

STARFINDER



THE THREEFOLD CONSPIRACY
ADVENTURE PATH

THE CRADLE INFESTATION

BY VANESSA HOSKINS



INHERITORWORKS CRUSADER

TIER 9

Large destroyer

Speed 8; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 1

AC 23; **TL** 22

HP 190; **DT** —; **CT** 38

Shields heavy 240 (forward 60, port 60, starboard 60, aft 60)

Attack (Forward) heavy antimatter missile launcher (10d10; 20 hexes), persistent particle beam (10d6; 20 hexes)

Attack (Aft) gyrolaser (1d8; 5 hexes)

Attack (Turret) laser net (2d6; 5 hexes)

Power Core Pulse Prismatic (300 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** advanced long-range sensors, crew quarters (luxurious), mk 5 armor, mk 5 defenses, mk 1 tetranode computer; **Expansion Bays** brig^{PW}, cargo hold, life boats (4)

Modifiers +1 to any 4 checks per round, +4 Computers (sensors only); **Complement** 8 (minimum 6, maximum 20)

CREW

Captain Diplomacy +17 (9 ranks), Engineering (9 ranks) +17, gunnery +15 (9th level), Intimidate (9 ranks) +22

Engineers (2) Engineering +17 (9 ranks)

Gunners (2) gunnery +15 (9th level)

Magic Officer^{COM} Mysticism +17 (9 ranks)

Pilot Piloting +17 (9 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +21 (9 ranks)

Inheritorworks, a subsidiary of Sanjaval Spaceflight Systems, specializes in starships sold almost exclusively to the church of Iomedae and the Knights of Golarion. While most of these vessels are designed to work in larger fleet formations, Crusader-class starships are designed to house up to eight knights for long-range missions where support is limited. Crews are given more-comfortable living arrangements in individualized apartments split across two decks, as they're expected to stay on mission for months at a time. Rather than take up space with repair bays and science labs, crews keep spare weapons and stockpiled munitions in the cargo hold so they can spend their time focused on the goals at hand. A brig ensures that any criminals they capture can be properly detained.

In keeping with the majestic and intimidating nature of the faith, the entire ship has been designed to look like the Iomedae sword, complete with starburst design. The main weapon systems are both forward-facing along the "blade" of the ship: a persistent particle beam and heavy antimatter missile launcher to pack the biggest punch against the hardest targets. The starburst corona houses a laser net capable of protecting the starship from incoming tracking weapons, and the "cross-guard" section holds the ship's bridge.

When Knights of Golarion are given the title of knight-errant and captaincy of their own ship, they often choose and customize a Crusader to benefit their hand-picked crew. Its relatively flexible design enables a crew to ensure the ship feels like home during the long months away as they enforce their law throughout the galaxy.

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 paizo.com/sfrd.

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Pact Worlds

PW

Armory

AR

Character Operations Manual

COM



ON THE COVER

Verifier Ki, depicted here in striking detail by Tomasz Chistowski, is an agent of Confluence, the merged governing consciousness of barathu society.



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THE THREEFOLD CONSPIRACY ADVENTURE PATH

THE CRADLE INFESTATION

PART 1: BIO-RESEARCH BREAK-IN

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In an attempt to stop the further spread of a sentient body-snatching fungus, the PCs must infiltrate a heavily guarded research facility. There they learn that this infestation might not be limited to these laboratories.

PART 2: A QUIET PLACE TO DIE

21

The heroes visit Laoe Araae, a hospice community for terminally ill barathus, to intercept a threat to an important government official targeted for dycepskian infection. As they try to rescue the high-ranking barathu, dycepskian hosts ambush the heroes. To make matters worse, gray agents also appear on the scene.

PART 3: POST MORTEM

28

In order to repair their starship and leave Laoe Araae, the PCs must hunt down the grays' secret observation station under the hospice. In the process, they uncover an even greater threat to the Pact Worlds.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"The Cradle Infestation" is designed for four characters.

9

The PCs begin this adventure at 9th level.

10

The PCs should reach 10th level during their escape from Laoe Araae.

11

The PCs should be 11th level by the end of the adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Approximately 30 years ago, the dycepskians—a species of fungal entities who only gain sentience when they infect other sentient creatures—somehow entered the Pact Worlds system and took over the Wise Council, a group of 14 shirren scientists who lived and studied aboard the Zeffrac Science Platform orbiting Liavara's moon, Nchak. The station was dedicated to all manner of projects, but the dycepskian hosts focused much of their research on barathu biology, as it is highly resistant to dycepskian infection.

Meanwhile, the grays—silent witnesses to just about everything—noticed the change in the Wise Council's behavior and soon came to see the dycepskians as a threat to their own unknown goals. By subtly manipulating scientists at Diorama Research and Development, an independent scientific facility that is similar in many ways to Zeffrac, the grays directed the bioengineering of a fungicidal virus and released it on the dycepskians. Unfortunately, it was not only ineffective, but it also reacted poorly with other barathu pathogens. One barathu scientist whom the dycepskians had exposed to their spores also happened to have a case of tentacle mold, a common but harmless barathu fungal rash, and these vectors mutated to form a fatal contagion. The illness—dubbed the Brethedan blight—spread quickly among other barathus, nearly creating a species-wide pandemic.

The Brethedan government was able to quarantine the infected barathus to a hospice community called Laoe Araae. Though efforts continue to be made to this day toward finding a cure for the Brethedan blight, the patients at Laoe Araae are generally made as comfortable as possible before their eventual demises. Ironically, Diorama scientists perform many of these experiments at their central laboratory, unaware that the facility was an original factor in the creation of the contagion.

The dycepskian hosts at the Zeffrac Science Platform noticed the grays' attempt on their lives and began to make plans to crash the station into Nchak and secretly spread among the moon's insectile inhabitants. However, in 292 AG, before the dycepskians could do so, vigilant grays took drastic measures: they caused the platform to suffer complete decompression, killing everyone on board. The autopsy of some of the victims exposed the dycepskians to the wider Pact Worlds, though the average citizen has never even heard of them.

Years later, the dycepskian strain from the Zeffrac Science Platform resurfaced at the small biotech firm Gamut Bio on Liavara. Almost by accident, the dycepskians cracked the problem of infesting barathus and discovered a method to speed up the process in other species. The infested hosts began

by crafting a biotech augmentation that secretly implanted dycepskian mycelium in a victim's body, causing them to succumb much easier. Shortly after, the dycepskians sent an infested barathu emissary to Diorama. Claiming to have discovered a cure for the Brethedan blight, this duplicitous scientist has plans to spread the dycepskian infestation further.

PART 1: BIO-RESEARCH BREAK-IN

By the end of "The Hollow Cabal," the PCs should know about Jesara Hy Nevintsi, the prominent barathu scientist who founded Gamut Bio. Several weeks ago, Nevintsi traveled to Diorama R&D, an independent research facility on Molovis, a small moon orbiting Bretheda. The PCs should realize that the infested Nevintsi is still a threat who will likely try to spread the dycepskian contamination to other victims, including barathus.

After the PCs have left Gamut Bio, they might need some time to recuperate or buy and sell equipment. Roselight is the closest major settlement where that is possible, and the PCs' two Steward allies—the shirren Xych Vorsen and the android Ephecta—let them know that the city is safe (for now). Don't rush the PCs, but try to impress upon them the urgency of the situation. If need be, Vorsen and Ephecta can surmise the amount of damage that Nevintsi could cause (or has already caused) at Diorama's facilities, spurring the PCs to leave for Bretheda sooner rather than later.

It takes 1d6 days of Drift travel or 1d6+2 days using conventional thrusters to journey from Liavara to Bretheda.

ON THE RUN

As the PCs approach Bretheda, they receive what appears to be a mundane advertisement or unsolicited communication addressed to a specific PC. A discerning PC can see that the message actually originated from Roselight with a successful DC 30 Computers check. Once the PCs open the message, they discover a prerecorded attachment from Xych Vorsen and Ephecta.

"We hope you receive this in time," says Xych. "Though I tried to get ahead of it, news of your break-in at Gamut Bio has hit the infosphere. Some of the more reactionary news sites are calling it a terrorist act from an unknown biological purist group, and several of Gamut Bio's shareholders are playing the roles of hapless victims. A Steward task force has begun an investigation into the incident."

Ephecta interjects, "Unfortunately, most of their files—even the backups—have somehow been corrupted. Shame."

"That should buy you some time, but the Stewards aren't the only ones looking for you," says Xych. "With the backing

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of the shareholders, Nevintsi has placed a 10,000-credit bounty on each of your heads, so be on the lookout. Whatever you're doing, I hope you can discover evidence that will clear your names; we'll do the same on our end."

"Sorry for the deceptive shell of this message, but we must be careful in contacting you. Longer vids or large datafiles would get flagged. I was, though, able to enclose a low-res copy of the Traechee Memorial Laboratory, Diorama's main facility. Nevintsi likely went there," says Ephecta. "Now you are on your own." The android reaches forward to end the recording, and the screen goes dark.

In addition to this recording, the message contains a small graphics file subtly named "Parking and Directions," which shows a line-drawing blueprint for the Traechee Memorial Laboratory (see the map of area **A** on page 8). The entrances and exits are clearly marked, but the individual rooms are not labeled. A few moments later, an internal script deletes the recording from Vorsen and Ephecta to cover their tracks.

With this notification, the PCs are now aware that they're wanted criminals and will likely want to stay away from any civilized areas for the time being. This will make legitimate shopping trips difficult, but at your discretion, a PC with ties to the criminal underworld (especially one with the outlaw theme) knows where to purchase goods with credits at 20% above market price or UPBs at 10% above market price. While the PCs should be able to stock up on ammunition and other supplies if their credits are good, they should feel like they always need to look over their shoulders (if they don't already).

The heroes' best chance at clearing their names is to find Jesara Hy Nevintsi at Diorama R&D and expose the dycepskian infestation in front of credible witnesses. Unfortunately, they will be too late to stop Nevintsi from corrupting others and setting into motion a plan to infest Confluence, the barathu entity that governs Bretheda.

EVENT 1: A RIGHTEOUS BOUNTY

When Knight-Errant Krelo Danesh caught the infosphere news report about a group of biological purist terrorists, he became livid and set his outraged mind toward justice. Seven years ago, he nearly died when he took a plasma bolt to the chest. When he awoke on a Knights of Golarion hospital ship, a pair of artificial lungs, designed by prominent biotech firm Life Innovations, allowed him to breathe again.

He used his second chance at life to rededicate himself to the knighthood and received special dispensation to become a knight-errant, pursuing justice where he saw fit. He assembled a team of talented squires to join him on a quest to purge the Pact Worlds of those who would undermine peace and civility.

Danesh sees the actions of the PCs much as they have been presented to the system: radical attacks made by fanatical purists seeking to take down "Big Bio" and other augmentation firms to preserve the sanctity of a biological whole.

Feeling that he owes his life to the technological medical advancements of firms like Gamut Bio, as much as to Iomedae and the knighthood, he feels it is his responsibility to track down the PCs and bring them before the courts.

Starship Combat: Knight-Errant Krelo Danesh is convinced the PCs might attack another biotech facility. His ship, the *Shimmering Blade*, has been patrolling near the various companies around Bretheda for the past few days and is in low orbit around Molovis when the PCs approach. The *Shimmering Blade*'s science officer continually monitors long-range scans, analyzing any ship that approaches the moon. If the PC acting as science officer succeeds at a DC 23 Computers check to scan the vicinity for starships as they approach Molovis, they pick up the *Shimmering Blade*'s signature and can determine the starting orientation for their ship and Danesh's vessel at the beginning of starship combat. Otherwise, the *Shimmering Blade* gets the drop on the PCs and the GM determines the starting orientation for each starship, as Danesh orders his crew to engage. This starship combat occurs in high orbit above Molovis, which has no direct effect on the encounter.

At the start of combat, Danesh broadcasts a message to the PCs, chastising their actions at Gamut Bio and telling them to prepare for Iomedae's justice. The knight-errant is almost fanatical in his belief of the PCs' guilt. No matter how the PCs might profess their innocence or try to explain the situation, Danesh dismisses them as miscreants. However, if a PC in the captain role succeeds at a DC 33 Bluff or Diplomacy check to tell their side of the story as an action, Danesh's conviction is a bit shaken, and he takes a -2 penalty to skill checks he attempts during this starship combat.

SHIMMERING BLADE TIER 9

Inheritorworks Crusader (inside front cover)

HP 190

CREW

Captain Athletics +23 (9 ranks), Diplomacy +23 (9 ranks),
gunnery +15 (9th level), Intimidate +23 (9 ranks),
Mysticism +18 (9 ranks)

Engineers (2) Engineering +14 (7 ranks)

Gunners (2) gunnery +13 (7th level)

Pilot Piloting +19 (7 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +14 (7 ranks)

Magic Officer^{COM} Mysticism +14 (7 ranks)

Development: If the PCs disable the *Shimmering Blade*, Knight-Errant Danesh and his crew use their life boats to flee to the surface of Molovis, intending to warn Diorama about the PCs. The PCs can follow the life boats to the surface and confront Danesh outside of the settlement (see **Event 2**). The PCs can also salvage equipment from the *Shimmering Blade*, which takes 1d4 hours, but Danesh's warnings increase the Alertness Level (page 7) at Traechee by 5; in this case, don't run **Event 2**, but at your discretion, the PCs might encounter Danesh and his squire within the facility.

In the event that the PCs' starship is reduced to 0 Hull Points, Danesh and his squire board their vessel and attempt to capture the PCs alive. If the PCs are still using the ship they confiscated from the false Stewards, **Event 2** can take place in the ship's corridors, using the map on the inside back cover of *Starfinder Adventure Path #26: Flight of the Sleepers*.

Story Award: For defeating the *Shimmering Blade* in starship combat, award the PCs 12,800 XP.

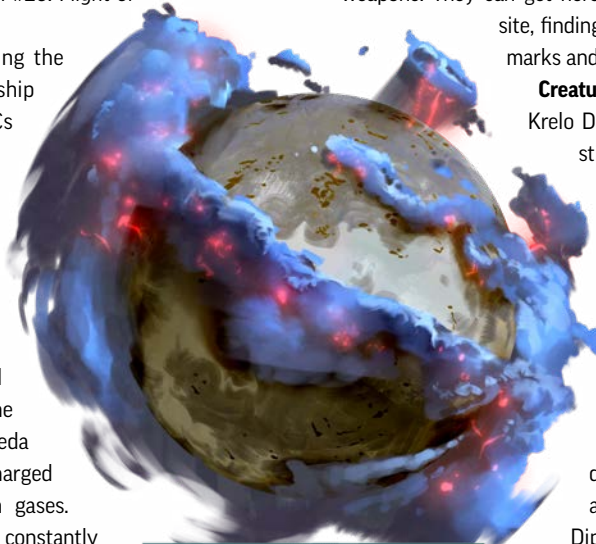
MOLOVIS

The small, stony moon of Molovis is just large enough to hold a thin atmosphere and exert low gravity. The satellite's elliptical orbit causes it to skim the "surface" clouds of Bretheda twice a year, picking up charged pockets of helium-hydrogen gases. Consequently, Molovis is constantly wreathed in a dense, purplish fog, with the occasional flash of lightning. This electrical activity also interferes with standard comm units.

In exterior locations on the moon, the fog provides concealment for targets more than 20 feet away and total concealment for targets more than 100 feet away. In addition, planetary comm units function only within 500 feet unless boosted with a communications array (see below). The temperature on the surface during the day is around 100°F but drops to more manageable temperatures during the evenings.

There are several sets of buildings concentrated in the moon's western hemisphere, consisting of laboratories and domiciles for Diorama R&D's scientists and their families. Theaters, automated restaurants, schools, landing pads, and other support facilities are close to the homes, forming a small settlement. A handful of communications arrays surrounding the settlement boost the range of planetary comm units and allow access to Bretheda's infosphere. The electrical activity doesn't interfere with sensor scans from orbit.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Culture or appropriate Profession skill check (such as law enforcement officer, mercenary, or smuggler) knows that it would be a bad idea to touch down at Diorama's landing pads since they are wanted criminals, especially after their encounter with the *Shimmering Blade*—though if the PCs insist on it, increase the Alertness Level (page 7) at the lab by 10. Another scan reveals a suitable landing site in a crater less than a 2-hour walk from the outskirts of the Diorama settlement. The ever-present fog provides ample cover for the PCs' vessel, and they can leave it within the crater without fear of it being discovered.



MOLOVIS

EVENT 2: ERRANT KNIGHTS (CR 10)

If the PCs track the *Shimmering Blade*'s life boats as they land on Molovis, they spot the one closest to the Diorama settlement near a rocky trench that is occasionally used for training exercises by security forces and for the testing of experimental weapons. They can get here quickly from their own landing site, finding that the area is marred by blast marks and small craters.

Creatures: The PCs face Knight-Errant Krelo Danesh and his squire. Though he still believes the PCs are terrorists, his code requires him to give any criminal an opportunity for redemption; he makes himself known to the PCs by calling out for their surrender. His starting attitude toward the PCs is hostile.

However, smooth-talking PCs have the opportunity to talk down the knight-errant. With a successful DC 33 Bluff or Diplomacy check, a PC can convince Danesh to listen to their argument. With an additional successful DC 28 Bluff or Diplomacy check, a PC can convince him of their innocence. If the PCs succeeded

at shaking Danesh's convictions during the starship combat, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus on these checks. Also, at your discretion, if the PCs present any hard evidence about what they discovered at Gamut Bio, they can gain an additional +4 circumstance bonus to these checks. However, if they acted like criminals during the starship combat (such as by using the taunt captain action or weapons with the irradiate weapon special property), you can impose up to a -4 penalty to these checks at your discretion.

KNIGHT OF GOLARION SQUIRE

CR 7

XP 2,400

Female human soldier

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; Perception +14

DEFENSE

HP 126

EAC 19; KAC 22

Fort +10; Ref +8; Will +9

Defensive Abilities unyielding bulwark^{AR}

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (25 ft. in armor)

Melee aurora shock pad +14 (2d4+10 E; critical staggered [DC 15])

Ranged single-wave divergent laser +17 (1d8+7 F; critical burn 1d6)

Offensive Abilities fighting styles (bombard), grenade expert (+20 ft.), heavy fire (+4 damage)

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TACTICS

During Combat The squire begins combat by throwing a riot grenade at the PCs, then switches to her laser. She falls back if too many PCs get past Danesh.

Morale The squire fights to the death unless Danesh gives the order to surrender.

STATISTICS

Str +4; **Dex** +5; **Con** +2; **Int** +0; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +0

Skills Athletics +19, Intimidate +14, Profession (bounty hunter) +14, Survival +14,

Languages Common

Gear inheritor's grace I^{AR} (aurora shock pad^{AR} with 1 battery [20 charges]), single-wave divergent laser^{AR} with 4 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), incendiary grenades II (2), riot grenades^{AR} II (2), efficient bandolier, mk 2 serums of healing (2)



KRELO DANESH

KRELO DANESH

CR 9

XP 6,400

Male human envoy

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Perception** +18

DEFENSE

HP 162 RP 4

EAC 22; **KAC** 23

Fort +8; **Ref** +10; **Will** +12

DR 5/–

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee incapacitator +19 (3d4+9 B; critical staggered [DC 18])

Ranged corona laser pistol +17 (2d4+9 F; critical burn 1d4)

TACTICS

During Combat Danesh uses draw fire to keep his allies safe while advancing on his enemies. He uses quick dispiriting taunt to frustrate the largest threats. If none of the PCs are within easy reach, he draws his laser pistol.

Morale When reduced to 40 or fewer Hit Points, Danesh yields. He accepts his mortality and would prefer to stay alive, hoping to serve Iomedae in the future, even if he is captured.

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +3; **Con** +0; **Int** +1; **Wis** +4; **Cha** +6

Skills Athletics +23, Diplomacy +23, Intimidate +23, Mysticism +18, Profession (bounty hunter) +18, Sense Motive +23, Survival +18,

Languages Common, Kasatha, Lashunta, Shirren, Vesk

Other Abilities envoy improvisations (quick dispiriting taunt, draw fire, seize the advantage^{COM})

Gear commander ceremonial plate (deflective reinforcement), field knight's shield^{COM}, corona laser pistol with 1 battery (20 charges), incapacitator with 2 batteries (20 charges each), mk 1 null-space chamber, mk 3 serums of healing (2)

Treasure: Diorama's security personnel occasionally use this ravine for weapons testing and training. With a successful DC 33 Perception check, a PC searching the area discovers a forgotten box of ammunition including 5 high-capacity batteries, 5 super-capacity batteries, 75 longarm and sniper rounds, and 90 small arm rounds.

Development: If the PCs defeat Danesh or accept his surrender, they can contact his other crew members and tell them not to go near or warn the Diorama settlement. What they do with a hostage Danesh is up to them. If they are able to convince Danesh they are innocent, he and his allies leave the PCs be, going off to look for other souls to redeem.

The PCs are then free to continue toward the Diorama settlement. The first building they approach is a communications relay tower.

Story Award: If the PCs talk down Danesh, award them XP as if they had defeated him and his squire in combat.

SNEAKING AROUND DIORAMA SETTLEMENT

The Diorama communications relay towers are automated, but there is a small shedlike structure at the base of each one, any one of which the PCs can use as a temporary base of operations. From here, they can recon the nearby settlement and Diorama R&D's laboratories without drawing attention to themselves. Diorama doesn't see many travelers, so it has no hotels or other such accommodations. At your discretion, the PCs can also find an unoccupied domicile, either waiting for a new tenant or with the current tenants on vacation, but they will need to be extra careful leaving and entering such a place.

As long as the PCs make a small effort to hide their identities (such as wearing sunglasses, wrapping their hair in a scarf, or simply removing their armor and leaving their weapons behind) and don't cause a ruckus, they can move around the Diorama settlement without risk of being spotted. Security forces around the company town are a little complacent, as not much happens on the moon.

There are a few shops around the settlement, but Diorama's maximum item level is 6th, unless the PCs want to purchase biotech augmentations or any of the items found in the "Biotechnology Gear" article on page 46; for these purchases, the maximum item level is 12th.

With a cursory search on the area's infosphere, the PCs can find the Traechee Memorial Laboratory. Alternatively, any resident can point them toward the walled compound.

A. TRAECHEE MEMORIAL LABORATORY

The Traechee Memorial Laboratory is Diorama's main research facility, a highly secured building located on the outskirts of the nearby settlement. It is surrounded by concrete walls with a stone facade, 20 feet high and 5 feet thick, topped with laser-beam motion sensors. On each corner of this wall and above the gates, a pair of small cameras feeds visuals of the interior courtyard and surrounding area to the security station in the lobby (area **A19**); these cameras are similar to the ones inside the building (page 9). There are two entrance gates: one for authorized Diorama R&D employees and a second for deliveries. Both have standard locks (page 10) and an intercom that contacts the guards in the lobby. See Getting Inside on page 9 for tactics the PCs might take to enter the labs or gather more information.

Between the walls and the main building are 100 feet of mostly open ground consisting of a small road for delivery hover trucks, a footpath around some pleasant landscaping features, the occasional artificial tree to provide shade, and some picnic tables for employees to enjoy their lunch outside.

ALERTNESS SYSTEM

The PCs will likely rely on deception and stealth to get inside the laboratory. Fortunately for them, even guarding a high-security facility can become routine and boring after a time. As far as the guards are concerned, this is just another day on the job. If the PCs decide to disguise themselves, none

MAP ANALYSIS

Thanks to Ephecta, the PCs have the layout of Traechee, though no indication of the specifics of each room. At your discretion, you can show them an unlabeled version of the map on page 8 or just give them a sketch. The PCs might want to try to glean more information from this. With successful checks in skills such as Culture, Engineering, or Physical Science, you can give them hints regarding the rooms' purposes.

of the regular guards see any need to scrutinize the PCs' arrival too closely, as long as the PCs avoid any suspicious activity and maintain their disguises. If the PCs fail to be subtle, however, the guards' assumptions rapidly change.

The Alertness Level is a number that goes up and down depending on the PCs' actions (but note that once the guards get suspicious, their wariness is difficult to dispel). Traechee's Alertness Level starts at 0. At Alertness Levels 3, 7, 10, and 12, the situation within Traechee changes.

The exact conditions that raise the Alertness Level depend on where the PCs are in the facility and what actions they take. As a general rule, however, failing a Bluff, Disguise, or Stealth check raises the Alertness Level by 1; failing one of these checks by 5 or more raises the Alertness Level by 2 and may have more immediate consequences, such as raised alarms or combat. These increases to the Alertness Level are cumulative; if the PCs cause a failure in a critical system twice, for example, the Alertness Level rises each time.

In addition to the provisions noted in the table, if the Alertness Level ever reaches 15, Security Chief Segrue (see area **A10**) takes matters into his own hands. He and two of the Diorama guards from area **A9** move to confront the PCs directly. They approach where Segrue believes the PCs are cautiously; while this group is approximately a CR 10 encounter, any additional enemies and hazards found in the area where this confrontation takes place might affect the difficulty.

The Alertness Level indicates the overall atmosphere throughout the facility, not the reactions of individual guards. A guard who catches the PCs in a restricted area or behaving suspiciously is likely to interrogate or even attack the offending PCs. Guards who are aware the PCs have tampered with systems will attempt to repair or undo whatever the PCs have done, while guards who are aware that the PCs are intruders and know their locations will gather reinforcements and track them down.

Alertness

Level	Effect
0-2	The guards are complacent. Run the adventure as written; Bluff, Disguise, and Stealth checks against the guards automatically succeed.
3-6	The guards are wary. The guards take 10 on Perception and Sense Motive checks to oppose

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**A. TRAECHEE MEMORIAL
LABORATORY**

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET
C = CAMERA

	Bluff, Disguise, and Stealth checks. Six guardian robots are deployed to protect the scientists and their research—two in area A4 and four in area A12 . The robots scan personnel and attack anyone not displaying a Diorama security badge (though they can be fooled) and move toward the nearest sounds of combat in adjacent rooms after spending 1 full round instructing the scientists to hide.
7-9	The guards are vigilant for intruders. Security clearance is strictly enforced, so Bluff, Disguise, and Stealth checks attempted by the PCs take a -2 penalty. Guards attempt Perception checks to notice hiding foes and pierce disguises, and Sense Motive checks to detect deceptions.
10-11	The guards request reinforcements from the other Diorama facilities, who arrive in 1d4 hours. In addition to the provisions noted above, add one Diorama guard (page 11) each to areas A3 , A8 , A13 , A16 , and A19 ; these guards might replace any guards that were already defeated.
12+	The entire facility is put on emergency lockdown and employees are evacuated and interrogated. All doors in the facility are closed and magnetically sealed until Security Chief Segrue manually overrides them. Bluff, Disguise, and Stealth checks attempted by the PCs take a -4 penalty. Reinforcement groups of two Diorama guards (page 11) show up from other facilities every 10 minutes, arriving in vehicles and entering through the warehouse's loading bay doors (area A2).

GETTING INSIDE

While running this part of the adventure, you should be flexible and ready to adapt to the PCs' ideas, as the sequence can be tackled with a variety of strategies. Overall, there are four basic goals of this mission: Find a way into the facility, locate information about Nevintsi, find and recover evidence of dycepskian influence (such as any HepatoDyne implants), and escape the facility safely. Though there isn't a strict time limit to this mission, you should remind the PCs that they're wanted for terrorism. The longer they take to accomplish their mission, the more likely they are to be tracked, found, and arrested.

Some tactics that the PCs might use, and how to adjudicate them, are as follows.

Direct Approach: The PCs can use the intercom at the laboratory's main gate to speak to one of the guards at area **A19**. The guard politely asks the PCs' business, informing them that this is a private facility. For example, if the PCs simply ask to speak to "someone in charge," the guards grow a little suspicious, increasing the Alertness Level by 1. A PC can negate this increase by succeeding at a DC 28 Bluff or Diplomacy check. The guards then remark that the PCs will need to give a specific name if they want to speak with someone.

If the PCs ask for an employee by name, one guard contacts that person via a comm unit and patches them into the intercom after a few moments. Most employees are unaware of any sinister plots occurring within the labs; consult the NPC's location within the facility to get a description of their role in the facility to direct any conversation. Quanma Ge Uliyu and Aykins Segrue, being infected hosts, attempt to deflect the PCs' inquiries. If the PCs seem particularly insistent or admit that they are aware of dycepskians, either host invites the PCs to return to Traechee after working hours, where they plan to attack the snooping PCs, staging it as an attempted break-in. Such an encounter can occur in Uliyu's office (area **A18**) or in the warehouse (area **A2**) with no guards present.

In the beginning, the PCs might have only Director Rel Volstra's name. The guard informs the PCs that she has been off-site for over a week and is expected to return in several days. If the PCs succeed at a DC 28 Diplomacy check, they can find out from the guard that the head scientist Quanma Ge Uliyu is essentially in charge during Volstra's absence.

If the PCs mention Jesara Hy Nevintsi, the guard admits to hearing the name before, but is fairly certain they are unaffiliated with Diorama R&D. A PC can ask the guards to check to see if Nevintsi was supposed to visit with a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check. After a few moments, the guard discovers that the barathu was, in fact, scheduled to arrive at Diorama less than a week ago, but there are no records of them arriving. After Nevintsi merged with and infected the head scientist Uliyu, the two purged the lab's servers of the visit.

Employee Hijinks: By succeeding at a DC 28 Diplomacy check to gather information around the Diorama settlement, the PCs can discover the name of a newly arrived junior scientist: **Alix Crendor** (N agender human). With a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check, a PC can pump Alix for knowledge of Traechee's general security measures and the names of the facility's managers; if the result of the check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, Alix also admits that barathu head scientist Quanma Ge Uliyu has been acting strangely the past couple of days, accelerating the timeline for live testing of the new implants brought to the lab by another barathu over a week ago. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Sleight of Hand check can steal Alix's security badge; they report it missing within an hour if they are about to go on their shift (which happens overnight) or the next day if the PCs catch Alix right before they go to sleep. A PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Diplomacy check can convince Alix to sell them their badge for 14,000 credits; if the result of this check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, the price is reduced to 10,000 credits. Finally, a PC can sneak into Alix's apartment to restrain them while they sleep with a successful DC 30 Stealth check, or cow them into not leaving their apartment with a successful DC 26 Intimidate check. From there, a PC can use the Disguise skill to temporarily take Alix's place, giving them the chance to subtly infiltrate the lab alone.

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Get a Job: A PC who forges a resume with a successful DC 26 Computers check can apply for a data analyst job at Diorama R&D over the infosphere. Analyst supervisor Bartet Brattlespring gets back to them in 1d4 days, asking them to come in for an interview. A PC can ace this interview and be offered a job with a successful DC 28 Bluff check or DC 32 Diplomacy check. The next day, that PC will be issued a staff security badge by the IT administrator, Targea Darryhammer, and be given a long orientation by Brattlespring (see area **A17**). During work hours, that PC is expected to be at their virtual workstation most of the day, and if they are caught wandering about the facility near the labs, the Alertness Level increases by 1. If a supposed analyst is seen in the building after work hours, the Alertness Level also increases by 1. Either increase can be mitigated by a successful DC 28 Bluff check.

Late-Night Raid: The PCs might wait until after business hours to attempt to sneak into Traechee and search the place. They will first need to climb over the wall (with a successful DC 20 Athletics check) and disable the motion sensors at the top (with a successful DC 25 Engineering check), or get through one of the gates while avoiding, disabling, or hacking the cameras. Alternatively, the PCs can time their movement to sneak past the cameras if one of them succeeds at a DC 30 Stealth check. Try to steer them to area **A1** and the flying viper eel swarm there. The PCs will then have to bypass or disable a lock to get inside, unless they have secured or forged a security badge (see Security Badges and Locks below).

While the building is mostly empty of scientists and analysts, six Diorama guards are on duty. One junior scientist takes readings in area **A4**, and two more junior scientists monitor the experiments in area **A12**. The two dycepskian hosts—Quanma Ge Uliyu, the head scientist, and Aykins Segru, the security chief—also remain on the premises, in their respective offices. Finally, there is a 75% chance that Bartet Brattlespring, the analyst supervisor, is working after hours (see area **A17**). As the PCs move through the facility, they will also have to deal with the cameras, but they can perhaps shut them down from the utility closet (area **A5**) and buy some time to get the information they are looking for.

Storming the Castle: The PCs can also throw subtlety to the wind and barge into the facility with guns blazing. This instantly raises the Alertness Level by 10. If your group seems intent on this tactic, remind them that they don't know if anyone within Traechee is infested with dycepskian mycelium. Taking innocent lives will cement their reputation as terrorists, so you might want to caution them to at least deal non-lethal damage until they gain more information.

TRAECHEE MEMORIAL LABORATORY FEATURES

The Traechee Memorial Laboratory has several common features that can be assumed unless noted otherwise.

Atmosphere: The atmosphere within the facility is thin, the same as on the surface of the moon, but the inhabitants have all acclimated to it.

Ceilings: Due to the fact that some of the scientists are barathus, the ceilings in this one-story building are 15 feet high.

Doors: Doors to the exterior are 2-inch-thick steel, while the interior doors are constructed from standard plastic. Many of the doors are locked, as described in Security Badges and Locks below. Unless propped or held open, a door automatically shuts (and locks where applicable) after 1 round.

Gravity: As with the surface of Molovis, the gravity within the facility is low.

Lighting: The lighting within the facility is normal.

Security: Electronic security within the building includes cameras that send visual, audio, thermographic, and infrared information from all common areas, the warehouse, and the analysts' work area to the security station in the lobby (area **A19**). Cameras found in the various offices (and in the lobby) send feeds only to the security chief's office (area **A10**). All this information is saved on the mainframe (area **A6**). The laboratories (areas **A3** and **A12**) aren't monitored by cameras but maintain their own recordings of experiments. Each of these cameras is near the ceiling where indicated on the map.

A PC can disable the cameras' power in area **A5** or disable an individual camera they can reach with a successful DC 23 Engineering check. Alternatively, a PC with the remote hack class ability (or similar) can hack into the cameras' feeds with a successful DC 28 Computers check to show a loop of previous footage. This tampering isn't noticed for 1d3+1 hours. If this sabotage is noticed, the Alert Level increases by 1.

Signs: All signs are written in Brethedan and Common.

Walls: The exterior walls of the main building consist of 3-inch steel with a 2-foot-thick stone facade. Inside, most walls are painted concrete or have a luxury facade made of wood or stone.

Windows: The exterior windows are constructed from 2-inch-thick transparent aluminum with one-way reflective coating.

SECURITY BADGES AND LOCKS

All Diorama personnel have a security badge that authorizes them to be on premises. These badges are encoded with encrypted authorization codes by Targea Darryhammer with equipment in her office (area **A6**), but these codes can be forged with 1 hour of work, 20 UPBs, and a successful DC 40 Computers check. Having a legitimate badge on hand to duplicate lowers the DC to 30. Badges reported missing are flagged in the system. Generally, badges are categorized as either staff, scientist, or security personnel, though specific executives have their own badges.

The locked doors in the facility have one of four clearance levels: standard, laboratory, secure, and maximum security. If a PC fails by 5 or more when attempting to bypass a lock using Engineering or Computers, a warning pops up in the security system, increasing the Alertness Level by 1 and causing a pair of Diorama guards to check out the area within 5 minutes. If a PC fails by 10 or more when attempting to bypass a lock, the Alertness Level increases by 1d6, a visual and audible alarm

goes off, and a pair of Diorama guards rushes to the area within 1 minute. The PCs should have time to react to these alarms before combat begins.

Standard Lock: This level of lock requires any level of security badge to open. A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Computers or Engineering check can bypass such a lock.

Laboratory Lock: This level of lock requires a scientist, security personnel, or executive badge to open. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Computers or Engineering check can bypass such a lock.

Secure Lock: This level of lock requires a security personnel or executive badge to open. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Computers or Engineering check can bypass such a lock.

Maximum-Security Lock: This level of lock requires special clearance coded into specific security badges, as noted in the room's description. The director's badge (see area **A20**) can open any of these locks, regardless of the clearance noted. A PC who succeeds at a DC 33 Computers or Engineering check can bypass such a lock.

A1. WASTE DISPOSAL (CR 10)

Two bins stand against the building under a pair of garbage chutes and are surrounded by a short wall. One bin is painted black, and the other is painted bright red.

Diorama dumps all waste from Traechee in these two bins for processing; the black one is for standard garbage and the red one is for biowaste. A set of metal stairs leads up to a cement platform where deliveries are made. The double door to the warehouse is locked.

Creature: The seals on the red bin are cracked, attracting the attention of flying viper eels—tiny, eyeless animals with long, sinuous bodies and mouths full of vicious fangs. They are typically scavengers in the wild areas of Molovis and other Brethedan moons, but they've grown accustomed to eating regularly from the biowaste bin. They now consider the garbage area to be their territory and are resting within the red bin. The swarm of flying viper eels attacks any creatures who come within 10 feet of either of the waste bins, but they don't pursue creatures fleeing further than 40 feet away.

FLYING VIPER EEL SWARM CR 10

XP 9,600

HP 165 (page 56)

TACTICS

During Combat The eels focus their attacks on the PCs closest to the red bin.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 25 Hit Points, the swarm of flying viper eels flees.

Development: After killing or driving off the flying viper eels, the PCs can attempt to enter the building through the trash chutes (as shown on the map on page 8). A Small or

smaller creature can squeeze through the chute above the black bin (leading to the warehouse) as a standard action, but a Medium creature must succeed at a DC 22 Acrobatics check to do so; a Large or larger creature cannot fit through this chute. A Small or larger creature can't fit through the chute above the red bin (leading to the specialty lab), but a Tiny creature can do so with a successful DC 22 Acrobatics check, though doing so could be dangerous (see area **A4**).

Treasure: A PC who searches the black bin with a successful DC 25 Perception check finds a broken artifact ice needle (*Starfinder* *Armory* 9) with only 2 HP remaining.

A2. WAREHOUSE (CR 8)

Each door into the warehouse has a standard lock.

The north wall and center of this warehouse contain industrial shelves that extend to the ceiling. Each shelf holds crates, boxes, and barrels of various sizes. Double doors exit to the southwest and south, and a twenty-five-foot-wide loading bay door opens to the west.

Raw materials and supplies for Traechee (such as security equipment and office supplies) are stored here. Though this area isn't difficult to enter, the containers with the most valuable contents are secured with laboratory locks. This prevents a regular employee from accidentally opening a barrel full of inert biomass.

Creatures: When the facility is not on high alert, two of the on-duty Diorama guards patrol the warehouse, occasionally receiving supplies from vendors through the large western door or performing the occasional bit of manual labor as they help an analyst or scientist retrieve a piece of equipment. This happens infrequently, so the guards politely question anyone who enters. Vendors would have had to check in at the gate, speaking with the security guards in area **A19** over the intercom, so these guards know when to expect a delivery.

These guards are likely the quickest in the building to respond to alarms.

DIORAMA GUARDS (2) CR 6

XP 2,400 each

Korasha lashunta soldier

LN Medium humanoid (lashunta)

Init +2; Perception +13

DEFENSE

EAC 18; KAC 21

Fort +8; Ref +6; Will +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (25 ft. in armor)

Melee tempest gale baton +16 (1d6+11 C; critical staggered [DC 14])

Ranged corona laser rifle +13 (2d6+6 F; critical burn 1d6)

Offensive Abilities fighting styles (hit-and-run), nimble fusillade, opening volley

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Lashunta Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

1/day—detect thoughts (DC 13)

At will—daze (DC 12), psychokinetic hand

TACTICS

During Combat The guards attempt to use their familiarity with the facility to their advantage, moving to flank any intruders in melee combat. They are slow to use their laser rifles inside the labs for fear of damaging the experiments.

Morale If reduced to 20 or fewer HP, a Diorama guard surrenders, hoping to live through the experience and collect trauma pay.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +18, Intimidate +13, Sense Motive +13

Languages Common, Lashunta; limited telepathy 30 ft.

Gear lashunta ringwear II, corona laser rifle with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), tempest gale baton^{AR} with 1 super-capacity battery (80 charges), *mk 2 serum of healing*, manacles, security badge

Treasure: Though most of the equipment stored here is useless to anyone not running a corporate office or biotech lab, a PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check locates an accidentally unlocked crate containing 10,000 UPBs.

A3. NORTHWEST HALLWAY

The walls of this hallway are bare. The double door to the north is labeled "Warehouse"; it is secured with a standard lock.

The eastern wall contains three doors. The northernmost door has a sign that wordlessly indicates the danger of high voltage, the center double door is labeled "Authorized Personnel Only," and the southernmost double door is unmarked and unlocked.

The western wall contains two doors. The northernmost double door is labeled "Specialty Lab" and the southernmost double door is made from transparent aluminum and labeled "Main Lab—Wear Protective Gear."

A4. SPECIALTY LAB (CR 7)

The double door to this room from the hallway is secured with a laboratory lock.

Scanners and scientific equipment cover a workbench against the western wall. The northeast and southeast corners of the room feature small incubation chambers. The northern wall contains a large red

biowaste repository with angled walls and thick steel doors. A single pair of double doors exits to the east.

This lab is for special assignments that don't require isolation via decontamination chambers. The scientists in this lab are currently working on symbiotic organisms to aid in a user's ability to combat depression and reduce inhibitions. These biological personal upgrades aren't ready for the open market, as they tend to make the user somewhat of a megalomaniac for the first few days after installation, until their brain chemistry has time to adjust.

The north wall contains a large biowaste disposal unit, much like a wood chipper, but for softer organic specimens. It empties directly into the red waste container outside (area **A1**). The device doesn't function while the doors are open, but any Medium or smaller creature that is unfortunate enough to be stuck inside when the machine is turned on (a standard action) takes 12d6 slashing damage each round (Fortitude DC 30 half).

Creatures: Three scientists can be found conducting experiments in this area during business hours: a damaya lashunta, a half-elf, and a shirren. After hours, a single damaya lashunta junior scientist has been assigned to observe any changes to the specimens overnight and prepare new specimens for the next day's tests. None of them are capable combatants and immediately surrender if threatened; however, they will set off a silent alarm if given the opportunity. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Perception or DC 23 Sense Motive check notices one of the biologists attempting to get close to the switch located under the western counter. If the biologist activates the alarm, security personnel are alerted; this immediately deploys the guardian robots in the room, causes a patrol of two Diorama guards to come check on the lab, and raises the Alertness Level by 4.

If the PCs are able to convince the scientists that they're supposed to be there by succeeding on a DC 23 Bluff or Disguise check, or fool a deployed guardian robot's scanning equipment with a real security badge or a convincing forgery, they're able to examine the lab as they please.

When the guardian robots are deployed, hatches in the floor slowly open and raise the guardian robots over 1 round. The robots are



active during this time but cannot move from their squares until the second round of combat.

GUARDIAN ROBOTS (2)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 70 each (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 3 86)

TACTICS

Before Combat The guardian robots scan the security badges of all creatures in the room to authenticate them.

During Combat The guardian robots attempt to physically create a barrier between themselves and any of the scientists, allowing them to escape through the room's only exit. The robots fight defensively as long as any civilians are still in the area and switch to full-attack actions once only hostiles remain.

Morale The robots fight until destroyed.

Treasure: There are three mk 2 synergizing symbiotes being tested here. These personal upgrades can be used only to increase Charisma, Intelligence, or Wisdom.

A5. UTILITY CLOSET

The door to this room has a secure lock.

High-tech industrial fixtures cover the northern wall. A single door exits to the west.

This is the main utility closet for the entire building. Although everything is controlled and regulated by the mainframe in the data center (area A6), the PCs can still cause problems by sabotaging the fixtures in this closet, which connect to the building's infrastructure. If a PC succeeds on a DC 28 Engineering check that takes 1 minute, they can disable one of the following systems: main power, backup power, infosphere connectivity, or security cameras. If a PC's result exceeds the DC by 5 or more, they can disable two systems. If a PC's result exceeds the DC by 10 or more, they can disable as many systems as they choose. A PC who fails this check by 5 or more causes minor fluctuations in a random system and takes 5d6 electric damage. A PC can be aided by only one ally for this check.

Development: Disabling the main power causes concern among the staff, increasing the Alertness Level by 2. With the main power offline, interiors are restricted to emergency lighting, which provides only dim light. The security cameras provide only periodic data, granting a +4 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks to sneak around the building. Scientific equipment used for preservation (such as bio-tanks and refrigeration units) still function, but larger, more active equipment stops functioning. The mainframe goes into a lower power mode, reducing the DC of Computer checks to hack the system by 5. Analyst terminals shut down completely, leaving any workers in A16 without anything to do; they decide to loiter in areas A8 and A19 for up to an hour before going home.

Disabling backup power does nothing unless the main power is also disabled. If both main power and backup power are disabled, then the entire facility is plunged into darkness, as none of the internal lights function. The Alertness Level increases by 4. The security cameras go completely offline and can provide no data. Scientific preservation equipment goes offline, but most of their contents don't spoil for 1 hour. The mainframe goes into emergency power mode, using its own backup batteries to keep it operational for up to 24 hours. During that time, it can give commands to security robots in the facility; it immediately activates all guardian and assassin robots, giving them the command to patrol the facility and scan all occupants for an ID badge. All personnel are escorted out of the facility and to the parking lot by the guards. The four guards from area A9 remain in the parking lot for 1 hour while they take attendance before excusing the non-guard personnel to go home, while the two guards from area A2 patrol the exterior of the building.

Disabling infosphere connectivity irritates most of the employees, increasing the Alertness Level by 2. While most work may continue as normal, the Diorama guards aren't able to call other facilities for reinforcements. As long as this connection is down, additional reinforcements cannot be requested if the Alertness Level raises to 10 or 11. At Alertness Level 12, one pair of guards leaves to get reinforcements, returning 1 hour later with a dozen additional guards.

Disabling the security cameras immediately puts the guards on edge, increasing the Alertness Level by 4. They cannot immediately be made aware of security breaches in the facility, and instead perform manual check-ins over their comm units every 10 minutes.

If the PCs cause minor fluctuations in a system, the Alertness Level increases by 1, but not much else happens.

When a system goes out, two of the Diorama guards from area A9 head to this room in 1d4 minutes to attempt to fix the problem. One aids the other, who attempts an Engineering check with a DC equal to the result of the PCs' Engineering check; if successful, they're able to restore the system or systems. If Targea Darryhammer is in the facility, she arrives in the closet 10 minutes later to check on the problem herself (and to fix it in the same manner if it hasn't yet been fixed). Even if the problem is fixed, the Alertness Level does not decrease.

A6. DATA CENTER (CR 9)

Both sets of double doors to this room from the hallways have secure locks.

Bundles of high-speed data cables traverse the ceiling and walls in this metal-clad chamber, plugged into a large central mainframe tower on one end and disappearing into the ceiling on the other. The room is startlingly organized and sanitary. The dust-free metal grates on the floor blast cold air throughout the room. Laser hand sanitizers stand like

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sentinels inside every entrance. Large double doors stand to the east and west, and there is a single door to the north.

This room holds the secure data and security systems for the entire facility. Targea Darryhammer (see area **A7**), the building's IT administrator, is somewhat of a germaphobe and likes to keep her data center neat and tidy. The computer terminals themselves have secure locks and require a security badge to open. The door to the north is labeled "Targea Darryhammer, IT Administrator."

Once the PCs have physical access to the mainframe, they can attempt to access the system. The mainframe acts as a hardened tier 7 computer with a security III upgrade module and a rank 2 shock grid countermeasure, requiring a successful DC 44 Computers check to hack. Disabling the main power (see area **A5**) forces the system into low-power mode, lowering this DC by 5. Having a security badge grants a +5 circumstance bonus to Computers checks to hack this system, and learning either Darryhammer's or Segrue's password grants a +5 circumstance bonus; the two bonuses stack. A PC with either Darryhammer's password and security card or Segrue's password and security card can gain immediate root access to the mainframe. Only Darryhammer and Segrue have root access.

Most of the information stored within the mainframe deals with the day-to-day running of Traechee, as well as an archive of past research data. If the PCs search out information about the fungicide project mentioned in Uliyu's notes (see area **A18**), they find only the scientific details, but not the name of the outside individual who requested the research, as if someone had scrubbed it. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Life Science or Medicine check while examining this data realizes that the finished fungicide is extremely deadly and aggressive, but its method of attack is very similar to the symptoms presented by those afflicted with the Brethedan blight. That PC can surmise that it is possible that this unnamed fungicide is somehow related to the Brethedan blight, the first case of which was documented the same year as the fungicide's creation.

A PC with access to the mainframe can also attempt to find information about Diorama R&D's testing of the HepatoDyne implants. However, they quickly learn that this data has been sequestered onto a separate (and unconnected) server at the request of Security Chief Segrue less than a week ago.

Creature: An assassin robot is kept hidden in the ceiling, waiting orders from the mainframe. Anyone with root access to the mainframe can activate or deactivate the robot; otherwise, it attempts to neutralize anyone in the building tagged as an intruder according to the security system's algorithm.

The assassin robot is automatically activated if the Alertness Level reaches 12 or higher; it has full access to the building and will seek out anyone tagged as an intruder.

Because it is controlled by the security mainframe, it can see through any of the building's security cameras.

ASSASSIN ROBOT CR 9

XP 6,400

HP 135 (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 2108)

TACTICS

Before Combat Once activated, the assassin robot determines which creatures in the building are tagged as intruders. If these targets are moving to a specific part of the building, it moves to intercept them and attempts to set up an ambush using holographic camouflage.

During Combat The assassin

robot uses target tracking and holographic trick to neutralize the most dangerous target. If reduced to 60 HP or fewer, it uses holographic camouflage to become invisible and then retreats to use nanite repair before rejoining the fight.

Morale The assassin robot fights until destroyed or deactivated.

Treasure: Two engineering tool kits are affixed to the walls, one on the north side of the room and another on the south.

A7. IT ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE

The door to this room has a maximum-security lock, keyed to Targea Darryhammer's security badge.

This dust-free room looks like a picture from an office supply catalogue. Every object on the desk looks carefully selected and placed at right angles to the other objects. A plant in the southeast corner is well taken care of, and a set of shelves to the northeast contains a variety of engineering and computer tools, all pristine and in official carrying cases.

This office's occupant keeps the room spotless. All of the tools are organized, labeled, and kept fully charged.

Creature: During regular working hours, **Targea Darryhammer** (N female dwarf) can be found in this office working on a project or tinkering with an offline camera. If the Alertness Level reaches 7 outside of regular business hours, she's called to come in and assist; it takes her 1 hour to arrive.

Development: Darryhammer is a businesswoman and a professional, not a combatant. If threatened, she will generally comply with anything the PCs ask of her, though



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she refuses to give up her password to the mainframe. While her initial attitude depends on if the PCs are in successful disguises, her attitude shifts to unfriendly if the PCs ask her for her password. At this point, a PC who succeeds at a DC 33 Diplomacy check can convince her that what they're doing is for the benefit of the galaxy, improving her attitude to indifferent. If the result of this check exceeds the DC by 5 or more, her attitude instead increases by two steps. Providing evidence of the dycepskians gives a PC a +4 circumstance bonus on their check, as Darryhammer is highly afraid of infections.

If her attitude is at least indifferent, Darryhammer grants them access to the mainframe. If her attitude is at least friendly, she helps them find the information they need, reducing the time it takes to locate to 1 minute. If the PCs fail this Diplomacy check, Darryhammer raises a silent alarm on her comm unit, calling two Diorama guards to her and increasing the Alertness Level by 2.

Treasure: The cabinet on the eastern wall contains an engineering kit, a hacking kit, a beacon portable light, a tier 2 datapad (*Starfinder Armory* 100), two rolls of ion tape (*Armory* 105), a set of thieves' tools (*Armory* 109), a zipstick (*Armory* 109), and 2,000 UBPs worth of spare parts useful for crafting technological components.

A8. EASTERN HALLWAY

This long hallway is decorated with a few holopictures of Brethedan cloudscapes. The double door to the north is labeled "Warehouse," while the double door to the south is unmarked. Both doors have standard locks.

The eastern wall contains four doors. The northernmost double door is labeled "Locker Room." The middle two double doors are both labeled "Analysis." The southernmost double door is labeled "Rel Volstra, Director."

The western wall contains two doors. The northernmost double door is labeled "Authorized Personnel Only." The southernmost double door is labeled "Restroom."

A9. LOCKER ROOM (CR 8)

The double door to this room from the hallway has a secure lock.

This locker room features walls of lockers to the north and south; each wall has a total of twenty half-door lockers. A low bench stands in front of each wall of lockers. The smells of sweat and deodorant pervade the air. Double doors exit to the east and west.

The double door to the east is labeled, "Aykins Segrue, Security Chief."

This locker room doubles as an armory for the facility's guards. Each guard is given their own locker and is expected to keep their own equipment secure. Each locker has a maximum-security lock (keyed to each guard's security badge)

and contains the equipment for one Diorama guard plus six uniforms. Each weekend, a cleaning company takes the dirty uniforms off-site to be laundered, returning them the next day.

Six guards cover the day shift and six guards cover the night shift. Guards work 4 days on and 4 days off in rotating schedules. This means that at any given time, 30 out of the 40 lockers have full sets of equipment inside. Spare weapons are locked inside Segrue's office (area A10).

Creatures: When the facility is not on high alert, two of the on-duty Diorama guards who are supposed to be patrolling are usually found in this room lounging and gossiping. If anyone who is not wearing a guard uniform enters this locker room and is not immediately recognized by the guards occupying the room, they immediately become suspicious, increasing the Alertness Level by 1, and they start asking questions of the newcomer.

If a disruption occurs in the facility, the guards here spend 2 rounds gathering their equipment before heading towards the source of the disruption.

DIORAMA GUARDS (2)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

HP 108 each (page 11)

Development: Any commotion in this room, such as combat, gets the attention of Security Chief Segrue, who arrives 3 rounds later.

Treasure: Each of the 30 lockers that belong to off-duty guards contains a suit of lashunta ringwear II, up to 6 uniforms, and a pair of manacles. A first-aid kit hanging on the wall contains an advanced medkit, five medpatches, a can of sprayflesh, and a *mk 2 serum of healing*.

A10. SECURITY CHIEF'S OFFICE (CR 9)

The door to this room has a maximum-security lock, keyed to Aykins Segrue's security badge.

This spartan office contains a basic metal desk with a portable workstation, three uncomfortable looking chairs, a weapons locker, and a small cylindrical personal server.

The personal server is relatively secure for its size. This tier 4 computer has two miniaturization upgrades, a security II upgrade, a fake shell countermeasure that hides a large secure data module behind a firewall, and a faulty wipe countermeasure. A PC who succeeds at a DC 31 Computers check to hack the server can gain access only to the fake shell that shows mundane data about the facility's security and guard personnel (including pay rates and shift schedules). A PC who succeeds at a DC 36 Computers check while examining this data can detect the fake shell. It then takes a successful DC 33 Computers check to penetrate the firewall and access the hidden data. After three failed attempts

to hack into the secured portion of the computer, the wipe countermeasure executes its code. However, this program was installed incorrectly and only corrupts part of the data.

If the PCs successfully access the secure data without triggering the wipe countermeasure or later recover the corrupted data, they learn all the information below. However, if the PCs only gain access to the data after it has been corrupted, they learn only what is presented in the Corrupted Files sidebar on page 17.

The hidden, secure files on Segrue's server show Diorama R&D's research data on the two HepatoDyne implants in the main lab (area A12). A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Life Science check can tell that someone is altering the data as it comes in from the lab, and that Segrue is covering their tracks. The falsified data shows nothing about the dangerous mycelium within.

Another folder contains personnel records for the Traechee Lab's many employees, with the exception of head scientist Quanma Ge Uliyu. Segrue has made notes on each record, which boil down to whether or not an individual should be "infested" or "eliminated." Most are scheduled for infestation, except for Targea Darryhammer and Bartet Brattlespring (who are both labeled as "unlikely to accept implant").

Finally, the PCs find infosphere searches on the floating barathu hospice Laoe Araae and related Brethedan government policies. A marked passage reads that should any patients of the Brethedan blight seem to begin to recover, a verifier agent from Confluence would be required to travel to the hospice as soon as possible to authenticate the claims. These searches appear to have been sent from Jesara Hy Nevintsi's comm unit, along with a note reading, "Primary approach for infesting Confluence. Will reestablish contact once completed."

Creature: The dycepskian hosts of Gamut Bio did their homework before sending the infested Nevintsi to Diorama and, luckily for them, the lab's security chief, Aykins Segrue, was a verthani who was almost obsessed with augmenting his body. The infested barathu brought with them several HepatoDyne implants to turn a selected few members of the Diorama staff into hosts. After Nevintsi infested head scientist Uliyu, the two offered an implant to Segrue, who accepted

it gladly. As a dycepskian host, Segrue has been keeping an eye on the labs ever since. The infested Segrue fabricated a story about possible corporate espionage, ordered his own personal server, and started conducting interviews with each of the staff, starting with the researchers and looking for others who might be willing to accept an implant once they have passed inspection in the main lab.

Aykins Segrue spends most of his time at his desk, working late hours in pursuit of quietly spreading dycepskian influence. He still performs his duties as the building's security chief, responding to incursions as according to the Alertness Level. He has also been paying close attention to news about the attack on Gamut Bio; unless the PCs succeed at a Disguise check opposed by his Perception check, Segrue recognizes the PCs and attempts to neutralize them.

If Segrue becomes aware of any combat within the building, he takes 2 rounds to secure his computer, radios for assistance from his guards, and equips his shield, then heads in the direction of the disturbance.



AYKINS SEGRUE

CR 9

XP 6,400

Dycepskian-infested male verthani vanguard
(*Starfinder Adventure Path #28: The Hollow Cabal* 55, *Starfinder Alien Archive* 118, *Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 50)

N Medium humanoid (dycepskian, verthani)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +17

DEFENSE

HP 145

EAC 22; **KAC** 24

Fort +11; **Ref** +11; **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities mitigate (9 damage), uncanny agility;

DR 3/—; **Immunities** mind-affecting effects

Weaknesses vulnerable to remove affliction

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee entropic strike +21 (2d10+9 A/B)

Ranged aphelion laser pistol +21 (3d4+9 F; critical burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities entropic attunement (knockdown [DC 16], penetrating)

TACTICS

During Combat Segrue uses his reactions to mitigate attacks, using reactive and energize against any powerful energy attack. He attempts to sunder the weapons of dangerous opponents.

Morale If reduced to 30 or fewer HP, Segrue attempts to flee to receive backup from his guards.

AYKINS SEGRUE

If successful, this raises the Alertness Level by 4. If he cannot flee, he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +4; **Con** +6; **Int** +3; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +17, Bluff +22, Computers +17, Intimidate +17

Feats Improved Combat Maneuver (sunder), Improved Combat Maneuver (trip)

Languages Brethedan, Common, Goblin, Sarcesian, Vercite

Other Abilities entropic pool (maximum 6), fungal mass mind, reactive (2/day), skin mimic, vanguard aspects (boundary—embodiment; exergy—insight), vanguard disciplines (energize, entropic charge)

Gear advanced iridishell, field tactical shield^{COM}, aphelion laser pistol with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), *mk 3 serum of healing*, security badge; **Augmentations** accelerated datajack, advanced darkvision capacitors, *mk 3 dermal plating*, standard speed suspension

Development: If the PCs inspect Segrue after they have defeated him, they find the telltale greenish-yellow veins around his eyes and a still-healing surgical incision on his arm. The PCs likely recognize this cut from the previous adventure as the recent installation of a HepatoDyne implant. If they autopsy Segrue's body, they find the same greenish-yellow mycelium replacing his nervous system as they probably discovered in all previous dycepskian-infested hosts on Roselight and Gamut Bio.

If Quanma Ge Uliyu is still alive when the PCs defeat Segrue, the infested barathu is aware of Segrue's condition through the dycepskian fungal mass mind. Uliyu contacts the two guards in area **A19**, concocting a story about receiving an unusual comms interaction from Segrue, who is now unreachable. These guards send two of their coworkers from area **A2** to Segrue's office (or one of them goes if the warehouse guards aren't available). Meanwhile, Uliyu prepares to confront the PCs, either in their office or outside of the building.

Treasure: The weapons locker contains a box of 72 long-arm rounds and has a maximum-security lock keyed to Aykins Segrue's security badge, three high-capacity batteries, three super-capacity batteries, four tempest gale batons (*Starfinder Armory* 9), and four corona laser rifles. The server is semi-portable and is worth 12,120 credits.

A11. DECONTAMINATION CHAMBER

Each of the double doors leading into these chambers (from the hallway and the lead scientist's office) has a laboratory lock.

This small chamber contains several vents and spray nozzles.

The two chambers marked **A11** are designed to ensure no bacteria or foreign agents enter or exit the lab. Motion-activated sensors in the walls initiate the decontamination process when someone enters the room. The process takes 2 rounds

CORRUPTED FILES

The files are largely unreadable, but some fragments are recoverable. These fragments show data on a biotech augmentation, likely the HepatoDyne implant, as well as some attached scientific notes. Another readable section mentions the name of Laoe Araae, a barathu hospice, as part of an excerpt on a Brethedan government policy that says that should any patients there seem to recover, a verifier agent from Confluence would be sent to examine the claims. Part of an external note attached to this document reads, "primary approach."

and consists of jets of mild liquid chemicals and low sonic pulses that are harmless to most creatures (unless they are subjected to the procedure for an extended period of time) but destroy microscopic contaminants. The liquid chemicals evaporate within seconds.

Both sets of double doors of each of these chambers are made from transparent aluminum, so the occupants in the connecting rooms have line of sight to one another. One double door of each chamber can't be opened until the other is closed. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Engineering check can force open a double door, but doing so causes a light to flash within the lab; this increases the Alertness Level by 1.

A12. MAIN LAB (CR 9)

Each of the double doors leading into this room from the decontamination chambers has a laboratory lock.

Biomass regenerators, tissue sculptors, micro-cell reformulators, and other pieces of delicate scientific equipment cover the western counter in this laboratory. On the eastern wall, three massive tanks stand against the wall with various hoses attached to each. An eerie light emanating from within the tanks radiates throughout the room—a stark contrast to the buzzing white lights overhead. A small counter in a niche just north of these tanks holds all manner of chemicals and solvents.

The bulk of research at Traechee occurs here. Among the major projects that the resident biologists are working on is a cure for the Brethedan blight. However, due to the arrival of Nevintsi and the infection of head scientist Uliyu, this research has temporarily stalled.

Nevintsi brought three HepatoDyne implants with them. Two of them are here (the third having been implanted into Security Chief Segrue), attached to the exteriors of two of the large tanks to study their effects on living tissue. This research is being curated only by the infested barathu scientist (see *Creatures* on page 18), so the others have yet to notice the implants' adverse effects. A PC can remove an implant with a successful DC 28 Life Science or Medicine check and 1 minute of work; failing

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this check by 5 or more ruins the dycepskian mycelium within, rendering it useless as evidence. Unless the infested barathu scientist is distracted or has surrendered, they notice the PCs meddling with the equipment. The barathu knows no one is allowed to handle the implants, so they set off the silent alarm as described below unless threatened with violence.

Creatures: Six biologists can be found in this area during business hours: two damaya lashuntas, three shirrens, and a barathu. After hours, two junior biologists, both humans, perform various menial tasks such as sanitizing equipment and recording observations of the specimens. None of these scientists are capable combatants and immediately surrender if threatened; however, they will set off a silent alarm if given the opportunity. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Perception or DC 23 Sense Motive check notices one of them attempting to get close to the switch located under the northern end of the western counter. If the biologist activates the alarm, security personnel are alerted; this immediately deploys the guardian robots in the room, causes a patrol of two Diorama guards to come check on the lab, and raises the Alertness Level by 4.

However, the barathu scientist is a dycepskian host. They act normal, but if the PCs act hostile, both Quanma Ge Uliyu and Aykins Segreue are warned of the PCs' presence through the fungal mass mind. The two other hosts are on guard from here on out, but this doesn't increase the general Alertness Level.

If the PCs are able to convince the scientists that they're supposed to be there by succeeding at a DC 23 Bluff or Disguise check or fool a deployed guardian robot's scanning equipment with a real security badge or a convincing forgery, they're able to examine the lab as they please, unless they begin interfering with the experiments (see above).

When the guardian robots are deployed, hatches in the floor slowly raise the guardian robots over 1 round. The robots are active during this time but can't move from their squares until the second round of combat.

GUARDIAN ROBOTS (4)

CR 5

XP 1,600 each

HP 70 each (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 3 86)

TACTICS

Use the tactics presented for the guardian robots in area **A4**.

A13. SOUTHWESTERN HALLWAY

This hallway is decorated with interesting, almost artistic holophotos of micro-organisms. The northernmost and southernmost double doors are unlabeled and unlocked. Only the double door from the lobby is locked with a standard lock.

The double door on the eastern wall is labeled "Restroom." The double door at the southern end of the western wall is labeled "Quanma Ge Uliyu, Lead Biotechnologist."

A14. LAB RESTROOM

These restrooms contain additional sanitation equipment and emergency ocular washing stations.

Creatures: There's a 10% chance that either a scientist from one of the labs or a Diorama guard is using this restroom during work hours if the Alertness Level is 6 or lower.

A15. ADMINISTRATION RESTROOM

These restrooms are decently maintained, but half of the stalls are out of disposable sanitary supplies.

Creatures: There's a 30% chance that either an analyst (from area **A16**) or a Diorama guard is using this restroom during work hours if the Alertness Level is 6 or lower.

A16. ANALYST WORK AREA

Each set of double doors to this area has a standard lock.

Rows of cramped workstations line the office walls; each workstation is configured with an adaptable VR interface and sanitation-gel dispenser. Two sets of double doors open to the west and a single door opens to the south.

While biologists work on the other side of the building, the analysts here crunch numbers, run simulations, and perform various other logistical tasks that help direct the research and keep the lab functioning. Each analyst's work area is entirely virtual, so there are very few personal effects in this room. The door to the south is labeled "Bartet Brattlespring, Analyst Supervisor."

Creatures: During regular business hours, this office is often at maximum capacity, holding about two dozen workers (mostly human, lashunta, and shirren). These Diorama R&D data analysts are generally plugged into hybrid VR devices that allow them to manipulate data in a virtual environment; they are unaware of the world around them unless disturbed. The room is typically silent with the exception of an employee occasionally shifting their weight, clearing their throat, or mumbling to themselves. Sometimes, the sound of Eoxian opera echoes from the supervisor's office (see area **A17**). When the PCs enter this room, there's a 10% chance an analyst is leaving their work area or returning (such as to or from a bathroom break or a break outside). An analyst generally avoids eye contact with anyone dressed as a scientist or security guard, but they don't question anyone else, assuming them to be a new analyst thanks to the job's high rate of turnover.

A17. ANALYST SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE

The door to this room has a maximum-security lock, keyed to Bartet Brattlespring's security badge.

This cramped office contains an open cabinet on the southern wall, overflowing with broken and outdated technology. A cluttered workstation on the eastern wall is sized for a smaller individual. Piled boxes and taped-up charts block the room's only window to the east. A single door opens to the north.

The workstation here holds no information of interest to the PCs, merely analyst schedules, drafts for grant proposals, and project management software.

Creature: Analyst supervisor **Bartet Brattlespring** (CG male bleachling gnome) is an elderly gentleman who has run this office since it opened. He has no aspirations for further advancement, no time line for retirement, and very few hobbies (with the exception of his fondness for Eoxian opera). Brattlespring also has chronic insomnia; he rarely sleeps and keeps random hours. At any given time, there's a 75% chance that Brattlespring is working at his desk; 50% of that time he is playing Eoxian opera on a small speaker to drown out any other noises from the building. If Brattlespring hears any commotion caused by the PCs in area **A16** (he has a Perception modifier of +16), he comes out of his office to investigate. When he is listening to his music, Brattlespring takes a -4 penalty to Perception checks.

Brattlespring is made visibly uncomfortable by the presence of Medium or larger creatures in his office; he likes the space's cozy qualities but doesn't appreciate feeling boxed in. However, he acts friendly towards Small or smaller creatures. Depending on how the PCs have entered the facility (including any disguises), the elderly gnome might assume they're new security guards getting the lay of the land. With a successful DC 23 Bluff or Diplomacy check, a PC can convince Brattlespring that they are already familiar with the building's systems; otherwise he attempts to lecture the PCs for up to 20 minutes to explain the minutiae of the day-to-day procedures at Traechee. Any attempt to intimidate him in his office causes him to panic, screaming out warnings and leaping towards a silent alarm; this raises the Alertness Level by only 1, as he often overreacts when employees or applicants of larger sizes enter his office too suddenly.

Development: Listening to Brattlespring's full orientation grants the PCs a +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff or Disguise checks to impersonate an employee.

A18. HEAD SCIENTIST'S OFFICE (CR 10)

The double door to this room from the hallway has a maximum-security lock, keyed to Quanma Ge Uliyu's security badge. Though the doors to the decontamination chamber from the main lab can be opened from the other side without a security badge from the main lab, the scientists bother Uliyu only in emergencies.

This pristine office shows little sign of wear on the carpet. A desk with a beanbag-like executive chair occupies the

southwest corner, with two worn chairs for visitors in front and a potted plant off to one side. A table in the southeast corner of the office is covered with outdated medical and scientific equipment in good condition. Modern, working laboratory appliances stand ready for use on a table in the northwestern corner. A closed wooden cabinet stands against the northern wall. A transparent aluminum double door leads north, and another double door exits east.

This office is a combination of small museum to biological medical technology, meeting space, archive, and personal laboratory for Quanma Ge Uliyu, Traechee's head scientist.

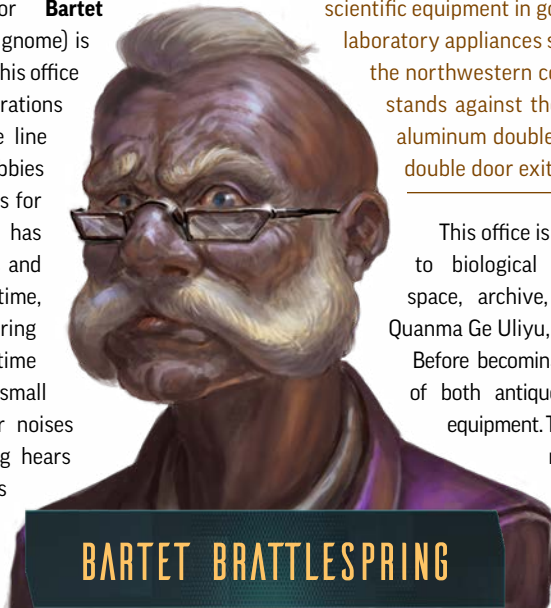
Before becoming infested, Uliyu was a collector of both antique scientific and record-keeping equipment. They often kept extensive personal notes on magnetic-tape recording devices, which were never transferred onto Traechee's mainframe. The laboratory's director insisted that Uliyu keep these archives secure,

despite not many people having the ability to access them, so the barathu keeps them in the wooden cabinet, which has a maximum-security lock keyed to Uliyu's security badge. The infested Uliyu doesn't see them as worth destroying.

Along with a portable magnetic tape player, the cabinet holds over 50 tapes. A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Engineering check recognizes the antiquated technology and knows how to use it. Luckily, the tapes are labeled by date, so the PCs can easily find the last recording Uliyu made. In it, the head scientist explains that during Director Volstra's absence, they plan to meet with the representative from Gamut Bio to review several prototype augmentations that allegedly bolster the recipient's immune system. Uliyu plans to thoroughly test these devices in the main lab before declaring them a success and mentions data from all trials will be stored in the mainframe, as usual. The recording ends on a trepidatious note as Uliyu expresses hope that this doesn't end like "the debacle of 291," the last time they worked with an outside contractor.

If the PCs spend another 30 minutes combing through the tapes, they can find a recording from that year where Uliyu mentions that a representative from the Zeffrac Science Platform has requested that Diorama R&D bioengineer an unusually strong fungicide for reasons the barathu doesn't quite understand. Further entries note that the project was rushed and fraught with weird incidents, such as scientists experiencing periods of forgetfulness. In the end, Uliyu was glad to be done with the job, though they weren't pleased with the final product.

Creature: When the infested Jesara Hy Nevintsi arrived from Gamut Bio, one of their first acts was to merge with Quanma



BARTET BRATTLESPRING

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Ge Uliyu—a common barathu greeting. Unfortunately, this successfully resulted in spreading the dycepskian mycelium into Uliyu, pulling the lab's lead scientist to the fungal mass mind. With the conversion of Aykins Segrue (see area **A10**), the dycepskians are firmly entrenched in the lab's upper management, and Nevintsi was able to move on to Lae Araae.

Uliyu can usually be found here in their office, including after regular business hours. Even before being taken over, Uliyu worked almost around the clock, using their apartment in the settlement for entertaining guests. Uliyu would often sleep at their desk and still does, but now only in brief spans of a few hours at a time. The dycepskian infection reduces much of the need for rest.

Uliyu attempts to keep up appearances, so PCs posing as scientists might be able to interact with Uliyu by entering through the main lab (area **A12**) and succeeding at a Bluff or Disguise check opposed by the scientist's Sense Motive or Perception check, respectively. If Uliyu grows too suspicious, they attack after telepathically warning the scientists in area **A12** (who activate the silent alarm, as described in that area).

If the PCs attacked Segrue, Uliyu is aware of the PCs' presence and true intentions and attacks them on sight.

QUANMA GE ULIYU CR 10

XP 9,600

Agender dycepskian-infested barathu (*Starfinder Adventure Path #28: The Hollow Cabal* 55, *Starfinder Alien Archive* 20)

N Large aberration (dycepskian)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE HP 150
EAC 23; **KAC** 24

Fort +10; **Ref** +10; **Will** +16

Defensive Abilities amorphous; **Immunities** mind-affecting effects

Weaknesses vulnerable to *remove affliction*

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (Ex, perfect)

Melee slam +20 (2d8+11 B)

Space 10 ft.; **Range** 10 ft.

TACTICS

During Combat On the first round of combat, Uliyu uses adaptation to gain DR 5/—. If the PCs aren't within reach of their tentacles, they change their adaptation to gain 15 feet of reach or a ranged attack (+18 to hit, 2d8+10 B). Uliyu attacks the weakest-looking PC if possible, hoping to sow chaos in their enemy's ranks.

Morale Uliyu fights to the death, as they have likely been caught in their office and cornered by the PCs.

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +2; **Con** +3; **Int** +5; **Wis** +8; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +19 (+27 to fly), Bluff +24, Computers +19, Life Science +24, Medicine +24, Physical Science +24, Sense Motive +19

Languages Brethedan, Common; telepathy 200 ft.

Other Abilities adaptation, combine, fungal mass mind

Gear *psychic booster*, security badge

Treasure: The antique medical and scientific equipment found on the southeast table is worth 12,000 credits to a collector and weighs a total of 2 bulk.

Development: If this combat occurs within view of the transparent aluminum doors to the main lab, the scientists there activate the silent alarm, which summons a pair of Diorama guards and raises the Alertness Level by 4.

If Aykins Segrue is still alive when the PCs defeat Uliyu, the infested verthani is aware of their condition through the dycepskian fungal mass mind. The Alertness Level increases by 4, and Segrue moves to investigate the barathu's office. Within 10 minutes, he arrives with two of the guards from area **A9**. If the PCs aren't there anymore, he tries to track them down.

A19. LOBBY (CR 8)

The waterfall on the back wall is a permanent hologram concealing a large closet full of office supplies, hard copies of corporate manuals, and spare batteries. The front doors are locked with a secure lock after normal business hours.

Creatures: Two Diorama guards sit behind the reception desk, monitoring the feeds from the building's security cameras. Unless there is a major emergency elsewhere in the building, these guards remain here at their post.

DIORAMA GUARDS (2) CR 6

XP 2,400 each
HP 108 each (page 11)

Treasure: The equipment in the closet is mostly useless to the PCs, except for 10 spare high-capacity batteries and three *mk 2 serums of healing*. A spare vendor key card is in the top drawer of the reception desk.

A20. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

The double door to this room has a maximum-security lock, keyed to Rel Volstra's security badge.

This lavish office contains a large couch, a small round meeting table, and a giant oak desk with comfortable leather chairs on either side. A small wet bar stands against the western wall next to a small specimen of an exotic Castrovelian palm tree.

This executive office belongs to Director **Rel Volstra** (LN female human), administrator of this facility. She maintains a stocked wet bar and comfortable seating areas, only using her desk when she has more involved work to do. Having only been in this position for a few months, she's still in the process of settling in and hasn't yet had time to replace her

personal restroom with more appropriately sized facilities. The previous director of Traechee Memorial Laboratory was a dragonkin named Krelnor who mysteriously stopped coming into work a few months ago and finally left the planet without any explanation. Krelnor's disappearance had nothing to do with the dycepskian infiltration of the lab or the gray's past involvement with Diorama; he had merely gotten in over his head with some black-market smugglers of illegal biotech and decided to flee before they came collecting.

The double door in the northern wall is a discrete entrance to a personal washroom; its handles are flush with the wall but aren't hidden from sight.

Treasure: The wet bar contains several unopened bottles of rare and top-shelf liquor, worth 5,000 credits to the right collector and weighing 1 bulk. Volstra is currently at an offworld executive retreat, but she accidentally left her security badge in her desk; a PC can locate the badge with a successful DC 23 Perception check. It functions as a master badge that can unlock any door or locker in the facility.

LEAVING DIORAMA

No matter their approach to the mission, the PCs should have discovered (and likely defeated) the dycepskian hosts who have infiltrated Traechee, recovered the HepatoDyne implants, and learned that Jesara Hy Nevintsi has moved on to Laoe Araae with some kind of plan to infest an agent of Confluence. They also likely uncovered evidence linking Diorama R&D to a mysterious fungicide created in the same year that the first case of the Brethedan blight was documented. They probably have more questions about the connection between these pieces of information, and answers might be found at the hospice.

Unless they cause a gigantic ruckus at Traechee, the PCs have the opportunity to get a full 8 hours of uninterrupted rest in their settlement hideout if they need it. If the PCs' ship was disabled by Knight-Errant Krelor Danesh and they haven't yet repaired it, they have time to do that now as well. However, the PCs shouldn't feel like they should dawdle, as the dycepskian threat still has the potential to expand!

PART 2: A QUIET PLACE TO DIE

As the PCs leave Molovis with information about the dycepskian plot at Laoe Araae, they are contacted again by the Steward agents Xych Vorsen and Ephecta. The pair let the PCs know they have arrived at the Brethedan city of Trillidiem to be closer to the heroes in case of trouble, under the auspices of working on a separate case. The PCs can tell the agents what they know, which is greatly concerning to the shirren and android. Read or paraphrase the following.

"This is bad," says Vorsen. "If the dycepskians can infect the Confluence agent, they can spread their infection back to Confluence themselves and gain direct political control over both Bretheda and Liavara. I don't need to tell you that would be catastrophic."

Ephecta interjects, "Our one defense is that the dycepskians need to stay secretive. If they attack the agent outright, then Confluence won't take them back into the collective. You need to find a way to get that agent out of harm's way before the dycepskians make their move."

Vorsen says, "We'll stay in Trillidiem looking for a legal way to detain an agent of Confluence in case things go poorly on Laoe Araae. Good luck!"

The Stewards aren't able to offer any direct assistance at this time, but they can answer questions the PCs might have about Confluence (*Starfinder Pact Worlds* 123) and Laoe Araae (*Pact Worlds* 124).



QUANMA GE ULIYU

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MILK RUN

Though unlikely, it is possible that the PCs are able to infiltrate the Traechee Memorial Laboratory, steal the remaining HepatoDyne implants, uncover the dycepskians' plans for Laoe Araae, and then leave without rousing too much suspicion or getting into combat. At the very least, the PCs might avoid the majority of the fights here, which will leave them sorely lacking in experience for the remainder of the adventure.

Such cleverness and ingenuity should be rewarded with XP for each encounter they were able to avoid or overcome using non-combat methods. For example, if the PCs were able to prevent the assassin robot in area **A6** from deploying, award them XP as if they defeated the robot in combat.

From Molovis, it takes 1d8 hours to reach Laoe Araae. An automated message directs the PCs to land on the visitors' landing pad at the hospice's therapy wing, where they will be greeted by facility staff; touching down on the staff landing pad requires a security code the PCs don't have.

THE PROBLEM IS THE SOLUTION

Jesara Hy Nevintsi is aware that the PCs are on their trail, so they lay a trap for their pursuers that they believe will enable them to quietly infect Verifier Ki, the Confluence agent, as well. Over the past few days that Nevintsi has been at Laoe Araae, they have infested a number of the patients and convinced a few orderlies to aid them.

Verifier Ki arrives shortly before the PCs and is shown to a private meeting room in the therapy ward, where they are given some documentation about the hospice's recent efforts to peruse. Meanwhile, any non-essential staff and non-infected patients are transferred to other areas of the facility. When the PCs land, they are to be greeted by friendly faces and allowed to speak with the Confluence agent. When they reach the meeting room, the ward enters a lockdown state, under the auspices of the PCs being terrorists. Nevintsi will "save" Verifier Ki from the PCs, then insist they look over the agent to make sure they weren't harmed. During this exam, the infested barathu plans to merge with Ki, spreading the dycepskian mycelium, which should remain dormant until after the agent has remerged with Confluence.

GRAY INTERVENTION

The grays have had a secret observation outpost attached to the underside of Laoe Araae for some time to observe the progress of the Brethedan blight, a disease that they accidentally helped engineer. Though the original virus failed to destroy the dycepskian infection, the grays are taking advantage of the opportunity to learn more about the unique biology of barathu adaptation. Despite their scrutiny, they don't notice the dycepskian plan to combat

the Brethedan blight with their own mycelium. At least, not until the PCs arrive.

All grays within the Pact Worlds have been notified about the PCs' status as an experiment whose parameters have changed since their escape. When Nevintsi springs their trap, the grays realize something is amiss—the PCs also wish to stop the Confluence agent from being infected. The grays decide that capturing both Verifier Ki and the PCs will give them the most control over the situation. The grays disable the PCs' vessel and move to kidnap both the PCs and Ki, planning to wipe everyone's memories of the events. This leads to a three-way confrontation during **Event 5** in area **B2**.

B. LAOE ARAAE THERAPY WING

This area is just one small wing of the large hospice, featuring spaces for meditation and art therapy for the ailing patients, and is the first (and usually only) part of the facility visitors see. While other parts of Laoe Araae are dedicated to making the terminally ill barathus comfortable in their last days, those who have most recently contracted Brethedan blight are still mobile and try to keep themselves from thinking about their impending deaths by partaking of the amenities in these rooms.

LAOE ARAAE THERAPY WING FEATURES

The therapy wing of Laoe Araae has several common features that can be assumed unless noted otherwise.

Atmosphere: The entire hospice is within a dome that protects it from Brethedan storms. The atmosphere is normal.

Ceilings: The ceilings here are 20 feet high to accommodate barathu physiology.

Doors: All doors are constructed from steel and are usually unlocked. In fact, each door opens automatically when a creature approaches it.

Lighting: The lighting within the therapy wing is normal.

Signs: All signs are written in Brethedan and Common.

Walls: The walls consist of 2 inches of steel covered with an inch of drywall that has been painted seafoam green.

Windows: The windows are constructed from 3-inch-thick transparent aluminum.

B1. LANDING PLATFORMS

Several landing platforms inside Laoe Araae's dome can support three or four Large or smaller starships. The area is equipped with sound dampeners to keep the rest of the hospice peacefully quiet. The entrance to the hospice proper is to the south. When the PCs arrive, there are no other starships parked here.

Creatures: Automated robots with limited virtual intelligence maintain the platforms; when a starship lands, they secure the vessel and even refuel it if necessary. These robots have been programmed to welcome visitors to the hospice, directing them to the garden courtyard (area **B2**). The robots aren't combat capable.

Development: Once the grays decide to recapture the PCs, they activate long-dormant programming within the robots, directing them to disable the PCs' thrusters, which the robots accomplish by removing several compression coils and a gyrostabilizer chip. These parts are delivered to Observation Station Zairx and will need to be retrieved by the PCs if they want to leave Laoe Araae (see Part 3).

B2. GARDEN COURTYARD

The transparent walls of this courtyard reveal blue and violet cloudscares outside. Four stone pillars surround a stone fountain that sprays water out of a barathu statue atop the fountain's peak. Greenery occupies the four corners, and the floor is covered with artificial grass. Metal benches stand against the northernmost pillars and southern wall, just between two sets of double doors. Other sets of double doors lead to the north and west.

This area is often occupied by visitors who are either dropping off a sick loved one or meeting with the hospice's doctors to receive bad news. When there are no visits scheduled, the barathu patients are allowed to float in this garden space, which is designed to provide the maximum amount of emotional comfort. Hidden speakers pipe in light orchestral music and the plants give off a faint lavender scent.

The locked southwestern double door, marked "Patients and Staff Only," leads to the hospice's medical wing. Each staff member carries a key card that unlocks the door for 1 round. With a successful DC 30 Computers or Engineering check, a PC can bypass the card reader or disable the lock. When the hospice goes into lockdown, the key cards no longer work and the DC increases by 10. These areas are beyond the scope of this adventure.

The northern double door is labeled "Landing Pads." The double door to the southeast is labeled "Arts and Crafts Room." Both areas are outside the scope of this adventure.

Creatures: When the PCs arrive, they are greeted by Maedam, a male kasatha orderly dressed in white. While not a dycepskian host, Maedam has bought into Nevintsi's lies, believing the PCs to be dangerous criminals. He feigns a friendly demeanor, acquiescing to the PCs' requests. If the PCs are aggressive, this merely affirms the kasatha's suspicions. When asked to speak to the Confluence agent, Maedam directs the PCs toward area B8.

If necessary, use the stats for a Laoe Araae orderly from **Event 3** for Maedam. He is, in fact, one of the orderlies present in that encounter. Until that time, he flees from any combat to get backup from area B6.

B3. ARTS AND CRAFTS ROOM

Several easels stand around a raised platform in the southeast corner of the room, each with a large pad of

paper and several pieces of charcoal. A round table in the northeast is covered with various art supplies. Three large cabinets stand against the western wall. Two sets of double doors exit to the north and to the southwest.

The northern double door is labeled "Courtyard," while the other is marked "To Meditation Chamber."

The terminal barathus use this space for painting, drawing, and other creative endeavors to keep their minds sharp and their days interesting. The room is currently configured for charcoal drawings of a live subject. The cabinets contain even more art supplies.

The platform hides a sealed entrance to Observation Station Zairx (area C). A PC who succeeds at a DC 38 Perception check notices that the platform is hollow and sits upon an unusual patch of metal flooring that appears to be a welded-shut hatch. With 10 minutes of work and a successful DC 33 Engineering check, a PC can open this hatch, revealing a ladder leading down into darkness (and, eventually, area C1). The grays use their phase ability to pass through the platform, moving between the secret passage and the room.

Creatures: When the PCs first pass through this room, they find two dycepskian-infested barathus drawing a third dycepskian-infested barathu who is posing on the platform. These barathus are permanent residents of the facility whom Nevintsi quietly merged with to spread their mycelium, in effect, curing the Brethedan blight at the cost of the patient's free will. Though it has only been a couple of days, the hospice's doctors have noted their marked improvement, but have yet to call Nevintsi's "treatment" a cure. Thanks to the fungal mass mind, Nevintsi is aware of the PCs' presence when these barathus spot the group and readies themselves. When the emergency announcement is made, these barathus float over to the garden (area B2).

Treasure: Charcoal drawings of and by dycepskian-infested barathu might be worth something to a specific type of collector, but discovering such a buyer is beyond the scope of this adventure.

B4. L-SHAPED CORRIDOR

This wide L-shaped corridor has three sets of double doors. The doors to the northeast are labeled "Arts and Crafts," the doors to the west are labeled "Staff Only," and the doors to the south are labeled "Meditation Chamber." There are two other single doors, which are unlabeled.

The western door leads to staff facilities and remains locked at all times. Each staff member carries a key card that unlocks the door for 1 round. With a successful DC 30 Computers or Engineering check, a PC can bypass the card reader or disable the lock. When the hospice goes into lockdown, the key cards no longer work and the DC increases by 10. These areas are beyond the scope of this adventure.

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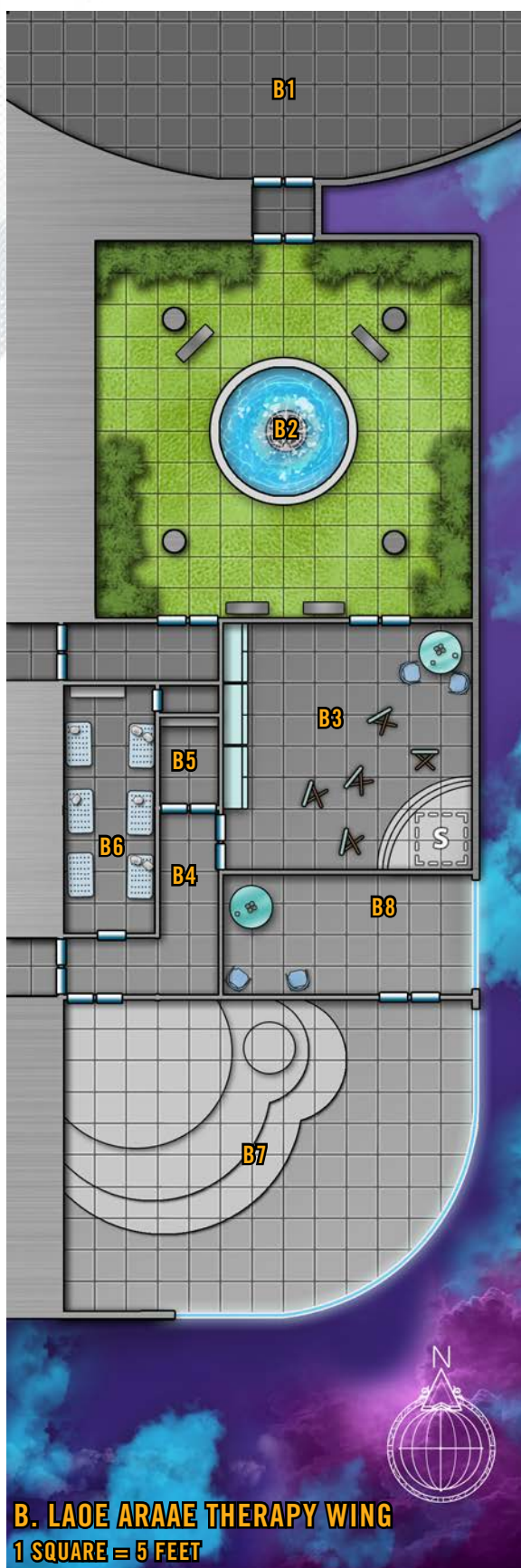
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B5. JANITORIAL SUPPLY CLOSET

The door to this closet is locked, requiring a successful DC 30 Engineering check to open.

The shelves here hold sponges, cloth towels, and bottles of cleaning fluid, among other cleaning supplies.

Creatures: Dr. **Soqui Revus Boh Kalita** (NG female kasatha) wasn't convinced of Nevintsi's stories, so before the PCs arrived, the barathu knocked out the doctor and hid her in this closet. Once found and awakened, she can assist the PCs with any injuries they might have, though she doesn't follow them through the facility if the dycepskians and grays haven't yet been dealt with. However, she can provide the PCs with helpful information later on (see Finding the Gray Observation Station on page 29).

B6. ORDERLY ON-CALL ROOM

This long room contains six cots for orderlies to sleep between shifts or while on-call. Under each cot is a set of drawers for personal effects. The cabinet in the rear of the room contains a handful of clean uniforms.

Creatures: The three other kasatha orderlies who are helping Nevintsi fool the PCs wait here until after the PCs meet with Verifier Ki, after which they move to area **B2**. If the PCs barge in here before that, the orderlies politely point them toward their destination.

B7. MEDITATION CHAMBER

This room features several broad, tiered platforms descending from the northwest corner to a large curved window on the southeast corner of the room, which displays a breathtaking view of the clouds. The smell of lavender pervades the air. Sets of double doors open to the northwest and northeast.

The infirm barathus often use this chamber to help feel connected to Bretheda, quietly meditating while gazing out the windows. Sound dampeners keep the room relatively quiet.

Creature: When the PCs first arrive, a dycepskian-infested barathu floats near the windows, observing the cloudscape. They largely ignore the PCs unless directly interacted with; if forced into conversation, they only talk about the beauty of the view. If asked about the Confluence agent, the barathu directs the PCs to the private meeting room (area **B8**). Nevintsi keeps tabs on the PCs' progress through this barathu thanks to the fungal mass mind. When the emergency announcement is made, this barathu floats over to the garden (area **B2**).

B8. PRIVATE MEETING ROOM

A round table in the northwest corner of the room is covered with electronic medical reports and other datapads. Two chairs have been pushed against the southern wall.

A large window to the east grants a view of a beautiful Brethedan cloudscape.

This chamber is often used for one-on-one therapy sessions, though much of its more comfortable furniture has been temporarily moved elsewhere.

Creature: Nevintsi has convinced the hospice's administration to grant this private chamber to Verifier Ki, the Confluence agent, to use as a workspace. Ki is unique among barathus in that they show a preference for cybernetic augmentations over biotech ones. These enhancements don't interfere with the agent's ability to merge with Confluence or the quantum connection they have with the Brethedan entity.

Provided all the most recent data about the Brethedan blight patients, Ki is poring over this research when the PCs arrive. As Ki turns to ask them who they are, a message comes over the PA system.

"Attention Laoe Araae staff, emergency protocol one. A group of bioterrorists has infiltrated the facility. They have already harmed one orderly and we believe their target is the visiting agent from Confluence. This is not a drill."

Emergency lights begin to flash. The PCs have only a few moments to attempt a DC 30 Diplomacy check to get Ki to trust them, adjusting the agent's starting attitude to indifferent. Otherwise, Ki's starting attitude is unfriendly as they believe the intercom message. Ki will follow the PCs' commands either way, acting in self-preservation and transmitting a running report to Confluence using the entity's unique method of quantum communication.

If a PC presents some hard evidence of the dycepskian threat (such as a HepatoDyne implant) and succeeds at another DC 30 Diplomacy check, Ki's attitude becomes friendly.

VERIFIER KI CR7

XP 3,200

Agender barathu envoy (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 20)
LN Large aberration

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +15

DEFENSE HP 100

EAC 19; **KAC** 20

Fort +6; **Ref** +8; **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities amorphous; **DR** 1/—

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (Ex, perfect)

Melee slam +13 (1d8+7 B)

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



LAOE ARAAE ORDERLY

TACTICS

During Combat Ki stays out of the fray, wanting only to survive. If Ki is friendly toward the PCs (see above), they use their envoy improvisations to aid the PCs.

Morale If reduced to 30 HP or fewer, Verifier Ki uses full defense actions in an attempt to stay alive.

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+23 to fly), Culture +15,

Life Science +20, Medicine +20, Sense Motive +20

Languages Brethedan, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities adaptation, combine, envoy improvisations (improved get 'em, not in the face [DC 17], quick inspiring boost)

Gear silver AbadarCorp travel suit, mk 2 serum of healing;

Augmentations mk 1 dermal plating, respiration compounder, retinal reflectors

Development: Once the emergency lights start flashing, Laoe Araae goes into lockdown. The PCs will be unable to travel to the other wings of the hospice, but they will likely want to flee to their starship with Verifier Ki in tow. However, Nevintsi and their infested or duped allies try to stop the PCs, hoping to infect Verifier Ki during the chaos or after the PCs are defeated. Meanwhile, the grays are alerted to the pandemonium and deploy their capture teams.

EVENT 3: LOSS OF COMPOSURE (CR 12)

This event occurs as the PCs reenter area B7 on their way out of the hospice.

Creatures: Jesara Hy Nevintsi and the four bamboozled kasatha orderlies confront the PCs here. Nevintsi first tries to convince Verifier Ki that they, as the founder of Gamut Bio, can be trusted, and that the PCs are unhinged fanatics. Nevintsi is happy to banter with the PCs for a few moments. When it becomes clear the PCs won't listen to their reasoning, Nevintsi regrettably instructs the orderlies to restrain the PCs.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Sense Motive check while fighting the orderlies realizes that they don't fight with the same fervor as previous dycepskian hosts. That PC can conclude they might only be following orders and aren't infested by the fungal menace.

LAOE ARAAE ORDERLIES (4) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Male and female kasatha

N Medium humanoid (kasatha)

Init +0; **Perception** +11

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DEFENSE **HP 84 EACH****EAC 17; KAC 19****Fort +7; Ref +7; Will +4****OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** unarmed strike +14 (1d6+10 B)**Ranged** zoologist injector pistol +11 (1d8+5 P; critical injection DC +2)**TACTICS****During Combat** The Laoe Araae orderlies attempt to grapple and restrain the PCs using their binders.**Morale** A Laoe Araae orderly surrenders when reduced to 20 or fewer HP.**STATISTICS****Str +5; Dex +0; Con +2; Int +1; Wis +3; Cha +0****Skills** Acrobatics +16, Athletics +16, Culture +11, Diplomacy +11, Medicine +11, Sense Motive +16**Feats** Improved Combat Maneuver (grapple)**Languages** Brethedan, Common, Kasatha**Other Abilities** desert stride, four-armed**Gear** business stationwear, zoologist injector pistol^{AR} with 20 darts, *mk 2 serum of healing*, *serum of enhancement (commando)*, basic medkit, binders (2)**JESARA HY NEVINTSI** **CR 11****XP 12,800**Agender dycepskian-infested barathu (*Starfinder Adventure Path #28: The Hollow Cabal* 55, *Starfinder Alien Archive* 20)

N Large aberration (dycepskian)

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +25**DEFENSE** **HP 170****EAC 24; KAC 25****Fort +10; Ref +10; Will +14****Defensive Abilities** amorphous; **Immunities** mind-affecting effects**Weaknesses** vulnerable to *remove affliction***OFFENSE****Speed** fly 30 ft. (Ex, perfect)**Melee** slam +21 (2d10+13 B)**Ranged** barathu pellet +19 (2d8+11 B)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**TACTICS****Before Combat** Nevintsi adapts a ranged attack (as presented above in their statistics) before initiating the lockdown.**During Combat** Nevintsi attempts to stay out of melee combat, leaving that to the orderlies. They position themselves in front of the meditation room's northwestern exit to keep the PCs from fleeing.**Morale** Nevintsi fights to the death, confident in the dycepskian plan.**STATISTICS****Str +2; Dex +0; Con +5; Int +3; Wis +8; Cha +0****Skills** Acrobatics +20 (+28 to fly), Bluff +25, Diplomacy +20, Life Science +25, Sense Motive +25**Languages** Brethedan, Common; telepathy 100 ft.**Other Abilities** adaptation, combine, fungal mass mind

Development: If the PCs kill any of the orderlies (especially after they surrender), Verifier Ki's attitude shifts to unfriendly toward them, no matter what it was before. The barathu vocally expresses their displeasure in such an act and refers to the PCs as murderers.

EVENT 4: SHADES OF GRAY (CR 11)This event occurs as the PCs pass through area **B3** for the second time.

Creatures: The grays have decided to capture the PCs and Verifier Ki to wipe their memories of the Laoe Araae events. Two members of the abduction squad are hiding within the supply closets here and spring their ambush after all the PCs enter the room. A PC must succeed at a DC 35 Perception check to act during the surprise round.

GRAY ABDUCTORS (2) **CR 9****XP 6,400 each**Gray operative (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 56)

N Small humanoid (gray)

Init +8; Senses darkvision 30 ft.; **Perception** +18**DEFENSE** **HP 135 EACH****EAC 22; KAC 23****Fort +8; Ref +11; Will +12****Defensive Abilities** evasion, phase, uncanny agility**OFFENSE****Speed** 50 ft.**Melee** touch +17 (probe [DC 18]) or

medium sap +17 (1d6+9 B nonlethal)

Ranged flare compliance ray +19 (2d4+9 F nonlethal; critical blind [DC 18])**Offensive Abilities** debilitating trick, sleep paralysis (DC 18), trick attack +5d8, triple attack**TACTICS****Before Combat** Each gray activates their cloaking field.**During Combat** A gray abductor attempts to incapacitate the PCs with trick attacks using their flare compliance ray. They stay out of melee combat, but resort to wielding their saps if they have no other choice.**Morale** If reduced to 15 HP or fewer, a gray abductor uses their phase ability to retreat to their comrades' sides in area **B2**.**STATISTICS****Str +0; Dex +6; Con +0; Int +4; Wis +3; Cha +2****Skills** Acrobatics +23, Computers +23, Medicine +18, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +23**Languages** Aklo (can't speak), telepathy 100 ft.**Other Abilities** operative exploits (cloaking field, uncanny shooter), specialization (ghost)

Gear gray stealthsuit (functions as d-suit III), flare compliance ray^{AR} with 2 batteries (20 charges each), medium sap^{AR}

Development: After facing these grays, the PCs can attempt to increase Verifier Ki's attitude toward them by one step, requiring a successful DC 28 Diplomacy check and at least a cursory explanation of what the PCs understand about the situation. If the PCs killed any of the orderlies in **Event 3**, this check takes a -4 penalty, as Ki doesn't trust them.

EVENT 5: GARDEN PARTY (CR 12)

This event occurs as the PCs enter area **B2** on the way back to their ship.

Creatures: The four barathu patients that Nevintsi infested linger here as a last resort to stop the PCs from escaping with Verifier Ki. However, half of the gray abduction team had a similar idea, and now the two groups are in a standoff. The PCs' appearance precipitates a fight, as both groups want to either capture or kill the PCs.

BARATHU PATIENTS (4) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Agender dycepskian-infested barathu (*Starfinder Adventure Path #28: The Hollow Cabal* 55, *Starfinder Alien Archive* 20)

N Large aberration (dycepskian)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +17

DEFENSE HP 65 EACH
EAC 17; **KAC** 18

Fort +4; **Ref** +4; **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities amorphous; **Immunities** mind-affecting effects

Weaknesses vulnerable to *remove affliction*

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (Ex, perfect)

Melee slam +12 (1d4+6 B)

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

TACTICS

During Combat Each pair of barathu patients combines into one entity, choosing defensive adaptations such as DR and energy resistance. They then remain in front of the exit to the landing pads, blocking the PCs from escaping. They attack anyone who comes near them.

Morale Giving their life for the dycepskian cause, the barathu patients fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +0; **Con** +3; **Int** +2; **Wis** +5; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +17 (+25 to fly), Bluff +17, Diplomacy +12, Life Science +12, Sense Motive +17

Languages Brethedan, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities adaptation, combine, fungal mass mind

GRAY ABDUCTORS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

HP 135 each (page 26)

TACTICS

During Combat The gray abductors focus their efforts on knocking out the PCs first, so that they can bring them back to the observation station alive.

Morale If reduced to 10 HP or fewer, a gray abductor uses their phase ability to retreat further into the hospice and regroup. At your discretion, they reappear as the PCs fight other grays in area **C**.

NO ESCAPE

Once the PCs return to their starship and try to leave Lae Araae, they immediately realize that their ship's engines will not power on. A PC trained in Engineering can immediately diagnose the issue as several missing compression coils and a missing gyrostabilizer chip. Further investigation reveals that



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they were stolen from the starship recently and hastily. If a PC takes a moment to look around, they discover that the automated robots that greeted them when they landed are nowhere to be seen. The PCs will have to track down their missing starship parts in order to escape.

Story Award: If the PCs keep Verifier Ki safe long enough to reach their starship, award them 6,400 XP.

PART 3: POST MORTEM

Laoe Araae's lockdown protocol won't be lifted for several hours, and authorities are likely on their way to investigate. This is bad news for the PCs, who are still wanted criminals. At this point, if the PCs haven't yet found the unconscious Dr. Kalita (see area **B5**), she emerges from the closet to assess the situation. If necessary, she can provide first aid and any other necessary medical procedures.

The PCs might also gain additional information by questioning Dr. Kalita. She has a few things to say about Jesara Hy Nevintsi that can fill in the blanks for the PCs. Read or paraphrase the following.

"I've worked here for several years, tracking the progress of the infection and generally making patients as comfortable as possible. Everyone here deals with their fate differently, but on the whole most do so calmly. They know that merging with others only spreads the infection further; otherwise the blight isn't contagious.

"When Jesara Hy Nevintsi arrived here several days ago claiming to have a cure, I was immediately skeptical, even after they presented a report from Diorama R&D confirming the research. The treatment described seemed... vague, and Nevintsi insisted that they be the only one to administer it, citing proprietary information. I voiced my concerns to Laoe Araae's board of directors, but many of them were excited to try anything that might cure the blight.

"In the end, a trial period was instituted, and four barathu patients volunteered. Nevintsi performed their 'miracle cure'—in secret, I might add—and the results were amazing. The next day, the blight's symptoms had receded, and the volunteers appeared to be getting better! The success was reported to Bretheda, and Confluence decided to send Verifier Ki here to authenticate the cure. But I noticed the volunteers were acting odd. While they were still quite friendly, they didn't seem to enjoy any of the usual leisure activities. It was like they were going through the motions.

"Hours before Ki was to arrive, I mentioned this to Nevintsi. And they knocked me out and stuffed me into a closet! I suppose they were a fraud after all."

FINDING THE GRAY OBSERVATION STATION

The appearance of gray abductors should clue in the PCs that there is more going on at Lae Araae than even they were aware of. A PC who succeeds at a DC 12 Intelligence or Wisdom check realizes that the grays' speed at entering Lae Araae so soon after the lockdown occurred means they likely couldn't have come from a ship orbiting the hospice; they probably have some kind of concealed hideout nearby, possibly even within the facility.

As Dr. Kalita recovers from her traumatic experience, she surveys the remains of the battle in the courtyard. Upon seeing the corpses of the gray abductors, her expression clouds, a hidden memory suddenly resurfacing. If the PCs ask her about it (and especially if they mention grays), she shares her revelation. Read or paraphrase the following.

"I-I remember seeing them before. It was shortly after I joined the staff. I can't believe I forgot this. They... appeared in the arts and crafts room. I heard a noise, turned around, and they were just there. I tried to run, but they shot me with something sharp; I fell to the ground, paralyzed.

"Before I knew it, they were standing over me and I was on some sort of table. I remember intense pain and confusion. Then I was suddenly back in the arts and crafts room, sitting in one of the chairs. I... I vaguely remember it happening again about a year ago too... they took me from my shuttle, I think. I'm sorry if this isn't very helpful."

The PCs can scour the therapy wing to find evidence of the grays, especially if they search area **B3**. Though the DC to find the sealed hatch leading to the observation station is difficult, the PCs have time to take 20 on the Perception check.

C. OBSERVATION STATION ZAIRX

After the accidental creation of the Brethedan blight, the grays needed to know what had happened and what role the dycepskians played. Through psychic manipulation of Brethedan officials and Diorama R&D management, grays implanted the idea of a hospice for the terminal victims of the blight, and thus Lae Araae was created. During its construction, gray operatives attached a cloaked observation station to the underside of the platform, nestled between several of the gravitonic repulsors that keep the hospice hovering within the upper clouds of Bretheda.

Several grays are posted within Observation Station Zairx, all tasked with monitoring the Brethedan blight and attempts to treat it. This usually involves abducting doctors and other staff from the hospice and scouring their minds for relevant data. As usual, the grays erase any memories of these events.

Barathus are a bit too large for the grays to easily bring into their small facility, so often, the grays examine the patients while still within Lae Araae, usually at night after rendering much of the staff unconscious. Very infrequently, the grays will seize a patient's corpse, replacing the unfortunate barathu using a replicant ooze (*Starfinder Adventure Path #26: Flight of the Sleepers* 58), giving the impression that the barathu has remarkably recovered. The grays engineer an "accident" for the replacement soon after, so that the hospice doctors don't look too closely at the improvement.

In addition to its cloaking device, the observation station is slightly out of phase with the Material Plane, much like the grays themselves. Even if a passing starship had the wherewithal to scan Lae Araae for anomalies, the station appears only as a minor sensor malfunction before the advanced cloaking device compensates, rendering the facility invisible once again. Unfortunately, due to the station's phasic shift, a gray's phase ability is less useful. While in the station, a gray cannot pass through walls or material objects, but they retain their 20% miss chance against attacks and effects targeting them directly and take only half damage from area effects.

As the PCs climb down the ladder from area **B3**, they eventually reach a point where the station's artificial gravity takes over, resulting in a brief stomach-churning feeling of disorientation as they feel like they are hanging upside-down on a ladder. They can easily right themselves and finish the brief climb up to the hatch that leads to area **C1**.

OBSERVATION STATION ZAIRX FEATURES

The grays' observation station has several common features that can be assumed unless noted otherwise.

Atmosphere: Nestled under Lae Araae, the station occupies the same protective dome. The atmosphere is normal.

Ceilings: Due to the grays' height, the ceilings here are only 10 feet high.

Computers: The computers within the station store and relay data in a way that transcends language, much like telepathy does. A PC need not understand Aklo to glean information from and manipulate computers here. Each is a tier 5 computer, requiring a successful DC 33 Computers check to hack.

Doors: All doors are constructed from steel and can be opened by touching a panel set in the center (a move action).

Gravity: The station generates its own artificial gravity, though it is "upside-down" relative to Lae Araae.

Lighting: Grays have darkvision, so there is no artificial lighting within the station.

Walls: The outer walls consist of a thick quartz-like material that is as solid as a starship bulkhead, while the interior walls are 3 inches of brushed steel.

C1. OBSERVATION STATION ENTRANCE

This unadorned room contains only a few doors and a large floor hatch. One door leads south and two doors lead east.

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The hatch opens onto the shaft that leads to Laoe Araae. The hinges on the hatch are well-used, as this is the grays' primary way of infiltrating the hospice.

C2. MEMORY LAB (CR 11)

A metal chair faces the southwestern wall, adorned by electrodes and straps and topped with a crown of wires and crystals. A computer terminal stands along the southern wall. A solitary door leads to the north.

The grays use this lab for performing memory wipes on Medium and smaller abductees by strapping the victim into the metal chair and connecting the "crown" to their cranium. This industrial memory expunger is then activated at the room's computer terminal. The procedure takes 10 minutes, generally erasing the last 6 hours of the subject's memories and leaving them dazed for an hour. During that time, the grays return the subject to their bed (or wherever they were taken from).

The computer terminal can be used to adjust the amount of the subject's memories that the expunger deletes, from 5 minutes to 4 days. It also stores information about the mindwipes performed here on dozens of Laoe Araae staff and visitors, with notes that the barathu patients are usually dealt with via the grays' natural psychic abilities. A PC who succeeds at a DC 33 Computers check while using the computer discovers a subroutine that opens a hidden compartment in the console (see Treasure).

Creatures: Two gray abductors are here, prepping the equipment for the PCs. These grays are expecting the abduction team to succeed and are surprised to see the PCs. They attack immediately.

GRAY ABDUCTORS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

HP 135 each (page 26)

TACTICS

During Combat The gray abductors try their best to render the PCs unconscious.

Morale These grays fight to the death, as they are unable to phase through the walls of their facility.

Treasure: A PC can spot the outline of the hidden compartment in the computer console with a successful DC 40 Perception check. It can be opened using the computer (see above) or with a successful DC 40 Engineering check that takes 10 minutes. It contains a memory expunger (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 57) and an erasure worm (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #26: *Flight of the Sleepers* 45) for emergencies.

C3. SURGERY (CR 11)

As the PCs enter the corridor outside this room, they can hear screaming from inside.

A medical table with bright overhead lighting occupies the center of this room, alongside counters full of various medical equipment and a cabinet holding an array of cybernetic augmentations. A small computer terminal is built into the southern counter. A single door exits to the south.

Experiments, extractions, and implantations take place in this medical lab. The tidiness and spotlessness of the room starkly contrasts the horrifying procedures that take place here. Though anesthetized, the unfortunate patients are often awake for these procedures, strapped down and unable to move. The equipment here functions as a medical lab.

Gaining access to the computer terminal allows a PC to undo the table clamps, adjust the lights, open the augmentation storage cabinets, and gather information on all the grays' unwilling patients. Otherwise, the restraints on the table can be disabled with a successful DC 33 Engineering check, while the locked cabinet can be opened with a successful DC 30 Engineering check.

Creatures: When the PCs arrive, a gray surgeon is in the middle of installing a tracking probe into the body of **Rialke Hest** (NG male human), an orderly the grays recently abducted from Laoe Araae on his last day of work. The grays had abducted and performed experiments on him several times during his stint at the hospice and want to be aware of his further movements. Hest is conscious and strapped to the table face-up, while the surgeon slides a minuscule implant past his ocular nerve. A stabilization arm attached to the table holds the insertion tool steady, even after the surgeon lets go of it.

Rialke Hest is a noncombatant, though if necessary, he has an AC of 6 and Fortitude and Will saving throw bonuses of +0; because he is fully restrained, he automatically fails any Reflex saving throws. Hest perishes if he takes more than 6 HP of damage.

GRAY SURGEON

CR 11

XP 12,800

Starfinder Alien Archive 56

NE Small humanoid (gray)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 30 ft.; **Perception** +20

DEFENSE

HP 168

EAC 24; **KAC** 25

Fort +10; **Ref** +10; **Will** +16

Defensive Abilities phase

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee incapacitator +19 (3d4+9 B nonlethal; critical staggered [DC 20]) or touch +19 (probe [DC 20])

Offensive Abilities sleep paralysis (DC 20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; melee +19, ranged +21)

1/day—overload systems (DC 20)

3/day—deep slumber (DC 19)

At will—caustic conversion

TACTICS

During Combat The gray surgeon tries to stay out of melee range and casts caustic conversion at the closest PCs. If possible, they try to inflict overload systems on the strongest-looking PC.

Morale The gray surgeon fights to the death, furious that the PCs disrupted their operation.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +3; **Con** +0; **Int** +8; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +5

Skills Computers +20, Life Science +25,

Physical Science +20, Medicine +25, Stealth +25

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

Gear gray cleansuit (functions as kasatha microcord IV), incapacitator with 1 battery (20 charges), black nanite hypopens (3), chemalyzer, white nanite hypopens (2)

Treasure: Among the uninstalled augmentations is a set of long-range darkvision capacitors.

Development: The PCs can either finish the implantation procedure on Hest, requiring a successful DC 25 Medicine check, or reverse it, which requires a successful DC 35 Medicine check. A PC can retry this check if they fail it by less than 5, but failing by 5 or more causes 1d8 piercing damage, which could kill him. The PCs can use the computer to release Hest from the table; however, if they do so before removing the insertion tool, Hest thrashes around in a panic and takes 2d8 piercing damage. Of course, the PCs could knock him out first if they have the means.

Once Hest is free, the PCs might want to erase this traumatic memory from his mind using the equipment in area **C2**. They must first succeed at a DC 30 Diplomacy check to convince Hest they have his best interests in mind. In either case, Hest can return to Laoe Araae via the ladder.

Story Award: If the PCs rescue Rialke Hest, award them 6,400 XP.

C4. ENGINEERING BAY (CR 10)

Engineering workbenches line the walls here. A set of steel cabinets stands against the far southern wall, and an L-shaped bench occupies the center of the room. Doors exit to the west and east.

The grays maintain their weapons, armor, and other technology here.

Creatures: Two gray engineers are here prepping explosive charges to plant on the PCs' starship. The grays intend to place the PCs' vessel in low orbit around Bretheda and then fake a cascading fusion leak. The resulting explosion is meant to ensure the rest of the Pact Worlds think the PCs have died. If the gray engineers become aware of combat elsewhere in the observation station, they spend 3 rounds securing their equipment before investigating the commotion.

GRAY ENGINEERS (2)**CR 8**

XP 4,800 each

Gray mechanic (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 56)

NE Small humanoid (gray)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 30 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE**HP** 115 **EACH**

EAC 20; **KAC** 21

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

Defensive Abilities phase

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical knife +15 (2d4+8 S) or touch +15 (probe [DC 18])

Ranged reality pistol +17 (1d10+8 E; critical confuse^{AR} [DC 18])

Offensive Abilities overload (DC 18), sleep paralysis (DC 18)

TACTICS

During Combat The gray engineers order their drones into melee combat while shooting at the PCs with their pistols set to stun. During the second or third round, each gray engineer activates their energy shield, choosing to gain resistance 5 to a type of energy favored by the PCs.

Morale After one of the gray engineers is killed, the other retreats to area **C5** to release the dormakhabu. They then flee to Overseer Gyru's side, where they fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +4; **Con** +2; **Int** +6; **Wis** +0; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +21, Computers +21, Engineering +21, Physical Science +21, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +16, Stealth +21

Languages Aklo (can't speak), telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities artificial intelligence (drone), expert rig (engineering kit), mechanic tricks (energy shield [14 HP], repair drone, resistant energy), miracle worker 1/day, remote hack (DC 18)

Gear gray cordsuit (functions as d-suit II), reality pistol (*Starfinder Adventure Path* #26: *Flight of the Sleepers* 45) with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), tactical knife

GRAY ENGINEER'S DRONES (2)**CR –**

N Small construct (technological)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE**HP** 80 **EACH**

EAC 18; **KAC** 20

Fort +6; **Ref** +7; **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities unflankable; Immunities construct immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee tactical retractable spike +15 (1d4+9 P)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +13 (+21 to climb), Stealth +18

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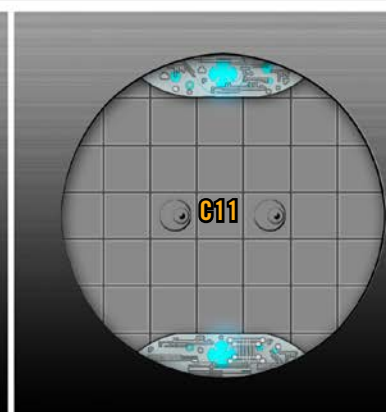
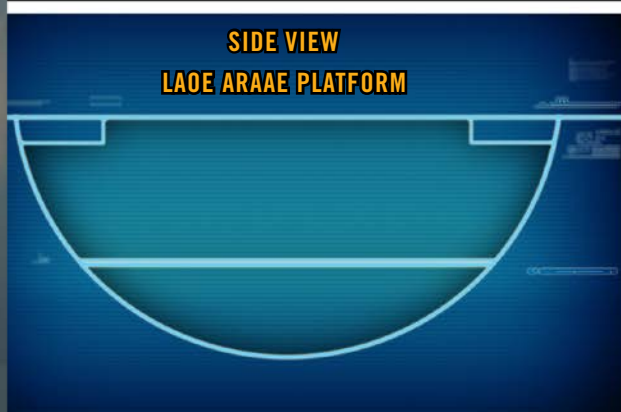
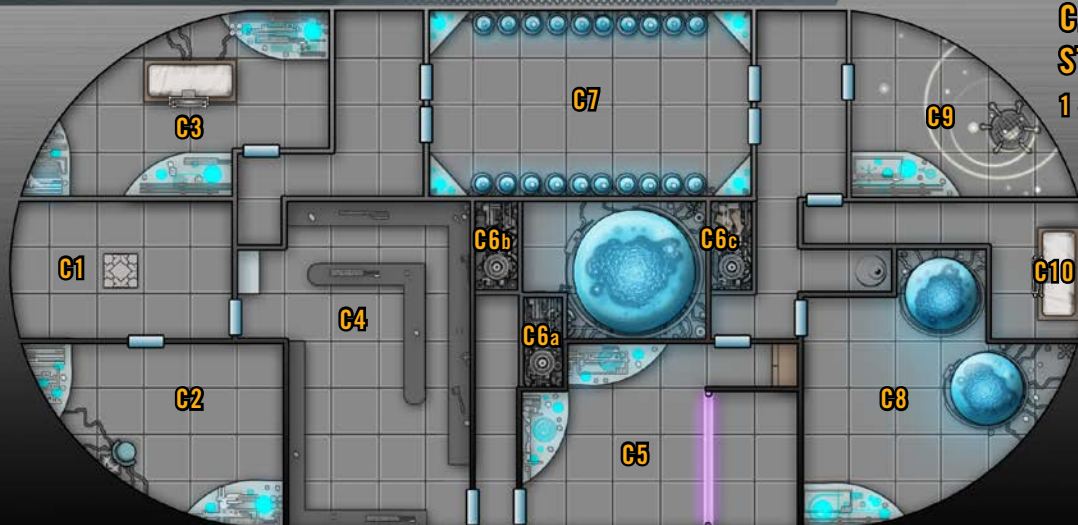
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Other Abilities drone mods (reactive camouflage), reduced actions (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 138), unliving
Gear tactical retractable spike^{AR}

Treasure: Among many pieces of half-built or half-repaired (and therefore useless) pieces of gray technology in the cabinets, the PCs find a working reality rifle (*Starfinder Adventure Path #26: Flight of the Sleepers* 45) and 40,000 UPBs.

Development: A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check finds their ship's missing compression coils on one of the workbenches.

C5. CONTAINMENT CELL (CR 11)

A brilliant violet force field covers the eastern wall of this room, obscuring anything beyond. Control terminals on the north and west walls blink serenely while a solitary cabinet occupies a small nook on the eastern side of the room. Doors exit to the north and west.

The grays use the high-tech cell here to confine dangerous creatures or individuals encountered in the course of their observations. The opaque force field prevents observers from seeing or hearing anything in the cell.

Gaining access to the computer terminal allows a PC to raise or lower the cell's force field, open the cell's exterior hatch, monitor the vitals of the cell's inhabitants, or activate or disable the auditory suppression system (see Hazard). Otherwise, the PCs can disable the forcefield with a successful DC 33 Engineering check.

Hazard: The room is equipped with an auditory suppression system in case of a cell breach. It automatically activates if the force field is disabled. Though the system operates at a frequency that grays cannot hear, a PC must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save each round save or become staggered for 1 round. The dormakhabu is particularly vulnerable to this frequency and becomes dazed for 1 round if it does not succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save each round. Once a creature successfully saves against the signal, they become immune to it for 24 hours.

Creature: Several months ago, a mobile gray team was attacked by a dormakhabu, an aberrant predator that seems fixated on destroying grays. Always interested in scientific inquiry, the grays captured the dormakhabu instead of killing it, dropping it off at Observation Station Zairx for further study. Not much progress has been made on dormakhabu research since then, as Overseer Gyru believes her subordinates' time is better spent on their original mission.

The dormakhabu paces back and forth behind the force field, waiting for the chance to be freed and consume its captors. If released, it stalks any living prey in the station.

DORMAKHABU

CR 11

XP 12,800

HP 180 (page 55)

TACTICS

During Combat The dormakhabu initiates combat by unleashing a telepathic howl, then attacks the closest target with its tentacle. Against grabbed creatures, the dormakhabu uses its bite attack.

Morale If reduced to 30 HP or fewer, the dormakhabu flees.

C6. POWER CORE

A huge transparent aluminum tube stretches from floor to ceiling here, an undulating sphere of black ooze suspended within. Flat metal discs on the walls project an eerie white light. The only exit is a corridor to the west.

The grays of Observation Station Zairx rely on a semi-experimental dark matter-based power core to keep the facility running. The metal discs project a combination of coolant and gravitons that keep the sphere of refined dark matter stable and contained while also creating an ionized conduit of particles for energy to be absorbed and transmitted to the rest of the station.

While attempting to interact directly with the power core is dangerous (see Hazard below), the PCs can discover three power distribution nodes (marked **C6a**, **C6b**, and **C6c**) within nearly hidden cabinets (each of which requires a successful DC 30 Perception check to find). A PC can disable a node with a successful DC 33 Engineering check; a PC who fails this check by 5 or more takes 3d6 electricity damage from the wiring.

The node at **C6a** powers areas **C2**, **C4**, and **C5**; disabling this node shuts down computer consoles and other equipment and disables the force field and the auditory suppression system in **C5**.

The node at **C6b** powers areas **C1**, **C3**, and **C7**; disabling this node shuts down the computer console, medical equipment and restraints in **C3**, as well as the rejuvenation chambers in **C7**.

The node at **C6c** sends power to areas **C8**, **C9**, **C10**, and **C11**; disabling this node shuts down the computer consoles and other equipment in **C8**, **C9**, and **C10** (area **C11** has a backup generator to power its consoles), as well as the ooze containment system in **C8**.

Hazard: A creature that steps into the white light (which includes any space adjacent to the tube) takes 3d6 cold and bludgeoning damage per round from the stream of coolant and gravitons. If a creature were to break the tube and touch the dark matter, they would take 10d6 acid and cold damage per round of contact.

C7. REJUVENATION CHAMBER

Transparent tubes line the north and south walls of this wide hall, each with a mirror-like pad on the floor and bright lamp shining down. Consoles occupy each corner. Double doors exit to the east and west.

The grays use this chamber to rejuvenate their bodies by stepping into the tubes and allowing the bright light to suffuse their bodies. Over the course of 10 minutes, a gray's wounds are healed, and their body becomes rested as if they had spent 8 hours sleeping. The chambers are configured for gray physiology and cause significant damage to non-gray creatures that try to use them (see Hazard). A PC can reconfigure a single chamber by accessing one of the room's terminals and succeeding at a DC 38 Medicine check. This allows a specific non-gray creature to use one of the tubes, which restores 6d6 HP and alleviates the fatigued and exhausted conditions. Such a creature can use a tube only once per day.

Hazard: A non-gray creature who enters a tube that hasn't been reconfigured feels significant pain and is dealt 12d6 damage at the end of a round, after which the tube reopens.

C8. OOZE FOUNDRY AND STORAGE (CR 9)

Two giant vats of taupe and green slime take up the majority of space in the eastern section of this laboratory. There is a computer terminal on the southern wall, and a door exits to the west.

This facility is where the grays create and store replicant oozes (*Starfinder Adventure Path #26: Flight of the Sleepers* 58), which they use to replace abductees who accidentally perish. They then go on to engineer "accidents" for these replacements, as they are unsustainable in the long run.

Gaining access to the terminal enables a PC to monitor the ooze creation process, release a completed ooze, or flush a failed experiment into the Brethedan atmosphere. The records indicate that only one replicant ooze has been created in the past few months; the goo within the vats is currently inert.

Creatures: A gray ooze wrangler's job is to maintain this chamber and the oozes it produces. While the foundry mainly produces replicant oozes, the ooze wrangler keeps a pair of assembly oozes stored in ooze stasis flasks (*Starfinder Adventure Path #26: Flight of the Sleepers* 45) for emergencies.

Earlier in the day, the ooze wrangler decanted a replicant ooze to consume and take the place of a deceased Lae Araae barathu patient. The ooze wrangler is prepping the replacement when the PCs infiltrate the station. If the ooze wrangler knows the PCs are nearby (likely through a telepathic warning from fellow grays or the sounds of combat), the ooze wrangler cooks up a plan to trick the PCs with their newest creation.

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GRAY Ooze WRANGLER

CR 7

XP 3,200

Starfinder Alien Archive 56

NE Small humanoid (gray)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

DEFENSE

EAC 18; **KAC** 19

Fort +6; **Ref** +6; **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities phase

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee touch +11 (probe [DC 17])

Ranged flare compliance ray +13 (2d4+7 F nonlethal; critical blind^{AR} [DC 17])

Offensive Abilities sleep paralysis (DC 17)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; ranged +13)

1/day—*charm monster* (DC 20), *displacement*

3/day—*invisibility*, *mind thrust* (2nd level, DC 19), *mystic cure* (2nd level), *see invisibility*

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 18), *mindlink* (DC 18)

TACTICS

Before Combat If she hears the sounds of combat from elsewhere in the facility, or gets a telepathic warning from the other grays, the gray ooze wrangler casts *invisibility* on herself and directs the replicant ooze to call for help.

During Combat The gray ooze wrangler tries to keep her distance from a fight, casting *mystic cure* on the replicant ooze to keep it healthy. When the replicant ooze reverts to its ooze form, the gray throws one of her ooze stasis flasks (which causes the wrangler to become visible) and casts *displacement* on herself. She casts *charm monster* on a still-standing PC once all her oozes are defeated.

Morale The ooze wrangler fights to the death, knowing the PCs could disrupt the grays' plans.

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +0; **Con** +0; **Int** +2; **Wis** +5;

Cha +4

Skills Diplomacy +14, Life Science +19, Mysticism +19

Languages Aklo (can't speak), telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities ooze savant

Gear gray cordsuit (functions as d-suit II), flare compliance ray^{AR} with 1 battery (20 charges), ooze stasis flasks (2, *Starfinder Adventure Path* #26:

Flight of the Sleepers 45) each containing an assembly ooze (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 16)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ooze Savant (Su) Grays with this rare ability can telepathically communicate with oozes. They ignore the mindless trait of oozes and treat all oozes as if they had an intelligence modifier of at least –5, allowing them to use skills like Diplomacy and Intimidate to change an ooze's attitude. An ooze's starting attitude toward a gray with this ability is indifferent.

REPLICANT Ooze

CR 7

XP 3,200

Starfinder Adventure Path #26: *Flight of the Sleepers* 58

N Large ooze (shapechanger)

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

Perception +15

DEFENSE

EAC 19; **KAC** 20

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

Immunities ooze immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee slam +15 (1d8+11 B)

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

TACTICS

Before Combat The shapechanged replicant ooze calls out for help, trying to lure the PCs into this room. It maintains its disguise as an ill barathu until most of the PCs are in the room, then attacks.

During Combat The replicant ooze uses full attacks against the toughest-looking PC.

Morale The replicant ooze fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

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

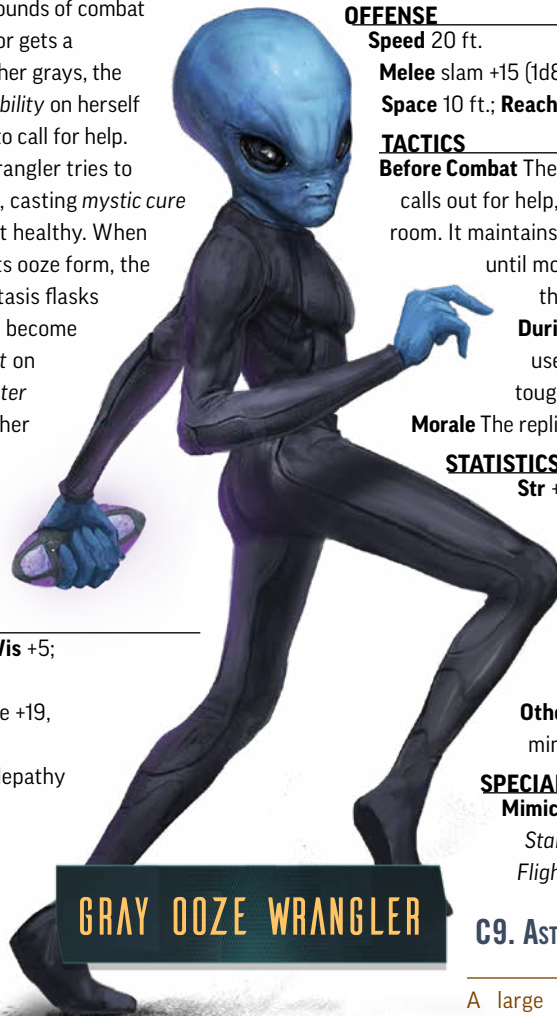
Skills Athletics +15, Bluff +20, Disguise +20, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +15

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language)

Other Abilities mimic corpse, mindless

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mimic Corpse (Ex) See page 58 of *Starfinder Adventure Path* #26: *Flight of the Sleepers*



GRAY Ooze WRANGLER

C9. ASTRONOMY LAB

A large holographic astrolabe in the eastern half of this room draws the eye,

with silvery threads of light depicting the paths of celestial bodies. A small cage sits atop the computer terminal in the corner. A door exits west.

Though not their main mission, the grays perform astronomical research here, focusing on the paths of Bretheda's many moons. Overseer Gyru uses this lab more than any other gray in the observation station. The computer terminal contains the data Gyru has collected over the years, most of which is esoteric and likely of no interest to the PCs.

Creature: The cage contains a live vorac (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 3 146), an eyeless, six-winged avian that Overseer Gyru captured last year on a trip to one of Bretheda's moons to confirm one of her hypotheses about its orbit. Lately, though, Gyru has neglected the pet. A PC might gain the creature's trust by feeding it. Though omnivores, voracs prefer to eat large insects or small reptiles. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Survival check can improve its attitude to friendly; feeding it grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the check. Once the vorac is at least friendly, a PC can bond with it as a 12th-level creature companion (*Alien Archive* 3 138).

C10. BACKUP DATA STORAGE

A huge bank of computers occupies this small room at the end of a long hallway. Lights flash and internal systems hum within the bank, but there appears to be no way to access it.

The grays back up the data they have collected about Laoe Araae here. The various computer consoles around the station routinely copy their data onto this server via a wireless intranet. There is no access terminal, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 33 Computers or Engineering check can hook up a datapad or similar device to the server in a process that takes 10 minutes. A PC can then attempt a DC 35 Computers check to access the data within; unlike the consoles in the station, the server doesn't have telepathic capability, so a PC must be able to read Aklo to attempt this check.

The information stored here dates back to the construction of Laoe Araae and the observation station. While it could fill the PCs in on any facts about this adventure they have yet to learn and provide answers to some of the hospice's staff and patients' families, it bears no relevance to the rest of the campaign.

C11. COMMAND CENTER (CR 13)

The command center can be entered only by using the teleportation circle in the hallway outside of area C8; a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Engineering check understands the purpose of the teleportation circle. A creature who steps on a teleportation circle is immediately transported to a random unoccupied square adjacent to its coupled circle as dimension door (immediately ending its turn). The hallway teleportation circle is coupled to the eastern circle in area C11.

The transparent ceiling of this domed chamber rises to thirty feet at its apex and offers a spectacular, if inverted, view of the Brethedan cloudscape. Ten feet up, a transparent balcony stretches nearly all the way around the room's circumference. Two black circles are etched into the floor, with a matching circle on the balcony. Consoles stand against the northern and southern walls.

This area functions as a command center for the entire observation station. Its teleportation circles work in the same fashion as described above. The eastern teleportation circle is the chamber's exit, while the western circle transports users up to the balcony.

The computers terminals here contain all the information found on the rest of the facility's computers, plus an overview of Observation Station Zairx's main mission: to observe the progress of the Brethedan blight and its victims. Once the self-destruct sequence has been initiated (see below), it can't be stopped, but a PC who has access to a terminal can attempt a DC 33 Computers check to delay the sequence for 1 minute; this check can only be attempted once.

Creatures: Overseer Gyru, the gray in control of Observation Station Zairx, stands on the balcony, perusing a datapad and looking out on the clouds of Bretheda. Over the years at her post, Gyru has come to use this view as a way to focus her thoughts. A single gray abductor monitors the station via the consoles.

When the PCs appear within the command center, Gyru realizes that her time as overseer is likely at an end. As is protocol, Gyru telepathically commands the abductor to initiate a self-destruct sequence that will detach the station from Laoe Araae and overload the dark matter core, ensuring gray data and equipment cannot be salvaged. This sequence takes 4 minutes to complete, plus 1 additional minute for each power relay the PCs disabled (see area C6). A telepathic countdown in Aklo begins immediately. If no PCs understand Aklo, one of them can recognize the messages as a countdown with a successful DC 12 Intelligence or Wisdom check.

GRAY ABDUCTOR

CR 9

XP 6,400

HP 135 (page 26)

TACTICS

During Combat Even now, the gray abductor tries to knock out the PCs with nonlethal damage.

Morale The gray abductor fights to the death, standing with their overseer.

GYRU

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female gray witchwarper (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 56, *Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 60)

NE Small humanoid (gray)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +22

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DEFENSE**HP 170 RP 8****EAC 25; KAC 26****Fort +11; Ref +13; Will +13****Defensive Abilities** phase**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)**Melee** touch +19 (probe [DC 21])**Ranged** globe binding blaster +21 (2d6+12 B; critical bind^{AR} [DC 21])**Offensive Abilities** sleep paralysis (DC 21)**Witchwarper Spells Known** (CL 12th)4th (3/day)—*cosmic eddy* (DC 23), *greater invisibility*3rd (6/day)—*displacement*, *explosive blast* (DC 22), *flight*, *haste*2nd (at will)—*force blast* (DC 21), *slice reality*^{COM} (DC 21)**TACTICS****Before Combat** Knowing the PCs are coming, OverseerGyru casts *displacement* and *flight* on herself just before the PCs arrive.**During Combat** If Gyru hasn't already given the command,

she telepathically commands the abductor to initiate the station's self-destruct while casting *haste*. Gyru then casts *greater invisibility* on herself and uses infinite worlds to shape the battlefield to her whims while staying out of the fray. When her ally has been defeated, she starts using her damaging spells against the PCs.

Morale Gyru fights to the death, accepting that mutual destruction is the only way to keep her secrets safe.

STATISTICS**Str -1; Dex +4; Con +0; Int +5; Wis +0; Cha +8****Skills** Diplomacy +27, Life Science +22, Mysticism +27**Languages** Aklo (can't speak), telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities alternate outcome (2/day), infinite worlds (3/day, 220 ft., 12 rounds), paradigm shifts (dart aside, magic deletion [SR 24])

Gear gray overseer's robes (functions as platinum AbadarCorp travel suit), globe binding blaster (*Starfinder Adventure Path #26: Flight of the Sleepers* 45) with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), gyrostabilizer chip, overseer's datapad^{AR} (tier 4, hardened, miniaturization 4, range III [planetwide])

Development: Overseer Gyru's datapad holds a copy of the station's most recent set of data, including messages from Mysteriarch Zaxo about the PCs. See *Concluding the Adventure* for details.

After the PCs defeat Gyru and retrieve their gyrostabilizer chip, they need to escape the observation station's imminent self-destruction. On their way back to area **C1**, they encounter any grays they haven't already defeated, who are also fleeing toward the hospice. At the end of the self-destruct sequence, the observation station detaches from the underside of Laoe Araae as the dark matter core overloads. The station becomes completely out of phase with the Material Plane as it plummets into Bretheda's atmosphere. Moments later, it implodes silently. Anyone watching might mistake it for an unusual bit of turbulence in the gas giant's atmosphere.

If the PCs are still within the station when this happens, they are obliterated, barring a miracle.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Returning to Laoe Araae, the PCs can repair their starship and check in with Verifier Ki. The barathu, who now realizes the PCs have been telling the truth, thanks them for ensuring they weren't infested, and volunteers to speak to the Stewards and the media on their behalf. Ki also states that they have already passed the PCs' story along to Confluence in the hopes that it will help the PCs clear their names. The barathu is scheduled to be picked up by an official Brethedan



OVERSEER GYRU

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government transport shortly and doesn't leave Laoe Araae with the PCs.

The PCs also have time to investigate Overseer Gyrus's datapad. If the PCs did not retrieve it, a rescued Rialke Hest can fill the PCs in on the facts below, having overheard them after being abducted. Alternatively, the Stewards Yych Vorsen and Ephecta can contact the PCs with information they intercepted from encrypted transmissions emanating from Absalom Station.

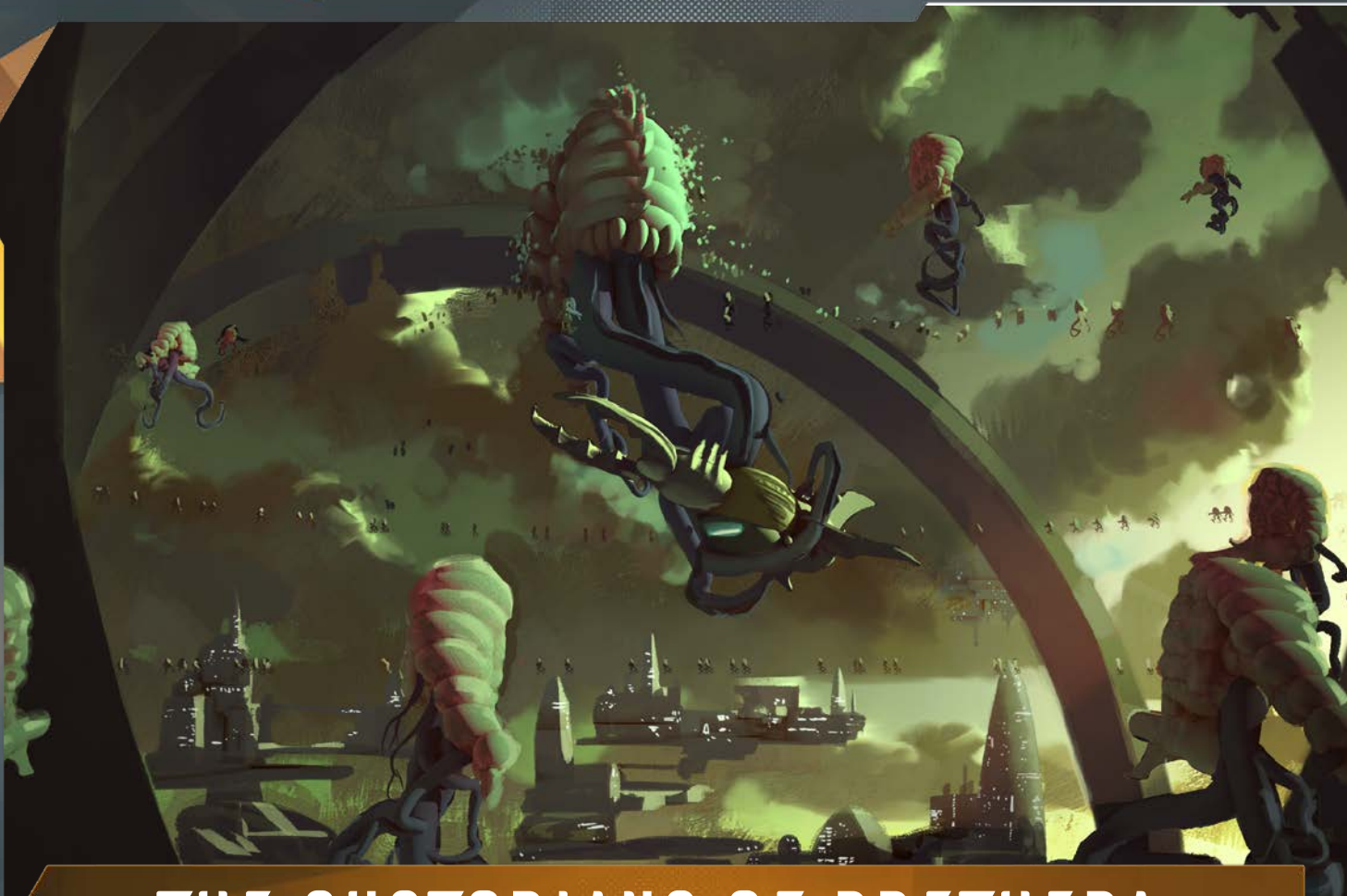
Gyrus's datapad uses a standard interface consistent with Pact Worlds technology, though in Aklo. A PC can unlock the datapad with a successful DC 32 Computers check. The largest collection of files is in a folder marked "Project Laoe Araae Background." The reports within date back to 290 AG and detail the gray's first suspicions about "unknown agents" on the Zeffrac Science Platform. After several months of observations, gray operatives learned about the "fungal infestation" of the Wise Council, naming it as "dycepskian influence." The records go on to explain the eventual accidental creation of the Brethedan blight as described in the Adventure Background, the construction of Laoe Araae, and the deployment of Observation Station Zairx shortly before any patients were transferred to the hospice. The final memo notes Gyrus's appointment as overseer of the facility. Use this information to fill the PCs in on any facts they might have missed so far.

In addition, communication logs show messages from Absalom Station regarding the PCs' escape during the attack on

Outpost Omicron. The grays' standing orders are to observe and record the PCs' actions should they come within the purview of any current gray post; they are not to be recaptured unless unusual circumstances dictate otherwise. These messages come from someone named Mysteriarch Zaxo and include dossiers on each PC. Each profile is accompanied by a picture and brief biography of the individual the PC is a clone of, one of whom is a member of the Pact Council named Erem. This record is marked "For replacement of reptoid agent."

The final outgoing message is from Overseer Gyrus to Mysteriarch Zaxo, explaining the situation on Laoe Araae and her intent to reabduct the PCs in the wake of the "ambush perpetrated by the dycepskian menace." Gyrus wants to know why and how the PCs became entangled with the dycepskians and plans to scour their minds for that information. She assures Zaxo that "memory expungement protocols" will be followed for the hospice's staff and patients since the abduction will likely be "unfortunately chaotic."

Gyrus's datapad is the first solid evidence the PCs have that they are clones, and if they relay it to Vorsen and Ephecta, the Steward agents are understandably flabbergasted (though Vorsen seems oddly thrilled as well). The two are also stunned by the information about a member of the Pact Council being a reptoid, and ask the PCs to meet them at Absalom Station to expose the impostor and clear the PCs of the false charges circulating against them, leading to the concluding adventure, "Puppets Without Strings!"



THE CUSTODIANS OF BRETHEDA

"I'll be the first to admit, we kind of take them for granted. They're from here in the system, they're members of the Absalom Pact, they aren't undead or AIs. But they're weirder than you realize. They'll change right in front of you like it's nothing, growing legs to walk around or extra eyes to see with, or a bunch of them'll join together and now you're suddenly talking to someone completely different. Sure, they don't have genders, but whatever—half the time they don't even have names. Good luck explaining why that confuses you."

—Kedri Shalannic, senior Starfinder agent, to junior agents en route to Trillidiem

BARATHUS

Long before recorded history, single-celled organisms floating in the stormy skies of a turbulent gas giant took an evolutionary leap forward. They joined together, forming a new being that was larger, more adaptable, and more capable than they had been independently. Changes like this had taken place on thousands of worlds before, but in Bretheda's churning clouds, the new organisms retained a fragment of their original autonomy and function. Where other lifeforms amassed more and more cells, growing larger and becoming more specialized as individual creatures, the Brethedan cells retained the ability to join together and draw apart again, gaining the advantages of both forms.

Millions of years later, these beings, called barathus, still exhibit this peculiar evolutionary adaptation, which has become a cornerstone of their physiology, outlook, and society. Barathus have a second noteworthy, and possibly related, biological adaptation as well: the ability to edit their own genetic code at will, giving them extreme flexibility. The link between these two traits is unclear: no one knows which came first or if one resulted from the existence of the other. Combined, these abilities make barathus one of the most adaptable species in the galaxy.

OUT OF MANY, ONE

When two or more barathus merge, the result is more than mere telepathic collaboration. This conjoining results in a fundamentally different being with a single, independent consciousness and personality; they become, in effect, a new person. This new entity commands the combined mental and physical prowess of all components, including their knowledge and memories. This can provide a significant advantage, whether the barathus are trying to escape a hungry nuru worm or design a more efficient starship thruster. There is no limit to how many barathus can join together in this way—indeed, Bretheda is home to numerous entities who consist of hundreds or even thousands of merged barathus, many with significant political or economic influence. In these large entities, the new consciousness becomes relatively stable, remaining intact even if individual barathus join or leave the entity.

When the external stimulus that prompted barathus to merge has passed, the entity usually disbands, leaving the component barathus to resume their individual lives. Each component recalls its time as part of the larger collective, though because these memories were formed within a powerful combined intellect, they're somewhat limited by the individual barathus's mental faculties. Some barathus have compared their memories of a merge to a highly compressed video feed, wherein the overall memory is hazy or filled with static, so details are hard to make out. These memories do include a portion of the knowledge and memories of the other component barathus, since the combined entity had all these thoughts

at their command, but these recollections are secondhand and even less distinct.

Barathus reproduce by budding, a process similar to cellular reproduction, but on a much more complex scale. A barathus's ability to rewrite their own genetics ensures biological diversity and repairs any damage to their genetic code, so sexual reproduction with another barathus is unnecessary and ultimately less advantageous than simply budding offspring from themselves. A barathus with sufficient resources and an inclination to reproduce generates an excess of tissue and genetic material, which eventually separates from the parent and becomes autonomous. These resultant "early stage" barathus can modify their bodies just as adults can, often merging with one or more adult barathus for protection even though they have little experience or knowledge to offer. A young barathus controls their own growth, but they still take about a year after budding to



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reach the size of an adult. Barathus judge psychological maturity in terms of experience, so a year-old barathu who has lived through very interesting circumstances might be considered an adult, while a barathu who has been sheltered for decades might still be considered a child.

UNLIMITED ADAPTATIONS

While every species naturally adapts to its environment, few can compare to barathus' ability to modify their physical bodies. By altering their genetic code, they produce a boggling array of materials that can be incorporated into their physiology. In the early development of the species, this allowed them to manifest armored plating to defend against predators, spiny protrusions to hunt prey, and grasping appendages to manipulate the world around them.

Today, barathus apply their unique physiology to manufacture tools, industrial chemicals, medical serums, biotech augmentations, and more. A barathu's ability to produce a material or component is limited only by their knowledge of the substance they wish to produce and the availability of the required elements in or near the barathu's body. Merging allows several barathus to combine their mental prowess and collected resources, so combined entities can often produce larger and more complex objects. Barathus looking to overcome a shortage of some required element might seek to hire or collaborate with another barathu that has already acquired or ingested more rare materials.

Barathus' ability to edit—and thus repair—their own genetic code means they don't age as most biological creatures do. Instead, age deteriorates a barathu's memory. As an individual barathu accrues more and more memories, many hazy and vague from repeated merging and disbanding, their psyche begins to falter. As a side effect of this mental failure, the barathu can no longer effectively adapt and maintain their genetic code. Most barathus at this stage of life choose to contribute their physical forms and lifetime of experiences to one of the planet's permanently combined entities, but a few choose to remain apart instead, allowing their bodies and memories to fade in tandem.

SOCIETY IN THE SKIES

Given that most barathus alternate between existing as a single identity and combining to form various new consciousnesses, the concept of "self" is somewhat foreign to them, and members of other species often struggle to understand the nuances of barathu identity. Individual barathus explain their perspective differently; some feel they only exist as an individual when they're outside of a merged unit. When merged, another creature exists, and an individual barathu recalls that existence as belonging to a different entity. Other barathus apply the concept of "self" to every consciousness they have ever participated in, referring to all such entities in the first person. Still others describe

each transition between single barathu and collective as the beginning of a new identity.

Similarly, barathus don't normally have names for themselves. Their powerful telepathy makes verbal designations unnecessary, and their frequent merging creates so many unique personalities that naming them all would be a terribly inefficient practice. But barathus working with members of other species have long understood the challenge this presents, and many have adopted names solely for the convenience of others. These names are more akin to titles, describing a barathu's role as others are likely to encounter them; an additional tag within the name clarifies an individual barathu's relationship to larger collective individuals. Barathus living entirely among other cultures adopt more personal names, though these names have no consistent conventions. A barathu might borrow the name of an admired individual or legendary hero, choose a random collection of sounds or gestures they find pleasing, or accept a name given to them by a friend.

All these unusual distinctions are little talked about among barathus, of course, who find their unique nature quite ordinary. In contrast, barathus struggle to understand the isolation of individuals who can only communicate with others through touch, spoken words, or rare or limited telepathy. Many barathus view other species with a combination of pity and condescension.

Due to their adaptability and connectivity, barathus were among the least distressed of all the Pact Worlds species at the end of the Gap. The significance of the Gap was not lost on them, but there were few societal disruptions; as other cultures fell into chaos and disarray, barathus simply moved forward. Barathus are constantly creating and ending individual consciousnesses, and they're used to memory lapses, so waking from the Gap wasn't an entirely foreign experience. Many barathus likened the experience to disbanding from a particularly large and long-lasting merge.

Barathu politics and economics revolve around the all-encompassing significance of merging as a cultural touchstone. Bretheda's governing body, Confluence, is a merged collective of several thousand barathus, and many of the major corporations operating in the planet's stormy skies are governed in a similar manner. Merging into a collective is so efficient that barathus find it ridiculous to conduct business, research, governance, or other affairs as individuals. This perspective puts them at odds with many other species, for a merged barathu corporation is literally a single person, however large and complex. For this reason, barathus' approach to corporate regulation is far more permissive than most other cultures prefer, and the restrictions placed upon corporate activity by other civilizations become violations of personal rights when applied to a merged barathu corporation.

Barathus are easygoing by nature. Few things present a real threat to the barathu species, and Bretheda's skies

have historically provided plenty of organic matter for them to subsist upon. As more barathus come to dwell in urban areas, floating agricultural systems have kept pace with demand for food. Barathus resolve conflicts among themselves by combining and addressing the problem as a collective entity, so arguments between individuals are few and far between. Their communal society has few laws, and most of the laws that do exist are in place to regulate non-barathus. In general, barathus find members of other species a bit bewildering, but as long as a visitor isn't disruptive or destructive, barathus welcome those who dare to live on their stormy gas giant.

Barathus place tremendous value on knowledge, education, and experience. Youths are encouraged to study whatever field they most enjoy; since the Signal, many barathus study at prestigious or specialized universities throughout the Pact Worlds. Young barathus are also encouraged to explore and collect new experiences, making them better able to contribute to any merged entities they join. Over the past few generations, however—as barathus have budded and been raised surrounded by other species—some have developed a more individualistic mindset that makes it difficult for them to merge smoothly with others of their kind. These barathus remain in their juvenile state much longer than normal, and older generations view these independent youths with varying degrees of scorn and disdain. The conflict between “travelers” and “residents” has grown swiftly in recent decades, becoming one of the most significant cultural divides in the history of barathukind.

Outsiders are often surprised by the honesty and frankness of barathus, but from the barathu perspective, information can be kept private only until the next merging. Keeping secrets from one another is all but impossible unless the barathu refuses to merge, which in turn attracts attention and concern from others. There are notable exceptions to this attitude, however; in the less-savory districts of Trillidium, a cadre of barathus entrenched in black-market commerce and other outlawed practices merge only with other members of their cohort, ensuring no outsiders learn the details of their dealings.

THE DREAMERS

Barathus might have been one of the first species in the system to travel between worlds, using telepathically controlled oma—enormous space whales—as primitive biological starships. One of their first journeys was to the neighboring gas giant of Liavara, a peach-colored world with a distinctive ring system, and those barathus who visited came away deeply changed by the experience. These barathus became known as the Dreamers. Although they remained similar to barathus in appearance, their behavior was altered beyond comprehension, and they gained command of confounding psychic powers. No records

relate the reason for this journey, but the Dreamers and their descendants became key aspect of barathu culture. Nearly every barathu knows about the Dreamers, considers them distant kin, and generally refuses to discuss them with outsiders except to ensure the Dreamers' protection.

Within barathu circles, the conversation is more complex. Theories abound as to the reason for that fated transformation, including the supposition that the Dreamers needed to exist in a preternatural sense, that they were drawn to a powerful psychic influence emanating from Liavara itself, or perhaps that they came to be by simple chance. Likewise, barathus have many reasons to protect the Dreamers. Some insist the Dreamers' otherworldly songs are an essential manifestation of the universe, and that should the Dreamers cease to sing, the universe itself would begin to unravel. Others view their Dreamer kin with parental adoration, feeling some species-level responsibility for their existence and defending them as they would budded offspring.

Though barathus hold widely varying opinions on this matter, they share some beliefs in common. They insist on a protectorate status for Liavara, under barathu administration, rather than allowing it to hold full Pact Worlds membership. Barathus also agree that the Dreamers must be left to their own devices, free from external influence—even that of other barathus. Breaking from these traditions is a serious misstep in barathu society, and meddling with the Dreamers is one of the few ways for barathus to be imprisoned or even exiled. Nevertheless, some barathus do oppose these views, and a small but vocal community of barathus on Liavara argues for freer contact with the Dreamers. How long Confluence will continue to allow this group's protests is anyone's guess, but some argue that Confluence's silence is evidence that they've been infiltrated by members of this group of Liavaran agitators.

SPIRITUALITY

Faith and spirituality are complex matters among barathus. For most creatures, the relationship between the soul and the larger multiverse is personal, but barathu merging makes such convictions public; every merge provides a new perspective—and sometimes even a direct challenge—to their beliefs. In such a society, for any given worldview to survive, it has to align closely with barathu culture as a whole.

Of the deities, Oras, Talavet, and Yaraesa are the most commonly revered among barathus. Yaraesa appeals to their appreciation of education and knowledge, while Oras embodies their inherent ability to modify themselves, and Talavet speaks to their shared knowledge and memories. No divinity perfectly represents the barathu mindset, however; while barathus may appreciate them, they rarely worship in a conventional manner. Instead, barathus view a favored deity with the respect and admiration held for a revered teacher or mentor. The closest thing barathu society has to

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a common spirituality may be their regard for the Dreamers, whom they appreciate and honor. Barathus agree upon the significance of the Dreamers' psychic powers, even if their opinions about the purpose of those powers varies.

Despite their unusual sense of self, barathus wrestle with death as other species do. The fact that an aging barathu can permanently merge with a greater collective gives solace to survivors, but barathus mourn any passing of a friend or relative. Indeed, the passing of one barathu often means the loss of several, for any merged identities the deceased contributed to are also gone forever. Memorial traditions include crooning songs and slow, wafting dances through Bretheda's stormy skies; naturally, groups of

barathus mourning the same comrade merge to better express their sorrow.

Barathus recognize the existence of an afterlife in the Outer Planes, but they consider the concept largely irrelevant. Souls of the deceased don't recall their mortal lives, can't communicate beyond difficult and rare exception, and mostly don't have much impact on the lives of the living. Some view the afterlife as a kind of ultimate merging, in which a soul becomes part of the multiverse itself, but others see death as the ultimate disbanding, after which one can never merge again.

Those barathus who refuse to pass to the Outer Planes manifest as ghosts and haunts, just like other species. However, these unquiet spirits are often laid to rest when another barathu accepts the spirit's memories in one final merging. Although these "ghost merges" are actually very rare, barathu ghost stories often feature them as a means to pass on unfinished business to the living. Great Brethedan storms like the Eyes of the Ancients are said to hold the spirits of barathus who want to pass on their memories but, because of the Gap, are unable to do so.

WITHIN THE PACT WORLDS

To the dismay of their political rivals, barathus' influence in the Pact Worlds is much larger than their actual population. Not only do they govern Bretheda, the largest world in the system, through the merged entity Confluence, but they also administer the neighboring (and nearly as large) planet Liavara. This authority extends over the moons of both worlds to a number of species and cultures, not all of which appreciate barathu leadership. Several Liavaran moons have petitioned for—and received—full Pact Worlds status in their own right; residents of the moon Nchak are lobbying for this status even now. The indigenous maraquoi of the Brethedan moon Marata have been divided over their own status within the Pact Worlds, and this conflict is drawing ever closer to civil war. The struggle has spread to Bretheda, with barathus smuggling weapons to Marata and even threatening political violence against their enemies.

The Pact Council itself is a complicated and tense matter for barathu representatives. From the barathu perspective, a council seat remains a single seat even if it's occupied by a merged entity consisting of hundreds of component barathus, but such logic often draws anger and protests from other councilors who feel the seat is being abused. Even the number of allocated seats is controversial, since the number of barathus in residence on Bretheda changes moment by moment, depending on who's merged with whom. Barathu representatives to the



council remain steadfastly neutral in the various alliances and partnerships formed by other councilors, and their willingness to work with all parties only somewhat reassures their colleagues, engendering skepticism and hostility among politicians with more devotion to specific goals. For example, barathu representatives are quick to work with representatives from Eox and Apostae, a fact which Bretheda's rivals, including Councilor Erem (page 37), have used against them.

These challenges aside, most Pact Worlds recognize that barathus reliably offer their collective intellect to solve system-wide problems, and Bretheda's economic and technological advancements have been a boon to the system. Barathu weaponry was at the forefront of the Silent War against the Veskarium and the defense against the Swarm. Brethedan biotech is the gold standard of the field, and even those who resent their dominance can't dispute that barathu innovations spur economic growth within and beyond the Pact Worlds.

ALTERNATE BARATHU RACIAL TRAITS

Thanks to eons of modification, barathus are among the most varied of the species in the Pact Worlds. The following alternate racial traits follow the rules presented on page 8 of the *Character Operations Manual*. Unlike most other species, barathu modification continues throughout their lives; a barathu character who spends a week using the retrain downtime activity (*Character Operations Manual* 155) can retrain their racial traits, choosing one barathu racial trait or alternate racial trait and losing whichever racial traits the newly chosen trait replaces, as noted in each racial trait.

COLLECTIVE CONNECTION

Barathus born from a collective of merged adults sometimes glean fragments of memories from that collective. These barathus receive a +2 racial bonus to checks to recall knowledge.

This ability replaces strange anatomy.

FLUID SELF

The species' unique sense of self makes barathus difficult to affect mentally, an ability particularly common among newly budded barathus and those who have recently split from a collective. A barathu with this trait gains a +2 racial bonus to saving throws against mind-affecting effects.

This ability replaces strange anatomy.

INTERNAL CHEMISTRY

Although all barathus have a certain innate understanding of biochemistry, others have refined it into an art form, turning their bodies into living chemical factories. A barathu with internal chemistry gains the following options

instead of the typical options available for the early stage adaptation ability.

- ☛ Spraying acid is a simple chemistry exercise. The barathu gains an acid spray ranged natural attack that deals 1d3 acid damage with a 30-foot range increment. A PC using this ability is considered armed and gains a unique Weapon Specialization with this attack at 3rd level, allowing them to add 1-1/2 × their character level to their damage rolls with this attack. The acid spray cannot be disarmed or sundered and doesn't require ammunition.
- ☛ The barathu secretes a frictionless slime. When the barathu uses early stage adaptation to gain this ability, they can immediately attempt to use Acrobatics to escape a grapple without spending another action.
- ☛ Lighter-than-air gases increase the barathu's fly speed by 15 feet.
- ☛ Soothing psychoactive chemicals grant the barathu a new saving throw against each ongoing mind-affecting effect that is affecting them.
- ☛ A cloud of fumes spreads over a 20-foot radius from the barathu, affecting the area as a smoke grenade (*Core Rulebook* 184). Barathus are immune to the choking effects of this cloud.

This modifies early stage adaptation.

MINERAL EXOSKELETON

Some barathus, especially those who explore beyond Bretheda and Liavara, modify themselves by building shells out of mineral deposits. A barathu with a mineral exoskeleton gains these options instead of the typical options available for the early stage adaptation ability.

- ☛ Added reinforcement to their external shell grants the barathu DR 1/-.
- ☛ Dangerous growths function as a natural weapon that deals 1d3 bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage. A barathu PC using this ability is armed, and this attack cannot be disarmed or sundered. If a barathu PC using this ability is at least 3rd level, they gain a unique Weapon Specialization with these natural weapons, allowing them to add 1-1/2 × their character level to damage rolls with this attack.
- ☛ Spikes grow from fleshy surfaces, dealing 1d6 piercing damage to each creature that hits the barathu with an unarmed or natural attack.
- ☛ Reinforced tentacles function as powerful but slow limbs, granting a burrow speed and land speed of 10 feet.
- ☛ The area covered by the barathu's shell expands, granting a +2 racial bonus to AC but reducing the barathu's flight speed to 0.

This modifies early stage adaptation.

STUDENT OF LIAVARA

Barathus respect and protect the Dreamers of Liavara, but few modify themselves to follow the Dreamers' path.

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Those who do gain a hint of the Dreamers' telepathic powers but forever lose the ability to modify themselves further. A barathu who selects this alternate racial trait cannot retrain it as it can others (see page 43).

You gain the following spell-like abilities.

- **At will:** *daze*, *telepathic message*
 - **1/day:** *mind link*, *mind thrust* (1st level)
- This replaces early stage adaptation.

BARATHU FEATS

Barathus' flexibility improves throughout their lives as they gain years of experience and add new tools to their repertoire.

ADAPTIVE RESISTANCE

Your training enables you to adapt and evolve formidable temporary defenses.

Prerequisites: Enhanced Resistance, base attack bonus +4, early stage adaptation racial trait

Benefit: You gain an option for your early stage adaptation ability, allowing you to change the damage type your Enhanced Resistance applies to. This change lasts for the normal duration of your early stage adaptation ability.

BUD DRONE

You have used your unique biology to bud off a biological drone you can more easily integrate with.

Prerequisites: Drone class feature, adaptation or early stage adaptation racial trait

Benefit: Your drone has living components. You can use Medicine instead of Engineering to repair it, and your drone naturally heals to full Hit Points when you rest for 8 hours. A drone modified in this way is considered an aberration rather than a construct for the purpose of spells and effects targeting it. In addition, Life Science and Medicine become class skills for you.

COMPLEX ADAPTATION

With understanding and experience, you can manipulate your genetics to gain unexpected secondary effects.

Prerequisites: Life Science 5 ranks, early stage adaptation racial trait

Benefit: When you use early stage adaptation, you can choose two different benefits instead of only one.

ENCLOSE SERUMS

Due to your unique physiology, you can safely store important medicines inside yourself until you require them for use in an emergency.

Prerequisites: Adaptation or early stage adaptation racial trait, or ooze type

Benefit: You can store one serum or medicine within your body; this does not count against your bulk limits.

As a move action, you can internally open and absorb the item, gaining its normal effects as if you had consumed it.

RELOCATE VITALS

In times of danger, you can alter your body to protect your most vulnerable organs.

Prerequisites: Early stage adaptation racial trait

Benefit: Once per round when you are hit by a critical hit, you can move your vitals as a reaction.

You don't take additional damage from the critical hit, but you do take any special critical effects.

BARATHU SPELLS

Barathu biology, and the study of the Dreamers, has opened the door to many mystical discoveries, including the following spells. Most of these spells are available to characters of any race, but some can only be learned by or cast upon barathus.

ACCELERATED ADAPTATION

School transmutation

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets 1 barathu

Duration 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw Fortitude negates (harmless); **Spell**

Resistance yes (harmless)

You grant a barathu increased control over its own powers of adaptation. If the target has the early stage adaptation racial trait, it gains adaptation (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 20) instead. If the target already has adaptation, it can have two adaptations in effect at a time, instead of only one.

ATAVISTIC HOWL

School enchantment (emotion, fear, mind-affecting)

Casting Time 1 standard action

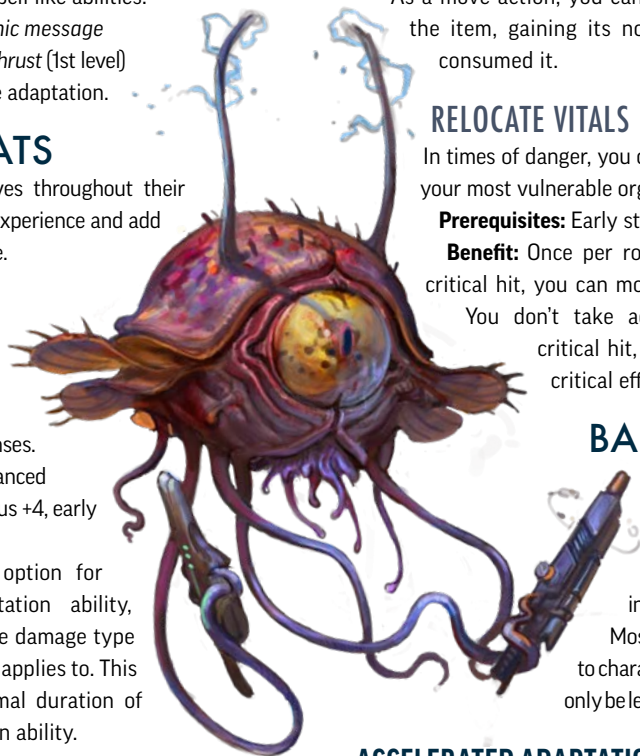
Targets all creatures within 30 feet

Duration see text

Saving Throw Will partial; **Spell Resistance** yes

You release a howl of primal rage, echoing the pain of Dreamers awoken by injury. Creatures in the area that fail their saves are shaken for 2d4 rounds. Dreamers are immune to this spell.

Barathus can cast this spell as a reaction when reduced to 0 Hit Points. In this case, the spell's DC is increased by 2.



BENEVOLENT SYNESTHESIA **School** transmutation**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Target** 1 creature**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)**Duration** 1 round/level (D)**Saving Throw** Fortitude negates (harmless); **Spell****Resistance** yes (harmless)

You transform the target's brain, allowing them to see sounds, hear scents, and otherwise perceive sensory input using multiple sensory organs. Even unusual senses, such as a shirren's vibration sense, are affected. For the duration of the spell, the target is immune to the blinded, dazzled, and deafened conditions and gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Perception checks.

MERGE CONSCIOUSNESS **School** divination (mind-affecting)**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** touch (see text)**Targets** you and one creature**Duration** 1 round/level**Saving Throw** Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

You merge your consciousness with one touched creature, sharing your strengths and compensating for each other's weaknesses. For the duration of the spell, the targets can communicate by telepathy to a range of 30 feet; if either has telepathy from another source, they may both use that range instead. As long as the targets are within this telepathy range, they share the higher of their two saving throw modifiers against mind-affecting effects and have a +2 enhancement bonus against fear effects.

SHARED EVOLUTION **School** transmutation**Casting Time** 1 swift action**Targets** you and up to one willing creature/level within 30 ft.**Duration** 1 round**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

You must be a barathu to learn this spell. When you cast it, you activate your early stage adaptation while also extending it to your allies. You can't have used early stage adaptation since the start of your last turn, and once you cast this spell, you can't use it until the start of your next turn. When you choose the adaptation, it applies both to you and to all the spell's targets.

BARATHU MANUFACTURERS

The following barathu firms manufacture weapons that are commonly available within the Pact Worlds. Perhaps the most famous of these is Lethal Innovations, the military spin-off of the barathu-run Life Innovations corporation, but

countless barathu manufacturers operate within the Pact Worlds.

Manufacturer modifications follow the rules presented on page 55 of the *Starfinder Armory*.

MINERAGENICS

The Mineragenics corporation is one of the smallest military manufacturers on Bretheda, though its operations have grown exponentially since the successful release of its Frozen Life weaponry line. The barathus who own this firm first experimented with exoskeletal modifications and variations on the armor plating barathus have used for millennia, but a side venture resulted in the development of simple weapons made from the same mineral deposits.

A Frozen Life weapon can be any non-powered kinetic melee weapon, and they all have the archaic weapon property regardless of whether the original weapon had that property. The weapons may not be powerful, but they are remarkably affordable; if the type of weapon was not already archaic, its price is 20% lower than normal.

TWISTED RIBBON

Founded through an extremist arm of the church of Oras, Twisted Ribbon—a reference to the double helix of most species' DNA—produces weaponry necessary for the church's aim of unfettered evolution. Developed specifically for barathus, these weapons are designed to be easily smuggled into sensitive areas.

Twisted Ribbon can manufacture any weapon with the living property. Such weapons can be integrated with a barathu body as a standard action, their component materials dissolving and their structure written into the barathu's DNA. Weapons integrated in this way cannot be disarmed or sundered. A barathu with the adaptation or early stage adaptation ability (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 20) can draw a Twisted Ribbon weapon as an option of that racial ability. The cost for a Twisted Ribbon weapon is twice the listed price, given its strictly black-market nature, and a barathu may have only one Twisted Ribbon weapon integrated into their body at a time.

WHIRLWIND INDUSTRIES

This fledgling Brethedan company seeks to make weapons less unwieldy for flying customers by incorporating a context-sensitive air bladder unit into larger weaponry. The corporation only manufactures weapons of 2 bulk or more. Its signature modifications, which give a weapon the living special property, reduce the weapon's bulk by 1 and reduce the minimum Strength score required to wield the weapon by 2. These benefits apply only while in an atmosphere and increase the price of the weapon by 40%. Whirlwind Industries hasn't yet perfected its design to function across all environments; these weapons rupture and become broken when exposed to vacuum.

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BIOTECHNOLOGY GEAR

"Whatever your problem, I guarantee I can grow you something to help solve it, or one of the barathu corps already has. Might be a weapon, might be a tool, probably a body augment. Don't be squeamish now! Biotechnology isn't just useful—it's a way of making your body really your own. You don't have to live with whatever genetics gave you. You wanna look different? Move different? Do something you think is physically impossible? I can help with that. And, my friend, the price, I assure you, is more than reasonable."

—Corto Byrith, black-market geneturger

The biotechnology juggernauts of Bretheda rely in large part on the natural bioengineering abilities of their barathu leaders. The jellyfish-like inventors have applied their techniques to all manner of technology, including weapons, armor, and even personal tech. All of these items can be crafted or repaired using the Life Science or Engineering skills.

WEAPONS

Organic weapons often have the living special property (*Starfinder Armory* 29), although sometimes these techniques are used to make organic weaponry that is no longer substantially alive.

WEAPON SPECIAL PROPERTIES

Some of the weapons described here use the following weapon special properties.

Regrowth

This weapon regrows its own ammunition, usually with the help of sunlight and nutrients drawn from the air or soil. It takes the weapon 8 hours to replenish its full capacity of ammunition; this ammunition is always standard ammunition unique to the weapon and cannot be sold.

Unbalancing

This weapon pushes foes off-balance. When you deal damage with this weapon, the target is flat-footed against the next attack that targets it before the start of your next turn. Anything that causes a critical hit to be treated as a normal hit, such as fortification, grants immunity to this special property.

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

These weapons are available from barathu manufacturers, but some originated among other species.

Brain Pike

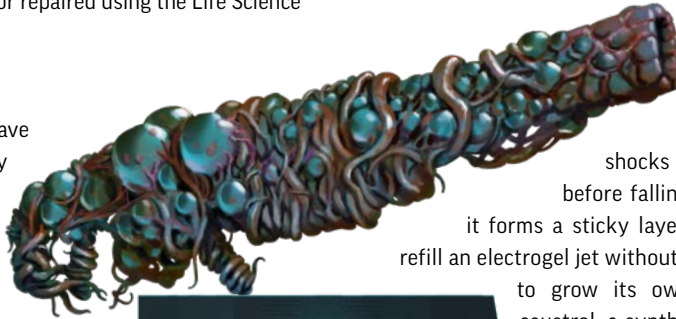
This long spear is grown from chitin or horn by shirren, formian, and nuar bioengineers. The psychically sensitive material of a brain pike homes in on the thoughts of its target, adjusting its own movement mid-thrust to hit a vulnerable spot.

Chimera Graft

This imposing rifle, made of red scales and horn, emits an impressive gout of bright flame. Designed by Iratha Incorporated and first released as an augmentation, it proved cumbersome and was redesigned as an armor-integrated weapon.

Electrogel Jet

Lethal Innovations (*Armory* 57) developed this weapon with assistance from a barathu consulting firm. An electrogel jet is a bulbous, blue creature with pulsing veins and soft tentacles that grasp the wielder's arm to help support the weapon's heavy weight. The creature's bulbous sacs synthesize an electrical gel that shocks and burns targets before falling to the ground, where it forms a sticky layer. Owners who wish to refill an electrogel jet without waiting for the weapon to grow its own fuel can substitute caustrol, a synthetic acid with the same price and container size as petrol.



ELECTROGEL JET

Frost Maw

Barathu researchers studying frost worms on Triaxus have modified tissue harvested from worm larvae to produce a new weapon: an armored, toothy tube with bone protrusions that serve as comfortable grips. The frost maw sprays out fluid that forms a coating of electrically charged, gleaming ice formations wherever it is used. With a particularly lucky shot, this ice can form a thick enough coat to freeze a creature in place.

Moon Splinter

Certain elven and gnome families have long cultivated magical trees that draw power from the First World, and living branches of these magnificent trees can be fashioned into weapons known as moon splinters. Through some sort of interplanar connection, a moon splinter absorbs cold and moisture from the First World to create glowing shards of ice that vibrate with extradimensional energy. Its wielders can then stimulate the wood's telekinetic magic with a battery, propelling the ice with supernatural force; with each successive strike, the strength of the vibrations increases.

The bark of a moon splinter gleams with First World frost. Crescent moon splinters are leafy, while gibbous moon splinters grow buds, and full moon splinters bloom with flowers. A new moon splinter is bare, but it glows with arcane sigils that vary in color and shape and are believed to be influenced by the presence of nearby ley lines.

Retractable Stinger

This hollow stinger is installed in an armor upgrade slot. It is typically stored in a limb of the armor (though some androids use it to augment their headbutts). The stinger must be extended to be used as a weapon or to refill its injection reservoir. Extending or retracting the stinger is a move action.

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BASIC MELEE WEAPONS

ONE-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	BULK	SPECIAL
Retractable stinger, tactical	6	4,300	1d4 P	Injection DC +2	L	Conceal ^{AR} , injection, integrated ^{AR} (1 slot), operative
Retractable stinger, advanced	9	13,900	1d10 P	Injection DC +2	L	Conceal ^{AR} , injection, integrated ^{AR} (1 slot), operative
Retractable stinger, elite	13	51,000	2d10 P	Injection DC +2	L	Conceal ^{AR} , injection, integrated ^{AR} (1 slot), operative
Retractable stinger, paragon	17	268,000	4d10 P	Injection DC +2	L	Conceal ^{AR} , injection, integrated ^{AR} (1 slot), operative

ADVANCED MELEE WEAPONS

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	BULK	SPECIAL
Brain pike, drone	4	1,950	1d8 P	Confuse	1	Analog, living ^{AR} , reach, thought ^{AR} , unbalancing*, unwieldy
Brain pike, warrior	8	8,700	2d8 P	Confuse	1	Analog, living ^{AR} , reach, thought ^{AR} , unbalancing*, unwieldy
Brain pike, knight	11	24,600	4d8 P	Confuse	1	Analog, living ^{AR} , reach, thought ^{AR} , unbalancing*, unwieldy
Brain pike, queen	14	66,500	7d8 P	Confuse	1	Analog, living ^{AR} , reach, thought ^{AR} , unbalancing*, unwieldy
Brain pike, god	18	372,000	11d8 P	Confuse	1	Analog, living ^{AR} , reach, thought ^{AR} , unbalancing*, unwieldy

SMALL ARMS

ONE-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
CRYO									
Moon splinter, crescent	4	2,200	1d4 C & B	70 ft.	Staggered	20	1	1	Bright, force ^{AR} , hybrid, living ^{AR} , polarize ^{AR} 1d4
Moon splinter, gibbous	9	13,000	2d6 C & B	60 ft.	Staggered	40	2	1	Bright, force ^{AR} , hybrid, living ^{AR} , polarize ^{AR} 1d6
Moon splinter, full	10	19,000	2d12 E	80 ft.	Staggered	80	4	1	Bright, force ^{AR} , hybrid, living ^{AR} , polarize ^{AR} 1d8
Moon splinter, new	10	19,000	2d12 E	80 ft.	Staggered	100	5	1	Bright, force ^{AR} , hybrid, living ^{AR} , polarize ^{AR} 1d8

LONGARMS

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
CRYO									
Frost maw, growl-class	3	1,350	1d8 C	15 ft.	Bind 1d4 rounds	20	2	1	Aurora ^{AR} , blast, living ^{AR} , unwieldy
Frost maw, snarl-class	9	13,000	2d8 C	60 ft.	Bind 1d4 rounds	20	2	1	Aurora ^{AR} , blast, living ^{AR} , unwieldy
Frost maw, roar-class	10	19,000	4d8 C	80 ft.	Bind 1d4 rounds	20	2	1	Aurora ^{AR} , blast, living ^{AR} , unwieldy
FLAME									
Chimera graft, growl-class	7	6,250	1d12 F	40 ft.	Burn 1d6	20 petrol	1	1	Automatic, integrated (1 slot), harrying ^{AR} , living ^{AR} , regrowth*
Chimera graft, snarl-class	11	24,000	2d12 F	40 ft.	Burn 1d6	20 petrol	1	1	Automatic, integrated (1 slot), harrying ^{AR} , living ^{AR} , regrowth*
Chimera graft, roar-class	17	218,000	4d12 F	40 ft.	Burn 1d6	20 petrol	1	1	Automatic, integrated (1 slot), harrying ^{AR} , living ^{AR} , regrowth*

HEAVY WEAPONS

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
SHOCK									
Electrojet jet, sheet	4	1,880	1d8 A & E	30 ft.	Staggered	20 caustrol	4	2	Line, living ^{AR} , mire ^{AR} 1 round, regrowth*, stun, unwieldy
Electrojet jet, ribbon	7	6,500	2d8 A & E	40 ft.	Staggered	40 caustrol	4	1	Line, living ^{AR} , mire ^{AR} 1 round, regrowth*, stun, unwieldy
Electrojet jet, rocket	11	23,700	3d8 A & E	50 ft.	Staggered	40 caustrol	4	1	Line, living ^{AR} , mire ^{AR} 1 round, regrowth*, stun, unwieldy
Electrojet jet, smooth-channel	15	99,900	6d8 A & E	60 ft.	Staggered	40 caustrol	4	1	Line, living ^{AR} , mire ^{AR} 1 round, regrowth*, stun, unwieldy

*This weapon special property can be found on page 47.

ARMOR

The armors below were developed by and designed for barathus; as such, they are highly adjustable, easily accommodating barathus' ever-changing physiology. Reduce the DC for Engineering checks to adjust these armors by 5; if you pay a professional to adjust the armor instead of doing so yourself, the cost is 5% of the armor's purchase price.

FLIGHT SKIN

Barathus designed flight skins to help them move comfortably in the cramped spaces favored by many terrestrial species, but the modular design proved easy to adapt to other species. A flight skin comprises redundant layers of light, airy material that lie nearly flat and resemble rubber or soft cloth but, buttressed by bio-psychic force fields, briefly inflate to reduce sudden impact. Flight skin environmental protections take the form of a thin membrane that, when activated, envelops exposed skin.

When you fall or are hit by a falling object while you're wearing your flight skin, calculate the damage as if the fall were 20 feet shorter.

POWERED ARMOR

ENCOUNTER SUIT

LEVEL 4
PRICE 2,800

EAC Bonus +5; **KAC Bonus** +7

Max Dex Bonus +3; **Armor Check Penalty** -4; **Speed** 25 feet

Strength 16 (+3); **Damage** 1d6 B

Weapon Slots 0; **Upgrade Slots** 2

Capacity 20; **Usage** 1/hour

Size Medium; **Bulk** 10

DESCRIPTION

This armor is made of rubbery blue material grown by barathu conglomerates. It's most popular among early-stage barathus who are not yet as skilled at adapting to various environments.

SHIELDS

Recent innovations by barathu corporations have resulted in their first offerings of organic deterrence shields, used to scare off animals and other melee attackers. These shields follow the rules for shields (*Starfinder Character Operations Manual* 124-125).

DETERRENCE SCALE

A deterrence scale is a small, light shell of chitin carried with one limb and maneuvered to intercept attacks against you. A limb wielding a deterrence scale can still hold another object and be used to reload weapons, but it cannot wield weapons or other shields.

A deterrence scale also can be used to make melee attacks; it is an advanced melee weapon when used in this way, dealing 1d3 electricity damage. In addition, when you have the shield aligned against a specific foe within your reach and that foe attacks you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to shock that foe, dealing electricity damage equal to the shield's item level; the attacker can attempt a Reflex save (DC = 10 + half the shield's item level + your Dexterity modifier) to reduce this damage by half.

A deterrence scale has the powered and stun weapon special properties. An electroplax or amperometric deterrence shield has capacity 20 and usage 1, while a galvanic or voltaic deterrence shield has capacity 40 and usage 1 (per the Deterrence Scale [Shield] table on page 50). A deterrence scale expends 1 charge each time you attack with it or you use a reaction to shock an attacker.

BIOTECH AUGMENTATIONS

Barathus are famous for the dizzying array of biotech augmentations and personal upgrades they provide the Pact Worlds, and they are constantly innovating, pushing the boundaries of biological science. A selection of these augmentations are described on the pages that follow.

ENCOUNTER SUIT

LIGHT ARMOR

ARMOR MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	EAC BONUS	KAC BONUS	MAXIMUM DEX BONUS	ARMOR CHECK PENALTY	SPEED ADJUSTMENT	UPGRADE SLOTS	BULK
Flight skin, nascent	1	230	+0	+2	+5	—	—	1	L
Flight skin, foray	5	3,350	+3	+5	+5	—	—	3	L
Flight skin, dream	9	15,000	+9	+11	+5	—	—	4	L
Flight skin, venture	14	77,000	+14	+17	+6	—	—	5	L
Flight skin, conglomeration	18	400,000	+18	+21	+7	—	—	6	L

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ASCENDANCE SAC

SYSTEM
SPINAL COLUMN

MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE
Drifter	5	2,720
Wind rider	8	8,800

You have an organ, attached to your spine with muscle groups and tendons, that can quickly expand into a sphere as large as your space; this sac fills the space directly above you as it inflates with a gas that provides lift. You can inflate or deflate the sac as a move action, but you can't deploy the sac while wearing armor not fitted to you.

While the sac is inflated and you are in an atmosphere and in at least light gravity, you use the rules for moving in zero gravity (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 402), but you experience gravity normally in all other ways; for example, the range increment and maximum range of your weapons do not change. In addition, on subsequent turns while the sac is inflated, you can rise up to 30 feet or descend up to 60 feet by taking a move action. If you are using a wind rider ascendance sac and are not overburdened, you gain a fly speed of 30 feet when you are in an atmosphere and at least light gravity.

If you deploy any ascendance sac underwater and in at least light gravity, you become buoyant and rise 15 feet toward the surface at the end of your turn each round.

Ascendance sacs are popular among non-barathus who have immigrated to Bretheda, Liavara, or other gas giants.

BONE SPINES

SYSTEM
SPINAL COLUMN

MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE
Bristling	5	2,900	1d4 P
Warding	9	12,900	2d4 P
Punishing	13	47,900	4d4 P
Rebuking	17	242,900	8d4 P

Your bones are laced with dangerous spines that can be extended to harm foes who get too close. You can retract or harmlessly extend your spines as a standard action. You can't extend bone spines while wearing armor not fitted to you. If your bone spines are extended and an opponent within 5 feet hits you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to deal the listed piercing damage to that attacker. If your opponent's attack roll is a natural 20, the attacker also gains the bleeding condition equal to the item level of your spines. If you have natural weapons and those weapons are magical, the damage dealt by your bone spines is also magical.

DETERRENCE SCALE [SHIELD]

SHIELD MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	SHIELD BONUS	MAXIMUM DEX BONUS	ARMOR CHECK PENALTY	BULK	UPGRADES
Deterrence scale, electroplax	4	2,200	+0/+1	—	—	1	0
Deterrence scale, amperometric	8	9,400	+1/+1	—	—	1	0
Deterrence scale, galvanic	12	34,600	+1/+1	—	—	1	0
Deterrence scale, voltaic	16	178,800	+1/+2	—	—	1	0

GROWTH GLANDS

SYSTEM
SPINAL COLUMN

AUGMENTATION BIOTECH	PRICE 3,900	LEVEL 6
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Your largest bones are embedded with specialized glands that can cause you to radically increase in size. You can't activate these glands while you're wearing armor that isn't fitted to you. Activating this augmentation requires a full action. While you are transformed, your size increases by one size category. If you become Large or larger, your reach increases by 5 feet, the amount of Bulk you can carry before being encumbered increases by 2, and you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to checks to destroy an object using Strength (*Core Rulebook* 409). The effect of the glands lasts 1 minute. You must rest for 10 minutes to regain Stamina Points to reactivate the glands or spend 1 Resolve Point to recharge them immediately.

GRASPING TENTACLE

SYSTEM
ONE ARM AND HAND

AUGMENTATION BIOTECH	PRICE 4,200	LEVEL 6
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Your arm is replaced with a long, boneless tentacle. Your reach with your grasping tentacle (including attacks made with weapons you wield with your tentacle) is 5 feet more than your natural reach. When you use the tentacle to perform a disarm, grapple, or trip combat maneuver, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your attack roll.

HEALING TENDRIL

SYSTEM
SPINAL COLUMN

MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE
Rescuing	3	1,400
Rejuvenating	7	6,600
Mk 1 melding	9	13,800
Mk 2 melding	13	50,000
Mk 3 melding	16	170,000

A translucent tendril emerges from your back. You can retract or extend this tendril as a move action. It isn't prehensile, but you can touch it to a willing or unconscious creature within your reach as a standard action in order to fortify the target's health. If the creature is dying, you automatically stabilize it. If the target is stable but unconscious, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to restore 1 Hit Point to the target. If the creature is diseased, infested, or poisoned, you grant it increased resistance but expose yourself to the affliction and must attempt a saving throw against it. If you succeed, the target of your healing tendril gains a +4 circumstance bonus to its next saving throw against the affliction and you don't contract the affliction.

yourself. If you fail, the target of your healing tendril gains a +2 bonus to its next saving throw against the affliction and you contract the affliction yourself. You can use your healing tendril once per day. You cannot use your healing tendril on yourself.

When you use a rejuvenating or melding tendril, the target regains HP equal to your level + your Constitution modifier. A melding tendril can also be used as a unity tendril of the same mark (see below). When used as a unity tendril, your melding tendril does not stabilize, heal, or grant the target a bonus against afflictions. However, if you have already attached your melding tendril to a creature, you can take a standard action to use the healing properties of your tendril on it.

MOBILITY TENTACLES

SYSTEM
LEGS AND FEET

AUGMENTATION BIOTECH PRICE 9,900 LEVEL 8

Your lower limbs are replaced with four strong tentacles that can carry you up vertical surfaces or propel you through water without using other limbs. You gain a climb speed of 20 feet and a swim speed of 20 feet.

NEUTRALIZER LOBE

SYSTEM
THROAT

AUGMENTATION BIOTECH PRICE 9,900 LEVEL 8

A lobe grafted onto your throat processes toxins your body would normally struggle to remove. Whenever you attempt a saving throw against a drug or poison, your neutralizer lobe automatically attempts a Medicine check to treat drugs or poison, using a modifier equal to your level + 2. If this Medicine check is successful, the neutralizer lobe grants you a +4 bonus to your subsequent saving throw.

PAIN MODULATOR

SYSTEM
BRAIN

AUGMENTATION BIOTECH PRICE 34,600 LEVEL 12

Your brain has a specialized gland to process pain signals separately from your higher brain functions, allowing you to maintain concentration in stressful situations. You can concentrate on a spell even when you take damage that reduces your Stamina Points (but not your HP). In addition, whenever you end your turn under a pain effect that requires you to attempt a saving throw, you can attempt a new saving throw against the effect; if you succeed, the pain effect ends.

PANOPTIC EYES

SYSTEM
BRAIN

AUGMENTATION BIOTECH PRICE 4,100 LEVEL 6

You have eyes in the back of your head. You can conceal these eyes beneath your hair or with thin cloth without obstructing your vision, but you might choose to emphasize them instead, discouraging others from sneaking around

you. You are unflankable, as the Universal Creature Rule (*Alien Archive* 158). In addition, the penalty you take from the fascinated condition is reduced to -2.

SUPERORGAN

SYSTEM
BRAIN, HEART,
AND LUNGS

MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	FORTIFICATION
Basic	14	63,000	20%
Complex	15	94,000	40%
Thorough	16	145,000	60%
Fluid	17	218,000	80%
Amorphous	19	480,000	100%

Your brain, heart, and lungs are partially homogenized with redundant functions, so each organ can perform the tasks of the others when necessary. This grants you a fortification ability that works like that of force fields (*Core Rulebook* 206), giving you a chance to treat any critical hit as a normal attack. This benefit doesn't stack with the benefits of any other fortification ability.

UNITY TENDRIL

SYSTEM
SPINAL COLUMN

MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	REACH
Mk 1	6	4,200	5 ft.
Mk 2	10	17,300	10 ft.
Mk 3	14	63,000	15 ft.

A green tendril emerges from the back of your neck. You can retract or extend it as a move action. It's not prehensile, but you can use a standard action to touch it to another willing creature and connect your minds. Your tentacle remains in contact with this creature until they're no longer in your reach or you use a move action to detach the tentacle. During contact, you and the target can communicate with each other as if you both had telepathy. When you and the target are connected by the tendril, you both automatically succeed at attempts to aid another and provide covering fire, but only when doing so for each other.

AUGMENTATION MANUFACTURERS

The augmentation modifications below can be used only on biotech or biologically-based magitech. When first acquired, no augmentation can have more than one manufacturer's modification. However, many genetic engineers and hospitals offer options to customize existing augmentations. It is also possible to combine modifications by crafting an augmentation yourself. If you combine manufacturer modifications in any way, the final price of the item is equal to the normal price plus an additional 10% plus the cost of the modifications. The GM is the final arbiter of whether a modification can be applied to an augmentation, as well as what modifications can or can't be combined.

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Iratha Incorporated

Iratha Incorporated is best known for being run by and selling predominantly to humanoids, despite being based on Bretheda. Its highest-selling biotech augmentations are optimized for combat. Unarmed attacks made with a limb that includes an Iratha Incorporated modification are not archaic. When you gain the augmentation, you can choose to change the damage type of your unarmed strike to bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing; this damage type can't be changed without replacing the augmentation. An Iratha Incorporated augmentation costs 10% more than usual.



Life Innovations

Life Innovations is one of the largest and most successful biotechnology companies in known space. Although it has a dizzying array of offerings, it is best known for morphing augmentations that can adopt the appearance of ordinary organs. A Life Innovations biotech augmentation has two forms—a standard form and a secondary form that appears to be a normal, unaugmented system. You can switch between the two forms as a move action. While the augmentation has the form of an unaugmented system, it cannot be used, and none of its benefits apply. It can be identified as an augmentation only with a successful Perception or Life Science check (DC = 15 + 1-1/2 times item level) or by magic (such as *detect augmentation*). This kind of Life Innovations biotech augmentation costs 10% more than usual.

Skybreak Holdings

One of the few elven organizations that still do regular trade outside Sovyrian, Skybreak Holdings deals in plant-based biotechnology of all sorts, interacting with clients through lashunta intermediaries. Skybreak augmentations are famously elegant and easy to use. If a Skybreak augmentation has an effect with a duration longer than 1 round, that duration is increased by 50%. A Skybreak augmentation costs 20% more than usual.

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEMS

In addition to creating biotech versions of many common items, barathus are the primary providers of the following technological items. Organic technological items can regain HP from effects that restore HP, such as a *mystic cure* spell, and they regain a number of HP equal to their item level each day.

BUOYANT HARNESS		
LEVEL 2		
TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM	PRICE 500	BULK L
CAPACITY 20	USAGE 2/hour	

This silky, palm-sized pouch is worn on the back and includes stretchy bands that can slip over all major limbs. Visitors to Bretheda don buoyant harnesses while within the upper levels of the planet's atmosphere, but some planetary explorers also find them useful for arresting sudden falls.

Putting on a buoyant harness is a full action.

You can deploy a properly attached buoyant harness as a reaction by pulling sharply on any of the bands. Once deployed, the pouch uses organically heated helium to inflate into a balloon as large as you and filling the space directly above you, causing you to float; while floating, use the rules for moving in zero gravity (*Core Rulebook* 402). A buoyant harness does

not function in heavy or extreme gravity. The balloon remains inflated and self-heated as long as it has charges remaining. You can deflate it as a move action, collapsing it by the start of your next turn. If you deflate a buoyancy harness while it is maintaining your altitude, you immediately descend 60 feet; if you reach the ground, you land safely. If not, you fall any remaining distance.

CRAWLING CORD		
LEVEL 1		
TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM	PRICE 100	BULK L

This rubbery, organic cord is 5 feet long and has a plug on each end that attaches to a computer, allowing you to interface with the computer from a distance. You can use a standard action to control the cord using a computer attached to one of these ends. The cord can stretch, contract, and bend around obstacles, moving up to 20 feet each time you direct it. Its maximum length is 50 feet. It can also grab onto and move a computer of light or negligible Bulk by plugging into it and pulling, but it disconnects if used to pull an object of more than light bulk. Moving a crawling cord past observers without being noticed requires a successful Sleight of Hand check, opposed by the Perception check of any observer. The cable draws power from any computers to which it is attached.

ELECTROSENSORY DRUM		
LEVEL 8		
TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM	PRICE 8,400	BULK L
CAPACITY 20	USAGE 1/hour	

This handheld, organic drum-shaped device uses organs similar to those many aquatic and avian species use to detect electrical activity. Using an electrosensory drum is a move action. The drum operates by using blindsense (electricity) with a range of 20 feet. Targets are displayed on the drum's softly glowing surface, along with their range and distance. An electrosensory drum generates its own energy that powers it for 60 minutes per day. Each use, no matter how short, consumes 1 minute of this time.

MESSAGE SLIME

LEVEL 1

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM PRICE 50 BULK –

Message slime is a transparent, programmable ooze that comes in an egg-shaped container and is used to deliver clandestine or surprise messages. Any creature with a personal comm unit or other computer can use it to program a message slime with a message up to 5 minutes in length—including both audio and visual components—and requirements that activate the slime's message. The criteria for activating the message must be simple and detectable with vision or hearing. For example, the slime might be programmed to activate as soon as a creature comes within 30 feet, or as soon as a shirren says the word "hello." The slime is then spread on a surface, such as a wall, countertop, or door. As soon as the activating conditions are met, the slime's surface displays its message. Message slime that has not yet been activated can be detected with a successful DC 20 Perception check. Once spread over a surface, message slime cannot be reprogrammed. It continues to play its message every time it is activated for 1 month or until removed. After this time, the slime dries into an inert, flaky substance.

WRIST LEECH

LEVEL 2

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEM PRICE 125 BULK –

A wrist leech is a dark red, sluglike life-form about 3 inches long and 1/2 inch in thickness; one end of the creature ends in a circular sucker with tiny teeth. The leech can be applied to an individual's skin, whereupon it attaches and begins sucking the individual's bodily fluids. The wrist leech's carefully designed physiology then filters the blood, removing toxins and other harmful chemicals from the bloodstream before returning it to the host's body. An individual with an attached wrist leech gains a +4 circumstance bonus to saving throws against any injury affliction. A wrist leech requires no battery, but survives for only 4 hours once placed on the skin before it shrivels up and dies.

OTHER ITEMS

Barathus are common providers of medicinals and personal items, including the following.

ALLERGY POD

LEVEL 1

PERSONAL ITEM PRICE 20 BULK –

An allergy pod is a small organic consumable that can be inserted into your nose or another breathing orifice with a standard action, where it slightly inflates to fill your breathing cavity. Creatures with multiple nostrils must break the pod apart and insert a piece in each nostril. The pod suppresses your allergic responses to inhaled substances, such as fungus, mold, or pollen. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throws against inhaled afflictions for 12 hours, after which the pods shrivel up and drop out of your nose. The listed price is for a box of 10 allergy pods.

GROOMING MOSS

LEVEL 2

PERSONAL ITEM PRICE 50 BULK –

Grooming moss is a consumable, palm-sized organic patch you can apply to your skin as a standard action. When you do, it consumes dirt and byproducts from your skin, slowly working its way over your entire body to make your skin clean and healthy. You can use a move action to tear off a patch of grooming moss, but it falls off naturally after 12 hours. As long as it is attached to your bare skin, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saving throws against contact afflictions. Each breed of moss is meant to be used by a single group of physiologically similar species, such as lashunta and humans; when used on a different group of similar species, the moss still attaches to the skin for 12 hours, slowly working its way across the body, but the only result is itching and discomfort.

SPIDERSATCHEL

LEVEL 3

PERSONAL ITEM PRICE 1,200 BULK 1

This surprisingly strong spidersilk backpack has simple knots at all its structural joints. A spidersatchel is a living organism that spins additional silk to seal tears in its fabric, accommodate oversize loads, and otherwise manage the pack's contents. If worn properly, the bulk of a spidersatchel does not count against your bulk carried, but the bulk of any item within it does. A spidersatchel can hold up to 3 bulk of items. While wearing it, treat your Strength score as 3 higher for the purpose of determining your carrying capacity. This does not stack with the effect of any other backpack.

STOMACH TABS

LEVEL 1

PERSONAL ITEM PRICE 75 BULK –

You can swallow a stomach tab as a standard action. It releases helpful microbes that maintain health, relieve excess acidity, and kill germs. Your breath becomes fresh and pleasant-smelling for 1 hour, and you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saves against ingested afflictions and the nauseated and sickened conditions. The listed price is for a box of 10 stomach tabs.

STYLEMANDER

LEVEL 1

PERSONAL ITEM PRICE 50 BULK –

Stylemanders are fluffy, finger-sized, eight-legged grooming insects. Although nearly mindless, they're considered by some to be cute and useful. They are always spotlessly clean, are natural cleaners of other creatures, and even clean the glass jars in which they are kept. Their instinct to groom hair has made them popular among nuar, skittermanders, ysoki, and other shoppers with fur or furry pets, but occasionally even humans and lashunta use one in lieu of conventional combing routines. To use a stylemander, let it out of its jar and let it comb through your hair or fur for 5 minutes. It removes and eats bugs, parasites, dirt, and stray hairs. Some designer breeds are marketed for their tendency to comb fur into particular styles or patterns. A stylemander lives for about 3 months.

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ALIEN ARCHIVES

"Don't let their bestial appearances fool you—xanthoi are highly intelligent, sometimes even scholarly individuals. If you want to make friends with one of these magnificent creatures and maybe tag along for one of their stellar conjunctions, you have to approach them on their level. Recognize their superior knowledge; a xanthos has likely seen more of this wide galaxy than you have. Humble yourself in front of them. If you can invite them to witness a piece of history in the making, you're made in the shade. But most important of all—and I can't stress this enough—maybe put away that laser rifle."

—Pemze Klun, xenowhisperer

DORMAKHABU

CR
11XP
12,800

N Medium aberration (gray)

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense (scent) 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft.;**Perception** +20**DEFENSE****HP** 180**EAC** 24; **KAC** 26**Fort** +13; **Ref** +13; **Will** +12**Defensive Abilities** phase**Weaknesses** light blindness, vulnerable to sonic**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft., burrow 20 ft.**Melee** tentacle +23 (4d6+19 B plus grab) or
bite +23 (2d8+19 P; critical 2d6 bleed)**Ranged** acidic spit +20 (3d8+11 A; critical 1d6 corrode)**Offensive Abilities** telepathic howl (DC 18)**STATISTICS****Str** +8; **Dex** +1; **Con** +5; **Int** -3; **Wis** +3; **Cha** +0**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Athletics +25, Intimidate +20**Other Abilities** tracking (scent)**ECOLOGY****Environment** any**Organization** solitary, pair, or pack (3-10)**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Acidic Spit (Ex)** As a ranged attack, a dormakhabu can spit a thin stream of acid from its mouth with a range increment of 30 feet.**Phase (Su)** Dormakhabus exist slightly out of phase with the Material Plane. A dormakhabu can pass through walls or material objects (but not corporeal creatures), as long as it begins and ends its turn outside of any wall or obstacle. In addition, a dormakhabu always 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 dormakhabu.**Telepathic Howl (Ex)** As a full action, a dormakhabu can unleash a wave of telepathic energy. All creatures within 60 feet must succeed at a DC 17 Will save or become confused for 1d4 rounds. Creatures with telepathy or limited telepathy take a -2 penalty to this saving throw. A dormakhabu can use this ability every 1d4 rounds.

This six-legged beast resembles a slender alligator with three eyestalks

on top of its head and a ridge of bony plates running down its spine. Its front two limbs end in sturdy claws capable of digging through earth and stone. Under its eyestalks, a dormakhabu also has a long and powerful tentacle, which it uses to drag hapless creatures toward its wide mouth full of sharp teeth, located in the center of its torso. Due to the dormakhabu's rubbery skin and ability to phase through solid matter, many scholars theorize that this unusual aberration originates from the same world or dimension as the aliens known as grays. Despite these similarities and possible shared origins, dormakhabus have not been reported to cooperate with the bulbous-headed humanoids.

The only evidence of the strife between the two species comes from an unsubstantiated infosphere report in which an unnamed witness claimed to have been held captive by grays in some kind of underground facility on an asteroid. This person alleges to have seen a creature with a description matching that of a dormakhabu burrow up from the stone floor and unleash a terrifying psychic tremor that flooded the minds of the grays and their captives alike.

Beset by confusing and nightmarish visions, the witness watched in horror as the dormakhabu spit acid on their incapacitated gray captors before rushing to grab an alien with its tentacle and stuffing the unfortunate victim into its maw. Thanks to the chaos, the witness said, they were able to escape with their life and memories intact. However, no solid evidence for this story has been found.

If true, the question remains as to why or how a dormakhabu can track and hunt grays with such fervor. However, those who believe in the existence of the grays are grateful to hear that the mysterious infiltrators are not without their own natural predators.

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FLYING VIPER EEL

CR
10

XP
9,600



N Tiny animal (swarm)

Init +8; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 60 ft., sightless;

Perception +19

DEFENSE

EAC 23; **KAC** 25

Fort +14; **Ref** +14; **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities swarm defenses; **Immunities** swarm immunities

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (Ex, perfect)

Melee swarm attack (1d10+10 P plus flying viper eel venom)

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

Offensive Abilities distraction (DC 17)

STATISTICS

Str +0; **Dex** +8; **Con** +5; **Int** -5; **Wis** +3; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +24 (+32 to fly), Stealth +19, Survival +19

HP 165

ECOLOGY

Environment any air (Bretheda)

Organization solitary

FLYING VIPER EEL VENOM

Type poison (injury); **Save** Fortitude DC 17

Track Dexterity (special); **Frequency** 1/round for 6 rounds

Effect progression track is Sluggish-Stiffened-Staggered-Staggered; the second staggered functions as an end state.

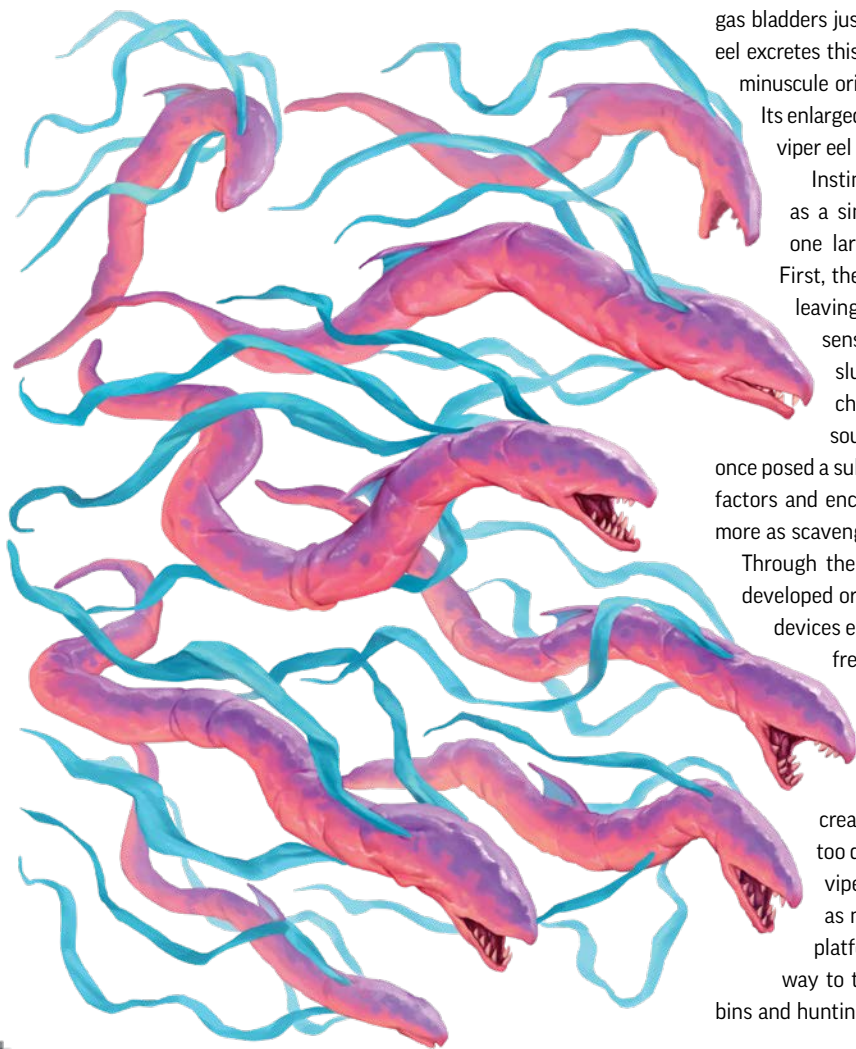
Cure 2 consecutive saves

Within the swirling clouds of Bretheda, the living float and the dead sink, but usually not before a swarm of flying viper eels can scavenge the bodies. A single flying viper eel looks to be nothing more than a long, flat, serpentine creature with a pointed snout, sharp teeth, no eyes, and gossamer-like strands flowing around its body. It stays buoyant with natural hydrogen gas bladders just under the skin along its spine. A flying viper eel excretes this hydrogen in highly pressurized streams from minuscule orifices in order to navigate a gas giant's clouds.

Its enlarged, ribbon-like cilia function as sails, enabling the viper eel to ride air currents toward its next meal.

Instinct has taught viper eels to work together as a single unit, traveling the skies of Bretheda as one large swarm to better take down larger prey. First, they let their venom slow the target's reactions, leaving it unable to fight back. The eels' heightened senses and agility allow them to detect potential sluggish victims hundreds of feet away, quickly change direction, and rush toward the new source of food. Though these aggressive swarms once posed a substantial threat to Brethedan life, evolutionary factors and encroaching civilization have forced them to act more as scavengers.

Through their expertise in biotechnology, barathus have developed organic devices to repel these flying eels—these devices exude a strange-smelling musk and vibrate at a frequency the viper eels find disturbing, but the results are unpredictable. On the other hand, haans hunt the creatures as easy game, using their firespray to roast swarms of viper eels, while others catch the roasted creatures in handmade nets before they plummet too deep into Bretheda's atmosphere. Once prolific, viper eels are quickly becoming endangered, even as many swarms have taken to infesting floating platforms at Bretheda's surface and made their way to the gas giant's moons, scavenging from trash bins and hunting other urban vermin.



GOLEM, ABYSIUM

CR
12XP
19,200

N Large construct (magical, technological)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +22

Aura radioactive (high, 10 ft., DC 22)

DEFENSE

HP 200

EAC 26; **KAC** 28

Fort +12; **Ref** +12; **Will** +9

DR 10/—; **Immunities** construct traits, electricity, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +26 (6d4+20 B; critical irradiate^{AR} [DC 19])

Offensive Abilities berserk, breath weapon (30-ft. cone, 13d6 F, DC 19, usable every 1d4 rounds)

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

STATISTICS

Str +8; **Dex** +4; **Con** —; **Int** —; **Wis** +1; **Cha** —2

Skills Intimidate +22

Other Abilities comm, mindless, unliving

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or gang (2–4)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Berserk (Ex) When an abysium golem takes damage that reduces it to half its maximum Hit Points or fewer, it must attempt a DC 18 Will saving throw. While at or below half HP, it must also attempt a DC 18 Will saving throw whenever it takes additional damage. On a failure, the golem goes berserk. While berserk, the golem uses its actions to make a full attack or to move and attack. If it can't reach a creature, it attacks objects. The golem can attempt a DC 18 Will save at the end of each of its turns to end the berserk state. If the golem's creator communicates with the golem to calm it (via comm unit or from within 60 feet) and succeeds at a DC 10 Charisma check, the golem receives a +2 circumstance bonus to this saving throw.

Comm (Ex) A golem can receive wireless communications (and thus commands from its creator) at planetary range.

Magic Immunity (Ex) An abysium golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance, unless the spell specifically lists constructs in its Targets entry. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the golem, as follows.

- If targeted with *remove radioactivity*, the abysium golem is slowed (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds (no save), but if the caster also succeeds at a caster level check against the DC of the golem's radioactive aura, the golem is also flat-footed and off-target for the same duration.

- The *irradiate* spell ends any slow effect on the golem, and it regains a number of Hit Points depending on the radiation level (2d8 for low, 4d8 for medium, 6d8 for high, and 8d8 for severe). If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its maximum Hit Points, it gains any excess as temporary Hit Points.

These golems are crafted from abysium, the blue-green glowing starmetal also known as feverstone. They are dangerous not only for their strength and ferocity, but also because of the radiation they emit at all times. Some believe that abysium—and the golems made of it—are connected to the Abyss, the nightmarish home of all demonkind.



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LAWLESS ONE

CR
12

XP
19,200



CN Medium outsider (extraplanar, chaotic, incorporeal)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +22

DEFENSE **HP** 170 **RP** 5

EAC 25; **KAC** 26

Fort +11; **Ref** +13; **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, void adaptation;

Immunities acid, cold, construct immunities

Weaknesses susceptible to order

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (Su, perfect)

Melee entropic touch +20 (2d12+12 A; critical severe wound [DC 21])

Offensive Abilities reality revisitation

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; melee +20, ranged +22)

1/day—*baleful polymorph*^{AA2} (4th level, DC 23), *corrosive haze* (DC 23)

3/day—*arcane sight* (DC 22), *bestow curse* (DC 22), *dispel magic*, *entropic grasp* (DC 21)

At will—*caustic conversion*, *invisibility* (DC 20)

STATISTICS

Str —; **Dex** +5; **Con** +0; **Int** +0; **Wis** +8; **Cha** +0

Skills Acrobatics +27 (+35 to fly), Intimidate +22, Stealth +27

Languages truespeech

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or anarchy (3–6)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Reality Revisitation (Su) Whenever a creature succeeds at its initial saving throw against one of the lawless one's spell-like abilities, the lawless one can spend 1 Resolve Point as a reaction in an attempt to tweak reality in its favor. The target creature must then reattempt its saving throw against the spell-like ability at the start of its next turn. If it fails, apply the effects of the spell to the creature as if it had failed its initial saving throw.

Susceptible to Order (Su) A weapon affixed with an *axiomatic* weapon fusion bypasses a lawless one's incorporeal defenses as if it were a *ghost killer* weapon.

Phantasmal creatures resembling inevitables, lawless ones are construct-like humanoids of spinning gears that brim with chaotic energy. However, their similarities to denizens of the lawful plane of Axis are merely physical. Where inevitables are charged with maintaining order, lawless ones seek the exact opposite, looking to corrupt the rule of law, disrupt long-held class structures, and destroy status quos. They do this by targeting societal leaders, whether they be duly elected government officials or self-made titans of industry. When not on the attack, lawless ones bide their time, using their invisibility and incorporeality to stay hidden. After they strike (and usually kill) their targets, they disappear without a trace, leading many to believe their victims were taken out by skilled assassins or other non-supernatural threats.

As such, little is actually known about lawless ones, especially regarding their origins. 25 years ago, an anonymous user of a fringe infosphere community claimed that AbadarCorp unintentionally created the lawless ones after trying to use blueprints somehow stolen from Axis to create their own inevitables, but the post was quickly expunged. The rumor still persists, however, despite AbadarCorp executives' constant denials.



OBFUCHSIA

CR
12XP
19,200

CE Small plant

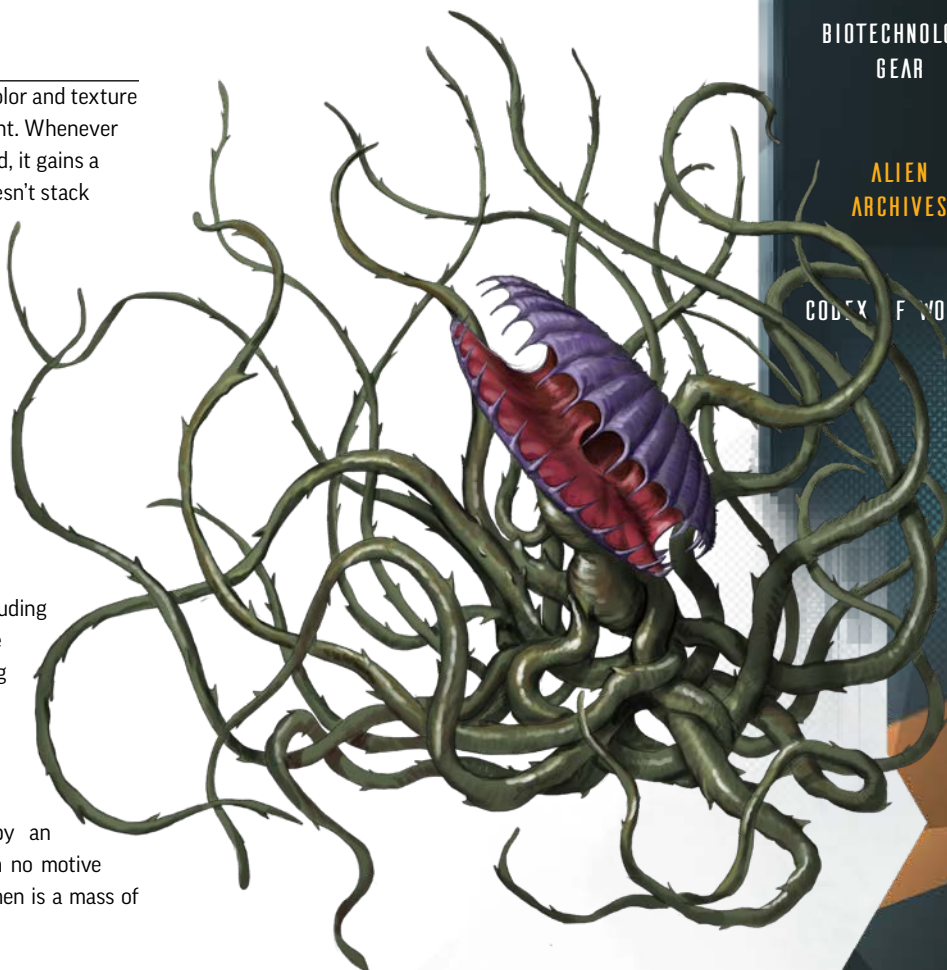
Init +8; **Senses** blindsight (vibration) 120 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +22**Aura** silence (10 ft., DC 19)**DEFENSE****EAC** 26; **KAC** 28**Fort** +16; **Ref** +14; **Will** +11**Defensive Abilities** camouflage, void adaptation;**Immunities** plant immunities**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** bite +22 (2d8+17 P plus 1d8 A) or
tendrils +25 (3d6+17 B plus grab)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tendrils)**STATISTICS****Str** +5; **Dex** +8; **Con** +3; **Int** +4; **Wis** +4; **Cha** -2**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Athletics +22 (+30 to climb),
Stealth +27 (+37 when motionless)**Other Abilities** compression**ECOLOGY****Environment** any vacuum**Organization** solitary or sprouting (2–4)**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Camouflage (Ex) An obfuchsia can alter the color and texture of its foliage to blend in with its environment. Whenever an obfuchsia remains motionless for 1 round, it gains a +10 bonus to Stealth checks (this bonus doesn't stack with *invisibility* or similar effects). If the obfuchsia moves more than 10 feet or takes a hostile action (such as attacking), it loses this bonus until it once again spends 1 round remaining still.

Silence (Ex) An obfuchsia vibrates thin membranes between its tendrils to cancel sound waves in an atmosphere, generating an aura of silence that lasts until the beginning of the obfuchsia's next turn. Creatures within 10 feet, including the obfuchsia, are deafened (Fort DC 19). Sound-based sense-dependent effects, including blindsight (sound), cannot pass through the emanation. This aura of silence is not strong enough to stop sonic weapons, however, which function normally. If the obfuchsia can't take actions, its aura is suppressed.

thin, writhing tendrils wrapped around a thorny, acid-dripping maw, all possessed of deadly cunning and a surprising capacity for stealth. By aligning light-deflecting microstructures on the feathery foliage that sprouts from its appendages, a stationary obfuchsia can make itself all but invisible against its surroundings. Further, the creature can counteract ambient sound waves by vibrating thin membranes between its tendrils, stifling the sounds of struggle as it tears into horrified victims. Without proper sensors, a crew can easily find itself at the mercy of this utterly remorseless hunter. Fortunately, obfuchsias emanate trace levels of radiation that, while harmless, are still detectable by radiation sweepers and similar devices.

Obfuchsias begin their lives as massive clouds of spores that float dormant in space. Radiation from the engines of passing starships awakens them, prompting them to attach to the ship's hull and germinate. They grow quickly and, when fully developed, infiltrate the vessel through the tiniest entry, squeezing their malleable forms behind access panels and through ducts until they can pounce on prey. Once they have fed, obfuchsias again seek the void—where they explode into another spore cloud to spread further across the galaxy.



Suspected to be bioweapons engineered by an extinct species, obfuchsias are creatures with no motive beyond slaughter and replication. Each specimen is a mass of

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CODEX OF WORLDS

PROTEAN, XIRITIX

CR
11

XP
12,800



CN Large outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, protean, shapechanger)

Init +5; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +25

DEFENSE

EAC 24; **KAC** 25

Fort +10; **Ref** +12; **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities amorphous, *displacement*; **DR** 10/lawful;

Immunities acid, polymorph; **Resistances** electricity 10, sonic 10; **SR** 22

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (Su, perfect)

Melee claw +20 (2d10+13 S) or tail +20 (3d4+13 B plus grab)

Ranged anomaly ray +22 (2d8+11 A plus driftflash [DC 20])

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

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th)

Constant—*displacement*

HP 170

STATISTICS

Str +2; **Dex** +5; **Con** +3; **Int** +0; **Wis** +1; **Cha** +8

Skills Acrobatics +20 (+28 to fly), Disguise +20, Mysticism +25, Physical Science +20, Stealth +25

Languages Abyssal, Protean; telepathy 100 ft.

Other Abilities change shape (Small, Medium, or Large animal, elemental, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, ooze, plant, or vermin)

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Drift or Maelstrom)

Organization solitary

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Anomaly Ray (Su) As a ranged attack, a xiritix can fire a ray of destabilizing energy with a range increment of 60 feet. This natural weapon has the automatic weapon special property (maximum 6 targets). Once the protean uses this ability, it can't use its anomaly ray for 1d4 rounds.

Driftflash (Su) A creature struck by a xiritix's anomaly ray must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude saving throw or be affected by a random effect, as determined on the following table.

D8 EFFECT

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | The target is assaulted by the terrible smell of a rancid pit of the Abyss and is sickened for 1d4 rounds. |
| 2 | The target is enveloped by the cloying gloom of the Shadow Plane and is shaken for 1d4 rounds. |
| 3 | The target hears the whispers of the damned in Hell and is off-target for 1d4 rounds. |
| 4 | The target is distracted by the comforting serenity of Heaven and is flat-footed for 1d4 rounds. |
| 5 | The target is snared by wild vines from the First World and is entangled for 1d4 rounds. |
| 6 | The target is subjected to the blinding light of the Positive Energy Plane and is blinded for 1d4 rounds. |
| 7 | The target witnesses a vision of death from the Boneyard and is staggered for 1d4 rounds. |
| 8 | The target is surrounded by swirls of erratic colors from the Maelstrom and is confused for 1d4 rounds. |

Xiritixes are rare proteans created by a large section of the Maelstrom being pulled into the Drift, though some scholars believe they were once another species of proteans that mutated in the planar shift. These mercurial, serpentine beings view the rest of the multiverse as boring and stagnant; they seek to remedy this "problem" by inflicting the same planar-mixing chaos that birthed them on whomever they come across. Xiritixes usually maintain a facet of their original forms (such as a sinuous tail or colorful scales) when they change shape, making them easy to spot even in disguise.



XANTHOS

CR
14XP
38,400

N Huge magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision;**Perception** +25**DEFENSE****HP** 235**EAC** 28; **KAC** 29**Fort** +14; **Ref** +14; **Will** +17**Immunities** cold; **Resistances** electricity 30, fire 30; **SR** 25**OFFENSE****Speed** 60 ft.**Melee** bite +26 (6d6+22 P) or

hoof +26 (4d6+22 B)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th)1/day—*teleport*3/day—*arcane eye*At will—*life bubble***STATISTICS****Str** +8; **Dex** +2; **Con** +6; **Int** +1; **Wis** +4; **Cha** +1**Skills** Culture +30, Intimidate +25, Mysticism +30, Physical

Science +25, Sense Motive +30

Languages Aklo, Common; telepathy

5 ft.

Other Abilities exploit stellar conjunction**Gear** industrial backpack, personal comm

unit, spy drone (laser microphone), 4

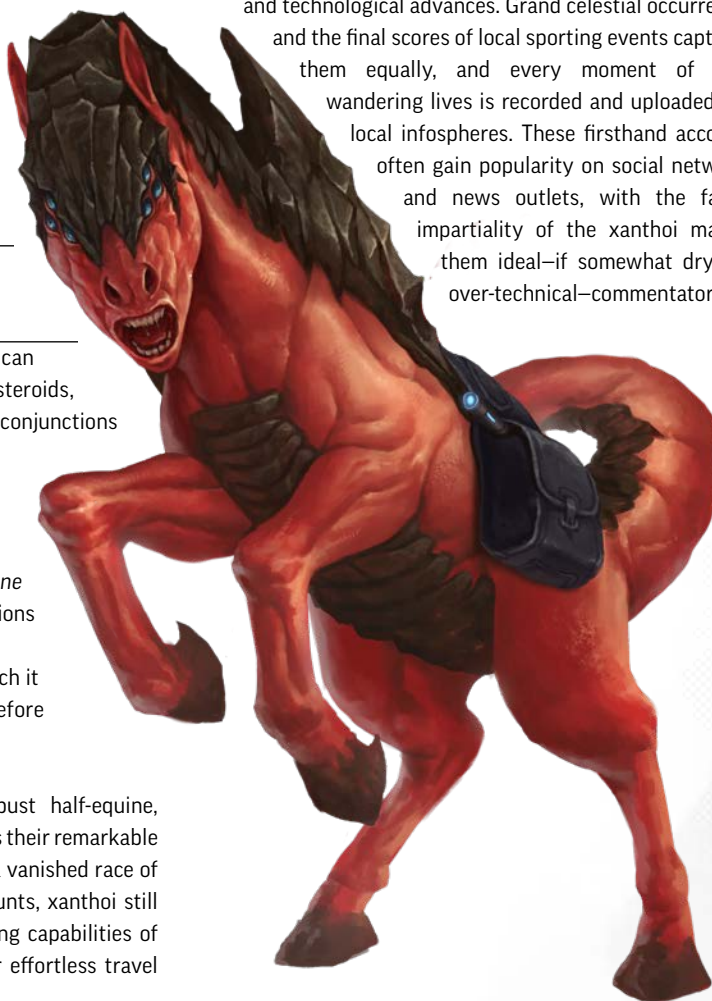
batteries (20 charges each)

ECOLOGY**Environment** any**Organization** solitary or pair**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Exploit Stellar Conjunction (Su)** A xanthos can

sense the alignment of stellar objects (asteroids, comets, planets, and so on), which form conjunctions that grant them magical travel. During these conjunctions, the xanthos can use their *teleport* spell-like ability as *interplanetary teleport* to reach any world they have visited before, or as *plane shift* to reach any plane. These conjunctions occur at the GM's discretion and usually remain viable for 10d10 hours, after which it could be days, weeks, or even months before another conjunction occurs.

and their drive to observe, collect, and catalogue knowledge give them a long history as field researchers, but the end of the Gap marked a drastic shift in xanthos mindsets. While other species despaired at the collective loss of so much history, the xanthoi celebrate the Gap as the period of their masters' return. They believe their creators utilized powerful magic or technology to compile all accumulated information in the universe, taking a large chunk of it with them when they again departed at the end of the Gap. They celebrate this erasure as an opportunity to learn anew, free from the misconceptions of the past, and proselytize the inevitable return of their masters, whom they believe will bring about a second Gap.

Understanding that their masters have already collected the "old knowings" that they and others have gathered throughout history, xanthoi now focus their acute observational skills on current events of all sorts. They seek to understand and document everything from political upheavals and interstellar wars to fashion trends and technological advances. Grand celestial occurrences and the final scores of local sporting events captivate them equally, and every moment of their wandering lives is recorded and uploaded into local infospheres. These firsthand accounts often gain popularity on social networks and news outlets, with the famed impartiality of the xanthoi making them ideal—if somewhat dry and over-technical—commentators.



The intimidating appearance of the robust half-equine, half-reptilian xanthos (plural xanthoi) belies their remarkable intellect and magical abilities. Created by a vanished race of plane-hopping aliens to serve as their mounts, xanthoi still exhibit the natural curiosity and teleporting capabilities of their absentee masters. Their capacity for effortless travel

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CODEX OF WORLDS

CODEx OF WORLDS

AGESH

Colorless Mining World

Diameter: $\times 1$; **Mass:** $\times 1\text{-}1/5$

Gravity: $\times 1\text{-}1/5$

Location: The Vast

Atmosphere: Normal

Day: 36 hours; **Year:** 180 days

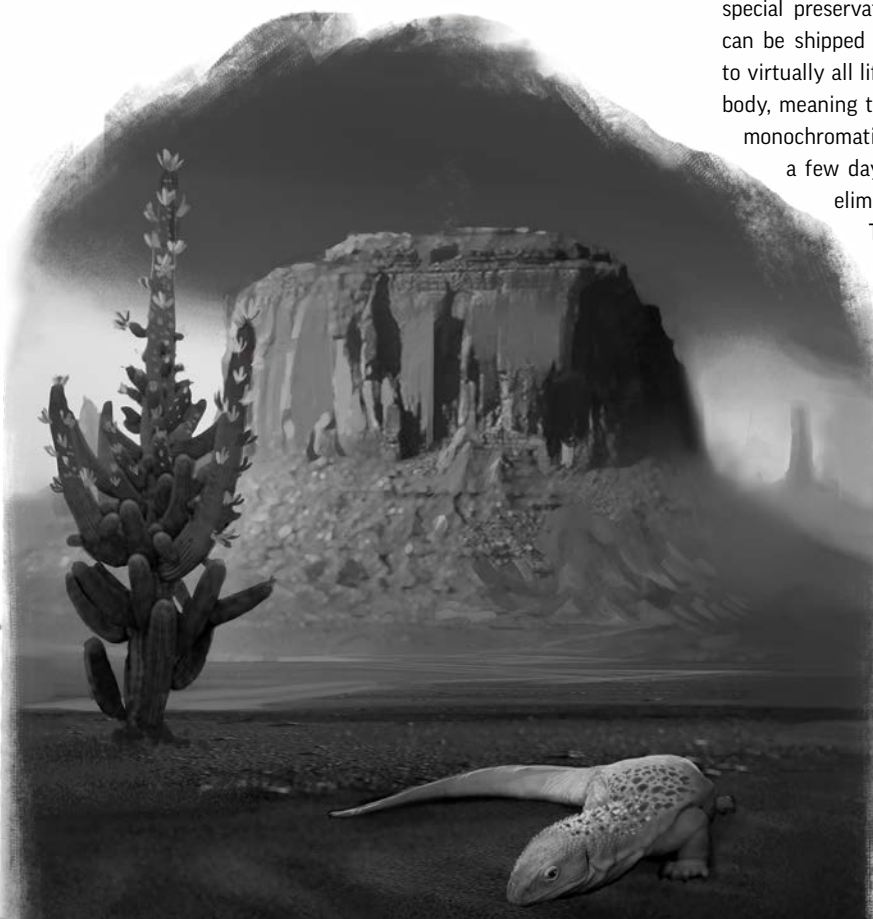
The largest of four planets orbiting a nondescript star in the Vast, Aghesh is an arid black orb streaked with white clouds. This mineral planet was discovered over a century ago by intrepid explorers from the Pact Worlds and settled shortly thereafter by miners hoping to extract monodust, a nanoscopic material with curious optical properties that make it a useful component in many hologram and laser technologies. Monodust saturates the planet's environment and biosphere, giving Aghesh its most noticeable element: a completely monochromatic environment. Monodust absorbs ambient light and reflects it across only a few discrete wavelengths. In practical terms, this means that precisely five colors exist on Aghesh: black, dark gray, gray, light gray, and white.

While seeing the color leached from the environment as the airlock doors open can be disorienting for many first-time visitors to Aghesh, its long-term residents—both the miners who laboriously sift the desert sands for aggregated monodust chunks and the secondary network of merchants and other tradespeople who have sprung up around them—have adapted well to their unique home. Signage on Aghesh utilizes distinct geometric symbols where other systems might rely on color coding, and local fashions tend to focus on aesthetically pleasing tessellations of black and white. Those least-adapted to Aghesh's environment are the top-level executives of the various mining corporations, many of whom maintain designated "prism rooms" in their domiciles, fitted with airlocks and filters to scrub the monodust out of the air and holographic projectors to superimpose colorful images across the walls. Though this process is expensive and energy-intensive, these executives receive a disproportionate amount of the lucrative profits from monodust mining, so they have the resources.

Efforts to synthesize monodust elsewhere have failed as, for unknown reasons, the substance decays rapidly when exposed to the atmosphere of other planets, necessitating special preservation in vacuum-sealed containers before it can be shipped off-world for sale. While biologically inert to virtually all life-forms, monodust does accumulate in the body, meaning that those who travel off-world retain their monochromatic coloration and lack of color vision for a few days, until the substance has been naturally eliminated from their skin and visual organs.

This is a point of pride for some merchants who transport the valuable commodity.

Though no sapient creatures have evolved on Aghesh, the planet's biosphere is teeming with native creatures that are adapted to its arid, windblown surfaces, including black-gray lichens and gray cacti with striking white flowers. The planet's reptilian fauna tend to be mostly gray-white to reflect the desert heat, though they also have black patterning to better blend into the black sands. Extraterrestrial dissection of Agheshan life-forms has revealed the presence of vestigial cone cells and other structures associated with color perception, suggesting that monodust entered Aghesh's environment at some point in the relatively recent geological past, though who or what might have created and introduced such an unusual (and useful) material remains a mystery.



NEXT MONTH

PUPPETS WITHOUT STRINGS

By Landon Winkler

Armed with evidence of a conspiracy that goes all the way to the top of the Pact Worlds government, the heroes travel to Absalom Station to root out the duplicitous agents. Once the operatives are unmasked, the heroes have their final chance to come face to face with the puppet master behind it all!

CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

By Kendra Leigh Speedling

The heroes might have stopped the insidious machinations of the Unseen, but their adventures don't need to end there! This article is packed with plot hooks for the further exploits of the heroes of The Threefold Conspiracy.

MAGICAL ACADEMIES

By Hilary Moon Murphy

Across the galaxy, magical academies teach students to hone their spellcasting abilities in a variety of traditions. From technomancy to war magic, learn about these educational institutions and pick up some new techniques!

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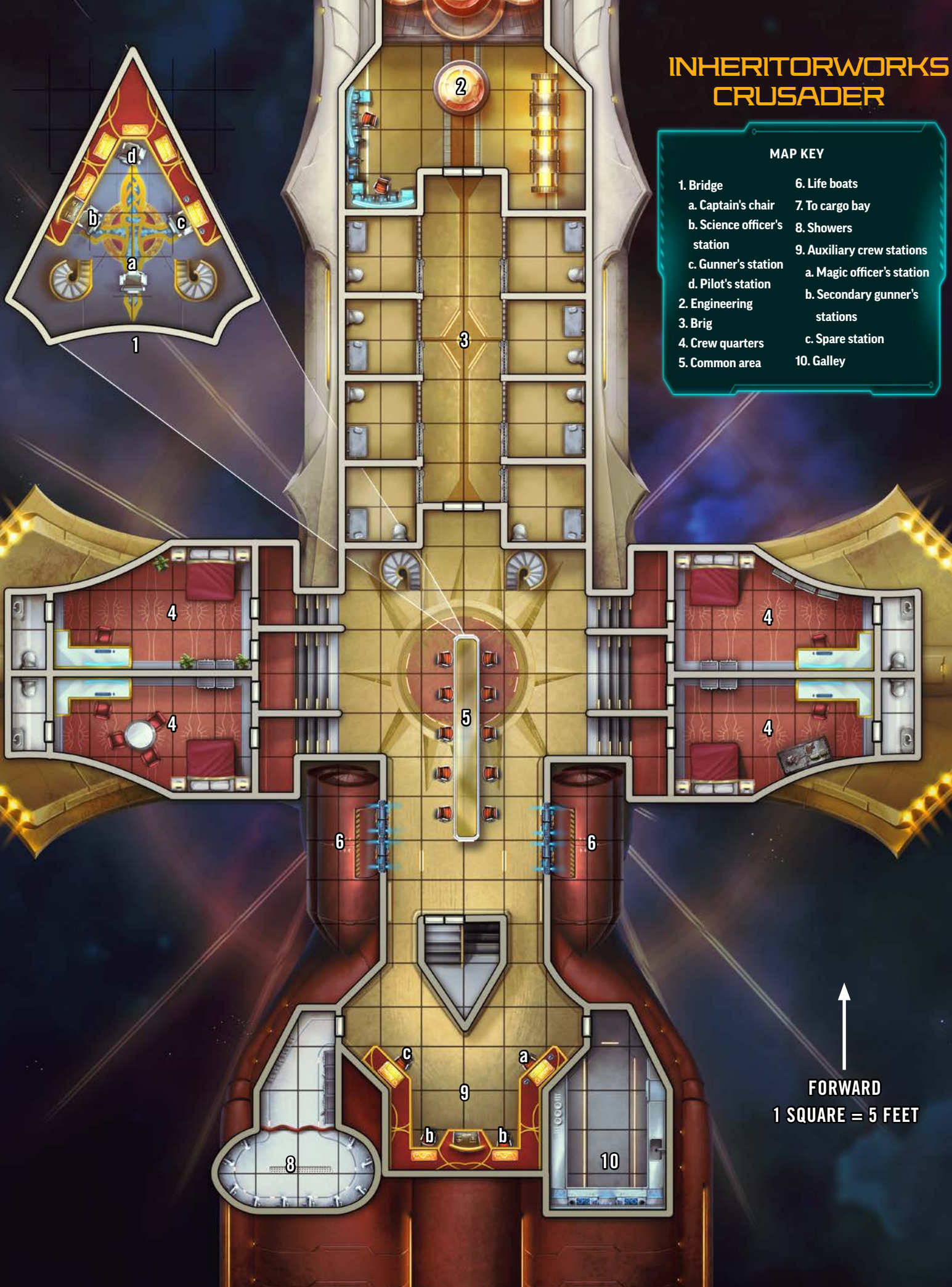
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INHERITORWORKS CRUSADER

MAP KEY

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Bridge | 6. Life boats |
| a. Captain's chair | 7. To cargo bay |
| b. Science officer's station | 8. Showers |
| c. Gunner's station | 9. Auxiliary crew stations |
| d. Pilot's station | a. Magic officer's station |
| | b. Secondary gunner's stations |
| 2. Engineering | c. Spare station |
| 3. Brig | 10. Galley |
| 4. Crew quarters | |
| 5. Common area | |



FORWARD

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



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Printed in China. PZ07229