 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, radiation sense 60 ft.; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

EAC 17; **KAC** 19

Fort +10; **Ref** +8; **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities fast healing 5, spawn polyp, versatile regeneration 5 (see text); **Immunities** radiation

HP 80

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (see spooky action)

Melee bite +14 (1d8+11 P; critical wound [DC 14]) or claw +14 (1d6+11 S; critical wound [DC 14])

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (see spooky action)

Offensive Abilities spooky action, two-headed maul

STATISTICS

Str +5; **Dex** +2; **Con** +5; **Int** -2; **Wis** -1; **Cha** -2

Skills Athletics +18, Intimidate +13

Languages Common

Other Abilities tracking (scent)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or gang (2-4)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fast Healing (Ex) A quantum troll exposed to radiation—whether from an attack, a hazard, or other effect—benefits from its fast healing while exposed or for 1 round after a brief exposure, such as an attack.

Spawn Polyp (Ex) If a quantum troll takes a critical hit while its regeneration is functional, a troll polyp (page 61) tears free of the damaged area and lands in an open space adjacent to the troll. This polyp starts with Hit Points equal to the damage the critical hit dealt.

Spooky Action (Su) A quantum troll exists in several possible quantum states at once. It threatens squares within 30 feet of it. In addition, as a move action, it can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see, or as part of a full action, it can teleport 15 feet. The troll must teleport at least once per round if it can. A creature able to see the invisible, or with blindsight or *true seeing*, can make an attack of opportunity against the troll when it leaves its space as it teleports if the troll is within reach in its staring space or its arrival space.

Two-Headed Maul (Ex) If a quantum troll hits the same target with two claw attacks or with one claw attack and one bite attack during the same turn, it can attempt another bite attack against that target with a -4 penalty to the attack roll.

Versatile Regeneration (Ex) See page 61.

Quantum trolls were the result of gray experiments intended to create highly mobile and resilient guardians. In these experiments, gray scientists severed trolls' limbs and placed the trolls and their limbs in a state of superposition, hoping that new trolls would grow from the severed limbs while the origin trolls regenerates new limbs. These trials only partially succeeded, resulting in the creation of quantum trolls and troll polyps (page 61). Quantum trolls are two-headed trolls that exists in multiple quantum states, able to skirt the laws of reality by teleporting erratically.

A typical quantum troll is about 13 feet tall and weighs approximately 2,500 pounds.



TROLL POLYP

CR
3XP
800

CE Small aberration (giant)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +8**DEFENSE****EAC** 14; **KAC** 14**Fort** +5; **Ref** +5; **Will** +4**Defensive Abilities** versatile regeneration 5 (see text)**OFFENSE****Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft.**Melee** versatile slam +11 (1d6+7 B, P, or S plus biomass entanglement)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**STATISTICS****Str** +4; **Dex** +2; **Con** +1; **Int** -4; **Wis** -1; **Cha** -3**Skills** Athletics +8, Stealth +8**Other Abilities** compression**ECOLOGY****Environment** any**Organization** solitary, pair, or rout (3-10)**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Biomass Entanglement (Ex) A troll polyp's slam splatters regenerating biomass onto that target. The target must succeed at a DC 12 Reflex saving throw (DC 14 if the troll polyp scored a critical hit) or become entangled until it escapes by succeeding at a DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics check made as a move action. The biomass also releases its target if the mass takes 5 damage from one attack (AC 10).

Versatile Regeneration (Ex) A troll polyp's regeneration stops functioning for 1 round only if the polyp takes simultaneous damage from more than one energy damage type during the same turn or takes damage of three or more energy types in a given round. If one foe readies an action to attack the polyp when another foe does, the two attacks are treated as occurring on the same turn for this ability's purposes.

Versatile Slam (Ex) When a troll polyp hits with its slam attack, it can deal one of the following kinetic damage types: bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing.

A troll polyp is a mass of tissue with predatory awareness, resulting from horrific gray experiments intended to create trolls that not only would regenerate severed limbs, but whose severed limbs would also grow into new trolls. These experiments only partially succeeded, resulting in the creation of quantum trolls (page 60) and troll polyps, ooze-like creatures that can operate independently of the troll they came from. Some trolls or polyps exposed to strange energies or gates

to other planes, especially the Abyss, form tumors that rip free as a new troll polyp every 2 to 3 weeks. Such polyps instinctively avoid attacking their progenitor or one another but otherwise show no loyalty.

Troll polyps are barely sentient, lacking a life cycle or cognitive functions. They are hungry and aggressive, with little motivation beyond the desires to kill, eat, and assimilate organic matter into themselves, and they smash anything that seems to be an artificial construction. Troll polyps mindlessly attack life-forms that are whole and ordered, and they also are driven to break technological objects, although their motivations, if any, are unknown. Without targets to destroy, troll polyps seek food and warm nooks to cram themselves into.

A typical troll polyp is 3 feet tall and weighs 45 pounds.



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CODEx OF WORLDS

STOPGAP

Port of Last Resort

Diameter: $\times 1/14$; **Mass:** $\times 1/2,000$

Gravity: $\times 1/10$

Location: Near Space

Atmosphere: None

Day: 9 hours; **Year:** 1,701 days

Stopgap is a dwarf planet in orbit around Foergrim, an yellow star in Near Space. The Foergrim system has no full planets, only several clouds of planetoids and asteroid belts that form rings and vague orbital clouds around the star. Stopgap is the largest object in the system—it's just barely big enough to round itself out through gravitational forces. It has no atmosphere or native life of its own, but it does contain the manufactured corridors and chambers of a small base.

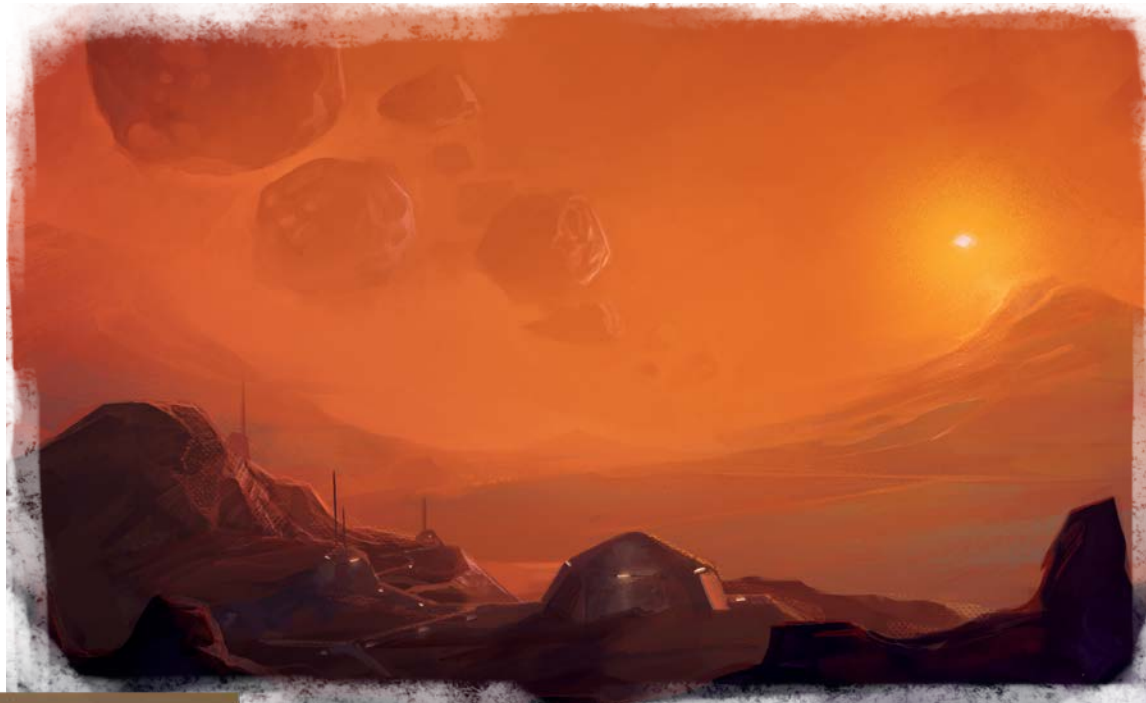
The Foergrim system has just enough nearby Drift beacons to qualify as being in Near Space, although it is much farther from the Pact Worlds than most Near Space locations. However, the asteroids and planetoids fill the system have attracted the attention of mining companies. Every few years, a miner working the Foergrim system will discover a vein of starmetal in an asteroid, and the subsequent "asteroid rush" brings in hundreds of independent prospectors. An asteroid rush typically lasts only 3 to 6 months, but the prospectors lured in by the initial rush often discover several smaller metal veins, resulting in a semipermanent population in the system that mines out these less lucrative deposits over time.

Stopgap was the first location within the system in which miners discovered significant starmetal deposits, which resulted

in long-term occupation by miners from across the galaxy. Stopgap became an well-known exporter of djezet, as well as tiny amounts of horacalcum. To support the starmetal harvest, mining companies collaborated to construct airtight facilities within the planet that could support a few thousand residents. Now, even though the starmetal veins in Stopgap have been mined out, the base there still supports a few hundred permanent residents, with the population growing temporarily when an asteroid rush attracts visitors to the system.

There is no official law in Stopgap, though the church of Abadar established a chapel to promote the idea of creating a system-wide government. The base is now almost entirely owned by the Druethil Mining Company, which is itself owned by Ichihara Holdings, though the parent company mostly leaves Stopgap to its own devices. Because of this anarchic situation, Stopgap almost always hosts a few mercenary groups on Druethil's payroll, often trading room, board, and starship repairs for short-term contracts. Everyone is welcome at Stopgap as long as they don't cause trouble and pay their bills.

The combination of a no-questions-asked policy, low levels of law enforcement, and millions of planetoids that can host crude bases of operations makes the Foergrim system a popular waypoint for pirates, scoundrels, mercenaries, smugglers, and various criminals. The system is extremely difficult to scan, and asteroid prospectors often report flickering sensor readings and even claim to see gray flying saucers in the denser parts of its many asteroid belts. The system's relative security and obscurity also make it a popular location for clandestine labs and secret vaults, which are considered far more likely to be the source of unidentified ships.



NEXT MONTH

DECEIVERS' MOON

By Jason Tondro

As the PCs and their new Steward allies begin the trek back to the Pact Worlds, they realize their previous captors might still be after them. Once the heroes defeat this hidden menace, they pick up hints that their newfound friends aren't what they seem. Even if the PCs escape from the false base, they learn that they have infiltrated another Steward installation!

THE INSIDIOUS REPTOIDS

By Jason Tondro

Anyone could secretly be a disguised member of the reptoid faction known as the Unseen, but no one is certain of where they came from or what they want!

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STARSHIPS OF THE UNSEEN

By Diego Valdez

From invisible gray saucers to shape-changing reptoid chameleon-ships, the factions of the Unseen have developed incredible technology unknown to the Pact Worlds. Learn about the dangerous technology of these strange vessels.

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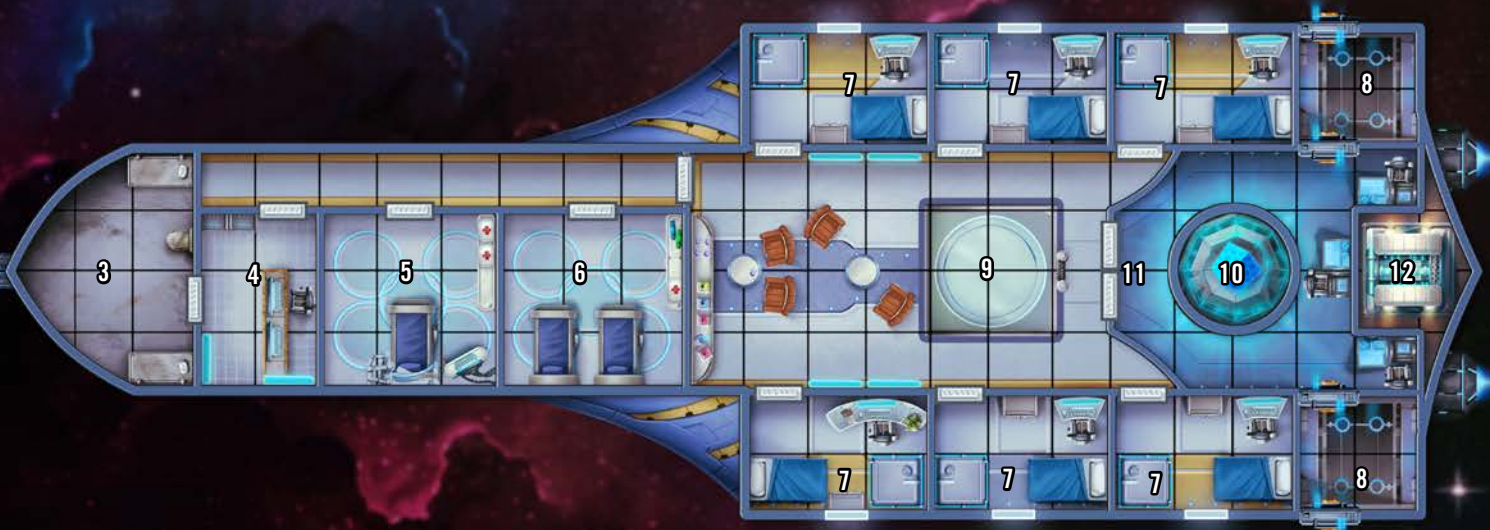
- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Bridge | 7. Crew's quarters |
| a. Captain's chair | 8. Airlock |
| b. Engineering station | 9. Lift |
| c. Pilot's station | 10. Power core |
| d. Gunner's station | 11. Engine room |
| e. Science officer's station | 12. Drift engine |
| 2. Turret | 13. Galley |
| 3. Brig | 14. Storage |
| 4. Security station | 15. Guest quarters |
| 5. Operating room | |
| 6. Medical bay | |



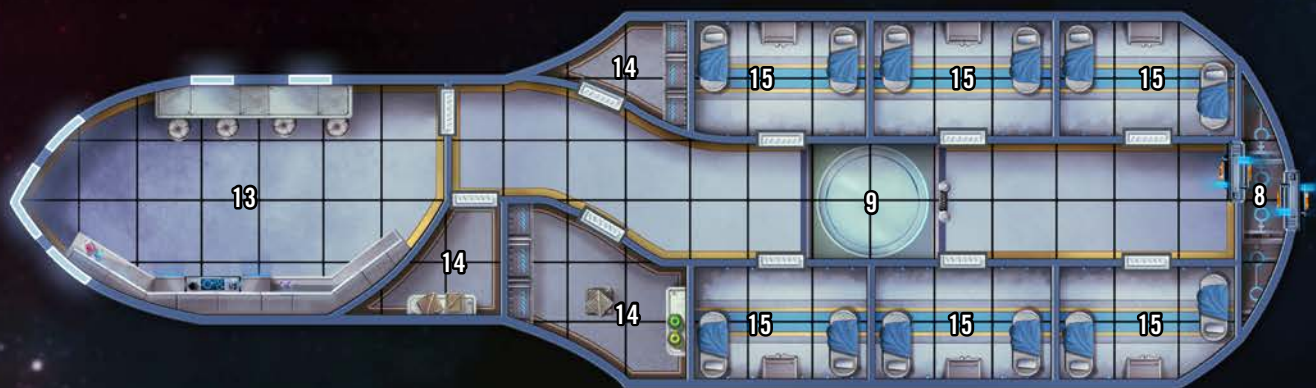
TOP DECKS



MAIN DECK



LOWER DECK



FORWARD

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



DON'T TRUST YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Trapped in a bizarre research facility that's under attack, the heroes must battle against weird technology and experiments run amok. Even after they are aided by elite Steward agents in their escape, the heroes are left with more questions in need of answers!

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