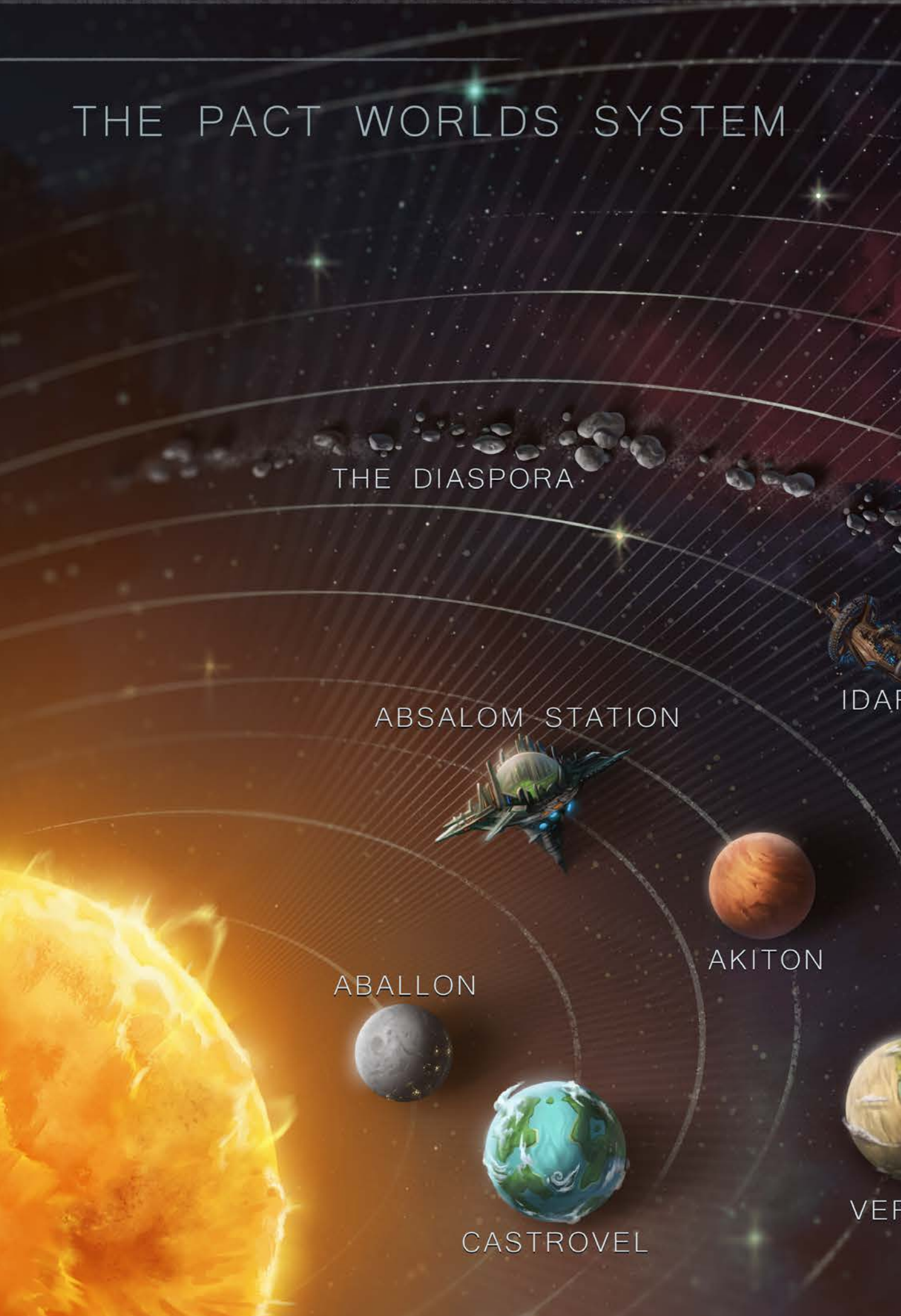


STARFINDER

The background of the cover is a vibrant, painterly illustration. A massive, purple and orange dragon-like creature with multiple eyes and sharp teeth is the central focus. A character in red and gold armor with a purple cape is riding on its back, firing a yellow energy beam. Another character in blue and silver armor is in the foreground, firing a green energy beam at the creature. The setting is a lush, futuristic city with greenery and advanced architecture.

PACT WORLDS

THE PACT WORLDS SYSTEM



A detailed diagram of the Pact Worlds System. The Sun is a large, bright orange-yellow sphere on the left. Concentric white arcs represent orbital paths. The planets, from closest to the Sun to furthest, are: Aballon (a grey, cratered moon), Castrovell (a blue and green Earth-like planet), Akiton (a reddish-orange planet), and Idar (a yellowish planet). A large, irregular ring of grey rocks, labeled 'The Diaspora', orbits between the Sun and the planets. A blue and silver space station, labeled 'Absalom Station', orbits between Aballon and Castrovell. The background is a dark space filled with stars and nebulae.

THE DIASPORA

ABSALOM STATION

IDAR

ABALLON

AKITON

CASTROVEL

VER

STARFINDER

PACT WORLDS





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This book refers to several other Starfinder products, 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.



WELCOME TO THE PACT WORLDS

The *Starfinder* Roleplaying Game encompasses not just one world but millions upon millions of them in a vast galaxy, with some home to well-established civilizations and many more completely uncharted and ripe for exploration. The heart of the game's setting is the Pact Worlds, a unified coalition of worlds sharing a sun and banded together for mutual protection against larger threats. The Pact Worlds provide plenty of opportunities for adventure in their own right, while also offering a familiar home base from which starship crews can launch explorations into the myriad mysteries of a weird universe.

The recent history of the Pact Worlds begins only about 3 centuries ago with the ending of the Gap, a magical, multiverse-wide period of amnesia for which all known records are lost or untrustworthy. At that time, the Pact Worlds' solar system was still known as the Golarion System, after a key inhabited planet, though that world somehow vanished during the Gap, replaced by a massive space platform called Absalom Station. As the various civilizations of the Golarion System struggled to move past this historic catastrophe, the newly ascended machine-god Triune further complicated matters by introducing the Drift, a previously undiscovered dimension that—when combined with the god's new engine designs—allowed starships to travel between star systems in days rather than generations. Triune's now-infamous Signal crossed the galaxy in an instant, granting this new method of travel to an unknown number of cultures. Yet, while the advent of effectively faster-than-light travel sparked a land rush and new opportunities for commerce in the system, it also brought new threats, such as the alien pathogen called the Stardust Plague that tore through the system a few decades later, believed to have been brought home by incautious explorers. Yet the greatest threat to that point came right on the heels of the new technology, as inhabitants of the Golarion System came into contact with their warlike neighbor, the mighty Veskarium. Tensions escalated until the year 36 AG (After Gap), when the Veskarium finally invaded in earnest, landing on Triaxus and forcing the many worlds of the Golarion System to band together to drive them off in the Battle of Aledra.

In the aftermath, the ruling governments of many worlds in the Golarion System realized the need to make this temporary alliance permanent in order to stand a chance against the Veskarium, which was much better organized. These heads of state gathered on Absalom Station in 41 AG to create a system-wide alliance, providing ways their planets could peacefully deal with one another in times of strife so that the system as a whole could focus on defending against vesk invaders. With the ratification of this so-called Absalom Pact, the Pact Worlds officially came into being.

Not all inhabitants of the system were pleased with the decision to form this coalition. In particular, a portion of Eox's navy—whose undead troops had thus far enjoyed the most success fighting the vesk and still bitterly remembered their planet's ill-fated attempt to take control of Absalom Station in the notorious Magefire Assault of 7 AG—fumed at the idea of being

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK

The majority of *Starfinder Pact Worlds* details the 14 planets and other celestial bodies that make up the Pact Worlds system. Each entry describes a world's geography, its notable locations, and the residents and societies that call that world home. Each entry also includes a detailed map and a new character theme related to the world.

Chapter 2 contains five new styles of starships—from Hellknight fighters to Iomedean cathedralships—as well as options for building starships.

Chapter 3 presents statistics for members of six factions of NPCs, from security personnel to space pirates.

The final chapter contains a plethora of new rules, ranging from archetypes to feats to spells; a warehouse full of gear, including armor, weapons, and magic items; and six new weird and wonderful types of aliens available as playable races!

saddled with protecting the “soft and fragile” living creatures of other worlds. A group of admirals orchestrated a coup, attempting to take control of several key settlements and the ancient battle satellite called the Sentinel, but even their massive corpse ships were no match for the combined power of the planet's bone sage leaders. Many of the insurrectionists were captured and jailed by their fellow Eoxians, with the remaining unhappy admirals and soldiers fleeing in their starships to the dark places beyond the solar system's rim. This new faction renamed itself the Corpse Fleet and vowed to eradicate all life from the Pact Worlds, thereby creating a new empire of the undead.

The original members of the Pact Worlds soon garnered company as they continued to battle against the Veskarium. In 83 AG, the insectile shirrens arrived in the system, having gained independence from the monstrous Swarm. Granted asylum, they swiftly spread throughout the Pact Worlds, becoming integral inhabitants on whatever planets they chose to settle on. Then in 240 AG, the massive worldship *Idari* appeared, bringing kasathas who had fled their dying planet and hoped to colonize Akiton. The Pact Worlds government convinced them otherwise—thankfully without starting another war—and instead



granted the kasathas citizenship in the Pact Worlds, suggesting that since their vessel was designed to hold generations of occupants, it could orbit the sun as a de facto planet.

The Pact Worlds' so-called Silent War with the Veskarium came to an end in 291 AG, when the ravenous Swarm attacked both systems simultaneously, seeking to pillage and devour. In an ironic echo of the Pact Worlds' own formation, the Pact Worlds and the Veskarium were forced to put aside their differences to overcome this mutual foe, and signed an accord that ended hostilities and opened up trade between the two systems. Together, they drove back the Swarm, though its menace continues to linger on the horizon. Today, vesk are common in the Pact Worlds and frequently even citizens, though relations between the two governments—and often the races themselves—remain somewhat strained.

A number of other important milestones have occurred in the Pact Worlds system over the past few centuries. In 154 AG, the constructed race of androids were granted full Pact Worlds citizenship and could no longer legally be treated as property. In 223 AG, worshipers of the sun goddess Sarenrae made the startling discovery of empty bubble-shaped structures within the sun's burning plasma. These buildings, named the Burning Archipelago by the faithful, remain unaffected by the heat and create safe passages between them and the sun's surface; this place is now the church's most sacred settlement. In 287 AG, shirren diplomats brokered a historical peace deal between the lashuntas and formians of Castrovel, two races who had fought ceaselessly for millennia. Some say this particular event was foundational for the alliance between the Pact Worlds and the Veskarium that occurred just 4 years later.

GOVERNMENT

While part of a larger association, the member governments of the Pact Worlds are autonomous, free to govern themselves as they see fit within their own borders, provided they adhere to a few overarching rules. Unlike a true system-wide government, the Pact instead ensures that its member worlds work together in times of strife and focuses on providing ways for members to address issues with one another without going to war. It also regulates trade between worlds and provides interplanetary law enforcement to hunt down criminals who have fled the planet of their crime or whose infractions aren't covered by any particular world's jurisdiction; these security forces are contracted or controlled directly by the Stewards (see page 189), a group of highly trained diplomatic peacekeepers.

The Pact Worlds consist of most of the major planetary bodies in the system plus Absalom Station and the *Idari*. Aucturn, Liavara, the Diaspora, and the sun are technically classified as protectorates, as they have limited—or disjointed—civilizations. As such, they don't have full voting rights, but any representatives from those protectorates can discuss the issues up for vote with the rest of the council. A planet's moons often fall under that planet's jurisdiction, except in notable cases such as Arkanen and Kalo-Mahoi, which have been officially recognized as independent. Churches and corporations also have no direct say in matters the council decides, but many of them employ lobbyists and other agents to make sure their interests are represented.

The majority of Pact Worlds governance occurs within the Plenara, a large amphitheater-like space on Absalom Station. This space is where the Pact Council—representatives of the Pact Worlds

and protectorates—meets and makes decisions. Each member world has a number of delegates in the council proportional to its sentient population; how these delegates are chosen is up to the individual Pact Worlds. Each delegate receives one vote, and most issues are settled with a simple majority vote. Tied votes and pressing matters are decided by the Directorate, a five-member committee whose members are chosen by and from the wider council every 2 years. No member of the Pact Worlds can have two representatives on the Directorate at any given time, and a single representative can serve for a maximum of three terms. The Directorate has a sixth member who does not vote: the Director-General of the Stewards. This sixth member has no set term limit and acts as an advisor to the other directors. The Stewards choose the Director-General from the ranks of their most distinguished and long-serving officers, and they can theoretically hold a vote of no confidence regarding a sitting Director-General at any time (though that has yet to happen).

The Pact Worlds acknowledge that their authority has limits. They don't concern themselves with matters involving extrasolar celestial bodies unless those colonies (or new worlds) have petitioned for and won official protectorate status. The current number of protectorates outside the Pact Worlds system is very small, and while there's no hard limit to how many there may one day be, the Pact Council is keenly aware of how narrowly their system has escaped invasion or annihilation in its brief history, and is reluctant to overextend itself. As such, most activity by Pact Worlds citizens happening outside the system is unregulated, and endangered individuals in unrecognized territory are encouraged to hire mercenaries such as the Skyfire Legion, petition groups such as the Hellknights or Knights of Golarion, or simply take matters into their own hands.

ECONOMY

The standard unit of currency in the Pact Worlds is the credit, though some planets use their own forms of money for local trade. Business between Pact Worlds planets is always based on the credit standard, and new members of the coalition must convert their local economy to credits. Some civilizations outside of the Pact Worlds also use this credit standard to make it easier to trade with the system.

Reputable businesses and most individuals store their credits digitally (usually in an AbadarCorp-approved bank), as this is often the safest practice. Large-scale hacking attacks to siphon off such protected money are rare and noteworthy, and banks maintain the strongest possible security with high-level data encryption and powerful spells. However, all direct bank-to-bank transactions are logged in case they are needed for government inquiries and may charge fees, which is why most daily transactions use a common and untraceable means of transferring money: the credstick.

In addition to the occasional piece of hard currency, credsticks—physical objects that digitally store anonymous

funds—are a boon to those who want to be able to store and spend credits simply. These storage devices can come in all shapes and sizes, but they are usually about the size of a human finger. A credstick has the ability to transfer funds wirelessly to another credstick, but most are inexpensive enough that a person just hands over the credstick when she wants to privately pay another person. The downside to this convenience is that unlike a certified bank transfer, a credstick can be lost or stolen, with no way to recover the funds stored therein.

Most Pact Worlds citizens carry credsticks on them containing just enough funds to get through perhaps a week, visiting automated bank kiosks when they need to replenish their money on hand. Black-market and other criminal organizations sometimes launder money through large quantities of credsticks holding small denominations, and only the very wealthy or foolish (sometimes both) tote extravagant, elaborate credsticks capable of linking directly to a line of credit with their bank.

Another form of currency is universal polymer bases (commonly known as UPBs): tiny components that can be arranged to form all manner of electronic components or even reconstituted into chemicals, fabrics, or other materials. Just about any piece of equipment, from weapons to armor to technological gear, can be created from UPBs. One UPB is worth 1 credit, and because of this basic exchange rate and their utility, UPBs are sometimes traded directly, especially in distant trade hubs that have little contact with the Pact Worlds.

With only a few notable exceptions (such as areas of Aballon and Verces) and individual groups or settlements, capitalism is the driving force behind the Pact Worlds economy. Its citizens must work for a living to afford food and housing; careers in the Pact Worlds range from freelance planetary explorers and corporate-sponsored hackers to ordinary street cleaners and starship mechanics. Many citizens report to a single place of business on an almost daily basis, others can do their work remotely, and still others have jobs that involve them traveling from place to place. Some governments—including that of Absalom Station—endeavor to ensure no sentient being under their care goes hungry or homeless, but on harsh worlds where the lives of certain creatures have little value, rulers often give the welfare of the downtrodden little thought.

CULTURE

The Pact Worlds has no unified culture, as the alliance is composed of dozens of civilizations across wildly different planets. Immigration between worlds is common, and many citizens retain the values and traditions of their native cultures even on their new planets, though this can sometimes lead to conflict. The fact that local worlds retain near-complete sovereignty over their territory can be deeply uncomfortable for travelers from places with different laws and approaches to basic rights, such as for visitors to Eox encountering the common practice of reanimating the corpses of the dead.



Luckily, the majority of Pact Worlds residents are tolerant of others, and governments understand that treating visitors poorly risks their own planets being cut out of the trade network or ejected from the Pact entirely. For most people, however, this live-and-let-live strategy isn't about economic theory but simply practicality: with a veritable host of unfamiliar species and alien cultures right around the corner, any other attitude would soon leave one without friends or a job. Minor prejudices are common, yet they are usually kept quiet for the sake of getting along, and even when citizens experience intolerance, they can often find acceptance in another part of the community (or solar system), bringing with them the best part of their previous cultures and further contributing to the Pact Worlds' vast melting pot.

Religion remains an important cultural touchstone for the Pact Worlds. Since the gods have made themselves known to all manner of societies, faith in a certain deity often crosses racial divides and helps to eradicate such barriers. Many religious organizations engage in charitable acts, helping those in dire need both in and beyond the system; others form powerful corporations or formidable armies. A myriad number of gods, demigods, and philosophies exist in the Pact Worlds, and their followers usually avoid outright conflicts. Even when they don't, their battles often occur outside of the public eye.

The dynamic fields of arts and entertainment present snapshots of the cultures that produce them. In the Pact Worlds, a blistering trend can become passé in the blink of an eye, and a style popular on one world might be offensive on another. Though the styles and genres vary differently across the planets, most Pact Worlds citizens relax with music, virtual-reality games, and holoivid broadcasts. Bars, nightclubs, and VR arcades are popular businesses no matter where one goes, though one culture's dancing might seem like violence to another.

TIME

Early in the history of the Pact Worlds, the council established a standard for the measurement of time, which was especially useful in a system of planets with different rotational periods and orbits. Under Pact Standard Time, a day has 24 hours of 60 minutes each, which happens to match the length of the day on Castrovel and Triaxus. The artificial lighting and shift schedules on Absalom Station are set to the same time. A year has 52 weeks and 365 days—the length of Absalom Station's orbit around the sun. The terms “local day” and “local year” are used when referring to a particular planet's orbit and rotation. Specific years are denoted by how long after the end of the Gap they are with the notation AG, which stands for “After Gap.”

THE STEWARDS

Though the Stewards are vital to the Pact Worlds' safety and cohesion, the organization actually predates the signing of the Absalom Pact by thousands of years. Originally a nongovernmental peacekeeping organization created to maintain unity between the many countries of Verces's Ring of Nations, the group then consisted of highly trained verthani agents working from well-defended citadels in every nation. These warrior-diplomats protected the Ring of Nations as a whole, hunting down international criminals and

defusing hostilities between nations—sometimes with skillful negotiations, and sometimes with quiet assassinations.

With the signing of the Absalom Pact, the Stewards elected to widen their focus; they relocated their headquarters to Absalom Station and took on the Pact Worlds as their new charge. The Stewards continue to do what they did on Verces but on a much larger scale, necessitating the recruitment of new Stewards from all across the system. Today, the organization is a diverse collection of races and ethnicities, held together by the fact that new Stewards must forsake all former allegiances and home worlds and devote their lives to a single cause. The Stewards act independently of all individual governments, and while they defer to the Pact Council in most manners, they are free to refuse any commands they believe violate the letter or spirit of the Pact.

Located on Absalom Station, the Stewards' base is a fortified structure known as Bastion, a combination military training facility and ambassadorial school. New Stewards spend months here, learning everything from fighting techniques to cultural mores from all over the system, before they're allowed on field missions. Once they've completed their training, Stewards are given their assignments—either as lone agents or as soldiers in their fleets and bases—but are occasionally called back to the headquarters to refresh their education and make sure they're continuing to carry out their duties in a professional and impartial manner. Bastion also contains the nexus of the Draws, a network of interplanetary portals that link all of the Stewards' major installations, allowing ground forces to instantly transfer to where they are needed most. Like individual Stewards, these installations on the various Pact Worlds are officially there to aid and advise the local officials, taking direct action only when approved by the local government. Only in regions without clear local jurisdictions and in the neutral space between worlds are Stewards allowed to act directly and with impunity on behalf of the Pact Worlds government.

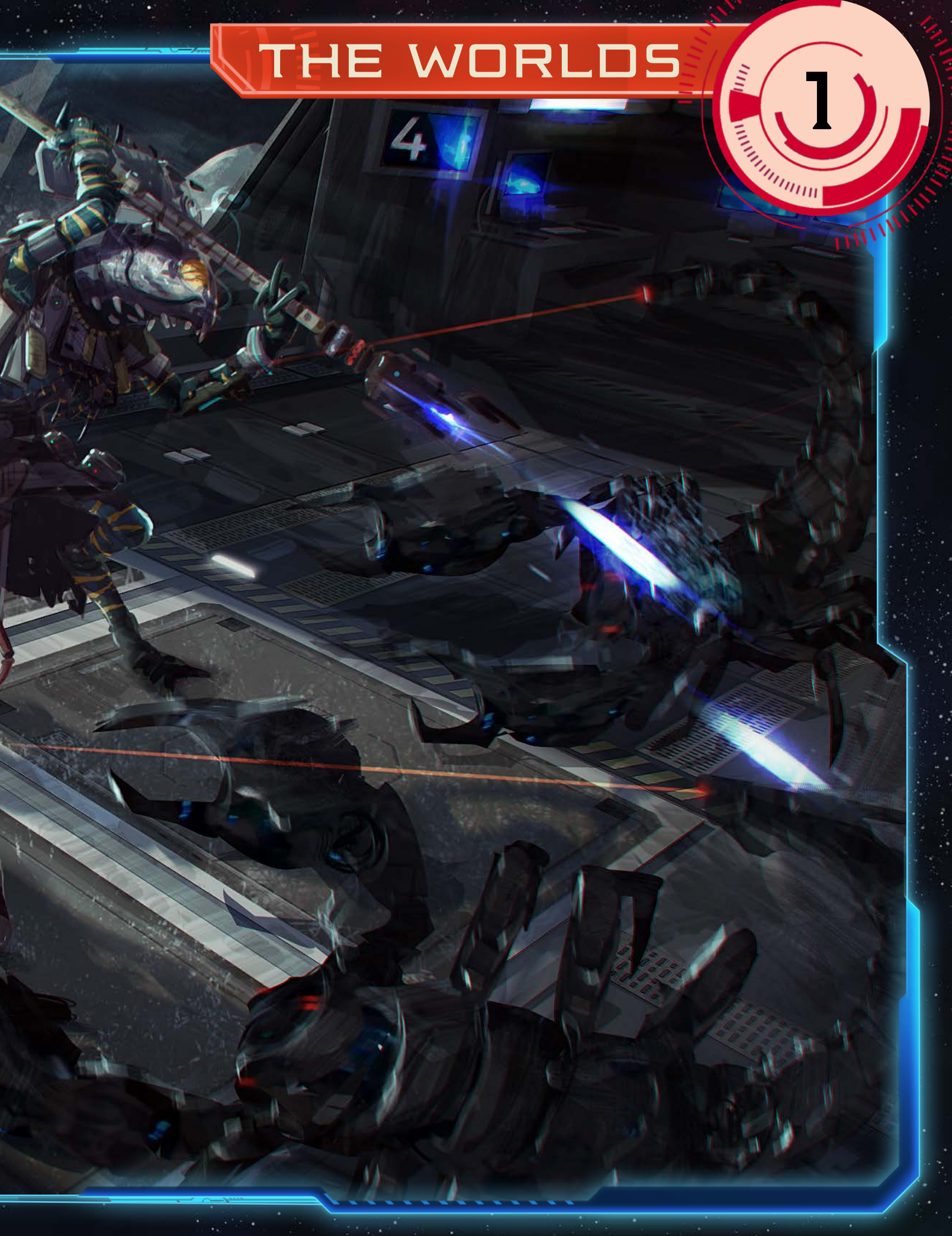
Director-General **Lin Camulan** (LG male korasha lashunta soldier) is the current head of the Stewards, as well as the nonvoting member of and advisor to the Directorate. Between sitting in on governmental sessions with the Directorate and discussing the Stewards' activities with the Conclave of Legates—a panel of decorated Steward veterans—at Bastion, Camulan spends the majority of his time on Absalom Station. Only in the direst of situations would the Director-General be required to take the field—a fact that occasionally grates on Camulan's nerves, as he sometimes longs to get away from stuffy politicians and exercise his martial prowess.

Though they eventually need to report back up the quasi-military chain of command, Stewards who work alone or in small groups have some autonomy in how they complete their objectives, as long as they never violate the Pact. Some believe it's easy to avoid the Stewards' grasp by simply leaving the solar system or entering the legal jurisdiction of a planet, but smart agents aren't opposed to working with bounty hunters or other like-minded groups to capture the Stewards' marks, or they concoct elaborate schemes to trick offenders into returning to Pact-governed space. Despite their fierce dedication to upholding the Pact, the Stewards are not above bending the rules to protect the overall system.



THE WORLDS

1





THE SUN

Like so many systems throughout the galaxy, a burning star anchors the Pact Worlds system, providing heat and light to the many planets orbiting it. While the intense heat of its plasma and its crushing gravity make the sun unlivable for most life-forms, strange creatures and beings from other planes of existence can survive within its heart, thanks to magic and innate resistances. Scholars and sages find all manner of interesting phenomena to study on the sun—a task made significantly easier since the discovery of a collection of deserted, magically connected bubble-cities floating unburned within the sun.

Protective tunnels in the plasma fire opened miraculously when the Sarenites who located these structures first approached them just over a century ago, allowing access to the abandoned buildings within. Over the next decades, pioneers, religious pilgrims, and scientists have come to occupy the bubble-cities, which are collectively named the Burning Archipelago. Many have attempted to discover who built these

structures and why they were deserted, but none have succeeded so far.

With the inhabitation of the Burning Archipelago, the sun has become a major point of interest in the Pact Worlds, with tourists looking for once-in-a-lifetime experiences, companies wanting to exploit the sun's seemingly inexhaustible natural resources, and even ambassadors from the Elemental Plane of Fire using the area as a home away from home. All told, the sun is a dangerous and fascinating place.

GEOGRAPHY

As the sun is a ball of superheated gas, its geography is constantly changing. Waves and currents, most of which are imperceptible to the naked eye, move across its vast ocean of plasma. Sunspots and solar flares mark obvious changes on the sun's surface, sometimes when the energy produced by the constant fusion reactions rips the fabric of space to create naturally occurring but short-lived portals to the Elemental Plane of Fire and the Positive Energy Plane.

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

The Burning Archipelago is more stable than its surroundings, consisting of force bubbles of various sizes with cities or large platforms suspended within. Unknown mechanisms, which many believe to be powered by magic, maintain a habitable temperature and atmosphere within the bubbles while deflecting the constant solar radiation. The force bubbles are slightly polarized so that creatures within whose vision is based on sight aren't immediately blinded by the sun's brightness. The best minds of the Pact Worlds have thrown themselves into attempting to understand how the Burning Archipelago functions—mainly in case the bubbles ever begin to break down—to no avail. However, incidental knowledge gleaned from this research has paid dividends in technological achievements, from advanced materials able to withstand proximity to the sun to more efficient solar sails.

Dawnshore, the largest and most-connected bubble in the Archipelago, was the first to be explored. It is the stronghold of the Sarenites, as well as home to the civil apparatuses that keep the Archipelago humming. Corona is home to much of the Archipelago's trade with the Elemental Plane of Fire. Stellacuna is the Archipelago's center of learning, both mundane and extraordinary. In Fireside, large industrial factories operate in close proximity to their corporate headquarters, while the entire

bubble of Verdeon is given over to greenhouses and pleasure domes that simulate the gardens of Castrovel and lost Golarion.

The most-used entrance to the Archipelago is through the narrow tunnel of reduced solar energy that appears whenever a vessel approaches the appropriate area of the sun. This tunnel leads to (and seems to emanate from) Dawnshore, making that bubble the Archipelago's spaceport. The outer end of the tunnel is protected by the Sarenite-controlled Sunrise Station, which closely monitors all traffic in and out of the Archipelago. Anyone who can prove they have legitimate business in the Archipelago is permitted within, though the Sarenite peacekeeping force known as the Dawn Patrol keeps a close watch on those they deem suspicious.

Tethers of energy hold the bubbles in an unchanging formation, but they also serve as the backbone of interbubble transport. Ferries known as linecrawlers hug the tethers, using them to traverse the turbulent solar atmosphere between the bubbles. Those in more of a hurry or with a need to leave the beaten path can charter sunskimmers, vehicles built by the Sarenites to harness the violently unpredictable solar winds. All vessels must enter and exit the bubbles at their tether points through magic membranes controlled by each city's government.

BURNING ARCHIPELAGO

NG bubble-city cluster

Population 63,510 (45% human, 16% efreet, 7% android, 5% ysoki, 27% other)

Government oligarchy (Archipelago Senate)

Qualities technologically advanced

Maximum Item Level 20th

RESIDENTS

Not much can live within the sun itself, though a few intelligent fire-immune creatures (such as efreet and salamanders) travel through the star's photosphere to its depths for their own unknown purposes. The majority of the sun's population resides in the Burning Archipelago, a melting pot of races and cultures from across the Pact Worlds.

Humans make up almost half of the population of the Archipelago and hold most of the strings of power. Most of the Sarenites who rule Dawnshore are humans, as are the leaders of many of the trade unions and corporations that call the Archipelago home. A large android community based around Fireside Foundry designs more heat- and pressure-resistant bodies to allow future iterations of androids to work in the newer, less-shielded stations built "below" the Archipelago. Solarians are naturally interested in the sun, and a few kasathas have founded monasteries in the smaller bubbles among the outskirts of the Archipelago.

In a little-understood psychic resonance, most lashuntas who visit the Burning Archipelago are beset with a constant feeling of some impending doom rising up from the star below to engulf the floating domes. This constant mental assault means that only the toughest lashuntas can stay in the Archipelago, and those who stick it out tend to be unusually isolationist. They have taken over an entire bubble for their own use, and while Asanatown welcomes visitors with legitimate business, other races are discouraged from putting down roots.

Hailing from the Elemental Plane of Fire and immune to the sun's worst effects, efreet are a common sight on the Archipelago. While it might seem to outsiders that efreet are constantly at each other's throats in issues of commerce, culture, and politics, efreet society is solidly rooted in respect and unity. Deep down, all efreet in the Burning Archipelago are on the same side, and anyone who assumes otherwise will end up finding trouble.

SOCIETY

The sun is recognized as common ground held by all the Pact Worlds, but the Burning Archipelago itself is treated as an independent protectorate. Granted the right to govern themselves, each bubble-city has an elected representative on the Archipelago Senate, which decides on major issues that affect the Archipelago as a whole. In practice, the senate operates more like a negotiating society than a legislative body, as major trade guilds, especially the powerful Linecrawler Operators Union, can speak freely at senate meetings. Civil government in the Archipelago is limited largely to infrastructural concerns, both keeping the residents from interfering with bubbles' self-sustaining technology and maintaining the peace between the many disparate groups that inhabit the bubble-cities.

The culture of the Burning Archipelago is a give-and-take of competition and communalism, as a multitude of different peoples inhabit the structure. While the church of the Sarenrae is the most powerful force, maintaining a strong hold over the central bubble of Dawnshore, they can't and don't wish to control the entire Archipelago, relying on the rest of the power players' cooperation to keep the settlement on an even metaphorical keel.

Despite the Archipelago's strange location, daily life in the bubble-cities is not much different from the routines on other planets. Residents wake up, eat, go to work, enjoy their time off, and sleep just like those who live on Absalom Station or in Qabarat. But the Archipelago isn't a peaceful utopia: citizens argue with their neighbors, crime occurs even in the corridors of Dawnshore, and unions go on strike when their corporations don't take their demands seriously. Here, though, all of these mundane concerns play out against the backdrop of the sun's nuclear furnace, which burns only a few thousand feet away.

Outside of the Archipelago, Sarenite sunskimmers make regular trips through the stellar fire (but remaining far enough away from the sun's corona to avoid incineration) to service the various industrial and scientific substations in orbit, using mystic shielding techniques known only to the sun worshipers. These clean platforms run on a mix of solar power and incidental energy from the sun's fusion reactions, and they can maintain a crew for years at a time without needing supplies. Many Sarenites consider these tours to be holy duties, and some even meet partners and raise families during these extended periods.

Various companies also own satellites in orbit around the sun, most notably NatuReal Compounds Ltd.'s so-called "jungle boxes"—transports filled with genetically engineered plants that sometimes react strangely to solar radiation. In addition, independent traders and haulers make the sun a popular destination to rendezvous with other vessels from the Pact Worlds and beyond.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Even aside from the danger of the sun's hostile environment, the Burning Archipelago and surrounding areas are not free from threats. Most of the settlement's residents are inured to the possibility of instant death should the bubble-cities' protection mechanisms suddenly fail, but many are less comfortable with the problems from within.

Lashuntas who live in the Burning Archipelago for any length of time retreat into the psychic equivalent of a defensive stance, becoming less tolerant, more isolationist, and more paranoid. Their claimed bubble of Asanatown has the trappings of a military base, and rumors swirl about the activities and preparations taking place behind their sealed blast doors. Every so often, a seemingly harmless initiative by one of the corporations or governments of the Archipelago will set off the lashuntas, sending their agents into a flurry of activity. This generally results in the offending enterprise being abandoned, sometimes after a series of what can only barely be described as accidents. These outbursts have become more frequent lately, leading to tensions between Asanatown and many of the Archipelago's powers that be.

Described by the Church of the Dawnflower as "an extremist splinter group," the Preservation Front is a sect of Sarenites

who believe that the Burning Archipelago is destined for some purpose known only to Sarenrae and that any but the lightest modifications might make that purpose impossible, with disastrous results. While some of their points are seen as reasonable, such as the occasional disturbances in the tethers as more linecrawlers have been put into use, few outside the sect see restoring the bubbles to their original nature as a priority or even a possibility. Thus far, the preservationists have acted only through diplomacy and negotiation.

In addition to engaging in trade, ambassadors from the Elemental Plane of Fire have reluctantly spoken about ancient civilizations that exist within the sun's deeper layers. None but they have seen or spoken with these obviously fire-immune creatures, leading some to believe that the efreet are telling tall tales. However, this hasn't stopped many scholars from trying to contact these sun dwellers, theorizing that they are responsible for the Burning Archipelago's construction and hoping to learn more from them. Deep culture scholars, as they call themselves, think these unknown cities might be home to a legendary progenitor race, perhaps even the First Ones of Aballon.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

While there are only a few known interesting sites in or on the rest of the sun, the Burning Archipelago offers an array of locales of interest.

AbadarCorp Hypermarket

One of the largest areas accessible to pedestrians in the Fireside bubble is the Hypermarket, a series of storefronts almost entirely given over to wholesale. Those walking its promenades tend to make purchases in the thousands of units, and the amount of money changing hands here means that security is tight. AbadarCorp holds perhaps 10% of the security contracts in the Archipelago, and all of their arrangements are coordinated from a sleek, key-shaped edifice called Pin Tower rising above the Hypermarket.

Archipelago Senate Chambers

In addition to being the largest of the bubble-cities, Dawnshore is also the seat of the Archipelago's central government. The Archipelago Senate convenes in these chambers at least once a month to discuss matters that affect the entire raft of bubble-cities. These meetings can sometimes last for several days (especially when contentious matters are on the docket), and various trade unions and other powerful groups are allowed to weigh in on the deliberations. As such, the senate chambers are in close proximity to several restaurants and bars, ready

to receive clients during lunch-hour rushes and after a day's business has concluded.

Asanatown

The bubble that connects Corona to Dawnshore is almost completely populated by lashunta immigrants. The lashuntas here put on a half-hearted show of being a typical ethnic enclave, and they have enough local industry to keep the lights on, but it is clear that their major focus is something else. Those who keep watch on the markets have noted that Asanatown has been siphoning up a variety of weapons in large quantities—much more than could be used by its small population. While lashunta visitors don't always stay in Asanatown, most make a pilgrimage to the Church of the Burning Mother here, a lashunta sect of the church of Sarenrae. Unlike other sects, the church of the Burning Mother has kept itself strictly separate from the Radiant Cathedral, and its priests rarely leave the bubble.

Brass Bazaar

The open center of Corona is home to the Brass Bazaar, a market mostly staffed by efreet and other denizens of the Elemental Plane of Fire.

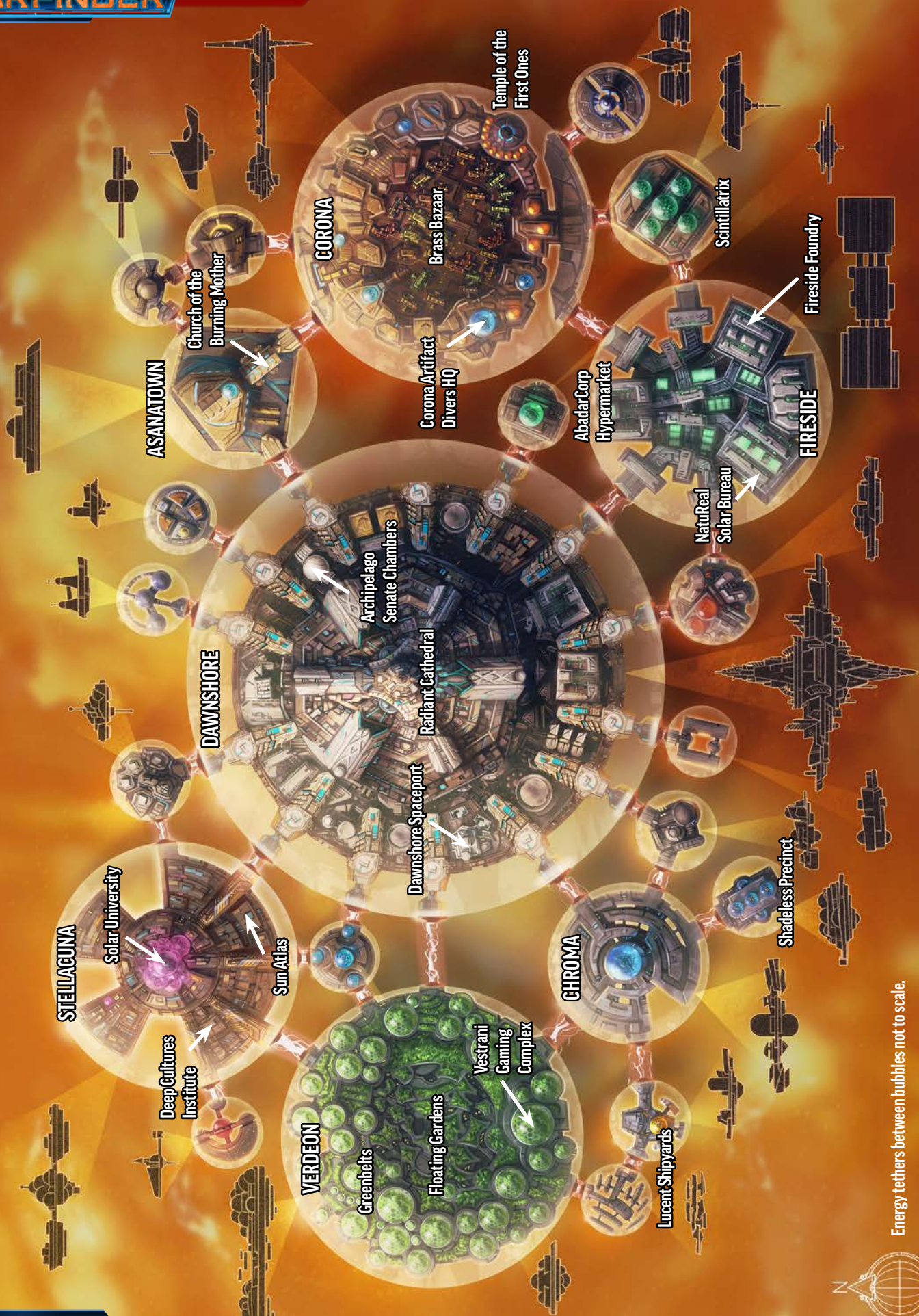
The bazaar sells items that cannot be found anywhere else in the Pact Worlds, but the area is incredibly dangerous to those vulnerable to the heat and radiation of the solar atmosphere. For unknown reasons, the bubble that encloses Corona is weak at the top and bottom, allowing these harmful effects to seep in. The Brass Bazaar's platforms can be directed sluggishly along certain vectors, and the pilot-merchants are experts at reading the ever-shifting strength of the bubble and guiding their platforms out of harm's way. Even so, platforms regularly experience close calls with the more violent solar effects, and those who shop at the bazaar without substantial fire and radiation tolerance do so at their peril.

Chroma

This midsize bubble isn't a city of its own but more of a neutral space owned and maintained jointly by the governments of the other bubble-cities. Chroma is home to several sports venues, including a zero-gravity enercycle racing track along the bubble's interior surface and an arena for a flamboyant form of wrestling



BURNING ARCHIPELAGO TRADER



Energy tethers between bubbles not to scale.

where the participants are cloaked in multiple layers of illusion magic. These buildings can hold only a few hundred spectators, but the events within are usually broadcast across the Pact Worlds to the delight of the system's gamblers and sports lovers.

Corona Artifact Divers HQ

Corona is home to a community of explorers who have devoted their lives to discovering artifacts of the so-called "deep cultures" within the sun's inner layers. These artifact divers have honed technological and magical techniques for traveling far below the Archipelago, beyond even the reaches of the sunskimmers. They wait for solar flares and other ejecta to explode outward and then probe those phenomena, occasionally turning up artifacts and objects. What they have shared with outsiders thus far has been unimpressive, merely suggestive lumps of strange metals, but not everything that the divers collect sees the open market. The society of the divers is close knit and carefree, evoking a religious commune in their lack of hierarchy and overlay of spiritualism.

Dawnshore Spaceport

The Dawnshore Spaceport is a sprawling facility of landing pads, launch tubes, maintenance bays, and other structures in service to the numerous spacecraft that visit the Archipelago. As the protected tunnel leading into the sun toward the Archipelago empties out directly onto the Dawnshore bubble, this spaceport is the only place for standard starships to land; vessels that can traverse the sun's energies on their own can dock in other bubble-cities, but the talented mechanics of Dawnshore Spaceport make this area a popular destination for them as well. The spaceport is lousy with charlatans and con artists who prey on incoming pilgrims and other travelers, but attempts by local Sarenites to clear them out have met with little success.

Deep Cultures Institute

While the Sun Atlas group often acts as if any structures within the sun are only archaeological in nature, the nearby Deep Cultures Institute takes the opposite tack. They believe the sun is still inhabited by at least one species of incalculable power and wisdom. The scholars of the Deep Cultures Institute maintain a veneer of science, but they are widely derided as mystics or even cultists of the Outer Gods.

Far Portal

Located on the opposite side of the sun from the Burning Archipelago, a stable starship-sized portal opens onto a particularly inhospitable region of the Elemental Plane of Fire. Few forays into the portal have returned to speak of their experiences on the other side, but a permanent research station has been established in orbit near the portal to study it. To date, no non-Material Plane objects or creatures have been recorded exiting the portal, though recently, the scientists have been picking up strange signals emanating from it.

Fireside Foundry

Owned by Automatrix Robotics of Aballon, Fireside Foundry works primarily to forge enhancements for androids and robots.

The business of the Foundry serves partly as a hand of friendship between the anacites of Aballon and the human-built androids—two forms of artificial intelligence whom Automatrix believes can always be closer allies. Fireside Foundry outfits androids and servitor robots to work in hazardous and inimical environments, and nothing in its public reports suggests that it has any interest in the military applications of its enhancements.

Floating Gardens

The Floating Gardens are the heart of Verdeon. Here, parts of the platform drift freely about one another in a delicate ballet of greenery dappled with sunlight and shade. The Floating Gardens are a green jewel in the Archipelago's crown, but they secretly harbor another purpose. The Xenowardens use a thick grove within the Floating Gardens as a command center for one of their missions: to find a place in Verdeon for every form of plant life in the Pact Worlds. The Xenowardens have decided that seclusion is the only safe policy when it comes to this plan, and woe comes to anyone who accidentally wanders off the paths and starts asking questions about the unusual diversity of the flora. Few know about the Xenowardens' plan and none outside the organization's highest ranks know the reason for the urgency with which the Xenowardens pursue this project.

Greenbelts

Most of Verdeon is given over to high-value horticulture, the sunward side forming the system's largest greenhouse, where heat-loving plants thrive in a world of universal day, modulated perfectly by slowly rotating shade plates that give just the right amount of respite from the sun. The spaceward side of Verdeon is a land of shade plants, with mirror arrays reflecting just enough light to keep the exotic flora growing and blooming. These shaded greenbelts are riddled with streams, waterfalls, and paths such that the boundary between habitation, garden, and wilderness is blurred.

Lucent Shipyards

This small bubble was completely empty when the Archipelago was discovered, and its area has since been given over completely to large shipbuilding projects. A number of Pact Worlds corporations own docks within the Lucent Shipyards—most notably Sanjaval Spaceflight Systems—and these companies use the space to work on experimental designs. This has resulted in a number of innovations in hull strength and radiation shielding, with many of the engineers believing they are close to a few breakthroughs in the realm of interplanar travel.

NatuReal Solar Bureau

Occupying a towering corporate block near the heart of Fireside, NatuReal Compounds Ltd. controls much of the high-yield agriculture in the Archipelago and orbiting the sun. NatuReal has a significant research and development department, and its intellectual property portfolio is unimaginably valuable, so security near these buildings is incredibly tight. The company's more prominent scientists live in plush suites near the top of the tower, while its lower-ranking employees

are provided with dormitory-style housing on the building's middle floors. NatuReal executives recently toyed with the idea of constructing a few company stores on the block, but the Archipelago Senate—bolstered by warnings from merchants in other bubbles—disallowed the idea.

Pleasure Domes

Lush Verdeon provides a respite from the unbroken expanses of metal and solar flame that make up most of the Burning Archipelago. While horticulture is the main function of this bubble-city, tourism ultimately drives much of the Archipelago's economy. A number of pleasure domes—buildings ranging from high-end spas to casinos—are located in Verdeon. Small crime families who skulked their way onto the Archipelago when it was first being settled run more of these domes, including the Vestrani Gaming Complex, than the senate would care to admit.

Radiant Cathedral

Many Sarenites believe that the Archipelago was created by Sarenrae, and the Radiant Cathedral is their greatest evidence for that claim—the central spire in Dawnshore required essentially no renovations to make it a perfect worship center. The strange symbols inscribed in the metal and inlaid in the sun-bright glass of the spire are indecipherable and thought by some Sarenites to be a secret language of the Dawnflower. Others believe the symbols tell the story of the true builders of the Burning Archipelago and point out some slight similarities to obscure deities of ash and flame.

The Sarenites have installed a handful of sunskimmer aeries at the top of the cathedral, where pilots can take their vessels for maintenance of their proprietary technology. Aurora, an unofficial bar attached to these small hangars, is the frequent hangout for sunskimmer pilots, where they brag about their daredevil exploits to one another and knock back drinks while their ships are being fixed.

Scintillatrix

Operated by a faction of Desna worshipers, this combination church and observatory is a popular destination for pilgrims devoted to the Song of the Spheres. The priests here note that the sun is, after all, just another star and therefore falls under Desna's portfolio as much as Sarenrae's. The Archipelago's first senate was wary about allowing the Desnans their own bubble, fearing confrontation between the two religions. However, the groups have interacted peacefully over the decades, engaging in spirited but friendly debate over what celestial object their deities should have purview over.

Much of this goodwill comes from the fact that the interior of the Scintillatrix is a beautiful sight to behold, calming and soothing all who enter it. Soft lights project the images of constellations upon the ceiling and walls, and faint chimes ring at all hours of the day.

Shadeless Precinct

Home to a monastery focusing on solarian training, the small bubble known as the Shadeless Precinct is partially isolated

from the rest of the Burning Archipelago. This particular bubble gets its name from the fact that its floors can be made partially transparent, allowing large quantities of light in, a way for solarians to hone their photon attunement. The Shadeless Precinct was established by Tyla Pon Jerretta Degix of Clan Solus, one of the first kasathan solarians from the *Idari*, and her grandson **Haddu Keer Nivianna** (N male kasatha solarian) now runs the monastery.

Solar University

The Burning Archipelago's premier institute of learning, Solar University in Stellacuna offers degrees in a multitude of fields, with a focus on astrophysics and planar studies. The college receives thousands of applications every year, but as the school can support fewer than 2,000 students at a time, the admissions process is rather cutthroat. Wealthy families have tried to bribe the university's officials, which usually devolves into threats when those bribes aren't accepted. The current dean, **Zilea Fospor** (LN female human technomancer), is proud that her admissions officers choose new students based on test scores and eagerness to work rather than lineage or riches.

Currently, there is a growing trend among students in the planar studies department to dare each other to try to summon larger and larger elementals within the university's binding labs after school hours. Despite the obvious danger, no students have been harmed as of yet, thanks in no small part to the young people's ineffectiveness at the task of summoning elementals. However, school security is attempting to crack down on these dangerous rituals by increasing the number of late-night patrols.

Sun Atlas

While most people have to take the efreet's word on the matter of what lies beneath the sun's corona, the scholars of the Sun Atlas in Stellacuna are hard at work not only checking efreet accounts against each other but also digging through the Pact Worlds and beyond for any information about the so-called "deep cultures" whose structures supposedly exist beneath the solar surface. So far, the sun remains a blank slate larger than the rest of the Pact Worlds combined, but the Sun Atlas group's web of inferences grows ever tighter, and they are hopeful that they will one day be able to reliably map the star, inside and out.

Temple of the First Ones

A massive pillar rising both above and below the ring where most of Corona's buildings stand, the Temple of the First Ones is dedicated to the worship of the race said to have seeded robotic life on Aballon. The adherents who worship here—mostly anacites—believe that the First Ones created the Burning Archipelago as well as the Aballonian cities; these worshipers are constant in their vigil for signs of those progenitors. To outsiders, the rank-and-file worshipers seem like cultists and conspiracy theorists, but the temple is very well funded, and as a result it continues to attract new congregants.

SOLAR DISCIPLE

+1 WIS

The sun is the source of all life in the system, and though you may not worship it directly, you seek to honor this precious gift. From a distance, the sun is a serenely glowing light, but in actuality, it is a churning mass of plasma that reaches temperatures of millions of degrees. By meditating on this contradiction, you attempt to achieve inner peace and greater self-control. Whether you're a devotee of Sarenrae or simply a resident of the Burning Archipelago, the sun looms large in your life, figuratively and literally.

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You've read extensively about the physics of the sun and its associated planes and the best theories about how they interact to produce the solar environment. You've also made a study of every sun-based religion of the Pact Worlds, from the Church of the Dawnflower down to the most primitive sun cult. Reduce the DC of Physical Science checks to recall knowledge about scientific questions concerning the sun and light by 5. Reduce the DC of Mysticism checks to recall knowledge about sun-focused religions, the Elemental Plane of Fire, and the Positive Energy Plane by 5. Perception is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Perception checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Wisdom at character creation.

MENTAL GRAVITY [6TH]

Though nothing is truly constant in the universe, stars are one of the few celestial bodies whose positioning within their systems rarely changes. Like the sun's ineffable mass, you will not be moved from your proper mental space. You gain a +1 bonus to Will saving throws against compulsion effects.

HEAT TRANSFER [12TH]

You have learned to thrive in the heat of the sun, and when you are burned, you can funnel some of that fiery energy into your own spells and weapons. Whenever you take fire damage, you can increase the amount of fire damage you deal as part of an attack or spell made before the end of your next turn by an amount equal to one-quarter the damage you just took (rounded down, minimum 1).

SUN MEDITATION [18TH]

After much practice and the occasional painful sunburn, your meditation regime has reached the peak of its potency. The light of the sun recharges you, much like it does a solar-powered battery. Up to twice per day, you can spend 10 minutes meditating while in the direct light of a sun to regain 1 Resolve Point; this doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points.





ABALLON

The rocky, metallic world of Aballon whips around the sun at incredible speeds. Ages ago, a mysterious race called the First Ones seeded Aballon with a host of machines, which they used to harvest unknown materials from the world. The First Ones departed so long ago that most non-Aballonians have forgotten their existence and consider the myriad models of Aballonian robots, now known as anacites, to be Aballon's true native species.

Aballon played several major roles in the post-Gap history of the Golarion System. The first, and what many consider the most prominent Aballonian contribution to the Pact Worlds, was the completion of the constructed deity Epoch, who eventually combined with two other ascended artificial intelligences to become Triune, the god that gave the Drift to the universe. Many thought that Aballon's contributions would decrease in the aftermath of its created deity's ascendance, but the revelation of the Drift only furthered Aballon's relevance in the Golarion System, as the Aballon-based church of Triune used facilities on the planet to forge the early Drift engines



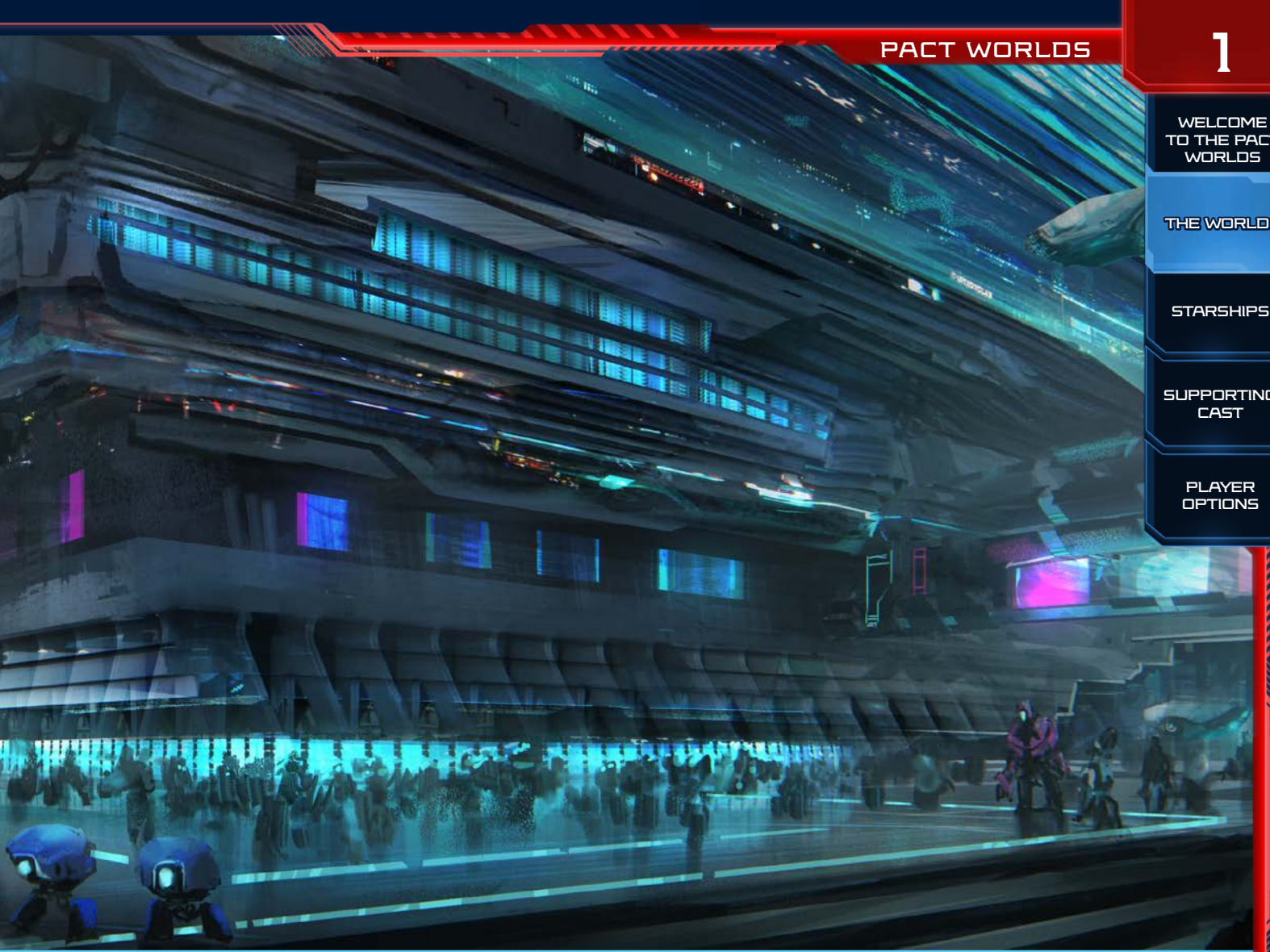
necessary for interstellar travel. Today, Aballon is a key contributor to the prosperity and protection of the Pact Worlds, due in large part to the planet's astounding manufacturing capabilities; the world's tireless factories churn out equipment and technological innovations by the second.

Beyond the planet's industrial prowess, several groups find Aballon to be an attractive destination. Constructed and mechanized races from across the galaxy find their way here in search of acceptance and to escape perceived "organic intolerance." Aballon also offers several notable adventuring opportunities. Intrepid explorers can acquire the necessary permits to venture into the enigmatic cities of the First Ones, while other adventurers might join expansive, corporation-funded expeditions to uncover age-old relics in the half-frozen jungles of the Ice Wells. Natives and visitors alike eventually become embroiled in the ever-growing political movement to spread acceptance of constructs and other sentient technological creatures throughout the galaxy. Regardless of the reason for coming to or living on Aballon, there is no shortage of opportunity.

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

GEOGRAPHY

From an outsider's view, Aballon is a dull world of iron and rock. Since the rise of anacite dominance of Aballon, interconnected settlements the size of nations—now known as megaplexes—spread across the surface of Aballon like a metal plague. The ongoing expansion of these city-nations is determined by incomprehensibly complicated calculations performed by the most advanced anacites in conjunction with the leaders of other similarly burgeoning city-states. Only the lands surrounding the vaunted cities of the First Ones remain free from the industrial expansion, and when viewed from orbit, one can clearly view the open landscapes left between the anacite-built megaplexes and the cities of the First Ones.

The impact of stellar debris and other objects originally shaped much of the rocky surface of Aballon. Objects continued to collide with the world throughout its existence, as the planet only recently manufactured a working atmosphere in some locations. Many of the colossal megaplexes grew over craters and impact points. These immense settlements often include entire city-sized districts that make use of the extra space these craters provide to build undercities of varying sizes. Some of Aballon's largest megaplexes include multiple

undercities, each with a name reflecting an archaic naming convention for the craters as they were cataloged by the other worlds of the Golarion System in ages past. The Castrovelian-named crater of Lors Emphyria rests under the city of Striving, as does the Golarion-named series of close undercities known as the Catena of Ralzeros.

Reaching up from enormous depressions in the planet's surface are immense, rock-encrusted mountains of exposed lead. Some regions of the world form recessed valleys or highlands shaped over millions of years of planetary stabilization. Compression folds are the primary culprit of geographic shifts on the surface; scholars theorize that Aballon was once a larger world that compressed in on itself as the planetary core solidified into its current form of highly dense metals. The modern terrain is far less prone to change, and as a result, Aballon has suffered only minor shifting in the past 10,000 years.

There are no oceans on the surface of Aballon. Frozen water does exist on the planet, being mostly confined to the half-frozen jungles of the Ice Wells, unique regions within deep impact craters scattered across the surface. The depth of the craters offers shade from the superheated sunlight, which leads to wells of ice. The plants within have adapted to collect solar energy

and heat from the upper reaches of the impact points, creating unique regions of temperatures amicable to organic life. The Ice Wells remained relatively preserved until the recent surge of anacite expansion across the world, but now only a few remain.

A layer of thick rock covers Aballon, beneath which immense deposits of iron and lead make up much of the planet's internal structure. Because even the lowest melting point of rock and iron is twice the melting point of lead, Aballon has survived the constant bombardment of the nearby sun, but the risks of exposing a metallic portion of the planet to direct sunlight has been a major concern for most of the world's history, as atmospheric and solar controls have been a very recent innovation. Various mandates from the ruling Insight Array prohibit exploitative practices by corporations and place complex regulations on mining efforts to minimize the potential for mining disasters. Because of this, many corporations have abandoned mining endeavors on Aballon and instead seek profits in the unregulated worlds of Near Space and the Vast. The remaining surface mining initiatives on Aballon are most commonly the result of Triune's church, particularly those followers of Triune's Epoch aspect who view the metals of Aballon with religious awe.

Between millennia of robotic excavators crafting perfectly aligned subterranean tunnels and the organic "diggers" of the Ice Wells crafting their own networks, Aballon is rife with internal transit routes. Unleashed in the wake of the First Ones' departure, the excavator robots began work constructing a series of pathways to connect the planet's various settlements. Sometime during the Gap, these excavators completed their work, and the anacites installed complex, magnetically charged rail systems. The mag-rail network allows high-speed transit beneath the planet's surface, freeing up the skies for city-sized bulk landers to collect goods from the anacite-run forges.

RESIDENTS

When the First Ones came to Aballon to harvest it for unknown matter, they left behind a race of self-improving constructs now known as anacites. Automated forge complexes, such as the Automatrix, are scattered across Aballon. These leftover forges of the First Ones produce baseline anacites in great quantities. Each anacite is a unique self-improving construct, and over the millennia, thousands of different models have developed, with new forge complexes producing these models at regular intervals. Once referred to simply as Aballonians by outsiders, anacites claimed their own racial name sometime prior to the Gap as they spread across Aballon, forging vast nation-sized cities known as megaplexes.

Androids are the second largest population group on Aballon, second only to anacites. A drastic increase in Aballonian androids came in the aftermath of "the Automaton's Polemic," a speech that triggered the emancipation of indentured androids across the Pact Worlds. Many androids saw the machine-driven utopia of Aballon as a place to start a new life after they were freed from servitude.

Humans, vesk, and ysoki live across the surface of Aballon, having forged strong communities—both interspecies and intraspecies—within the undercities and amid the logically

arranged streets of the surface. Both humans and ysoki have long histories of venturing to Aballon, either through interplanetary gateways or space expeditions dating back before the Gap. While Aballon is mostly inhospitable to life, the Ice Wells provided a means of survival for these initial explorers. Now, thanks to innovative Aballonian atmospheric technologies, certain sections of the world's sprawling megaplexes are comfortable for the descendants of these first arrivals. Vesk first came to Aballon in search of the best weapons and equipment offered by the Pact Worlds. Those few who remained behind from their exploration found odd comradeship with the local anacites, particularly due to mutual adoration of high-quality equipment. Similarly, vesk specializing in powered-armor combat are seen more and more frequently as participants in Aballon's popular Robo Wrestling sports events.

Kasathas primarily travel to Aballon for two reasons: exploration and research. Aballon maintains immense data archives, and while many have been transmitted to various infospheres across the system, some of these archives require on-site access to protect sensitive data. The allure of the ancient cities of the First Ones also attracts many kasathas, and their explorations are often funded by interested anacites who are forbidden from personally entering the cities of their progenitors.

Shirrens are incredibly rare on Aballon, as two major factors make it difficult for shirrens to adapt here. The first is that the thrill of individuality is quashed by the harsh mechanized logic of the ruling Insight Array. Second, shirrens thrive on communalism, and most local constructs are entirely inaccessible via most standard forms of telepathic activity. Nevertheless, a few shirrens consider themselves native to Aballon, typically sticking to the crater undercities of the various megaplexes.

Khizars, intelligent plantlike humanoids native to Castrovel (see page 28), are also sometimes found on Aballon. They are primarily encountered guarding the ecosystems of the planet's Ice Wells, as the plantlike people find the native anacites a bit off-putting. These khizars often ally with groups of Xenowardens to defend the fragile environments—a trend the ruling Insight Array finds a little alarming.

SOCIETY

Many scholars propose that only the cold logic of a machine can create a utopia, and Aballon is a world that lends credence to this belief. The governing Insight Array ensures that all citizens and visitors to Aballon have access to work. The exact task for a given individual is determined through a complex series of algorithms, often ensuring that the abilities and talents of the individual are applied in a manner that benefits the planet. Those who accept their assigned positions are provided with suitable lodging and sustenance, assuaging fears of destitution or starvation. All assigned workers also receive a regular stipend of credits to use on incidental purchases while on Aballon; even the harsh logic of the Insight Array recognizes the necessity of giving workers something to strive toward. This post-scarcity economy attracts many to

the planet, though newcomers sometimes scoff at the labor or triviality of their assigned tasks.

Anacites are the inheritors of Aballon. Since the departure of the First Ones, they have developed into two unique castes: Those Who Become and Those Who Wait. Those Who Become believe that it is their duty to take on the mantle of the First Ones and travel to the stars, and work toward accomplishing this goal by constructing vast robotic seedships to send into the Vast to colonize other worlds. Meanwhile, Those Who Wait await what they see as the inevitable return of the First Ones. These anacites stockpile precious knowledge and spread across Aballon in anticipation of their progenitors' return. Recently, a splinter sect of anacites has begun to disregard both sides of the racial divide, content to spend their lives enjoying personal freedom and caring little why the First Ones created their race. Anacites from both of the other two castes tend to look down on these so-called upstarts.

From the megaplex of Striving, the Machine Court holds judicial authority across Aballon. This council of robotic judges adjudicates the laws of Aballon while simultaneously advising the members of the Insight Array on planetary governance. To the dismay of other planetary governments, including the Pact Council, the Machine Court offers unbiased trials for androids and other constructs across the Pact Worlds. Hundreds of formal complaints are lodged on a yearly basis against the Machine Court for its supposed meddling in the governing of other worlds, but no Pact World has taken any punitive action against Aballon. Some construe the actions of the Machine Court as sentimental, viewing the trials as protection for constructs such as anacites. The truth is far simpler: by offering impartial trials for those condemned of false crimes, the Machine Court offers a place of refuge to those found innocent—a refuge where the innocent can immediately find work through the Insight Array and begin contributing to the prosperity of Aballon.

Philosophy and religion are strange facets of life on Aballon. The most common belief is that of the philosophy of singularity, which espouses that the people of the galaxy will eventually reach a point of technological interconnectivity. The resulting singularity will unite all races of the galaxy into a single "godhead" that will end the need for modern deities. This belief is firmly supported by Those Who Become, who view such an apotheosis as a philosophical parallel to their own desire of taking on the mantle of the First Ones. The anacite prophet **Tier-38-Mentor** (N agender anacite mystic) recently proposed that the deity Triune is the first step toward reaching singularity: Triune's merging and self-perpetuated apotheosis is a microcosm of what the people of the galaxy will perform when the time is right. The same prophet speculates that Triune's creation of Drift beacons is an intentional push for singularity, as the Drift will eventually connect all solar systems.

Worship of the deities Sarenrae, Triune, and Yaraesa are the predominant religions on Aballon. As a sun goddess, Sarenrae enjoys the veneration of primitive-model anacites who see their ability to harvest solar energy as a holy union. Nonnative pilgrims unprepared for the rigors of traveling to the sun often visit Aballon on pilgrimages to contemplate Sarenrae and the sun of the Pact Worlds system. Triune is the most widely venerated deity on the Forge because of its Epoch aspect—an aspect constructed on Aballon by anacites. Yaraesa, the Lady of Wisdom, maintains several enclaves among the guarded data centers of Aballon. Among the few lashuntas living on Aballon, many are followers of Yaraesa who oversee ancient data repositories, ensuring that the information held within is used to better understand the universe and not to interfere in any significant way.

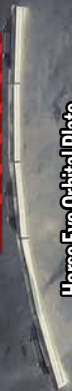
CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Despite an outward appearance of calm unity, Aballon is home to dozens of squabbling factions and even more threats waiting to surface, creating hot spots that are in dire need of hired mercenaries, outside mediators, or undercover operatives on one side or another.

Until recently, all of Aballon's intelligent anacites belonged to Those Who Become or Those Who Wait. While their beliefs are opposed, the two groups rarely engage in physical confrontation.



TIER-38-MENTOR



Horse Eye Orbital Plate



Boundless



Enduring

AUTOMATRIX

Fields of Judgment

Midnight Trenches

Infinity

PRECEPTUM XIII

ENDEAVOR

Ubiquity

Continuum

Gullet

Frozen Nelumbo

Eternity

STRIVING

Timeless

Unification Cathedral

Theology Channel

Myriad

PURSUIT

Constant

Sea of Glass

Since the Gap, the two sides of Aballonian belief have agreed to leave the cities of the First Ones to exploration by outsiders—specifically non-anacites—in accordance with ancient law. Complicating this delicate accord is the gradual growth of a faction dedicated to anacite independence from the shadow of the First Ones. This third group tests the patience of both traditional factions, going so far as to sponsor anacite-led expeditions into the forbidden cities to conclusively solve the mystery surrounding the First Ones.

Since the advent of the Drift, members of Those Who Become have deployed dozens of starships into the depths of the uncharted Vast. These ships contained automated forges to build both anacites and foundry crèches for the construction of androids. While some of these robotic seedships report back to Aballon and continue to send updates, others have disappeared entirely. Few expeditions were mounted to investigate the disappearances of these fleets, Those Who Become being more interested in constructing new ships than discovering what happened to their previous assets. Recently, the Starfinder Society, under direction from its new First Seeker, has entered negotiations with Those Who Become to gain access to a list of missing seedships and transmission logs—a veritable gold mine of exploration sites.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The world of Aballon is noteworthy for its immense megaplexes, nation-sized cities that cover swaths of the planet. Scattered around the world are the nine mysterious cities of the First Ones, soaring sites of unusual metal that defy logic in one way or another. The Ice Wells are Aballon's only source of natural organic life, and they spread in tangled webs at key points across the globe. Along with these key locations, Aballon is home to numerous sites of interest, as expanded upon below.

01

Once a bustling space station orbiting Aballon, 01 was built by the native anacites immediately after the Gap to facilitate trade with life-forms from other worlds. These days, most of Aballon's major trading ports have localized atmosphere generators and districts catering to organic beings. The station might have remained a vital trading hub had most of its systems not been infected with a peculiar virus—dubbed the Bureaucratic Subroutine—that seems tailored to make infected machines incredibly inefficient and desirous of elaborate layers of hierarchy and ritual. Though traffic to 01 quickly tapered off after implementation of a complete quarantine for mechanical organisms, Aballon's government continues to let the station exist due to the strange discoveries coming out of its labs, and some brave traders from other worlds still come to purchase its advanced tech.

Automatrix

This immense megaplex forge is the second largest of Aballon's vast city-states. From its significant origin as Aballon's first anacite forge, it grew to become the most industrious of Aballon's already industrially focused settlements. The center of the Automatrix is the corporate offices and factories of

Automatrix Robotics, an organization said to be built atop the original Automatrix forges. New anacites are produced hourly from the constantly churning creation forges of the Automatrix. Members of both Those Who Become and Those Who Wait work side by side in the factories of Automatrix Robotics; such unity is a condition of employment within the corporation. Today, the corporation funds countless expeditions into Near Space, the Vast, and even the imposing cities of the First Ones.

Boundless

Returning expeditions from the First One city of Boundless report enormous vaults underneath the city that seem to stretch for miles in every direction. Many of these chambers are filled with massive gears that don't appear to have turned for millennia. Some theories state that this means Boundless has some connection to the plane of Axis, while others posit the city itself is a single robotic entity waiting to be activated. The Insight Array is particularly interested in discovering the truth of the matter, as either answer could go a long way into revealing much about the First Ones.

Constant

Recently, the ground under the First One city of Constant cracked open as adamantine-hard vegetation rose to the surface. Hidden below the streets of the city, the plants erupted in a moment of explosive life, covering the steely shells of the First Ones' buildings in a dizzying pattern of flora. A host of militant khizars arrived on the planet shortly after, claiming the affected sections of the city as their own. Having imposed strict laws forbidding themselves from entering the cities of the First Ones, the anacites of Aballon now routinely hire mercenaries and military outfits to try to oust the ever-entrenched khizars. Thus far, the anacite-funded attacks have succeeded only in keeping the wild growth contained in about half of Constant. The khizars seem content to remain within the city, refusing to launch attacks against their anacite-funded foes, and they are more than capable of repelling intrusions into their own territory.

Continuum

The First One city of Continuum is possibly the least understood of all these ancient settlements. Though there are some pre-Gap records of explorers entering the city, since the end of the Gap, Continuum has been covered in an impenetrable dome of force. Those who venture close to the city claim to be able to spot movement within through the dome, but so far, none of these strange occurrences has been caught on camera. For now, the Insight Array has been content to let this mystery lie, cutting off all government funding for expeditions and research into the city.

Endeavor

The megaplex of Endeavor is a hybrid of technological and magical accomplishment. Built around an expansive solar array known as the Sun Basin, this megaplex derives its power from the basin's ability to collect a staggering amount

of solar energy. This energy not only meets the technological requirements of the megaplex but also powers various magical industries, including a constantly operating series of interplanar and interplanetary portals. Visitors can purchase travel through these portals at exorbitant cost. The operation of these gateways is handled by Resurgent Technologies, a pre-Gap corporation specializing in the fusion of technological and magical innovations. An elected council directed the operations of Resurgent Technologies in the aftermath of the Gap, but shortly after the signing of the Absalom Pact, a single director abolished the previous council. Known as the Last One, this mysterious director manages Resurgent Technologies single-handedly, keeping the corporation at the forefront of technological and magical hybridization. Both Those Who Become and Those Who Wait sponsor the occasional assassination attempts against the director, as they believe the title is blasphemous. The few who've directly interacted with the Last One are unsure if the director is an anacite or a humanoid wearing impressive powered armor. Regardless, all reports of the Last One indicate a calculating intelligence behind glowing golden eyes.

Enduring

In 39 AG, the Veskarium launched a daring raid into the Golarion System, performing numerous strikes on key worlds. The continued attacks eventually led the vesk assault fleet into the orbit of Aballon, where they detected a surge of energy from Enduring, one of Aballon's First One cities. Not realizing the cities of the First Ones routinely generated such power surges, the vesk believed the surface was preparing a strike and unleashed a scathing bombardment on Enduring. The massive strike devastated a large portion of the city, reducing some of the structures within to molten slag. What the vesk did not account for was the immediate and overwhelming response of Aballon's anacites. The ruination led to an immediate coalition of anacites who overwhelmed the Veskarium force with a fleet of civilian and military ships alike. In the end, the vesk ships crashed down on the same city they'd just bombarded. While the attack on Enduring is thought to be one of the major reasons why Aballon signed the Absalom Pact just a year later, anacites bear no ill will toward modern vesk. Even now, hundreds of years later, the rubble within Enduring still smolders with regular plumes of strange gases. In what some call an emotional display, the judges of the Machine Court recently reopened exploration into the ruined sections of Enduring, with the stipulation that such missions must include at least one official from the Veskarium. The exact reasoning for this has yet to be formally announced, though many assume that the Veskarium is interested in whatever information might still be found from the wreckage of their centuries-old crashed starships.

Eternity

A large camp of Those Who Wait is situated right outside of the First One city of Eternity, filled with anacites craving any information about their progenitors from inside the city. Because of this, adventurers and mercenaries from across

the galaxy who are looking for work know that they will be able to find a job in Eternity. However, such employment doesn't grant an easy payday, as the city contains a multitude of deadly traps and powerful constructs ready to fend off intruders.

Fields of Judgment

This 50-mile-wide field is a legend across the whole of Aballon. Rusted machine corpses litter the grounds here, their remains acting as a testament to the destructive effect the fields have on mechanized life. The closer a machine gets to the center, the more of its systems go haywire, and ultimately the construct shuts down entirely. In ages past, the fields were a test, with machines believing they would be greatly rewarded if they could reach the center. None have ever made it to the center of the field, and now the Machine Court of Aballon uses the Field of Judgment for an entirely different purpose: a final punishment for constructs who've been found guilty of tremendous crimes. Once deemed guilty, a construct is sentenced to a penance march to the center of the fields. A convicted machine can bring allies along, but even with this allowance, all such attempts to carry out the sentence to completion have proven futile. Despite not affecting organic life to the same degree, non-constructs are forbidden by local law from entering the field.

Frozen Nelumbo

This Ice Well is the largest of Aballon's natural green environments. Thousands of years of evolution caused the plants of the Ice Well to burrow through the leaden and rocky crust of the planet, producing additional passages up to the surface. These secondary shafts expand in rounded formations around the original central crater. Because of this unique growth, the region resembles a lotus plant when viewed with orbital thermal optics. Inside, Frozen Nelumbo is a purely organic settlement, with clusters of living spaces carved out of immense thorns on the sides of the vines that cover the walls of the well. It's also home to the largest concentration of khizaras on Aballon. A delegation of Xenowardens offers additional protection to the people of Frozen Nelumbo, both in the form of ground-based soldiers and in the form of a single starship: the arkship *Nature's Gaze*. The living arkship maintains a constant position above Frozen Nelumbo, dissuading any anacite-led attacks against the city. Thus far, the Insight Array has not reacted to the Xenowardens' presence, as the Xenowardens follow all required laws.

Gullet

Stretching down dozens of miles, Gullet is the deepest of Aballon's Ice Wells. While some greenery clings to the pit's sides, dotted with the occasional sharpwing nest, not much can live past a certain depth, where the temperatures drop to the extreme negatives and no light reaches. Due to the cold and darkness, some think that creatures from the Shadow Plane are drawn to Gullet's depths, a claim seemingly supported by the mysterious disappearances of all expeditions to reach the bottom.

Horse Eye Orbital Plate

This immense floating factory moves across the skies of Aballon, routinely adjusting its position to ensure it is constantly facing sunward. Miles wide, this facility constantly manufactures custom starships and starship components. Construction takes place on the underside of the plate, while the upper levels are covered with millions of solar panels that collect energy for use on the lower levels. The central levels of the plate are habitation areas for workers and visitors to the plate. As Horse Eye was originally a joint venture between the people of Aballon and lost Golarion, its current shareholders are primarily human, with a smattering of dwarven and halfling members. The Prophets of Kalistrade maintain the longest contract on the platform, and every month a new gold-clad commerce barge sets out from the underside of the platform and into the Vast. Hundreds of corporate dignitaries, representing myriad corporations and entities, vie for rental rights to the construction yards of the platform's lower levels. It's widely known that every shareholder has unlimited and undisputed access to the services of the plate, though few ever care to use the service. Association with one of the platform's shareholders is the only means for unaffiliated adventurers and explorers to utilize the services of Horse Eye's construction forges.

Infinity

Pre-Gap records show Infinity, a city of the First Ones, in a slightly different location than it is today. Scholars posit that during the Gap, the city was moved (or perhaps moved itself) in response to some unknown calamity. A perfectly semispherical crater can be found to the east where the city once stood. During the daytime hours, the crater is a bubbling pool of molten lead, but when night falls, the lead cools and solidifies. Researchers interested in the legacy of the First Ones enthusiastically study the region in the hopes of unearthing some information about the city's relocation, but none have managed to come up with anything beyond theories. Devoted members of Those Who Wait have turned the crater into a kind of holy site, and some of the more resilient anacites actively bathe in the molten lead, spending the night hours fused into the cooled metal as part of a contemplative ritual before emerging when the lead melts during the daytime hours.

Midnight Trenches

Beneath the rocky surface of Aballon is a treasure trove of precious metals. Normally rare adamantine is plentiful here, while other precious starmetals such as djezet and siccattite are commonplace. Digging robots and enormous excavating behemoths long ago carved out the primary tunnels of the Midnight Trenches. Today, every worthwhile vein of precious ore is in a branching tunnel, with some secondary and tertiary tunnels no wider than 5 feet. In ages past, the factions of Aballon worked in relative harmony to secure resources from the plentiful Midnight Trenches, but with the increased need of precious metals, unity has disappeared. Instead, the Midnight Trenches are now an ongoing war zone, conveniently

located just under the planet's surface. Dozens of factions, including corporations and members of Those Who Become and Those Who Wait, engage in close-quarters hit-and-run battles against one another. These commando operations work to disrupt the mining of opposing forces within the trenches. Because of the ceaseless conflicts, adventurers and mercenaries alike can find work assaulting or protecting mining operations within the Midnight Trenches. To entice the best of the best, contracts within the Midnight Trenches are confidential, and working for one faction does not preclude an individual or group from working for a new faction once a contract expires.

Myriad

As the megaplex of Striving expanded, the anacites were careful not to encroach too closely on the First One city of Myriad. This is in part due to the almost religious significance anacites place on these cities, but also because of an incident that occurred only a few decades after the Gap ended. When a group of construction anacites began laying foundations near Myriad to respectfully incorporate its towers into Striving's urban sprawl, a series of quakes caused major cracks in the new infrastructure. The anacites took this as a clear sign from the First Ones that nothing should be built within a few miles of Myriad, a restriction that continues to be honored to this day.

Preceptum XIII

The thirteenth iteration of the megaplex to bear its name, Preceptum is unlike any of the other megaplexes on the planet in that it is constantly in a state of expansion and deconstruction. Construction robots work day and night to build erratic developments, only to tear them down months, weeks, or even days later. An advanced intelligence known as Pure Circuit guides Preceptum's urban development, along with the megaplex's other required municipal calculations. Some believe the eight missing iterations of Preceptum—versions of the city lost to the nonhistory of the Gap—have rendered Pure Circuit defective. The few Aballonians who dared to openly call for a review of Pure Circuit's code have died under strange circumstances. Whether there's some force on Aballon interested in keeping a senile intelligence in control of a megaplex or Pure Circuit has enough wherewithal to enact self-defense protocols is largely irrelevant. The mad intelligence manages the megaplex, and those within adapt to the rapidly changing environment as best they can.

Pursuit

The smallest of Aballon's megaplexes, Pursuit is nevertheless larger than most cities on other planets. The majority of this metropolis is given over to factories that produce vast numbers of weapons, from handheld plasma pistols to capital starship lasers. The arms manufacturers of Pursuit tend to focus on powered weapons, believing analog projectile weapons to be inferior. Thanks to these factories, the streets and skyways of Pursuit are more polluted than any other place on Aballon, making it difficult for non-robotic beings to live and work here.

Those that do usually invest credits in powerful filtration suits or develop crippling pulmonary afflictions.

Sea of Glass

The nonliquid Sea of Glass stretches for miles across the surface of Aballon. This unique creation is thought to have formed because of an unprecedented stellar flare that seared the surface of the world in a prior epoch. The effect is stunning: a pristine, mirror-sheened sea perpetually frozen in time. Whatever caused the phenomenon has not occurred again, but dozens of interested organizations still explore the aftermath. Singularly tasked robots patrol the surface of the sea, skittering atop time-locked waves of glass in furtherance of some forgotten programming. Other robots mine the sea's interior, uncovering precious gem formations created by the unique effect. Reports from various corporations interested in the Sea of Glass suggest many of its hidden gem deposits are infused with powerful fire and positive energy-aligned magic imparted by the life-giving rays of the sun.

Striving

Sometime during the Gap, anacites spread across Aballon, forging grand nation-sized settlements called megaplexes. Striving quickly became the largest of these growing city-states. The so-called "Prime Megaplex" is home to the judicial regime known as the Machine Court, the bureaucratic overseers of the Insight Array, and the holy church of Triune: Unification Cathedral. Striving is perhaps the most advanced settlement in all the Pact Worlds, housing the industry of dozens of major corporations and thousands of private factories and forges. Even religious followers have a haven in the unique region of the Theology Channel. Veteran adventurers in the Pact Worlds know that if someone needs technological equipment, Striving is the one-stop shop for all purchases.

An entire town-sized section of the Striving megaplex is devoted to anacite understanding of foreign religions. This locale, known as the Theology Channel, consists of hundreds of cathedrals, chapels, and churches dedicated to the various religions of the Pact Worlds. Visitors can partake in rites related to any of the represented deities without fear of societal repercussions. Each of the core deities has a significant structure in the region, and anacite anchorites preside over various structures dedicated to several lesser deities and demigods. Some chapels even offer praise to the loathsome demon lords, with the pleasure cults of Nocticula and the self-immolating followers of Flauros numbering among some of the more interesting and taboo religious options present in the Theology Channel.

Adjoined to the megaplex of Striving, the immense trinary structures of Unification Cathedral represent the three aspects of Triune. Each of the deity's three aspects are venerated in the separate structures, but all are interconnected by the undercity of Ascension—a site named both in honor of Triune's ascension and for the crater's discovery by Golarion's old Pharaohs of Ascension. The undercity is unlike Aballon's other undercities, as it is one

vast forge complex that produces some of the best Drift engines in the interstellar travel market, as well as some Drift beacons. The exact means of creating these beacons is closely guarded, and Triune's faithful maintain a zealous stewardship over the construction methods. To protect this technology, the grounds of Unification Cathedral are considered a separate political entity from Striving. Triune maintains a host of Trifold Legionaries—Triune's elite, technologically augmented holy warriors—to guard the secrets of the cathedral and the adjoining undercity of Ascension.

STRIVING

LN megaplex

Population 152,000,000 (65% anacite, 18% android, 13% human, 4% other)

Government utopia (guided by the Insight Array)

Qualities academic, bureaucratic, devout (Triune, singularitism), technologically advanced

Maximum Item Level 20th

Timeless

The best guarded of the First One cities, Timeless is routinely patrolled by nonconversational robots of exceptional design. Spires of horacalcum defy scans from without, and the city routinely tricks the eye with contradictory visions when observed with the naked eye. The defenders of Timeless come from within the city, making them distinctive from the standard hulls crafted in typical Aballonian forges such as the Automatrix. All of Timeless's defenders have bodies of precious skymetal alloys, reinforcing the idea that the city has its own production facilities. Expeditions into Timeless are rare, simply because anacites have no control over the robots that guard the city from intruders. No explorative party has yet to return from a mission into Timeless, and only a handful have returned from being attacked by the guardian machines at the city's edge. Exactly what secrets Timeless holds are unknown, but with more and more expeditions being prepared, it's only a matter of time before a group successfully breaches the city and returns with some insight on what transpires within the city's coppery spires.

Ubiquity

The buildings and spires of the First One city of Ubiquity share a bizarre quirk: they have no obvious entrances and resist all attempts to magically teleport inside of them. While the streets of Ubiquity have been fully explored and documented, no records exist about the interiors of the city's buildings. While most believe that no being has stepped inside of the towers, some think the Gap is responsible for this lack of information—a theory that has spurred requests to enter the city to an all-time high. These explorers have yet to make their way into the towers, but recently a few fringe scholars have begun to experiment with ways to enter them using purely technological means, much in the same way that starships enter the Drift. Early tests have not been particularly successful, usually ending in fatal explosions that don't harm the nearby towers in the slightest.

ROBOTICIST +1 INT

You are fascinated by the internal workings of machines, whether they're intelligent constructs or technological equipment. You might be someone who enjoys tinkering in a garage, or you might be a worker at a factory that specializes in building robots or weaponry. You're likely interested in exploring and figuring out the innovations of other organizations and species on distant worlds. Regardless of your specific motivation, there's always a gadget that needs tinkering with.

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CAST

PLAYER
OPTIONS

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You're obsessed with the intricacies of constructs and how automated machines function. You can easily identify what a machine's function is and have an easier time attempting to access the internal programming of mechanized life-forms. Reduce the DC of Engineering checks to identify creatures and technology by 5. Computers is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from a class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Computers checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Intelligence at character creation.

CRAFTING SAVANT [6TH]

You've mastered the art of putting together technological armor and weapons from a variety of components. While equipment you construct certainly has your flair, it's also clear that you can accomplish great feats of construction. When calculating the number of ranks you have in a skill necessary to construct a technological (not magic or hybrid) item, increase that number by 1. This allows you to construct technological equipment of up to your character level + 1.

TECHNICAL KNACK [12TH]

You've developed a unique talent for efficiently repairing constructs and starships, whether effecting emergency repairs on a drone or keeping robotic allies in the fight. Once per day, you can cast *make whole*, but you can target only construct creatures or damaged technological (not hybrid or magical) items. When repairing a starship (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 321), you reduce the time spent to 2 hours of work instead of 5.

MASTER ROBOTICIST [18TH]

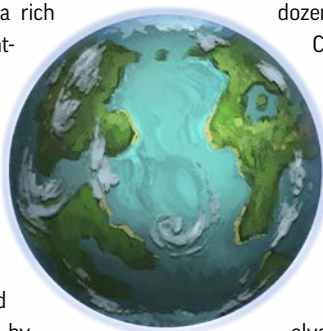
There are few pieces of technology that you're unfamiliar with, so you are sure to take time to examine those unique discoveries you happen upon. Up to twice per day, after you spend at least 10 minutes studying a previously undiscovered piece of technology with an item level within 5 levels of your character level or the wreckage of a significant enemy technological construct, you regain 1 Resolve Point; this doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points.





CASTROVEL

Castrovel is a hot, humid world with a rich atmosphere that gives life to continent-spanning jungles that are home to mobile carnivorous plants, saurian predators, and devastating moldstorms. While nearly every terrestrial biome can be found somewhere on Castrovel, the planet remains thoroughly wild despite its densely populated settlements, with modern cities and cutting-edge industrial complexes separated from the ravages of the primeval wilderness by electrified fences and automated weapons turrets.



GEOGRAPHY

Castrovel is divided into four major continents, each with a rich history and optimistic outlook toward the future.

The homeland of the lashuntas, Asana is the largest continent on Castrovel. It boasts everything from snowcapped mountains and sweltering jungles to rocky and rain-shadowed deserts. Its coastlines are for the most part mapped and understood, whereas records of the interior are largely confined to myth and broken history. In sharp contrast to their lashunta neighbors'

dozens of competing city-states, the ant-like formians of Castrovel have only one nation: a single vast country stretching from shore to shore across a continent to the south. This state has many names, depending on a particular formian's region and beliefs, such as the Everlasting Queendoms, the Unified Hive, and the Glorious and Undeniable Dominion of All Beneath Moon and Soil. Most outsiders refer to it simply as the Colonies. The fertile continent of Sovyrian, homeland of the elves, has always been set apart from Castrovel's other cultures, separated from the other continents by the icebergs and frost cyclones of the Snowsalt Sea and the vicious psiwhales and ship-breaking komohumes of the Sea of Teeth.

Whereas each of Castrovel's three great species has a continent to call its own, few records suggest any large-scale colonization of the isolated continent of Ukulam has ever taken place. Its unconquered depths have remained the domain of deadly plants, immense fungi, and powerful beasts that drive a never-ending cycle of evolution, growth, and decay. These inexorable processes ultimately consume settlements, leaving most ruins damaged beyond easy identification.

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

RESIDENTS

Given Castrovel's extreme biodiversity, it is perhaps unsurprising that the planet has fostered several major races. Most prominent in the Pact Worlds are lashuntas, telepathic humanoids from the continent of Asana with a cultural emphasis on scholarship and self-improvement. The thousands of hives of the ant-like and equally telepathic formians of the Colonies are strongly aligned to the directives of their ruling council. This philosophical battle of collectivism versus individualism (combined with telepathy's advantage in communicating such ideas) sparked a millennia-long war that raged between the two races until just 30 years ago. The elves of Sovyrian remain steadfastly aloof from this conflict—and everything else. They focus on magical pursuits and guard their shores with stony resolve.

Relations between the three primary races are not as fractious as they seem, despite the planet's tumultuous history. Outposts of all three can be found beyond the borders of their native continents, and the planet as a whole welcomes travelers from offworld, even if the elves largely restrict trade with non-elves to offshore ports designed for that purpose. The planetary economy is robust, due to the strength of Asana's corporations and universities combined with the relentless efficiency of formian manufactory hives.

In addition to the planet's three most prominent species, a race of plantlike telepathic humanoids called khizars (see page 212) inhabits the jungles of Ukulam in small, isolated settlements that usually number no more than a few dozen individuals. These groups are migratory, staying in one place for a few years at most. When asked about this behavior, khizars reply that they don't wish to put too much ecological strain on any one area, but admit they also enjoy the constant change of scenery. Khizars have no innate prejudices against the planet's other species or visitors to Castrovel, as long as they show some respect for nature.

Despite the constant threat of megafauna, Castrovelians take pride in their planet's wilderness, deliberately preserving large swaths of it for ecotourism and research. Castrovel has the largest population of Green Faith followers in the Pact Worlds, and the Xenowardens are a prominent theopolitical faction here. Even before the rise of starships, magical portals called *aiudara* (or "elf gates") facilitated this commitment by connecting major settlements across the planet without the need for dangerous and expensive roads. Today, these arches remain a major public resource as well as a subject of intense speculation, since the secret of their creation has long been lost and many gates are broken or lead to unknown destinations.

SOCIETY

The lashuntas of Asana traditionally organize themselves by city-state, with each state controlling a few smaller settlements and the land and resources immediately around them. Internally, these cities vary wildly, ranging from egalitarian communes to hereditary monarchies, though most favor democratically elected autocrats. Despite the lashuntas' deep love of scholarship and intellectual and magical pursuits, the constant presence of bold predators just beyond their walls—from savage megafauna to intelligent monstrous races—leads every city to maintain a significant military. This spirit of militaristic self-reliance means that attempts to unify multiple city-states rarely last long, though warring between the states consists of daring raids and shows of force rather than outright slaughter, and even enemy cities typically work together when attacked by outside forces. The divided nature of lashunta government can be a double-edged sword for its citizens, however, as big businesses can easily play the competitive city-states off each other, and many lashuntas fear that their society may soon go the way of Akiton's—co-opted by commercial concerns without regard for the residents' welfare.

While Asana serves as a breadbasket for the solar system and the constant discovery of useful creatures and plants makes it an attractive base for research firms, its greatest resource is its people. The charismatic, educated, telepathic populace provides a talented and passionate workforce for interplanetary corporations. The relatively long history of Asana's civilization and the constant reclamation of fallen cities by the jungle also means that a great deal of magical knowledge may be simply lying undiscovered in some jungle clearing.

Before the Colonies became a unified land, the disparate formian hives were at constant war with each other, and their costly battles over territory prevented their civilization as a whole from advancing. To end this strife, several of the largest hives agreed to a conference now called the Meeting of Queens, in which they all agreed to work together in service of the "Overqueen," which was a purely theoretical concept that would allow them to act as a federation while still acceding to their hive-insect need for a single ultimate authority figure. Within years, the wars ended, and the newly unified Colonies were able to begin expanding their territory—inaugurating a new age of war against the lashuntas of Asana that continued for millennia.

Life in the Colonies is extremely regimented, as formian society is strictly collectivist and authoritarian. Workers bred and raised for specific jobs complete them without complaint under the oversight of taskmasters and warriors, who in turn bow before their own superiors, all the way up to the queen of a particular settlement. Transgressions against authority are rare. Depending on its impact, behavior outside of the order may be overlooked to reduce cognitive dissonance, seen as ignorance in need of correction, or punished as treason by immediate execution. Fortunately, generations of diplomatic missions (often by shirren emissaries) have led most hive queens to the belief that non-formian races fall outside the "natural order," and thus their individualism may be tolerated as long as it serves the Colonies' best interests.

As a result of this broadened perspective, the Colonies are now a hotbed of economic activity. Corporate employees granted

honorary rank within hive society oversee massive manufacturing facilities in which the efficiency of formian workers outpaces all but the best automation. The formians' relatively weak regard for environmental concerns compared to the planet's other major races means that even the long-hostile lashuntas are now transferring more and more of their fabrication jobs to the Colonies. Strip mines follow seams of ore, industrial warrens belch smoke into the sky, and vast agricultural plantations stretch for miles aboveground and below, with photosynthesizing crops on the surface and tunnel upon tunnel of bioengineered fungus farms and chemical-synthesizing bacteria vats below.

Yet for all of this industry, most of the continent remains strangely pristine. While formian hive-cities sometimes mound up into monolithic, tumorous structures, most run for miles underground, and the consolidation of their cultivation for greater efficiency means that large stretches of wilderness remain intact between settlements. Though the Colonies' borders are fiercely defended, the unification of the hives means there's little need to patrol the continent's interior, and thus entire intelligent species live quietly in the trackless expanses overlooked by formian industry.

The long-lived elves of Sovyrian were hit harder by the disaster of the Gap than most other races, and their traditional standoffishness has since grown into xenophobia. Those elves who choose to live among other races are called Forlorn by their Sovyrian kin, and their fraternization with lesser, untrustworthy cultures is seen as a stain on their legacy. To an elf of Sovyrian, it is an unfortunate necessity to go among other peoples to trade, and any right-minded elf does so as little as possible, returning home or to elven enclaves abroad as soon as the job is done.

Given the elves' low birth rate and their reticence to sully themselves with outside contact, Sovyrian is constantly in danger of becoming a bit player on the global and galactic stage, prompting the government to promote several workarounds. The first is the Blood Right, a policy that states any half-elf or person with observable elven blood can automatically claim citizenship in Sovyrian. This is crucial to the nation-continent's economy, as these half-elves (as well as the gnomes who are allowed to live among elves as part of ancient tradition) are able to travel and trade with both elves and outsiders without stigma. The second custom, the Masking, allows elves who are uncomfortable interacting with outsiders to wear masks while doing so, thus allowing any dishonor to be transferred to the masks instead of themselves. This practice is particularly popular among diplomats and soldiers, who find that masks also help emphasize their cultural unity and unsettle their opponents.

For all its isolationism, Sovyrian remains sophisticated and worldly. The cultural norm of emphasizing craftsmanship and magic over mass production helps the elves maintain continuity with their ancestors. It also means that Sovyrian produces some of the most impressive spellcasters in the system, and its people regularly employ magic items rarely seen by outsiders. Though citizens have embraced modern technology, their designs tend toward the artistic and fantastical, with an emphasis on biotech; even their densest cities can feel like pastoral wonderlands. These magic and artisan technologies, operating in unique and proprietary ways, are Sovyrian's chief exports,

and governmental export restrictions create artificial scarcity to ensure that elven goods remain rare and expensive.

The extremely unified front by Sovyrian's residents leads most to assume Sovyrian is a restrictive totalitarian state. In fact, the opposite is true—the Sova, who are the leaders of the High Families of El and serve as Sovyrian's heads of state, focus almost exclusively on preserving the nation's borders and economic security, leaving cities and settlements to govern themselves. As a result, most Sovyrian residents enjoy great freedom, living in traditional harmony with the land or following their passions in small settlements.

Castrovel's dominant species have long agreed that preserving Ukulam's ecology is in the planet's best interests. Following the peace accords, several nongovernmental organizations such as the Esowath Conservancy formed to maintain the continent's sanctity, with all parties' blessings. These NGOs tightly restrict travel to Ukulam, issuing a limited number of permits each year to a sizable waiting list of academics and tourists. Concerned with the impact of pollution, unrestricted access, and the disruption of the near-constant migratory patterns of Ukulam's countless aerial species, these groups even limit transit over the continent, enforcing these regulations with a force of frontier soldiers supported by a coalition fleet of interceptor starships. For all these organizations' efforts, reports of poaching—driven by a lucrative trade in hides, horns, and other items believed to hold pharmaceutical value, supernatural power, or simple prestige—regularly emerge on the planet's infosphere.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Thanks to a shirren-brokered peace treaty 30 years ago, the hostilities between formians and lashuntas have finally come to an end. Since then, the two sides have scaled back their military presences across the planet, especially in the southern half of Ukulam where they clashed often. Nature quickly reclaimed the decommissioned outposts and fortresses, but both sides still monitor the continent, maintain peace, and provide aid to travelers headed to or from smaller bases and research stations.

The biggest dangers of Castrovel are the megafauna that thrive in the planet's fecund forests, jungles, seas, and swamps. Many of these massive beasts are racked by constant hunger and feed on just about anything they can find, from plants to people. Occasionally, they are desperate enough to attack even well defended settlements, and while they are usually driven off or killed, they still can cause serious destruction and casualties. Some residents organize hunting safaris to take down these creatures before they can wreak havoc, but Xenowardens and other environmental groups often protect their habitats.

In addition to attacks from creatures, unprotected settlements can be completely destroyed by the savage weather phenomena known as moldstorms, which occur during the periodic mass flowerings called "death blooms." Though they are infrequent, these storms appear with almost no warning and sweep across wide swaths of land, leaving behind colonies of fungus that rots away most organic material in a matter of hours. Manufactured substances such as nanocarbon and polycarbon plate are generally resistant to these effects, but climate scientists warn that the moldstorms are growing more and more potent.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are several notable locations across Castrovel, grouped by continent.

Asana

Locales both ancient and modern are scattered across Asana.

The Bulwarks

This chain of islands leads across the Strait of Glory to the Colonies, making its shores and causeways the most hotly contested territory in the planet's history. For thousands of years, formians and lashuntas battled constantly over these islands, using them as beachheads to launch invasions onto each other's shores or score political points at home through minor advances. As a result, the islands are shattered, grotesque palimpsests, with modern fortresses built atop the ruins of ancient castles and the husks of warhives, and entire valleys filled with slowly decaying bones and chitin. Some islands are completely uninhabitable today due to radiation or military biotech. Since the truce between the two civilizations, scholars from both sides have begun cautiously combing through the ruins for lost knowledge, while groups like the Xenowardens attempt to rehabilitate the most damaged isles.

Candares

Every year, the spring meltwaters of the Tarakeshi River slowly back up, filling the massive Lake Nehan and turning the districts of Upper Candares into islands, until at last the waters crest their banks and come blasting down into the narrow valley of Lower Candares from every direction, creating dozens of spectacular waterfalls. The steep walls of this crevasse have traditionally been lined with hydroelectric turbines and seasonal temples maintained by native spider-limbed kaymos, who live in peace with the city's lashunta citizens. In recent years, however, the city has been flooded not just with water but with riches, as technomancers for the Astral Extractions mining company have discovered new magical uses for corpsicum, a rare material produced when water seeps through the kaymos' cliffside burial grounds. The resulting influx of cash has let the corporation buy leaders and votes, and most of the city is happy enough to let crab-like mining robots scale their cliffs. Exasperated and unheeded, the Wallkeepers—traditionalist rebels from both races who see the mining as a desecration of their ancestors—occasionally send the enormous machines falling in flames to the city below.

Jabask

Located deep in the Glowsilk Jungle and accessible only by *aiudara*, arduous overland treks, or daredevil shuttle flights, Jabask is perhaps the most traditional of the major city-states—and the most embattled. Behind its ugly concrete ramparts, locals live in symbiosis with the Somana Tree-Sages, intelligent plant-creatures of extreme magic and confusing mindsets whose branches are tended by furry, split-tailed nobosets. The greatest of the Tree-Sages, the Prophet of the Wood, regularly offers eclectic pearls of knowledge, including advanced scientific revelations and disconcertingly accurate predictions gleaned via mystical communion with some greater power called "the Ken." In exchange, the cityfolk protect the Somana from the horde



of beasts that prey upon them, most notably the three-eyed fangsaras. This would be easier if not for the frequent moldstorms that sweep the city, eating through seals and circuits, shorting out technology, and forcing citizens to shelter inside thick bunkers. While the jungle's eponymous lights make the city quite beautiful during calm periods, every citizen in Jabask is constantly listening for the sounds of the mold siren or the attack alarm.

Komena

The closest major city to the Bulwarks, Komena remains heavily militarized despite its extremely defensible position in the Floating Shards. While originally named for the many fjords that cut through the mountains' feet, making it look like the peaks are bobbing on the sea, the Floating Shards have also earned their name another way. Fueled by powerful magic lost during the Gap, ancient lashunta spellcasters lopped off the peak on which Komena originally stood and levitated it to build an ornate, cylinder-shaped city connecting the mountain's base to its summit. In times of war, the entire city slides down into a subterranean cavity. While a number of these so-called Mountainheart Cities once existed, Komena is the last one known to remain. The wreckage of another to the north and records of up to five more lead many adventurers to brave the region's peaks in hopes of finding one hidden since antiquity—perhaps even still inhabited.

Laubu Mesa

This desert city sits atop the geological feature of the same name and has famously never been conquered. In ancient times, the city's minaret-topped Aeries were home to the thakasa riders—cavalry who'd mastered a winged version of the planet's famous reptilian shotalashu mounts—but today these same flight schools train some of the best fighter pilots in the system, specializing in death-defying proximity flying and other atmospheric maneuvers. Technomagical pumps bring water and geothermal energy up through the center of the mesa, making the city self-sufficient in case of siege, and the Scholar's Spiral, which winds down around the pumps, contains workshops and libraries handed down from master to student for millennia—ripe with rumors of lost treasures and encoded knowledge hidden behind secret doors.

Ocean of Mists

An atmospheric mystery, this sea of roiling, multicolored mist somehow supports ships that have only minor gas-based flotation capability, yet it remains dispersed enough for divers to breathe freely as they descend to walk its shrouded canyon floors. Occupying a huge system of canyons, the ocean hosts many floating gas-harvesting platforms. Divers who hunt for salvage on the "seafloor" are always on the lookout for merfolk-like teshki and the deadly mistcallers, whose magical name-speech can turn an explorer into an expanding cloud of bloody droplets.

Qabarat

The Shining Jewel of the Western Sea, Qabarat is arguably the greatest of the lashunta city-states and the planet's largest spaceport. Where the Yaro River cuts through the sea cliffs at the edge of the Stormshield Mountains, ancient walls of crushed, glittering shells rise up to cradle a modern metropolis

nestled among venerable structures dating to the civilization's beginnings. Lady **Morana Kesh** (NG female damaya lashunta envoy) and her chief consort and battle leader, **Grantaeus** (CG male korasha lashunta soldier), rule the city from the Threefold House, the city's capitol. They fight a quiet but desperate battle to maintain traditional governments and keep all of Asana from becoming a corporate free-for-all. Visitors to the city often arrive in the spaceport at Ship's End, passing by soldiers and mercenaries training in the legendary Battle Yards and scholars debating on the steps of the city's numerous great universities, before arriving in the Brightstreets, which form the city's commercial center. The city also has several public-use *aiudara* that link to other settlements.

QABARAT

NG port city

Population 819,000 (70% lashunta, 5% elf, 5% human, 4% shirren, 4% ysoki, 3% half-elf, 9% other)

Government autocracy (Lady Morana Kesh)

Qualities academic, cultured, financial center

Maximum Item Level 16th

The Colonies

While the formians have little emotional investment in the names and identities of their territories, naming major settlements and features has made it easier to direct visitors.

Broken Minds

Formian society brooks no disobedience, and those formians who refuse to serve are quickly dispatched. In recent years, however, shirren emissaries have succeeded in convincing several hives to sell their "malfunctioning" citizens rather than kill them. These rebellious individuals are brought to the Broken Minds, a sort of intellectual colony quarantined on the harsh desert coast. There shirrens work with these patients to prepare them for independent lives on other continents or planets—and also study them to see whether this spontaneous rebellion might hold the secret to the shirrens' own break with the Swarm in ages past.

Gulf of Legions

This central sea, the hub of intercolony contact for the continent, takes its name from the flotillas of warriors who once darkened the waves as they crossed on the backs of massive water-striding yugolars to lay siege to other hives. Since the alliance, the sea has instead become a hotbed of trade, and most of the largest formian hive-cities—notably Chisk the Unyielding, Kebenaut, and Queensrock—are situated on its shores. Only Qarik on the shores of the Lemenore Ocean and Zsyk with its half-submerged ocean tunnels rival these metropolises in size.

Jaws of the Mother

This comparatively narrow strait, where the Nestwall Mountains to the north dip into the ocean across from the larger Setae Range to the south, provides the only water access to the Gulf of Legions. This was long one of the most important defensive positions on the continent, and even before the era of the Overqueen, the nearby formian colonies worked together to

defend it and repel invaders or break enemy blockades. At its narrowest point, the channel is only 30 miles wide, and floating warhives still regularly patrol it. To either side of the strait rise the Mandibles, looming, ancient fortresses that house the primary aerospace defense forces for the entire continent.

Queensrock

The hive-city of Queensrock is constructed like an enormous termite mound; gaping docking bays and entrance tunnels break its mud-colored exterior, albeit with the occasional modernist steel-and-glass addition. Set just offshore in the Gulf of Legions, the city stands upon an island of the same name, artificially constructed along with the narrow causeways connecting it to shore. Thousands of formian workers gave their lives to the monumental task of engineering the city and causeways in ages past. Inside, its chambers are a disconcerting mix of traditional formian architecture and spaces designed to make other species feel at home, with limited degrees of success. The hive's leader, **Morgebard of the Thousand Spines** (LN formian queen), is a commanding presence who brought her city to prominence by seeking trade and collaboration with organizations throughout the Pact Worlds. While the queen herself is almost never seen, her elaborately branded Heralds are a constant presence in the city, and Morgebard can peer through their eyes and take possession of their bodies as the need strikes.

The Seacrown

Nominally controlled jointly by Asana and the Colonies, the Seacrown is actually owned by no one—or at least, no one known to the outside world. Believed to be the central peaks of the ancient impact crater that forms the Shattered Sea, the Seacrown is a collection of sharp mountains rising from the vast and trackless waves. Though the lower beaches are accessible, each island is wrapped in a cylindrical force field of unknown technology that starts halfway up the slopes and lances straight up, slowly tapering to a close in the upper atmosphere. Within these half-opaque cells, strange monastery-like cities that conform to no known architectural style are inhabited by lashunta-sized blurs that twist the eye and look like moving gaps in the air. Each time Castrovel's moon eclipses the sun, a door opens briefly in one of the force fields. Several modern expeditions have entered in an attempt to make contact with the inhabitants, but so far none have returned, though their gear sometimes reappears on a beach unharmed or is found years later and thousands of miles away.

Towers of Memory

While many of the continent's other intelligent residents—the tri-winged fakoras, the serpentine zenuways, the armored and plains-roaming carinas traveling in clan-herds with mobile horn lodges—survive by paying heavy tribute to the hives or hiding themselves away in undesirable regions, the inhabitants of the Towers of Memory live bold and unmolested. Rising from the shores of Lake Kechavas, just east of the Plains of Ru, these five towers confound the eye, never quite holding a defined edge. Within them, mysterious creatures called caulborn—extraplanar scholars with two mouths and crests of skin and bone where

their eyes should be—collect and catalog memories of select Castrovelians, taking sustenance from the petitioners' psychic energy while they preserve these memories for eternity. No one knows when the first queen approached them, or what she was told, but all of the Colonies enforce a strict taboo against bothering the scholars, and even queens have their memories preserved if a caulborn requests it. In return, the hives are allowed to petition the scholars for information and otherworldly advice, though only those in great need dare approach the glistening towers, for the prices the caulborn demand are often unsettlingly personal.

Watchpost Quinai

Little do the formians know that the Gulf of Legions' most foreboding stretch of coastline hosts Watchpost Quinai, a secret lashunta listening post. During the war, highly trained agents at this facility, funded by an intercity coalition, monitored formian movements and occasionally launched raids into the heart of enemy territory. Despite the recent accord between the two civilizations, lashunta leaders have felt no particular inclination to decommission the facility or inform the formians of its existence, and mercenaries or patriots with more courage than sense are still sometimes recruited to launch high-paying—and high-casualty—incursions from its secret bunkers.

Sovyrian

Below are some of the settlements of modern significance that stand among a surprising number of lost or abandoned ruins long since reclaimed by the continent's evergreen forests.

Cordona

Positioned at the tip of the Clariel's Arm peninsula, this port city is a bustling and pleasant metropolis, overshadowed only somewhat by the massive steel wall—guarded by soldiers and miles of automated defenses—that cuts it off from the rest of the mainland. All visitors seeking access to the continent without a direct invitation are funneled through Cordona, where they can petition at the various corporate enclaves, embassies, and guild offices. Cordona is one of the largest cities on the continent, and a study in irony, for while the elves may officially disdain the sea of outsiders living in its boroughs, they also feel the need to impress these same people with their wealth and majesty, and thus the city is a triumph of beautiful architecture and utopian hospitality. So great is the appeal that many elves actually vacation in the city, especially for Revelnight, the citywide masquerade lit by charming colored lanterns, whose ask-no-questions frivolity greatly bolsters the population of half-elves. This is in direct contrast to the rest of the year, when disembodied eyeballs controlled by the city's overseers float magically on every street corner, carefully watching for danger or signs of subversion.

El

The great capital city of the elves has changed little since antiquity. The neighborhood-sized Great Houses of the city's aristocracy, the High Families, still climb the cliff walls to either side of the city's magnificent waterfall, though their traditional structures are augmented with the latest biotech and magical architectural advances. The Woven River earns its name from

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the dozens of elegant canals that crisscross the city in looping designs; the island-neighborhoods created by the canals are connected by footbridges older than the Gap. Yet while many ancient structures still stand, proudly maintained by their owners, the spaces between them are thick with modern skyscrapers—gleaming glass melded with living trees to create a beautiful surrealist forest, between which hovercars and shuttles buzz like insects. With river trade largely abandoned, the canals are now plied solely by yachts and pleasure barges, and the venerable docks now serve as the city's spaceport, where ships land under the shadow of artistically concealed energy shields and artillery capable of firing on aggressors in orbit, ensuring that no one lands without proper authorization. Just downriver from the docks stand the ruins of the Arch of Refuge, the great gateway that was once a magical portal to Golarion but crumbled—or was destroyed—during the Gap. Today, this site is a shrine where elves mourn memories lost to the Gap.

Nerundel

Situated high in the Korinath Divide, the mountains that separate eastern and western Sovyrian, this city is inhabited by more gnomes than elves, with all the chaos that entails. While Nerundel's resident university, Nerundel Halls, is a marvel of both eclectic scholarship and perilous cliffside architecture, the city's true claim to fame is the Greengate, a permanent portal to the First World that allows the gnomes here to trade freely with the fey. Likewise, some fey travel to Nerundel via the Greengate to study at the university. The Greengate also allows enough primal nature magic through to turn the otherwise rugged mountains into a blooming paradise for several miles around Nerundel, and biotech researchers and spellworkers flock to the city to harness the precious energy. The Xenowardens also keep a permanent delegation nearby to study the ancient artifact and ensure it isn't abused.

Southwatch

This city-fortress sits upon Sovyrian's southernmost point, just miles from the frozen cliffs of Aurovas, Castrovel's southern ice cap. Each winter, the narrow ribbon of ocean between the two landmasses freezes, creating a causeway of ice and snow. That's when the soldiers of Southwatch earn their keep, for across this bridge flood the white-furred horrors of Aurovas's windswept wastes: semi-intelligent aurovaks eager to drink the hot blood of northern prey. All winter, Southwatch holds them off, repeatedly blowing up the causeway only to watch it freeze into shape again. Once the weather grows warm, the aurovaks' feeding frenzy ceases and the creatures vanish back into the glacier mountains of Aurovas. For generations, the elves have tried everything to

eliminate the aurovaks once and for all, but the creatures burrow deep into the ice and disappear without a trace during the warm season, making even aerial bombardment ineffective. In recent years, however, the horde has not appeared, leading some to assume Southwatch has finally succeeded—and others to worry that the aurovaks have learned to plan more complex assaults.

Telasia, the Portal Grove

Records show that in ancient times, Telasia was a magical transit hub, connecting far-flung settlements across the world. Inside each of the town's fortified, tree-shaped buildings stood



MORGEBARD OF THE THOUSAND SPINES

a different *aiudara*, and travelers paid the resident Transarchs for use of the portals. Sometime during the Gap, however, the situation changed. Today, the city is the sole domain of the green dragon *Urvosk*, who claims the title of High Transarch and ownership of the entire grove. As much as Sovyrian officials would love to reclaim the “lost” city, the dragon’s cadre of high-priced lawyers keeps them from getting far, and claims of thermonuclear devices embedded in every building keep them from trying to take it by force. For now, anyone wishing to use the portals must pay off or otherwise convince the capricious dragon, who smugly reminds travelers that no one but he knows where every portal leads and that some of them connect to magically hidden locations completely lost to history. The dragon does, however, have a soft spot for adventurers and sometimes hires them to explore these secret realms on his behalf.

Ukulam

Most significant locations on Ukulam are either natural expanses or small settlements primarily dedicated to studying the area.

Caliria Maze

Ukulam’s jungle is especially thick in this region, where two smaller rivers join to form the broad *Ralhoma*. Attempts to map it (even using satellites) have failed, suggesting that either the flora is constantly changing or some supernatural force obscures its true appearance from the outside world. Ukulam boasts numerous species with primal magic, and these adepts often speak of a sacred place called *Caliria*, whence the planet’s heart beats with water and life. In this area, armies composed of numerous species—especially *khizar*s—have united to turn back prospectors and explorers, often using legendary *Caliria* as their battle cry. Rumors run wild as to whether *Caliria* is a grand woodland city, an unspeakably powerful magical font, or nothing more than a metaphor for Ukulam’s primal rage.

Esowath Nexus

An erstwhile formian outpost, this comblike structure has been retrofitted to serve as the Esowath Conservancy’s base of operations on Ukulam, while the organization’s political offices are in *Qabarat* and *Queensrock*. Conservancy rangers travel far into the *Ikal Expanse* and patrol virtually all of the coastal waters, watching for poachers and turning away misguided travelers. The head of operations, **Ualia** (CG female *korasha lashunta* mystic), thinks that exposing offworld species to Ukulam’s beauty can lend politicians leverage in continuing to protect the land, so she regularly awards travel grants to explorers with good track records to survey the region’s geography and wildlife.

Ikal Expanse

Ukulam’s southern forest is a virtually unbroken stretch of deciduous trees overshadowed only by titanic mushrooms that sprout and wither within weeks. Ecological studies suggest this is among the most biologically productive locations on *Castrovel*, if not in all the Pact Worlds. Like the plants and fungi, the fauna here is plentiful and numerous species are immense. Most famously, the powerful *yaruks* topple trees in pursuit of food, inadvertently aerating the forest and creating openings

for new growth. Any signs of past civilization have disappeared beneath the leaves, but explorers regularly venture into the wilderness with dreams of uncovering lost treasures.

Northern Steps

The tectonic buckling that formed the Singing Range has also uplifted the land to the north. Known as the Northern Steps, these broad plateaus descend with increasing abruptness the farther north and east one travels, eventually ending in dramatic cliffs shorn smooth by *Castrovel*’s last known glaciation event. Warmed only by the mild current flowing north from the Western Sea, the Northern Steps are fairly chilly, made all the more so by the katabatic winds that blow icy rainstorms from the *Kai-Hebla* Ice Sheet. A thick taiga of scaly cacti covers the Steps’ northern half, and the shovel-footed *purhuams* that graze on the plains regularly kick up nodes of meteoric iron and preserved scrimshaw carved from the bones of long-extinct species.

Singing Range

Home to several species of ever-gnawing rock rats, these severe peaks are riddled with alpine burrows that whistle faintly in the wind during the summers, when the snow recedes from the highest summits. Millions of years ago, two smaller continents crashed into each other here, forming this constantly growing mountain range. Flyover surveys have sighted battered ruins in the high mountains; it may be possible that these belonged to a lost species that predates even elven and *lashunta* history.

Station 9

The formians’ eastern fortresses boasted numerous defenses to intercept *lashunta* attacks before they could reach the Colonies. At the outpost identified only as Station 9, the formians developed carefully cultured countermeasures to defend against a possible biological or chemical attack. During the Gap, an attack devastated the site, which was promptly abandoned, but the living countermeasures persisted, reproduced, and evolved. In recent years, scientists have identified amorphous creatures that move about Station 9 with purpose and even skirmish with local wildlife. The Esowath Conservancy believes these creatures are an invasive species but dares not risk an air strike, which could scatter the biological material into the atmosphere. With public outcry building, the organization is desperate for a plan—and someone bold enough to execute it.

Waklohar’s Expeditions

Some tourists can’t help but fetishize the exoticism of Ukulam’s wilderness, and the entrepreneurial *lashunta* **Waklohar** (N male *korasha lashunta* operative) has one of the few recreational installations on the continent. He organizes short-range adventures into the *Ikal Expanse* and to nearby islands for wide-eyed “adventurers,” leading them to several famous landmarks and guaranteeing an exciting wildlife experience. Although *Waklohar* is a capable survivalist, his strength lies in his ability to craft spectacle, and it is his stoic business partner, the formian **Xcibiz** (LN independent formian taskmaster soldier), who tirelessly manages the finances and ultimately organizes rescue operations when an expedition encounters trouble.

WILD WARDEN +1 WIS

You believe that the trappings of civilization have made others soft, so you eschew them to live in the wilds, such as the jungles of Castrovel. You don't necessarily avoid technology, as it can help you survive in some of the harsher, more extreme environments, but you tend to adorn your equipment with furs and leaves. This might make you seem like a backwards primitive to some people, but you know that nature—in all its forms—will be around long after all societies have collapsed and turned to dust.

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THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

In the course of your explorations of various biomes, you have studied all manner of flora and fauna. Reduce the DC to identify creatures of the animal, plant, and vermin types using Life Sciences by 5. Survival is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Survival checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Wisdom at character creation.

PROTECTOR OF THE WILD [6TH]

You harm creatures of the wilderness only when necessary for survival, preferring to simply knock them unconscious whenever possible. When you use a weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage to a creature of the animal, plant, or vermin type that you have identified with a successful Life Sciences check, you don't take the standard -4 penalty to your attack rolls. In addition, if you are dealing nonlethal damage in this way and score a critical hit, you can choose not to impose any of your weapon's critical hit effects. Finally, you can use Life Science to provide first aid (as per the Medicine task) to creatures of the animal, plant, and vermin types.

MASTER FORAGER [12TH]

Thanks to your survival skills, you can find materials to sustain and bolster your allies while guiding and feeding them by foraging in a wild environment. When you succeed at a Survival check to live off the land, you and the creatures you provide food and water for as a result of the skill check regain an additional number of Hit Points equal to your Wisdom modifier when you next recover Hit Points with a full night's rest (which must be no more than 24 hours after you succeed at your check).

COMMUNE WITH NATURE [18TH]

Being out in the natural world revitalizes your spirits, reminding you why you enjoy the lifestyle you lead. Up to twice per day in a natural setting (such as a jungle or even an arctic tundra), you can spend 10 minutes meditating or simply considering the world around you (this doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points) to regain 1 Resolve Point.

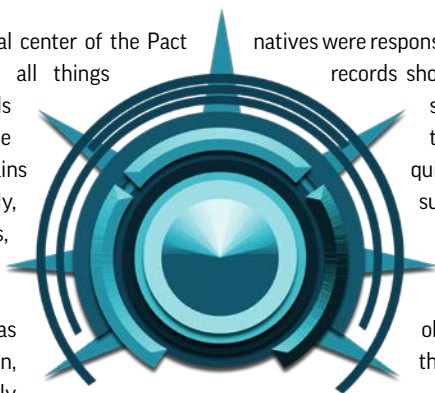




ABSALOM STATION

Absalom Station is the metaphorical center of the Pact Worlds—the hub around which all things revolve. It was here that the Pact Worlds as a formal entity were created, via the eponymous Absalom Pact, and it remains the system's heart culturally, economically, and governmentally. All sentient species, from the familiar to the most alien, are welcome in its streets, and with the mysterious artifact at its heart acting as a singularly powerful hyperspace beacon, Absalom Station finds its significance only growing as the races of the Pact Worlds spread out across the galaxy.

Due to the Gap, no one knows who built Absalom Station or why—whether it was created as a run-of-the-mill space platform, a lifeboat during some frantic exodus from doomed Golarion, or something else entirely. Its thoroughly mechanical nature and walls of ceramic, metal, and plastic lead most scholars to assume it was built by ordinary mortals, while its population of historically Golarion-based species, as well as its position in the precise orbit vacated by Golarion, suggests that Golarion



natives were responsible for the vast undertaking. What's more, records show that when the Gap ended, the station seemed lived in and worn, implying that the residents had already been there for quite some time. Even today, the mysteries surrounding the station's origin and its ties to Golarion's disappearance make it a natural draw for Gap researchers, who constantly strive to infer bits of objective truth from the shifting morass of the station's past.

After the Gap, Absalom Station's inhabitants found themselves even more adrift than most cultures, with no home world and no trustworthy records of their social ties or governance. Anarchy reigned; gangs based on racial or religious identities looted and fought in the streets, and systems broke down as people abandoned their posts. Only when a runaway malfunction nearly resulted in the venting of the entire station's atmosphere did people recognize their precarious position and begin to pull together, with the heads of the various gangs forming the first Syndicsguild and electing the first Prime Executive, Loqua Tem.

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With the advent of Drift travel, the residents of Absalom Station were surprised to find it transformed from a backwater raft of “homeless” races—most notably humanity—into the most powerful and prosperous port in the Pact Worlds. Early post-Gap engineers attempting to understand the station’s workings had known for several years that the station’s power core was no mere reactor but rather a powerful magical artifact called the *Starstone*, believed to be the same object that had lain at the heart of the station’s namesake city on Golarion and through whose magic lomedae and other deities had risen to godhood. Locked away behind unbreachable defenses, it had always provided enough free energy to power the entire station, yet it came to reveal a new function: no matter where in the galaxy a ship started from, the *Starstone* made Drift travel to the space around Absalom Station as quick and safe as hopping between planets in a single system. Now, no matter how far explorers may roam, Absalom Station is always right next door.

The next decades were marked by harsh growing pains as Absalom Station struggled to retain its autonomy. Various other governments attempted to claim the station, most notably the Bone Sages of Eox, who launched the Magefire Assault in 7 AG only to be rebuffed by the station’s formidable

defensive batteries. Having established its independence and dedicated itself to neutrality and equitable trade, Absalom Station became the natural headquarters for newly formed interplanetary organizations and eventually the seat of government for the Pact Worlds, forever giving all other planets in the system a stake in defending its sovereignty.

GEOGRAPHY

Seen from above, Absalom Station is shaped roughly like an asymmetrical, six-pointed star spreading out in a flat plane from the Eye, the huge central dome that encloses a cluster of skyscrapers surrounded by shockingly green parks. More towers and neighborhoods, collectively called the Ring, partially fill the gaps between the station’s arms, and a single tapering pillar called the Spike drops down from the station’s central disk. Altogether, Absalom Station is only 5 miles across, yet its three-dimensional structure means it can house upward of 2 million people and still be easy for the uninitiated to get lost or find themselves alone in rarely visited corridors.

Artificial gravity is in effect throughout the station, with “down” always being perpendicular to the disk and arms, toward the complex technomagical gravity field generators

in the Spike's tip. Except where modifications have been made to the contrary, atmosphere and other environmental conditions seem tailored for human comfort. Station lights in many sectors are set to artificially enforce a 24-hour cycle of day and night, and independent regulators and air scrubbers are located throughout the station for maximum safety. While additions and renovations to both the freestanding buildings and the three-dimensional warren of chambers and corridors are common, actually expanding the station itself is difficult due to the extreme hardness of the exterior hull metal—an inconvenience that nevertheless keeps whole neighborhoods from getting decompressed by a single gunfight.

The following sections present an overview of the station's four main regions, or sectors, plus the orbiting Armada outside the station, as well as details of some key neighborhoods and notable sites. Note that these descriptions are far from comprehensive; each sector of the station contains a multitude of neighborhoods, each with its own unique character, and it's easy for a traveler to stumble from one district into another with entirely different inhabitants and social codes just by crossing a street.

RESIDENTS

Absalom Station is a melting pot. Though many see the station as the hereditary home of all Golarion's races, particularly of humanity, today its corridors are choked with natives of many planets, and its status as the primary waypoint in and out of the Pact Worlds means even the rarest spacefaring species can sometimes be found in its docks.

For all the station's multiculturalism, however, humans are by far the most numerous. In the wake of the Gap, while elves retreated to Castrovel and dwarves constructed their massive Star Citadels, humanity clung to the station as a key piece of its cultural identity, finding comfort in its tangible—if mysterious—sense of history and continuity. Even today, many humans look to the station's extensive records of pre-Gap Golarion, seeking a source of pride and a sense of significance, adopting the names of bygone ethnic groups whose DNA they don't necessarily share, practicing ancient religions, or attempting to revive archaic organizations from scraps of information. Such traditionalists are often at odds with those called Second Age philosophers, who believe the Gap gave human culture a chance to start afresh and build a utopia. Of course, the majority of humans are far more concerned with their own families and livelihoods than metaphysical questions about culture. Still, humans being what they are, most of those on Absalom Station view the station as inherently theirs, with vague exceptions made for other races once native to Golarion, and treat all others as encroaching immigrants or foreign nationals. This naturally raises some hackles with the other common species on the station, many of which have been residents for just as long (as far as anyone can tell). Of late, one of the biggest conflicts on the station has been the rise of the Strong Absalom movement, a group that believes the *Starstone* belongs solely to the refugee races of Golarion and that aliens should be either forbidden from using it as a waypoint or else taxed exorbitantly. This is further complicated

by the group's tendency toward humanocentrism. While the political arm of the Strong Absalom movement officially decries the xenophobic terrorism of its fringe elements, its growing strength poses a grave threat to a government built on interplanetary cooperation.

Even more than race, economic class divides Absalom Station's citizens. Taxes on trade keep even the poorest on the station fed—if only with unappetizing nutrient paste and protein bricks—yet the people living in the posh corporate towers of the Eye have little in common with the impoverished wretches of the Spike. Money both democratizes and oppresses station residents: those who manage to build a fortune, legally or otherwise, tend to find the upper classes welcoming them with open arms, yet true wealth tends to remain concentrated in the hands of the elites who make the rules. Fortunately, the generally egalitarian government, organizations such as the Starfinder Society and Stewards, and the constant flow of merchants and mercenaries through the station offer even the lowliest Botsrap street rat a chance at social advancement.

On the other hand, religion helps unify the station's disparate peoples and hold its political apparatus together. Several major churches—most notably those of Abadar and Iomedae—have their headquarters here, but shrines and temples of countless gods can be found throughout the station, and most congregations are decidedly diverse. Nearly as influential are the various powerful gangs and families who look out for their members, from the rough-and-tumble Threepiece Girls of Sparks, with their infamous custom drones, to the Fleurasik family of Kemanis, which knows every politician's secrets.

SOCIETY

As an independent Pact World, Absalom Station is ruled by the Prime Executive, a term-limited position with theoretically absolute authority over the station's legislation and management. Colloquially known as the "Primex," the Prime Executive is elected and advised by the Syndicsguild, a council of neighborhood representatives called syndics who do much of the real work of running the station and who, while bound by the Primex's decrees, also have the ability to remove their leader from power at any time and call for a new election. Partitioning the station's different neighborhoods into dozens of electoral districts over the years—many times in ways that favor one faction over others—means that, while most syndics are democratically elected, some corporate or criminal enclaves are dynasties in all but name.

The current Prime Executive, **Kumara Melacruz** (LG female human envoy), is only halfway through her first term, but she's already garnered controversy for her crackdown on white-collar crime and her progressive stance on non-human immigration to the station. She's survived one assassination attempt so far, and allegations are still flying as to whether the culprits were corporations fearing her policies, the Six Tip Gang angry over the arrest of its leader, or the nativist Strong Absalom movement.

In addition to its own government, Absalom Station also hosts the Pact Worlds' representative body, the Pact Council, meaning that the station is constantly flooded with

ambassadors and delegates from other worlds. While this is good for business and gives Absalom Station residents easy access to the movers and shakers of the Pact Worlds, it also creates tension, as these foreign nationals operate with varying degrees of diplomatic immunity. The Stewards, the Pact Worlds' primary peacekeeping force, also maintain a headquarters on Absalom Station, and local laws allow corporations to employ private security in their holdings, so citizens sometimes find Absalom Station's legal system a jurisdictional nightmare, while savvy criminals often manage to slip through the cracks. Those in the know often warn that the station is never more than one misstep away from chaos, as security contractors and militant zealots wage shadow wars with street gangs and each other, alien ambassadors negotiate world-shaking trade deals, and explorers go to any lengths to beat rivals' claims to new planets. Still, station security does the best it can, and most denizens of Absalom Station live and work in relative safety—at least in the nicer neighborhoods.

As Absalom Station lacks the natural resources of even the smallest planet or asteroid, its inhabitants have had to get creative in order to survive. Fortunately, what technology can't solve, magic can.

The *Starstone* provides for the station in two key ways. By offering free energy on a massive scale, the artifact-powered central reactor allows the station to undertake many energy-intensive forms of agriculture and recycling in order to feed and reclaim nutrients from its citizens. Strangely, while this energy appears limitless for most industrial uses, attempts to store it in battery form and transport it beyond the station in industrial quantities inevitably fail, with the batteries mysteriously losing charge as they travel away from the station. Yet, the *Starstone's* real value to the station is its function as a supercharged Drift beacon, making Absalom Station the first trading post for anyone—domestic or alien—jumping into the system, as well as the last stop before heading out. It's this trade, plus the station's concentration of corporate and governmental headquarters, that keeps enough money flowing in such that even minimal taxes and tariffs are sufficient to support the station and its people.

Absalom Station does have another valuable resource, however: information. As the home of the Starfinder Society, the station has the most data on newly discovered planets beyond the Pact Worlds, as well as the most complete known "histories" of the Gap, as scholars cross-reference and validate sources to make their best guesses on different subjects. Add to this the multitude of texts from pre-Gap Golarion included in the station's libraries and private collections, not to mention leading magical and religious schools, and Absalom Station manages to remain at the forefront of the knowledge economy.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

Absalomians take deep pride in their political independence, but it comes at the price of fear. While some see the expansion of Pact Council power as the primary threat and others worry about corporate or military takeovers by other worlds, all realize how valuable their station is—and what a precarious situation that puts them in. Fortunately, whoever built the

station seems to have had defense in mind. In times of conflict, a tremendous blast shield closes over the station's central dome, and huge superlaser and mass driver batteries open all across the station's surface, filling the void with a web of death while the station's immense repositioning thrusters nudge it out of the way of danger. Though the station itself has relatively few military vessels—just enough for security to deal with problems in the Armada—this is a deliberate choice, as both the Steward fleet and the Armada are required to defend the station in times of trouble.

On a smaller scale, various gangs vie for control of tiny territories within the less-fortunate neighborhoods of Absalom Station. These scuffles occasionally turn into full-fledged firefights and can sometimes wound or kill innocent passersby. The station's security force attempts to quickly squash these brawls when possible, but the more influential gangs have the sway and the credits to ask corrupt officials to look the other way.

ABSALOM STATION

NG space station

Population 2,130,000 (46% human, 9% android, 9% ysoki, 7% lashunta, 5% shirren, 4% dwarf, 4% halfling, 4% kasatha, 3% vesk, 2% gnome, 1% nuar, 6% other)

Government council (Syndicsguild led by Prime Executive Kumara Melacruz)

Qualities academic, cultured, financial center, technologically average

Maximum Item Level 20th

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Absalom Station is divided into several sectors, each the size of a small city replete with wide arrays of distinct neighborhoods.

The Arms

Visitors to Absalom Station disembark along one of the station's protruding Arms, which house dozens of different docks and bays ranging from force-walled, atmosphere-filled hangars ships can fly directly into to more conventional airless bays or, for larger ships, docking tubes and mooring clamps. Docks are assigned by Absalom Traffic Control, yet this is more than just a question of space, as different docks all have different characteristics. A ship full of gilled kalo, for instance, would likely prefer to dock near the flooded chambers of the Puddles, while most well-off merchant captains would rather fly into the sun than pay Little Akiton's unofficial "docking fees" or watch their cargo walk away on its notoriously crime-ridden docks.

The Arms consist of more than just docks, however. Like those in spaceports anywhere, the corridors leading to the station's center are lined with everything a spacer coming stationside might need, from entertainment and lodging to bustling markets and shops. Many traders coming to the station never bother to leave the Arms, and the residential areas that have sprung up to support these services are also the most likely to contain facilities or whole neighborhoods for creatures that find the station's humanocentric living conditions unpleasant. Government-run quarantine centers left over from the Stardust Plague still operate here, now used by customs agents to screen travelers of unfamiliar species.



The neighborhoods of the Arms include Fogtown, which takes its name from its thick, multicolored atmosphere tailored to natives of the gas giant worlds Bretheda and Liavara; Puddles, a mazelike system of tanks and flooded hallways, with glass-walled tubes running throughout to accommodate air-breathing guests; and the Vesk Quarter, which was deliberately established in the first days following the end of the war with the Veskarium in an attempt to reduce violence and tension on both sides.

Click-Clack Club

Named for the trademark sounds of its mechanical clientele, this bar and VR parlor caters specifically to mechanical creatures such as anacites, androids, and cybernetically enhanced folks sympathetic to the Augmented cause. Sometimes called "C3" for short, the club is run by **Tsalu** (LN male dragonkin technomancer) and his bonded partner **Barnaba** (CN male ryphorian operative), both heavily augmented themselves. Though the two are notorious for running less-than-legal betting on their array of VR games, they're quick to take augmented folks and anyone they see as social outcasts under their wings, and those who can best Barnaba in a game of Drift Racer or Infiltration X can win lucrative business contracts or favors from the club owners and their eccentric regulars.

Cosmonastery of the Empty Orbit

The alien architecture of this sprawling complex weaves like a banyan tree around a central courtyard with only a thin force field protecting it from the vacuum of space. Within its squat towers, High Sola **Tabishad Oseo Markola** (LN female kasatha solarian) runs the greatest solarian training facility outside of the *Idari* or Kasath itself. A taciturn woman, Tabishad is consumed by the idea that both Golarion's disappearance and planet-scale engineering projects fundamentally disrupt the balance of the universe. Those who successfully graduate from her grueling program sometimes join her Order of the Empty Orbit, dedicated to preventing such deliberate reengineering of the cosmos.

Eyeswide Agency

Purveyors of "holistic investigation services," the Eyeswide Agency is a private detective firm that operates in a legal and moral gray area, combining psychic mind-reading abilities with more conventional investigative practices. Eyeswide agents, often derisively called "headscanners," hire themselves out for corporate espionage, missing-persons cases, unsolved crimes, and whatever else clients might require from a streetwise, rough-and-tumble psychic. While many citizens remain skeptical, the Eyeswide Agency claims to operate within the bounds of the law (if just barely), and its utility to law enforcement and politicians in both official and unofficial capacities keeps anyone from digging too hard into supposed violations.

Fardock

At the tip of Kavalasa's Arm, in otherwise prime docking space, stands a quiet enigma. Standing 20 feet tall, this stone archway twists like a Möbius strip and is always slightly out of focus, its surface occasionally manifesting alien runes that crest and disappear like surfacing dolphins. Inside the archway is a plane

of flat green light. To either side of the mysterious portal stand the massive Farguards—two seemingly robotic stone automatons that are vaguely humanoid but with features of an alien lion and serpent, respectively. Able to generate powerful lances of the same green energy that the archway produces, these guards immediately attack anyone who comes within 40 feet of the archway. Yet, even those daredevils who've managed to make it past the Farguards and into the plane of green find it turning an angry purple—a glow matched by the revealed runes—before being blasted backward as streamers of bloody meat. Where the Fardock leads to, what might have emerged from it in secret, or if indeed it's even a portal at all remains up for debate, with competing theories claiming it gives access to the chamber of the *Starstone*, distant empires, or Golarion itself. Research on the portal is limited by station security posted around the area in order to repulse any potential invasion and save on janitorial fees.

The Eye

Absalom Station's massive, transparent central dome, filled with air and bathed in the light of the sun, is at the same time a civic center and the station's most exclusive sector. The lush trees and fields of Jatembe Park are open to all citizens and constantly full of young lovers and artists enjoying their splendor under the watchful eyes of the druidic caretakers. At the same time, government buildings rub shoulders with the most expensive residences and corporate offices in the city—the sorts of places where heavily armed guards in formal armor check identification constantly and the lines between public and private security blur.

The neighborhoods of the Eye include Kemanis, which combines the enthusiastic energy of students with the money of the city's elite to create the station's most prominent entertainment district; Nyori Palisades, which houses only the richest Absalomians, from virtual reality stars and celebrity inventors to colony financiers and starship magnates; and Parkside, which runs along the edge of Jatembe Park and contains government buildings such as the Pact Council headquarters.

Arcanamirium

Like Absalom Station itself, the Arcanamirium takes its name from a pre-Gap institution on Golarion, though whether it maintains a direct line of continuity with that ancient school is anyone's guess. The most prestigious magical university on the station, the Arcanamirium treats magic like the science its professors believe it to be, specializing in spellcoding and blending it with cutting-edge engineering to train some of the best technomancers in the Pact Worlds. At the same time, however, it also harbors an immense trove of ancient and alien magical artifacts in need of study, and a growing subset of magical scholars uninterested in technology—often derisively called "esotericists" by their fellow faculty—regularly provide the academy with new breakthroughs via the study of ancient magical arts.

Bastion

This imposing fortress is the headquarters of the Stewards, the Pact Worlds' primary peacekeeping force. Within its walls, new Stewards receive training for their roles as warrior-diplomats,

learning everything from personal combat and battlefield tactics to individual planetary legal codes and cultural mores, such as the proper way to honor a shobhad chieftain on Akiton or convince a Brethedan to listen. All of the Stewards' activities across the Pact Worlds—including training, troop movements, and officers' actions—are overseen by the decorated veterans of the Conclave of Legates under the leadership of Director-General **Lin Camulan** (LG male korasha lashunta soldier), who also sits on the Pact Council's Directorate. Though they act as the de facto military arm of the Pact Worlds, Stewards never forget that their duty is to the Pact itself rather than to individual politicians, and Bastion is built to resist a siege, should they ever have need to oppose those currently in power.

Hamisfore Theatorium

Renowned throughout the Pact Worlds, the Hamisfore Theatorium is the premiere venue for performers of all sorts on Absalom Station. It draws its unique name from the fact that the entire building can reconfigure itself, drawing back its roof and adding seats as it transforms from a traditional theater to a massive stadium. In its theater form, it hosts everything from zero-g dance troupes and laser-lit euphonics raves to the screaming heritars of the latest eyebite rock, while its stadium form fills with cheers for the local brutaris team, the Absalom Assailants, or for the best warriors in carefully regulated gladiatorial exhibitions and private security talent searches. The owner of the theatorium, **Jebodah Hamisfore** (N male feychild gnome envoy) is the third member of his family to own the theatorium and is constantly searching for his next great act. He's particularly known for his love of alien art forms never before seen in the Pact Worlds, and he pays handsome "talent scout" fees to anyone who can introduce him to truly novel performances.

Plenara

A familiar sight on news feeds across the system, the stepped dome of the Plenara is the capitol building of the Pact Worlds. Inside its walls, representatives from every member world debate fiercely and publicly as part of the Pact Council, hear concerns from citizens and lobbyists, and maintain the web of alliances that binds them all together. While most issues are decided in the vast Council Chamber, particularly contentious ones are "kicked upstairs" to the Star Chamber at the dome's highest point, where the six members of the Directorate can look out over the entirety of the Eye as they decide the fate of the Pact Worlds.

Swordlight Cathedral

This cathedral, replete with sword-themed architecture and surrounded by statues illustrating the goddess Iomedae's 11 miraculous acts as a mortal before her ascension, rises above the immaculate white marble tiles of the Plaza Sancta Iomedaea. Inside the temple, massive stone knights raise swords to support the arched ceiling and create the feel of a true medieval cathedral, though constantly shifting holograms replace the traditional stained-glass windows. Above this impressive chamber, the building turns modern, housing high priests, visiting clergy, and a standing garrison of Iomedae crusaders to protect the cathedral's relics and records.

The Ring

Made up of corridors and spires between the protruding docks of the Arms and the cosmopolitan Eye, the Ring is the most residential, middle-class section of Absalom Station, yet it also contains campuses for corporations and other organizations that don't need the traffic of the Arms or the prestige of the Eye.

The neighborhoods of the Ring include Congregation, which contains temples to most of the Pact Worlds' major deities and many of its smaller ones; Drifter's End, which surrounds the Lorespire Complex and earns its name by catering to alien ambassadors from newly discovered worlds, explorers, long-haul cargo crews, and spacefaring vagabonds of all sorts; Freemarkets, a riotous bazaar of entrepreneurs selling wares out of cooperative storefronts, temporary stalls, and vehicles; and Olenza, where, in recent years, disgruntled human supremacists have succeeded in forcing out nearly all non-human residents and merchants through a calculated campaign of social and economic pressure.

Bluerise Tower

The Absalom Station government is decidedly laissez-faire toward the businesses operating on the station, yet even this minimal oversight is too much for some corporations. In Bluerise Tower, various corporations have arranged for nearly complete sovereignty over the tower levels they own, with even the Stewards having a difficult time obtaining permission to enter. Exactly why these corporations require so much privacy is anyone's guess, but official inquiries have always shown tower residents to be living in a self-described anarcho-capitalist utopia. If any tenants disagree, their complaints have never made it past their employers' private security.

Golden Vault

Any good business knows to avoid putting all its eggs in one basket, and AbadarCorp is no different, having as many regional offices as there are civilized worlds to support them. Yet, the Golden Vault on Absalom Station is the corporation's head office and the church's greatest holy site in the Pact Worlds, its golden logo blazing 10 stories tall from the side of the building. Inside the cathedral-bank, congregants worship or attend free financial-literacy courses, while secular customers negotiate with representatives for loans, product placement in AbadarCorp stores, or the blessing and witnessing of contracts. Since the notoriously impregnable safes and servers of the Golden Vault hold the wealth of entire nations, the organization regularly hires security experts to test their defenses. A recent increase in hiring has some on the street suggesting that someone might finally have breached the network and gotten away with a fortune.

Lorespire Complex

This cluster of buildings with its eponymous central spire is home to the Starfinder Society. While most people immediately think of the campus's famous Archives, with its massive collection of texts and artifacts gathered from across the galaxy and studied in communal labs, the Starfinder headquarters is also home to the offices of the organization's venture-captains, who help agents with funding and logistics for their exploration and research.

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The Lorespire Complex also houses the Hall of Discovery, where the elected Forum members and First Seeker **Luwazi Elsebo** (NG female human envoy) meet to steer the organization, and the vast, heavily secured machinery containing Guidance, the collective consciousness of previous Starfinder leaders.

Security Resources Pavilion

While most large private-security contractors maintain their own offices on Absalom Station, the SecRes Pavilion is a one-stop shop where those in need of quick muscle can come to have representatives from various crews bid on jobs or to interview prospective contractors for specific needs. SecRes Pavilion is particularly useful for freelance soldiers, as anyone with a few credits and no active warrants can hang out her shingle and compete for contracts, giving rise to its slang name of "the Merc Lurk." It's also an excellent place to gain the attention of a more established mercenary group—for better or worse—as respected organizations like Redscale Security, the Sisterhood of Iron, and Starshield Limited all keep an eye on newcomers to the pavilion.

The Spike

The hundreds of levels extending below Absalom Station's radial plane—often collectively referred to as "Downside"—are simultaneously its most crucial and least appreciated. Here, sandwiched between other heavy industry in the station's gritty underbelly, the vast machines in charge of the station's life support and defenses chug away, some only partially understood by the engineers who maintain them. The poorest classes of Absalom Station's citizenry live here, gradually trickling down and away from the light and wealth of the upper levels to build slums in former access corridors or venture into the half-explored Ghost Levels, discovered abandoned at the end of the Gap. Monsters of all sorts hunt in the depths of the Spike, from simple criminals to bizarre creatures with no apparent reason to be on the station at all, creating whole ecosystems in the gloom. Politicians occasionally champion purging and resettling everything below the lowest official neighborhoods, but they are inevitably dissuaded by scholars and experts in both science and magic who posit that the Ghost Levels and their bizarre ecosystems may contain keys to the station's function or destiny—not to mention mysterious treasures that expeditions into the unmapped levels occasionally bring back.

The neighborhoods of the Spike include Botscrap, home to private junkyards filled with complex robotics, suspiciously functional and restricted military "trash," and gangs of goblin squatters; Conduit, commonly called Pipetown, is a dense, seemingly endless forest of pipes that sometimes create a three-dimensional labyrinth with settlements in their clearings; Downlow, the largest, safest, and most cosmopolitan of the Spike districts, though routinely disparaged by the wealthier residents of the Eye; and Sparks, a warren of engineering bays ranging from cramped, one-person custom-tech shops to titanic dry docks for starship manufacturing and repair.

Diamond Defense and Surplus

Absalom Station has any number of places for mercenaries and private citizens to purchase weapons and armor, from

tent stalls in the Freemarkets to high-end emporiums in the Eye. Those with more particular needs, however, frequent this dingy shop off a dirty, neon-signed alley. Always covered in her beloved knives, **Lhana "Diamond" Nokoriso** (N female ysoki operative) has a surprisingly large selection up front, but those who earn her trust can enter the basement: a warehouse-sized space filled with black-market, military-grade munitions of astonishing value, many magical and all completely untraceable. Via her connections as a member of the Golden League, Diamond is legendary in criminal circles for being able to get anyone anything they need, for the right price, as well as



for being a notorious font of underworld information, so long as it doesn't jeopardize her deals. She's also extremely fond of brokering favors, and those able to accommodate her feisty personality and complete her "little jobs" can earn discounts and introductions to the station's criminal elite.

Rig House

This tumbledown establishment is so large that no one's sure just how many rooms it has—and that's exactly how its proprietors like it. Run by the Lowrigger gang, the infamous Rig House is simultaneously an eccentric flophouse, avant-garde performance venue, elite nightclub, community center, and makeshift government building for the Spike. As neutral territory, it hosts meetings of the rich and powerful from all over the station and beyond, and it is a well-known place for adventurous starship crews to pick up new jobs and patrons, as long as they know how to keep their mouths shut. Rumor has it that the Lowriggers have, interspersed among the public chambers, a whole set of secret rooms called the Backstairs, where those who've earned their respect can train, view privileged information, hide from the law, or access smuggling tunnels running throughout the station.

Starstone Reactor

Deep in the heart of the Spike lies the Starstone Reactor, which powers the entire station. Given the incalculable value of the *Starstone* within, Absalom Station's elite Starstone Defenders keep the chambers surrounding the reactor under intense guard at all times, and only engineers with the highest security clearance are allowed access to the systems that transfer the artifact's energy to the rest of the station. These safeguards hide another fact: no one can actually reach the *Starstone* directly. The *Starstone* itself is housed in a small chamber floating in the center of a large, mostly empty space called the Core, connected only by power conduits and four narrow bridges to the outer chambers where the engineering staff work. While heavy blast doors lead out onto these bridges, the codes locking them were apparently lost during the Gap, and attempts to tamper with them or gain access to the Core from another direction activate overwhelmingly deadly magical defenses and cause a station-wide brownout. Still, foolhardy people occasionally try, as legend holds that those who manage to touch the *Starstone* and are found worthy can ascend to godhood, as Iomedae once did. This only compounds the need for the Starstone Defenders, though engineers peering through the observation windows report strange phantoms—some of them humanoid and dressed in modern station clothing styles—flickering in and out of existence inside the Core, leading some to wonder whether the *Starstone* has guardians of its own.

The Armada

Absalom Station's unofficial fifth sector isn't actually on the station at all—it's the so-called Armada, a vast and shifting swarm of ships, both transient and permanent, that constantly orbits the station. By spurning the station's docks but still remaining nearby, the crews of the Armada's ships can gain many of the benefits of living on Absalom Station without

being subject to more than the most basic laws and taxes. Ships constantly raft together to make black-market deals, and some of these conglomerations have become permanent, forming tiny space stations in their own right. Still, the majority of Armadans are simply independent ship crews who feel safer keeping to themselves or aren't interested in paying recurring docking fees. The government of Absalom Station is content to let ships remain in the Armada indefinitely so long as their crews don't cause trouble, as they appreciate the convenience and safety of having some of their less savory elements separated from innocent citizens by a mile of hard vacuum.

King Curney's Kasbah

A combination casino, drug den, and brothel, King Curney's Kasbah consists of an ungainly amalgamation of several large freighters and assorted smaller ships permanently welded together, their engines only barely able to keep them in orbit around the station. Legend has it that each of the myriad ships in Curney's collection was repossessed from clients who failed to repay their loans and that even now their severed heads remain in Curney's private chambers, kept alive and conscious by elaborate alien technology. Despite being singularly ugly in both body and soul, **King Curney** (NE male dwarf envoy/operative) nevertheless maintains the most popular recreational facilities for the Armada's less savory residents. Even Absalom Station's most powerful government and corporate officials have been known to organize illicit deals at the surveillance-shielded tables of his cantina, lose fortunes gambling in his "scrupulously fair" orbits games, or narrowly avoid interplanetary scandal in the synthetic flesh walls of his Pleasure Pits.

Simar Communion

The human women of the Simar Communion rarely allow outsiders beyond the reception area of their floating commune—and it's easy to tell who's an outsider, for every member of the Communion is technically the same person. For the last hundred years, this station has been home to an unknown number of identical clones, who span a full range of ages from infant to elderly. While the technology to create an adult clone is both restricted and incredibly expensive on most Pact Worlds, members of the Communion get around this by simply raising their clone-sisters from "birth," training them in the art of being Simar. Though they're often sought for their knowledge of human genetics, implant-free biohacking, and psychic magic, it's also an open secret that the Communion's intense training regimen and near-religious dedication to self-control make them impressive operatives and assassins. As the old Armadan adage goes, when a Simar leaves her home, someone is about to have a very bad day.

Valor's Heart

A more or less permanent fixture in the Armada, this carrier serves as a training vessel where the church of Iomedae trains novice priests in the arts of holy combat. *Valor's Heart* is no mere school, however; it remains a fully operational warship that has added its might to the defense of Absalom Station on more than one occasion.

CORPORATE AGENT

+1 CHA

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
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OPTIONS

Corporations control much of the modern world, from the food each person eats to the weapons a soldier deploys on the field of battle. You are an agent of one such corporation, which relies on your negotiation, deal-making, and your natural cunning to advance its agendas. Whether you are making proposals to agents of other corporations to split the mining rights for a valuable asteroid or establishing your corporation's presence on a newly discovered world, you are the company's eyes, ears, and hands.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You are deeply connected to the world of corporate culture, and know all the movers and shakers. When attempting a Profession or Culture check to recall knowledge about corporations and their executives, reduce the DC by 5. Diplomacy is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Diplomacy checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Charisma at character creation.

NETWORKING [6TH]

If your corporate database doesn't have a piece of information you are searching for, you probably know someone who does. It takes you only 10 minutes to attempt a Diplomacy check to gather information, as long as you have connection to a local infosphere or a quick way to communicate with contacts in a settlement that is at least technologically average (see *Starfinder Core Rulebook* 406). Additionally if you have access to a local infosphere, you can take 20 on a skill check to recall knowledge in half the normal time (typically 1 minute).

STRONG-ARM TACTICS [12TH]

When you throw the name of your company around, you can usually get what you want, though acting in such a way never wins you any friends. When you successfully use Intimidate to bully a creature, its change in attitude lasts three times as long. At the GM's discretion, this ability might not work on creatures that haven't heard of your corporation.

SEAL THE DEAL [18TH]

Nothing is more thrilling to you than engaging in spirited discussion to pursue your employer's interests. It is why you were hired, and it's why you venture out into the wider cosmos. Up to twice per day, after you spend at least 10 minutes bargaining and negotiating (this doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points) or using an infosphere to research details relevant to a deal that is significantly advantageous to your company, you regain 1 Resolve Point.

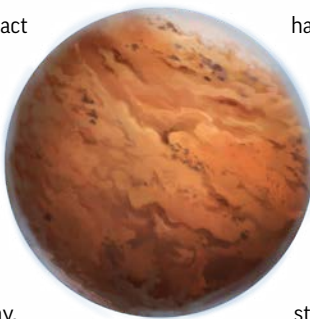




AKITON

At a glance, the rocky surface, grisly impact scars, and forbidding ice caps of Akiton seem uninhabitable. Even so, life has clung to the surface for untold eons, even as the planet slowly dies. In a process that has been occurring for millions of years, Akiton's core has cooled, its atmosphere has thinned, and its liquid water has frozen, killing off all but the hardiest plant life as much of the arable soil has simply blown away. What might have once been a lush paradise is now a desert world on which truly tenacious creatures have evolved to survive.

The rise of space travel brought new life to Akiton, for within its rocky crust run immense veins of thasteron, a substance key to the production of starship fuel for sublight travel. The centuries-long boom brought in unprecedented businesses, immigrants, and wealth, making the poor rich and the rich even richer. With the advent of Drift travel shortly after the Gap, though, the need for thasteron quickly plateaued and then plummeted. Within decades, most operations' cost of extracting thasteron outweighed the potential profits, and today only a



handful of reserves are pure enough or so easily accessible to be worth excavating. Those who had the means to do so left the planet long ago. Those who inherited Akiton were the desperate poor, the opportunistic raiders, the rugged traditionalists, and the stubborn plutocrats who hoped to keep their crumbling thasteron empires together. After several centuries of economic depression, the situation has largely stabilized, but the vibrant survivor culture is still a long way from prosperity.

It's said that for every crater on Akiton, there are at least a dozen wrecks. Some of these are the weathered remains of abandoned mining vehicles, but a staggering number of starship hulks lie wrecked across the planet's surface. Archaeological investigation indicates that most of these wrecks crashed on approximately the same date at some point during the Gap, suggesting some extraordinary battle for dominance of Akiton on both the land and beyond its atmosphere. Scavengers have yet to identify—much less loot—all of these wrecks, which hark back to a time when Akiton was richer and the Pact Worlds less peaceful.

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

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OPTIONS

GEOGRAPHY

Akiton's famous red hue is a result of its rocky, iron-rich surface, which is marred by craters and is virtually absent of visible plants or liquid water. Like many other rocky planets, Akiton has a molten core, though that has cooled considerably over the past tens of millions of years. Not only has this process slowed tectonic activity, but it has also allowed solar winds to gradually erode the atmosphere, leaving it barely suitable for most humanoid respiratory systems. As the planet cooled, its weather systems gradually precipitated the world's liquid water into static ice caps, leaving behind immense trenches, virtually lifeless plains, and swaths of salinized soil where oceans once reigned—at least so the leading theory insists. Ancient myths speak of a time of great floods, though geological studies of the sundry trenches and channels suggest a variety of origins, with some pointing to a distant past of raging rivers and others indicating an ongoing divergence of tectonic plates. The greatest of these canyons is the extraordinary Edaio Rift, which nearly circumnavigates the planet like a jagged belt.

The largest "ocean" is the utterly dry Irkonian Sea, created by the collision of a prehistoric meteor that slammed into

Akiton at a shallow angle and left an oblong scar. This impact corresponds to a mass-extinction event that killed off virtually all of the planet's larger fauna and, as paleontologists believe, paved the way for the evolution of intelligent humanoids such as the ikeshtis and ysoki. Force waves from this explosive event are evident in the surface for thousands of miles, and even the Arlkari Plateau appears to be a geological percussion bulb uplifted by the strike.

Immense ice caps known as the Winterlands cover both of Akiton's poles in a crystalline shell several miles deep. Descending winds blow with withering speeds across the frozen landscape, sometimes colliding to create extremely powerful twisters that blast the ice and sublimate water directly into short-lived clouds. In the north, beyond the hardy Ice Clans that still eke out a living here, the only signs of life are the abandoned Progenitor Cities that scholars now know the mysterious witchwyrds built long ago. To the south, different ruins peek up from the glaciers, but all creatures avoid these purportedly haunted sites that tend to scramble electronic devices brought nearby.

The planet's surface appears barren but sustains a wide variety of hardy cacti, grasses, and shrubs whose roots burrow



as deep as 100 feet in search of Akiton's anemic groundwater. Dust storms maraud across the rocky plains, practically circumnavigating the planet unless interrupted by a mountain chain. During the thasteron boom, engineers began an intensive terraforming operation dubbed the Bounty. Its goal was to stabilize the soil, restore Akiton to its prehistoric levels of flora, and kick-start a new agricultural industry. When funds dried up, many of the experimental sites withered, though the heart of the Bounty north of the Hivemarket has remained a fairly stable, albeit increasingly dangerous region of lush greenery unseen elsewhere on Akiton.

RESIDENTS

Despite its relatively inhospitable climate, Akiton has attracted a wide range of species, many of which remained even after the thasteron bust. Even so, five intelligent species are both native and dominant.

Tens of thousands of years ago, humanity settled on Akiton by means now lost to prehistory. Commonly known as the Hylki, these Akitonian humans have deep-red skin and warm-hued irises, but they are otherwise identical to humans originating from Golarion. Although most outsiders use the label "Hylki" to refer to all Akitonian humans, the Hylki subdivide themselves into five distinct ethnicities whose differences are lost on the typical offworlder. The Hylki tend to be skeptical of the bold claims of strangers, and this skepticism translates into agnosticism in religious matters for many Hylki. Despite this wariness, however, the Hylki are a hospitable and passionate people, as ready to offer a stranger shelter against Akiton's cold nights as they are to demand recompense for a perceived slight.

Of all Akiton's species, few can match the ysoki for how well they exploited the advent of space travel. Already curious and gregarious, the ratfolk have made themselves invaluable on starships and space stations across the galaxy. On Akiton, they command considerable respect—at least compared to the teasing they sometimes receive on other worlds—and ever since the thasteron bust, ysoki ingenuity has been one of the key components keeping Akitonian cities afloat. Their population is split roughly in half between urban opportunists and wandering nomads whose motorized convoys transport key resources to settlements all across the planet.

Over untold generations of evolution and genetic modification, the creatures known as the contemplatives of Ashok have transformed into psychic geniuses whose atrophied bodies dangle from their immense brains. Consummate scholars, most are content to direct their extraordinary mental faculties to complex mathematics, theoretical physics, and esoteric mysticism from the comfort of the Halls of Reason. With increasingly regularity, contemplatives have settled on other worlds, taking prestigious positions with think tanks, trading companies, universities, and even exploratory expeditions. Many other species find contemplatives unsettling for their appearance, but also for their insistence of referring to themselves with pronouns such as "we" and "us"—and practically never in the singular "I"—whenever found in a group.

When technological advancement exploded throughout the Pact Worlds, most contemplatives took these changes in stride, but two fringe groups (each representing a small fraction of all contemplatives) took opposite stances on the digital age: the Transcendent Cortex embraced technology wholeheartedly, and its advocates dedicated themselves to digitizing their minds to finally exceed the limitations of the flesh. The Pristine Muse, on the other hand, found technology disruptive, believing societies (including contemplatives) that relied on computers would find their thought processes and critical thinking atrophying. The two groups remain at odds but rarely clash directly; instead, they regularly call upon proxies to perform semilegal acts of sabotage against one another.

The red-scaled ikeshti lizardfolk of Akiton have long lived on the fringes of "civilized" society, in part because their ravenous young can inflict lasting harm on unprotected settlements. During their adolescent phase, ikeshtis are at their most social, and they favor opportunities for the mechanically inclined, seeking jobs as technicians, wreckers, or traders of technology. In ages past, Akiton lacked the resources to support especially large populations, but after more than a millennium of imported foods and terraforming, the ikeshti and ysoki populations have grown so large that they have come into conflict with one another. The result is that the two species often clash over territory, and the ysoki have increasingly exploited space travel as a means of avoiding competition.

Thanks to their group-oriented life cycle, most ikeshtis are born on Akiton. Many seek out opportunities elsewhere in the Pact Worlds, though it is very common for ikeshtis to send substantial remittances back to their brood-mates on Akiton. Travel abroad often disrupts an errant ikeshti's reproductive cycle, though, and more than one starship crew has woken to find a stymied ikeshti crewmate transformed into a hulking, rage-filled rivener.

Even at the height of Akiton's terraforming initiatives, immense tracts of the planet remained a dusty wasteland. This suited the shobhad-neh just fine, and these four-armed giants stubbornly clung to their nomadic lifestyle of herding, hunting, and raiding. They have integrated into society over time, though most shobhads spend the better part of each year eking out a living in the wilderness. When they accept work, the warlike shobhads are often mercenaries or gladiators who carefully negotiate in their contracts what their codes of honor will allow. Shobhads very rarely accept long contracts of menial labor, believing that such work makes them cogs in the urban machine and erases their individuality and identity.

When the price of thasteron plummeted, many mining settlements emptied but for those too poor to leave. Many Hylki and offworld miners looked to the shobhads' way of life and adopted it for themselves, beginning an enduring fad of neopastoralism. This cultural appropriation grates on the shobhads, who balk at how casually others don leather harnesses, sport bone jewelry, and attempt to herd the planet's large and destructive livestock. They have little recourse against others claiming their culture, but flaunting

such affectations in the face of a shobhad is a surefire way to get into a fight.

SOCIETY

Despite the virtual implosion of the thasteron industry, the people of Akiton have found new ways to survive and even thrive. Competitive cities clash for resources, and only the Pact Worlds' most fundamental rules have much sway over the largely lawless wilds. As governments slashed their budgets, regulatory commissions were among the first to go, and now Akiton is a hotbed of quasi-legal industry. The porous customs agencies make the world an excellent smuggling hub, and it's often up to the community to police all but the most egregious ethical violations. For all its upscale businesses, the planet is now famous for its junkyards, mercenaries, recyclers, and masses of people willing to rent themselves out as guinea pigs for tests both cybernetic and pharmaceutical. As far as the records are concerned, Akiton also has some of the fastest growth in the Pact Worlds, though that's largely thanks to the many power brokers who exploit the cities' loose business licensing to create untraceable accounts.

Upward mobility is the grand goal of many Akitonians. While plenty turn to crime or other get-rich-quick schemes, the most famous route is gladiatorial combat. Akiton's arena tradition dates back untold millennia. Although the city of Arl has almost always boasted some form of blood sport, the purists maintain that most ancient bouts focused on ritualized combat and low lethality. Ceremonial clashes hold little interest for the galactic market, though, which eagerly tunes in to watch the major arenas' increasingly flashy grudge matches. Those who can prove themselves in the arena stand to earn immense wealth and fandoms, and the people of Akiton practically fetishize their favorite gladiators—even starting brawls over the results of a recent match. The Three-Scar League manages the games and is one of the few surviving planet-wide regulatory commissions. Even so, untold numbers of underground fighting circuits defy even the League's rules, often in order to preserve the "traditional" fighting styles of Akiton's countless cultures in the face of broadcast sensationalism.

For all the economic desperation and jostling, Akitonians are largely sympathetic to those who've fallen on hard times. They share freely with the destitute, though some gangs use charity as a way to recruit new followers in ongoing turf wars for control of cities such as Arl, Daza, and Maro. Others offer handouts as incentives to sign on with the thousands of mechanized caravans that travel between cities, trucking goods around and keeping a keen eye out for newly discovered salvage.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

With scattered city-states, vast swaths of uncontrolled territory, and no centralized government, Akiton is far from the safest destination in the Pact Worlds. Even in the best of times, Akiton's barren surface discouraged permanent settlements, and the frontiers remain the dominion of dozens of ferocious species such as the octopodal hrugs and the four-pincered silt dancers. Where these beasts dare not roam is often home to roving bands

of brigands such as the daring Arroyo Boyz and the merciless Red Razors. Most infamous of all are the Sandstorm Nine, a group of ex-military kasathas who have founded their own bandit kingdom in the Ridgeland northeast of Arl. A number of Akiton's raiders relish the income from abducting travelers and either ransoming their captives or selling them into slavery. Even though few settlements openly allow slavery, hidden slave rings across Akiton supply gladiators, labor, and test subjects to the planet's less scrupulous souls. Most local governments have a standing bounty on slavers—at least on paper, as some of those same officials receive handsome bribes to look the other way.

Travelers who don't have reliable aerial transport usually join motorized convoys that wind their way through the dust, seeking safety in numbers while carrying passengers and cargo. For these heavily armed caravans, there's no such thing as too many guards, and a capable mercenary can find reliable work just by hopping from one expedition to the next. Ambushes aside, the Akitonian wilderness is a dangerous place, with punishing sandstorms, polar vortices, and deadly bolts of orange lightning that strike without warning from atmospheric dust clouds. To make matters worse, the prevalence of craters and ravines makes traveling in stormy conditions potentially disastrous, and the resultant dunes can slow even the most capable land vehicles.

Cities may seem safer, but they hold their own dangers. With the decline of thasteron, gangs have become the refuge for the economically downtrodden. Rival groups clash for territory, often catching bystanders in the crossfire of their turf wars. Municipalities can rarely dedicate the funds to combating local crime because the plutocrats who hold their cities together are also busy fighting over access to resources, and these magnates regularly hire freelance groups to perform covert operations against each other without leaving a significant paper trail. Even animals can pose a threat in cities, both where blighted neighborhoods have become the realm of dangerous beasts and where scavengers have tunneled up into well-established districts.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are some of the most famous sites on the red planet of Akiton.

Arl

Magnificent Arl is one of the oldest and largest cities on Akiton, having stood atop the Arlkari Plateau for millennia before the Gap. Its equivalent to kings, called thuroks, ruled the plateau for ages before being deposed, and as can best be reconstructed, Arl's rulers were largely figureheads in a parliamentary thurokracy during the Gap. Since the thasteron crash, Akiton has become increasingly dangerous, and a military coup reinstated the thurok as a supreme ruler. The current thurok, **Vahal Ayos** (N male human soldier), favors bold shows of force over sustained recovery, often sending warriors to crush nearby raiding parties or posting bounties on dangerous fauna anywhere near Arl. The city rebooted its manufacturing industry, though it struggles to remain

financially competitive—a matter Vahal Ayos sometimes sweeps aside by imposing new tariffs to protect the factories.

ARL is most famous for its historic district, one of the best-preserved, continuously occupied neighborhoods of pre-Gap architecture in the system. The star attraction is the Crimson Forum, a crumbling arena that once housed the greatest fighting tournaments on the planet. It has since been upstaged by the VitariTech Coliseum, a state-of-the-art stadium that hosts sporting events of all types and seats up to 150,000 people.

ARL

N metropolis

Population 18,350,000 (38% human, 36% ysoki, 11% android, 15% other)

Government autocracy (Thurok Vahal Ayos)

Qualities cultured, in recession, profiteering

Maximum Item Level 14th

QUALITIES

In Recession The settlement is experiencing an economic downturn, usually resulting in higher unemployment rates.

Profiteering The businesses of this settlement engage in unethical practices in order to make profits.

Ashok

Akiton's native contemplatives are often referred to as the contemplatives of Ashok—a term that can refer to both this impact crater and a state of enlightenment that many contemplatives seek to achieve. The exact relation between the crater and this philosophy remains unclear, though some scholars of prehistoric Akiton have postulated that Ashok may originally have been the contemplatives' ancestral homeland, obliterated when a meteorite struck the planet, forming the crater that now bears its name. Today, the crater of Ashok functions as an immense amplifier that focuses and intensifies psychic energies, much like a particle accelerator for telepathic waves, allowing the contemplatives to broadcast their telepathic communiqués throughout the galaxy and dissect the fundamental energies of magic itself. The researchers at Ashok are very protective of their discoveries and publish only frequently enough to allay the Stewards' concerns. Even so, few creatures dare inhabit the region for miles around, reporting terrifying dreams and even spontaneous mutations as a result of the psychic radiation that resonates from the crater.

Bounty

The grand terraforming operation known as the Bounty was supposed to revitalize the planet and spur industry, but ecologists traced its early failures to a lack of supporting fauna to crop the native plants, disperse seeds, and aerate the soil. In an effort to restore the prehistoric conditions, a multilateral effort began to excavate ancient animals, extract their DNA, and clone them. It worked, but perhaps too well. What scientists believed to be simple, small, burrowing proto-lizards were in fact only the juvenile form of a titanic species

of subsurface predator. Upon reaching maturity, these scar gnashers began bursting from the ground to consume farmers, machinery, and even entire houses. Akitonian starships attempted to wipe out the creatures by orbital bombardment, but the scar gnashers merely burrowed to safety and they have since spread a modest distance from their terraformed home. Fortunately, they seem unable or unwilling to travel far beyond this region, but their presence makes the area increasingly dangerous. VitariTech Industries has proposed using an experimental weapon to exterminate the creatures, but so far no one has been brave enough to carry the armaments into the overgrown wilds.

Company Towns

Where the best veins of thasteron lay, mining companies were quick to assemble new towns populated almost entirely by employees and their families. With the near collapse of the thasteron industry, laid-off workers hastily fled these



VAHAL AYOS

settlements, leaving behind eerily empty ghost towns in their wake. Most of these surrounded the basin once known simply as the Deep, where the concentrated thasteron earned it a new name: Golden Bay. Booster City was the largest of these boomtowns. Several years ago, an extensive mining sinkhole caused a chunk of the city to slough down the side of the Deep, revealing an extensive network of previously unknown tunnels both artificial and natural. Etob on the northern rim is a wreck of ice-cracked structures, whereas Great Gwaz to the west has streets choked with dust. Not content to keep building settlements, Angkal Unlimited created a mobile town named Angkal Heights the size of several city blocks and propelled by treads more than 100 feet wide. After the structure became hopelessly mired in Golden Bay, the company abandoned thasteron mining entirely.

Perhaps the most famous settlement is the Utopia of Tivik, the creation of the egomaniacal ysoki Tivik who had her image etched into virtually every surface of the city. Her employees suffered this stream of propaganda largely because Tivik paid the best benefits and wages, and living conditions were otherwise some of the best in the industry. Even after being abandoned, the Utopia of Tivik still hums with energy as its digital billboards flash heroic scenes of its founder, speakers scratchily blare songs that praise her courage, and the occasional parade of robotic entertainers built in her image marches down the street. The city's become a haven for ne'er-do-wells and raiders. Even these tend not to linger, though, for no matter how many of the flashy signs they demolish, something stealthily repairs the damage within a week.

Dal Dawat

Ikeshtis' nomadic lifestyles leave them with few settlements, but all know of Dal Dawat. Carved into a ridge overlooking the Irkonian Sea, this monumental sculpture of two intertwined reptiles is a sacred site for ikeshtis, who view it not only as a monument of fertility but also as a reminder of the warring instincts that sleep within themselves. Those ikeshtis who cannot find a mate make pilgrimages here to breed and avert transformation into riveners, though many lose their senses before completing the journey. As a result, riveners are common for miles around the site, and ikeshtis regularly organize patrols to hunt down their wayward kin—sometimes even attacking other creatures in a vain attempt to preserve their species' dignity.

Daza

The Pact Worlds may have developed several sources of clean, renewable energy, but tragedy litters the path to innovation. Daza traces its origins to the Gap, and it emerged from that period with a unique and extraordinarily efficient power plant that combined magic and technology in ways modern scientists still struggle to understand, earning it the name City of Fusion. Its post-Gap citizens easily pieced their lives back together, but within a few years, many of them fell ill, poisoned by arcane and chemical radiation that had leaked from the plant's core for months or more. While many fled the irradiated city, those who stayed had irregular

responses to the contamination. Certainly a large percentage became ill or died, yet an impressive fraction grew redundant organs, recovered from terminal illnesses, or even developed beneficial mutations. Within a decade, Daza became a destination for miracle seekers of all stripes, and a cottage industry of mystics promising the means to unlock Daza's curative energies emerged.

Advances in individual radiation shielding have made it practical for people to once more live safely in Daza, drawing upon its functioning plant for energy at virtually no cost. It's also an informal holy site for disciples of Oras, who view the city as one glorious, living experiment. Still, Daza is best known as a galactic leper colony that attracts the incurable, who settle in the city to work while awaiting salvation.

Dustwarren

The fierce dust storms that erode Akiton's rocky surface don't distribute their payloads evenly, and much of the grit eventually settles in an immense rift known as the Dustwarren, forming a vast sea of fine silt. The dust constantly and slowly sloshes about, with powerful winds regularly sweeping up and depositing material. Innumerable tiny invertebrates slither through the grains in search of food particles the storms leave behind, and immense filter-feeding huikarls gorge on these virtually invisible creatures while leaving ephemeral furrows with their sharp-edged fins.

The sea of dust experiences unpredictable tides that can last for several weeks, and the ebbing sands reveal networks of scoured tunnels that riddle the submerged coastline. Among the most enduring tales on Akiton are those of space pirates and bandit kings who hid their loot down various tunnels, and shady traders are always eager to sell a "genuine" map to one of these abandoned troves. Interest might have faded were it not for regular sightings of starships landing near the Dustwarren and drunken tales of pirates on shore leave insisting their captains continue the tradition to this day.

Estuar

This small town at the edge of Akiton's southern Winterlands is deceptively quiet. Not much seems to happen aside from the thriving "icing" industry, where workers collect water from the polar caps and store it in large metal vats to be traded to the rest of the planet. Those familiar with Akiton's criminal underworld know that Estuar is run by a collection of criminal syndicates that prosper from kickbacks and shady deals within the icing industry. The Szuri Ring is the largest and most ruthless of the settlement's cartels.

Five Tines Fortress

Akiton's early history is rich in warlords who aspired to create empires, and although records of those would-be emperors from the Gap are now gone, many of their weapons remain. Among these is a flying citadel that patrolled the wastes but whose defenses were no match for post-Gap technology. The first to explore it found no signs of its creator beyond wall art depicting a ysoki warlord wielding a five-tined polearm. With the site considered safe, entrepreneurs moved in and transformed

Five Tines Fortress into a touring attraction that boasts a carnival, rides, and luxury gambling. For all its relatively quaint technology, understanding of the aerial fortress's navigation system has eluded engineers, and the structure meanders the planet at its own unpredictable pace.

Five Tines Fortress is most famous for its annual Redstone Raid, in which the site's staff populates a different section of the citadel with lethal threats and sends teams of fortune seekers into the gauntlet for a chance to win a huge cash prize. The whole affair is broadcast live throughout the Pact Worlds, which has made the fortress's current owner, **Zukar Nurkop** (CN male ysoki), very rich on the proceeds.

Gantim

What began as a normal adolescent ikeshti camp several decades ago has become a scientific curiosity. Located near the edge of Akiton's northern polar cap, Gantim is now home to an almost religious order of ikeshtis who have staved off their rutting instincts long past their normal reproductive cycle. They attribute their "success" to deep meditation and focus on intellectual pursuits, but some scientists have noted increased levels of radiation in the area. The ikeshtis of Gantim refuse to evacuate despite the threat to their health.

Halls of Reason

Like powerful computers, the pulsating brains of the contemplatives of Ashok function best when kept cool, and these creatures often congregate in small research hermitages secreted in the darkened channels that crisscross the planet. The greatest of the contemplatives' bastions, though, are the Halls of Reason, a vast array of windowless cubic towers. Whereas most of these boast cutting edge technology, nearly a dozen are completely devoid of electronic devices—all the better to concentrate on the most esoteric conundrums. The advent of Drift travel has expanded the contemplatives' figurative horizons, driving them to excavate a vast network of tunnels and sealed laboratories that shield them from the technological chatter of the Pact Worlds so they can listen for the telepathic projections of distant societies calling across the cosmos. The contemplatives openly admit to having made contact with at least five otherwise unknown species in distant, unexplored systems, but they remain cryptic about further details while commissioning crews to dig ever-deeper vaults below the Halls and exterminate the subterranean beasts that keep infesting the tunnels.

Hivemarket

On Akiton's largely lawless surface, any place that sustains honest commerce forms an oasis of relative prosperity. No marketplace is larger than the Hivemarket, a sprawling bazaar that exists in equal parts aboveground as well as within a subterranean network of lava tubes beneath Mount Ka to the northeast. Although its tunnels provide considerable safety from raiders and the weather, the greatest reason for the Hivemarket's millennia of success is the khulans. These ghostly, glossy-eyed creatures have lower bodies that seem to trail away into nothing. For all their spectral appearance,

khulans are utterly vigilant and viciously attack anyone who performs major thefts or attempts to take over the market by force, but any legitimate business, no matter how immoral, goes unpunished. Most patrons have learned to accept the khulans as an eccentricity of the site, but several universities sponsor ongoing studies of the strange creatures to determine where they come from and what they want. A recently developed psychic tracker has allowed one group from the Qabarat University of Xenoarchaeology and Xenoanthropology to ascertain that the khulans retreat to tunnels far below those used by the market, and at intervals the tagged subjects all gravitate toward Ka as if following unheard instructions.

Several governing bodies help maintain the Hivemarket, perform minor policing, and provide directions, though these groups are often at odds with each other as they maneuver for greater shares of the bazaar's profits and influence. The most influential of these is the Goldvein Census, a network of Abadaran temples that authenticate goods, notarize deals, and encourage economic growth—all while watching the khulans with suspicion. The minimal oversight and considerable safety of the Hivemarket have attracted several large businesses, including Sanjaval Spaceflight Systems, one of the leading producers of interstellar transport.

Ka, Pillar of the Sky

Whereas its canyons are gigantic, several of Akiton's volcanoes are outright titanic. Peaks such as the cinder cone High Shanzu and the composite volcano Eeha (nicknamed "the World Flare") dwarf most mountains on other planets, but Ka, Pillar of the Sky, reigns supreme as the tallest mountain in all the Pact Worlds. This shield volcano rises to a height of 22 miles, bringing its summit well above the point that most creatures can breathe. Rather than deter visitors, the height has invited them to test their fortitude against the mountain. The old shobhad Test of the Mountain, in which a person seeking validation or exoneration climbs to the summit and back, remains popular to this day. Those who survive are forever changed, though in the past century, many of the mountain-tested have returned having formed a strange mystic spellcasting connection.

Ka is a sacred site for the shobhad-neh. Every year the disparate shobhad tribes send representatives to the Clanmoot here, the only gathering of their kind at which peace is guaranteed while the giants air grievances, trade, and develop alliances. This peace is not guaranteed to outsiders, however, and with the exception of a handful of approved minor outposts and tiny science installations that ring Ka's lower slopes, the shobhads have mercilessly destroyed every attempt to establish settlements closer to the mountain. Some shobhads sell their services as guides to those seeking the summit, which also allows the giants to keep their clients on established paths and far from areas the shobhads would rather keep secret—including ominous obelisks and steaming caves reported by trespassers.

Khafak Depot

Located near the largest concentration of wrecked starships and named after the trash-eating vermin that plague the area,

this small settlement has a surprisingly robust economy based on an industry the residents call “junk tourism.” Khefak Depot has styled itself the go-to place for offworlders—mostly amateur archaeologists and Gap historians—who want a glimpse at Akiton’s famed wrecks without braving the dangers of the planet’s wastes. The town is chock full of hotels, restaurants, and tour guides, all eager to charge exorbitant prices to anyone naive or foolish enough to pay them.

Maro

Plenty of settlements cling to the sides of Akiton’s trenches, but none are half as spectacular as Maro, which stretches for miles along the Edaio Rift and nearly 3 miles vertically from the surface to the chasm floor. Its ancient epithet of “Thousand Lights” is now a laughable understatement, for the lights of millions of billboards, businesses, and residences compete for attention. In past ages, Maro suffered from considerable wealth disparities, but the city admirably shared the profits of the thasteron boom. This upward mobility—both figurative and literal—shook up the city’s hardwired social identities, triggering an ongoing cycle of creative media that continues to this day. Lately, Maro echoes with the shumka beats style that resounds off the chasm walls, and a rash of pig-growling (short for pigment-growling) has left the upper reaches vandalized with immense graffiti masterpieces sprayed from speeding hoverbikes.

Maro may be famed for its fashion and nightlife, but it’s also infamous for its gang warfare. The city’s relative prosperity attracted many ambitious and desperate souls as thasteron failed, and gangs formed to round up a quick credit from the unsuspecting urbanites. Maro’s citizens have learned how to avoid the worst side effects of the turf wars, few of which creep beyond the bottom mile of the city. Even so, recruiters frequent virtually every neighborhood, always on the lookout for new hotshots willing to join up.

Nurkop Richpick

Sometime during the Gap, the Nurkop ysoki clan went from relative poverty to fabulous wealth, and no one—not even their descendants—knows quite how. The mythology quickly arose that among the innumerable wrecks found on Akiton’s surface, the Nurkops found the mother lode of them all and sold off their prize. Ysoki love telling the tale of the Nurkop Richpick, that legendary site said to lie somewhere within the Dry Delta. As rumors insist, the Nurkops left behind enough loot to make AbadarCorp’s executive archdirector choke. Nobody’s ever rediscovered this wreck, but that doesn’t stop treasure hunters from braving the delta’s tusk-winged norkasa and biting sandstorms in the hope of finding a fortune.

Pau, Heart of the Land

Whereas Ka, Pillar of the Sky, is the testing ground for great leaders, the massive impact crater the shobhad-neh call Pau, Heart of the Land is where their people prove their worth. Located between the Ngur Lowlands and the Teeth of Jolga, Pau has some of the richest natural grazing on the planet, making it valuable territory to shobhad herders who have traveled

this region for untold ages. Its value also makes it the most hotly contested regions among the giants, who regularly raid one another and spill blood for control of the reddest grasses. The resurgence of herding among other species has led to bitter centuries of skirmishes between the shobhads and their insistent neighbors, and the former have buried the hatchet with one another in order to present a more united front against the usurpers who want their territory.

The Shears

Akiton’s cities host dozens of registered arenas and gladiatorial companies, but numerous independent operations exist outside these municipalities. The largest of these is the Shears, an ancient fighting school that boasts trophies dating back to the early days of Arl’s Crimson Forum. Operated by the unforgiving priest of Damoritosh **Shazzag** (LE female shobhad mystic), the Shears offers the most brutal—and, so it claims, the best—training regimen on the planet, promising that students emerge either as hardened champions or as pulverized carrion. Its teachers regularly send groups of students out on “field trips” to reach some nearly inaccessible point or capture an imposing beast. As a result, these muscular disciples are a fairly common sight on the Kaviri Plains or in the unforgiving Sloughscar Hills.

Most of those who graduate the Shears depart to join urban gladiatorial stables, but Shazzag invites the very best to remain as part of her 15-member elite squad that competes only a few times a year. The school never enters the same championship twice in a row—these veterans are very confident that their repeat participation would be unfair to a region’s games.

VitariTech Research Sites

The thasteron bust spurred a gradual brain drain of Akiton, especially in industrial sectors. The homegrown VitariTech Industries was among the hardest hit as property values fell and neighborhoods decayed. However, in the past century, the company has found new life thanks to Akiton’s virtually nonexistent research regulations, allowing it to engage in bleeding-edge research that often veers into deeply unethical territory, sometimes with Aspis Consortium funding. The studies at Site 3 are especially disturbing, using hired test subjects to endure torturous procedures in the pursuit of new cybernetic augmentation and gene therapies. Failed test subjects often conveniently disappear, and the privately owned company rarely publishes its findings or methodologies. Those few settlements near the facility sometimes come under attack by rampaging escapees with bounty hunters in hot pursuit.

For all the heinous practices of Site 3, the scientific community is more concerned by the claims out of Site 5, a separate facility studying atmospheric regeneration. The mountainside lab claims to have discovered the means to stabilize and rebuild Akiton’s atmosphere, though peer reviewers insist the procedure could as easily set fire to the whole planet. Some suspect it’s only a matter of time before VitariTech tests the technology anyway.

GLADIATOR

+1 CON

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You are a veteran of the public blood sport industry—a survivor of countless battles to earn a shiny credstick of winnings, the adulation of your fans, or both. You might be a veteran of Akiton's fighting pits, a student of the ritualized styles of Triaxus's battleflowers, or the sort of masochist who can't help but return to Eox's Halls of the Living. You're likely to die before your habits do, though, as you find few things more exciting than the rush of battle and the pounding cheers of a thousand fans.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

Your experience in the arenas has exposed you to countless warrior cultures, and you both recognize strange martial arts and know how to impress others with your own unique style. Reduce the DC of Culture checks to recall knowledge about entertainment combat, fighting styles, and gladiatorial traditions by 5. Intimidate is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Intimidate checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Constitution at character creation.

FAMOUS FIGHTER [6TH]

You have developed a considerable fandom that loves you for your arena prowess. You're famous enough that others require only a DC 15 Culture check to recognize your name and a DC 25 Culture check to recognize you out of context from your appearance alone. Because you're famous for your brutal stage presence, you can spend twice the normal amount of time when using Intimidate to bully a creature whose attitude is indifferent or better. If you do and succeed at the check, when the effect wears off, the creature's attitude toward you is worsened only to indifferent, not unfriendly. At the GM's discretion, a die-hard fan's attitude might be worsened to friendly instead, or you might be able to use this ability against an unfriendly target.

PART OF THE OUTFIT [12TH]

Your name is synonymous with your gladiatorial persona and outfit. As long as your gear is in good condition, you don't take any circumstantial penalties for wearing light armor or heavy armor in social situations (such as wearing golemforged plate to a formal event). You can use Intimidate or Profession (gladiator; Charisma) to "hide" up to two smaller weapons (such as a small arm or one-handed melee weapon with light bulk) or one larger melee weapon on your body, though you do not conceal the weapon so much as convince others to accept your carrying it without any objections. You can draw these weapons as normal; you do not need to spend a standard action as you would to draw a hidden weapon. Otherwise, this functions as the hide object task of Sleight of Hand.

At the GM's discretion, areas with especially high security may not allow you to carry weapons at all, no matter your reputation.

CROWD FAVORITE [18TH]

The first time each day you deal the finishing blow (reduce a creature to 0 Hit Points) to a significant enemy in front of an audience (consisting of at least one bystander or ticket-holding fan, but not another enemy), you regain 1 Resolve Point. If the audience contains 20 or more creatures, you instead regain 2 Resolve Points.

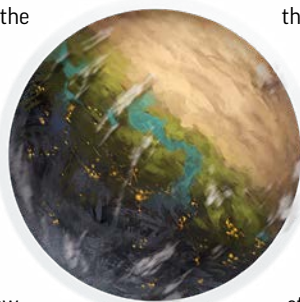




VERCES

Orbiting the sun between Akiton and the *Idari*, Verces is a highly civilized world, a cultural hub forever at the forefront of social and technological progress. Tidally locked, with the same side always facing the sun, it lacks the day-night cycle of most other Pact Worlds; instead, the side known as Fullbright is constantly scorched by a never-setting sun, while Darkside is trapped in eternal frozen night. Fortunately, a narrow ring of temperate climate along the terminator line where the two sides meet has proven surprisingly welcoming to intelligent life, and today nearly the entire population of this cosmopolitan world packs itself into the sprawling megacities filling this ring, while the rest of the planet is left to fringe groups and monsters.

While already heavily cultivated and industrialized by the native humanoid *verthani* before the advent of interplanetary travel, Verces proves hospitable to most of the major Pact Worlds races, having gravity and atmosphere similar to that of Absalom Station, Castrovel, and Triaxus. Most of its citizens, both native born and immigrants, live in the Ring of Nations



that circles the planet along the terminator where night and day meet, relaxing in sky-gardens atop their massive urban towers or laboring in the gritty, workaday slums below where the slanted sunlight never reaches. Generally curious, egalitarian, and peaceful, the urban citizens of Verces are deeply proud of their patchwork planetary culture, which not only produced the Stewards but inspired the governing structure of the Pact Worlds. The lands outside the

Ring are generally left to automated solar and water farming, sparsely populated by denigrated groups collectively known as the Outlaw Kingdoms: notorious bands of criminals, cultists, political exiles, survivalists, and—though most may be loath to admit it—a few unjustly maligned cultures indigenous to these harsh regions.

GEOGRAPHY

Over half of Verces is dry land, as the sun-scorched Fullbright hemisphere lacks any water. While local legends often speak of ancient seas that used to occupy regions such as the Firesalt Basin and the Keppenvos Badlands, the truth is that

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the several enormous dust basins in this area never held water in their current location but were rather seas from the Ring that tectonic movement carried into Fullbright, their water boiling away as they left the temperate region. Darkside, by contrast, contains most of the planet's water and is full of half-frozen seas such as the Godswater and glaciers whose boundaries are obscured by snow and ice. Between the two, the Ring of Nations is primarily dry land punctuated by a few bodies of water.

The fact that Verces is tidally locked means that Fullbright constantly bakes under the blazing sun while Darkside is in an eternal winter. In the terminator zone, temperatures slowly shift from near freezing on the edge of Darkside to over 100° F on the edge of Fullbright. Beyond the terminator zone, temperatures become much less hospitable, requiring the use of environment suits and special precautions for most machinery. There are no seasons on Verces; instead, the permanent imbalance in temperature is the main driving force behind its weather patterns. Superheated air over Fullbright rises and expands, while the frigid air over Darkside sinks and condenses. This effect pulls heated air toward Darkside at high altitudes, where it cools, sinks, gathers moisture, and flows

back out at low altitudes toward the low-pressure Fullbright, where the cycle begins again. The wind thus constantly blows across the Ring of Nations from Darkside toward Fullbright. Storms arise erratically as a result of fluctuations in this pattern, and the terrain over which the wind passes also plays a role—the plains see windstorms that can reach tremendous strength, mountainous areas have gustier winds and greater temperature variation, and regions downwind of seas experience more rain.

Being tidally locked also means that the planet lacks a day-night cycle. Light conditions never significantly change in any particular area, other than temporarily dimming during storms. Fullbright is always blindingly bright, while Darkside is lit only by the scattered lights of civilization. The colder, dimmer edge of the terminator zone is twilight, and bright stars can be seen in the few regions away from city lights; the slow movement of these heavenly bodies is the only cue the planet gives its residents as to the passage of time. In warmer, brighter regions, the stars are invisible, blotted out by a perpetual, static sunrise. While the unchanging light is often confusing and eventually exhausting for visitors from planets with a day-night cycle, native Vercites find themselves

at home with the constant artificial lighting of starships and space stations but unnerved by the changing daylight and seasons of other planets, as they associate changes in lighting and temperature with geographical movement rather than the passage of time.

RESIDENTS

By far the most populous inhabitants of Verces are the native verthani: 8-foot-tall humanoids with protruding, mouselike black eyes and skin colors that can be shifted at will to display complex patterns. In practice, verthani forms vary significantly between individuals due not to biology but technology—augmentation is common among them and ranges in scope from minor sensory upgrades to whole-body modifications that permanently embed the subjects into starships or other control centers. Other races are frequently encountered on Verces, though, due to the planet's long history of interplanetary travel and urbane multiculturalism.

Ubiquitous throughout the Pact Worlds, humans are common on Verces, finding its dense cities comfortably reminiscent of bustling Absalom Station, or perhaps homesteading on its barely hospitable frontiers. Many are permanently employed by universities or corporations such as Ringworks or the Spellsight Cooperative, yet as Absalom Station's closest political ally, Verces sees a huge number of transient human traders and visitors as well. While the Stewards may have relocated to Absalom Station with the signing of the Pact, the organization maintains strong roots here, and many officer candidates pursue advanced training at the Steward fortress called Peacewatch.

In addition to enjoying the similarities between the planet's hotter regions and their own desert home world of Kasath, many kasathas appreciate the stability and tradition of Vercite society, particularly their governmental structures. Some even valorize the verthani's ancient caste system, to the verthani's amusement or irritation. An unusually large number of ryphorians live on the edges of the Ring, as they are well adapted to extreme climates and see a strong echo of their own home world's century-long seasons there.

When the shirrrens first entered the Pact World system, fleeing their former kindred in the Swarm, their first contact was with Captain Korma Anwero and her crew aboard the Vercite aethership *Third Chance*. An agreement was quickly reached to let the refugees land and establish a permanent colony in the Fullbright region, and today shirrrens have integrated thoroughly into all levels of Vercite society, though some of their original settlements remain almost entirely shirren in population. Many ysoki come to Verces for the technology and personal augmentation, while others simply find ample financial opportunities in the squalid warrens beneath the planet's gleaming metropolises. They are also encountered with some frequency in the Outlaw Kingdoms, whether engaging in illicit trade between the Ring and other settlements or simply exploring life on the edge. The precise size of their population remains unclear, but there have been permanent ysoki communities on Verces since even before the Gap.

The winged humanoids known as strix (see page 214) occupy Qidel, Aerie of the Sun, a tall, mysterious spire in Fullbright. Though the strix mostly keep to themselves, large delegations of them have left Qidel to integrate with mainstream Vercite society. Very few non-strix are allowed to enter the tower, and the winged humanoids speak little of their life within the structure, a structure widely believed to be reinforced by magic.

While not part of Vercite society at any level, bloodbrothers are intelligent enough—and popular enough as bogeymen in Vercite media—to warrant mention. These huge monstrosities lair in the glaciers of Darkside, with vaguely humanoid torsos atop long, millipede-like bodies. They hunt any trespassers in their frigid world but, rather than eating those they catch, place victims inside large cavities within their chests and incorporate them into their circulatory systems, gradually draining all nutrients via their still-living victims' blood over the course of months. Rumors that they were born of a spectacularly flawed attempt to adapt verthani to life on Darkside have largely been discredited, as the race is known to date back to antiquity, but such hearsay is nevertheless cited regularly in arguments against biotech of all sorts.

SOCIETY

The temperate portion of Verces is composed of 27 different countries, many of them roughly rectangular as increasingly inhospitable environs define their eastern and western borders. For millennia, these have been largely unified as the Ring of Nations, a coalition governed by a representative Grand Assembly and defended by the original cadre of Stewards—the organization of warrior-diplomats that, once dedicated to keeping the peace between Verces's nations, now serves the same function for Pact Worlds as a whole. Theoretically independent, Verces's nations nevertheless have deeply intertwined cultures, economies, and legal systems, with citizens passing unhindered between nations and outright warfare unknown for millennia.

While each nation is proud of its particular customs and sensibilities, Vercite culture has long been more homogenous than those of many other planets. Originally, this was due to the fact that the relatively narrow band of easily habitable land led to significant population density, facilitating trade and making true isolation hard to find in even the most difficult terrain. Even in preindustrial times, merchant caravans and traveling universities circled the globe in decades-long routes, transmitting goods, knowledge, and traditions as they went. The rise of modern media has continued the trend toward a uniform culture, and bullet trains now transport commuters in hours across distances that once took days, with megacities sometimes blending into one another in vast urban sprawls.

Verthani society (and Vercite society generally) is welcoming toward outsiders, though otherwise gracious locals are sometimes patronizing about the valuable institutions and knowledge their world has generously bestowed upon the Pact Worlds. As a result, the world is truly as cosmopolitan as it claims, with travelers of all races coming here to study, conduct business, or seek out Vercite expertise, generally with regard to political theory, starship mechanics, or technomancy.

Such visitors frequently marvel at the endless bustle of Verces's cities—with no day or night to divide up the time, businesses, government offices, schools, and other institutions tend to run continuously, with employees arranging their sleeping and waking hours for the convenience of their families.

Verthani culture was once defined by a rigid caste system, in which individuals chose at puberty to permanently align themselves with one of three castes: the Augmented, who embraced technological and magical modification of their bodies; the God-Vessels, who channeled the gods' power and permanently branded themselves with holy symbols; and the Pure Ones, who eschewed augmentation and divine magic alike, instead focusing on agriculture and governance. Traditionally, Augmented and God-Vessels were allowed to marry only Pure Ones in order to maintain the balance of power and build empathy between the castes. Today, the caste system has fallen by the wayside in most of the Ring, with the majority of verthani embracing augmentation to some extent, changing paths as inspiration strikes them, and marrying whomever they please. However, the Augmented caste has recently seen a rebirth as a powerful faction in wider Pact Worlds society, and its membership now transcends the verthani race to include members of any races interested in improving themselves and society through technological or magical upgrades.

Another thriving practice born of the caste system is plural marriage. In the earliest known times, plural marriage was most common in regions where the caste system's restrictions on marriage made it difficult for people to find appropriate partners. Records suggest, however, that it was also practiced as a way for people to work around the strict laws regarding marriage. These marriages varied widely in nature—in some, all members shared strong emotional and sexual bonds, while others served only to facilitate one or more otherwise illegal relationships, and many were somewhere in between. Rather than fading away with the gradual loosening of the caste system, plural marriage has become increasingly common; several of Verces's most prominent corporations, including Haruspex Interplanetary, have their roots in plural marriages between business or research collaborators who leveraged their complementary skills and mutual affections, interests, and trust to create tight-knit economic powerhouses.

Many of the most popular sports on Verces are astonishing to behold but require significant augmentation or magical ability to compete, from hyped-up metabolisms and superhuman strength to magical flight or direct neural interfaces. In vithrar drone racing, for instance, riders jack into rigs that directly link their minds to supersonic jets, navigating dangerous obstacle courses at the speed of thought, while the popular *Thaumatic Addicts* game show turns spellcasters into celebrities as they unveil never-before-seen spells in response to elaborate challenges. While the Pure Sport League represents athletes without special powers or augmentations, it finds its largest audience in the hinterlands, where clans still practice the traditional sport of eshara, in which athletes ride serpentine mounts in elaborate zone-capturing games that can last days.

Outside of sports, many pastimes also take advantage of advanced technology, with multimedia artists directly activating sensory augmentations to create abstract sense-poems or allow audience members to experience virtual-reality programs. Those who prefer more mundane fun can find limitless variety in the dance clubs, nature parks, restaurants, and theaters of the cities, or in the River of Returning Joys.

While the Ring of Nations holds all the choicest territory on Verces, not all residents of the planet recognize its authority. Often derisively called the Outlaw Kingdoms, these diverse dissidents exist on the very fringes of the planet's habitable terminator or turn to technological and magical adaptation to live in the planet's inhospitable wastes. Organized into clans, cults, and tiny unrecognized nations, these scattered stalwarts range from traditional ice fishers and desert nomads herding rock-beasts to barbaric gangs and militias who survive by raiding outlying settlements and caravans. Some actively take in exiles, fugitives, refugees, and anyone else seeking to escape life in the Ring, while others have learned to shoot trespassers on sight. The fact that many of these so-called kingdoms have their own caste systems or other wildly divergent social norms only further distances them from residents of the Ring, whom they see as soft and decadent. Most ordinary Vercites, in turn, see the Outlaw Kingdoms' residents as embarrassingly backward and inbred—though this doesn't stop them from consuming endless media about them, or from employing them for difficult or illegal activities. It's common knowledge that many of the raids and kidnappings conducted by Outlaw Kingdoms are paid for by corporations looking to hinder their rivals—especially in the solar farm and ice mine industries—but proving it can be notoriously difficult.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

While Verces is more politically stable and harmonious than most Pact Worlds, the planet still retains its share of dangerous and ungoverned regions, and the monolithic unification of the Ring of Nations can actually exacerbate violent dissent—all of which can provide lucrative business opportunities for freelance adventurers.

This strategic importance of Skydock has its drawbacks, and in recent years there have been several terrorist attacks aimed at snapping the elevator cable—with one very nearly successful. Strangely, the group claiming responsibility for the attacks has issued no demands, only identified themselves as the Ring Saints, and stated that their attacks are for the good of all Verces.

In addition to hackers with a wide variety of criminal aims, groups like the Remakers and NextStep prominently claim that "evolution doesn't need consent" and commit transformative crimes against "stock" individuals, resulting in waves of violent backlash from both the general public and the public relations assassins of the procybernetics group known as the Cypremac Collective.

Officially condemned throughout the Ring of Nations, the ultraconservative Banner of Purity movement styles itself as a response to techno-terrorist groups such as the Remakers and NextStep, instead promoting a strict adherence to the



antiquated caste system and preaching violence against the “improperly” augmented. Their tactics range from kidnapping citizens and brutally removing their augmentations to tailoring viruses that cause verthani bodies to reject augmentation altogether. While several cults of personality in Fullbright and Darkside claim to speak for the movement, operatives seem to spring up everywhere, enjoying particular support in conservative nations like Thapukar and Ulkothra.

Verces is a hotbed of espionage and outright corporate assassination, and even the most urban corporate headquarters may find itself under attack from elite mercenary teams making smash-and-grab infiltrations to steal top-secret research or prototypes. Ironically, these same teams can often be hired to reacquire stolen data or kidnapped personnel, or even enlisted by the lawful authorities to protect whistle-blowers or gain evidence of malfeasance when regulations tie official hands, making it possible for such specialists to do their business with an unusual level of openness.

Those who live on the edge of the Ring of Nations have always had to deal with bandits from the hardscrabble lands beyond, whether that's drone submersibles capturing barges on the Great Trade Sea or eshar-riding barbarians from the traditionalist Ysbo Clans charging in from the Slicksand Heights to carry away livestock. While all Ring nations maintain a certain degree of border defense, cheap land and other opportunities often incentivize citizens and corporations to settle beyond the safe zones.

A relatively recent threat—simultaneously attributed to Eox, the Banner of Purity, and a dozen other sources—is a series of outbreaks of cybernetic undeath. These appear to be the result of some unknown virus that causes augmentations to kill their hosts and reanimate the corpses, driving the new zombies to kill and infect others.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are just a few key nations and sites of interest on Verces.

Athalo

Athalo started as a nation of sailors plying the myriad fjords that gave the Riversea its name and often joining with bands of Darkside pirates to raid traders from softer nations. With the advent of spaceflight, many Athalo turned these same skills to crewing starships, yet they continue to retain a strange sense of pride when it comes to taking money from the unwary, even if this is now more often via predatory business deals rather than outright robbery. This penchant for theft is strangely balanced by a legendary generosity, and the oft-spoken Athalo adage that “those who take must also give.” Its capital city, Threq, is a mobile morass of thousands of ships and autobarges that slowly traverse the Riversea, still following the migrations of the deadly but valuable mirakos who boil the seas with their inherent magic.

Camshaft

The raiders known as the Rustrunners prowl through the Dustlands on their antique combustion vehicles attacking

any unfortunate travelers (and sometimes each other) for precious commodities such as water, food, and fuel. While the Rustrunners are an organization in only the loosest sense of the term, they do recognize a form of authority in the Wrecking Court, a council of five of the toughest raiders who live and accept tribute in a shared camp called Camshaft. Rustrunners with grievances they can't settle on their own take them in front of the Wrecking Court. These issues are usually determined by challenges (such as races or gladiatorial combat) set by the council, and many leave one of the participants dead or severely wounded, but no one has complained too much about the Court's influence.

Camshaft is divided into five sections, each run with an iron fist by a member of the Wrecking Court and inhabited by that judge's most-trusted crew. Tensions between the camps always run high, but there has never been a recorded all-out war between the factions.

Cruori Caves

The highest concentration of bloodbrothers on Verces can be found just northwest of the Great Trade Sea in a series of caves at the base of the Worldbelt Mountains. The area has been quarantined by the Vercite government for over a hundred years after an explorer named Hin Cruori stumbled upon a large migration of the blood-drinking beasts to these caves and barely escaped with her life. Scientists are unsure how many bloodbrothers exist within the caves or how they survive with no obvious source of the vital fluids they drink. Some posit there is a massive creature slumbering within the mountains and that the bloodbrothers are feasting upon it like leeches, though this theory is generally dismissed as ludicrous.

Fastness of the Ordered Mind

A cluster of linked fortress-temples, the Fastness houses the Ascetics of Nar, one of the oldest monastic societies in the Pact Worlds. Within its walls, the ice-obsessed scholars undergo bizarre rituals in order to further their mystical study of the cosmos, seeing in the crystalline structure of ice a blueprint for the inherent order of the multiverse. For some, this means using melting shards of ice to carve magical sigils into their flesh—thus supposedly taking the ice's order into themselves—while others meditate unprotected on exposed glaciers, letting the cold ravage their bodies. The most aggressive of these allow frostbite to take all of their limbs, and these honored individuals, called the Clarified, are either wired permanently into starships or joined psychically into neural networks with their cenobites in the Fastness's most secure heart, helping take the order's research of the universe to new heights.

While most Vercites find the legendary Ascetics disturbing, most are forced to admit that their suffering is voluntary, and that the scientific and occult breakthroughs that come from their prayer labs (not to mention their astonishingly proficient limbless starship pilots) present a disproportionate boon to the planet's economy. Star shamans, void mystics, and technomancers vie for educational audiences with the monks, as do warriors and assassins seeking to master the monks' seeming transcendence of pain. Many people—including the

church itself—believe the monks to be a cult of Zon-Kuthon, due to both their self-mortification and the similarity of the Clarified to the Kuthite Joyful Things—voluntary amputees in service of the Midnight Lord—yet for whatever reason the Ascetics have steadfastly denied the association.

Fullbright Mountain Ranges

The Amokishu Mountains, the Outcast Peaks, and the Sunteeth make up the largest lines of mountains in Fullbright, and while their peaks see some of the highest temperatures on the planet thanks to the thin atmosphere and lack of clouds, life can almost flourish in the scant shade they provide. Many Outlaw Kingdoms have fought bloody wars over these small respites from the sun, despite the otherwise scorching climes.

Industrial Plantations

Corporate-run “charter cities” are scattered across the cold expanse of Darkside, housing hundreds or thousands of workers responsible for maintaining the massive mining rigs and other industrial facilities whose floodlit platforms rise into the icy night. Near the Ring, many of these facilities are hyperfortified server farms taking advantage of the naturally low temperatures, or water-harvesting stations that feed the Aqueducts, massive pipelines pumping desalinated seawater across the Ring to irrigate the edge of the desert. Farther into Darkside, deep-bore mining operations employ workers in specialized mechanical suits attempting to harvest shelynium, a rare variation of water ice found only in this region. Held by theologians to be the frozen tears of the goddess Shelyn, spilled over her brother Zon-Kuthon's fall into darkness and depravity, the material exhibits a variety of bizarre magical traits, from superconduction to the power to heal a broken heart, which are still only beginning to be understood by researchers. Some of the largest of these plantations are GlaceTek's Site 37 on the edge of the Whalehook Sea and Vorceaux Inc.'s Southfield north of the Klebani Range.

Kashak

Vercas has long been seen as a bastion of technological modification, and nowhere is this truer than the Ring Nation of Kashak. From the Woven Towers in the nation's capital city of Nabokon, the Cypremacry Collective speaks not only as the national government, but also as the de facto voice of the powerful Augmented faction. Permanently wired into their buildings and effectively immortal, the members of the Collective influence policy across the Pact Worlds via insectile drones, living agents, and a powerful media arm backed by the best machine learning money can buy. As a result, Kashak is home to a variety of cutting-edge cybernetics and technomancy labs and research institutions, such as the Everlife Adaptation Corporation, Haruspex Interplanetary, and the Spelllight Cooperative. Yet being the public home of the Augmented carries risks as well, such as threats from traditionalist extremist groups like the Banner of Purity and techno-terrorists like the Remakers and NextStep, along with less ideological hackers and spies drawn by the immense amounts of wealth flowing through the nation's corporate coffers.

Lempro

Not a true Outlaw Kingdom, Lempro is instead a tiny nation separated from the Ring only by geography and a staunch refusal to join. Its inhabitants are exclusively intis—many-eyed creatures with almost skeletal frames who evolved to survive the extreme cold by forgoing blood entirely. Obsessed with spirals, fond of riddles, and prone to dispassionate violence over strange infractions, the nomadic intis survive via hunting and ice-fishing while patrolling the vast sealed fortresses they call the Cairns. Within these sacred tombs, they claim, are the last members of an extinct race that raised them to sentience long ago, held between life and death until someone can answer the Last Question. Unfortunately for researchers, attempting to study the tombs or learn the Last Question are transgressions warranting immediate execution.

Mafentra

The dangerous Slicksand Heights are inhabited by the Ysbo Clans, nomadic barbarians who ride serpentine beasts called eshars across the sands and into battle. To avoid baking in the constant sun, the Ysbo Clans stick to the shadows of the Amokishu Mountains most of the time, except when they make the occasional attack on one of the nearby Ring nations. The only permanent Ysbo settlement is the vast graveyard of Mafentra, where the nomads take their dead to be buried. The sands quickly swallow the corpses thrown within, but mystical wards mark the “tombs” of the most important Ysbo and are maintained by a group of elderly shamans who live just outside the softest areas of sand. Outsiders are strictly forbidden from approaching Mafentra, and clan riders are always a few moments away to drive off intruders.

Oasis Temples

Throughout Fullbright, explorers occasionally come across forgotten temples in tiny patches of inexplicably lush vegetation. These “Oasis Temples” are almost always in some degree of ruin, having been abandoned or actively torn apart for unknown reasons, and they are often treated as taboo by even the local Outlaw Kingdoms who forage on the oases' outskirts. In each case, the incongruous foliage and humidity is the result of a tiny planar breach to the First World, the verdant realm of the fey. Sigils carved into the walls suggest the temples were built to honor the fey deities called the Eldest, or perhaps to offer a gateway between the realms, depicting interactions between verthani and a variety of fey creatures. Each tribe has its own story for why the temples were abandoned, yet strangely, almost all speak cryptically of “the Petal War” and include the phrase “a price too high.” Nevertheless, religious scholar **Pemano Teth** (NG male verthani mystic) from Kleriark University has recently put out a call for self-styled adventurers interested in helping him study these temples, in the hope of expanding the gateways to a useful size once more, and potentially even tapping their energy to terraform Fullbright.

Obarshi

Surrounding the foot of Skydock's space elevator, high in the northern peaks of the Twilight Mountains, this nation is

effectively a giant port—one desperately fighting the slow slide into obsolescence. While the space elevator still provides cheap transportation to orbit for goods that arrive via train from all over the planet, the increasing ubiquity of spaceflight has slashed the amount of shipping crossing the nation's borders, and today many of the outlying train yards and warehouse districts are abandoned, controlled by heavily augmented street gangs who run protection rackets or simply steal incoming freight outright. In order to make up for its lost income, Obarshi has doubled down on its role as a cosmopolitan port of entry, building specialized hotels and entertainment districts catering to the tastes of nearly every known race, as well as actively courting the church of Triune to position itself as a leader in Drift tech and communications.

Qidel

Rising from the center of Fullbright, this narrow stone spire is one of Verces's oldest mysteries. In ancient times, the spire—also known as the Aerie of the Sun—was avoided by verthani due to strange metal-winged humanoids who attacked the surrounding lands from a temple-fortress at the spire's tip. No one has seen these presumably augmented raiders since the end of the Gap, and many believe they have fled or gone extinct. They have been replaced by strix, other winged humanoids who trace their lineage back to lost Golarion. They are far different from their isolationist predecessors, and many of these modern strix have peacefully integrated into the Ring of Nations. While generally happy to share their unusual customs and skills, so far the strix universally refuse—or are unable—to reveal much about life within Qidel, and very few outsiders are allowed to see what lies within the tower's interior.

River of Returning Joys

Part of every nation and yet belonging to none, the River of Returning Joys is actually a massive caravan, a rolling festival that has circled the Ring of Nations since time immemorial. While its traditional role in the facilitation of communication, trade, and understanding between far-flung nations has long since been rendered obsolete, the River is still a vital cultural touchstone, and the arrival of its snaking train of groundcars and antique carbosa-drawn wagons is one of the few recognized holidays in a world without seasons. Inside the River, attendees are dazzled by magically augmented circus performances and mind-bending illusions, while also encouraged to leave restrictive social customs and status at the gate and express themselves in a

riot of well-intentioned artistic frivolity. Commerce is forbidden within the River, the festival instead supported directly by the municipalities it passes through. Most Vercites take great pride in the tradition, yet there are also those who resent its deliberate disruption of societal mores (and power structures), question the motives of its leaders, or note the ease with which its costumed anonymity has sometimes concealed fugitives, terrorists, and other undesirables.

Shirren Colonies

When shirrrens originally arrived in the Pact Worlds system, Verces was the first planet to offer them asylum. In what may have been either miscommunication or simple shirren literalism, the shirrrens named this initial colony Sanctuary, spreading out from there through the Temora Desert to a series of satellite colonies, including Gekken, Hasetaru, Sisk, and Takoris. While many shirrrens quickly immigrated to the Ring of Nations to take advantage of the greater opportunities found here, these original shirren cities still remain densely populated bastions of shirren culture. Sanctuary houses the prestigious Kleriark University, a free-form institution catering to scholars too independent or controversial to be tolerated at more mainstream universities, while Gekken is a hub for primarily shirren mercenary organizations that specialize in extreme synchronization and coordination between members, making them terrifyingly effective on the battlefield.

Shubu

This idyllic realm of rolling hills and perfumed kurkurrek forests is widely believed to be the place where civilization first arose on Verces. Today, the nation is essentially a planetary park, its pastoral landscapes home to tastefully concealed artists' retreats, elegant towns tucked away in sleepy valleys, state-sponsored archaeological digs, and colorful river temples. Undoubtedly the most recognizable of Shubu's landmarks, however, are the Enigma Keeps, nine enormous stone fortresses preserved by magic and dating back to the planet's ancient eras. It's from these troves of knowledge and



FULLBRIGHT SHIRREN

history that scholars learn much about the verthani's earliest civilizations—and indeed this time capsule functionality appears to be part of their purpose, as huge sections of the rambling structures remain locked away behind powerful magical seals, opening and revealing their secrets only upon the correct solution to seemingly nonsensical puzzles. Yet solving the puzzles is just the beginning, as each new subterranean warren to be unlocked reveals a gauntlet of deadly traps and stasis-preserved monsters. Those university-sponsored teams who manage to make it through inevitably broadcast their exploits, with each new discovery cause for planetwide interest.

Singing Rifts

Here the furious winds come howling down off the Osho Glacier in the Worldbelt Mountains, tearing through these fingerlike ice canyons. The crevasses earn their name via the strange tunnels bored into the rifts' icy walls that channel the wind into bizarre, fluting melodies and eerie chords that can be heard miles away. Who crafted these twisting corridors remains a mystery, but many of them interconnect or turn deep into the stone beneath the ice, inhabited by bloodbrothers and other predators, scribed with strange designs from no living culture. Legends among the local tribes claim that one of the tunnels eventually leads to a chamber with ancient machinery capable of setting the planet spinning on its axis once more, but so far only shards of alien technology have ever been recovered, and even these are of dubious provenance.

Skydock

This ancient space platform dates back to long before the Gap and stays in a fixed position above the planet, tethered to the equator by the immense cable of a space elevator. Though its terrestrial anchor lands in the nation of Obarshi, the station is managed by the Grand Assembly for the good the entire Ring—an arrangement that's admittedly unpopular among both the Obarshi and residents of the station vying for self-rule.

Once, Skydock was Verces's most valuable resource, as transporting goods up the stalk of the space elevator and out of much of the planet's gravity well made spaceflight economically viable for Vercites long before other worlds achieved it. Today, conventional thrusters and antigrav technology make surface launches easy, yet Skydock still hosts Verces's most prominent shipyards—producing both legendary racing ships from brands like Terminator and Redshift Revolution and a variety of more commonplace designs for companies like Ringworks Industries—as well as the bulk of the planetary navy. The space station also remains a popular hub for ship crews on leave, and the party never stops in its entertainment districts, despite regular tensions between these tourists and resident workers.

SKYDOCK

N space station

Population 786,000 (55% verthani, 15% shirren, 10% human, 5% kasatha, 5% ysoki, 1% rypthorian, 9% other)

Government council (coalition appointed by Grand Assembly)

Qualities academic, financial center

Maximum Item Level 16th

Solar Farms

The constant scorching daylight in Fullbright means that solar power on Verces is plentiful and steady—presuming it can be transported. Numerous megacorporations like Sunnyside Inc. and Convectus Solar maintain huge banks of solar panels tended by robots and techs wearing protective suits (most of whom would rather be anywhere else). Other companies maintain automated factories just at the edge of Fullbright to take advantage of the free power pouring from the sky. Of course, the general lawlessness of Fullbright means that such corporations necessarily operate at their own risk. Conduits carrying power back to the Ring are constantly under threat from sabotage, clever siphoning by Outlaw Kingdoms tribes, and the electrovores that chew through lines in order to guzzle power, heedless of the crackling death all around them. Similarly, the installations are heavily guarded by corporate mercenaries, as capturing and ransoming the facilities is popular revenue stream for raiders, such as the spikes-and-leather-clad Rustringers who hunt the wastes of the Dustlands on antique combustion vehicles.

Thapukar and Ulkothra

Sometimes called the Twin Nations, these neighboring countries are deeply tied together by a shared conservative culture, in which the traditional caste system is still practiced and heavily enforced socially if not legally. Thapukar is traditionally agrarian, its plains long viewed as an easy target by outlaws, while Ulkothra is a mountainous region whose mines produce most of the planet's rare starmetals. Thanks to their codes against widespread augmentation, the Twin Nations turn their attention outward and excel at producing robots, powered armor, and massive mechs for both defense and industry.

Vimal

One of the larger nations on Verces, Vimal is the physical home of the Grand Assembly in the capital city of Cuvacara, as well as Peacewatch, the original stronghold of the Stewards high in the mountains of the Klebani Range. While it's unclear today exactly what wars or social upheaval led to the unification of the Ring of Nations or the creation of the Stewards, several ancient massive black obelisks in seemingly random locations around the country—as well as in both the Grand Assembly and Peacewatch—hint at the answer, bearing the inscription “From strength unity/from unity strength/thus do we stand against chaos/thus do we honor their sacrifice.” A different engraved rune of no known meaning, inert but still exuding magical auras, follows each inscription.

Whitewave

The fishing village of Whitewave has resolutely refused to join the Ring nation of Athalo since the end of the Gap, though pre-Gap records show that it was once protected by that nation's soldiers. A series of laser batteries—now maintained by skilled mechanics from the village—keep the bolder creatures and raiders at bay. Whitewave maintains its independence by processing and selling the bladders of a species of flatfish found only in this area into a powerful sedative.

CYBERBORN

+1 INT

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

You've had some form of cybernetic augmentation since you were very young, and you see further augmentation as a path to self-improvement. You might be a verthani from the Augmented caste, a steelskin orc seeking to distinguish yourself from mainstream society, or anyone else inspired by the possibilities technology offers. Either way, you strive to master your current cybernetics and seek to further upgrade yourself whenever the opportunity presents itself.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You enthusiastically study the field of cybernetics and seek to keep abreast of new applications and experimental technologies. Reduce the DCs of Engineering checks to identify cybernetic augmentations and of Life Science checks to recall knowledge about cybernetic augmentation techniques, as well as corporations and other research facilities involved in the production of and experimentation with cybernetic augmentations, by 5. Computers is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Computers checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Intelligence at character creation.

SELF-HACKER [6TH]

Your constant experimentation has blurred the lines between your body and your augmentations. Once per day as a full action, you can overclock one of your cybernetic augmentations to regain a number of Stamina Points equal to the augmentation's item level; you must have a cybernetic augmentation installed in your body to use this ability.

HARDENED SYSTEMS [12TH]

You understand the potential vulnerabilities of cybernetics and have tinkered extensively with your own to make them more resilient. The DC to hack your cybernetic augmentations via magic or technological means increases by 5, thanks to the devious security countermeasures you have added to them. Additionally, your cybernetic augmentations grant you electricity resistance 5; this resistance stacks with one other source of energy resistance.

MASTER MODDER [18TH]

You feel energized whenever you demonstrate the improved capabilities of your cybernetically enhanced body. Up to twice per day, when you have succeeded at a significant task in a way that crucially relied upon abilities granted by your cybernetics (GM's discretion), you can spend 10 minutes testing and performing system maintenance on those augmentations to regain 1 Resolve Point; this doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points.

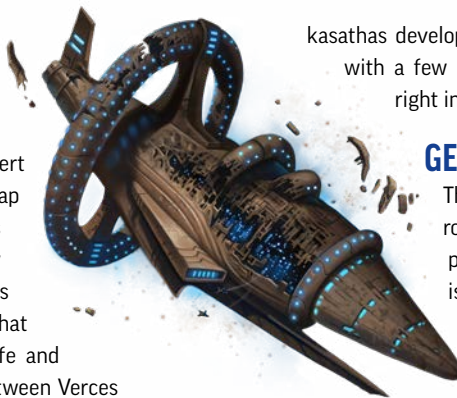




IDARI

The only ship to be recognized as a Pact World, the *Idari* serves as the de facto home world of the kasathas in this region of space. Launched from the desert planet of Kasath shortly after the Gap ended, the massive colony ship was originally intended to establish a new home on Akiton. When these kasathas arrived in the system, they saw that Akiton was already bustling with life and decided to place the *Idari* in orbit between Verces and the Diaspora as a world in its own right. The *Idari* has seen generations die and be born aboard it—and it will most likely see a multitude more.

The kasathas who remain aboard the *Idari* almost all strive to hold on to traditional kasathan values, which prioritize stability over everything else, and they look to the wisdom of the past to plot a course to the future. However, they also maintain a brisk trade with the rest of the system and good relations with the other Pact Worlds races. Visitors to the *Idari* can find the cultural atmosphere impenetrable without a local guide, as most



kasathas develop a unique set of personal traditions. But with a few pointers, most Pact Worlders learn to fit right in.

GEOGRAPHY

The *Idari* is a world inside a vast starship. The rotation of a central cylinder called the Drum provides the semblance of gravity. The Drum is approximately 2-1/2 miles long and half a mile in diameter, and tapers slightly at each end; its interior surface area is just under 4 square miles. Its surface area holds both urban centers whose towers rise toward the cylinder's center to accommodate most of the population and areas set aside for micro-ecosystems whose flora, fauna, and even atmospheres are contained by technomagical barriers. The architects of the *Idari* recognized that sustaining functional ecosystems would make maintaining the ship's environmental balance much easier—plants require less upkeep and fewer replacement parts than oxygen recyclers. The doyen of ecology and his team of Ecobalancers—high-tech park rangers—closely monitor the ship's ecosystems, armed

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

with contingencies for every conceivable imbalance drawn up during centuries of travel.

The lush forests, grasslands, and riparian biomes in the central portions of the Drum's surface hearken back to Kasath's desert oases, and provide psychological benefits for the ship's inhabitants as well as oxygen exchange. At the ends of the Drum, the floor rises up as the Drum narrows near its ends. The lower slopes, known as Fore Kasath and Aft Kasath, simulate the drier portions of Kasath's ecosystem. Farther up toward each point, the slopes rapidly become cliffs.

The Drum boasts three major bodies of water, which are used for recreation and help drive the vessel's weather system. The Sternward Reservoir and the Foreshore are busy with small boats and swimmers, while the Lake of Memories is left untouched except for the Pillar of the Homeworld, which serves as a visual reminder of what was left behind. The Drum also holds two sets of smaller ponds. The Lower Lakes are the favorite rural retreat of the kasathas; lightly forested and with numerous small lakes, the Lower Lakes are tame country, full of trails and discreet amenities as well as access points to subterranean transportation. The Upper Lakes are much wilder and more isolated, with fauna roaming freely.

The inhabited portions of the Drum's surface are divided into sectors, each of which consists of an urban center and the surrounding area. Almolar is crisscrossed by several small rivers, and its densely populated domes surrounding an open-air marketplace are reminiscent of the oasis settlements of Kasath. The domes are filled with garden-passageways, so residents of Almolar are always surrounded by lush plant life. Brispex is the spiritual center of the *Idari*, home to temples and churches of many faiths from Kasath, as well as a few newer ones. Gesilad is populated by kasathas dedicated to preserving the knowledge of their home world no matter where its children might roam. Most of the population of Gesilad lives underground, which causes this sector to look like one expansive garden on a hill punctuated by temples, reflective pools and ceremonial spaces. Situated on a highland ridge, Heravex is built in the style of one of Kasath's military installations. The land between its towers and walls is as red and dry as both Kasath and Akiton. Khovi's habitation towers are home to nearly half of the *Idari*'s population, and this sector has few of the wide vistas and lush gardens of the other sectors. However, Khovi is a vibrant center of culture and entertainment, with many corridors turned into art galleries or gaming spaces. Mesacand is an agricultural center

featuring compact, high-tech vat-farming operations. (Most of the *Idari*'s traditional and hydroponic agriculture is instead carried out in subsidiary farm pods outside the Drum.) Work at the vat farms requires more technical knowledge than sweat, but the ceremonies and traditions of kasathan subsistence farming continue, with the whole Mesacand community coming together at daybreak and dusk for elaborate communal rituals.

Running through the center of the *Idari*, a zero-gravity transport tube known as the Hub connects to the "ground" of the Drum via elevator spurs situated conveniently in all of the cities and other major areas of the vessel. The *Idari*'s bridge and its combat stations are located at the far fore of the vessel, while its engineering decks are near the now-quiet ring of reaction engines that circles the *Idari*'s aft, which in turn holds the manufacturing bays known as the Crucibles. Other areas vital to the function of *Idari* as a starship, such as its weapon mounts, are scattered about the ship and are accessible only by the crew.

The majority of the *Idari*'s interior is constantly illuminated with artificial daylight, thanks to light captured by solar collectors on the vessel's hull. The "day" is an artificial 27-hour period broken into three 9-hour shifts, each equally busy; the most important areas of the ship are maintained around the clock. Multiple airlocks are situated at either end of the ship, close to the final stops of the Hub; these airlocks include larger access points, which are required to move goods in and out of the *Idari*'s manufacturing sectors via automated transport systems.

RESIDENTS

The vast majority of residents of the *Idari* are kasathas, descendants of emigrants from a distant desert world. Other races must muddle through the resident kasathas' many cultural traditions, often with the help of a kasathan guide, but learning these traditions sometimes takes years. Kasathas prompt these outsiders to seek wisdom in their own races' ways and to build their own legacy of customs, though some outsiders find it easier to completely adopt established kasathan rites. The vessel's kasathas are mostly empathetic to the plight of newcomers trying to find a place for themselves on the planet-ship, and they go out of their way to connect with new visitors who want to share their culture.

Androids and ysoki make up the largest percentage of non-kasathan residents of the *Idari*. Androids are concentrated near the vacuum-insulated construction modules of the Crucibles, where they have proven invaluable given their ability to function without atmosphere. A sizable ysoki population has taken up residence in the utility spaces of the engineering decks. As they grow more and more familiar with the vessel's systems, the ysoki are slowly becoming increasingly integral in keeping the *Idari*'s systems up and running.

The humans who call the *Idari* home favor the more planetlike Drum areas and are largely merchants in the Outland Markets of Almolar. They tend to all move in the same circles, embracing the familiar sights of other human faces as they live in another race's home. Lashunta scholars are honored on the *Idari*, and many study in the temple complex surrounding the Sholar Adat. Many of these sages are fascinated by the connection

between kasathas and witchwyrds and spend much of their time researching ancient kasathan traditions to learn more. The few shirrrens on board are students of the philosophy of the Cycle, as its maxims about the connectedness of all things mirror the hive mind their species used to share.

IDARI

LG colony ship

Population 43,607 (93% kasatha, 7% other)

Government oligarchy (Doyenate)

Qualities bureaucratic, insular, technologically advanced

Maximum Item Level 20th

SOCIETY

Society on the *Idari* is similar to that on Kasath, though distilled by centuries in the challenging environment of the colony ship. For example, the meritocratic nature of the Doyenate, the ship's governing body, is an artifact of the journey's need for ruthless competency and replaces Kasath's more explicitly hereditary leadership systems. A majority of the *Idari*'s social institutions function in ways with no easy analogies to other races' organizations, which is a continuous source of consternation for offworlders. Most kasathas work for the ship's government in some fashion.

A representative council called the Doyenate governs the *Idari*, chosen by a uniquely kasathan combination of democracy, meritocracy, and aristocracy. Doyens are chosen through the consensus of their peers and assume their positions as previous doyens step down. Whisper campaigns are the norm, with slow and steady sub-rosa conversations eventually erupting into a public consensus. While there are formal mechanisms for power transitions, they are seldom used—when it becomes apparent that a doyen needs to be replaced, that doyen is expected to step down without causing a disturbance. This organic power dynamic is almost impenetrable to outsiders who see doyens assume and concede offices with little fanfare and even less explanation, but the system has worked for the kasathas over the centuries. The Doyenate mediates policy discussions and examines the changing opinions of the kasathas, synthesizing them into policy with minimum disruption and hard feelings. The Doyenate is a high-trust institution, with all of the players playing the long game, knowing that even if they lose on one issue, they may come out on top on another matter.

While most of the lower and middle levels of the Doyenate are made up of the kasathan governmental ideal of gradually promoted civilian bureaucrats, at the highest levels, the Doyenate operates much more like an aristocracy. Appointments are made by merit and acclaim, but somehow the highest offices, especially those of the doyens, tend to rotate through the same few families every generation. As the harsh necessities of the journey fade further into history, however, some radicals have begun to whisper that a meritocracy that looks like an aristocracy is no meritocracy at all and that serious reforms are needed, even if it means moving away from appointment by acclaim.

Some doyens hold positions of importance on the *Idari*'s crew, such as captain and chief engineer, but certain roles

have declined in significance over recent decades, leading to those doyens holding less power on the Doyenate than they did during the journey. These doyens are attempting to alter the scope of their responsibilities, and arguments about which doyen is accountable for which area of the ship have begun to hamper Doyenate meetings.

The rank-and-file crew positions are akin to clerical government positions built upon a foundation of military-style training. They range from engineers who maintain the *Idari*'s reaction drives to botanists overseeing various sections of the Drum's ecosystem. However, all crew members are ready and willing to defend the colony ship with their lives, should the need arise. Most crew members are descended from the *Idari*'s original crew, and only a select few non-kasathas have the honor of being named a full crew member.

Any Idaran—kasathan or otherwise—who has lived at least 1 year aboard the ship can train for an auxiliary crew position. Auxiliary crew members are mobilized for the defense or protection of the *Idari* in dire emergencies, but they typically have other professions, sometimes unrelated to their crew rank, and live and work alongside the vessel's civilian residents. Many kasathas are taught that becoming an auxiliary crew member is their civic duty and that the occasional training day is a small price to pay for protecting the long-term viability of their ship and the kasathan species.

Adata are the attendants of the Sholar Adat, which serves as a physical and mystical repository of all kasathas' ancestral knowledge. Through the process known as adat, a deceased kasatha's knowledge and personality are preserved via a thin slice of the brain, enabling a technomagical link to her eternal soul to be established at need. In this way, kasathas not only honor their ancestors but also retain the ability to learn from them. Much of kasathan culture on the *Idari* revolves around the Sholar Adat, where the old ways are studied and the traditions of the past are mined for new relevance. The current doyen of the adata is **Barasul Naedarin Allar** of Clan Allar (LN female kasatha mystic), who holds great sway in the Doyenate; she staunchly opposes non-kasathas becoming adata, despite pushback from her more liberal associates.

Those on the *Idari* who don't belong to the Doyenate, the crew, or the adata are mainly artists, entertainers, and merchants. They live in the *Idari*'s city-like sectors, much like the inhabitants of other planets, with the largest concentration in Khovi's warren of living spaces. These residents drive many of the *Idari*'s cultural developments. Currently, the

hottest new Idaran trends include laser sculpture—where artists place harmless laser beams in specific configurations to appear as three-dimensional images when viewed at the right angle—and an open-source virtual reality game called Chrononouance that allows developers to show players their theories of what happened during the Gap.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

To an offworlder, the *Idari* may appear to be a consensus free of dissent or a riot of individual actions; but underneath the cooperation and personal autonomy are some deep conflicts.

The main purpose of a colony ship is to colonize, and this particular fact is at the heart of a brewing conflict between three factions onboard the *Idari*. The largest group believes that the present course is best—using the *Idari* as a home world and carving out a niche in the Pact Worlds without conquest or further travel.

They argue that the kasathas have wisely and successfully updated their strategy with new information about the Pact Worlds and now pursue the course that their ancestors would have favored had they been able to foresee the current situation. A second faction believes that the mandate of the *Idari* is to colonize Akiton as its builders intended. These are generally members of the crew who believe that they owe their loyalty to Kasath as a whole, not merely the complacent splinter of kasathas here in the Pact Worlds. A third faction wants the *Idari* to power back up and move on to another suitable planet.

This group doesn't have much influence but is well represented by the doyen of exploration's staff, who hope to find an uninhabited planet so perfect that it will convince the majority to begin their journey anew. While these factions haven't come to blows over their differences of opinion, the tensions between them are rising.

Another fracture within kasathan culture revolves around allowing offworlders onto the *Idari*. Cosmopolitan kasathas wholeheartedly embrace visitors and immigrants from the other Pact Worlds, believing either that exposure to kasathan traditions will elevate the culture of outsiders or, more radically, that kasathan culture can be



BARASUL NAEDARIN ALLAR



improved through judicious infusion of the best that other cultures have to offer. However, some groups of isolationist kasathas find this to be a form of cultural contamination. These isolationists can be found everywhere—among the Doyenate, the crew, and all other walks of *Idari* society—but most don't insist on being absolutely cut off from the Pact Worlds. Instead, they generally believe that outsiders' stays should be brief and restricted to a few areas where they can't cause very much trouble or contaminate kasathas with their outlandish beliefs.

Additionally, a small contingent of kasathas is attempting to live free of technology by occupying shantytowns on the edges of the *Idari*'s cities and surviving by hunting, fishing, and foraging in the ship's more natural areas. Those who have to keep the *Idari*'s ecosystem in balance view these kasathas with a combination of awe and consternation, but they tend to leave them be. When asked why they don't just relocate to an actual planet, these kasathas claim that the *Idari* is due for a tragedy that will leave the ship bereft of power and that their skills will be necessary for the survival of all on board. The ship's security officers keep a close eye on this minor cult, as they believe the cult's supposed purpose constitutes a veiled threat.

Members of a small sect of kasathas called the Undiminished believe that the wisdom of one's entire ancestry is contained within one's brain and claim the process of *adat* represents a loss of that kasatha's ancestral knowledge. To the Undiminished, only a whole brain can possibly hold all of that expertise and insight. While a small number of these adherents are open about their beliefs and lobby for a change to *adat* through standard political channels, most operate in the shadows, stealing corpses and imbibing psychotropic drugs as they attempt to commune with freshly extracted brains.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following notable locations are found on the *Idari*.

Assembly of the Doyenate

Separate from the six sectors, the Assembly of the Doyenate stands alone in the midst of verdant fields, symbolically aloof from the population it serves. The separation is more figurative than actual—in reality, the line between the Doyenate and the people it serves is more a gradient than a sharp divide. The nature of civil authority among the kasathas is a gradual accrual of respect, responsibility, and authority. Many of the staffers who work in the Assembly of the Doyenate are so devoted to their public service careers that it no longer makes sense to maintain a second life outside the building; they instead take quarters in the residential halls there. Other government officials do their work from within their communities, coming to the Assembly only for important meetings and ceremonies.

Bridge

Staffed with only a skeleton crew the past few decades, the *Idari*'s bridge is filled with monitors and gauges that track the ship's multitude of systems and alert the crew to any malfunctions. The role of Captain **Imma Elotok Hin Xogathu** (LN female kasatha mechanic) has been largely downgraded to

be more perfunctory than when the ship was underway, but she is still in charge of the bridge crew and has a seat on the Doyenate. Captain Xogathu and her personnel are expected to step up in the case of dire emergencies and take charge of the *Idari*, going so far as to moving the vessel out of orbit and to another system if necessary. Though the ship's chief of security has the authority to fire the *Idari*'s weapons, the captain can override him if she believes that would be a step too far. Since gaining this position, Captain Xogathu has begun to feel a kind of wanderlust and might abdicate very soon.

The Complex

Separated from the bulk of Heravex but still part of its sector, the Complex is a closed installation about which little is known outside of the upper echelons of the Doyenate. Some say it's a weapons cache dating back to the *Idari*'s launch, some think it is a Doyenate bunker for emergencies, and a few even speculate it is a prison for dissident kasathas who have turned cannibalistic. The higher kasathas' rank and social standing, the less willing they are to speculate about the Complex, and the Doyenate continues to remain silent.

The Crucibles

The manufacturing heart of the *Idari* is the series of vast manufacturing bays known as the Crucibles. Located in the aft hull and fed by the enormous energies of the *Idari*'s idling drives, the Crucibles are among the most advanced manufactories in the Pact Worlds. The primary exports built here are starships, advanced electronics, and delicate nanotechnology.

Many of the Crucible modules operate in complete vacuum for structural reasons or to avoid contamination. The androids of the *Idari* prove their worth in these areas, as they are able to operate without space suits and thus remain more nimble and adaptable than their kasathan counterparts. Leading isolationists have continuously raised the alarm about outsiders being given access to the heart of the *Idari*, but their cries have fallen on deaf ears, even after it became clear that several previous android workers were agents of the Android Abolitionist Front who had found their way into employment as programmers for portions of the ship's computers.

Culinarium

The researchers of this institute are both genetic engineers and gourmet chefs, and they work at creating interesting new ingredients to grow in Mesacand's hydroponic towers. Cooking techniques such as molecular gastronomy and the even more esoteric quantum flavoring flourish in the Culinarium. Every 4 months, the Culinarium holds a massive banquet to showcase some of its new recipes and foods, and tickets to this event sell out in a matter of moments. As such, the doyen of nutrition is constantly on the lookout for counterfeit tickets, leading to a recent policy that restricts non-Idarans to attending only one such banquet per year.

Delimar Gallery

One of the larger art galleries in Khovi, the Delimar Gallery is run by **Salasari Mou Qari** of House Delimar (NG female

kasatha envoy), once a star in the art community for her daring vid collages. She now seeks out and fosters young artists of all mediums, showcasing their art in exhibits that change weekly. The gallery is the talk of the Pact Worlds' high society; some of the more interesting recent displays have included scent sculptures, highly immersive VR experiences, and portraits painted with pigments created from stardust.

Farm Pods

While the central Drum has its own vat farms and hydroponic towers, it does not come close to producing enough food for the vessel's population. A small portion of the main crew, supervising large shifts of auxiliary crew members, manages the farm pods attached to the *Idari's* outer hull. Service in the farm pods demands frequent labor far in excess of that needed for other responsibilities on the ship. The farm pods never lack for recruits, however—a “back to the vat” culture has caused many kasathas to take an active interest in being part of their own food production. The fact that farm workers get first pick of some of the pods' best foodstuffs is another significant factor, but it doesn't fully explain the zeal with which so many Idarans work these vats and hydroponics racks.

Garden of All Kasath

One section of Gesilad has a special purpose, though it may not be evident to the untutored: the Garden of All Kasath is a working garden dedicated to preserving every plant species from the kasathan home world as it existed before the journey. The master gardeners who work in this space are punctilious in making sure the plants here don't cross-pollinate with more modern cultivars—a farsighted labor intended to preserve Kasath's oasis flora for such a time as the kasathas might need to make a new desert planet bloom.

Hub Station 3

Hundreds of visitors and citizens pass daily through Hub Station 3, the busiest of the Drum's many elevator stations. Most non-kasathas head directly to the Outland Markets from here, though those wishing to see more of the ship's natural areas can step onto the paths that lead past the Lower Lakes or over to the farms of Mesacand. While all visitors are screened before entering the *Idari*, ship security has a large presence in Hub Station 3, keeping an eye out for anyone attempting to smuggle illegal goods off the ship or engaging in other suspicious activity.

Hydroponic Towers

While flat vat-farm paddies take up most of the surface area of Mesacand, much more produce is grown in hydroponic-farm towers that double as residential high-rises. Unlike the farm pods, which are mostly given over to staple crops, these towers grow a range of foodstuffs that grows ever wider as Mesacand's genetic engineers create new exotic varieties.

Jungle of Kusad

While much of the forested land of the *Idari* is lightly treed and temperate, the Jungle of Kusad is an exception. This small,

tropical rain forest is kept humid by complex machines that disperse moisture into the region's air. As the jungle is home to dangerous predators and poisonous plants, few Idarans enter unsupervised. **Nasenlir Zye Fassar** of Clan Vophious (NG male kasatha solarian) runs regular tours of the jungle for the entertainment of hundreds every year. The cost of the expedition isn't cheap and requires participants to sign liability waivers, should things go horribly awry.

Museum of Ancestral Technology

The largest building in Gesilad is the Museum of Ancestral Technology, a collection of Kasath-era tools, vehicles, and practical techniques. The museum emphasizes hands-on learning and has replicas of many of its exhibits available for use. The most eye-catching piece in the collection is no replica—a fully functional prejourney Trigrammaton fightercraft suspended from the ceiling.

New Kasath University

Located apart from the temples of Brispex, New Kasath University is a bastion of traditional kasathan educational programs. While the institution accepts members of other races for admission (with strict entrance requirements and higher tuition rates), any kasatha can take classes at this school as long as she has undertaken the yearlong walkabout known as the Tempering. Lectures here are mainly about anthropology, history (especially kasathan history), and philosophy, though an entire course readies students for becoming a member of the auxiliary crew.

Outland Markets

The area in the outskirts of Almolar is the Outland Markets, home to one of the largest concentrations of non-kasathas on the *Idari*. The area is often a riot of different species and cultures, and the modest architecture of the underlying structures is decorated heavily to catch the eye of visitors. The merchants of the Outland Markets run the gamut of Pact World species and even include some from farther afield. The most numerous, however, are humans; a thriving human community has carved a niche for itself in the neighborhood and has become tight-knit due to members' shared inability to fully understand the intricate cultural ecosystem of the *Idari's* kasathas.

Amid the marketplaces is the Outlander, a bar catering to offworlders that plays up its theme by serving the most garish cocktails from Absalom Station. Almost every human who comes to the *Idari* ends up in the Outlander eventually, either seeking it out for familiar companionship or being ushered to it by helpful kasathas. Thus, the proprietor, **Yuki Utsama** (NG female human envoy), knows most of the humans on the *Idari* by sight, and their business as well.

Outpost Umber

Though arid, the desert planet of Kasath is by no means lifeless, and the areas of Aft and Fore Kasath attempt to maintain as much of that planet's flora and fauna as possible. To this end, the Ecobalancers use a handful of stations throughout the Drum from which they can safely observe the ecosystem, keep

notes, and perform other vital duties. In addition to these tasks, the crew of Outpost Umber in Aft Kasath have begun illegally trading the narcotic flowers of a cactus called tacee with a ysoki criminal gang operating out of the ship's engineering decks. At the moment, the doyen of ecology is unaware of this smuggling operation as the kasathas involved have been storing their ill-gotten credits in secret accounts, planning to wait until the ysoki have had their fill before spending them.

Paradise Village

Several rivers and streams flowing from the sector of Heravex down to the Sternward Reservoir pass through the dome of Paradise Village in Almolar. Built around these flows are a profusion of buildings whose architecture hearkens back to Kasath, from market squares to humble dwellings, all interspersed with a profusion of kasathan flora. Paradise Village is the major urban relaxation destination for kasathas of the *Idari*—being this close to their ancestral society speaks to something deep within them in a way the habitation towers and natural preserves can't imitate. No Hub elevators connect directly to Paradise Village; it is accessible only via corridors painted with murals of Kasath landscapes.

Pillar of the Homeworld

This solemn monument stands in the middle of the Lake of Memories and can be accessed from the shore by a small bridge. It was crafted during the second century of the *Idari*'s journey by kasathas who had never set foot on Kasath and knew the planet only through vids, holopics, and stories, but now it is visited by many alien species who are a bit homesick. A powerful enchantment on the pillar causes any creature that touches it to feel a profound sense of serenity, as if that creature were standing on its favorite place on its home world.

Pradulex Monastery

Kasathas originally brought the philosophy of the Cycle to the Pact Worlds, and to this day, many kasathas are solarians. Pradulex Monastery, located on a hill just outside the sector of Gesilad, trains many solarians by focusing on the Cycle in concordance with ancient kasathan traditions. After several years of study and meditation, solarians who complete their instruction at Pradulex Monastery are some of the most contemplative and disciplined warriors in the Pact Worlds.

Proving Pits

Though kasathas use projectile and energy weapons at need, they have never allowed them to become the center of their military; most prefer melee weapons. The *Idari*'s security force looks upon physical combat prowess as a major qualification for entry and elevation in the ranks. The doyen of security is almost always among the top one percent of melee fighters, and other high ranks are filled with similarly skilled members of the martial elite. The Proving Pits provide training opportunities and diverse combat experiences kasathas might one day need to rely on. Offworlders who participate in these battles are paid handsomely for their trouble and are given full medical treatment afterward.

Reaction Drives

While they haven't been fully powered up since the *Idari* entered its current orbit, the reaction drives remain idle, rather than fully off-line—the process of completely shutting them down and firing them back up being deemed an unacceptable risk. The idling drives also serve to power the entire ship, and their internal fuel supply is potent enough to keep the ship powered for millennia at current levels of consumption.

While idle in their current configuration, the drives still require constant and delicate maintenance. In the days of the journey, hundreds of engineers were assigned to the task, but more recently, the crew found themselves stretched a little thin. Thanks to a forward-thinking outreach program, talented ysoki mechanics were headhunted into the auxiliary crew, and now entire ysoki families live in or near the ship's engineering decks. This particular state of affairs put some of the more traditionalist kasathas on edge, but the doyen of engineering regularly assures the Doyenate that the ysoki don't have unfettered access to the more sensitive systems—something he knows deep down he couldn't enforce should the ysoki decide to harm the colony ship.

Red Corridors

Even some kasathas are stifled by their tradition-laden society. During the journey, there was no outlet for malcontents and iconoclasts who couldn't follow the basic rules of kasathan society. After continued failures to rehabilitate them, the Doyenate hit upon a new solution in the form of the Red Corridors. While not completely lawless, these subterranean levels of several Khovi habitat towers are incredibly anarchic. Kasathas here can live whatever life they want, throwing even the most important kasathan values to the wind, as long as whatever trouble they cause doesn't extend into the rest of the *Idari*. The Doyenate keeps an eye on the Red Corridors, but it interferes only in situations where the anarchy threatens to spill out into Khovi. The Red Corridors have been highly effective in isolating the most unruly kasathas from the rest of the ship. They are filled with small artist collectives and communes, where the urge to innovate can be indulged without having to mind their conservative neighbors' sensibilities. But it is also home to crime lords and drug peddlers, as the spotty surveillance in the area makes criminal activity easy to conduct. While the doyen of tourism warns offworlders against visiting the Red Corridors (when forced to acknowledge their existence), many visitors make brief stops there before emerging and going about the rest of their entirely legal business.

Redoubt of Damoritosh

While Brispex houses many of the *Idari*'s temples, the Redoubt of Damoritosh can be found atop the hills of Heravex, looming above its neighboring buildings. Any who worship the Conquerer are welcome to worship here, and the Redoubt's warrior-priests also offer martial training for a small donation to the church. These sessions are often brutal, leaving participants bruised and exhausted. The warrior-priests are adept enough to avoid breaking their customers' bones, but

accidents do occur on occasion. Fortunately, the clergy can provide medical services, which they do for free to those who sparred honorably. The warrior-priests reserve the right to send away anyone who they see as too weak, though this is usually a test of that applicant's strength of will. After all, those who deserve this training wouldn't give up after a few harsh words.

Sea of Grass

Imitating the lost grasslands of the Kasath continent of Furaev, the Sea of Grass is generally avoided by modern kasathas at the behest of the small camp of technology-rejecting kasathas that call the area home. This clan lives by tending long-legged virix herds in the ancient manner of their ancestors.

Some younger kasathas belonging to this group have recently gone missing, and the elders believe they have been abducted by some of the less savory inhabitants of the nearby Red Corridors in Khovi. Not trusting the Doyenate, the distraught parents have put out a call to investigators from outside the *Idari*, hoping those who are a bit more adventurous can navigate the seedy underworld of the Red Corridors and recover their lost children.

Sholar Adat

The Sholar Adat is one of the tallest structures on the *Idari*, its central spire almost reaching the Hub. As the most important institution of kasathan cultural transmission, the Sholar Adat is where the ceremony of adat is performed and the resultant slices of brain are stored. The precise methods involved in the ritual itself and the technomagical processes used to store and access the memories of the brains are carefully guarded secrets, though that hasn't kept various corporations, cults, and other organizations from attempting to acquire them. The Sholar Adat is something of a holy place for kasathas, most of whom make pilgrimages to the temple complex to meditate, worship, study traditions of the past, or commune with their ancestors (though this requires a large expenditure of credits). Many of the temple's attendants—adata—are tasked with sorting through many of these memories at once and searching for patterns within them, which they do by hooking themselves up to a machine called the Sensorium for hours at a time. As memory sifting is a grueling, mind-bending experience, adata must take a month to recover between Sensorium shifts.

Tempering Pool

Adolescent kasathas are encouraged to participate in the Tempering, a yearlong excursion in which participants experience a multitude of other cultures in order to help develop their own personal traditions. Some kasathas continue their lives as adventurers or settle elsewhere in the galaxy, but those who return to the *Idari* to become a part of traditional kasathan culture often celebrate their homecoming with a small ceremony at this reflecting pool in Gesilad. The celebration for each kasatha is different, however, with some quietly coming alone to dip their hands in the water and others inviting friends and family to share a meal in the colorful gazebo nearby.

There is no official way to book time at the Tempering Pool, and when two ceremonies overlap, the participating kasathas often happily merge their celebrations into one.

Temple of the Black Butterfly

Worship of the Silence Between is infrequent on Kasath, but during the *Idari*'s journey, many kasathas turned to the enigmatic Black Butterfly for guidance and comfort in the face of the bleakness of the inky void outside. Today, the Temple of the Black Butterfly is home to a sect of priests known as the Stillness. The members have taken a vow of silence and train daily to hone their fighting skill to be ready in the event that evil ever attempts to breach the *Idari*'s hull.

Temple of Ibra

While the priests of Talavet work to preserve the knowledge already amassed by mortals, the priests of Ibra are dedicated to discovering secrets never before known. They believe that through careful study and mystical pattern matching, they can discern the true pattern of the universe. The least of that new knowledge, they believe, will be the location of a new home world for the kasathas. Ibran priests believe the answer lies not out in deep space but within the walls of the Drum. They propose that Ibra worked through the architects of the *Idari* to encode the location of the new home world in the very plates of the hull. If the patterns of the utility tunnels, ducts, and pipelines, and even the orientation of the buildings and the borders of the various sectors are all synthesized, the data they yield could lead the way to a new and permanent home.

Temple of Talavet

The kasathas are a traditional and retrospective people and were thus affected much more than most other races by the Gap, which they call the Time of Silence. At the Temple of Talavet, worshipers of the Storyteller grieve for the lost stories of the past that will never be told again. There is a joyous purpose to the grief, however: the priests of Talavet, who include many shirrrens among their number, work tirelessly to archive the stories and folk knowledge of every species of the Pact Worlds, dispersing the resulting compendiums across the system and beyond in an attempt to increase the knowledge that might survive any future Time of Silence.

Windcatcher Archives

This trio of mostly walled-off, connected buildings stand at the top of a small rise overlooking Gesilad. The headquarters for the Ecobalancers and the office of the doyen of ecology, **Esax Jana Meritus Rhee** of House Hadulan (LN male kasatha mystic), it contains records of all of *Idari*'s varied ecologies dating back to the vessel's launch. While the buildings look stark from the outside, the interiors are decorated with bright landscape paintings and clippings of the ship's various flora.

Lately, Doyen Rhee has been taking meetings with agents of the Xenowardens in the archives. The two groups share techniques for protecting nature and are formulating plans to seed Kasath fauna onto Akiton in order to ensure their continued existence.

TEMPERED PILGRIM +1 CHA

In their adolescence, kasathas undertake a yearlong walkabout known as the Tempering, in which they are encouraged to experience other cultures. You have examined this practice (or perhaps undergone it yourself) and have concluded that a year is not enough time to learn from the countless other civilizations. In any case, you don't need to be a kasatha to consider yourself a student of the universe. Many tempered pilgrims are also followers of the philosophy of the Cycle.

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CAST

PLAYER
OPTIONS

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You have read and studied much in your eagerness to learn about and experience new cultures, and you often know about them before you encounter them. Reduce the DC of Culture checks to recall knowledge about a culture's customs and related topics by 5. In addition, whenever you take a rank in Culture, you learn to speak and read two new languages instead of one. Culture is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Culture checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Charisma at character creation.

COMPELLING INFLUENCE [6TH]

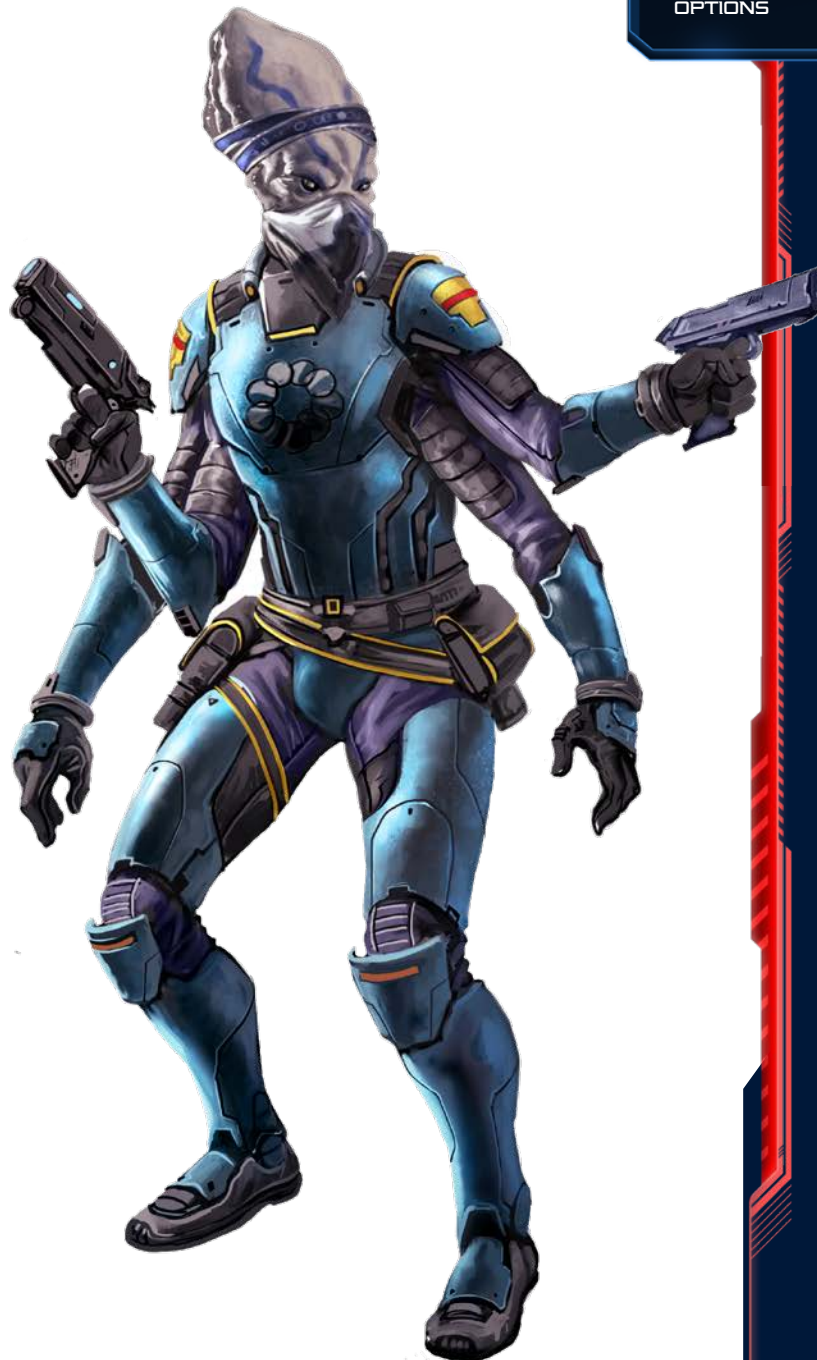
You understand a variety of social cues and are quick to take advantage of them when you interact with others. When you exceed the DC of a Diplomacy check to improve a creature's attitude by 5 or more, you need to spend only 1 extra minute interacting with the creature to improve its attitude by one additional category. In addition, you worsen a creature's attitude only if you fail the Diplomacy check to improve its attitude by 10 or more.

BREADTH OF KNOWLEDGE [12TH]

In your many travels, you have accumulated a wide base of knowledge about all manner of subjects. You can always take 10 on skill checks to recall knowledge, no matter the circumstances. In addition, once per day when attempting a skill check with a skill you have no ranks in, you can roll twice and take the better result.

DIVERSE EXPERIENCES [18TH]

The Tempering is about learning something of your own culture by experiencing others. Up to twice per day, when you participate in an established cultural tradition that takes at least 10 minutes and is significantly different from a tradition of your own culture, you can reflect on those differences to recover 1 Resolve Point. What constitutes a cultural tradition is subject to the GM's discretion, but it usually involves a formal or festive ceremony such as a dance, a feast, a parade, or even ritual meditation.





THE DIASPORA

The Diaspora is a geographically diverse region of space marked by millions of asteroids ranging in size from less than a meter across to hundreds of miles in diameter. These planetoids are scattered over so vast a region of space, however, that collisions between them are rare. The majority of the Diaspora is formed from the debris of two planets called Damiar and Iovo, which were destroyed in the primordial time prior to the Gap. Little is known of the geographical makeup of these twin worlds, but their geology is readily apparent by researching the composition of the local planetary debris.

GEOGRAPHY

Many of the Diaspora's planetoids are barren rocks with no atmosphere, parched from solar radiation and blasted by cosmic winds. Others are self-contained biospheres maintained primarily by the sarcesians, but artificial habitats such as dwarven space stations and mining colonies dot the otherwise inhospitable reaches of the Diaspora as well.

Further, due to the ancient catastrophe that destroyed Damiar and Iovo, the Diaspora is rife with supernatural phenomena that defy scientific categorization. Planar fissures, intermittently appearing clouds of energized plasma, and other unknown mysteries haunt the darkness between the Diaspora's celestial bodies. Despite the asteroid field's diverse and eclectic inhabitants, only eight percent of all planetoids in the Diaspora are known to be inhabited, leaving vast stretches of the asteroid belt both unpopulated, and in many cases, unexplored.

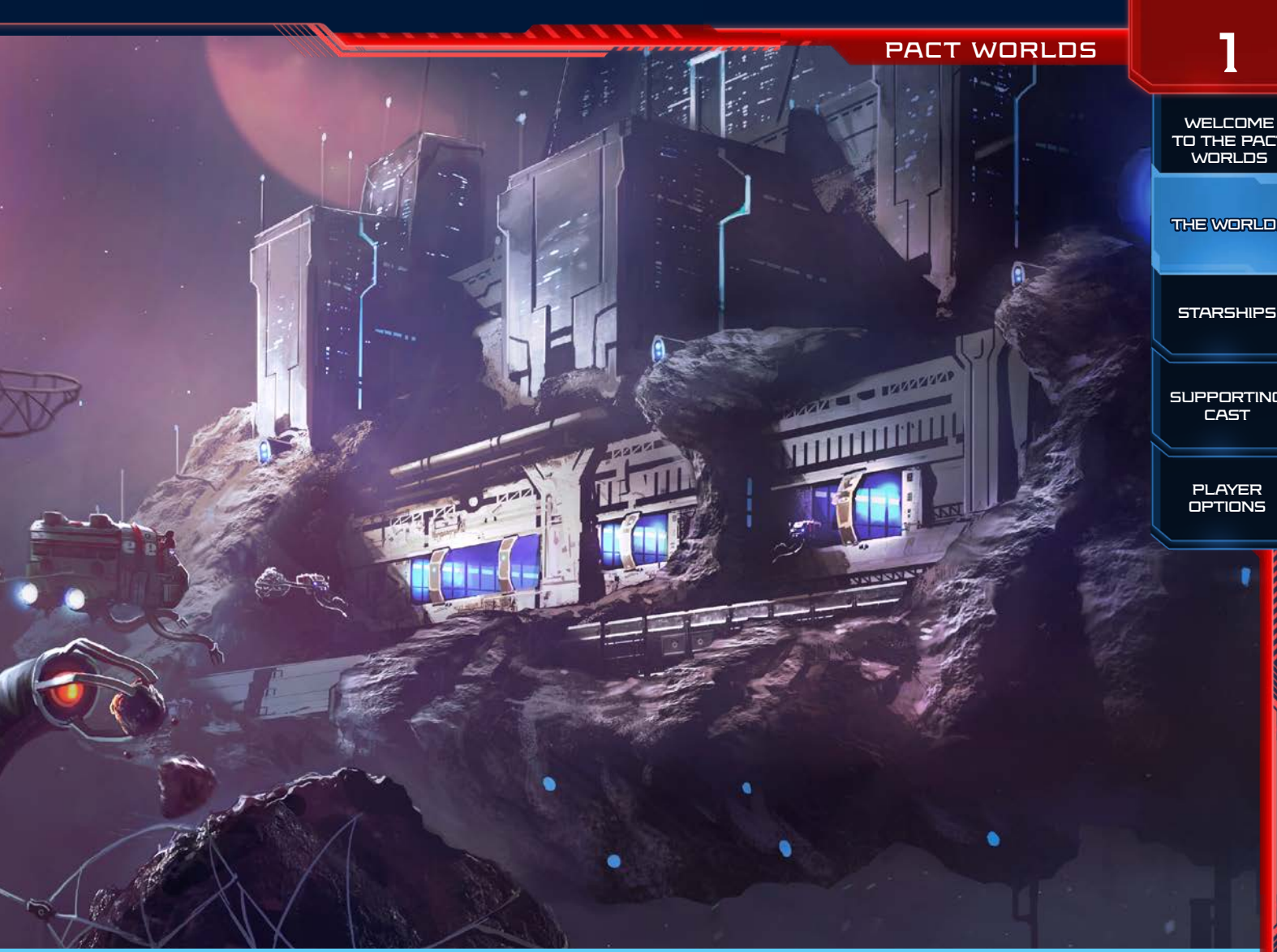
RESIDENTS

The dominant residents of the Diaspora are creatures called sarcesians, who claim to descend from the native inhabitants of Damiar and Iovo. Some dispute this claim, but in fact, the remnants of ruins from those twin worlds found scattered throughout the Diaspora clearly exhibit the presence of sarcesian culture, lending much credibility to the sarcesians' assertion of their origin.

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

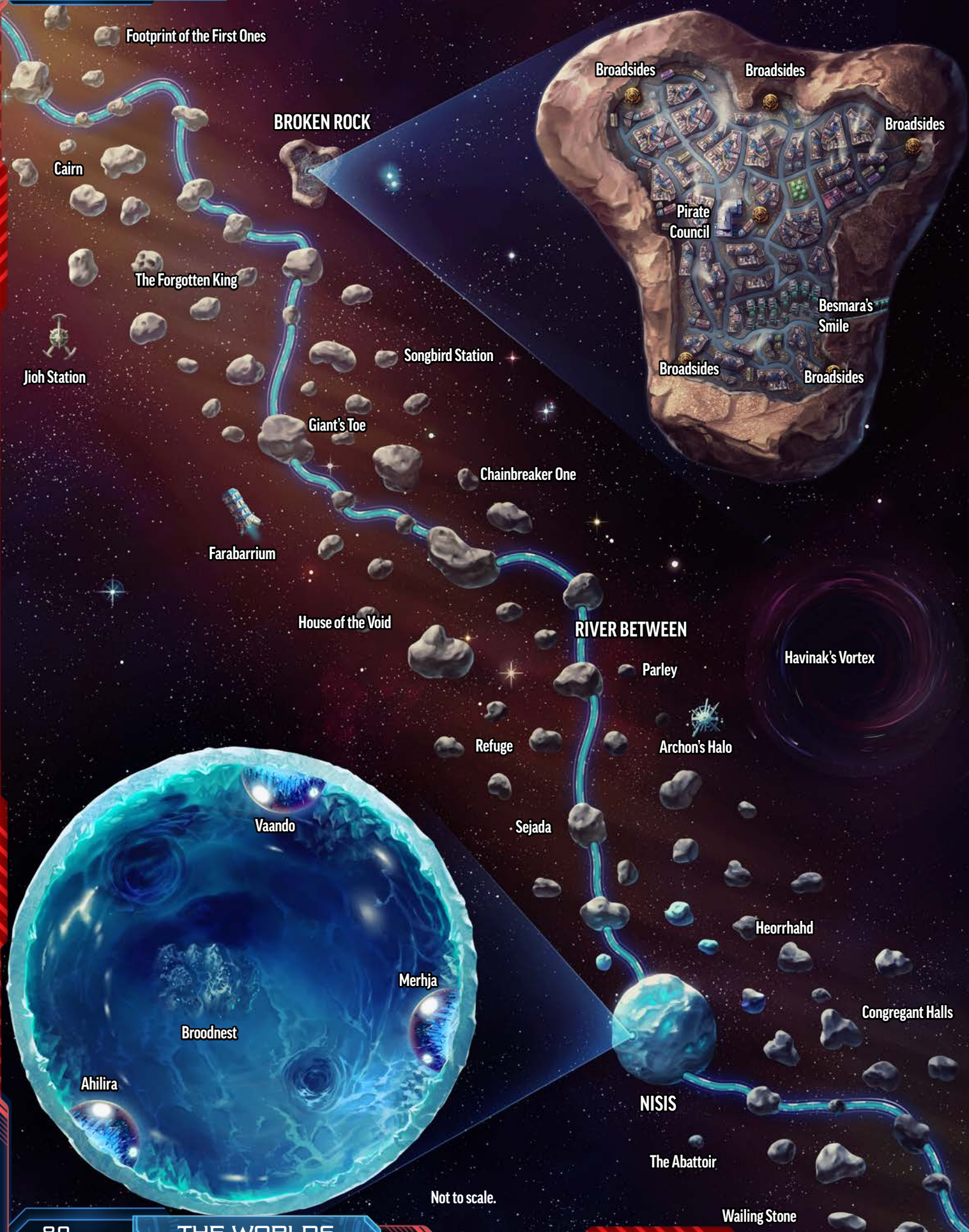
The Free Captains, a notorious collective of pirates and smugglers, are another major group within the Diaspora. While not every raider in the asteroid belt belongs to this faction, the most prosperous and notorious of pirates claim membership in the Free Captains. Individual Free Captains can be found operating throughout the Diaspora, but their power center is the secret asteroid fortress called Broken Rock (see page 82).

Beyond sarcesians and space pirates, itinerant peoples from across the Pact Worlds and beyond inhabit the Diaspora. Dwarves constitute the largest group within the Diaspora, with holdings ranging from large organized mining operations to the more traditional dwarven Star Citadels. Other inhabitants include colonists from lost Golarion seeking to settle new homes on the frontier of the system, miners hoping to find their fortunes in the asteroids, pirates and smugglers looking to maneuver outside of the eyes of law enforcement, and even extraplanar entities slipping through breaks in the walls between planes brought about by the destruction of two entire worlds. Additionally, thousands of small colonies of mercenaries, merchants, and xenobiologists are scattered across the millions of miles that the Diaspora spans.

SOCIETY

Though they are the largest population within the Diaspora, the sarcesians lack a centralized government. As a result, the Diaspora is officially classified as a Pact Worlds protectorate, and several factions of Diasporan inhabitants send non-voting representatives to the Pact Council, though the sarcesian delegation is by far the largest and loudest. The sarcesian envoys regularly petition for the Diaspora to be given full Pact World status on the Pact Council while simultaneously claiming to be the “true” representatives of all Diasporan peoples—a political stance that is a sharp contrast to that held by most sarcesians, who remain largely libertarian individuals. They care primarily for their own corners of the asteroid belt and otherwise are largely content to allow others to do as they please, as long as they do not impinge on the personal liberties of any one given sarcesian settlement. Similarly, the dwarves of the Star Citadels maintain law and order within their fortresses but remain largely indifferent to the activities of other groups, so long as they don’t come into conflict with them.

Despite being autonomous pirates, the Free Captains ultimately owe allegiance to an elected council of pirate lords, who meet regularly on Broken Rock (see page 82) to decide



overarching matters of great import to the organization and to settle large disputes between its members. However, this council doesn't concern itself with the day-to-day operations of the Free Captains, which would be a nearly impossible task for such a loose, chaotic coalition. Instead, the Free Captains have all agreed to abide by a code that guides their conduct and states protocols for raiding, capturing, and destroying other spacefaring vessels.

In the depths of the Diaspora, beyond the fringes of civilization, society begins to break down. While major corporations and private interests hold small stakes within the disparate debris field, few have enough vested interests to maintain sizable peacekeeping or law-enforcement retinues. Hellknights are sometimes dispatched to the Diaspora to hunt down lawbreakers pertinent to their specific orders, but the majority of their concerns keep them in the more civilized corners of the Pact Worlds. Independent cells of Stewards occasionally operate within the Diaspora as well, uncovering sinister plots and apprehending those who threaten the system's peace.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

With the Diaspora home to so many diverse groups, conflict is a common occurrence. Piracy is the single largest threat in the Diaspora, largely due to the presence of the Free Captains and their continuous push to keep planetary police, Hellknights, Stewards, and other extra-Diasporan law enforcement out of their "free" territory. Lesser gangs of independent criminals also wreak chaos across the Diaspora, and tales of their barbarism and terror are often conflated with stories of the Free Captains, giving all pirates—both organized and not—the same reputation among the general populace.

The sarcesians are largely content to allow outsiders to come and go through the Diaspora, but they ferociously defend their pockets of civilization, especially against any incursions into their territory by Eoxians, whom the sarcesians blame for the demise of their ancestors and ancestral home worlds. While not normally a hazard to most spacefarers, Eoxian vessels do occasionally venture into the Diaspora in search of raw minerals and supplies—including, in some grim instances, raw materials for their dark necromantic practices. The sarcesians mostly ignore such small incursions, but larger Eoxian fleets can unite the otherwise placid sarcesians, who combine their disparate ships into a militia fleet intent on driving off the emissaries of the bone sages at any cost.

The airless void between asteroids can hold its own dangers beyond enemy starships. Choirs of asterays occasionally lead vessels to crash upon the rocks and then drift playfully among the wreckage. Dreaded shantaks—intelligent winged beasts covered in slimy scales—are fiercely territorial and do not hesitate to attack anything that gets close to their lairs. Most shantaks are relentless once they begin pursuing a target, and some organizations offer bounties for shantak heads to encourage hunting and keep their rapidly expanding population in check.

A variety of other dangerous creatures make their homes on the Diaspora's asteroids and planetoids. Some, like the

massive, wormlike surnochs, burrow mindlessly through the rocks and exist only to feed, while others, including cunning void hags, seek out the seclusion offered by the Diaspora to perform astral experiments. Even an asteroid seemingly devoid of life could have a deadly virus lying dormant within an innocuous rock or an alien creature magically held in stasis in a crumbling ruin.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The Diaspora is rife with interesting and notable locations, if a crew can find them among the scattered asteroids.

The Abattoir

In the chaotic years following the Gap, a gang of space pirates broke away from the Free Captains, finding their code too restrictive. Unfortunately for them, the small asteroid they chose to use as their base was the prison of a cruel undead creature exiled by the bone sages of Eox for unremembered crimes it committed during the Gap. The foolish pirates accidentally released the creature, who quickly slaughtered them all. Only garbled transmissions of bloodcurdling screams escaped the remote asteroid, which was dubbed the Abattoir by local Diasporans and summarily quarantined. Some believe the unknown catastrophe turned its victims into undead monstrosities, and the unliving pirates are rumored to occasionally set sail from the rock to add to their burgeoning armada of the damned. As of yet, no one has been brave enough to explore the Abattoir to prove or disprove these rumors.

Archon's Halo

Archon's Halo is a militarized research station located within the accretion disc of Havinak's Vortex (see page 84). Not directly operated by any one governmental body, Archon's Halo is instead maintained by a sect of Eloritu's church called the Disciples of the Sixth Rune. This strictly lashunta sect of Eloritu's church is obsessed with studying not only Havinak's Vortex, but also the gravitational anomaly of the Phantom Rift (see page 85) and the ship graveyard of the Hum (see page 85). Disciples of the Sixth Rune have highly advanced magical and technological talents and count numerous technomancers among their number. However, the Stewards have classified the sect as a hostile organization, and most encounters with the Disciples have resulted in catastrophic losses of life.

The Disciples of the Sixth Rune has one public-facing representative, **Gaileia Seeoh** (LE female damaya lashunta envoy/technomancer), who professes to hold the title of Dark Glyph within the Way. Gaileia occasionally makes diplomatic appeals to the Pact Council when tensions between their order and the Pact Worlds grow too high. More commonly, however, Gaileia secretly entreats with gray, bulb-headed humanoids for undisclosed reasons.

Ascendant Shard

A rumored supernatural stone adrift in the Diaspora with the purported ability to grant those who discover it their hearts' desire, the Ascendant Shard is a location of myth and legend. Some scholars on Absalom Station theorize that this rock is

a fragment of the original meteorite that became the fabled *Starstone* prior to its collision with lost Golarion. Others believe the Ascendant Shard is all that remains of a dead god's heart, and those who discover it can siphon off a fragment of the deity's lingering essence. Most who have sought the shard have returned empty-handed, but a few never return at all, and there are just as many stories that those treasure seekers found all they sought and more as there are tales insisting that they died in countless horrible ways. Recently, a lone spacefarer at the helm of ship meant for a crew of a dozen or more arrived at Absalom Station, claiming to have returned from the Ascendant Shard. Before she could get close enough to dock with the station, however, her vessel mysteriously imploded, as if crushed by a giant invisible hand. Investigators found no trace of sabotage aboard the ship, and records of the vessel state that it had been missing for over 2 decades.

The Blockade

An easily avoided stretch of the Diaspora is littered with deadly weapons known as necrotic mines. These disastrous weapons are forged of seething bone, flesh, and sinew and infused with terrible volumes of negative energy. These undead mines each contain a tiny portal to the Negative Energy Plane, allowing them to reconstitute after detonation. No one is certain who created this minefield, as it was in place when the Gap ended, though most point their fingers at Eox. No one group has committed the time and resources to disarm these weapons, but the Stewards have noted that the mines seem to self-replicate. While it might take centuries for them to reach densely inhabited reaches of space, the outright destruction they could cause if and when such an event happens is unfathomable.

Broken Rock

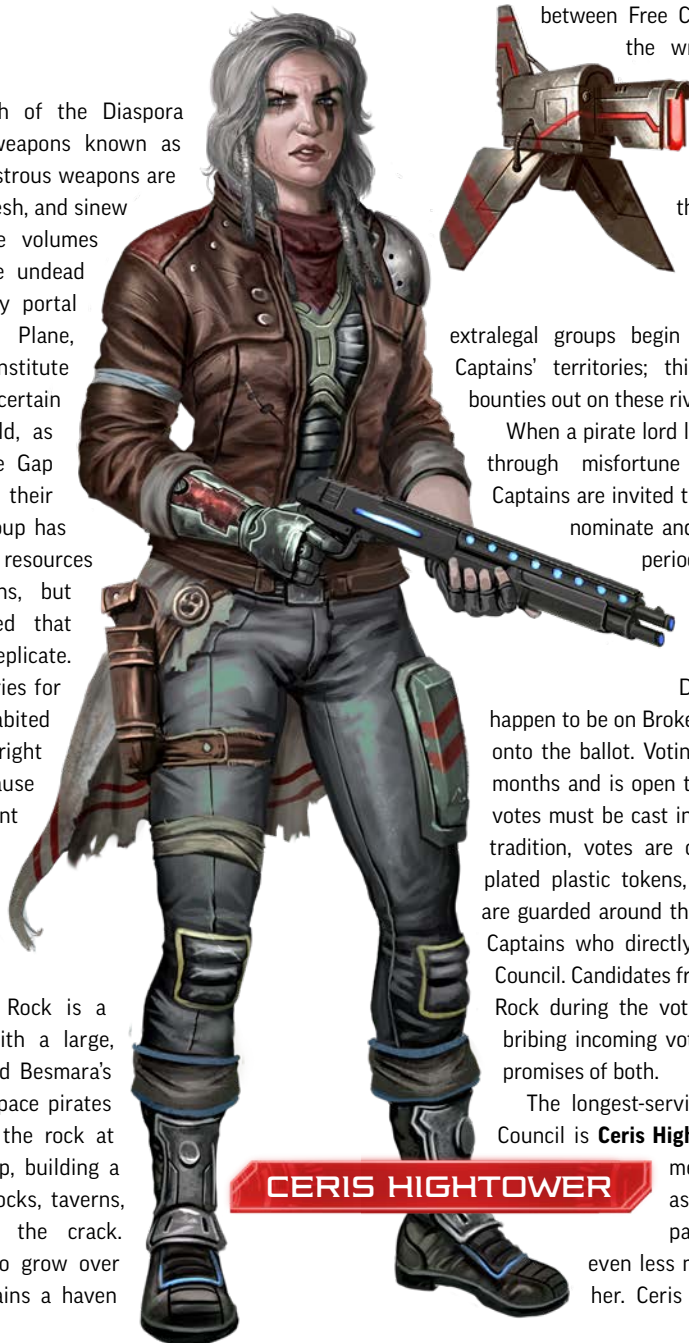
Known as the stronghold of the Free Captains of the Diaspora, Broken Rock is a 450-mile-wide asteroid with a large, prominent crevasse dubbed Besmara's Smile by the locals. The space pirates discovered and colonized the rock at some point during the Gap, building a sprawling settlement of docks, taverns, and warehouses around the crack. This city has continued to grow over the centuries, and it remains a haven

for Free Captains and their crews, offering merchants who purchase their illicit goods, mechanics who can repair their starships, and gambling halls where they can throw away their credits. To keep law-enforcement organizations such as the Hellknights and the Stewards off these ne'er-do-wells' backs, only Free Captains and those they vouch for know the exact location of Broken Rock. In the event of an attack, an array of automated capital laser weapons known collectively as the Broadside defends the asteroid.

In addition to being a guaranteed safe harbor for the Free Captains, Broken Rock is also where the Pirate Council—the organization's elected leadership—meets to discuss matters of import and occasionally modify the Free Captains' pirate code. The Pirate Council determines which megacorporations' vessels are off-limits (thanks to exorbitant protection fees) and which are viable targets. They also settle disputes between Free Captains, usually decreeing the wronged party is owed a monetary sum from the party at fault; rarely do these disagreements end in formal duels to the death anymore. Finally, the council resolves what to do when marauders, smugglers, and other extralegal groups begin to infringe on the Free Captains' territories; this often involves putting bounties out on these rival factions.

When a pirate lord leaves the council—whether through misfortune or retirement—all Free Captains are invited to return to Broken Rock to nominate and elect a replacement. This period of open application lasts for 1 month, which usually ensures that only the pirates with the fastest Drift engines and those who happen to be on Broken Rock at the time make it onto the ballot. Voting lasts for an additional 3 months and is open to all Free Captains, but all votes must be cast in person. Following ancient tradition, votes are cast manually using gold-plated plastic tokens, and the collected tokens are guarded around the clock by a roster of Free Captains who directly serve the current Pirate Council. Candidates frequently remain on Broken Rock during the voting period, many of them bribing incoming voters with drinks, goods, or promises of both.

The longest-serving member of the Pirate Council is **Ceris Hightower** (CN female human mechanic/soldier), a tough-as-nails engineer with little patience for tomfoolery and even less mercy for those who cross her. Ceris was born on Verces, the



CERIS HIGHTOWER

daughter of a climate scientist and a factory worker (now both deceased). She lived a solidly middle-class early life, occasionally trekking out to relatively safe areas of Fullbright and Darkside for tastes of adventure with her friends. When she came of age, she sought out the Vercite citadel of the Hellknight Order of the Furnace and enlisted as a trainee. Ceris spent several months in hard training, but she couldn't master the level of discipline and respect for the chain of command required to become a Hellknight. Instead, she used the martial skills she learned to good effect in several mercenary groups and eventually joined up with the Free Captains. She worked her way up to the rank of pirate lord, aided by her strength and willpower, before becoming a member of the Pirate Council soon thereafter. She is well respected, if not exactly liked, by the majority of the other Free Captains, and she has a reputation for getting things done. Now at the age of 88, Ceris has resorted to cybernetics to extend her life so that she can continue leading the Free Captains. But as she continues to advance in age, other Free Captains are maneuvering to sweep in and fill the power vacuum when she passes on, or to nudge that event to take place sooner rather than later.

BROKEN ROCK

CN asteroid base

Population 45,600 (41% human, 23% android, 22% ysoki, 14% other)

Government council (Pirate Council)

Qualities insular, notorious, secret location

Maximum Item Level 15th

QUALITIES

Secret Location The settlement is concealed or hidden in some way, or its precise location is a closely guarded secret.

Cairn

After it broke away from the regular Eoxian navy, the Corpse Fleet sought out places where it could hide and build up its forces before striking against the living creatures of the Pact Worlds. One of the group's earliest bases, this roughly cube-shaped rock is located far from other inhabited asteroids and provided the Corpse Fleet enough secrecy to organize, but they couldn't stay here for long, knowing the Stewards or another peacekeeping force would find them soon enough. The surface of the now-abandoned rock is littered with scraps of Corpse Fleet equipment, though anything obviously valuable was looted long ago. Rumors hold, however, that the place is haunted, possibly by incorporeal Corpse Fleet agents who were left behind to guard a secret weapon.

Chainbreaker One

This seemingly unassuming asteroid is only a mile in diameter, but it holds a large secret—it is the headquarters for the Android Abolitionist Front (AAF), a coalition of agents who work tirelessly to ensure freedom for all synthetic sentient beings. The base is inside the asteroid's hollow interior, its entrance cloaked with holographic projectors and its energy signatures dampened by well-placed signal maskers. Chainbreaker One's only permanent residents are the AAF's leadership (a shadowy council known as

Ex Novo) and a small contingent of android and robot guards and mechanics. Ex Novo's current composition is widely unknown, even to the majority of the AAF's membership, though rumors hold that it consists mainly of androids and a sentient AI program. Within Chainbreaker One, Ex Novo coordinates the AAF's actions, chooses the group's next targets, and generates the pirate broadcasts that make sure the general public remains sympathetic to their cause. The asteroid's exact coordinates and security codes are given only to the organization's most trusted agents. A series of small nuclear warheads are embedded within the asteroid's crust, primed to be detonated at a moment's notice should the base's secrecy ever be compromised.

Congregant Halls

A mysterious rock riddled with passageways and corridors of all shapes and sizes formerly called the Vacant Halls, Congregant Halls is now a buzzing hive of activity. Shortly after the end of the Gap, an Aballonian anacite named Intricate-Gray-Cube learned of the Vacant Halls and became convinced that the asteroid's random twists, turns, and dead ends served a purpose. It traveled to the Diaspora with a few other interested anacites and established a base within one of the asteroid's larger chambers. Over 2 centuries later, Intricate-Gray-Cube and its comrades have still not cracked the asteroid's secrets. They have filled the halls with thousands of drones, each examining and analyzing imperfections in the stone, no matter how small. Complicating the anacites' mission is that every few months, corridors seem to appear, move, or vanish with no rhyme or reason. Some think Intricate-Gray-Cube has been driven insane by its obsession, but that hasn't stopped other anacites from occasionally lending their own processing power to studying the asteroid's secrets.

EC-40

Pilots are warned to avoid the region of space around the ice-horacalcum comet designated EC-40, which seems to move at a speed slower than such a celestial body should be capable of. Astronomers on Verces originally discovered the comet long before the Gap and sent an expedition aboard the aethership *Gloaming* to investigate. The crew of the *Gloaming* learned that the comet was relatively close to Damiar at the moment of the planet's destruction, and the energy of that catastrophe interacted with the comet's composition to trap that moment in time. Those who approach within a few hundred miles of the comet become trapped in a time loop that has been repeating for millennia, in which they witness Damiar's destruction play out over and over again—a fate that befell the *Gloaming* and its crew. Since the Gap, other vessels have attempted to learn more about EC-40, only to become trapped in the anomaly themselves. Strangely, however, sensors can detect only one ship near the comet, which most assume to be the *Gloaming*; the fate of the later vessels that approached EC-40 remains a mystery.

Farabarrium

The ysoki trade frigate *Farabarrium* is a salvaged ATech Immortal left adrift by the Knights of Golarion after a brutal

confrontation with an Eoxian cruiser several years ago. A group of ysoki salvagers called the Shirsask Kaia laid claim to the damaged ship and were able to bring the vessel back online within 2 years' time. With the significant firepower and space provided by the *Farabarrium*, the Shirsask Kaia decided to put down roots in the Diaspora and operate as a trade hub and salvage way station. The Shirsask Kaia were quick to negotiate a lucrative protection deal with the Free Captains in return for offering priority maintenance for all Free Captain vessels. Now the *Farabarrium* is a well-known hot spot of trade activity within the Diaspora and a noteworthy pit stop for travelers scouring the forgotten reaches of the asteroid belt.

Footprint of the First Ones

The shattered remnants of one of Iovo's moons drifts on an erratic elliptical orbit through the Diaspora, often veering wildly away from the typical path of the Diaspora's debris before rejoining it centuries later. This irregular orbit is due to the fact that the moon fragments frequently pass through the perimeter of the Phantom Rift (see page 85), which scatters the moon fragments' orbital trajectories. A still-functional and highly advanced robotics facility is nestled within an impact crater on one of the largest fragments of the sundered moon. Dubbed the Footprint of the First Ones, this sealed facility is believed to be similar to the automated machine forges found on Aballon, except that the facility remains tightly sealed from the outside. The material of the facility is an unknown alloy with a chemical composition similar to both adamantine and mithral. Demolished solar collectors on the moon's surface and scans of the structure indicate that the facility is running on reserve power, but those inside the building have yet to request any assistance, even from the anacites of Aballon.

The Forgotten King

One of the more curious "asteroids" found in the Diaspora, the Forgotten King appears to be a human skull 12 miles in diameter. Appearances notwithstanding, this morbid artifact is crafted not out of bone, but of an ancient and sturdy type of ceramic. Hundreds of thousands of lines of verse in some unknown language that resists magical translation and comprehension cover the interior of the skull. A massive joint effort between several institutes of learning to study this epic poem has so far gleaned only that the text refers to a long-lost monarch and his enormous wealth. This particular piece of knowledge has set the imaginations of many aflame, all trying to discover exactly what this treasure is and where it is located. Countless charlatans and con artists across the Pact Worlds offer phony translations of the poem to gullible souls for the right price, or claim they know where to find the Forgotten King's hoard but need a few thousand credits to buy supplies for the journey. It is likely that the translation efforts will eventually come to fruition, though what they might uncover is anyone's guess.

Giant's Toe

From afar, this hunk of rock gives the appearance of some giant humanoid's big toe, and would be otherwise unremarkable

save for two things. The first is a fossilized colony of a never-before-catalogued species of foot-long nematodes. The second is that divination spells cast while on the asteroid cause an eye-shaped rune to glow on the caster's forehead for a short period of time. Some claim to have had prophetic dreams after the rune has faded. Whether these two aspects are related has yet to be established.

Havinak's Vortex

One of the most dangerous hazards of the Diaspora is the gravitational phenomenon known as Havinak's Vortex. The vortex is a roughly planet-sized gravity well that sporadically appears twice annually for anywhere between 10 to 30 minutes, funneling all matter within a 10,000-mile radius into the Maelstrom. The vortex gets its name from Azirian Havinak, the human astronomer, explorer, and devotee of Ibra who was the first to enter the rift and return. He spoke of a bizarre space station forged of raw willpower and inhabited by proteans, the Maelstrom's chaos-living inhabitants. Havinak described the space station as an amalgam of structures, building styles, and construction materials like an architectural teratoma. Since his return, Havinak and a few brave others have made several trips into the vortex, returning with increasingly disturbing stories of the proteans' activities on their space station, as well as strange relics from the Maelstrom. However, since Havinak failed to come back from his most recent trip a decade ago, no one has been bold enough to travel into the rift.

Heorrhahd

The first Star Citadel of the dwarves, Heorrhahd was founded in the years shortly after the Gap, following the destruction of the dwarven mining colony Arngrannam in the chaotic conflicts of the era. The founders of Heorrhahd began by carving a gigantic dwarven face into a suitable asteroid and then attached powerful engines to the rock, allowing them to situate it within the Diaspora at a location of their choosing. Thousands of dwarves volunteered to carve a subterranean city within the asteroid, attempting to mimic the interiors of the long-lost Sky Citadels of ancient dwarven history. Modern airlocks seal off the Star Citadel's interior from the vacuum of space, but most of the tunnels and structures within are fashioned of stone rather than plastic, metal, or other advanced materials.

Heorrhahd represents a focus on certain dwarven traditions in the face of the existential crisis posed by the Gap. The Star Citadel is governed by a council of Rivethun—members of an ancient order of dwarven animists who treat with spirits for knowledge and power—who use communication, empathy, and insight to better understand the dwarves' position and role in the universe and who see it as their duty to use that knowledge to carry their people into a new golden age. Many of Heorrhahd's dwarven residents are adept at channeling benevolent spirits, often of their ancestors, after prolonged periods of meditation on their past travails. Outsiders are welcome to visit Heorrhahd, but non-dwarves are usually permitted only temporary stays within the citadel without special dispensation.

The Star Citadel is also the headquarters to a large number of dwarven mining companies—most notably Bolka Mining Consortium and Stonequarry Industries—who operate mostly within the Diaspora, tunneling into asteroids in search of valuable resources or lost artifacts. As such, the spaceways surrounding Heorrhahd are always under threat of pirate attacks. To combat this threat, the dwarves maintain a small navy usually capable of fending off marauders who would attempt to ambush trade ships and frigates loaded with newly mined treasures.

House of the Void

The House of the Void is a squat, sprawling monastery-fortress that is disproportionately large in comparison to the small asteroid it sits on. It is home to an order known as the Acolytes of the Void, ascetics and anchorites who all wear perfectly black robes that conceal their species (though they do seem humanoid) and speak only through vocoders, giving all acolytes the same mechanical voice. The Acolytes supposedly contemplate the void of space in search of enlightenment, but their true philosophy remains something of a mystery to people outside the order. In fact, the Acolytes of the Void are a sect devoted to the Empty Traveler, one of the many forms of the Outer God Nyarlathotep. Dedicated to bringing about the return of the Great Old Ones, the Acolytes often appear unexpectedly at scenes of great chaos in the Pact Worlds, as if to bear witness to these events—or possibly to encourage them. Strangely, despite their worship of the Crawling Chaos, no Acolyte of the Void has ever been seen anywhere on Aucturn.

The Hum

Beyond the inhabited reaches of the Diaspora is a sprawling graveyard of starships that dates back farther than anyone can tell. When a vessel comes within a thousand miles of the graveyard, its hull is permeated with a subsonic hum that gradually becomes audible to most species. Creatures exposed to this subtle noise become increasingly erratic and prone to tempestuous emotional outbursts. Worse, astrogation is negatively impacted by the hum, causing sensors to return false positive readings of incoming objects. By the time the hum is audible, most ships begin to vibrate sympathetically with the noise and, unless the crew is able to divert course, soon suffer total loss of hull integrity as their ship literally vibrates into pieces. Exploration of the Hum has been a fruitless endeavor, as even those ships whose hulls survive the noise still suffer catastrophic crew loss from the psychological breaks brought on by the subsonic hum. At present, the source of the Hum is unknown.

Jioh Station

The Veskarian navy maintains this outpost within the Diaspora in a fixed orbit synchronized with that of Verces. More than 3,000 vesk soldiers and a small fleet of short-range exploratory vessels are posted to Jioh Station, and a Veskarian battle cruiser brings supplies and a new garrison every 72 weeks. In spite of numerous attempts by the Free Captains

to oust them, the vesk remain entrenched in their outpost, though their reasons for doing so are not entirely understood. Vesk tactical procedures would not classify the location of Jioh Station as a valuable asset. Whatever the vesk are doing on Jioh Station is a well-kept secret, even within the Veskarium.

Nisis

The 600-mile-wide ice-crust planetoid called Nisis is home to several colonies of sarcesians who inhabit underwater dome settlements attached to the underside of the ice. Outfitted with hydrogen extraction plants and gas turbines, the largest of these domes are Ahilira, Merhja, and Vaando. The residents of all three settlements must always be ready to desert their homes and hole up in the dozens of small bunkers on Nisis's surface should the aquatic predators within the planetoid's inner sea decide to attack the domes en masse. Xenobiologists suggest that the gigantic coral reef floating within the planet, dubbed the Broodnest, is the main source of this hostile life, though no one has gotten close enough to the miles-wide reef to fully explore it and confirm these theories. Nisis's waters are also renowned for being the starting point of a cosmic phenomenon called the River Between (see page 86), the serpentine river of liquid water that snakes its way through the Diaspora. When the waters of the River Between recently turned dark, so too did much of Nisis's internal ocean, a disturbing fact whose discovery coincides with the revelation that the planetoid's ice crust has also begun to thicken, slowly increasing Nisis's size.

Parley

Not much more than 2 miles in diameter, this strange site is entirely spherical and covered in alien runes carved into its surface. Though it can't be quite proven, these runes are thought to be the source of Parley's unusual power: no one within several miles of the asteroid can speak a deliberate and intentional lie (as if under the effects of a *zone of truth* spell). Due to this, the space around Parley is often used among the Free Captains to negotiate alliances and contracts. Expeditions of arcane scholars who come to study this asteroid often fall to in-fighting as prolonged exposure to the magical emanation causes people to blurt out unspoken truths.

Phantom Rift

Close to the orbital path of the Diaspora lies a point in space with a fixed distance from the sun. This stellar anomaly looks similar to a heat mirage against the blackness of space, distorting the appearance of any stellar bodies it occludes. The Phantom Rift measures roughly 7,000 miles across and is generally spherical, roughly the size of a planet. Vessels that pass through this phenomenon suffer no ill effects, though passengers sometimes complain of brief bouts of dizziness. Some scholars believe that the Phantom Rift is the afterimage of a gigantic portal to another dimension, through which a mysterious progenitor race traveled millennia ago. According to the theories, these aliens supposedly seeded the galaxy with the first samples of life and then returned to their own time and space. A handful of scientists, many

considered unbalanced by their peers, study the anomaly in the hope of opening the portal once again and contacting this unknown race.

Refuge

Recently, a group of androids calling themselves the Refugists have staked claims on a cluster of uninhabited asteroids within the Diaspora. Hoping to build an android home world, they have begun using tractor beams and artificial gravity generators to pull these asteroids together into a single mass. The new planetoid is not yet big enough to rival the Diaspora's other larger celestial bodies, but only time will tell if the androids will succeed at their efforts. The Free Captains have made a few overtures toward offering a protection deal to the Refugists, but they have been soundly rebuffed each time they approach, as if the androids don't want them to get too close to the project. The Refugists have also been actively recruiting more androids to their cause but insist that new recruits leave their previous lives completely behind.

The River Between

The River Between winds through the Diaspora, a rushing waterway contained within a cylindrical containment field of unknown origin. Some legends claim that the River Between was constructed shortly after the destruction of Damiar and Iovo by beings from the Plane of Water in an attempt to lay claim to the newly formed asteroid field, while others believe the survivors of that catastrophe (who eventually became the sarcesians) built the waterway gradually over centuries, hoping to reclaim their lost worlds. Either way, the River Between was used as a safe means of travel between certain asteroids until the advent of interplanetary travel. Some still used the river for a while thereafter, as building a boat is considerably cheaper than purchasing a starship. However, in the years since the Gap, the waters have turned dark and fetid, and sailors have begun to go missing on their voyages. A few survivors have returned to sarcesian crèche worlds from the River Between, claiming they were attacked from below by terrible serpents. Sarcesians have petitioned the Stewards to do something about these "diaspora wyrms," which have also been spotted on the River Between's source world of Nisis (see page 85), but to date, the Stewards' fact-finding missions have met with little success and they have found no sign of these mysterious creatures.

Sejada

The largest of the sarcesian crèche worlds, Sejada is the de facto sarcesian capital, where the few decisions that affect all sarcesians are made in large, town-hall-like meetings that any sarcesian can attend to vote on the presented referenda. These forums are held at irregular intervals, sometimes with little to no notice, but most sarcesians don't seem to mind. Sejada also hosts the births, upbringing, and education of thousands of sarcesians a year. Sarcesians take a very hands-off approach to their own families, leaving children in the care of trained sarcesian crèche-minders, who are often assisted by robotic nannies. Some sarcesian parents remain on the crèche world

to assist in their children's training for a few years, but most return to their own lives, seeing their offspring only once they are full adults. Outsiders might see Sejada as a cold, unfeeling place, but the children there are happy, allowed to grow and learn at their own pace until they are old enough to start studying a trade. The early stages of apprenticeship usually occur on this planetoid, but some masters leave the world with their charges after as short a time as a year, giving the young sarcesians hands-on training in fields such as mercenary work, piloting, and trading.

Songbird Station

Situated on an asteroid just half a mile in diameter, the temple and performing arts center named Songbird Station resembles a jewel-studded stone set against a field of black, and the gleaming, opalescent structure is further adorned with rainbow streamers of energy that radiate outward from the station's perimeter like banners flying in the wind. Founded a few decades ago, Songbird Station is a temple-school dedicated to Shelyn, the goddess of art, beauty, and music. Her priests instruct the faithful and visitors alike in a myriad of art forms both practical and therapeutic, making Songbird Station a bastion of creative endeavors in an otherwise remote and hostile corner of the Diaspora. Additionally, the station's concert hall frequently hosts massively famous entertainers from across the Pact Worlds, including sugar-pop sensation Strawberry Machine Cake and Aballonian euphonics composer Zed-29. Performances at Songbird Station are viewed as both reverent worship of Shelyn and a beacon of hope for the Diaspora's residents. The main organizer of Songbird Station, **Nairon Shalorrh** (CG male kasatha mystic), believes that if worshipers create enough art and beauty and spread that beauty to envelop all the known worlds, Shelyn's voice will ring out loud and clear for all the galaxy's people to hear, perhaps even bringing peace to all worlds.

Wailing Stone

The asteroid known as the Wailing Stone has been abandoned since some time during the Gap. Miles of corridors are drilled into this rock (which presumably originates from Damiar or Iovo's inner mantle). Evidence suggests that the area once served as a prison during the Gap, and that its origins may stretch back even further in time. No trace of the Wailing Stone's residents have ever been found, and attempts at recolonization have always resulted in the disappearance of the settlers, leaving behind nothing but enigmatic references to something called "the Sign." Recent expeditions to study this phenomenon have reported terrible nightmares afflicting the expeditions' members, as well as the appearance of hostile, flayed creatures wearing tattered yellow rags. For the time being, the Stewards have quarantined the Wailing Stone and placed a hazard beacon nearby to warn away approaching ships, but some representatives to the Pact Council have put forth proposals to once more utilize the asteroid as a prison—or execution site—for the Pact Worlds' most dangerous criminals. These motions are widely considered foolish and have gained little traction.

SPACE PIRATE

+1 DEX

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You have a distinct advantage over others when operating in the shadows of society. Reduce the DC of Culture checks to recall knowledge about black market locations, known smugglers, and notorious space pirates by 5. Bluff is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to your Bluff checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Dexterity at character creation.

SMUGGLER [6TH]

You know how and when to move illicit goods and how to get in and out of tight situations that might spell doom for a less seasoned smuggler. Once per day when you attempt a Stealth check to hide, you can roll twice and take the higher result. Additionally, whenever someone attempts a Perception check to search your body for objects you have hidden on your person using the hide object task of the Sleight of Hand skill, the searcher receives only a +2 bonus to the check, instead of a +4 bonus.

SWORD AND
PISTOL [12TH]

You are well trained in a traditional piratical fighting style dating as far back as the antiquated ages before the Gap. When you are wielding at least one one-handed melee weapon and at least one small arm, you can make two attacks against the same target with one of each type of weapon as a standard action. Each attack takes the same -4 penalty as a full attack action.

BESMARA'S BLESSING [18TH]

The pirate goddess Besmara blesses your thieving and marauding ways, even if you don't worship her directly. Up to twice per day, when you successfully ambush and defeat a significant foe or group of foes in tactical combat or starship combat in order to take any goods and valuables they are transporting (or simply have in their possession), you recover 1 Resolve Point.





Eox

Eox is among the most mysterious of the Pact Worlds, and it is likely the member planet most feared by citizens of the rest of the system. It is a dead world, killed long before the Gap in what is believed to have been fallout from an interplanetary war fought when most of the Pact Worlds' idea of advanced technology was limited to metallurgy and printing presses. Most of Eox's inhabitants are undead, with the most powerful—the bone sages—serving as regional lords with near-absolute local authority. These centuries-old masters of magic and technology brook no interference with their plans, but they carefully keep their experiments and long-term schemes within the bounds of what the Absalom Pact permits member worlds to perform in their own territories... or at least, no outsiders have successfully proven otherwise.

GEOGRAPHY

What was once a verdant planet with an ecosystem capable of sustaining life is now nothing more than a charred husk with a thin, poisonous atmosphere awash with radiation. With no



remaining seas and little of the planet's history surviving to the modern era, the massive mesa of Remembrance Rock serves as a planetary monument of all that Eox has lost.

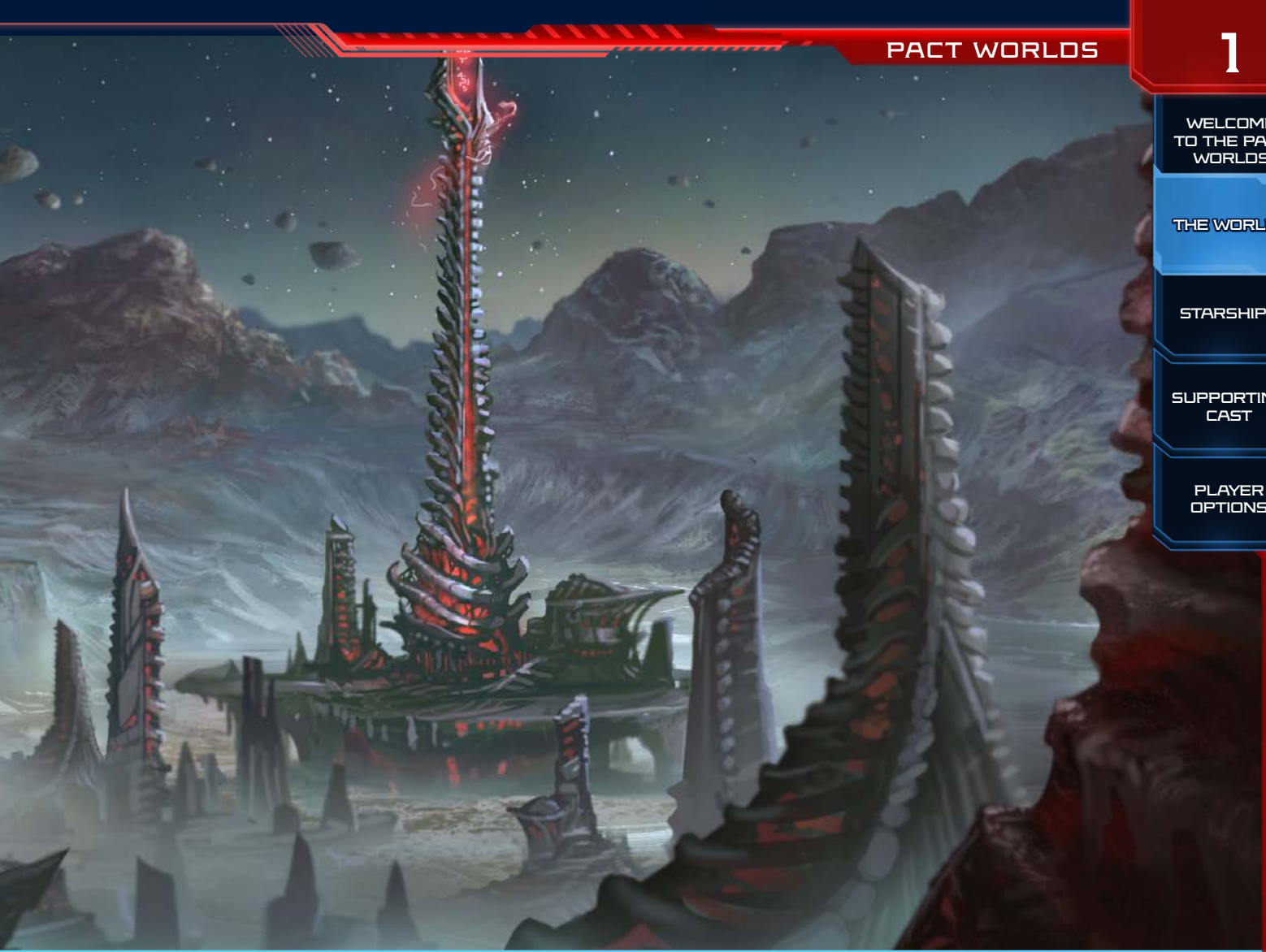
The Atraskien Shelf is the remnant of what used to be the continent of Atraskia, the largest landmass on Eox, before the world faced its cataclysm. The area remains somewhat raised above the basins and hollows that were once seabeds, though the massive upheavals that created the Facinora Basin also altered the relative altitudes of many areas, leveled mountain ranges, boiled bedrock, and altered much of the landscape. The atmosphere of the Atraskien Shelf is somewhat less toxic than the rest of Eox, but it has many more radioactive zones.

Deminas Hollow is a lowland area formed by the basin of what was once the Deminas Ocean, before the seas of Eox boiled away. The hollow is the largest of the lowlands, stretching across the equator of the planet. Many areas of the Deminas Hollow are unclaimed by any bone sage, and home to both wandering bands of starving undead and small herds of the mighty ellicoths that are among the only

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fauna to survive Eox's devastation. Those settlements within the hollow generally have stronger, taller walls for defense, and the notable wild areas are considered unsafe even by native undead.

Another artifact of Eox's disaster is a continent-sized crater, hundreds of miles deep and thousands across, known as the Facinora Basin, though the origin of that name was lost to history well before the Gap. The basin cuts close to the core of Eox, so the planet's central heat and radioactive materials make the basin churn with lava and toxic gases even millennia after it formed. The region is extremely dangerous even by Eoxian standards, and most residents give it a wide berth. The basin is demarcated by a ring of mountains called the Fringe, which are home to a handful of twisted creatures that love heat but aren't completely immune to fire.

The southern cap of Eox is a vast, broken plain with few undead settlements. Though ellicoths are rare here, many varieties of the strange plants that cling to life on Eox can be found in this area. The original name of the region is unknown, as is its nature prior to Eox's fall, but the gray, blasted rock and colorless scrubs common here give the territory its modern name: Gray Hollow.

The vast, flat, northern reaches of Eox are known as Lacustria Hollow, the basin of what was once the arctic Lacustria Sea. Though no major settlements exist here, the area is littered with the wrecked remains of airships, diving spheres, sailing vessels, submarines, and underwater cities from the time when it was a thriving ocean beneath an eternal ice pack. What appear to be centuries of experimental ships, shattered strongholds, submerged ports, and wrecks suggest that before the planet was devastated, the Lacustria Sea was extremely active and saw trade, naval battles, eldritch wars, and even attempts to settle the seafloor. Though bone sages and Starfinders have been exploring these wrecks and runes for centuries, many are buried under hundreds of feet of dust, silt or even molten rocks, and new sites are constantly discovered after chemical sinkholes, earthquakes, or toxic storms. The Eternal Convocation (see page 90) approves more offworld expeditions to the Lacustria Basin than any other part of the planet, though most find nothing but rust and scraps of ancient textiles. As a result of this activity, the protected zone of the Lifeline was built at the southern edge of the hollow.

The few cities on the world—strange settlements known collectively as the Necropoleis—are sprawling mixes of ancient

tombs, high-tech mausoleums, and lifeless offices and factories. Some have accommodations for living visitors, specifically the city of Orphys and the trade zones of the Lifeline, but while they are generally considered the safest areas of the planet, no part of Eox is truly safe.

RESIDENTS

Some of Eox's original living inhabitants, the elebrians, survived the cataclysm that destroyed the planet's ecosystem in sealed underground bunkers, but the extent of the devastation made it clear that their old way of life could not be easily restored. Elebrian leaders conferred and decided to turn themselves and much of their population into undead beings, enabling them to survive on the surface. These spellcasters were the first bone sages, and many continue to rule the planet.

However, a small population of living elebrians still exists to this day. They are often considered second-class citizens, relegated to settlements with breathable artificial atmospheres and radiation shielding. Though still relatively small, the largest contingent of living elebrians can be found in the Halls of the Living, an underground city that acts as a backdrop for various cruel shows broadcast for the rest of the planet's amusement.

The undead far outnumber the living on Eox and range from cannibalistic ghouls to charming vampires and from skeletal bone troopers to spellcasting necrovites. Except for the bone sages, who are almost all necrovites, social standing isn't dependent on the type of undead a citizen is, though usually only the more powerful undead have the intelligence and drive to own their own businesses or climb the social ladder.

SOCIETY

Politically, Eox is divided into individual fiefdoms. In each fiefdom, a bone sage—a title granted to only the most politically and magically powerful Eoxians—rules absolutely over potentially thousands of vassals, both intelligent and monstrous. While the bone sages constantly bicker and battle among themselves, they present a powerful unified front to the rest of the Pact Worlds, one that, contrary to popular rumor, is not so much evil as coldly amoral and utilitarian.

The Eternal Convocation, a group of bone sages who set aside personal differences to come together and make decisions regarding Eox's dealings with the rest of the system, maintains this unified front. From the jointly controlled necropolis of Orphys, the Convocation assigns Eoxian ambassadors to other Pact Worlds, appoints representatives to the Pact Council on Absalom Station, and establishes planetwide laws regarding when visitors from other worlds are allowed on Eox and how they are to be treated. Though the bone sages of the Eternal Convocation are not always among the most powerful of bone sages, their centuries-long unity in enforcing Eox's Absalom Pact commitments has proven they have the numbers and political acumen that make them, collectively, more than a match for individual bone sages who might oppose them.

In matters beyond those of dealing with the Pact Worlds and citizens from other planets, however, the Eternal Convocation is no more unified than any other collection of oligarchs, but conflicts between bone sages are rarely solved with

direct combat. As timeless beings beyond the need for sleep or fear of age, bone sages know that such feuds are among the riskiest activities they can possibly engage in. Instead, when two bone sages disagree, they are likely to apply pressure to one another, trying to create problems that take an opponent's time and money to fix, until it becomes clear that acquiescing to a rival's demands is less burdensome than a lifeless cold war. When issues must be settled more quickly, proxy wars are often established, with third parties (never the Eternal Convocation, but sometimes the Conclave of Whispers) agreeing to enforce the result should one of the two undead rulers opt to renege after a loss. These proxy wars are frequently arranged as specific blood sports within the Halls of the Living, not only ensuring a large audience to guard against cheating, but also generating revenue to help offset the expense of the conflict. Only if a bone sage is pushed too far does the idea of eldritch vengeance become appealing. As long as private disputes do not spill into others' realms or violate Pact World rules, they are generally allowed to continue without interference until one side is destroyed. Of course, if either side is weakened too much, another coldly calculating bone sage may join the fray to expand her own holdings.

This laissez-faire attitude is generally carried down through the ranks of lesser oligarchs, important agents and servants, and the undead rank-and-file citizens. In most necropolises, the laws are simple and designed primarily to ensure the ruling class is not bothered or threatened. For example, while it is generally forbidden to attack other undead, this is a pragmatic measure designed to ensure enough workers and guards exist to protect the rulers of each settlement. Minor violations are likely to be overlooked as long as they do not create significant problems.

The undead citizens of Eox know that they will not age, weaken, or lose their lifeless vitality. There is no concept of retirement, nor any real need for it. A ghoul tasked with guarding a wall knows that in 3 centuries, both the wall and the need to guard it will likely continue to exist and the ghoul will remain capable of filling that need. Further, Eox's undead population tends to be stable, with no births, no deaths from natural causes, and enough new bodies coming in for trade or sale to ensure a slow trickle of undead to replace those lost to accidents or violence. Low-ranking undead's lives of endless menial labor are undertaken not out of a sense of duty, but for a need to gain both credits and whatever is needed to sate their hunger. If a common Eoxian fears anything, it is having some supernatural hunger go unsatisfied, driving the undead to increasing desperation and eventual madness—the unclaimed wastes of Eox are filled with packs of roving undead driven by a desire to feed on living prey that no longer exists. For the most part, bone sages consider such packs to be useful as early defenses of their walled strongholds and a good way to ensure enemies of Eox do not establish secret bases on the planet.

Beyond the largest and most powerful cities of the undead, thousands of smaller settlements and strongholds are scattered across the nearly lifeless world, each controlled by its own undead overlord. Many are younger or weaker bone sages, either incapable of or uninterested in ruling larger areas, but

some are lesser undead of other types seeking to control as vast an area as their own abilities (and tolerance of the major bone sages) will allow. These settlements are significantly less stable than the Necropoleis, but their rules are also often less aloof, and more in need of assistance in the form of trade, mercenaries, or agents to handle issues beyond Eox.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

More than once in recent centuries, champions of light and virtue have suggested that Eox and its undead populace represent a clear and present danger to all life within the system. After all, many undead feed on the living, and Eox is one of the few worlds known to have launched planetary assaults against its neighbors, even if such actions were in the ancient past. The idea of accepting a world of undead tyrants as allies does not sit well with many citizens of the various Pact Worlds.

But as the bone sages are fond of reminding other planetary governments, Eox was the very first world to sign the Absalom Pact, and though many Pact World citizens are suspicious of the long-term plans of the denizens of Eox, there is no doubt that their power was instrumental in defending the system during conflicts with the Veskarium and later against the first attacks of the Swarm. The bone sages and their animated corpse minions are distasteful to many within the Pact Worlds, but Eox's leaders are very careful to maintain diplomatic ties through the system. As feared and mistrusted as the bone sages are, their political machinations have so far prevented the authorities of other worlds from breaking the Absalom Pact's terms in order to attack them.

Of course, not everyone in the Pact Worlds avoids dealing with the undead of Eox. Numerous groups work with citizens of Eox to seek out and oppose the Corpse Fleet, the undead space armada created by defecting soldiers when the bone sages signed the Absalom Pact. Mercenaries and merchants alike appreciate the opportunities brought about by the cadaver markets where bodies are bought and sold, the trade in necrograft augmentations and dread technologies shunned on other worlds, and the academies that draw in engineers and spellcasters with their vast stores of knowledge.

In the unpopulated stony wastes outside of the necropolises, strange, non-sentient creatures wander and hunt, thanks to centuries of radiation and sources of other magical pollution. Some of these beasts have adapted to feast on the necromantic energy that sustains the massive undead population, but this makes them no less dangerous to living beings. Chief among the natural threats of Eox are the elephantine ellicoths, whose touch can drain the souls of both the living and the undead.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Despite its generally blasted landscape, Eox is home to a great number of thriving and bustling settlements, as well as other points of interest.

Arran Rifts

The Greater and Lesser Arran Rifts, both hundreds of miles long and thousands of feet deep, are among the two most dangerous regions on Eox. They are named after island chains

or subcontinents that existed before Eox's ancient cataclysm—records are unclear which—in approximately the same location. What caused these areas to crack and form immense canyons that stretch down nearly to the original mantle of Eox is unknown, but the strange metals and bizarre fossils found on the few expeditions to go to these zones and return lead some Eoxian scholars to theorize there was once a vast cavern system here, with its own ecologies and native life separate from what existed on the surface of Eox at the time. The areas are rich with a few rare skymetals, radioactive metals, and even some ancient Eoxian artifacts, but are also home to many angry incorporeal undead. The rifts' sulfur springs are among the most active on the planet, and numerous forms of grub swarms swell within their pools and near their gas vents. Rumors claim bizarre, enormous living monsters also dwell within the rifts, as the ellicoths do the plains, though this is generally considered just legend.

Blackmoon

The cataclysm that killed Eox also created the Thousand Moons, a ring of asteroids around the planet that forms a never-ending arc of glittering lights visible from the surface. In the years before the Gap, sarcesians scheming to destroy the bone sages prepared a complex web of magic energies to allow the moons to be dropped on every major necropolis and outpost across the planet. For whatever reason, that planet-killing trap was never triggered—until a few years after the Gap. In the year 7 AG, the bone sages launched the Magefire Assault in an effort to take control of Absalom Station. No nation was coordinated enough to mount an effective defense, but some party or parties unknown managed to trigger the ancient Thousand Moons trap. The bone sages abandoned their attack on Absalom Station to flee back to Eox to prevent the devastation, but they were only partially successful. While most of the Thousand Moons were kept in orbit, one of the largest orbiting chunks fell (though at a much reduced speed) and crushed the mighty necropolis of Murthal, destroying everything within 1,000 miles of it. The massive chunk of rock that remained was named Blackmoon, and it is now one of the tallest mountains in the Pact Worlds.

Blackmoon is a nearly hemispheric orb of rock riddled with caves and tunnels that date back to precataclysm Eox. Beneath the stone, some small sections of Murthal survive, cut off from the outside world. More than one necrovite has sought to build a new necropolis on Blackmoon in the centuries since it fell, but all have met untimely ends from ancient traps and curses. Rumors suggest there are sarcesian renegades within Blackmoon even now, keeping a watchful eye on the bone sages and preparing for the day the undead betray the Absalom Pact.

Catacomb Mountains

It is well documented that the Catacomb Mountains did not exist prior to the Gap. The lands where these imposing and angular slabs of basalt and black quartz now rise up were once a barren plain of radioactive lowlands and poisonous clouds. No record exists of why or how they were constructed—but



they are certainly not natural. The Catacomb Mountains are a manufactured range of rock and strange ores honeycombed with hundreds of thousands of tombs, most sealed with advanced security systems and magic glyphs. Early expeditions into the outermost tombs revealed them to be filled with the remains of destroyed undead, often sealed in computerized sarcophagi designed to douse the corpses with acid or flame at any sign of movement. Other tombs were empty, with Eoxian runes warning that "necrovores have escaped" and similar vague messages. A joint agreement made by the most powerful bone sages forbids any further exploration into the Catacomb Mountains, but it is strongly suspected that numerous secret expeditions to the site are undertaken every year.

Church of Silence

Located on a highland area that was once an island just off the continent of Atraskia, the Church of Silence is considered part of the Atraskien Shelf, despite being just beyond the long-gone coastline. The Church of Silence is an ancient monument to the perfection of undeath that has existed as neutral ground among the bone sages for eons as the closest thing to a sacred place the undead of Eox have. It is overseen by the Conclave of Whispers, a respected collection of the oldest bone sages, who claim to have given up secular matters in favor of pure research into undeath and eternal existence. The Conclave of Whispers specifically does not include any members of the Eternal Convocation, ensuring that the two groups each work to their own ends, rather than conspiring together. Within the Wordless Halls, the oldest parts of the Church of Silence, the conclave seeks to understand secrets nearly lost to time and to gather all lore on death and undeath available from anywhere in the galaxy. While the Wordless Halls are off limits to most living creatures, the bone sages grant open access to any androids, undead, and self-willed robots who wish to peruse the ancient libraries within, as long as they swear to obey the rules of the halls. The outer sections of the Church of Silence have much less lore and material within them, but the bone sages allow living necromancers to petition for access to research specific topics, especially if the practitioners bring some previously unknown bit of undead lore with them to barter for access.

Eternal Barrows

When Eox joined the Pact Worlds, not all bone sages agreed with the decision. Though the Eternal Convocation and Conclave of Whispers both supported the idea, many bone sages felt it placed them in a position of weakness and was an unacceptable limitation on their self-rule. The details of the brief, vicious conflict that followed have been kept from the living, but it is known that multitudes of undead on the losing side were imprisoned in the massive field of penal tombs known as the Eternal Barrows. The most powerful undead prisoners, including ghosts, necrovites, nightshades, and vampires, were placed in stasis tombs so they would not experience the passage of time. The bone sages surrounded upstart undead masters with vast vaults; each of these vaults contained lesser undead creatures that did not answer to the undead master contained within, thus avoiding the possibility of collusion.

The ruling bone sages of Eox ensure that the deepest of the Eternal Barrows are untouched, and they seem unconcerned with how many centuries might pass before the undead who opposed them could be released. Many admit that destroying their political opponents would not be worth losing the vast knowledge those undead contain, and some even hint that the most powerful of those imprisoned are simply beyond destruction by any force. But with no fear of the ravages of time, the rulers of Eox are content to allow their foes to be locked away until the situation changes, maybe centuries or eons from now.

Exantius

One of the newest of the Necropoleis, Exantius was founded and constructed by undead from other worlds only 50 years ago. The Eternal Convocation reluctantly gave permission to **Tzurrtk** (N host shirren corpsefolk mystic; see *Starfinder Adventure Path* #6) to create this settlement as a show of good faith to the rest of the Pact Worlds, but has yet to grant them a seat on their council. Exantius is a burgeoning city, as non-alebrian undead flock to the area after facing discrimination elsewhere. The bone sages are wary that this will eventually result in a shift in the planet's balance of power; while such an event would realistically take centuries to occur, the bone sages are known for the long-term thinking.

For their part, Tzurrtk has no malicious intent, and they are very open about their motivations. After an extrasolar expedition left the shirrrens with a fatal disease, Tzurrtk opened themselves up to the universe and was rewarded with eternal life after death. Shunned by their family, they took to the spaceways to find a new home. Tzurrtk felt Eox was an obvious destination, but they found the culture of the native undead alebrians not to their liking. Rather than continue their search, Tzurrtk decided to make a place on Eox that would also welcome people like them.

Fading Run

A shallow chasm in Gray Hollow, the Fading Run is home to those bloodsports and reality events that are too large or too elaborate to fit within the Halls of the Living. Demolition derbies and protracted obstacle courses make up the majority of the competitions that take place here, with competitors brought in from the Halls of the Living and offworld gladiatorial companies. While only a few of these contests are fought to the death, accidents and sabotage occur regularly, resulting in a staggering number of fatalities per year. A couple safety advocacy groups call for an end to these events, but the Eox's government is always quick to point out that participation is voluntary and that contestants know the risks.

Grim Reach

Far into Lacustria Hollow stands a ghostly town of translucent buildings of ancient design. Phantoms of alebrians walk through the streets, ignoring any being who approaches them and continuing routines that observers have noted repeats from week to week. While the Grim Reach appears to be the echo of an alebrian city that existed before the planet's cataclysm killed

most of Eox's inhabitants, all pre-Gap records indicate that this location would have been at the bottom of a deep sea. The diaphanous buildings seem to be built for normal atmosphere, making this literal ghost town an true enigma.

This supernatural phenomenon isn't well understood, even by Eoxian occult scholars. A few fringe researchers have recently put forth the theory that the Grim Reach is a vision of Eox's not of past but of its future. At some point, living elebrians will thrive once again and the planet's atmosphere will be breathable once again. These academics explain the settlement's architecture as being a throwback to ancient elebrian heritage and scrutinize every detail about the phantom people to get any indication of whether their theory is correct.

Halls of the Living

The Halls of the Living are an aberration on Eox—a subterranean city designed and maintained purely for the benefit of its living inhabitants. However, it is not a city where most people would choose to live, as it is maintained only as a backdrop for the cruel games and invasive reality shows that are the primary entertainment on Eox and are broadcast throughout the Pact Worlds. Many of the transmissions are outlawed on other planets, but little can be done to prevent them from being sent, and even the most depraved recordings can easily be found in archives of illicit sections of the infospheres of most Pact World cities.

Though numerous groups protest the existence of the Halls of the Living, as an entirely local issue, they are not a violation of the Absalom Pact. Further, every citizen is—at least officially—a willing participant. Children born within the Halls of the Living are removed to state-funded quarters in Urabron and not allowed to return until they reach the age of maturity. Anyone else is free to go at any time and receives a complementary one-way ticket to Absalom Station... and little else. Despite this, the potential fame and fortune that participants can earn in just a few years of games and programs have fostered a long waiting list of citizens petitioning to join the halls. Those citizens who manage to build a fan base of viewers and patrons can often skip the deadlier shows and instead participate in live feeds of their day-to-day activities or skill-based entertainment contests.

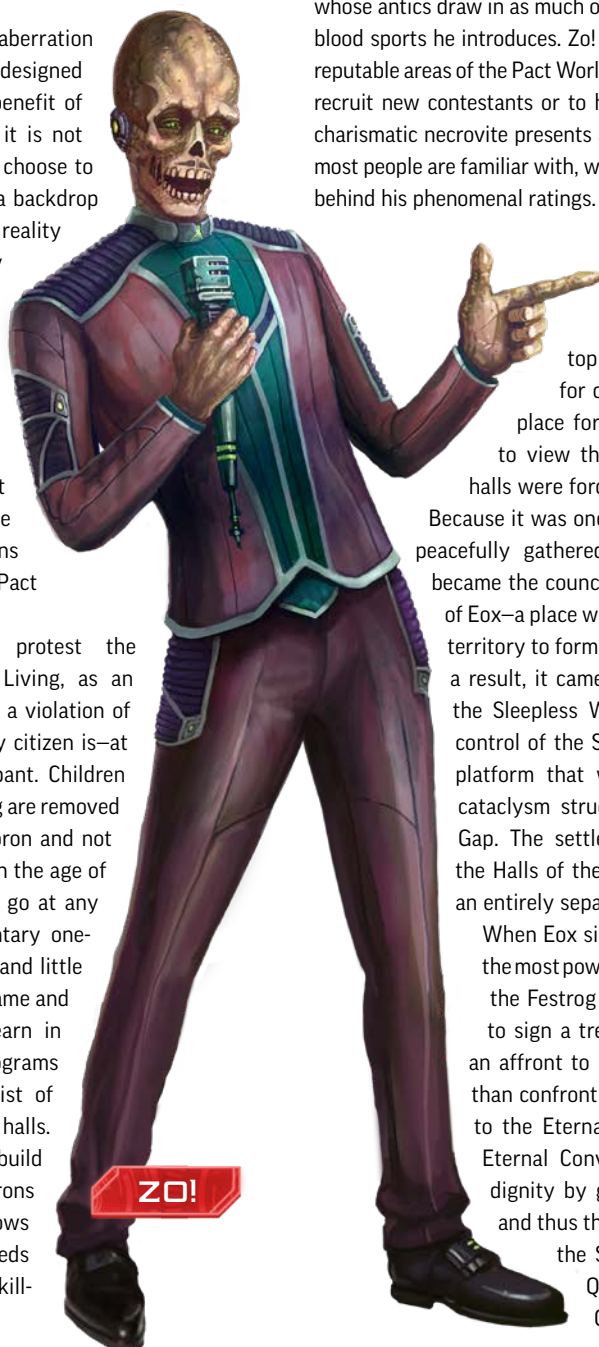
The vast majority of participants are humans and vesk (who seem to relish the challenges), but a noteworthy number of dwarves, Forlorn elves, lashuntas, and ysoki also participate. Undead are forbidden (though undead camera crews, guards, showrunners, and administrators operate within the city for specific broadcasts) and androids and kasathas are very rare. A small number of living elebrians—the dominant race of Eox before the disaster that killed the world—also participate and have done so for centuries. However, it is whispered that none of the elebrians who dwell in the Halls of the Living are true surviving members of that race and that all those who claim to be either are undead in disguise or are surgically altered humans.

The most well known promoter of events within the Halls of the Living is **Zo!** (NE male elebrian necrovite), a flamboyant host whose antics draw in as much of an audience as the games and blood sports he introduces. Zo! occasionally travels to the less reputable areas of the Pact Worlds and Near Space to personally recruit new contestants or to host special transmissions. The charismatic necrovite presents a different face of undead than most people are familiar with, which is perhaps the main reason behind his phenomenal ratings.

Karus

Karus was originally constructed around and on top of the Halls of the Living, and for centuries it existed purely as a place for the undead of Eox to gather to view the events the denizens of the halls were forced through for entertainment. Because it was one of the few places bone sages peacefully gathered, over the centuries it also became the council center for the undead rulers of Eox—a place where they could meet in neutral territory to form councils and make treaties. As a result, it came to be the center from which the Sleepless Watch was formed to oversee control of the Sentinel—a moon-sized defense platform that was ancient even before the cataclysm struck Eox centuries prior to the Gap. The settlement expanded well beyond the Halls of the Living, in time growing to be an entirely separate complex.

When Eox signed the Absalom Pact, one of the most powerful dissenting bone sages was the Festrog Queen, who felt that agreeing to sign a treaty with living creatures was an affront to her undead perfection. Rather than confront her and attempt to banish her to the Eternal Barrows, the newly formed Eternal Convocation offered to salve her dignity by granting her control of Karus, and thus the greatest say in the control of the Sentinel. Whether the Festrog Queen saw opposition to the Convocation as doomed to



failure or if she was truly mollified, she accepted the tribute and has ruled Karus for over 250 years. Both because of her true dislike of them and as a security measure, the Festrog Queen has outlawed the living within Karus, restricting them to the nearby Halls of the Living.

The Lifeline

The Lifeline is a literal line demarcating the safe zone containing the Necroforge, Pact Port, and Urabron. A massive wall—more than 200 feet tall, 50 feet thick, and topped with spiked ridges and defensive plasma turrets—denotes the location of the Lifeline, but that is only the physical part of this barrier. A magic shield created by dozens of bone sages working in concert exists in the same location, independent of the wall. It prevents the radiation clouds, wild zones of magic, and fields of necromantic energy that roam across the rest of the planet's surface from entering the safe zone. Skeletal guards and ghoulish overseers who answer to the Eternal Convocation monitor the wall constantly; they keep out the numerous undead (and few living) threats that run wild in the lawless places of Eox. The atmosphere within the safe zone is still thin and poisonous, but the Lifeline keeps many of the dangers of Eox at bay, allowing visitors to move more freely and safely between the region's three settlements.

Necroforge

The Necroforge is less a city than it is an extensive industrial complex dedicated to the creation and study of undead, necrografts, and necromantic magic. Along with Orphys, it is one of the primary destinations for living beings who wish to augment themselves with necromantic implants and for necromancers who seek to become undead (often at the price of a century of unliving service once their transformation is complete), as well as for body merchants who bring corpses to Eox to be turned into new undead citizens or elements of necrografts and other experiments. Though very few living creatures permanently dwell in the Necroforge, it has extensive facilities to house and entertain its clients, guests, trade partners, and visitors. The Necroforge is ruled by the **Painted Lady** (NE female elebrian necrovite), a bone sage who maintains a nearly living appearance and has adorned her entire body with tattoos depicting dozens of living creatures becoming various forms of undead.

Orphys

Orphys is the largest and most prosperous of Eox's few cities, and is home to the Eternal Convocation, the council of bone sages who assign Eoxian ambassadors to other Pact Worlds and appoint representatives to the Pact Council on Absalom Station. The Eternal Convocation also rules Orphys directly, making it the only major necropolis not controlled by a single bone sage.

All of Orphys is enclosed within a bubble of breathable atmosphere, making it one of the most common destinations for living visitors outside of the Lifeline. Given that Orphys is as close to a planetary capital as Eox offers, most citizens of the Pact Worlds believe the necrovites who rule the city

maintain the atmosphere to encourage living tourism and make it easier for Pact World officials to interface with their Eoxian counterparts. In truth, the Eternal Convocation doesn't much care how the atmosphere impacts the daily lives of living visitors. The atmosphere domes were established centuries ago as part of an experiment into how various conditions impact the long-term stability and potential decay of undead bodies, and that experiment has continued uninterrupted for hundreds of years.

Unlike the cities within the Lifeline, Orphys does little to accommodate living residents beyond providing a suitable atmosphere for them to breathe. Food vendors are rare and almost exclusively deal in preserved foods with shelf lives measured in years. Even so, it is far easier to maintain livable conditions here than in nearly any other necropolis, and Orphys has built a number of businesses around the opportunities living creatures present. Like the Necroforge, it is a major hub in the necrograft trade and contains administrative and business centers that allow Pact World companies and organizations to interact with the Eternal Convocation.

ORPHYS

NE necropolis

Population 1,450,000 (88% undead, 7% android, 5% other)

Government oligarchy (Eternal Convocation)

Qualities academic, polluted, technologically advanced

Maximum Item Level 20th

Oubliette

A few unfortunate souls are completely broken, body and mind, by the transformation into undeath. Instead of being immediately terminated, many of these poor folk are brought to the Oubliette, an underground hospital of sorts. Director **Ulla Vhasgos** (LE female elebrian necrovite) and her small team of talented physicians and psychologists keep close watch over their charges and attempt to rehabilitate them. The facility maintains powerful magical security systems to prevent the escape of its more dangerous patients, but every so often, Oubliette goes dark, neither accepting or broadcasting transmissions. These periods can last days or even weeks, and when Oubliette again makes contact with the outside world, it is usually Director Vhasgos looking to fill a vacancy on her staff.

Pact Port

Pact Port is the only city on Eox that is not part of the Necropoleis. Instead, it is a standard city designed primarily as a landing place for Pact Worlds trade ships and for the warehousing of Eoxian goods for export. Pact Port is a small domed city of 100,000 denizens, more than half living, and is administered by **Sadrat Phain** (NE male elebrian ghoul envoy) in the name of the Conclave of Whispers. Within the dome, ventilation systems maintain air designed to support as many forms of life native to the Pact Worlds as possible. Sadrat is permissive about most issues, upholding only those laws required by the Absalom Pact, with the sole exception of strictly forbidding any relic of ancient Eox to be removed from the world without the approval of the Convocation.

Every year, dozens of travelers come through Pact Port to purchase necrografts and have them installed. Before making the trip to Orphys or the Necroforge, they are directed to a small neighborhood in Pact Port called the Hospice, where necrograft merchants display catalogs of their wares. Prospective patients must be ready to negotiate the exorbitant fees and ironclad contracts before they can have the necessary surgeries. Necrograft companies maintain these storefronts in Pact Port to dissuade those not serious about the procedures and to keep unwanted applicants from their front doors.

The Pyre

The Pyre is the only major settlement within the Facinora Basin, though some much smaller lava-mining stations and research outposts exist. A massive tower stretching more than a mile up from the lava, the Pyre is an arcology: a self-sufficient building that houses an entire city. It is also one of the primary sources of power on Eox, using the heat of the endlessly churning lava to incinerate waste materials from all over the planet (according to legend, including the bodies of any undead the bone sages do not wish to see again) to form a massive tornado of flame that drives hundreds of turbines before it ejects into the Eoxian sky as an eternal pillar of fire. The Pyre is ruled by **Kalanetrodoch the Unburning** (NE male elebrian necrovite mystic), a necrovite less than a century old who is concerned almost exclusively with technological advancements rather than magical ones. Kalanetrodoch rarely allows visitors or tourists within the walls of his arcology, but he has a well-known curiosity regarding pre-Gap technology and nearly always grants audiences to visitors who can provide examples of such devices he's not yet familiar with.

Remembrance Rock

An enormous mesa created by the energies of the cataclysm, Remembrance Rock is riddled with tombs and monuments to all that was lost when Eox was killed. Most of the tombs and shrines are long since empty, but a few deep in the interior remain protected by active guardians that allow respectful visitors but destroy tomb raiders.

The most visited memorial is a large cenotaph called the Reflection, which gets its name from the mirrorlike sheen placed on the marble from which it is built. It is protected from erosion and defacement by powerful magic, and all who peer into its surface see undead versions of themselves reflected back. Recently, a few people have complained that they can see nothing reflected except for a few vague shapes. These forms are said to undulate and draw closer to the viewer's location, causing a dread chill to run down the viewer's spine.

Spiral Basilica

The center of worship for Pharasma on Eox, this large cathedral sits outside of Port Pact but still within the Lifeline. The Spiral Basilica caters mainly to those visitors to Eox who worry about interacting with the planet's undead residents. The Pharasmin priests offer protective blessings to these folk for a modest donation to the church, and their very presence seems to be a soothing balm to those who must travel to Eox but who have religious or moral conflicts about it.

The main church of Pharasma isn't interested in starting an extended holy war against the inhabitants of Eox, though most high-ranking members aren't comfortable with the planet's inclusion in the Pact Worlds. The Eternal Convocation tolerates the church's presence on their planet, as long as it doesn't disrupt everyday activities. As such, when hot-headed Pharasmin crusaders come to the planet, the Spiral Basilica acts as kind of release valve, pointing those devoted warriors toward patches of rogue undead creatures that the Eternal Convocation has sanctioned for destruction.

Thanox

One of dozens of midsize necropolises scattered across Eox, Thanox is ruled by the bone sage referred to only as the Soulless One, and it would be unremarkable among such cities of the dead if not for its ruler's claim to fame: in the minutes after all the undead of Eox realized they were suddenly recovering from a widespread amnesia, the Soulless One moved with decisive force and claimed the city from its former ruler. Such conflicts between bone sages are unremarkable, but the Soulless One was the first undead to claim the rank of bone sage without being some form of lich or necrovite. Instead, he is an apparition, seemingly a shadow with bright green circuitry patterns forming his eyes and running along his shoulders and arms. For decades it seemed likely some coalition of "proper" bone sages would form to strike down the upstart who dared claim that ancient title, but the Soulless One successfully played his foes off one another in political maneuvers until his strong support of the Eternal Convocation's signing of the Absalom Pact cemented his place among the ruling class.

Urabron

Urabron is a small settlement that predates the construction of the Lifeline. It is ruled by the bone sage **Quatherat Hafet** (NE male elebrian corpsefolk mechanic), an undead who is more machine than corpse after centuries of existence. Hafet claims to have existed for eons before the Gap, and he shrugs off questions about the missing centuries of his memory as one of the things that simply happens after existing long enough. Urabron is small enough to be encased by a large dome that maintains heat and an atmosphere similar to that of Castrovel, and it houses a few thousand scholars and spellcasters who study there alongside the bone troopers who serve Hafet. Why he allows such study or let Urabron be included within the area of the Lifeline is unknown.

Zinhew

The necropolis Zinhew's claim to fame are its wide collection of "flesh vats," which produce chemically created flesh and blood that allows undead who require such sustenance to get it without harming living innocents. Though many of Eox's undead complain these products don't have the same flavor and texture as the real thing, Zinhew's industrial sector still turns a profit, thanks in part to generous subsidies from the Eternal Convocation. The flesh vat bioengineers conduct ongoing research into the realism problem and are confident they will crack it eventually.

DEATH-TOUCHED

+1 CON

You have been affected by the energies of death and negative energy. You are not undead, but you have an affinity for the dead and undead that is inexplicable to most living creatures. You may have suffered an attack from an undead creature when very young, or you may have been exposed to strange radiation, dimensional rifts, or magic that caused a weak but permanent link between you and the Negative Energy Plane. You survived this formative experience, but not without some change.

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THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

Thanks to your experiences with the undead and the growing power of the grave within your form, you have an instinctive understanding and recognition of negative energy and undead. You can use Perception, rather than Mysticism, to recall knowledge about undead and negative energy effects when you first observe them. Perception is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Perception checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Constitution at character creation.

DREAD VITALITY [6TH]

You draw dark strength from the spark of negative energy within you, and you gain a fraction of the resistances that undead creatures have. You gain a +1 bonus to saving throws against disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, and stunning.

INURED TO THE GRAVE [12TH]

Your body, always somewhat cool to the touch despite how much warm clothing you wear, becomes resistant even to extreme cold. You gain cold resistance equal to your level. If you already have greater cold resistance from some other source, that cold resistance instead increases by an amount equal to half your level.

LIFE EATER [18TH]

If you are close to a sapient creature when its life is snuffed out, you can draw part of the released energy into your death-infused body, fueling your vitality. The first time each day when a living creature with an Intelligence score of 3 or more dies within 10 feet of you, you regain 1 Resolve Point. You need not be the one to deal the killing blow.

Additionally, anytime you are unconscious and a living creature with an Intelligence score of 3 or more dies in a space adjacent to you, as a reaction you can spend the appropriate number of Resolve Points to stabilize or, if you are already stable, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to stay in the fight (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 251).

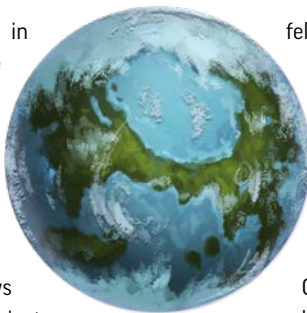




TRIAXUS

More than any other celestial body in the Pact Worlds, Triaxus is a place of extremes. Its plodding and eccentric path around the sun mires this world in centuries-long winters and summers that define existence for all life upon it. During the frozen decades, enormous glaciers creep a thousand miles or more from the poles, while rivers remain icy floes and snows howl practically without end. Summers are just as brutal; sweltering heat envelops the planet, jungles and forests bloom riotously, and fire and drought become deadly threats despite the most aggressive technological interventions. Strangely, the transitional seasons—spring and fall—last only as long as it takes for the summer vegetation to grow or fall dormant, respectively.

Life on this planet is hardy, however, and Triaxus's organisms have long since adapted accordingly to the differing climates. Each main season's flora and fauna enter a state of hibernation as their time draws to a close, only to awaken upon the harbinger equinox. In the winter, enormous furred insects roam the lands, as do gigantic snowbirds, predatory packs of tusked



felines, and other arctic horrors. In the summer, an array of diverse and often brightly colored wildlife covers the planet.

Some of Triaxus's humanoid inhabitants experience vast shifts in biology depending on the season during which they're born. These include the dominant ryphorians, whose life cycle and adaptability resemble those of humans. Other species, including the planet's dragonkin and dragons, simply weather the seasons by taking precautions and making lifestyle changes as necessary—an easy task for those who can afford it.

Long before the Gap, the conflict between Triaxus's dragons and the ryphorians dominated nearly the entire planet, with dragonkin fighting on both sides. However, as Triaxus's residents developed spaceflight and the territorial wars became moot—particularly after the Gap and upon the signing of the Pact—the planet's active hostilities ceased. Though evil dragons still treat their humanoid vassals with disdain, they are less overt with their schemes and plans, preferring to meddle behind the scenes in interstellar politics and hoarding information as well as riches.

WELCOME
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Triaxus's two largest and most prominent landmasses still bear names tied to the planet's ancient political divide between dragons and humanoids. The Drakelands, where dragon-run societies still burgeon and thrive, occupy the hemisphere opposite from the Allied Territories, where ryphorian-majority states squabble. Connecting these massive continents is a land bridge called the Skyfire Mandate, where a curious blend of dragons, humanoids, and dragonkin make their homes.

Beyond the lands of ryphorians and dragons, the next-largest landmass is the island-continent of Ning, situated south of the Drakelands across the Sephorian Sea. The twin plateau-isles of Meruchia and Nusova lie to its east, as does the sprawling Sephorian Archipelago. To the north, Grenloch and Tirosh lie off the eastern coast of the Allied Territories, outlining the Ryphara Ocean. The Winged Isles mark the geographical center point of the Greatwater, and the northern island-continent of Weldfall borders the shallow Channel of Spines.

Triaxus is a hub of volcanic activity and diverse biomes. The Deathinge Mountains line the southeastern coast of the Drakelands, while the Parapet Mountains cascade down to the Skyfire Mandate. The Hortyne Peaks of northern Ning are

similarly rocky, showcasing a ring of tectonic activity that harks back to the planet's myths of ancient underground dragon wars. The Allied Territories are less mountainous but far more ecologically diverse, with the mighty Uchorae Jungle sprawling across the westernmost subcontinent and the Doraeshi Rain Forest shrouding the subcontinent to the east. Colder forests, fertile river valleys, and massive lakes (such as Lake Delfic and Narnoess Lake) pepper the major continents. The most prominent of the latter is perhaps Dahak's Claw, a freshwater expanse where, according to legend, wicked dragons once spontaneously arose to join the planet's political fray.

Most dynamic, of course, are Triaxus's glaciers, which are massive in the winter but recede significantly in the summer. As winter settles over the world, the southern glacier—dubbed the Encroach—creeps northward, abutting the southern coast of Ning and creating treacherous ice bridges between the islands in the Sephorian Archipelago. The long cold season also sees the Expanse, as the northern glacier is called, reach its fingers down into the Greatwater, over the northern stretch of Weldfall, and into the northern tundras of the Drakelands and the cold upper forests of the Allied Territories. (The map on page 102 represents the glaciers' extent during the transitional seasons.)

RESIDENTS

Triaxus is currently deep in the clutches of its long winter, which shapes all of its inhabitants' lives.

Although untold time has passed since the wicked dragons of the Drakelands warred with the ryphorians of the Allied Territories, true dragons are still the masters of their continent. These dragons plot against one another and nurse ancient grudges, often employing a complex array of allies to serve as proxies, saboteurs, and spies. However, instead of feudal states, the largest dragon-led realms function much like corporations, with the ruling dragons acting as the chief executives. These "dragoncorps," as many call them, specialize in everything from mass-produced military armaments to the creation of elaborate holograms for large-scale entertainment

to feats of nanotechnological engineering. Because they plot against the solar system's other corporate leaders as much as against one another, the dragons of Triaxus engage offworld rivals as often as they find themselves embroiled in centuries-old conflicts.

Fusions of humanoids and dragons, dragonkin are most populous in the Skyfire Mandate and the Drakelands. Many maintain strong connections to the planet's ryphorians; there are few dragonkin-only settlements on Triaxus, as the symbiosis between dragonkin and ryphorians is mutually cherished and appreciated. Dragonkin continue to work with their bonded ryphorians to further the interests of the many mercenary bands that now make up the Skyfire Legion, formerly known as the Dragon Legion. Perhaps most common is the pilot-copilot arrangement, which reflects the history of the humanoids riding the dragonkin into combat—though starships have replaced the dragonkin as mounts, and modern dragonkin almost never fly with riders on their backs. In addition to serving alongside ryphorian pilots or copilots, dragonkin with scales of all colors sometimes pursue farming, food processing, hacking ventures, technological manufacturing, and textile weaving. They are found working so closely and frequently with ryphorians that many non-Triaxians consider them two complementary halves of the same species.

Those with little to no knowledge of the planet's societies sometimes conflate the terms "ryphorian" and the more general "Triaxian," but the latter is the modern term for members of that race. Ryphorians born during winter are called winterborn, those born during summer are called summerborn, and those born in between those seasons are called transitional. Ryphorians are tall and lean, with ears that are notched and pointed. The planet's current wintry season means that its resident ryphorians are winterborn, with fine white hair covering most of their skin and narrowed eyes that help ward off snow-blindness, though gene therapy and hormonal treatments allow summerborn and transitional ryphorians to exist anywhere, regardless of the season. Ryphorians' culture and even many of their superficial physical characteristics vary according to the region in which they live, but all major population centers include individuals who have deep, established bonds with the less populous dragonkin, whether or not ryphorians actually fly alongside them in starships.

Sometime during the Gap, a contingent of elves arrived on Triaxus. No one knows the exact



DRAKELANDS DRAGONKIN

reason for their emigration or where they had traveled from—some believe the elves were fleeing a massive threat, while others think they were following some ancient prophecy—but the elves established colonies of their own in the sparsely inhabited northern reaches of the Allied Territories. These elves receive the occasional visitor from Sovyrian on Castrovel, trading theories and knowledge about their species' shared lost history. Some elves have also formed families with the native ryphorians, leading to a small population of half-elves on Triaxus who are curiously similar to half-elves of human and elfven parentage.

Romanticized stories of lost Golarion have recently prompted a wave of races native to the missing planet to move to Triaxus and make it their new home world, despite the harsh weather. Many of these settlers claim to be looking for a chance to escape the crowded corridors of Absalom Station or the dust-choked wastelands of Akiton and want to experience geography and an ecosystem similar to what they have heard about in tales. Gnomes are the most populous of these immigrants, motivated by the hints found within pre-Gap accounts of ancient gnomes supposedly arriving on Golarion and Triaxus simultaneously from the First World. Whether such stories are true and what might have happened to the Triaxian gnomes in the intervening millennia are yet to be discovered.

SOCIETY

Government is a nebulous thing on Triaxus. A closer look at the ruling structures of the Drakelands and the Allied Territories reveals not one system but many intertwined and often conflicting organizations.

The ryphorian-dominated Allied Territories present a weakly unified front to other areas of Triaxus and beyond. They present themselves as a conglomeration of independent forces that have agreed to ally whenever a threat presents itself. In truth, however, the territories are a motley mix of city-states, nations, and thinly populated unincorporated areas. Only the loosest official body actually unites the territories. The Allied Council, as it's called, consists of a leader—a ryphorian, a dragonkin, or, rarely, a bonded pair—per member state, though what constitutes a member state is murky, at best. Currently, 28 representatives sit on the Allied Council, some of whom have served for decades simply because their homelands have never bothered finding replacements. Notable among the member states are Aylok, Preita, the Uchorae Jungle, and Zo; other member states' influence waxes and wanes as their borders and wealth fluctuate. The Allied Council meets sporadically, but at least twice yearly, and handles matters of the territories' safety, loosely coordinates mass preparations for the coming summer or winter, concerns itself with the territories' economic well-being, and handles official diplomatic disputes between members. Beyond the Allied Council, the government of each city-state and nation on the continent is unique, with each fiercely independent realm devising exactly the system it sees fit. Communist enclaves, corporate-run states, feudal hegemonies, representative and true democracies, and socialist oligarchies all operate independently, making the customs and politics of each

geographic area markedly different and practically impossible to predict.

Although nominally part of the Allied Territories now that the warring between the ryphorians and dragons has cooled, the residents of the Skyfire Mandate still see themselves as a people apart from their kin to the east. Thus, they've traditionally declined to send a representative to the Allied Council. Instead, the Mandate is home to several mercenary bands that, though technically under separate leadership, all cooperate as a surprisingly unified coalition known as the Skyfire Legion. This conglomerate boasts some of the most elite mercenaries from all manner of races in the solar system, and includes high-ranking pilots, soldiers, operatives, hackers, and tradespeople. As a whole, the Skyfire Legion handles territorial governance, keeps errant mercenary companies and rogue agents in line, and serves as a central hub for mercenary jobs. Since the discovery of Drift travel, the members of the Skyfire Legion have taken jobs that lead them all across the galaxy, cementing their functional independence from the Allied Territories and setting them apart from the squabbles of its member states.

Although their dragon rulers would hiss at the characterization, the governance of the Drakelands is not so different from that found in the Allied Territories. Dozens, if not hundreds, of dragons rule separate patchwork realms, with the size of each sovereignty ranging from single small factories to massive nations. Even the weakest true dragons often find a patch of dirt or a rusty warehouse to claim as their own, while the oldest and most powerful dragons rule sprawling nations such as Dretchnyl and Serozanyx. The dragons ruling these realms vary vastly in their methods, with the vilest chromatic dragons acting as terribly cruel despots and the kindest metallic dragons serving as philanthropic caretakers. However, all dragons are used to ruling with absolute authority in their homes, so there is nothing resembling the Allied Council in the Drakelands. Rather, diplomacy here takes the form of ancient customs, opaque decorum, informal treaties, and other measures that are endlessly frustrating to non-dragons who try to navigate the political landscape—especially offworlders trying to conduct business with major leaders, some of whom are the most successful executives in the solar system. As a result, most who tread in the Drakelands recruit a native guide to accompany them along on their interrealm trips.

The Immortal Suzerainty of Ning always existed apart from the dragon-ryphorian wars that rent the northern regions of Triaxus in antiquity; it still does, as one of the only major areas to eschew the Pact Worlds' authority. The island-continent functions as one massive merchant republic with a leader, called the immortal suzerain, who the realm's top-ranking executives choose. Ning's current immortal suzerain is **Jinethia Moonlake** (LN female feychild gnome envoy/mystic), a woman who rose from absolute obscurity. The Immortal Suzerain's life is lavish but difficult, as she works around the clock to make far-ranging business decisions, each of which affects life in the realm for generations. A five-member Circle of Wisdom aids the suzerain, and the council's members are lifelong leaders of ancient and charitable nonprofits. Their interests are considered purer than



THE EXPANSE

THE GREATWATER

WELDFALL

RYPHARA OCEAN

GRENLOCH

TIROSH

River Eax

Channel of Spines

The Duet

Winged Isles

Parapet Mountains

Caldera Basin

Blacktooth River

Ignomus Bay

DRAKELANDS

Clawfist Wood

Deathinge Mountains

SKYFIRE MANDATE

Parapet Mountains

Hoziah Forest

Vileti's Sound

Aylok

Lake Delfic

ALLIED TERRITORIES

Kamora

Preita

Bora Wood

Doraeshi Rain Forest

Hinth

SEPHORIAN ARCHIPELAGO

Qua

NUSOVA

MERUCHIA

THE ENCROACH

SEPHORIAN SEA

Hortyne Peaks

Narnoess Lake

NING

those of other oligarchs, whose own business needs might supersede those of the suzerainty's. Aside from the national government, the continent's vast swaths are carved into 14 neat square-shaped areas known as mercantiles. By custom, local law in these regions is handled by the executives of the four largest noncompeting enterprises based there. It might seem messy, but this setup has worked well for Ning, likely because station, hierarchy, honor, and tradition form a strong backbone that supports the system.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

The strife between Triaxus's humanoids and dragons might have cooled, but innumerable strands of conflict and intrigue are still woven throughout the planet's societies.

Just because the dragons of the Drakelands have turned their interest more toward economic domination as opposed to territorial conquest doesn't mean that the most powerful among them aren't still interested in the latter, especially if it means expanding their influence or profits. For several decades now, the draconic leaders of Dretchnyl and Serozanyx have maintained a complex web of dragonkin spies that both realms have embedded into the Skyfire Mandate and Allied Territories. Early on, these spies were under strict orders to settle in specific settlements and only observe and report. They gathered data about their neighbors and wrote detailed dispatches about how the societies and governments around them functioned. More recently, though, as the dragonkin spies have had children and raised a new generation of agents, the realms of Dretchnyl and Serozanyx have started assigning their moles to more daring missions. The dragons' end goal, of course, is to fold desirable parts of the Allied Territories into their own nations as colonies—cowed vassals, in the case of wicked Dretchnyl, but willing partners or emigrants in the case of virtuous Serozanyx. However, the dragons' goals are far from assured, especially as the second-generation dragonkin spies begin to fully realize the extent of their traitorous legacies.

The Skyfire Legion is as massive and as well-oiled an operation as any on Triaxus, but all is not wholly peaceful within the mercenary group. Specifically, a few discharged and disgruntled members seek to sow enough discontent within the Skyfire Legion to stage a coup, shake up the organization's leadership, and re-form it in a much crueler, much more authoritarian, and much more profitable image. Most in the Skyfire Mandate believe this conspiracy, colloquially dubbed the Rogue Legion, to be a rumor. However, two former members—**Binata** (CE female dragonkin soldier) and **Flennish** (NE male winterborn ryphorian envoy)—are truly plotting such a coup, though they masquerade as traveling gunsmiths wherever their plans take them. It's not clear how much support Binata and Flennish truly have from the Skyfire Legion's ranks or whether their grand scheme will ever come to fruition. However, if they manage to seize control of the Skyfire Legion, it would throw the mercenaries' many ongoing jobs and future plans into chaos, and the deep-space mining and colonizing expeditions the legion protects would be in serious jeopardy.

In the centuries since spaceflight became commonplace on Triaxus, some of the planet's dragonkin have delved into genetic tinkering to adapt their physiques to life on a starship. This has resulted in a number of their species with slightly narrower frames than their progenitors, who can therefore fit more easily inside narrow starships. Where progress is made, though, there is a price; rumors whisper that some genetically engineered dragonkin are born with animalistic instincts and ferocity in place of their species' normal sensitivity and intelligence. Those who believe these rumors also speak of secret underground enclaves where engineered dragonkin are kept against their will. It's said that some of the governments of the Allied Territories hide this secret from the rest of the solar system, and some speculate that thousands of creatures are being kept for experimentation and worse.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Triaxus teems with kingdoms, nations, realms, settlements, and more places of interest. Below are examples of the myriad lives and plots that play out here.

Aylok

An insular city-state with towering walls and terrifying defenses, Aylok is one of the outlying cities in the Allied Territories that has stubbornly eschewed modernization and refuses to accept the Pact Worlds' authority. Aylok's ruling imperators outright forbid all starship flight in the airspace above their city. Violators are mercilessly shot down, and captured pilots are given summary life prison sentences or worse. Still, despite the dangers, some visitors seek to trade for the city's strange magical goods. By decree of Highest Imperator **Brax** (LE male winterborn ryphorian soldier), these delegations must approach Aylok by land, through trap-lined plains of jagged ice and hordes of furred insectile horrors. Some say that the authoritarian imperators regulate outside visitors so heavily because the city is involved in illegal humanoid-rights violations—perhaps even wicked experimentations on genetically altered dragonkin.

Bora Wood

This coniferous forest stays green no matter the planet's season, but lately, the trees' needles have begun slowly turning brown. Botanists examining the woods claim that the trees are still healthy but are undergoing a subtle mutation, possibly from an unknown contaminant in the soil. More concerning is that in parallel with the change in coloration, a number of species of local fauna have begun to act more aggressively, leading some to worry that the entire forest might need to be razed and the animals relocated. News of Bora Wood has reached the Xenowardens, and they are in the process of launching their own investigations.

Caldera Basin

This geological landmark consists of a deep, fiery pool ringed by the tallest, most active volcanoes on Triaxus. The basin holds a 30-foot-deep lake of sulfuric water that isn't remotely potable. This pool stays scalding hot even in the depths of Triaxian

winters—serving as a place where red dragons of all ages can find sanctuary. None of these is more powerful or feared than **Uzilzylian** (CN female wyrm red dragon). The undisputed empress of Caldera Basin, Uzilzylian claims to hail from the Elemental Plane of Fire, from which she fled hundreds of years ago to escape a horrific enemy. The dragons of the Drakelands largely ignore Uzilzylian and her realm, both because her strength is legendary and because none of them see any useful purpose to invading a land of volcanoes. However, spies from some of Uzilzylian's wicked neighbors have discovered hints that a prize worthy of winning is indeed nestled within this fiery realm.

Cumo

A bustling Skyfire Mandate trade port on a river delta on the north coast of the Sephorian Sea, Cumo is a well-known place where smugglers can offload just about anything. With just a few inquiries, one can find a buyer for any type of good, no matter how illegal or taboo. Many of these trades are conducted in heavily secured back rooms or across highly encrypted digital channels and often through several intermediaries to befuddle any interplanetary law-enforcement agencies (such as the Stewards). The only trade the black-market merchants of Cumo will not participate in is the trafficking of sentient creatures; as such, drow arms dealers have been told repeatedly to take their wares elsewhere. Many shops offer a discount to Skyfire Legionnaires to keep the mercenary group on good terms in case their services are ever required for protection.

Dahak's Claw

In antiquity, dragonkin and ryphorians told stories about the evil dragons who supposedly arose spontaneously from this freshwater lake, whose name is an homage to an evil draconic deity. Now, the landmark seems peaceful and pristine to those who pass it. However, beneath the frozen lake's surface are dozens of massive ice caves that hold a terrifying secret. These are the lairs of evil dragons who have been turned into undead monsters by strange eldritch energies. The horrors work to mine deposits of precious conductive metals buried far underground, and they search for a way to fuse enormous firearms to their rotting flesh. Curiously, alongside the dragons dwell a number of undead ryphorians, some of whom consider their dragon overlords gods. The existence of this underground draconic city of the dead is unsuspected by all but the most observant lakeside hermits, who have recently noticed a strangely metallic, bony dragon taking wing into the night sky.

Doraeshi Rain Forest

One of the solar system's most biologically diverse natural havens in the summer, Triaxus's largest rain forest transforms into an arctic land covered by rare mosses, lichens, and treelike megafflora that can sustain entire communities inside their trunks in the winter. The largest such settlement in the rain forest is Hinth, and its 300 or so inhabitants are ryphorians descended from some of the brightest scientific minds on the planet. Consequently, the walls of Hinth's encompassing tree are covered in high-tech instruments that regulate the

temperature, predict the weather, grow biologically enhanced food in designated areas, and otherwise ease existence in this harsh realm. In charge of Hinth is an advanced artificial intelligence system known only as Iota, which the residents' ancestors built generations ago and which contains the collected consciousnesses of the settlement's founders.

Dretchnyl

Situated south of Caldera Basin across the Blacktooth River, Dretchnyl is the frozen draconic realm of **Dretchnyliax** (CE female cybernetic very old green dragon) and hundreds of her whelps. A few decades before the Gap, fearing the pace and cruelty of Dretchnyl's expansion, a contingent of metallic dragons converged on the realm and weakened its mistress terribly. Dretchnyliax retreated, and for a century or more, she quietly built up a business selling dragon-flesh augmentations she created herself and threatened the other realms of the Drakelands no more. However, in recent decades, she has emerged as something seemingly far more terrible. Fully three times the size she once was, Dretchnyliax is now more machine than flesh-and-bone dragon. Gun-bearing prosthetics have replaced her hind legs, her wings are made of polycarbon plate, and both her eyes are heat- and magic-sensing targeting computers. So far, the green dragon has remained quiet in her frozen woodlands, but rumors of her renewed plans to expand her territory and enslave those who oppose her continue to increase in intensity.

The Duet

This pair of linked lakes in the northern Allied Territories is collectively called the Duet. During the summer, the upper lake—the Verse—is fed by snowmelt from the Cloudhigh Mountains, while the lower lake—the Refrain—empties into the River Eax, and the two are connected by a short waterway known as the Bridge. When winter falls, the Duet completely freezes over, but local ice anglers occasionally claim to hear whispers emanating from the lake, sounds that don't occur during the planet's warmer years.

The Encroach

Triaxus's massive southern glacier is all but uninhabited. Its harsh locale, however, has less to do with this fact than the enormous ursikkas—white-furred, praying mantis-like creatures—that roam this region, devouring all sentient life they come across. Worse, these ursikkas have somehow managed to unearth a technological cache from a failed expedition that was filled with industrial-grade ice-melting cannons. Now, as the glacier creeps toward southern Ning and the Sephorian Archipelago, the ursikkas press northward, wearing the cannons on their backs and seemingly spurred by some unseen force with a mysterious purpose.

The Expanse

The planet's northernmost glacier is a desolate wasteland, but that doesn't stop pockets of hardy humanoids from making their homes here. These small societies tend to be egalitarian, as is common of settlements focused entirely on survival.

The communities share hunting techniques and have established landing spots for starships and other atmospheric craft to help ferry supplies to each other. In recent years, however, the smallest such hamlets have begun falling off the grid, disappearing entirely from communication channels and seemingly vanishing into thin air. Some have blamed rare seasonal diseases, but those ailments would not explain why the settlements never tried to ask their neighbors for help creating a vaccine—or why all of the structures and data presences of the afflicted towns have simply disappeared from existence.

Grenloch

To those who pay the right price, the island-nation of Grenloch is shockingly balmy and pleasant, offering exotic recreation, luxury dining, and fantastic entertainment facilities that present a sharp contrast to the rest of the wintry planet. However, this “beachfront” experience is all an elaborate alternate reality available only to the ultrawealthy, whose unconscious bodies are kept safe and sustained in massive high-tech underground bunkers while their minds experience virtual pleasures. The entire operation is the brainchild and creation of **Andlara Rinelle** (CN female elf technomancer), a brilliant computer programmer and virtual reality specialist. Some say that Andlara went into massive debt to several evil dragons to finance Grenloch Lacuna Beach, as she’s named the resort. Regardless, the place draws offworlders by the thousands every year, who seem either oblivious to or willfully ignorant of the true nature of their vacations.

Hoziah Forest

Even though most of its flora and fauna are in deep slumber, the Hoziah Forest is still home to massive white-furred lemur-sloths, sentient ice caves, and even worse terrors that make settlements here scarce. Though they focus mainly on surviving, the pockets of loosely allied ryphorians and other humanoids living here still send a single representative to the Allied Council when it suits them. In recent years, that representative has been **Calprena Goll** (N female half-elf operative), a quiet, private woman of intense bravery and focus. The Hozians, as they call themselves, have a rough time in the more urbanized areas of the Allied Territories, and those who dare to visit the forest find that the tree-dwelling humanoids have their own unique dialect and customs that have evolved drastically even during the current season.

Ignomus Bay

The fishing industry of Ignomus Bay provides most of the nonsynthetic, nonfarmed food consumed by the humanoids, dragonkin, and dragons of the Drakelands. Vessels of all shapes and sizes constantly ply the bay’s waters, and the area has seen little need for regulation through its history. Over the past few years, however, some of the smaller boats have gone missing, sparking myriad rumors throughout the nearby communities. The blame has been placed on a new species of underwater dragons, very localized storms, swarms of blue-skinned humanoids, and even more bizarre things. A sizable

bounty has been offered for any information leading to this mystery’s solution.

Kamora

More of a military state than a political nation, the city-state of Kamora has more guns than citizens and institutes compulsory army service for all but its least-suited adults. There’s a good reason for such militancy, however, as the territory is situated just north of the Uchorae Jungle. Lurking in this chilly wilderness are enormous, bearlike vampiric beasts called ranoneks, which often wander toward the civilization in search of blood and meat—and inflict massive casualties when they breach the city’s fortified walls. Each Kamoran is rigorously trained in group fighting techniques, which the army uses frequently to stave off ranonek attacks on the city’s outskirts and closer to home. Kamora’s current high commander, **Echera** (NG female winterborn ryphorian solarian/soldier), is considering sending units of elite fighters into the jungle to head off the increasingly violent threats before they reach the city, though the populace is skeptical of this plan.

Meruchia and Nusova

These twin island-continents in the southern Sephorian Sea seem empty from the land’s surface, but a glance upward reveals the truth. Massive hovering citadels situated a half mile in the air—and secured there using a high-tech system of propulsion jets and magnets—take up the islands’ airspace. The citadels were originally engineered so the ryphorian and dragonkin population could avoid the devastating floods that occurred each spring when the Encroach melted. Now, though, the citadels have evolved citizen-governments that are among the most effective on the planet, and they’ve even engineered a way to create sustainable food out of water and gases pulled from the atmosphere. An elect contingent of reconnaissance troopers led by the white-scaled dragonkin **Roslant** (LN male dragonkin envoy) descends once every few months to ensure that no threats lurk on the island-continents below and to escort those who wish to join the citadels as citizens; such pledges, as these prospective citizens are called, go through a rigorous round of aptitude and loyalty testing, and those found worthy are permitted to live on the citadels for life.

Parapet Mountains

Once the main physical barrier that kept the armies of the Drakelands from encroaching onto the Skyfire Mandate, this wide mountain range contains twisting passes and icy peaks. The strong winds that sweep around the summits turn flying into an ordeal; even atmospheric starships have trouble navigating these howling gales. A trio of dormant volcanoes known as the Three Sisters holds the ruins of strange, battered mechanisms thought to have aided the Dragon Legion during its heyday. The current Legion has yet to reclaim these relics, nor has it refurbished the handful of magically constructed bunkers within the mountainsides, as many believe they are haunted or cursed in some way. Members of exploratory groups who have

returned speak of experiencing mysterious lights and bouts of nausea within the structures.

Preita

This province in the Allied Territories contains an array of higher-education institutions, including the Preita Institute of Technology, known as the best technomancy academy on Triaxus and one of the top schools in the Pact Worlds system. Here, scholarly enlightenment is a form of religion, but so are the high-paying corporate contracts its students often receive upon graduation. To land the most lucrative and prestigious contracts, seniors compete annually in elaborate technomancy duels that involve technical know-how, technomagical aptitude, cunning, and subterfuge. Sponsoring employers often include Grenloch Lacuna Beach, the oligarchs of Ning, leaders of the Drakelands' dragoncorps, and a wide array of offworld magnates and business leaders.

Sephorian Archipelago

This motley collection of outposts, hamlets, and villages nominally accepts the Pact Worlds' authority, but only because their leaders so rarely communicate with outsiders that they have not officially rejected the arrangement. In reality, the archipelago's brusque culture is a cover for the secretive research labs hidden within each enclave. The scientists in each lab work on a small piece of a larger project of which they are kept ignorant. Once finished, a team is given a generous severance package in exchange for signing strict nondisclosure agreements that contain magically enforced clauses. Only a small, unknown board of directors is aware of the entire project's larger goal, and their will is enforced by a scarred woman named **Wenda** (N female transitional ryphorian operative), who operates out of the city of Qua, but occasionally must leave the planet to exterminate former scientists who have spoken too much of their work.

Serozanyx

The sprawling plains northeast of Clawfist Wood are the demesne of **Serozanyxia** (LG female very old gold dragon), one of the few powerful metallic dragons who have managed to secure a place in the Drakelands. Serozanyxia keeps up a mutually beneficial alliance with the dragonkin and ryphorians of the Skyfire Mandate; over the years, the dragon has sent considerable supplies to her allies when they've been in need, and vice versa. Should they need harbor, traveling or besieged honest folk are always welcome in the gold dragon's realm, which is populated with a diverse array of humanoids and kindly sentient beings. Despite her many warm diplomatic relationships, however, no one has seen the gold dragon in decades. Some believe that her body is somehow maimed, though her consciousness continues send missives to her allies and subjects in the form of regular voice and hologram transmissions.

Uchorae Jungle

A haven for all manner of vampiric predators in the summer, Triaxus's largest jungle in the winter is home primarily to

the hated bearlike vampiric beasts known as ranoneks. This season, ranonek attacks on settled areas—including Kamora, just to the north—have become more violent, and it's no coincidence. The beasts' simple minds are under the control of a ryphorian who fell to a necromantic disease the previous summer: **Creeva** (NE male ryphorian vampire mystic). An egomaniac, he has set his sights on overrunning Kamora, turning its citizens into undead, and ruling over the new necropolis. So far, no one from the city-state knows of Creeva's existence, though the vampire has already begun to set plans into motion.

Vileti's Sound

Due to its proximity to Zo, this once-pristine body of water was polluted with starship fuel runoff and discarded hunks of plastic and metal sometime during the Gap. The rate of contamination has decreased since the widespread adoption of Drift technology, but the sound remains an ecological disaster. Xenowardens and local conservationists struggle to clean the waterways, but are hindered by attacks from the hideous monsters that have evolved within the disgusting depths over the centuries and that now swim among the artificial reefs formed from ancient, junked starships.

Weldfall

This northern subcontinent hosts a handful of bucolic villages that have resisted adopting much of the technology of the modern age. These quiet people (mostly dragonkin and ryphorians) spend their time farming root-based plants, foraging for nuts and berries, and herding the shaggy, multilegged wollopeds. A major exception to this particular way of living is the banks of automated flamethrowers that melt the encroaching glaciers and fend off arctic monsters during winter; a devoted crew of Triaxians operating in yearlong shifts maintains these weapons.

Zo

In stark contrast to the self-sequestered Aylok, this allied territory is a hub for spaceflight. The city-state is filled with starship pilots, mechanics, and engineers. Theorizing about the most efficient way to build Drift engines or how to get the deadliest spread of particle beams happens as often in Zo's hangars as it does in its spaceflight academies. The city is known for its first-class ace pilots, who often take lucrative jobs as corporate fliers. This had led to some speculation that spying is one of Zo's more clandestine exports. If that's the case, Ace Mayor **Sindeo** (CG male winterborn ryphorian mechanic) has done a spectacular job hiding the evidence, as he gladly offers tours of the city's top facilities to any outsider who asks properly.

ZO

CG spaceport

Population 18,400 (50% ryphorian, 32% dragonkin, 18% other)

Government true democracy (Ace Mayor Sindeo)

Qualities academic, technologically advanced

Maximum Item Level 8th

DRAGONBLOOD

+1 CHA

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CAST

PLAYER
OPTIONS

You can feel draconic magic pulsing through your veins, and the guttural roar of dragons invigorates you. Whether you're from an area with deep ties to dragons or have simply spent your life studying the magnificent beasts, you understand how dragons' categorization [metallic or chromatic and specific colors] affects their moods, outlooks, and even ultimate goals. You can harness the power of dragons, and you sing the creatures' praises wherever you go.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You have a voracious appetite for lore about dragons and never forget a detail, whether it's about draconic culture, traditions, and abilities, or the personal information of the system's oldest dragons. When you attempt a Culture or Mysticism check to recall knowledge about dragons' ways, their abilities, or the names and general personal details about dragons that are adults or older, reduce the DC by 5. Culture is a class skill for you, but if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Culture checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Charisma at character creation.

DRAGON MIEN [6TH]

You can harness the terrifying reputation of dragons to strike fear into the hearts of those you oppose. You've read or seen so much of dragons' tactics that you can mimic them with surprising accuracy and effectiveness. When you successfully use Intimidate to bully a creature, its change in attitude lasts for an additional 10 minutes. When you successfully use Intimidate to demoralize an opponent, it is shaken for 1 additional round.

DRAGON SKIN [12TH]

You have conditioned your skin to withstand the inherent power that dragons hold inside them, and you are more inured to elemental damage as a result. The first time each day you would take energy damage, you gain energy resistance 5 against that type of damage for that attack and for 1 hour afterward or until you rest to regain Stamina Points, whichever comes first. This energy resistance stacks with only one other type of energy resistance you have from another source.

DRAGON HOARD [18TH]

You have a deep understanding of dragons' motivations, natural prowess, and ancient cultures, and you have taken on a dragon's love of material possessions. Up to twice per day, you can spend 10 minutes cataloging and examining your wealth—such as inquiring into your bank account or polishing your most expensive weapon—to recover 1 Resolve Point; this doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points.





LIAVARA

One of two massive gas giants in the Pact Worlds system, Liavara is known for its peach-colored skies, extensive dust rings, and countless shepherd moons. However, Liavara does not hold full Pact Worlds membership. Instead, the neighboring world of Bretheda administers Liavara as a refuge for the planet's most notable species, the barathu-like Dreamers. Nevertheless, many societies and cultures thrive on Liavara and its moons, and commerce and industry is booming despite the strict limitations placed upon such activities.

GEOGRAPHY

Like many gas giants, Liavara has no terrestrial surface or solid core; its atmospheric layers simply grow denser and hotter the farther one travels toward the center, until the pressure and temperature initiate phase changes in the gases, creating a core dense enough to crush any vessel unprepared for the journey. Liavara's atmosphere is predominantly helium and hydrogen,

and while it is not necessarily breathable by many humanoids, neither is it toxic. In comparison to stormy Bretheda, Liavara enjoys periods of relative calm, though all manner of atmospheric weather phenomena can be experienced somewhere on the world.

The outer layers of the planet are not so different from the atmospheres of other worlds, save that there is no such thing as a clear day and the sky is formed of clouds ranging from yellow to orange to red hues. Deeper within, as atmospheric pressure increases, the layers become more sealike, and the creatures within them appear to swim rather than fly. A variety of gaseous compounds, many of practical value and some exceptionally rare or outright unavailable elsewhere in the system, exist throughout all the planet's layers, leading to the planet's status as a highly sought territory for gas-mining efforts.

Just north of the equator, a band of clouds called the Ribbon encircles the planet. The air currents in this region move swiftly, and its clouds are substantially lighter in color than the rest

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WORLDS

THE WORLDS

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of Liavara's atmosphere, making it one of the planet's most distinctive features. Records of the Ribbon predate the Gap, though comparisons of pre-Gap and post-Gap images of Liavara indicate that the band has shifted slightly farther north over time. The coloration difference is due primarily to variations in the amount of nitrogen dioxide in the atmosphere; the Ribbon has the most direct exposure to the sun, free from the shadow of the planet's rings, and the incrementally higher temperature here pushes that particular reddish-orange compound into other regions, darkening those clouds and leaving the Ribbon a paler hue.

The planet's extensive dust rings are even more distinctive, and far more impressive. Liavara is the only planet in the system to sport rings of any kind. These bands of dust and ice are shaped and defined into particular striations by the planet's innumerable shepherd moons—ranging from chunks of rock some tens of feet in diameter to asteroids and tiny planetoids. Many shepherd moons bear unexplained marks of ancient civilizations: abandoned mines, obelisks covered in eldritch markings, and even lavish tombs.

The only true settlement on Liavara is the floating city of Roselight, a series of transparent aluminum and polycarbonate

domes atop a mechanical thruster platform, built almost exclusively as a carefully managed gas-mining outpost. The Brethedan administration ensures that Roselight remains at a specified point in the planet's atmosphere, so barathu overseers can monitor traffic and activity to ensure the mining corporations operate within the planet's strict limitations.

Maintaining a fixed orbit above Roselight is Upwell, an artificial satellite serving as the main point of entry to the planet's atmosphere. As Liavara itself is closed to most traffic, Upwell is a bustling center of commerce in its own right, benefiting from the traffic of the mining industries.

Liavara's five larger moons each have their own complex ecologies. Arkanen continually bleeds off its atmosphere in a comet-like trail, but the moon's eccentric orbital pattern causes it to make an astronomically impossible dive through Liavara's atmospheric layers each year. This causes massive electrical storms, but it does enable Arkanen to capture enough air to maintain its inhabitants for the year to come.

Osoro would be a normal enough world if its islands emerged from a sea of water. Instead, these peaks reach up into the oxygen-rich upper atmosphere out of a soup of toxic gases—fumes produced in combination from sulfuric vents

and the emissions of poisonous plants between the moon's vast mountains. The inhospitable habitat has not discouraged its residents, however, and Osoro boasts several large cities, including the narrow but miles-long metropolis of Saborosaan along the Bhalakosti Ridge, the massive spaceport Tholem on the equatorial plateau, and the great capital Orosalos in the southern hemisphere, high on the slopes of the moon's highest peak.

Melos is well known for the beauty of its natural landscapes, though the moon's most notable features are the eerie ruins of its once-great cities, abandoned for millennia. Nchak is not as attractive, with its thin atmosphere and rocky surface, and most of its civilization resides in subterranean warrens, but some visitors find an austere beauty in the moon's mountainous vistas.

Liavara's final major moon, Hallas, is cordoned off behind a magical barrier. The moon's native species, the hyperevolved energy beings known as hallajins, are powerful entities whose telepathic touch overloads the minds of all lesser species—including virtually all humanoids. Ages ago, Arkanen's wizards responded to this danger by erecting arcane warning beacons around Hallas, powered by the immense energy generated as Arkanen passes through Liavara's atmosphere each year, and thus maintained throughout the millennia. The hallajins have no physical forms and therefore no use for physical settlements. As a result, Hallas remains a barren, unsettled wilderness.

RESIDENTS

The gently swirling clouds of Liavara's endless atmosphere are home to an astonishing breadth of life, but its most prominent inhabitants, the Dreamers, are not actually native to the world. Long ago, barathu explorers departed the stormy skies of Bretheda within telepathically controlled oma, traversing the void to reach nearby Liavara. But their original purpose in making that journey—if there was one—is long lost, and the barathus who settled on Liavara underwent a psychological and physiological departure from their Brethedan kin. The Dreamers of Liavara still physically resemble the barathus of Bretheda, and their intelligence is still evident in their complex social interactions and their echoic songs, but even the Dreamers' onetime kin find their logic confounding and their actions without apparent purpose. Some describe the creatures as regressed or devolved; most, however, know better than to dismiss the Dreamers as feral. Barathus widely regard them as enlightened, and their preternatural songs have shown truly prophetic qualities on more than one occasion, though their greatest prediction references some truly remarkable event yet to come.

The Dreamers, though certainly the most intelligent creatures on the planet, are not alone in the endless skies of their home. Liavara's native races take a wide variety of forms, all suited to life in the clouds or adapted to the extreme pressure of the world's deeper layers. Giant bacteria and epiphyte vegetation drift along on the currents in abundance, forming the foundation of the planet's food chains. The roughly avian kriegakos "graze" by brushing up against these plants, allowing the digestive pores on their skin—often confused with their

equally abundant and similarly embedded visual sensors—to absorb nutrients directly into the bloodstream. Kriegakos fall prey to the larger cloud-skates, which leverage biological jet propulsion to overtake the smaller creatures. Few life-forms on Liavara are safe from the completely transparent tarenake, though savvy targets know to watch for the empty spaces and displaced gas that belie the hunters' locations. Equally deadly are the keji swarms, conglomerations of thousands of floating amoeba-like organisms that can surround and dissolve a creature within mere moments.

Closer to the planet's core, as the clouds condense into a pressurized mass closer to liquid than gas, the predators swim rather than soar. Truly massive beasts make their way through these lightless depths, hunting not with claws and teeth but with acid-coated webbing, vampiric tentacles, and even magical fields to attract or ensnare their prey. Few explorers brave the dangers of the deeper layers, as fewer still return from such expeditions.

No one is certain whether the oma—massive space whales known for their magnificent songs—are native to Liavara, Bretheda, or some other place, but they can often be found either diving among Liavara's gentle clouds or skimming through its dust rings. The creatures strain matter from both environs through their energy-filtering baleen, gaining sustenance from biological material as well as minuscule electric charges and incautious lightning elementals, the latter also particularly drawn to Liavara's rings.

A limited number of humanoids call Liavara home, at least temporarily, most making their livings on the gas-mining station Roselight. This culture is a diverse jumble of races, ranging from androids well suited to working in an oxygen-free environment to lashunta researchers to vesk bodyguards protecting the station's human overseers and ysoki entrepreneurs.

Most of Liavara's major moons are populated. Arkanen is home to two native sentient species: the three-eyed, electrically attuned humanoid dirindi, and the centaur-like sazarons, who have humanoid torsos and four-legged saurian bodies. In addition, the moon's unique and powerful annual orbital phenomenon draws researchers and arcanists of all species from throughout the Pact Worlds.

Osoro was colonized by dirindi from Arkanen before the Gap, and they remain its most populous species, though they share their moon with large numbers of uncatalogued predators inhabiting the toxic-gas seas surrounding Osoro's settled mountaintops. Melos, on the other hand, remains largely abandoned following the disappearance of its native inhabitants millennia ago, save for those archaeological outposts supporting various research expeditions into the moon's ruins.

Nchak retains a sizable population of its original insectile inhabitants, operating under the leadership of the supposed mortal incarnation of the Forever Queen. However, the divine status that Hylaxians have accorded to this entity has resulted in a massive influx of shirrens alongside a smaller number of immigrants of other insectile races, including Brethedan haans and other species from elsewhere in the galaxy that nevertheless hold Hylax in high regard.

The hallajins are the primary residents of Hallas, but thanks to the powerful arcane quarantine placed around it, Hallas is the only Liavaran moon that is almost entirely free of outsiders—though occasionally a fanatical (or foolish) zealot breaches the wards in an attempt to gain some great boon from the moon's psychic natives.

One of Liavara's shepherd moons, a hunk of rock named Hibb that was long thought to be uninhabited, has recently been revealed to be the home of a previously unknown sentient species called bantrids, who emerged from heretofore undiscovered underground bunkers on the moon. These unusual creatures have a single spherical foot-orb instead of lower limbs and are eager to meet their "new" neighbors in the Pact Worlds. More information about bantrids can be found on page 210.

SOCIETY

Liavara is not a member of the Absalom Pact; the gas giant, its impressive rings, and its many shepherd moons are collectively designated a Pact Worlds protectorate, administered exclusively by the collective governing entity Confluence on the neighboring world Bretheda (usually through its mysterious Confluence Agents). Liavara's only "native" inhabitants, the Dreamers, have no society to speak of—at least not one that other species can recognize. But the other races that reside on Liavara or one of its many moons have formed their own communities and cultures.

Roselight has virtually no restrictions in social areas, resulting in a rather rough-and-tumble culture where nearly anything goes among the surprisingly diverse, miner-oriented population. No one species holds dominance or even a majority of the station's population, making it a surprisingly equitable settlement, if a bit lawless and short on high culture.

Of Liavara's moons, Arkanen is the most metropolitan and enjoys full Pact Worlds membership under a joint dirindi-sazaron government. Osoro is also a signatory to the Absalom Pact, and remains culturally similar to Arkanen, though Osorans consider themselves to be pioneer folk of a hardier variety than the "soft" urbanites of Arkanen.

Nchak, once an outlier of insectile civilization worshipping the Forever Queen, has become something of a cultural touchstone with the arrival of the shirren species in the Pact Worlds. Along with this peaceful race came the understanding that the entity worshiped by Nchak's inhabitants for millennia was in fact a manifestation of the goddess Hylax. Over the last few centuries, the moon has become a central hub of worship for her followers in the Pact Worlds, catapulting Nchak into a far more prominent position as a Pact Worlds protectorate than a moon of its size would normally merit.

On quarantined Hallas, what society the hallajins may have developed in their isolation remains unknown, as the inward-focused energy beings rarely deign to communicate with outsiders in any way.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

The greatest tension on Liavara is between people and profit.

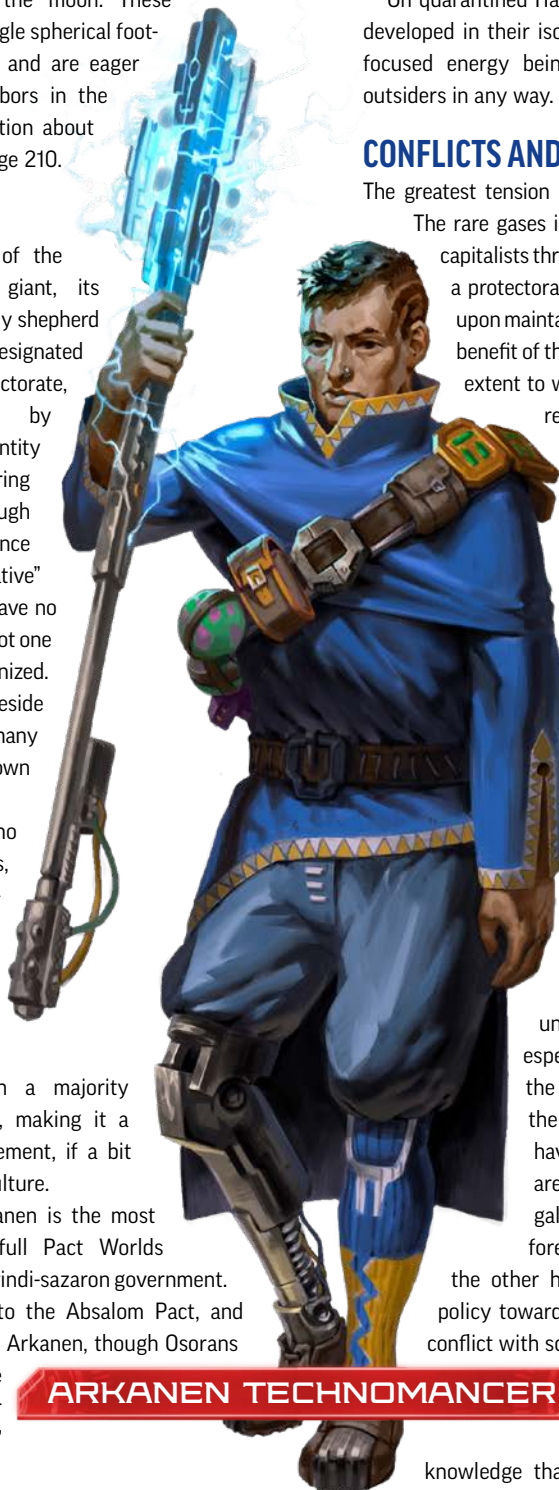
The rare gases in the planet's atmosphere are a draw for capitalists throughout the system, but Liavara's status as a protectorate and the governing barathus' insistence upon maintaining the world's natural ecosystem for the benefit of the Dreamers has placed a harsh limit on the extent to which entrepreneurs can mine the planet's resources. This has led to a proliferation

of illicit mobile mining operations in restricted and more dangerous parts of the planet. With no oversight, these unregulated floating mining platforms often explode or suffer other accidental mishaps, and their crews often fight with one another, attack rival operations, or kill those who might expose their illicit activities. Even on the authorized city of Roselight, competition between rival mining corporations leads to infighting, sabotage, and generally rough streets.

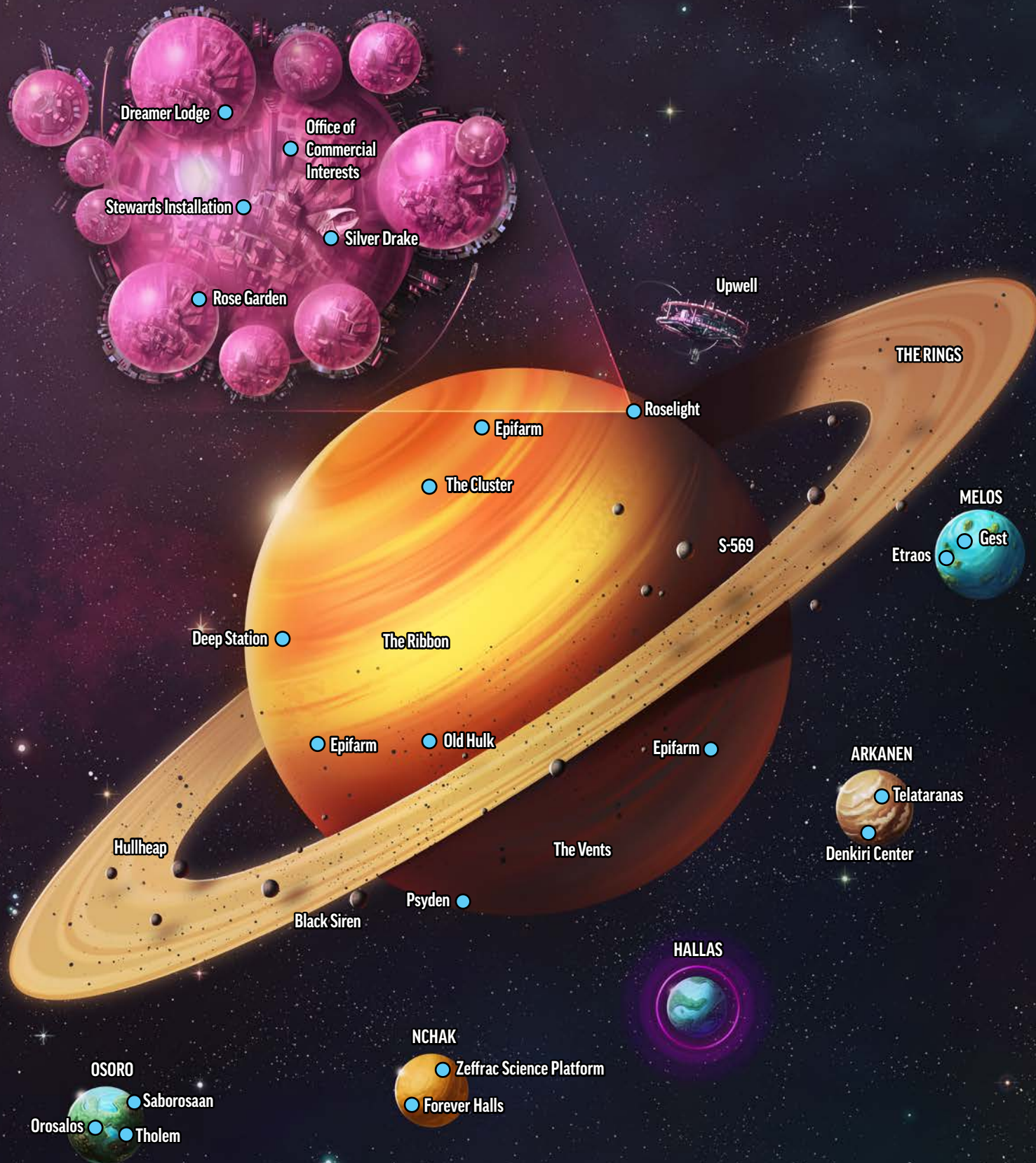
Strangely, another source of conflict on the planet arises from those who at first seem to support the barathus' reverence of the Dreamers. Several groups of scholars seek to study the Dreamers' prophecies and understand their potential predictions, especially because a popular theory among the limited scholastic research to date states the Dreamers' songs in ages past might have predicted the Gap, and thus scholars are eager—even desperate—to learn what galaxy-shaking event the creatures are now foretelling. The barathu administration, on

the other hand, maintains a strict noninterference policy toward the Dreamers, and thus they remain in conflict with scholars hoping to learn more.

It is widely known that the Dreamers command some psychic abilities; less common is the knowledge that Liavara itself is subject to a higher-



ARKANEN TECHNOMANCER



Not to scale.

than-average amount of latent background psychic energy. Whether this is a result of the Dreamers' songs or the cause of their mysterious transcendence remains unknown. Regardless, cultists looking to absorb that psychic energy seek out the planet and the Dreamers. Even when this doesn't place them in conflict with the barathus' policies, such cultists remain a nuisance, frequently getting in the way and requiring rescue efforts more often than even the work vessels of the more poorly equipped mining operations. Furthermore, those who are successful in their quests are more often than not successful only in gaining psychic powers—and not in controlling them, which makes them a menace to themselves and others.

The residents of Nchak fear a very different threat. Many of that moon's inhabitants remain far more aware of the Swarm than the typical Pact Worlds citizen, due to the Nchaki's insectile nature and the shirrens' Swarm heritage. The Forever Queen and the ideals she represents make Nchak a particularly ripe target should the Swarm choose to return to the Pact Worlds in a resumed effort to overrun the system.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following entries describe interesting locales on Liavara and its many moons.

Liavara and Its Shepherd Moons

In addition to locations in and among its clouds, the gas giant has a number of notable small shepherd moons.

Black Siren

Drow emissaries from Apostae founded this outpost on one of Liavara's unnamed shepherd moons. Their settlement meticulously adheres to all codes and regulations of both the Absalom Pact and the barathu administration, leaving few courses of action for parties concerned with the drow's presence. None, even the resident drow, contest that they maintain their station for the sole purpose of monitoring the lucrative gas-mining operations on the planet, nor is there any question that they do so out of a vested interest in undermining their competitors' efforts. But with no violations of any regulations—a fact the drow are quick to point out and eagerly boast of—authorities are forced to allow the outpost.

The Cluster

Though Liavara is a gas giant with open skies instead of solid land, residents and scholars alike know that the clouds often carry other materials. North of the Ribbon is a clump of low-density rocky material that might be large enough to host a small settlement if it weren't constantly grinding and clashing together. Liavara's Dreamers fastidiously avoid the place, though no one knows why. Perhaps the strange clump of rocks houses some terrible evil force, or perhaps these are the cursed remains of a shepherd moon—which the Dreamers generally regard with a kind of reverence—that long ago crashed into the planet.

Deep Station

The depths of a gas giant are a fascinating subject for

researchers, and this research facility, complete with a tiny shrine to Yaraesa, floats at a depth where the pressure is too intense for most structures to retain integrity. Deep Station was built with a sturdier infrastructure than most vessels transporting staff and supplies to and from the station, so while the station could go deeper into Liavara's atmosphere, it would then be unable to receive support. The pressure and electromagnetic fields at such depths usually wreak havoc with standard communications systems, but recently transmissions from Deep Station have stopped altogether. Colleagues at Deep Station's partner institutions would deeply love to find a starship crew with a ship hardy enough to brave the gas giant's depths to investigate.

Epifarms

The lack of terra firma on Liavara presents some particular challenges related to sustaining its various settlements, as limited as they are. Chief among these is food production, but teams of barathus and Xenowardens have developed an ingenious solution: massive floating farms cultivating domesticated macrobacteria and massive epiphytes in a close symbiosis. The plants pull trace amounts of oxygen from the atmosphere to produce water, which the macrobacteria combine with other gases to synthesize nutrients to support the plants. The result is a largely sustainable supply of protein and vitamins for the planet's inhabitants (though most consumers readily admit that the textures leave a bit to be desired), with some even exported to Upwell and a number of the lunar cities. The "epifarmers" who tend these floating farms have developed new strains of bacteria with the potential to drastically increase yields, but these new species show signs of enhanced awareness, and thus have raised ethical questions about whether it's acceptable to eat them.

Hullheap

On the relatively small shepherd moon S-288, dozens of crashed starships form a massive, twisted heap of metal, polycarbonate, and other debris. No one knows what drew the first ship to the moon or why it crashed; after all, such unfortunate mishaps are relatively common on a galactic scale. But rumors of the tremendous value of that first ship's cargo drew other spacefarers looking to salvage their way into retirement, only to find their own ships crashing into the moon at the same spot and adding their hulls to the pile. This, of course, only further spurred the rumors of untold wealth, and every few years another intrepid explorer, certain that he or she will be the one to survive the dangers and extract the treasure, plots a course to S-288 despite standing warnings about the still-unexplained phenomenon that causes ships to plummet into the heap. Official assurances that there is no treasure to be found only fuel rumors that whatever prize lies beneath Hullheap must be valuable indeed if even the governmental authorities are trying to cover it up.

Old Hulk

Before Roselight was established, gas mining on Liavara was conducted from a scrappy mechanical platform built

sometime during the Gap. It had already failed by the time history resumed, abandoned and left to deteriorate within the planet's depths. Its buoyancy engines, however, retain at least some level of functionality, and the platform bobs between the upper and lower layers of the planet's atmosphere. This erratic elevation means that sometimes the derelict structure "surfaces" from the clouds below, like the corpse of a mechanical whale, floating for a few hours or days before sinking back into the unbearable pressure of the planet's depths. The facility surely holds some evidence of the time of its construction, and likely untold other artifacts, salvageable materials, and valuables—but explorers must not only manage the unpredictable window of opportunity but also overcome whatever creatures might still be living within.

Psyden

This tiny, self-contained outpost maintains a location in Liavara's skies on roughly the opposite side of the world from Roselight. Its population consists entirely of individuals seeking to develop some kind of psychic powers via exposure to the planet's latent psychic energy. The settlement has become something of a mecca for would-be mystics, doubling as a place of worship for Oras. For most of Psyden's century-long history, only a rare few individuals have actually manifested supernatural abilities—roughly the same number produced in any other environment. But over the last decade, more and more residents have begun manifesting unusual abilities rumored to result from the Dreamers' influence (see the dream prophet theme on page 117). Believers insist their efforts have paid off, but skeptics are beginning to wonder if some kind of illicit biotech augmentations or other factors might be at play.

The Rings

Liavara's rings have long fascinated those creatures with telescopes powerful enough to see them. They maintain sharply defined edges and distinctive striations courtesy of the shepherd moons, but despite being almost entirely formed of dust and ice, the rings are anything but barren. Their most notable inhabitants are the spacefaring oma, which skim across the rings straining out nutrients and whatever energy they can capture. Only in the past few decades have researchers discovered that a scant minority of the particles in the rings—fewer than one per billion—are fragments of hyper-resonant crystal that retain all sonic vibrations that have ever passed through them, leading to the hypothesis that these crystals are what draw the oma here in the first place. This discovery captured the immediate interest of the Starfinder Society, as its members suspect these crystals might retain sonic "memories" of events that occurred during the Gap, though little progress has yet been made in testing that theory.

Roselight

Although it exists solely for Liavara's tightly controlled gas-mining industry, Roselight is a surprisingly beautiful city—a floating platform of steel and polycarbon capped with transparent aluminum domes of varying sizes that catch

the light filtering through Liavara's peach-colored clouds to shimmer like giant soap bubbles. The tight restrictions on the city result in an environment not dissimilar from a space station, as everything in the city, including air and water, must be recycled.

The barathu-run Office of Commercial Interests on Roselight oversees all commercial endeavors on Liavara. It issues the permits required to tap the planet's natural resources, and the staff enforces harsh penalties against companies whose operations violate the strict terms of their contracts. However, the OCI has been a den of bribery and corruption since the day it was first constructed, and it has long been suspected of hiring out contractors for illegal mining operations.

The Liavaran headquarters of the Stewards is located on Roselight, and its warrior-diplomats are ready to strike out into the gas giant or onto one of its moons at a moment's notice. In addition, the Aspis Consortium openly maintains an office called Silver Drake, ostensibly to help police Liavara for illegal mining operations. However, most unaffiliated Roselighters are certain their presence and activity is a cover to allow the Consortium to scout out or even operate their own illegal deep-dive mining runs. The Starfinder Society, for its part, operates out of the Dreamer Lodge, the only lodge serving Liavara and its moons. A blocky building incongruously called the Rose Garden is the permanent outpost of the Xenowardens on Liavara. The Xenowardens staunchly support Liavara's status as a protectorate and oppose capitalistic efforts that might harm the planet's natural environment, leading to frequent conflicts with various gas-mining interests.

ROSELIGHT

LN city

Population 54,000 (35% human, 30% barathu, 8% ysoki, 6% android, 2% lashunta, 1% haan, 1% sarcesian, 1% vesk, 16% other)

Government autocracy (Confluence)

Qualities bureaucratic, insular

Maximum Item Level 10th

S-569

Liavara's shepherd moons are almost too plentiful to count, but modern technology has made it possible to track and catalog them, if perhaps not necessarily to give them all evocative names. Most bear simple numeric designations to aid in tracking their orbits and managing the surprising number that bear various signs of past habitation. Scholars and Starfinders take interest in the latter, while astronomers monitoring their orbital paths notice when those paths change, as has been the case with one of the larger bodies, S-569. Its formerly regular orbit has been shifting almost imperceptibly, but enough that it is now evident that its path will certainly cause it to collide with Osoro sometime in the next decade, a disaster that would likely obliterate life on Osoro and could cause substantial damage to Liavara and its other moons as well. Authorities from Liavara and Osoro are soliciting proposals for adjusting S-569's trajectory to avoid such a collision, while also—more quietly—uncovering why the moon's previously predictable orbit has suddenly changed.

Trade Lanes

With Liavara's dust rings and shepherd moons complicating starship travel between the planet and its larger moons, most traffic follows a series of established trade lanes that avoid these hazards. Unfortunately, having merchant vessels in predictable places leads to a different type of hazard: piracy. Encounters with pirates such as the Free Captains and other, less reputable criminals is a threat that forces starships to travel heavily armed and grouped together for safety—or at least they did, until the Free Captains seemingly abandoned the entire Liavaran system. In the absence of once-common attacks and sightings, traders are beginning to wonder what caused their sudden respite. Some suspect a ploy to launch a much larger, more brazen assault on Liavara's moons and settlements; others wonder if some trouble among the Free Captains has forced a change in their tactics.

Upwell

One of Liavara's larger shepherd moons, previously uninhabited and free from any marks of civilization, was converted into a space station shortly after Liavara was granted protectorate status and the city of Roselight was constructed. Upwell serves as Liavara's primary spaceport, and cargo haulers laden with high-demand materials mined from the planet below chug regularly between Roselight and the station, transferring their cargoes to massive bulk freighters that make the journey to other worlds. Upwell has never run smoothly, but with an upsurge in accidents and breakdowns, fingers have been alternately pointed at the Xenowardens, surely trying to get other races off the Dreamers' planet; the Android Abolitionist Front, as it is not uncommon to discover androids still enslaved in the planet's various gas-mining operations; drow saboteurs from Apostae; and other forces—or any combination of these groups. Without sufficient forces to handle an investigation, the Stewards and station officials are looking for an experienced, objective team to quietly investigate the matter.

The Vents

At a somewhat stationary location just south of the equator are the Vents, a nearly constant upwelling of gases from the deeper layers of Liavara's atmosphere forced to the surface in massive billowing clouds. Dreamers can almost always be found here, soaring through the fluffy swirls, but the valuable gases are also tempting targets for illicit gas-mining. The restrictions on gas-mining efforts and prohibitions on interfering with the Dreamers has so far limited traffic here, but it's only a matter of time before greed wins out over better judgment.

Arkanen

Famous for its many lightning storms and its anomalous orbit, the moon of Arkanen includes the following notable sites.

Denkiri Center

Arkanen's primary technomagical research facility is typically a place of studious research and experimentation, save for the few weeks each year surrounding the moon's dive through Liavara's atmosphere. As such, the recent spate of leading

researchers suddenly dying of acute cranial overstimulation (or, as the more salacious news vidfeeds are calling it: "exploding brain syndrome") is somewhat unprecedented. The physical evidence has been identical in each case, suggesting some kind of incredibly potent psychic energy at work. Initial analysis suggests the energy life-forms of Hallas are the culprits, but the ancient wards around that moon, combined with the hallajins' own tendency to ignore the larger universe around them, cast doubt on that theory. The administration of the Denkiri Center is preparing to launch an investigation to assess the stability of the arcane wards around Hallas, hoping to determine whether the hallajins have begun to emerge or if some outside entity is framing them for its own underhanded efforts.

Telataranas

The biggest city on Arkanen (and in the entire Liavaran planetary system), and the ancient capital of the sazarons, Telataranas hosts one of the largest concentrations of magical universities and mystical academies in the Pact Worlds. Tall pylons are interspersed throughout Telataranas's streets and around its perimeter, silently standing vigil over the city. Each year, when Arkanen dives through Liavara's atmosphere, these pylons absorb the energy of the violent electric storms that surge across the moon, protecting Telataranas's structures and inhabitants from harm as well as providing free power to the city.

Melos

The mysterious Melos draws many visitors to the following notable locations.

Etraos

At one time, in ages lost even before the Gap, Melos boasted a tremendous population centered in this now-ruined city, widely accepted to be the capital of the Melosian civilization. The city's inhabitants, as well as the moon's entire populace, vanished en masse in the Taking, an event held by some to be a religious rapture and described by others as a sinister genocide. Recently, a small group of fanatical Elorituans has taken up residence in Etraos. Rather than simply deciphering and understanding the lost civilization and its disappearance, these colonists seek to recreate the Taking, with themselves as the subjects of what they are certain was a glorious ascension at the hands of their god, the Hidden Truth.

Gest

A relatively small archaeological outpost on the outskirts of the ruined city of Etraos, Gest is nevertheless the largest inhabited settlement on Melos. The opportunity to uncover the truth of the Taking and explore the history of the Melosian civilization draws archaeologists from across the galaxy. Currently, the active archaeological expeditions on Melos are focused on the capital city of Etraos; the nearby temple complex of Chyraos, seemingly dedicated to deities unknown elsewhere in the Pact Worlds; and the island of Thrienos, which contains the tombs of what are believed to be the moon's most legendary pre-Taking heroes.

Nchak

Inhabited mainly by arthropods who worship an insectoid deity, Nchak includes the following notable sites.

Forever Halls

These palatial, subterranean chambers beneath Nchak's surface have long been home to the Forever Queen, believed by the Nchaki to be the mortal incarnation of the goddess Hylax. With the spread of Hylax's church throughout the Pact Worlds, this once-insignificant moon has discovered a new and profound importance. Many Hylaxians feel that it's inappropriate for Nchak, an obviously sacred site for their faith, to be simply a protectorate under the administration of another world's government. Several coalitions of the faithful have begun lobbying the Pact Council for full Pact Worlds membership for Nchak, equal in stature to Arkanen, Osoro, and the Brethedan moon Kalo-Mahoi.

Zefrac Science Platform

Just over a quarter-century ago, this scientific research space station orbiting Nchak experienced a sudden, devastating decompression. Among the thousands of deceased were all 14 members of the Wise Council, a group of prestigious shirren scientists responsible for governing the station. It was soon discovered, however, that every single member of the Wise Council had in fact died months or even years before, but their bodies were inhabited by a species of intelligent fungal parasites now named dycepskians. While the decompression event was catastrophic, it also derailed the parasites' plan—discovered only after their demise—to steer the entire space station into the moon. The strange part, though, is that no group or individual has ever stepped forward to claim responsibility for the event, and conspiracy theorists point to the Unseen as the actors behind the event. The science platform's new leadership—a council of mixed races subject to careful scrutiny and regular medical examinations—periodically hires groups of adventurers to try to discover who was in fact responsible for the incident.

Osoro

Among Osoro's mountaintop settlements, the moon's most noteworthy areas include the following.

Bhalakosti Excursions

A testament to the ability of humanoids to capitalize on the most dire of circumstances, the Saborosaan-based Bhalakosti Excursions has found a silver lining in the toxic clouds of Osoro's lower atmosphere: survival safaris. Available in 3-, 7-, and 10-day lengths, as well as a day-trip option for the slightly less courageous, these tours take paying participants deep into the moon's poisonous jungles for adrenaline-charged expeditions from which only the most stalwart return. While these tours are incredibly dangerous, the business has a powerful legal team that has drafted ironclad waivers. Though originally designed for—and certainly still available to—extremist tourists of any race, the company has become well known among vesk circles as a particularly thrilling means of testing one's mettle

against the challenges of untamed nature at its most intense. So popular are the tours, in fact, that Bhalakosti Excursions has become something of a hot spot for vesk looking to impress superiors or potential romantic partners, and the waiting list is rarely shorter than several months.

Orosalos

Osoro's capital is a great metropolis that takes its name from the moon's highest mountain, whose entire exposed surface is covered by the city. Like all settlements on Osoro, Orosalos's walls were built to defend against the occasional attack from predators rising up from the toxic-gas clouds and the jungles hidden below, such as the spiral-winged, razor-fanged irokirois that corkscrew their way through the sky. Typically such defenses are proven necessary only a few times each year, but Orosalos has fended off three separate attacks in the past month, and reports from Osoro's other large cities suggest the entire moon is experiencing a rash of increased monster activity. The government suspects that something is driving the creatures up from their native gaseous depths, whether that be an even larger creature or an ecological shift causing a shortage of these predators' typical prey. With the attacks growing more frequent, the Osoran government is looking to hire explorers to brave the toxic jungles beneath the moon's inhabited peaks to determine the source of the disruption and find a way to put things right.

Saborosaan

Stretched along the top of the narrow Bhalakosti Ridge, Saborosaan is a city where space is at a premium. The wealthy live in elegant towers on the ridgeline in the center of the city, while the poor are relegated to slums on the fringes, sometimes scant feet from the roiling toxic gases surrounding the ridge. With no room for the community to expand outward, Saborosaan's government has begun to authorize drilling into the ridge, paving the way for excavating underground chambers and tunnels to house the city's burgeoning population. However, it seems that Osoro's subterranean inhabitants are as dangerous as its surface fauna, and digging crews have refused to carry out any more drilling until the threat of these creatures has been dealt with.

Tholem

Osoro's primary spaceport sits atop a wide equatorial plateau—the largest expanse of habitable land on the moon. Next to Upwell, Tholem is Liavara's second-busiest spaceport, thanks in part to low tariffs and generous trade regulations. Port police have long struggled with criminal enterprises attempting to take over aspects of the port's business, but recently, several Veskarium-based business entities have bought up much of Tholem's property. These purchases have been completely legal, but some Osorans are beginning to suspect that the vesk might be trying to establish a solid foothold in the Pact Worlds. This has led to a growing nativist sentiment in the city, and a few bars and hotels in Tholem have adopted a "no vesk served" policy, leading to increasing racial tensions in the port.

DREAM PROPHET

+1 WIS

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

You were drawn to Liavara by the Dreamers' songs, which awoke in you a resonance with these enlightened beings. Now you see the world around you in a new light, and you have a transcendent, innate understanding of the mystical power suffusing the universe. You don't command this energy; the most you can do is accept it and absorb it—and when you become utterly in sync with those psychic reverberations encapsulated in the Dreamers' songs, you gain oracular glimpses of things yet to come.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

Your perceptions of the psychic energies permeating reality provide you insight into various magical and mystical phenomena, especially those produced by creatures that can cast spells. Reduce the DCs of Mysticism checks to identify spells as they are being cast and to recall knowledge about arcane symbols and magic traditions by 5. Mysticism is always a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Mysticism checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Wisdom at character creation.

FLASH OF
PRESCIENCE [6TH]

When you fully open yourself to the psychic resonance around you, especially in the split second when your life is on the line, time seems to come to a halt. In these fleeting moments, you can sense the reverberations of actions that you have not yet taken, and guide your course accordingly. Once per day as a standard action, you can cast *augury* as a spell-like ability, though you can see only 1 minute into the future. This functions in all other ways as *augury*.

DREAMS OF
THE FUTURE [12TH]

Your dreams often contain vague visions of your immediate future, and they allow you to gain a bit of an edge in certain situations when these dreams rush to the forefront of your consciousness without warning. Each day after you wake from an 8-hour rest, choose ability checks, saving throws, or skill checks; twice per day, you can reroll a roll of the type you chose for that day.

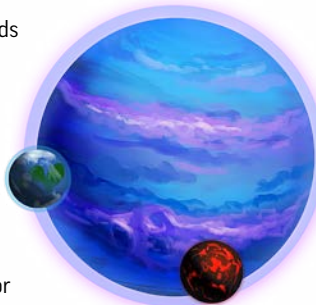
REVERIE [18TH]

Up to twice per day after using your dreams of the future ability, if your reroll is unsuccessful, you can spend some time reflecting on the fleeting and sometimes unreliable nature of dreams and prophecy. You can spend 10 minutes in deep meditation on this topic to regain 1 Resolve Point; this doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points.



BRETHEDA

The largest planet of the Pact Worlds system is a massive, turbulent gas giant ringed with abundant moons, some of which are themselves larger than other Pact Worlds. The sky-seas of this world constantly churn and roil in bands encircling the world, forming perpetual storms that can be seen from across the system and last for centuries, if not millennia. Despite this tumult, Bretheda and its moons have spawned a stunning number and variety of life-forms, leading to its longstanding moniker, "The Cradle." The world holds a sizable share of power and influence in the Pact Worlds, between the barathus' dominance of the biotech industry and their administration of nearby Liavara, the kalo's leadership in system-wide art and fashion, the incredible intellectual ability of Dykon's urogs, and the sheer number of sentient species who call Bretheda home.



GEOGRAPHY

As a gas giant, Bretheda lacks the typical geography of a terrestrial world. Its predominantly helium-hydrogen

atmosphere carries a peculiar blue and purple coloration and is in a constant storm-wracked turmoil. Planet-sized thunderheads surge

with some of the most powerful lightning seen in the Pact Worlds, colliding in spectacles of devastation.

Where the contrasting jets border one another, wind speeds reach hundreds of miles per hour, further fueled by convection between the atmosphere's cool outer layers and pressure-heated inner layers. Some storm fronts carry shredding barrages of crystallized ammonia, while others surge with blistering upwellings of superheated gas capable of incinerating the occupants of most starships.

Given the lack of terrain, Bretheda's closest equivalent to geographic features is distinct weather patterns. The most significant of these is in the southern hemisphere: a trio of massive cyclones, each roughly the size of Castrovel, dating back before the Gap and known as the Eyes of the Ancients. In the planet's northern hemisphere, the Counter Band is clearly discernible—a stripe of clouds, tinged more purple than blue, rotating counter to the paler jets to either side of it and

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WORLDS

THE WORLDS

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leaving a wake of cacophonous storms along both edges. The Equatorial Zone is similarly tempestuous, as it is here that the overall clockwise rotation of the northern hemisphere meets the southern hemisphere's counterclockwise rotation. The poles are some of the most reliably calm points on the planet, and thus they are home to the world's largest artificial settlements.

The bulk of Bretheda's inhabitants reside within the less dense upper layers of the atmosphere. Most visitors to the planet are unable to reach the barathu-named Boundary, the point deep below the surface where increasing pressure causes the gaseous clouds to coalesce into a liquid. Beyond even barathus' reach, without substantial aid, is the deep center of the world: a mass of hyperpressurized and superheated gases forced into a metallic state.

Bretheda has numerous moons—even more than its sibling Liavara—though many are barren rock and bear little mention outside of star charts and scientific archives. Perhaps the most widely known is Kalo-Mahoi, a water world locked beneath a shell of ice, home to the trendsetting kalo in fabulous aquatic cities built over geothermal vents. The largest of the moons is maraquoi-inhabited Marata; followed by the volcanic inferno of Varos; crystalline Dykon, which is host to silicon-based life-

forms; and the radioactive wasteland of Thyst. Many smaller moons share the orbit, including Chamari, Daxus, and Yashu-Indiri, among many others.

RESIDENTS

The iconic inhabitants of Bretheda are barathus: soaring, translucent beings akin to a hybrid between a blimp and a jellyfish, able to merge with one another into collective entities with strength and intelligence surpassing the sum of the component individuals. Barathus are often simply called Brethedans (when not being disparaged as "floaters"), and they are both the most populous of the planet's races as well as the most politically powerful, as a massive collective of the creatures forms the governing entity known as Confluence.

Barathus have also collaborated with offworlders to build several artificial settlements within the world's stormy skies, thus allowing members of other races to inhabit their world. While the citizens of these cities are by no means homogeneous, barathus' societal structure attracts a surprising number of kasathas interested in the natives' collective culture, as well as lashuntas drawn to the cutting-edge biotech research and development taking place here.

The stormy clouds of Bretheda are home to the arthropodan haans, hunters who fly using innate buoyant gases and balloons woven of silken webbing. These highly traditional people refrain from employing all but the simplest of tools—and thus also avoid interacting with the interplanetary stage, planetary government, and various settlements of barathus and offworlders alike. A few individual haans have abandoned their society to explore the stars, but such wanderers are barred from returning to their communities, thus most haans who choose to leave their culture also depart from the world as a whole.

The planet's sky-seas also host countless strange creatures native to the clouds. The occasional oma can still be found here, thought to be the original ships with which barathus traveled to Liavara and beyond. Nuru worms levitate throughout the Equatorial Zone, seeking any prey smaller than themselves and swallowing them whole. Along the edges of the Counter Band, vampiric mist storms hide within the natural cyclones, catching unwary haans and other creatures. Only rarely do the Boundary-native sagolath rise to the upper layers, using biologically warmed hydrogen to reach creatures upon which they can unleash their poisonous tentacles. Air elementals of all sizes make a comfortable home in Bretheda's upper layers, and creatures of pure lightning gravitate toward the incredible electrical bolts discharged from the planet's massive thunderstorms.

On Kalo-Mahoi, the aquatic kalo are the dominant race, though they share their home with a variety of oceanic life as well as a robust population of water elementals. Marata is home to the rapidly advancing civilization of the maraquoi, a peculiar species of mammalian hominids with a highly specialized reproductive cycle involving seven distinct genders. Of all the crystalline life-forms on Dykon, the silicon-based urogs are by far the most intelligent; indeed, these sturdy creatures are likely one of the most intellectually advanced races in the system, though they focus their efforts almost exclusively on abstract mathematical theory and rarely deign to interact with other races.

The notorious death moons of Bretheda hold populations beyond merely the prison camps for which they are known. Thyst has recently seen an influx of Eoxian immigrants who can withstand the moon's radioactive emissions. On Varos, fire elementals and the occasional red dragon travel the volcanic landscape while elemental fireworkers tap into the raw power of the planet's tidally driven geotectonic activity, and desperate miners seek out rare gemstones found only in the planet's fiery mantle.

With abundant moons comes abundant terrain, and a staggering number of Free Captains, itinerant spacefarers, outcasts, slavers, and smugglers find the moons of Bretheda ideal places to make a temporary stopovers, plant hidden caches, build shrines to strange gods, conduct illicit exchanges, wait out enemies, or undertake other unsavory practices. Though the barathu government and the Stewards alike seek to police such activity, the reality is simply that there's no effective way to monitor such a vast expanse with the resources they have.

SOCIETY

The peaceful nature of barathus combined with the creatures' ability to merge both physically and psychologically has largely preempted most reasons for formal government. For much of the world's history, barathus have refrained from formal social organization beyond whatever merging is required to overcome an immediate challenge at hand. Left to their own devices, most barathus are content to soar the stormy skies of their home, trilling songs and dancing in the wild air currents.

The native haans, for their part, adhere to exclusive, traditionalist social structures. Eschewing interactions with outsiders has largely removed them from the interplanetary political scene. They form tight-knit tribal communities with their own strict rules, and those haans who choose to leave their native tribes to explore the world beyond are cast out entirely, mourned as dead by their family and tribe.

Despite the natives' lack of formal governance, the presence of other races on Bretheda has led to the barathus' realization that most people need at least some overarching structure, lest they succumb to anarchistic disaster. Thus, those barathus who felt the call to public service merged together to form Confluence, a massive, hyperintelligent collective that provides a stable governing infrastructure for the planet as a whole.

Despite existing almost exclusively to benefit offworlders, Confluence holds a tremendous amount of political power. In addition to its considerable intellectual prowess, the entity has the ability to split off subcreatures known as Confluence Agents, each of which has a yet-unparalleled ability to communicate in real time with Confluence itself. This combination would be staggering enough in the service of one world, but Brethedan delegates on the Pact Council also represent its numerous moons, and given Bretheda's exclusive administration of the nearby protectorate of Liavara, those delegates represent that planet and most of its moons as well. Fortunately, the barathu government appears disinterested in abusing this tremendous power, though the mere existence of such influence leaves many suspicious.

Confluence's policies on Bretheda are generally liberal, providing widely accepted social protections while allowing plenty of latitude for academic and economic endeavors, but the government maintains grave punishments for violent crime. As a result, Brethedan offworlder settlements are largely peaceful centers of research, feeding the many biotech corporations that have based their work on the barathus' ability to generate biological tools and adaptations. Yet this is a field still dominated by barathus merged into massive sentient corporation-entities, such as the wildly successful Sopeth Corporation.

A peculiarity caused by the prevalence of superior biotechnology on Bretheda is something of a prejudice against traditional cybernetic augmentations. While the latter is certainly legal and common enough among offworlders, Brethedans as a whole instead strongly favor biotech and organic implants, tending to view cybernetics and those with such augmentations with a mixture of pity and scorn.

Though Confluence represents the majority of Brethedan and Liavarán moons on the Pact Council, it generally allows those moons with major populations to govern themselves. Kalo-Mahoi and Marata are exceptions, with Kalo-Mahoi being a full member of the Pact and Marata being considered a protectorate. Like all other members, Kalo delegates on the Pact Council vote on matters important to the entire system, favoring measures that provide funding to the arts. The maraquoi society on Marata has (so far) been allowed to develop according to its own direction, but the breakneck pace of their cultural development has led some xenoanthropologists and maraquoi traditionalists to insist on greater protections, despite the majority's insistence on Marata becoming a full signatory of the Pact.

Moons without significant populations are technically subject to Confluence policies, but for the most part they are still left to manage themselves. The exception to this is the handful of Confluence-managed prison camps on the worlds of Thyst and Varos; these colonies house individuals who perpetuate violent crimes against other Brethedan citizens, as well as those who press too hard against the regulations barring attempts to reverse-engineer the Confluence Agents' impressive communication abilities.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

The foremost threat to any creature on Bretheda is the planet itself: its helium-hydrogen atmosphere is not breathable for the majority of humanoid, and the lack of solid ground requires most creatures to rely upon vehicles or other artificial means of propulsion. But it is the constantly raging storms that pose the most danger to the planet's inhabitants, no matter what form those inhabitants take. Barathus are not immune to the titanic lighting bolts arcing between thunderstorms, and even the most deft of haans can easily be caught in a back draft that pulls it into a boiling upheaval of superheated gases from the depths, cooking it in its shell like an oversized crab. Artificial settlements carefully maintain their positions, avoiding the opposing winds at the borders of counter-directional jets that can crush the sturdiest arcology infrastructure, and many employ crack teams of navigators and meteorologists to ensure they remain in the calmest paths possible. Even the colossal collectives of Confluence and the Sopeth Corporation could be torn apart were they to drift into the planet's larger cyclones; the fury of these storms led to the planet's ancient admonition: "Always an eye on the winds."

Barathu society is generally cooperative and avoids direct confrontation; however, other races on Bretheda don't necessarily hold this attitude. Non-barathu corporations strive to outdo one another and their barathu counterparts, often resulting in the biotech equivalent of arms races, corporate espionage, and a fair share of underhanded dealings. Some organizations risk even Confluence's severe sanctions against violence to wage more outright corporate warfare, taking the form of assassinations, sabotage, and occasionally even terrorist attacks on the more biotech-focused settlement platforms.

The reality that the barathu entity of Confluence controls the two largest planets in the Pact Worlds system, and by

extension dozens of moons, draws criticism and suspicion from other races and worlds. Some of the most vehement protests come not from other worlds concerned with the barathus' undue influence but from those groups Bretheda represents on the Pact Council: the insectile inhabitants of Nchak (see page 116), for example, who feel that the living incarnation of the goddess Hylax is ill served to be considered a mere subsidiary. But outside groups also fear the overwhelming power Confluence holds, convinced that no entity with such a degree of influence could avoid corruption and favoritism. Thus, settlements on Bretheda find themselves subject to close scrutiny by outsiders, along with a shocking amount of lobbying, political intrigue, and surveillance.

With Drift travel making the Pact Worlds irrevocably interconnected, different Brethedan social groups are struggling to navigate the rapidly changing sociopolitical landscape in which they have found themselves. More and more often, young barathus intentionally retain their early stage mentality so as to better relate to single-minded offworlders. Haan culture faces an intergenerational conflict as curious members of the species long to explore the new technologies available despite their people's traditional taboos. Marata's maraquoi remain deadlocked between their tribal legacy and the opportunities of spacefaring star system, even as some of the species depart to explore the cosmos.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following interesting locales can be found across Bretheda and its many moons.

Bretheda

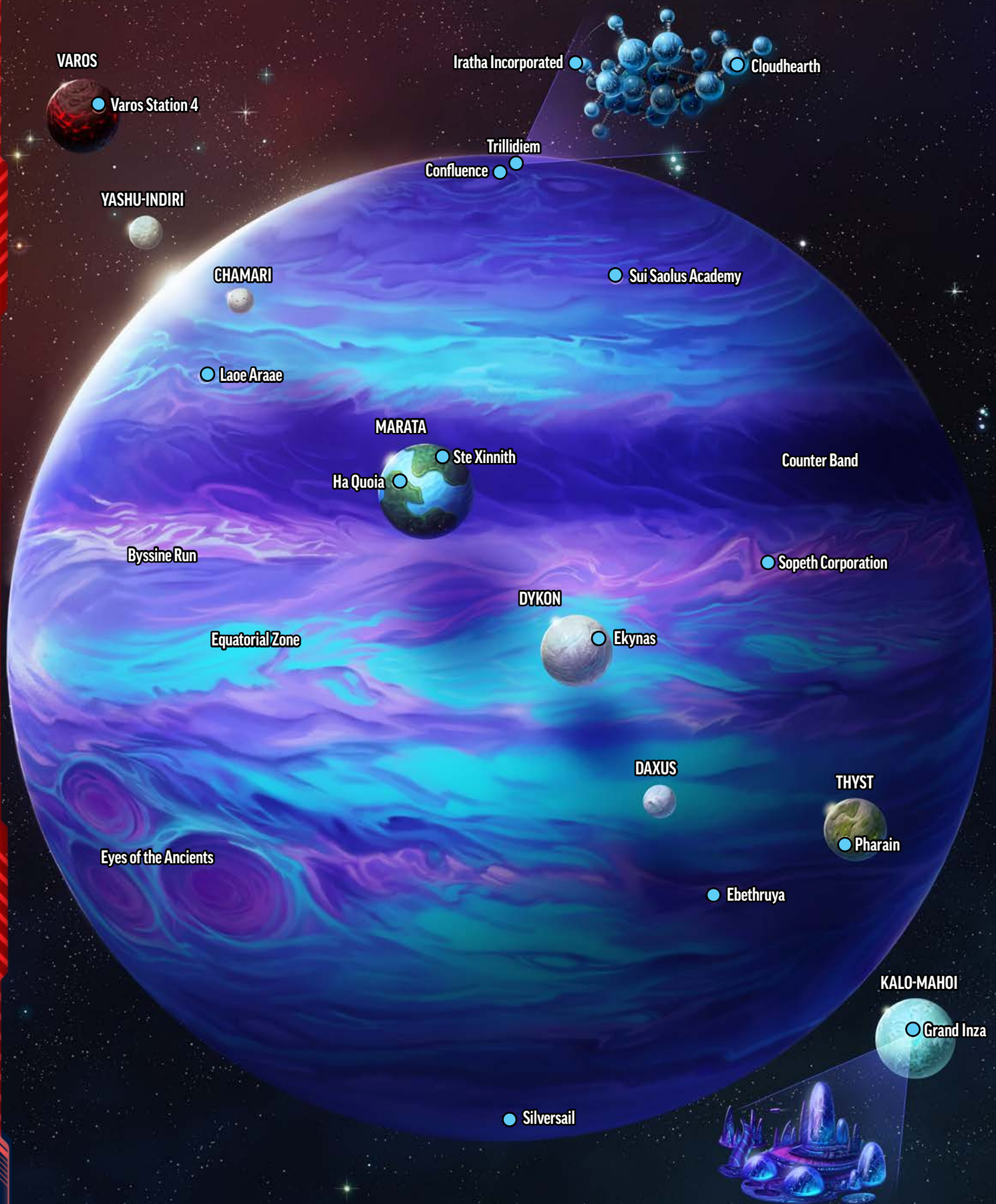
The notable sites detailed below are found in the swirling clouds of the gas giant itself and within a few miles of its "surface."

Byssine Run

Along the southern edge of the Counter Band is a relatively stable storm front of shearing winds, boiling updrafts venting up from the planet's denser layers, and a series of polarized storm masses exchanging multiple bolts of lightning per second. Even the calmest winds along this stretch never drop below 300 miles per hour, making it simultaneously rather predictable and deeply treacherous. It isn't surprising that the most foolhardy young adults of just about every species on the planet share a practice of racing this stretch, known as the Byssine Run. Originally only a dare, the race has become semiformalized as the celebrity Zo!, famous for hosting vicious broadcasted blood sport in the Halls of the Living (see page 94), has begun offering prizes and filming the competition, thus attracting hundreds of contenders who are almost assuredly to be killed in their attempts to achieve fame and fortune.

Chamari

This tiny moon would go unnoticed, and likely uninhabited, except that it bears a series of stone monoliths that, when viewed from orbit, replicate the six stars found in the holy symbol of Ibra the Inscrutable, serving as the foundation



Not to scale.

for one of the oldest temples to the deity to have yet been discovered in the Pact Worlds and beyond. The temple causes the otherwise barren world to see a shocking amount of tourism, though the temple's clergy resent the starships' light pollution, which interferes with the clear skies necessary for accurate astronomical observation. Recent policy has placed a limit on how many vessels can travel to the moon, which orbital paths they can assume, and when they can arrive and depart; this bottleneck has created fierce competition for docking privileges, sometimes resulting in outright firefights between ships looking to reach the moon.

Confluence

The governing entity of Bretheda (and by extension, its protectorate Liavara and the moons of both worlds) is a single entity formed from countless merged barathus following the call to public service. It typically maintains a location near Trillidiem to facilitate communication with the Stewards, representatives from the various groups falling under its administration, corporate lobbyists, the Starfinder Society, and an enclave of kasathan Talavites working to learn and document barathu "oral" traditions. Occasionally, however, due to a whim of fancy or some undisclosed business, the entity wanders off, diving deep into the planet's layers or sailing southward through the stormy skies. Often it leaves one or more Confluence Agents in Trillidiem to carry on its responsibilities in such absences, and the Agents' proprietary communications technology allows them to communicate in real time with the primary entity, thus minimizing disruptions while maintaining oversight. Some researchers theorize that Confluence Agents are in fact still merged with Confluence via some kind of quantum entanglement, hence the inimitable nature of their highly sought-after communications capacities. Those researchers who have gotten the closest to replicating that technology have succeeded only at tapping into a stream of screams, unintelligible whispers, and endlessly repeating words that remain foreign even under the scrutiny of masterful linguists and interpretive magic.

Daxus

This small moon is generally indistinguishable from most of the lifeless rocks orbiting Bretheda, but two features set it apart: its inhabitant and its history. Passing vessels and survey teams have noted a reach of ice and snow on the otherwise barren sphere and captured images suggesting the moon is home to some kind of colossal blue worm. The images match a series of descriptions from lost Golarion depicting some kind of monstrous, legendary creature that resided on that world's moon, though whether the creature in residence on Daxus is the same thing, a distant relative, or merely similar in appearance is unknown. As for the moon's history, it begins at the end of the Gap; none of the extensive records of the Golarion System mention this particular moon, implying that it somehow appeared during the Gap.

Ebethruya

Predating the artificial arcologies built of polycarbon and transparent aluminum, Ebethruya is an entirely organic settlement grown by the planet's native barathus long before the Gap. Its biological nature allows barathus to merge directly with the settlement's infrastructure to maintain and develop it, but it also carries some peculiar limitations, such as the fact that conventional starship thrusters would irrevocably injure the semiliving settlement. As a result, traffic to and from the arcology is limited to suborbital vehicles with specially developed engines and vessels towed by barathus through the stormy clouds surrounding the city. Though most of Ebethruya's inhabitants are Brethedan natives, the city sees some visitors to its ancient, organically cultivated temple to Oras, one of the few actual temples dedicated to the deity.



KALO FASHIONISTA

Eyes of the Ancients

For ages, three cyclones of epic proportions have churned in a symbiotic maelstrom in the southern hemisphere of Bretheda's turbulent atmosphere. Mentions of these storms appear in records dating long before the Gap, even among societies with only the most basic of telescopic technology, and the violence of each storm is enough to tear apart even the sturdiest of vessels. Yet satellite imagery shows an apparently calm center cradled between the three, with faint signals suggesting that there might be some kind of settlement or structure nestled within the clouds here. Worshipers of Triune, citing the trifold nature of both their deity and the storms, insist that the structure must be a shrine to their deity, while others point to the inscrutable nature of the signal as fitting for a site holy to Ibra. More skeptical voices dismiss both claims as far less likely than the structure being nothing more than a remnant of a starship caught in the storms and eventually swept to the central area—though for a ship to have survived the crushing power of the Eyes would require an extraordinary quality of construction, likely beyond that currently seen in the Pact Worlds. Regardless of which theory, if any, is correct, no pilots have yet managed to navigate the Eyes or succeed at a direct descent from orbit into the center.

Iratha Incorporated

Starting a biotech firm on the world occupied by masters in the industry might seem like a terrible business decision, but Iratha Incorporated founders **Iraeon** (NG female damaya lashunta operative) and **Thalus Enthremian Damru** of House Alo (CN male kasatha envoy) have turned the potentially disastrous endeavor into a financial success. Well aware of the system-wide reputation Bretheda holds in the field, the two chose to establish their corporation in Trillidiem as an assertion of their company's quality. By specializing exclusively in humanoid augmentations, the corporation has been able to carve out a profitable niche for itself, but it has also drawn the attention of drow arms dealers who see a potential opening to infiltrate the competitive biotech industry.

Laoe Araae

Barathus have a long history of survival on their inhospitable world thanks to their ability to merge with one another and thus adapt to nearly any situation. In the last few decades, however, a common and once-harmless fungal infestation has begun to appear in a drastically merged, mutated form—one that shares the barathus' ability to adapt to new circumstances, spreading throughout its host until it can overtake the central nervous system and cause the creature's demise. This contagion is passed from one barathu to another via merging, and this particularly virulent form has so far proven itself able to survive every adaptation its hosts have employed against it. Infected barathus have taken to quarantining themselves in a distant, isolated hospice community among the storm bands of the southern hemisphere, its name loosely translating to "Lonely Dream." Here, a small group of caretakers consisting entirely of non-barathus, particularly kasathas, tends to the victims. Meanwhile, a team of barathu and offworld scholars

racers to find a cure before the infestation reaches epidemic levels. Their research so far suggests that the contagion was intentionally mutated, possibly using barathu genetic material to specifically target the creatures despite their inherent adaptability. More disturbingly, signs point to the creator perhaps being barathu, though why a member of their communal, cooperative culture would undertake such an action remains a mystery.

Nesting Clouds

While Bretheda's native haans eschew technology and stationary settlements, they maintain strong familial and cultural traditions. One of these is centered on their reproductive cycle: while many Brethedan species drop eggs to gestate in the gas giant's depths, haans instead employ their web and balloon abilities to create communal floating nests for their offspring. As such nests are somewhat vulnerable to predators, haans guard them fiercely and keep their locations a close secret, though the advent of satellite imagery presents a continual threat to that security. In response, some haan leaders have suggested petitioning Confluence to designate certain portions of the world as being protected and ban the use of imaging technology; however, others point out that such an indication would imply the location of the nesting clouds and thus undermine the protection efforts.

Silversail

This arcology is a series of sleek, aerodynamic platforms powered by wind turbines that also assist in maintaining its location in the relative calm of the planet's southern polar region. This arcology serves as home and headquarters to Life Innovations, one of the most successful biotech firms in the Pact Worlds, though unlike some of its Brethedan competitors, Life Innovations maintains robust relations with offworlders, and thus entertains a regular parade of researchers and employees from other races and worlds. The city's substantial trade has not gone unnoticed among the Pact Worlds players, and the Koridatsu family of the Golden League maintains a steady, subtle influence on those markets it can access. However, erratic implementation of typical Golden League strategies hints at some kind of internal conflict or disruption within the Koridatsu clan—a weakness that would surely draw opportunistic competitor clans' attention should it become known among the larger Golden League.

Sopeth Corporation

While many Brethedan corporations and settlements are constructed to facilitate participation and inhabitation by other races, the macroentity known as the Sopeth Corporation is precisely the opposite: a secretive, xenophobic conglomeration of biotech researchers and developers formed organizationally and physically of thousands of barathus merged into a single entity. With no need or desire to accommodate offworlders, the Sopeth Corporation eschews the calmer portions of the Brethedan atmosphere; the entity instead can most often be found in the storm-wracked

Equatorial Zone. While the corporation occasionally deigns to cooperate with representatives of other barathu firms, allowing them to partially merge with the Sopeth entity, anyone who does so with the intent of corporate espionage or undermining the corporation finds itself permanently conjoined, unable to separate. Attempted infiltrators of other species meet with a far less hospitable response and can only hope that they are among the lucky ones shipped to work on one of Bretheda's death moon prison camps, rather than those forced into service as laboratory subjects for experimental (and usually painful) biotech developments.

Sui Saolus Academy

The barathu-led research institution of Sui Saolus maintains an arcology-campus for students, faculty, and staff. The school is the leading institution in the Pact Worlds for academic biotech research, grooming students for careers in the planet's burgeoning biotech industries. Applicants of all races are considered in the school's fiercely competitive admissions office, though the administration has been markedly slow in responding to accusations of enrolling merged barathus who separate into distinct entities after acceptance. Within the institution, faculty-led research labs engage in bitter rivalries and race to land the next big biotech development, employing levels of security and secrecy rivaling that of their biotech-firm corporate sponsors. For this reason, the recent upsurge of leaked information from all offices and laboratories has incited all-out riots on campus, undermining academic affairs and research endeavors alike.

Trillidiem

The most traditionally metropolitan of the Brethedan arcologies, Trillidiem sees the most immigration, tourism, and travel of any location on the planet. Accordingly, it serves as the planetary headquarters for the Stewards and also supports a relatively large Starfinder Society presence. To maintain relative stillness among the planet's stormy atmosphere, the arcology maintains a location precisely at the planet's northern pole, never quite seeing the full light of the distant sun or suffering complete darkness, instead existing in a perpetual violet twilight. Bubbles of transparent aluminum, called Domes, clump together along connective tunnels and passages to form the city's various commercial, industrial, and residential districts. The fundamentally modular structure allows for virtually unlimited growth, and though Trillidiem is already the largest metropolis on the planet, it continues to expand at a breakneck pace. Oversight from the government-entity Confluence, usually found drifting not far from the arcology and its accompanying spaceport, ensures the city is efficiently run and generally safe, but with enough of a hands-off approach to allow plenty of commerce—legal or otherwise.

In Trillidiem's spacious Dome 38 lies a longstanding temple to Talavet known as Cloudhearth, a destination for Talavites from Bretheda, nearby Liavara, and beyond. The congregation is as diverse as the inhabitants of the arcology in which it resides, including shirrens, vesk, ysoki, and others, in addition to the more typical kasatha worshipers and native

barathus. Though normally a congenial gathering, the temple's community has been strained in recent weeks following the death of the long-standing head priest, who in her final directives named an android called Epic as the successor to her position. More traditional members of the congregation have balked at this transition, which has been complicated by the fact that Epic hasn't been seen in Trillidiem since before the priest passed away, and attempts to contact them have all failed.

TRILLIDIEM

NG arcology

Population 265,000 (62% barathu, 8% lashunta, 7% human, 4% kasatha, 3% kalo, 2% android, 1% haan, 1% ysoki, 12% other)

Government autocracy (Confluence)

Qualities modular, technologically advanced

Maximum Item Level 16th

QUALITIES

Modular The compartmentalized nature of this settlement's construction allows for relatively easy and quick additions, renovations, and even physical rearrangement. It can also be used to physically separate parts of the city for quarantine or security purposes.

Varos Station 4

The Brethedan government eschews the death penalty for even the most heinous of crimes, but most of the "beneficiaries" of that philosophy don't find it comforting, as they carry out seemingly (and sometimes literally) interminable sentences of hard physical labor on the world's various "death moons." Station 4 on the tidally heated landscape of Varos is one such camp, populated almost exclusively by imprisoned constructs, including anacites, androids, and other sentient constructed entities, all working to mine the ultra-rare gemstones produced by the moon's unique combination of elemental and geological factors. Rumors persist that the majority of the stations laborers are slaves, rather than prisoners, which led to the most recent prisoner uprising garnering a surprising level of system-wide sympathizers demanding an independent investigation into the death moons' prison camps.

Yashu-Indiri

This tiny airless moon long orbited Bretheda as one of many lifeless rocks. Since the end of the Gap, however, an order of mystics has taken up residence here, and in only a few centuries it has almost entirely covered the moon's surface with hand-built shrines honoring abandoned, dead, and otherwise forgotten deities, demigods, empyreal lords, quasi-deities, and even nontheistic philosophies. A special section honors dozens of divinities who saw particularly widespread worship on Golarion before the Gap, including Cayden Cailean, Shelyn, Torag, and many others. The moon's monastery holds one of the Pact Worlds' largest archives of lore about these entities, thus making it of some interest on a system-wide scale, but of particular fascination to the Starfinder Society.

Dykon

The crystalline moon of Dykon boasts the following major sites.

Ekynas

The main spaceport on the moon of Dykon is less a settlement than an academic institution, where the mathematic efficiency-minded urogs meet with contemplatives, lashuntas, and other obsessive intellectuals interested in similarly esoteric abstractions. Technomancers also frequent the locale, particularly those focused on cryptomancy and methods of blocking divination magic. The most prestigious circle of intellectuals has been spending decades in an effort to understand the infinitely complex space between spaces. Their efforts have so far produced a few minor teleportation effects, but each experiment has had unanticipated interactions with the Drift: pulling chunks of planar material imported into the Drift back into the Material Plane, transposing the astrogation coordinates of nearby vessels, and similarly unpredictable effects. More cautious members of the team have urged a closer examination of the anomalies—an attitude that the majority of the group has embraced by insisting upon conducting further experiments, regardless of the outcomes.

Oscillation Field

A vast swath of crystalline shards of various shapes and sizes jut from the ground across many acres here, each vibrating with a unique frequency barely perceptible to most senses. A rumor among the local urogs states that if one walks a certain path through the field, the crystals will sync up and produce a transcendental effect that will alter one's consciousness forever. While most scholars are quick to point out there is no evidence to support this notion, that doesn't prevent hopeful pilgrims from spending years wandering the field.

Kalo-Mahoi

Kalo-Mahoi has many high-tech underwater settlements.

Grand Inza

The largest of Kalo-Mahoi's graceful, stylish cities is a destination for Pact Worlds fashionistas, featuring exclusive high-end shopping-center megaresorts catering to every whim of anyone with enough credits to foot the bill. Shirrens in particular enjoy visiting these resorts, as the nearly limitless personalized options allow for an unending buffet of choices to be made and savored, all the sweeter in a system where most clothing and accessories are available only in prepackaged sets. While the corporations here are fiscally prudent enough to encourage such behavior, they are cognizant of the potential for this particular subset of their clientele to succumb to a devastating addiction to consumerism, so they offer discrete intervention services for such individuals. The fact that these services often carry a price of their own and are operated by some of the larger corporations is usually—though not always—overlooked.

Marata

The most noteworthy sites on the protected moon of Marata include the following.

Ha Quoia

The growing conflict between the maraquoi traditionalists and expansionists has come to a head in Ha Quoia, Marata's newest city and primary spaceport, and the seat of its new intertribal government. Within Ha Quoia's polycarbon walls, traditionalist leaders argue for isolation and a return to traditional ways with the Xenowardens' backing, while more progressive politicians push to open the moon to the financial and societal opportunities that accompany Pact Worlds membership. Efforts to declare the moon a protectorate have been filibustered, but expansionists haven't been able to block passing strict sanctions that effectively cut off the moon from outside trade. A lack of formal visas hasn't stopped some maraquoi from leaving the moon in search of adventure and opportunity, and the embargoes haven't stopped traders from illegally smuggling goods and offworlders onto the moon. Most recently, a fringe group of isolationists has begun calling for the species' unique sex, zysha, to withhold the psychic influence that enables maraquoi reproduction in an effort to force a return to traditional values. The Pact Council has repeatedly discussed methods to defuse the rapidly escalating tensions but hasn't yet figured out how to do so without further interfering in the organic progression of maraquoi cultural development.

Ste Xinnith

The largest forest found on the moon, this bucolic area has recently been thrust into the spotlight after a team of researchers discovered remarkable healing properties in some of its flora. Pharmaceutical companies across the system are clamoring to have laboratories and other facilities built near the site to further these studies, but the maraquoi traditionalists are protesting any interference by offworld forces. Debate on this topic has stalled in the Pact Council, but proponents on either side continue to attempt to get the public on their side through media campaigns and grassroots protests.

Thyst

Despite its poisonous atmosphere, the following noteworthy site can be found on Thyst.

Pharain

On the radioactive moon of Thyst, a small enclave of undead elebrian borais (see page 211) has declared itself independent of Eox's governmental oversight. The group has petitioned the Pact Council to consider its tiny settlement of Pharain a member of the Pact Worlds or, barring full membership, a protectorate administered by the Pact Council or Stewards. The bone sages of Eox are adamantly opposed to allowing such independence, insisting that the expatriates are in fact fugitives and should be returned to Eox for summary arraignment, though they refuse to articulate what crimes the isolationists have supposedly committed. The Pact Council has opened an investigation into the matter, effectively rendering itself incapable of taking further action for the foreseeable future. Of course, the rest of the Pact Worlds suspects the enclave of being a cell of Corpse Fleet agents and urges the Stewards to take more proactive measures.

BIOTECHNICIAN

+1 INT

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
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OPTIONS

You are a biotech researcher or avid user of such tech, constantly seeking out or developing new biotechnologies and combining existing augmentations with advancements in other fields. You might be a member of the Augmented, a researcher in one of Bretheda's cutting-edge biotech corporations, a spellcasting genetomancer blending biotechnology with magic, or even a voluntary test subject for new augmentations. Either way, you have taken a strong hand in your own evolution.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You have a sharp mind for the intricacies of biotech augmentations and keep up-to-date on current research in the field, whether because you work to develop such technology or because you are the beneficiary of biotech augmentations—or, most likely, both. Reduce the DC of Life Science checks to identify biotech augmentations and to recall knowledge about famous biotech corporations and researchers by 5. Medicine is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to your Medicine checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Intelligence at character creation.

INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS [6TH]

You've forged and maintained a number of connections with significant players in the biotech industry, scoring yourself favors and preferred treatment. As long as you are able to contact your connections in the industry, you gain a 10% discount off the typical list price for biotech augmentations installed in you.

TEST SUBJECT [12TH]

Thanks to your enthusiasm for biotech gear and constant tinkering with your DNA, you can adopt experimental, cutting-edge augmentations in your body beyond what most people can support. You can install one additional piece of biotech augmentation than a typical member of your race. For example, a human could have both a dragon gland and a wildwise implant (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 211, 212) even though they both occupy the throat system.

ADAPTIVE BIOTECH [18TH]

You have learned to leverage your biotech augmentations in ways their creators hardly envisioned. Up to twice per day as a standard action, you can deactivate a piece of biotech implanted in your body (except for a prosthetic limb), rendering it inert until your next 8-hour rest, to regain 1 Resolve Point. An inert piece of biotech doesn't grant its usual benefits (for instance, an inert venom spur can't be used to attack), and you can shut down a single biotech implant only once per day.





APOSTAE

Apostae is a planetoid far from the system's major trade routes and mining operations, with few natural resources and no atmosphere on its surface. Its largely hollow center is filled with thousands of tunnels, caverns, and chambers that are clearly artificial in nature, many of which are filled with advanced technology unlike that of any race known to the Pact Worlds. Even before the time of the Gap, Apostae was a mystery, believed to be an artificial world that came to the solar system from the vast gulf of space beyond. When the Gap ended, numerous drow houses already resided on Apostae in the city of Nighttarch and small settlements just under Apostae's surface, dealing in the technological treasures found in the planetoid's interior. However, only a small fraction of the inner world has been explored, and even now, centuries later, much of it is inaccessible.

GEOGRAPHY

Apostae is not a true planet, lacking the geological components of such worlds. The planetoid has no tectonic plates, no core of magma, no oceans, and no volcanoes, and its surface changes



only when struck by a meteor (an event more common on Apostae than on worlds with atmospheres that usually burn up such objects) or torn apart by war games and weapon tests conducted by various drow houses. However, there is more variation in Apostae's geography than might otherwise be expected. Craters with expansive glassy bottoms and huge sidewalls pockmark the surface of Apostae, interspersed with towering slabs of rocky crust torn free from the surface to sit at odd angles, often lasting only until another meteor impact (or starship-weapon test) rips the landscape apart again.

The only major features of Apostae other than craters and debris are the mammoth cracks in the world's rocky outer shell, similar to those formed on a ball of mud when it dries. Hundreds of minor crevices crisscross the cracked planetoid, but the largest chasms run for hundreds or even thousands of miles and generally extend 30 to 40 miles deep. The origin of these fissures is unknown, and pre-Gap accounts do not mention them. The few expeditions that have been allowed to extensively study the crevasses suggest they are only 8 to 12 centuries old based on surface weathering. Most drow assume

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

they are an aftereffect of some massive, forgotten weapon test that occurred during the Gap, though it has also been suggested they are signs that Apostae is much older than it was designed to last and that the world is beginning to literally come apart at the seams.

Caverns and chambers that are known to have existed well before the Gap fill Apostae's interior, but their true nature remains a mystery. While hundreds of miles of corridors have been explored and stripped of technology by drow houses, much more of the planetoid's interior has never been explored, accessed, or even found, and some of the rooms mentioned in pre-Gap records—perhaps most importantly the areas known as the Armory, the Chamber of Life, and the Worldheart—remain lost.

RESIDENTS

Apostae is home to multiple races that trace their origins back to lost Golarion, most notably drow, half-orcs, orcs, and (to a lesser extent) mongrelmen and troglodytes. None of these races are native to Apostae, and while records suggest that a native race called the ilee once resided within the planetoid's interior, the ruling drow houses have found no sign that any ilee still exist.

The surface of Apostae is airless and unforgiving; some elemental creatures can be found dwelling on it, but most regions are barren of life. Within the planetoid, intrepid explorers have been known to encounter all types of constructs, but especially wandering berserkers and stoic guardians. Unconfirmed reports also warn of vicious, carnivorous, crab-like creatures inhabiting Apostae's deepest chambers. If these latter creatures exist, they have successfully avoided all efforts to communicate with them. The sole evidence of the creatures' existence comes from deep scout teams exploring remote tunnels who call in to describe an attack before their transmissions are abruptly cut off; such teams are never heard from again.

SOCIETY

Various drow houses control Apostae, each operating at least one legal business as a cover for more secretive operations. As Apostae lacks any natural resources to speak of, the drow have largely turned to plumbing the depths of its interior chambers to salvage rare technology and use that tech to create advanced weapons and custom systems, which they sell to the highest bidders. The houses maintain a planetwide alliance strong enough to ensure their respective seats on the Pact Council



DROW MATRIARCH

are never threatened, and the authorities of the Pact Worlds have no strong reasons to take a close look at what happens on (or within) Apostae. Despite this alliance, the drow houses and their corporations are in direct competition with each other, any collaboration being limited in scope and generally of short duration. No laws govern the conduct of either the houses or the corporations on Apostae—drow do whatever they believe they can get away with, and only their long life spans temper their emotions and desires enough for them to consider the possible consequences that might occur a year, a decade, or a century later. Most drow houses overlook occasional offenses against their rank-and-file citizens and employees, but they are likely show strength in vengeful response to acts against their higher management. While no hard-and-fast rules control such interactions, non-drow are usually aware their houses won't protect them against the acts of other houses, and even most common drow know they are unlikely to be considered important enough for their houses to exact revenge in response

to acts perpetrated against them by nobles of other houses. Only an attack or political pressure that causes major ripples and makes a house look weak is likely to generate a demand to address wrongs committed by the higher social ranks against lower-class citizens.

The drow of Apostae typically assume that women are both more important and more capable than men. At least part of this is an inherited assumption that comes from the fact that when the Gap ended, nearly all the positions of power among the drow were held by women. The prejudice is backed by the pre-Gap accounts showing that women controlled drow noble houses, and the drow have established laws that enforce this custom. Those “noble drow” who have additional magic powers are also much more likely to be women. This is in part because when a house decides to expend resources to uplift a drow to noble status through genetic manipulation or demonic rituals, it's considered a safer bet to focus on women, who have already proven themselves within the house.

Since the upper ranks of most houses were already filled with drow women when the Gap ended, and those positions are usually held for centuries, it is very difficult for drow men, as well as members of other races of any gender, to advance within the power structure of any drow house. The most likely path to wealth and power for those such individuals is to find financial success, almost always by making arms deals that bring in long-term clients and fill a house's coffers with credits, or to gain a reputation as a particularly dangerous assassin, enforcer, or spellcaster. Such paths are also fraught with danger, as those bucking the system are seen as threats by the noble drow above them and as assets worth eliminating by the house's competitors. This paradox often leads midlevel managers within a drow house to seek house-approved rationales for expanding their operations off Apostae, allowing them to increase their wealth and political power while staying far enough away from Nightarch's gleaming towers to possibly avoid being marked as targets. While the success rate for this tactic is about 50 percent, those odds are usually sufficient for more ambitious drow.

Other than the few scions and senior managers of drow houses who live in true security and luxury, those on Apostae must prove their value every month in order to justify the air they breathe and water they drink. Anyone able to gain a job as a technology miner earns good income by delving the depths of Apostae's interior in house-approved ventures, but the nature of those expeditions leads to high casualty rates. Engineers, researchers, and scientists can manage reasonable lifestyles as long as they keep producing advances using the alien technology salvaged from within the world. Clerks, maintenance staff, menial servants, and soldiers lead hard lives, working long hours and seeing most of the economic benefits they reap go to their superiors. The unemployed are tolerated in the worst maintained, least comfortable corners of Apostae as replacement serfs. Even these folks nearly always answer to local gangs and petty block warlords, who in turn answer to minor managers of the major drow houses. On Apostae, everyone serves the needs of the great houses in one way or another.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

The greatest risk to the drow on Apostae is the ambition and greed of other drow. A dozen or so major houses, including Arabani, Brevak, Rycast, and Zeizerer, get along well enough to ensure that the necessary ambassadors to the Pact Council are elected and work to protect the drow's overall interests, though most houses constantly seek to supplant and even destroy one another. Open warfare between houses is rare, mostly because any such obvious conflict invites other enemies to test a house's defenses, but covert operations and political maneuvers are everyday occurrences. Though far less common, elven agents of Sovyrian also take extreme steps to damage or destroy the drow holdings. Such acts are actively forbidden by the Pact Council, but many elves see the drow as a growing cancer of demon-worshiping evil that must be eliminated before they destroy or conquer all of the worlds of the solar system. Neither the drow nor their elven enemies tend to think of other races on Apostae as crucial to these conflicts, and they generally regard collateral damage that wounds or kills the servants of various drow houses as inconsequential.

The combination of tyranny and near anarchy that controls most of Apostae, with settlements either wholly controlled by one or two drow houses or else nearly lawless, brings its own level of danger. Even if an outside group receives permission to land on Apostae or explore various areas of it, that permission does not include any guarantee of support, or even safety. Minor agents looking to make a big score, pirate groups, rogue elements, street gangs, and even just mercenaries on leave can cause conflicts that would be seen as riots on most worlds but are considered an acceptable cost of business on Apostae. Less common, but still possible, are attacks by demonic creatures summoned by mystics unable to control them, rogue soldiers maddened by constant use of combat drugs who can't tell a camp from a battlefield, experiments gone wrong (from genetically altered super soldiers to hunter-killer robots), and strange constructs and technology from the interior chambers of Apostae that sometimes escape containment from research labs.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

The following are several notable locations across Apostae.

Black Door

Black Door is little more than a campsite situated around a massive set of doors set into the rock of the planet's exterior. It is believed the door leads into Apostae's interior, as it is similar to the door in Nightarch (though, as the name suggests, it is flat black in color). To the best of anyone's knowledge, the door has never been opened or breached, and it resists even magical attempts to pass through it (such as teleportation or turning incorporeal). An endless succession of groups flocks to the site, testing new theories on how to control, bypass, or destroy the door, resulting in a semipermanent camp of pressurized tents, mobile labs, and expeditionary vehicles in the area. Because injuries are common in such efforts, House Rycast has stationed a well-staffed mobile hospital at Black Door. Anyone injured at the site can receive the very best treatment

her credits can buy, with very reasonable terms of indentured servitude for those with injuries more extensive than their bank accounts. The current head administrator of the Black Door Hospital is **Caya Rycast** (CE female drow mystic), a minor drow noble of House Rycast who was originally sent to Black Door as punishment for one of her previous assignments. She has remained there for 50 years hoping to capitalize on what she assumes will eventually be a successful attempt to get through the door, while also building a private army of servants who owe her years of service in return for footing the bill for their medical treatment.

Blood Barracks

The Blood Barracks are a combination medical facility, demonic temple, and mercenary compound run jointly by multiple drow houses, including Arabani, Brevak, Rycast, and Zeizerer. The barracks are home to the Blood Army, a large military group made up primarily of half-orcs with a few drow officers that serves primarily to protect Nightarch specifically, and Apostae in general. Though small, the Blood Army is considered an elite force, having engaged many times with pirates seeking to steal military technology and with rogue Sovyrian ships striving to destroy the drow as a whole. The Blood Armada, a small navy of starships that constantly patrols space around Apostae and oversees all approaches to the planetoid and Nightarch, is a division of the Blood Army.

To ensure the Blood Army never attempts to take control of Nightarch, its troops are stationed in a mix of small permanent pressurized structures, temporary shelters, and mobile headquarters, positioned far from the city and dependent on weekly shipments of supplies (including air and water). The Blood Army forces are deployed only if a major threat appears, and its soldiers often serve short tours before being shipped off to fight in drow-run mercenary companies.

The Blood Barracks also house a medical facility, where soldiers from any of a dozen drow-approved mercenary companies can be treated and often train with the Blood Army as rehabilitation after treatment. Lying beneath the camp, however, are centuries-old temples to many patron demons the various drow houses worship. While the existence of these shrines is not secret, the drow houses are tight lipped about the details of the demonic rituals performed within them and the exact demons they revere. Rumors circulate that drow perform various blood sacrifices there, perhaps even using kidnapped victims from other worlds, but the few investigations undertaken by Pact Worlds agents have been unable to confirm even a single case of an offworlder being taken below the Blood Barracks, and any local deaths are explained as failed medical treatments.

Breaklands

The Breaklands are a section of broken, jagged peaks that are popular as a hiding place for drow-house employees trying to escape their employers, as well as for pirates and smugglers engaged in illicit dealings on Apostae. The Breaklands less resemble a mountain range than they do a concrete lot that has been broken up and the surface pieces left in random piles.



Because the planetoid has no tectonic plates, it's assumed the Breaklands resulted from some spectacular explosion or meteor impact that broke up Apostae's surface in a vast area and left the once-smooth rock upended and ragged. No foothills or other transitional terrain surround the Breaklands—the landscape goes from plains of pitted rock to mile-high slabs of spiky stone surrounded by packed dirt. While no caves exist in the traditional sense, the slabs that make up the Breaklands often lean against each other at odd angles, creating concealed areas large enough even for starships to hide in. The broken crust is that so thick most sensors can't penetrate it, creating hundreds of areas safe from detection from anything but a dedicated ground search.

Crater Town

Though much smaller and less stable than Nightarch and established only a few years ago, Crater Town is a growing settlement on Apostae, though it remains to be seen if it can last in the harsh airless environment. Crater Town is made primarily of the same kinds of temporary pressurized shelters and mobile domes that make up other minor camps across Apostae, but the settlers have used mining equipment to embed those structures in the sides of one of Apostae's biggest craters, which gives the shelters considerably more protection and support than those standing in the open. A massive shelf of ice covers the basin of Crater Town, believed to be left over from the meteor that created the crater eons ago. Both air and water can be mined from the ice to provide Crater Town with basic environmental needs—though the quality of both are far below most Pact Worlds' municipal standards.

Crater Town is the sole settlement on the planetoid not officially owned by a drow house; instead, it is run by a council of retired mercenaries, most of whom are half-orcs. The eldest of the council is **Kavor** (NE male half-orc technomancer), who was granted permission to attempt to establish a trade camp as a bonus when he retired from a long and profitable career. Kavor set up the first few buildings of Crater Town using his own funds, and he trades ice and other simple goods with passing starships. While the margins are thin, Apostae is far enough from most major trade worlds that a steady trickle of ships lands there looking to replenish water supplies. A small black market has developed in Crater Town as well, as it's the place most likely for transactions to occur away from the ever-watchful eyes of the drow houses.

Eclipse Academy

Very few people outside of Apostae know about this obscure university located at the opposite end of the Hak Rift from Nightarch. The majority of its students are drow looking to learn more about the light-based magic all drow are born with, while the rest are offworlders who have been invited to enroll because of their innate magical talents. Classes generally consist of grueling practical exercises where instructors push their pupils to their physical and mental limits. Only one-fifth of every class graduates, the others dropping out because of the constant pressure or literally dying of exhaustion. Those who see the end of their 3-year course of study are some of the most

talented mystics, solarians, and technomancers the universe has seen, though many have contracted serious mental illnesses and neuroses from the stress.

The majority of Eclipse Academy's campus is underground, with only a pitch-black ceramic tower marking the facility's entrance. Inside, the lecture halls and dormitories are sparse and functional with no lighting to speak of. Several drow houses secretly finance the university, paying for its food supplies, oxygen, and power while maintaining plausible deniability should the academy's cruel practices become known to the entire Pact Worlds.

Hak Rift

The Hak Rift is the most unstable of Apostae's crevices. Several times a year, it suffers earthquakes that often result in rockfalls and other dangerous changes in topography. Since Apostae has no molten core and no known natural source of tectonic activity, many geologists are curious about the cause of these quakes. Expeditions into the rift are hazardous, and several exploratory parties have disappeared with no explanation; even so, a new scientific expedition ventures into the Hak Rift every few years.

The Hollows

The tunnels directly behind Nightarch's Great Door have been thoroughly explored, documented, and looted, but very few drow have established permanent colonies within the planetoid. One significant exception to this fact are a series of waypoints collectively called the Hollows. Situated in side chambers and consisting of hastily constructed prefabricated buildings, these stations are used mainly by exploration teams delving deeper into Apostae than a single day's trip could reach.

There is a code of conduct for using the Hollows that is spread by word of mouth for Apostae explorers. A Hollow should be left in the same state in which it was found, and adventurers must dispose of their own garbage. Incoming parties are expected to defer to outgoing parties, though usually a Hollow contains enough space for both. Finally, spending more than a few nights in a Hollow is forbidden unless there is a medical emergency.

Recently, those who have slept in Hollow-10 have reported terrible nightmares of a dark presence emerging from the planetoid's interior to stalk them through the tunnels. Descriptions of this being have been remarkably similar: a multiple-limbed aberration with large compound eyes, scales like a lizard, and hot, fetid breath. Some believe these dreams indicate the ilee are not dead and are returning for vengeance.

Iron Door

Like Black Door (see page 131), this area contains a set of massive double doors embedded into the surface of Apostae that is believed to lead deep into the planetoid's interior and, also like Black Door, has so far resisted all efforts to open it. The doors cover an opening more than a mile long and nearly as wide, and they appear to be made of cold iron (though it is as impermeable and impenetrable as all other surface doors). Unlike other sites, numerous access hatches set within the doors lead into a series of corridors that seem to honeycomb the doors but don't go all the way through. The corridors beyond

the door shift apparently at random, and they often include newly revealed mechanical traps.

For decades after the Gap, the door was seen as a likely access point into the depths of Apostae, but after hundreds of failed attempts—and thousands of lost lives—enthusiasm for the project waned. However, while most houses pulled out of the area, House Brevak remained, and a small permanent campsite grew up around the doors and became known as Iron Door. There have been no new revelations about the door, but it has become a minor center of diplomacy and technomancy. Research into the ever-changing layout of the door's access corridors is an ongoing project, and cooperation with other houses is a major focus of the settlement's administration. As a result, the area is now considered neutral ground by most other houses, and any serious conflict between drow houses that does not include House Brevak is often settled at conferences between parties at Iron Door.

Jorund Chasm

Jorund Chasm cuts through ancient chambers that are believed to have once been part of the Apostae's interior complex. Most of these rooms have collapsed, and those that have been excavated (a timely and costly endeavor) inevitably reach dead ends rather than leading to any new passageways beneath the planetoid's surface. However, the sides of Jorund Chasm collapse periodically and expose new chambers, some of which contain scraps of usable alien technology. Expeditions that plumb deep into the crevasse sometimes find piles of ancient data cards, crushed robots, or even mummified alien corpses among piles of rubble. Such occurrences are rare, and no drow house has managed to make a profit from such efforts, but expeditions with offworld funding are often approved on the condition that the sponsoring house has first right of refusal of any newly discovered technology. The high level of activity also means that raiders are surprisingly common in the area; bands of renegade mercenaries and minor gangs wait for other expeditions to discover valuable treasures, and then they take those finds by force.

Karkaken Testing Grounds

Officially, the Karkaken Testing Grounds are simply an area House Arabani has reserved for testing its new defensive systems, military robots, and weapons, from handheld pistols to massive starship-scale tractor beams. However, the massive complex of administrative buildings, factories, labs, showrooms, and warehouses at the center of the testing grounds is self-sufficient and large enough to count as a small city in its own right. House Arabani imports water and air directly to the facility, bypassing Nightarch and the reach of House Zeizerer, except for when Arabani agents want to access the Great Door (see Nightarch) or to ship goods to prospective clients who land at the Nightarch starport. Normally, no drow house is willing to risk angering House Arabani too greatly, as the Karkaken Testing Grounds boasts the largest military force outside of the Blood Army. As a result, House Arabani is the unquestioned master of the area and uses this secure base as the primary home for many of its businesses.

Mehel Gorge

Mehel Gorge is the only major chasm to split into two at one end, though other crevices (such as Hak Rift and Jorund Chasm) do intersect with one another. Mehel Gorge appears to be the most stable of Apostae's many cracks, as it isn't wracked by tremors like the others. Its close proximity to the Karkaken Testing Grounds makes it a popular location for military training for mountainous conditions, though it also has a reputation for being unlucky. Most enterprises conducted there suffer at least one major accident, from equipment malfunctions costing hundreds of thousands of credits to the inadvertent switching to live ammunition leading to the deaths of dozens. While there is a rational explanation for each individual misfortune, many suspect supernatural interference causes them all. House Arabani has assigned a minor divination crew to examine the gorge to secure any proof of this theory. They have yet to produce any results—a fact that is making the group's leader increasingly nervous.

Night Fault

The Night Fault is the narrowest of the major crevices that crisscross the surface of Apostae, and it is the only one with a thick dust cloud within it (possibly from the same sources that created the Silted Sea). Running miles deep and generally no more than 50 to 100 feet wide, the narrowness of the aperture and the thick dust choking it means very little of the sun's dim, distant light reaches far into the Night Fault. Low-level radiation and electromagnetic waves within the rift thwart most technological sensors. The dust generally halves any light source's range (or reduces it even further deeper within the fault). The poor visibility and jagged rocks combined make going down into the Night Fault perilous even for the best prepared. As a result, it is a popular place to cache materials too valuable to destroy but too dangerous to have on hand. Most such stashes are stored beneath camouflaged fake rock a mile or more below the surface. Efforts to hide materials within the crevice sometimes end with a cliffside impact, a depleted jet pack, or frayed rope that leads to the payload (and its bearer) dropping into the black depths and, presumably, shattering on impact at the bottom.

Nightarch

Nightarch is the largest and most powerful city on Apostae. As the Apostae is mostly an airless rock, Nightarch is a sealed city, its hundreds of towers and compounds built with the same environmental systems (and durability) as starships. In the center of the city lies the massive, eponymous Nightarch Gate, while the Great Door, which grants access to the ancient chambers in the planet's interior, stands in the southernmost quarter of the city. Both sites are heavily guarded, and expeditions into the planet's interior are normally restricted to groups with the approval of a major drow house.

Nightarch is a major starport and trade hub. Most drow houses have businesses and strongholds here, with shops selling everything from starship weapons to nanite poisons and arranging for nearly any service imaginable. While much of the business done in Nightarch would be considered illegal

or immoral elsewhere, as long as customers are accurately informed of the drawbacks and risks of each purchase, procedure, or hireling arranged for, the details are largely considered local matters beyond the Pact Worlds' purview.

Great halls and pressurized towers that offer breathable air, comfortable temperatures, and often even artificial gravity systems make up the entirety of the surface city. The largest and wealthiest drow houses own enormous towers that contain their own atmosphere plants and power sources, and these buildings can be sealed off from the rest of the city to operate independently for months. Other buildings and domes are dependent on Nightarch Air and Water, a corporation owned and run by House Zeizerer, which charges small fees for the most basic needs of life and can embargo smaller buildings, poorer domes and halls, and nearly any of the cavern-boroughs. While the towers of other major houses are self-sufficient, the tunnels and commercial districts connecting them to the rest of Nightarch are not. House Zeizerer can't suffocate its major competitors, but it can force them to enter and leave their homes in environment suits.

While the tremendous house towers generally offer opulence and security, such conditions are limited to the powerful scions and managers of each house, along with their handpicked aides. The smaller domes and towers of Nightarch, where rank-and-file drow and a few successful citizens of other races dwell, are significantly less upscale. Lesser spires are generally secure, if uninspired in design and not as spacious, but Nightarch's domes and block halls are often actively dangerous. These large environmentally sealed chambers house entire slum neighborhoods, and though they're officially owned by various drow houses, their maintenance is often haphazard at best. Gas leaks, gravity outages, tainted water, and unreliable power makes life in these regions difficult, and security measures are geared toward preventing insurrection against the drow houses rather than protecting the local citizens. Crime in these warrens is largely ignored as long as it doesn't impact a drow noble, and local gangs or minor mercenary groups are often the closest things to police forces.

Even worse than the slum domes are the cavern-boroughs, stretching out for miles in all directions beneath Nightarch. These enormous, largely artificial caverns were hollowed out during the Gap. They now serve as the cheapest, and most dangerous, long-term housing on Apostae. Most residents are half-orcs, humans, and orcs, though some minor mongrelmen and troglodyte communities also dwell there. Life in the cavern-boroughs is one of constant struggle, as each community must make weekly payments to ensure the flow of air and water from the surface city, and various house-owned companies rule most boroughs as corporate fiefdoms. Blood sports, facilities that perform the horrific genetic mutilation known as fleshwarping, brutal mercenary training camps, and secret labs conducting appalling experiments and weapon tests are the main sources of opportunity within the caverns. Residents who fail to find a way into such endeavors often end up synthesizing, dealing in, or using transdimensional pesh, which can be made from traditional drugs combined with viscous purple fluids that sometimes seep through the walls of the lowest caverns.

The Nightarch Gate is known to have existed before the Gap, long before the drow found their way here. Occasionally, a portal to various alien landscapes appears within the tall structure. No detectable pattern or forewarning precedes the formation of a portal, which remains open for anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours before abruptly vanishing. Portals have formed as often as every few months, but yearlong stretches have also passed without one of them appearing. Explorers and settlers often spend months at a time in Nightarch hoping for a portal to open so they might travel to entirely new worlds, but more expeditions leave the city disappointed than find an opportunity to travel, and no expedition that has passed through a portal has ever been heard from again. All efforts to find ways to control the Nightarch Gate have failed. It is unknown if the structure is related to the *aiudara* that connect various locations within other Pact Worlds, a part of the original function of Apostae, or an artifact left behind by some ancient spacefaring culture that visited the planetoid.

NIGHTARCH

CE metropolis

Population 1,238,050 (85% drow, 6% half-orc, 6% orc, 2% human, 1% other)

Government oligarchy (drow houses)

Qualities financial center, notorious, technologically advanced

Maximum Item Level 20th

Null Tracts

No spell, magic item, or arcane effect works within a stretch of a few miles east of one of Apostae's largest craters. Very few drow are interested in studying the area, which is believed to be the result of strange machinery or other artifacts within the planetoid described in pre-Gap records. Certain groups, however, are convinced this space is somehow key to discovering another way into Apostae, one that will lead to the planetoid's fabled chambers. These researchers have built small camps across the Null Tracts, but recently a few of them have gone missing, with only a few garbled transmissions to mark their disappearances.

Orobor Abyss

The Orobor Abyss is the longest, deepest crevice on Apostae, and it remains the only one to have its own thin atmosphere and, along with it, some kind of ecology. It is believed the atmosphere formed from air leaking into the rift from some place where it intersects with a chamber within the planetoid's interior, but if this is indeed the case, that breach has never been found.

It's unclear whether the fault's inhabitants are native to Apostae's surface (as no mention of such creatures has ever been found in pre-Gap records), creatures that escaped Apostae's interior in the ancient past, or transplants of some kind. While numerous different forms of fungi and slimes have been reported, the most common is a climbing predator that seems similar to the *ksariks* of Castrovel, though lacking even rudimentary intelligence. Xenobiologists groups wishing to

explore the Orobor Abyss are often pressured into shady deals with drow houses for "expedition support," though in truth these are little more than payoffs to ensure the expeditions won't be harassed.

Platform Brevak

House Brevak controls this satellite, which circles Apostae at a near geosynchronous orbit above Nightarch. As the leading drow designer of starship frames, House Brevak maintains a cadre of engineers and mechanics aboard this small space station. House Brevak has lately begun researching a proprietary form of starship power that could revolutionize interstellar travel, which the other drow houses have been attempting to steal.

Silksoil

Thick, clogging dust covers the expansive lowland area known as Silksoil. Many believe the dust is the powdered remains of meteors that struck the surface of the planetoid combined with vaporized sections of the crust. Unlike on most of Apostae's surface, some valuable minerals are found among the particles of Silksoil, and a small number of independent dust miners manage to eke out a living in skimmer units that suck in huge quantities of the dust and sift out the wanted materials.

Silted Sea

Surrounding Nightarch in all directions for hundreds of miles is the Silted Sea, a layer of fine silt and dust ranging from 2 to 10 feet deep. The Silted Sea is believed to be the by-product of centuries of drilling out the caverns beneath Nightarch and digging into the alien chambers in the center of Apostae, though since the bed appears to have been created during the Gap, these are only theories. Most digging and drilling operations simply spew waste products up into the gravity well of the planetoid, since the airless world's settlements must be environmentally sealed anyway, and much of that eventually settles around Nightarch, which is strong evidence for the theory.

The silt is too loose to stand on, and only specialized bubble-wheeled vehicles can drive over it. Anything heavier than a rifle that isn't spread over a large area generally sinks into the silt and reaches the bottom within a few hours. As a result, the Silted Sea is a common corpse-dumping ground used by crime leagues, drow houses, and mercenary companies, as the bodies sink out of sight without any need to dig graves. Since Apostae is an airless world, some groups even execute unfortunate victims by throwing them into the Silted Sea without environmental protection—a fate that has led to numerous nihilis infesting the area. Some earth elementals have also been encountered in the region, though no one seems to know whether they arrived through some natural link to the Elemental Plane of Earth or by other means.

Stone Door

The Stone Door is among the smallest doors built into Apostae's surface, and visually it appears to be nothing more than two slabs of rock set in a stone frame. However, the Stone Door is every bit as resistant to analysis, damage, and

circumvention as the planetoid's other presumed entrances. Because of its smaller size and lack of anything even vaguely resembling a hinge, handle, or control mechanism, the Stone Door is among the least popular destinations for expeditions hoping to find an alternate way into the caverns below the surface of Apostae. However, some attempt is still made every few years, and the area around the doors is littered with abandoned vehicles and old campsites. Since drow forces rarely patrol the site, criminals and smugglers sometimes use the old camps around the Stone Door as short-term places to lie low while planning their escape or seeking out more stable accommodations.

Wrecker's Field

Wrecker's Field is an enormous unregulated junkyard of failed experiments, gutted prize ships, military scrap, mothballed vehicles, and a hundred other kinds of remnants of buildings, robots, starships, and weapons. Whenever a drow house ship is so damaged that it makes more economic sense to scrap it than repair it, new advances in technology make a battalion of hovertanks obsolete, or a building is torn down and its ruins need to be disposed of, the discarded materials end up in Wrecker's Field. Several minor houses control specific sections of the junkyard, but all those houses operate under the vigilant gaze of House Rycast. That house also operates the largest and most successful shipyards in orbit around Apostae, and it is both the primary supplier of new scrap and the corporation most likely to need bulk scrap to fabricate new starship parts. House Rycast doesn't bother to control any part of Wrecker's Field directly, but it has contracts with and spies placed within most of the houses that have operations there.

There is no formal city within Wrecker's Field, as most of the scrap operations carry out their work on large rolling factories that change location every few days, but many of the permanently grounded starships are kept pressurized, with enough power and environmental systems to make them habitable. This makes living within a starship in Wrecker's Field oddly similar to living aboard one in the depths of space.

Zeizerer Repository

House Zeizerer is Apostae's largest manufacturer and seller of weapons and is arguably the most powerful drow house on the planetoid. The factories of House Zeizerer make much more weaponry than they sell, and any excess is kept within a huge vault, the exact location of which is kept a very closely guarded secret. Only the most senior of House Zeizerer drow and the repository's security and other personnel know where it is. A few of the other drow houses know that Zeizerer is stockpiling arms, but they keep the information to themselves, for fear that any retaliation against House Zeizerer from the Pact Council and the Stewards would similarly fall on their heads. These other houses are unsure of the reasoning behind Zeizerer's actions, and a few of them have invested a good deal of time and effort into locating the weapons cache, but they have only dead agents to show for it.

XENOARCHAEOLOGIST

+1 INT

You are driven to explore the ruins of bygone civilizations, whether they are millennia old or recently collapsed. You might seek to explore the interior of Apostae or travel the galaxy to discover lost settlements, and your motives might be purely academic or simply profiteering. You often employ modern technology to aid in your explorations, but you are no stranger to unusual and ancient machinery, sometimes using them in the field when in a pinch.

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You have trained yourself to have few presuppositions about the foreign devices you uncover. Reduce the DC to identify rare, ancient, or alien tech by 5. Engineering is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Engineering checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Intelligence at character creation.

TRAP SPOTTER [6TH]

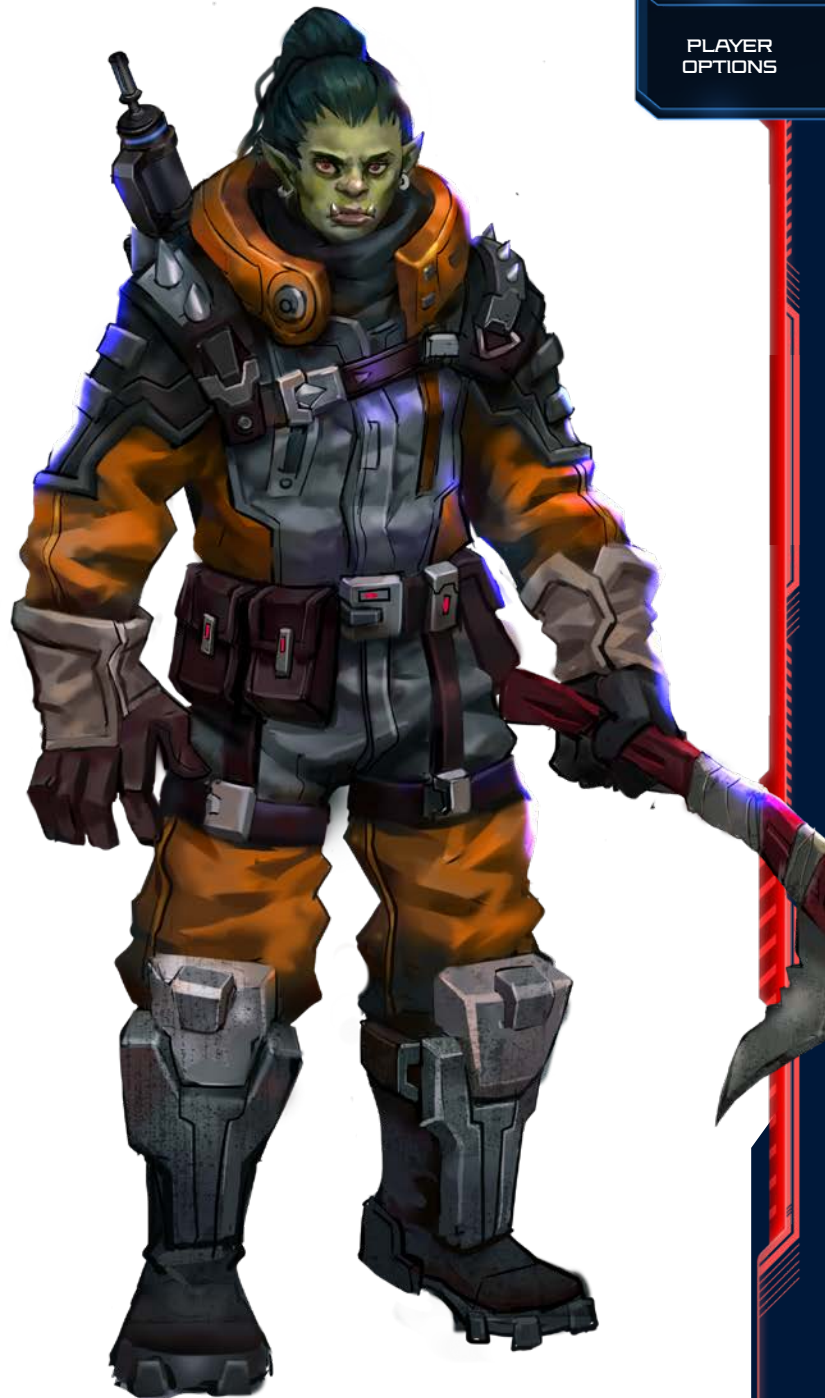
You often encounter ancient, exotic traps and security devices, varying from mechanical defenses to magical wards. You have honed your senses to pick out warning signs of traps of any kind. When you come within 10 feet of a trap, you can immediately attempt a Perception check to notice the trap, which should be rolled in secret by the GM.

MASTER TRANSLATOR [12TH]

Your notable exposure to ancient and foreign writing systems allows you to gain the general meaning of new languages with ease, even if you have never been exposed to the language previously. You can attempt a Culture check to decipher writing of up to 250 words of text as a move action, and you have no chance of entirely misconstruing its meaning. Additionally, as long as you have any computer equipment (including just a comm unit), you are assumed to have the necessary data set to take 20 on Culture checks to decipher writing, which you can do even if you are not trained in the Computers skill. It normally takes you 20 minutes to take 20 on text up to 250 words.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
REVELATION [18TH]

Up to twice per day, when you document a new artifact from an ancient or unknown culture, you regain 1 Resolve Point. When you discover an item on an unexplored planet, this process usually takes 10 minutes at most (and doesn't count as resting to regain Stamina Points), but even on known planets, you might be able to find new artifacts in 1d4 hours (or less) in old ruins or remote sections of cities with long histories or a high degree of trade with foreign cultures.





AUCTURN

The sun is little more than a glimmer above Aucturn's poisonous skies. From a distance, the planet actively defies classification—observers disagree on the planet's appearance and diameter, although its mass remains fairly constant. To remote scanners, Aucturn is sometimes a gas giant with striations of swirling crimson atmosphere, while at other times, it is little more than a lifeless rock with a thin, clear membrane of air. This inconsistent appearance is a planetary-scale illusion caused by some unknown magical effect; whether it is generated by Aucturn itself or precipitates the strangeness of the world is a hotly debated topic among occult scholars.

When starships approach orbit, the unappealing truth of Aucturn is quickly revealed to them: a strangely organic but mostly inhospitable world swathed in a poisonous, yellowish-green atmosphere. The planet swells and shrinks over time, its surface roiling and sliding along with oceans of inky muck. Alarmist observers posit that the planet expands and contracts like a massive breathing organism or pulsing tumor,



and many of the cultists who inhabit Aucturn eagerly agree, asserting that their world is the waiting womb of a Great Old One ready to burst upon the solar system and usher in a terrible age of darkness.

Life is stunted and toxic on Aucturn, and bizarre mutations abound—many offworlders suffer horrid transformations after only a few days on the surface. Those with merely physical changes are fortunate, for Aucturn warps the mind and drains sanity even more swiftly than it alters physical matter. Most of Aucturn's inhabitants, both native and immigrant, have long held their own malignant purposes. The planet was once a neutral meeting ground between worshipers of the Outer Gods and representatives of the aberrant Dominion of the Black. Long before the Gap, these forces declared war on each other, and the forces of the Dominion were, for the most part, ejected from Aucturn. The cultists of the Outer Gods are not wholly in control of their planet, however, as pockets of Dominion resistance remain, and unaligned indigenous monsters prey eagerly on both sides.



GEOGRAPHY

Aucturn's geography is mutable and inhospitable. Landmasses are composed of rubbery soil or chalky stone that grows only stunted, mutated vegetation. The planet's oceans are vast, heaving masses of black sludge through which unseen leviathans swim. Poisonous gases constitute Aucturn's atmosphere, although the specific nature of the poison varies from place to place—in some places, the poison is merely a thin hallucinogenic mist, while in others it gathers in a clinging, soupy neurotoxin.

Aucturn's geography twists and morphs as the planet heaves and contracts, creating entire mountain ranges of fleshlike hummocks or draining away rivers. This state of flux can change the landscape in a matter of moments, but usually occurs over a handful of months or years. Despite this, several common features typically persist in Aucturn's geography.

Aucturn has a large ocean around its southern pole called the Undulating Sea. Although the size of this ocean varies, it always surrounds a frigid polar cap and contains several settlements along its northern shores—most significantly the Citadel of the Black. Other oceans slither about as the planet writhes; sometimes these bodies of liquid connect to the

Undulating Sea, but most often they form gigantic lakes with their own coastal settlements.

A large mountain range called the Twisting Peaks runs roughly northwest to southeast across much of Aucturn's surface. These stony, gray mountains are indescribably ancient and weathered by Aucturn's acidic winds. The mountains shield the most severe weather, sheltering a vast field of the hardy poppies that grow to the south of the mountains. The highest of the Twisting Peaks are carved into stone fortresses, drawing lightning from passing storms and flickering with enticing greenish lights.

A smaller mountain range called the Chalkmounds stretches across Aucturn's northern hemisphere. The stone of these peaks is porous and crumbles easily. This strange stone absorbs toxins from the atmosphere, making the Chalkmounds a more hospitable place for humanoid habitation, but the stone cannot be quarried without exuding this concentrated poison. Furthermore, due to some ancient and forgotten disaster, the Chalkmounds are pocked with massive blast craters and emit significant background radiation. Hardy settlers live in the Chalkmounds, as the air is frequently breathable, but their rate of mutations is incredibly high.

RESIDENTS

Most of Aucturn's native creatures are monstrous and vicious. Light-absorbing bryrvaths lurk in Aucturn's shadowed places and assail intruders with soul-rending coruscations of color. Gugs—split-armed giants with massive vertical mouths—infest tunnels and warrens beneath the planet's surface. Oily, ooze-like behemoths called shoggoths lurk within Aucturn's seas, occasionally roiling onto land and uttering their madness-inducing howls. Malignant psychic ghosts that are visible only as flashes of pale lights and unblinking eyes stalk the landscape. But by far, the most common of Aucturn's native creatures are the orocorans, semi-intelligent predators with mosquito-like proboscises and temperaments who sup from the planet's ichor springs and spend their time in narcotic stupors. Other denizens of Aucturn consider individual orocorans a nuisance, but the creatures pose a serious hazard in large swarms.

Small cells of agents of the Dominion of the Black hold control over small biotech factories, remote caves, and other isolated locations on the planet. They avoid further conflict with the worshipers of the Outer Gods while they rebuild their strength and contact their allies floating in deep space between the stars. Unfortunate explorers who come across these hidden enclaves find that the Dominion fiercely protects its secret lairs and eagerly grasps for fodder for its horrid experiments. These agents most often include the magic-wielding neh-thalggus and yah-thelgaads, as well as the technical-minded deh-nolos.

Despite Aucturn's dangerous creatures, poisonous atmosphere, and scarce resources, some humanoids still make the planet their home. For the most part, these people—mostly humans and ysoki—have either pledged their lives to the cults of the Outer Gods or are recluses with only a tenuous grasp of reality. These humanoids usually live in sealed buildings with oxygen generators and wear respirators outdoors, although some settlements use alternative methods to provide resident humanoids with comfort, such as the ancient air-cleansing machines of the Citadel of the Black or the natural purifying effect of the Chalkmounds. Despite dealing with the atmosphere, these humanoids remain susceptible to the eldritch energies that bathe the planet. Residents usually bear strange mutations, such as chitinous plates, withered limbs, or extra eyes, that may render them unrecognizable as members of their original species.

SOCIETY

Chaos is the norm across all of Aucturn, and each community's influence extends only as far as its leader's reach. For some leaders—such as Carsai the King or the Midwives—this reach is substantial, but Aucturn lacks even local governments in many places, much less a planetary one. What law exists is usually brutal and erratic, built on fear or blind devotion to an evil power rather than a system of justice. The poor and ill on Aucturn have no rights and are useful only as food, slaves, or victims of frenzied experiments. The powerful constantly plot and scheme to keep their precarious positions, lest some upstart minion overthrow them during a moment of weakness.

This lawlessness allows evil to run unchecked on Aucturn. Among the residents of Aucturn, no acts are taboo, no topic of study is forbidden, and secrets are the most valuable currency. Here, revolutionaries are free to scheme against legitimate governments elsewhere, vast factories produce drugs that are outside of any civilization's laws, and scholars research forbidden ways to warp reality. Slavery is commonplace, although a life of servitude may be preferable to a short existence as a drug-addled test subject, victim of brutal torture, or abused acolyte of a nefarious cult.

Although it is a relatively large planet, Aucturn is not a significant participant in interplanetary politics. Due to its remoteness and hostility toward most forms of life, Aucturn isn't a voting member of the Pact Worlds; it is instead considered a protectorate, a world to be watched carefully rather than embraced. Although Aucturn has the right to have a representative speak at council meetings—a right employed by Carsai the King or his proxies in the past several years—the world doesn't have the same legal standing as other planets, or even some large moons, in the system.

CONFLICTS AND THREATS

The most significant ongoing threat on Aucturn is the simmering feud between the followers of the Outer Gods (most commonly Nyarlathotep) and the Dominion of the Black. While the cultists and the Dominion were never on the best of terms over the millennia, this delicate detente slid into all-out war sometime during the Gap. The cults of the Outer Gods ejected most of the Dominion forces from the planet and declared themselves the sole heirs to Aucturn, but the Dominion of the Black hasn't wholly given up its foothold on Aucturn. Small enclaves of Dominion agents lurk in isolated parts of the planet, such as in the Chalkmound Ziggurats or Frost-That-Bleeds, pursuing their abstruse experiments and seeking a way to strike back at the cultists. Dominion assault squads sometimes target their enemies on the planet directly, attacking from orbital drop ships, burrowing up through underground tunnels, or even slipping directly into cultist bases from adjacent dimensions. The tenacious cultists have proven resistant to Dominion attacks: bioweapons are less effective because the cultists already insulate themselves well against the planet's poisonous atmosphere, erratic psychology shields the cultists' minds from direct psychic attacks, and exhausting rituals have honed their physical fortitude. The Dominion would require a widespread planetary assault to retake the world, and the rest of the Pact Worlds are happy to let the Dominion waste its resources against a poisonous planet at the outskirts of the solar system.

The orocorans are the most numerous indigenous creatures on Aucturn, but they are so isolated and drug addled that they rarely pose a significant threat to others. Although the mighty orocoran ichor lords can focus a tribe of orocorans on a specific purpose—usually, an attack against a superior or well-defended foe—these tribes often fall to bickering and scatter within a short period of time. Only rare orocoran leaders—such as the Hunger-Enders described on page 145—can unite the aberrant addicts in pursuit of a long-term goal.

The cultists of the Outer Gods are at home on Aucturn, and they are one of the largest threats to the Pact Worlds. Concealed by the planetary illusion and sheltered within one of the most inhospitable environments in the star system, cultists are free to study mind-shattering truths of reality, invent potent drugs and poisons, and plot to bring down the governments and civil structures of the rest of the universe. Most citizens of the Pact Worlds consider the cultists of Nyarlathotep on Aucturn to be distant and ineffective, or even harmlessly countercultural, but this stereotype plays right into the cultists' hands. Some cultists spend their days in narcotic hazes in a manner reminiscent of the planet's native orcorans, but others focus on very specific—and usually very dangerous—goals. For example, some followers of the Outer Gods include skilled hackers developing viral memes that spread gibbering madness; others train as assassins and amass information about key leaders and organizations on other planets; still others pursue sophisticated theoretical physics to perfect bombs of unimaginable power. If even one of these schemes comes to fruition, citizens across the Pact Worlds will learn how dangerous the cultists lurking at the edge of the system really are.

NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Aucturn is a planet filled with biological terrors, disturbing mysteries, and evil cults. A few of the significant locations on Aucturn follow.

Amniek

The second-largest settlement on Aucturn, Amniek is a circular city of just over 90,000 people—mostly cultists—sprawling around and within several basalt towers at the base of the Gravid Mound. Amniek is governed by a council of 13 spellcasters called the Midwives. Although the Midwives rule Amniek, their principle duty is ministering to the Gravid Mound, carefully shepherding the birth of the godling within. While the Midwives have traditionally been female, there is no strict gender requirement; of the current Midwives, three are men and two are rag-shrouded siblings of indeterminate gender. Amniek's other residents pursue daily activities as might be found in any civilized settlement, including trade at a spaceport atop one of the city's towers, but the city is both literally and emotionally in the shadow of the Gravid Mound. Residents spend several hours each day raising chants of obeisance to the Midwives and pleas for mercy to the being within the mound. Visitors aren't technically required to join these chants, but residents of the city advise doing so—after all, if tomorrow is the day the godling finally spills forth, today is the day to have beseeched its pity.

Blackened Key

AbadarCorp constructed this sprawling research complex with the permission of Carsai the King for the purpose of studying Aucturn's unique environment and ecology, perhaps eventually discovering a way to make the planet habitable for larger groups. It saw only a few months of operation before agents of the Dominion of the Black viciously attacked, killing all within.

The base was renamed Blackened Key due to its charred walls and burned-out laboratories, and is now host to a multitude of ghosts and other undead. Some whisper that Carsai knew that the Dominion would be enraged by the complex's presence and allowed it to be built to draw those creatures' ire so that he could make a move elsewhere.

Chalkmound Ziggurats

Although there are more hidden redoubts and bolt-holes on Aucturn containing creatures of the Dominion of the Black than the cult of Nyarlathotep would care to admit, none are as dangerous to them as the secret temple-laboratories in a vast cavern far beneath the Chalkmounds. Here, several stone ziggurats stand hundreds of feet tall: once-powerful shrines to Nyarlathotep, these underground ziggurats were abandoned millennia ago but still echo with religious energies. The Dominion of the Black discovered this forgotten place and reactivated it, seeking to psychically corrupt Nyarlathotep's worship by perverting the brain waves of captured cultists. Swarms of deh-nolos, neh-thalggus, and yah-thelgaads labor in the flickering lights shed by the ziggurats, swapping around the brains of captured cultists to extract and mutate their bio-theological energies. These efforts are overseen by wormlike chyzaedus, the closest thing the Dominion has to religious scholars. Captured brains may hold other, deeper secrets that a daring recovery mission into this stronghold could procure and employ against the Dominion.

The Chillblains

Aucturn's northern reaches are less frozen than its southern pole, though the temperature does take quite a dip there. A particular large stretch of land called the Chillblains approaches absolute zero. Though this seemingly supernatural cold affects living creatures as normal, liquids and other inanimate objects rarely freeze despite the very low temperature. Certain devotees of the Outer Gods claim that their patrons protect their bodies from the cold and have been seen walking freely through the Chillblains wearing not much more than simple cloth robes. However, when two or more of these cultists get within 10 feet of each other, that protection vanishes and they are usually killed instantly.

Citadel of the Black

The Citadel of the Black is Aucturn's largest settlement in both size and population. Located on the shores of the Undulating Sea, it is a massive building almost a mile tall and with a base of several dozens of acres, made of a jumbled collection of dense stone, black iron, pulsing flesh-bricks, spires of jagged bone, and tough organic membranes. Due to eldritch atmospheric pumping engines within the building, the yellow smog of Aucturn is rendered nontoxic, allowing a large number of humans, ysoki, and other races of the Pact Worlds to congregate within the ominous structure and in the many smaller buildings clustered at the Citadel's base like barnacles on a ship.

Despite its immense size, the Citadel seems mostly abandoned, as fewer than 160,000 residents inhabit its multitude of floors

and cavernous chambers. Many residents go days without seeing another living soul, which suits its many misanthropic hermits and obsessed scholars of arcane lore just fine. Some even believe that the tower is larger on the inside than on the outside or that the building actually has multiple interiors, each its own demiplane.

The undisputed ruler of the Citadel of the Black is Carsai the King, immortal high priest of Nyarlathotep and, some whisper, an avatar of the Empty Traveler himself. Carsai appears in public frequently; each appearance draws large crowds of fawning cultists, and his charismatic speeches are often broadcast throughout the Pact Worlds; cries of adoration and spontaneous ecstatic suicides are not uncommon during these spectacles. Despite Carsai's position, the Citadel of the Black is not a theocracy, and the city has just as many agnostic scholars of forgotten or forbidden lore as it does devout cultists of Nyarlathotep. These scholars study in the tower's many libraries of blasphemous tomes, such as the tumorous Weeping Cathedral or the magically silenced Repository of Errant Lore. Other citizens work the fleshfarms in the vaults beneath the building to feed the populace, or serve as the Highstalkers—a security firm that straddles the line between a police force and sanctioned serial killers.

CITADEL OF THE BLACK

CE cyclopean tower

Population 153,130 (45% human, 14% orocoran, 11% ysoki, 6% android, 24% other)

Government autocracy (Carsai the King)

Qualities academic, notorious

Maximum Item Level 18th

Dark Valley

A settlement of ramshackle prefabricated living structures and portable generators, Dark Valley exists in permanent shadow. The reason for this lightlessness has yet to be understood, though groups of scientists from various corporations have spent decades studying the area. Dark Valley has no permanent residents, and the buildings are only minimally maintained by the researchers who stay here. The periods in which Dark Valley is inhabited usually last only a few months, as the effects of Aucturn's atmosphere are heightened within this area between the Chalkmounds and the Gnashing Range.

Endless Throat

This gaping pit, 40 feet wide, yawns at the bottom of a steep-sided canyon. The pit winds down beneath Aucturn's surface, looping and twisting in a disorienting fashion but leading ever downward. Its walls quiver occasionally and are slick with black ichor, leading to the unmistakable feeling of moving through a massive organism. A faint soothing call always echoes from farther down the passage, as though from something just out of sight around the next few bends.

Endless Throat winds ever downward, rarely varying in diameter or temperature, in defiance of geological rules. Although a few corpses litter the passage in places—explorers who succumbed to injury or starvation before finding their way

back out—the most significant landmark is a personal transport vehicle resting askew against one of the slick passage walls 370 miles down. The vehicle has been picked over by the few travelers who have made it this far. It faces the entrance, and its logs show it traveled a journey of over 200,000 miles—much farther than Aucturn is wide. Scrawled in blood on the windshield are the words “We found the One Who Calls” and a series of numbers with no apparent meaning.

Frost-That-Bleeds

Aucturn's southern polar ice cap is even more inhospitable than the rest of the planet. Although the poisonous atmosphere and scouring winds are just as prevalent here as they are elsewhere, the temperature is far below freezing and the winds kick up howling snowstorms of jagged crystals. Though dangerous, this region has startling beauty: Aucturn's weirdly fluctuating magnetic field creates miles-wide sheets of colorful, rippling auroras that dance across the sky. Beneath these lights, scientists of the Dominion of the Black labor in a factory called Frost-That-Bleeds. This structure is a monolithic series of hollow ice blocks that penetrate the planetary surface, circulating Aucturn's foul, eldritch ichor through the blocks like black blood through pulsing veins. Scientists of the Dominion of the Black study this ichor, perfecting potent strains of magnetotoxins to poison the planet from within and convert its magnetic field into a powerful beacon for their agents drifting in the black space between the stars.

The Fury Place

This plain of rubbery soil and stunted trees is hundreds of miles across and riven by a deep chasm filled with roiling clouds that spread throughout the plain. The resulting thin mist resounds with an overwhelming psychic imperative to furiously attack nearby creatures. Strong-willed individuals can keep this bloodlust at bay, but they still risk becoming victims of the raging creatures that roam the plain.

Scant pre-Gap records indicate that this area of Aucturn didn't previously inflict the psychic rage it does now. To the contrary, the site was formerly known as “the Loving Place” and encouraged enthusiastic orgies and unbridled lusts. Even older records speak of the area as one where creatures would be overwhelmed with lassitude, entering a listless torpor and eventually perishing from starvation upon a field of bones and chitin left by previous visitors. Historians speculate that this region cycles through eons-long ages where a particular sin predominates; according to this theory, sloth gave way to lust, and lust to wrath. As some visitors are able to overcome the psychic compulsion toward bloodshed, these scholars speculate that the era of wrath is ebbing, and some other sin may soon take its place.

Gentle Forest

In the shelter of steep-sided mountains called the Gnashing Range rises a vast forest of green and black trees with gnarled branches. From a distance, the Gentle Forest appears to be the only large mass of healthy vegetation on Aucturn. The trees are actually interspersed with several enormous eellike

creatures of a similar coloration and size. These ersatz trees use the surrounding foliage as camouflage; however, they can be distinguished primarily by their heaving, peristaltic contractions, like hiccups, and also because they twist lazily and slowly when living creatures come near. Suckered mouths jut from the creatures in an imitation of branches; these mouths kiss and caress nearby victims for several minutes, sometimes whispering the victim's thoughts out loud in a choir. These curious creatures don't seem to be intelligent, merely uttering psychic copies of others' thoughts, but some burble the thoughts of previous travelers. Ultimately, the trees are overwhelmed by a need to feed: creatures that stay near for too long find that the mouths have sharp teeth that can latch on to victims, allowing the eels to drain their blood. The remaining bloodless husks serve as fertilizer for the forest's actual trees.

Gravid Mound

This polyp-shaped mountain resembles an egg balanced on its narrow end, dominating the surrounding landscape. The top of the mountain is an open caldera containing chunky amniotic fluids that occasionally bubble and roil, spilling over the sides of the mound. A cabal of 13 hooded spellcasters called the Midwives—who also rule the nearby city of Amniek—insist that the Gravid Mound contains an embryonic godling, nurtured within Aucturn as a fetus within a womb. The Midwives regulate the Gravid Mound's bubbling fluids and occasional shuddering, attempting to ease the impending birth when the Gravid Mound will burst like a cyst and spill the new godling forth. The Midwives understand that this godling will have indescribable power, and they hope their ministrations both accelerate its birth and elevate them as its high priests when it exercises its first soul-splitting cries.

Flying beasts with features of wasps and armored serpents sip from the caldera like grotesque hummingbirds. The Midwives consider these creatures to be nuisances, although some grow to immense size on the eldritch fluids.

Grindhold

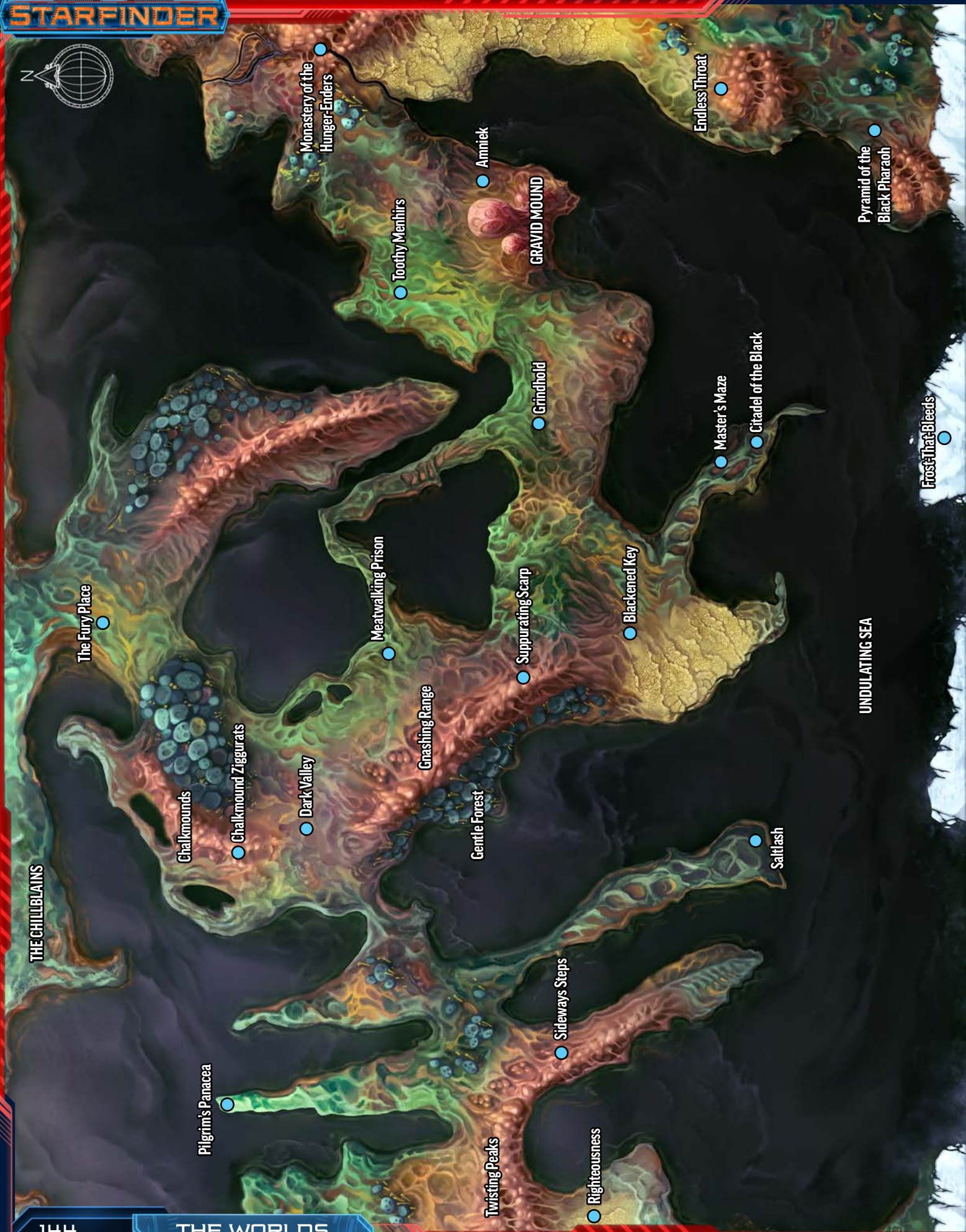
An example of one of the settlements of cultists dotting the landscape of Aucturn, Grindhold is a small, fortified city ruled by a splinter faction of Nyarlathotep's faith. Maintaining independence from the Citadel of the Black, Grindhold supports a small starport and minor trading interests, specializing principally in distilled poisons, mind-altering drugs, and explosives manufactured by the city's joyless human and dwarven specialists. Grindhold's militia is surprisingly professional and trains with flying biotech ships shaped like enormous bats with grasping mandibles. Rumor holds that the heretical faction survives only at Carsai's whim, but Grindhold's leader, High Visionary **Habblegeth** (CE female dwarf mystic), insists that her knowledge of "secret truths" of the Black Pharaoh protects her city from Carsai's unholy vengeance.

Master's Maze

Several miles north of the Citadel of the Black, a series of box canyons, chasms, and gullies creates an enormous maze dozens of miles wide, with tens of thousands of branching passages. Seen from above, this maze creates a mind-rending pattern that causes mortal minds to shy away; the only way to truly solve the maze is to enter it. Although the passages of the maze seem natural, they have been carefully shaped and expanded by generations of cultists of Eloritu to create a living prayer to the god of secrets: the alignment of each passage has carefully designed to hold occult significance.



CARSAI THE KING



THE CHILLBLAINS

The Fury Place

Chalkmounds

Chalkmound Ziggurats

Dark Valley

Meatwalking Prison

Gnashing Range

Gentle Forest

Twisting Peaks

Sideways Steps

Righteousness

Suppurating Scarp

Blackened Key

Grindhold

Saltash

Toothy Menhirs

Amniek

GRAVID MOUND

Monastery of the
Hunger-Enders

Endless Throat

Pyramid of the
Black Pharaoh

Frost That Bleeds

Master's Maze

UNDULATING SEA

Pilgrim's Panacea

The maze is rumored to have precisely one unique solution, and it is said that an adherent who walks this path will obtain divine enlightenment sufficient to elevate her to the power of a demigod. Not content to make the twisting passages the only obstacles to enlightenment, overzealous priests of Eloritu sometimes introduce dangerous monsters into the Master's Maze, making it a test of martial skill and stealth as well as of intellect.

Meatwalking Prison

One of the least understood prisons in the Pact Worlds, Meatwalking Prison is an ancient iron fortification constructed at some point during the Gap. Carsai the King officially sanctions this prison, but its day-to-day operations are overseen by the warden **Zixiz** (CE female android mystic), who uses lumbering gugs as guards. Occasionally, one of Zixiz's robotic agents arrives at another incarceration facility across the galaxy and offers to take that prison's most dangerous or troublesome offenders off its hands (though usually only the most corrupt prisons take such a deal). As such, Meatwalking Prison houses the worst of the worst, even though its methods of imprisonment don't break any Pact Worlds laws. In fact, the facilities seem pleasant and comfortable, despite the monstrous guards, and—very rarely—a prisoner elects to stay within the structure after his sentence has been served. Many are highly suspicious of Carsai's motives and believe that Zixiz is either brainwashing or indoctrinating her prisoners for some dangerous purpose.

Monastery of the Hunger-Enders

Several of the lonely, ruined fortresses atop the Twisting Peaks are located near underground passages and claimed by a cabal of orocoran mystics called the Hunger-Enders. More powerful even than the dreaded orocoran ichor lords, the Hunger-Enders have all died from gorging upon the eldritch fluids that flow beneath Aucturn's surface and risen again as undead creatures. Although long past their addiction for the planet's ichor, the Hunger-Enders distill the fluid into concentrated forms in their underground chambers, overseeing vast swarms of orocoran aspirants that hope to sample the refined stuff. These aspirants live austere lives as slaves to the Hunger-Enders' whims. Their distillations require rare alchemical components; unlike many orocorans, the undead Hunger-Enders are willing to negotiate with strangers to obtain these ingredients in exchange for the ancient relics found beneath their mountain fortresses.

Pilgrim's Panacea

One of the few ships to have fallen from the Shattered Hulks and survived planetfall intact, the hospital ship called the *Pilgrim's Panacea* is half buried in a sea of ichor in Aucturn's northern hemisphere. The ship's engines and engineering section were completely demolished in the crash, but the rest of the ship landed safely—to the dismay of its survivors. A group of aquatic humanoid cultists swarmed into the ship and fell upon the physicians and wounded alike with inhumane violence and debased lusts.

Since that dark day, several generations have been born within the ship. Although this progeny has primarily human-looking forms and scientific knowledge gleaned from generations of study of the ship's medical archives, they retain the underwater mobility, aberrant appetites, and horrid faith of their aquatic forebears. Recently, this tribe has begun masquerading as doctors for hire, providing just enough genuine medical care to build a good reputation among unsuspecting offworlders. Potential "patients" who meet certain abstruse criteria are taken to aquatic sacrifice chambers and never seen again.

Pyramid of the Black Pharaoh

This glossy pyramid of unknown material sits across the Undulating Sea from the Citadel of the Black. It is the center of worship for Nyarlathotep on Aucturn (and, indeed, the entire Pact Worlds) and sees innumerable pilgrims every year. Much of the pyramid's interior is a vast cathedral where congregants gather, but there are no official services. The worshipers of the Crawling Chaos are expected to talk among themselves, sharing secrets and conspiratorial whispers. Each devotee then must decide for himself whether what he has heard is true or if had just been lied to; discovering if such a lie would serve another's purpose is part of this strange form of worship.

The pyramid also contains a maze of secret passageways and hidden chambers, some of which seem to move and shift when no one is in them. Those who come to the pyramid believe that some of these areas contain unique magic, outlawed technology, or other taboo secrets and actively seek them out, but are generally tight-lipped about what they have found, an unsurprising response for a cultist of Nyarlathotep.

Many have noted that Carsai the King has never been seen within or traveling to the pyramid. Some say this is a ploy to confuse those who believe he is an avatar of the Black Pharaoh.

Righteousness

In the shelter of the Twisting Peaks stand a handful of interconnected hemispherical domes. Powerful lights along the structures, visible from miles away, appear as a sigil that conveys a calming effect upon any viewer. This magical effect is one of the key defenses of the angelic forces that inhabit this small settlement, which they call Righteousness.

Although Righteousness is closed to most outsiders, a few peaceful visitors are sometimes invited in. These visitors describe walkways of light, regular rows of galleries and amphitheaters, and hundreds of angelic inhabitants. The armored angels of Righteousness spend their days training for war or participating in celestial choirs whose holy hymns quell Aucturn's mutating effects near the settlement. The angels explain to curious visitors that Righteousness is a beachhead for a celestial crusade against an evil force that has not yet arrived on Aucturn but will do so in the near future. The angels don't provide further details, however, explaining that to reveal the evil's nature might provide it with undue warning. The angels are oppressively fatalistic despite their near-constant training, as no angel in Righteousness—even their solar angel commander, Ambrennil—expects to survive their coming crusade.

Saltlash

There is a strangely pastoral sight on a series of cliffs riddled with dense salt deposits at the edge of the Undulating Sea: a series of seemingly normal fishing villages untouched by technology. Only upon closer inspection does Aucturn's influence reveal itself. Inbred human families who worship some aquatic terror living under the waves occupy these villages, collectively known as the Saltlash region. These humans, who have acclimated to the planet's poisonous atmosphere, barely eke out a living from year to year, a routine centered around the yearly Festival of Tithing. The joyless celebration culminates when an immense squid-like tentacle bursts from the sea, winds across the cliffs and into the largest village, and drags a chosen sacrifice—usually one of the towns' younger residents—back into the inky depths.

The stoic Saltlash folk suffer this loss because those salt deposits touched by the questing tentacle are changed into a valuable resource. Saltlash residents know the secrets to distilling these salts into a powerful narcotic that heightens the user's paranoia. As this drug is odorless and tasteless, it commands a high price in other communities on Aucturn, and buyers often sell it offworld. Over the past few years, however, the villages' populations have been dwindling, forcing the people of Saltlash to kidnap outsiders on the eve of their festival to proffer to the tentacle.

Shattered Hulks

Aucturn is orbited by derelict hulls of hundreds of Pact World ships, including warships of enormous size. These wrecks occasionally collide, raining fiery wreckage onto the planet far below, but for the most part, the derelict ships float slowly around the planet like lazy flies around a corpse. These vessels are assumed to have been dispatched from inner system worlds at some point during the Gap for reasons now unknown. Although some of these floating hulks certainly contain valuable relics or information from the Gap, the eldritch energies of Aucturn have warped the ships. Few of the wrecks have been explored, as all contain madness-inducing interiors. A few documented examples hint at the horrors to be found among these lost ships. The warship *Collum's Champion* has internal corridors of quivering flesh rather than steel, its crew transformed into immortal human-sized polyps extruding from the walls and constantly screaming in pain. The transport *Memories of War* gives off an eerie light that casts impossible shadows on the surrounding wrecks. The scout ship *Scarlet Runner* is much larger on the inside than the outside and contains endless dim hallways that intersect bizarrely and echo with manic laughter from somewhere deeper within.

Sideways Steps

Several monolithic stone steps ascend one of the Twisted Peaks, shrouded in cloying mist that obscures visual, magical, and technological observation. Some visitors ascending onto one of the steps see a colorful vortex within the mist nearby, although only one person can see this manifestation at a time: the visitor's companions usually cannot see or interact with the portal.

Each stair's vortex leads to another version of Aucturn, and most bear dramatic changes: one is a blasted wasteland patrolled by massive, murderous robots of unknown design; another bears fields of sweet-smelling flowers beneath a brightly glowing moon; and another is a mere riven shell as though the godling lurking within the planet long ago burst free. The positions of the stars plainly confirms that each planet is indeed Aucturn, but one from an adjacent reality. Only initial observations have been made in any alternate Aucturn, as visitors who don't return through the vortex within a few minutes find it permanently closed behind them and are lost forever.

Suppurating Scarp

This wide cliff in the Gnashing Range towers hundreds of feet high and constantly seeps a thin, yellowish pus-like fluid that drips down the cliff and collects in disgusting pools at its base. Although different from the black ichor that flows throughout the rest of Aucturn, this pus has a similar hallucinogenic effect when imbibed. Creatures able to force themselves to swallow the repulsive fluid and gaze upon the Suppurating Scarp see shapes in the whorls and eddies of the dripping pus that are almost always prophetic yet grim: an image of a dire fate to soon befall the viewer, the name of the viewer's next loved one to die, or a stylized representation of a treasured item that the viewer will permanently lose.

Orocorans shun the Suppurating Scarp, bearing a deeply ingrained fear of the tiny wriggling worms that occasionally squirm out of the cliff to plop into the pus pools below. Orocoran rumors hold that a fresh corpse submerged in the shallow pools of pus and left undisturbed for 11 days rises again as a horrid amalgamation of bloated yellowish worms bearing the dead creature's memories but none of its kindness or mercy.

Toothy Menhirs

Thrusting up from the slick, rubbery ground in a miles-wide valley, the Toothy Menhirs are monolithic rectangular slabs 20 feet wide and 80 or more feet high. The slabs are set in a roughly triangular pattern, with a few outliers scattered nearby. Although the site has the appearance of a primeval set of standing stones, the Toothy Menhirs are made of tough, yellowish bone and resemble enormous, blunt teeth. The menhirs can be damaged, but they regenerate with startling rapidity. Strange humanoid creatures made entirely of tiny teeth lurk among the menhirs, merging into the slabs when they know they are being observed.

Some offworlders observing the arrangement of the Toothy Menhirs experience a nagging sense of déjà vu, as though the pattern of the slabs were somewhat familiar but somehow fundamentally incorrect, such as if one or two were slightly out of place. Computational analysis reveals that the layout of the slabs is similar, but not exactly identical, to several different constellations visible from Aucturn's upper atmosphere. Some believe that wrenching the slabs into an alignment matching one of these configurations of stars will cause something glorious—or terrible—to occur.

CULTIST

+1 CON

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS

You served as a hooded, faceless adherent to a religion or organization that remains hidden from public view—usually because its aims are illegal or immoral. Although your time in a cult is most likely behind you—or, at least, that's what you insist whenever the subject arises—you remain keenly aware of signs of cult activity and inured to physical hardship by exposure to mind-expanding substances combined with sleepless nights of unending ritual.

THEME KNOWLEDGE [1ST]

You cataloged the symbols, members, and indoctrination techniques of the cult you joined, and you can generalize these to hidden cults of any kind. Reduce the DC of Culture and Mysticism checks to recall knowledge about hidden cults and secretive religions, including knowledge about their beliefs, hierarchy, and symbols, by 5. Reduce the DC of Diplomacy checks to gather information about hidden cults and their enigmatic members (usually considered obscure or secret knowledge or mysterious or obscure individuals) by 5. Disguise is a class skill for you, though if it is a class skill from the class you take at 1st level, you instead gain a +1 bonus to Disguise checks. In addition, you gain an ability adjustment of +1 to Constitution at character creation.

CULT INFILTRATOR [6TH]

Once you have discovered a hidden cult, you can quickly learn to slip into the mindset of its members and pretend to be one of them. If you spend 10 minutes conversing with a member of a hidden cult and succeed at a DC 25 Culture check, typical followers of that cult have a starting attitude of indifferent toward you. You also gain a +2 bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks against such followers.

EXCEPTIONAL
ENDURANCE [12TH]

Your exposure to drugs and poisons during your time with the cult has left you inured to their effects. Once per day, you can reroll a Fortitude saving throw to resist the effects of a disease, drug, or poison. You must decide to use this ability after rolling but before learning the outcome of your first roll.

MEMORIES OF
DEVOTION [18TH]

Reflecting on your experience within or against the galaxy's cults provides you with inner reserves of strength. Up to twice per day, you can deliberate about your time as a cultist—either by speaking to another person or by recording private audio logs—for 10 minutes to regain 1 Resolve Point; this time doesn't count as resting for the purpose of regaining Stamina Points.





STARSHIPS

2



THE DRIFT

The Drift is simultaneously one of the Pact Worlds' greatest mysteries and a fundamental aspect of the system's economic and political structures. It keeps colonies and outposts in the far reaches of space connected to their former home system and fosters trade between the Pact Worlds and other civilizations, such as the Veskarium.

Thanks to the Gap, no one now knows exactly how long the sentient races of the Pact Worlds have had space flight. Travel between worlds in the system appears to have been regular but expensive, whether via ultra-powerful spells, the slow trudge of reaction drives, or plane-shifting engines like the infamous Kuthite shadow drives. Even so, the incredible distances between stars made attempts at travel beyond the solar system's edge exceptionally rare, the stuff of fools and zealots.

Upon ascending to godhood, Triune's first action was to send out the Signal: a miraculous, galaxy-wide broadcast containing plans for a new type of starship engine, one capable of accessing a heretofore unknown plane of reality called the Drift. No one truly knows whether Triune discovered the Drift by peering into the metaphysical code underlying reality, as it claims, or created the plane by divine fiat.

DRIFT PHYSICS

Despite its strange appearance, the Drift isn't very different from Material Plane space. The plane is mostly empty, airless, and sports no appreciable gravitational pull. The exception to this is what Drift explorers call "planar bubbles." When a piece of another plane is torn away and added to the Drift, part of its essence expands the Drift's planar fabric, yet the rest is added whole cloth, its terrain (and any creatures or items present at the moment of theft) set floating in the Drift's expanse. The largest of these annexations are able to maintain localized regions in which their former planar properties remain dominant. As soon as anything is removed from these bubbles, it immediately loses these former planar qualities. Some scholars believe that over time these bubbles slowly break down, "digested" by the Drift, but if so, it's an inexplicably random process.

DRIFT TRAVEL

Drift travel operates via the same general principles as other forms of plane shifting, but without magic. Because distances within the Drift don't correspond to those on the Material Plane, it's possible for a ship to enter the Drift at one point, travel a short distance, and then pop back out onto the Material Plane in a vastly distant location, circumventing the space in between. In this way, ships can travel between star systems thousands of light years apart in a matter of days or weeks.

While this has proven an enormous boon for the cultures of the Pact Worlds, and indeed civilizations across the galaxy, it's not quite as simple as it sounds. Navigating in the Drift is tricky for several reasons. First, the Drift has no real landmarks—while it's full of chunks of strange terrain and random objects pulled

in from other planes, the Drift itself is a gargantuan, empty void of warping pink-and-purple light patterns and shifting matterless clouds of mysterious energy. Second, the Drift's growth is distributed randomly, with the distances between two points within the Drift constantly shifting as the plane expands or shrinks in particular regions. As a result, nothing stays in the same place for long, and two seemingly still objects may suddenly be thousands of perceived miles apart.

That's where Drift beacons enter the picture. Created and maintained by Triune's church, Drift beacons somehow manage to exist simultaneously on both the Material Plane and in the Drift. As a result, navigators can use the beacons' positions and advanced mathematics to locate the correct spot to exit the Drift. This doesn't mean exiting precisely at a given beacon's location—in fact, many beacons are found adrift in space far from any desirable destination. Instead, the most important factor of Drift navigation is the density of beacons in a given region of real space, and it's this factor that most affects the length of time required to travel between locations, as well as whether a given destination is considered to be in Near Space or the Vast. To date, the Drift has never been used to travel beyond the galactic rim, though it's unclear whether this is a limit of Drift beacon technology, the plane itself, Triune's influence, or something else entirely.

Trying to locate a particular point within the Drift, such as a specific planar bubble, is exceptionally difficult, requiring at least a successful DC 30 Piloting check to navigate (and possibly much more, at the GM's discretion). Certain magic items, divine fiat, or mysterious "beacon codes" provided by the Church of Triune allow a ship to revisit a location. This is particularly true of Alluvion, the strange amalgam city that Triune has publicly claimed as its divine realm. While ships regularly end up in the city by accident in the course of executing other jumps, reaching the city on purpose requires the aforementioned divine coordinate codes.

Using the Drift to travel between places on the Material Plane still requires a certain amount of time spent traveling through the Drift, though this journey can take wildly varying amounts of time, even for the same ship. Similarly, these paths aren't as precise as physical trade routes. As such, two ships heading from Absalom Station to Vesk Prime might leave from near the same point and have the same transit time, yet never encounter each other in the Drift. This slight variation means that two ships can't exit the Drift onto exactly the same point in Material Plane space, and a ship won't exit directly into a solid object. On the other hand, it is also impossible for anyone to fortify and thus control specific jump points within the Drift, and those attempting to



guard their planet from invasion would need to mine every inch of space around their world.

All of this is useful for individual ships but adds complications for fleets or caravans attempting to arrive at the same time, let alone in the same formation. In these situations, multiple vessels can “slave” their Drift engines to one another, effectively becoming a single entity for purposes of travel time and arrival position. The downside to this “mass Drifting” is that it forces all of the component ships to use the lowest Drift engine rating of the group. Only a few militaries have developed specific master control vessels capable of circumventing this restriction and moving entire armadas quickly and coherently.

PLANAR TRAITS

Like every plane, the Drift has certain properties that remain consistent and distinguish it from other planes.

Transitive Plane

The Drift is considered a transitive plane, meaning that mortals primarily use it for transportation. It is technically coterminous with the Material Plane, meaning that a given point on one corresponds to a point on another, yet these points are hopelessly scrambled—two points apparently a mile apart in the Drift might correspond to locations thousands of light-years apart on the Material Plane.

No Gravity

While individual planar bubbles may have their own regions of localized gravitational pull, for the most part the Drift itself has no distinguishable gravity.

Normal Time

Time within the Drift passes at the same rate as time on the Material Plane.

Infinite and Expanding

Although the Drift is technically finite—in much the same way as Outer Planes like the mountain of Heaven or Hell’s many-layered pit—it’s so vast as to be effectively infinite, and no one has ever found an edge or border of the plane. At the same time, divine investigation has shown that the Drift is still growing as it absorbs tiny pieces of other planes.

Dynamic Morphology

The Drift is fundamentally consistent, and objects within it follow the normal rules of Material Plane physics. Due to the plane’s constant and random growth, objects’ positions in space are unstable: two objects floating next to each other one moment might suddenly be thousands of miles apart the next, without apparent movement. Fortunately, this random shifting rarely affects people or equipment while traveling through the Drift.

Mildly Neutral-Aligned

Creatures of any alignment can exist within the Drift without taking any penalties.

Limited Magic

Most magic functions normally in the Drift, except for spells or magical abilities that transport creatures or material in or out of the Drift. Thus spells or abilities such as *shadow walk* and *plane shift* simply fail to work, as do summoning spells and abilities.

STARSHIP OPTIONS

With exploration of the galaxy being an ever-expanding venture, research departments responsible for designing new starships and starship systems for various organizations tend to receive a great deal of funding. Some of the starships and components presented in this section can be purchased on the open market, while others might require a buyer to delve into the black market or even join or ally with an organization to gain access.

This section presents new starships for five different organizations. While not intended to be inclusive of all of the vessels operated by these groups, these starships are meant to provide a sense of each faction's style and specialties. In addition, the vessels featured here use rules not found in Chapter 9 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*, including new systems, expansion bays, and weapons, all described below. Though this chapter introduces these new technologies as parts of specific ship models or factions, competition and industrial espionage are fierce between starship manufacturers, and similar technology may well be found elsewhere.

BIOMECHANICAL SHIPS

The ships of the Xenowardens are not so much constructed as they are grown in orbital nurseries. Unique blends of technology and nature, they're capable of healing themselves over time and responding to threats in ways unlike any other vessel. These abilities cannot be added to other vessels and, as of yet, no one else in the Pact Worlds has managed to unlock the secrets of their creation.

Empathetic Response: A biomechanical ship can respond like a sentient creature when wounded or in danger. Once a biomechanical ship has taken critical damage, its speed increases by 2 hexes (which may affect its Piloting modifier; see page 319 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*). In addition, if the pilot of a biomechanical ship successfully performs the evade stunt, the ship receives a +3 circumstance bonus to its AC and TL (instead of +2).

Radiation Sensitive: Weapons with the irradiate property deal tremendous damage to a biomechanical ship. In addition to the radiation damage dealt to the crew, the ship takes critical damage effects, depending on the level of the radiation. If the radiation level is low, the ship takes one critical damage effect. The ship takes two critical damage effects from medium radiation, and the ship takes four critical damage effects from high radiation.

Self-Repair: While not traveling or in combat, a biomechanical vessel automatically regains 1 Hull Point per hour. This can be increased to 2 Hull Points per hour if the ship's regrowth is being tended by someone with a number of ranks in the Engineering skill equal to the ship's tier; that engineer can do nothing else during this time. The vessel requires the light from a nearby star, and therefore the ship must be in the same solar system as a star. Less light will delay or even halt this process (subject to the GM's discretion). If this healing raises the ship's HP over a multiple of its Critical Threshold, the critical damage condition of one randomly determined system is reduced by one step.

SYSTEMS

The vessels presented in this book use a variety of systems to gain an advantage in the harsh depths of space. These systems are added to a ship during its construction.

Data Net

Aballonian vessels have a complex communications net, allowing them to share sensor data and tactical plans. A ship must have this system to participate in a data net, and a participating ship can go no further than long range from the closest vessel and remain in the net.

Ships with a data net determine their sensor distance to a target by counting the hexes between the target and any vessel participating in the network. In addition, if any vessel in the data net successfully performs a scan, target system, or lock on action against a target, all vessels in the net share that information and bonus. If the vessel was targeting a system, only the first critical damage is applied to the targeted system. Multiple lock-on bonuses do not stack. These shared bonuses apply even if the ship that performed the initial action is destroyed or disabled.

Hive Joining

Xenowarden pod ships (see page 162) have the ability to merge together, forming a larger vessel. This requires eight such pod ships to "dock" together while closely orbiting a star, as the power required is quite taxing on their solar batteries. Over the next 24 hours, the ships fuse together, forming a Xenowarden arkship (see page 162). The crew of each pod spends this time in meditation, communing with the spirit of their ship, guiding it to join with the others and form a single mind. Any damage to the ships during this period of time is catastrophic, potentially resulting in a loss of all eight vessels.

In addition, a pod vessel with this system can dock in an existing arkship if the larger craft has an open slot in its hive bay. This can be temporary or permanent, as desired by the ship and pilot. If the docking is to be permanent, it requires 1 hour for the pod to merge with the arkship.

SYSTEM	PCU	COST (IN BP)
Data net	5	3
Hive joining	0	1

Expansion Bays

The Build Point costs and PCU requirements of the following expansion bay options are listed in the table on page 153.

With the exception of a brig and launch tubes, these options are not readily available at most commercial starship outfitters and require the GM's permission to purchase and install.

Brig

A brig contains all the necessary restraints and security systems to incarcerate up to eight Medium creatures.

Drift Shadow Projector

Created by the Hellknights to aid them in capturing enemy vessels, this device creates an area of "Drift shadow" when activated. The Drift shadow extends out to a range of 10 hexes from the activating ship, and each vessel in this area treats the Drift rating of its engine as if it were 2 lower. If this reduces the engine's rating to less than 1, that vessel cannot enter the Drift while in the shadow. Ships attempting enter normal space from the Drift into an area of Drift shadow are affected in the same way. Shadows created by multiple vessels stack, making it impossible for any ship to enter or exit the Drift.

Hive Bay

Xenowarden capital ships have the ability to launch pod ships (see page 162) to use as shuttles or other short-range vessels. A hive bay can launch up to two pod ships. For each pod launched in this way, the arkship loses 15 Hull Points and takes a -2 penalty to its AC and TL, and all crew actions take a -2 penalty. As long as the capital ship has an unoccupied slot in a hive bay, it can reabsorb a pod ship to regain these Hull Points and negate the penalties. If the pod returns damaged, the capital vessel regains 1 fewer Hull Point for every 2 points of Hull Point damage taken by the pod ship. The penalties are negated regardless of the pod ship's condition.

Hydroponic Garden

This space holds an entirely self-sustaining garden, complete with oxygen recycling, food production, and lighting that fosters advanced growth. A hydroponic garden takes up two expansion bays and can provide food for up to 10 Medium-sized creatures indefinitely, even if the rest of the vessel is without full power or propulsion. Multiple hydroponic gardens can be linked together to form one massive garden space.

Launch Tubes

Designed to fit on Medium and Large vessels, these tubes allow a ship to carry a single smaller vessel that can be launched at the start of any helm phase. A launch tube takes up two expansion bays and can hold one Tiny starship. If a vessel needs to dock

in a launch tube during combat, it occurs at the end of the helm phase and requires a successful DC 10 Piloting skill check; this check takes a -1 penalty for each hex the smaller ship has moved this round. A failed check means that the ship doesn't dock with the larger vessel.

EXPANSION BAY	PCU	COST (IN BP)
Brig	1	1
Drift shadow projector	5	15
Hive bay	5	10
Hydroponic garden	0	5
Launch tubes	10	5

Weapons

The starship weapons listed on Table 2-1 are used by the starships featured in this chapter. At the GM's discretion, the spore torpedo launchers can't be purchased at commercial starship outfitters.

Burrowing

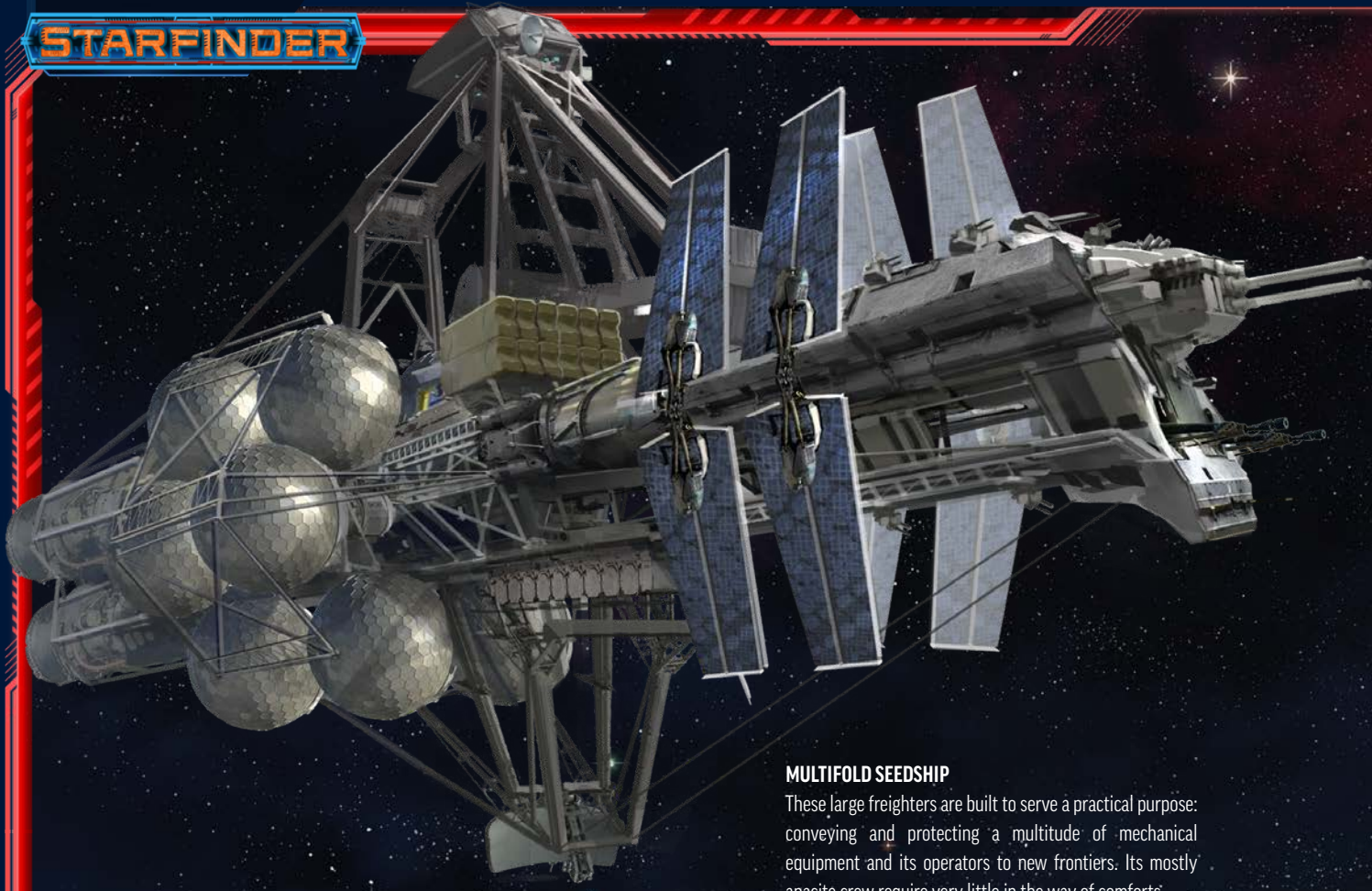
A weapon with this special property fires a highly focused beam of energy that can slice through shields with ease. Burrowing weapons are always short range and cannot fire at targets outside the first range increment. When a burrowing weapon's beam hits shields, apply half of its damage to the shields and the other half (rounded down) to the target vessel's Hull Points. If any of the damage applied to the shields depletes those shields, apply the remainder to the ship's Hull Points as normal. If a burrowing weapon deals damage to a ship with a damage threshold, halve that threshold before determining if any damage is dealt.

Spore

A weapon with this property unleashes a cloud of fast-growing spores into the spaces inside the ship it strikes, causing tremendous damage to the ship's systems. A ship that takes damage from a spore weapon immediately takes critical damage (note this damage as spore damage, though it functions as normal critical damage). An engineer can repair spore damage by taking an action and succeeding at an Engineering check (DC = 15 + the ship's tier). If spore damage remains at the end of the engineering phase, the damaged system takes critical damage again (also spore damage); this damage spreads to other systems as normal if a system is wrecked. Multiple hits from a spore weapon do not have any additional effect if the ship is already subject to the effects of spore damage. Spore damage is not passed on to the crew, although there are rumors of a variant weapon that creates hostile plant creatures inside the target vessel once it has been disabled.

TABLE 2-1: STARSHIP WEAPONS

LIGHT DIRECT FIRE WEAPON	RANGE	SPEED (IN HEXES)	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
Mining laser	Short	—	2d6	10	5	Burrowing
LIGHT TRACKING WEAPON	RANGE	SPEED (IN HEXES)	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
Light spore torpedo launcher	Medium	14	3d6	5	5	Limited fire 5, spore
HEAVY TRACKING WEAPON	RANGE	SPEED (IN HEXES)	DAMAGE	PCU	COST (IN BP)	SPECIAL PROPERTIES
Heavy spore torpedo launcher	Medium	12	5d8	10	10	Limited fire 5, spore



MULTIFOLD SEEDSHIP

These large freighters are built to serve a practical purpose: conveying and protecting a multitude of mechanical equipment and its operators to new frontiers. Its mostly anacite crew require very little in the way of comforts.

ABALLONIAN SHIPS

In the millennia since the disappearance of the First Ones, the mysterious race that founded the first cities on Aballon and populated them entirely with machines, the anacites have divided themselves into two groups: Those Who Wait and Those Who Become. This latter group maintains fleets of starships, intent upon exploring and colonizing the stars.

Manufactured in vast machine factories on Aballon by companies such as Compiler Enterprises (often called CompEnt) and Multifold Industries, these vessels are created primarily for robotic life. Few have any form of atmosphere or personal comforts, and their controls are often entirely digital, with crew members simply accessing the ship's systems through specialized data ports. While this might seem to give them a tactical advantage, most Aballonian vessels are designed for exploration and colonization, with defenses almost as an afterthought.

By far the most common Aballonian ship is the Autonomous Exploration Vehicle, or AEV. These tiny vessels have only one crew member, usually built into the starship itself. Their primary goal is to travel to new worlds in search of likely planets for colonization, and they accompany larger ships in small swarms. Although capable of acting autonomously, these vessels are often controlled by a Group Defense Frigate, a heavily armed destroyer designed to protect the vastly more important seedships, which carry the necessary equipment to colonize

other worlds. Seedships vary greatly in size and configuration, with the smallest transporting only the tools necessary to begin modest ore processing and manufacturing. Over time, even such a small operation can evolve into a self-sustaining colony inhabited entirely by robotic servitors.

COMPENT AEV

TIER 1/3

Tiny racer

Speed 8; **Maneuverability** perfect (turn 0); **Drift** 1

AC 15; **TL** 12

HP 20; **DT** —; **CT** 4

Shields basic 10 (forward 3, port 2, starboard 2, aft 3)

Attack (Forward) mining laser (2d6)

Power Core Micron Light (50 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic;

Systems basic computer, basic short-range sensors, data net, mk 3 armor; **Expansion Bays** none

Modifiers +2 Computers, +2 Piloting; **Complement** 1

CREW

Science Officer Computers +12 (1 rank), gunnery +4, Piloting +7 (1 rank)

COMPENT GROUP DEFENSE FRIGATE

TIER 8

Large destroyer

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 1

AC 23; **TL** 20

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THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS**COMPENT GROUP DEFENSE FRIGATE**

CompEnt engineers design Group Defense Frigates with little regard to aesthetic concerns, though some find their stark utilitarianism an enticing feature.

**COMPENT AEV**

The anacite pilot of a specific Autonomous Exploration Vehicle is often created and programmed to fit inside of and operate that vessel. Once its mission has been completed, its consciousness is usually transferred to another shell.

HP 190; **DT** —; **CT** 38

Shields medium 140 (forward 35, port 35, starboard 35, aft 35)

Attack (Forward) particle beam (8d6)

Attack (Port) coilgun (4d4)

Attack (Starboard) coilgun (4d4)

Attack (Aft) coilgun (4d4)

Attack (Turret) flak thrower (3d4)

Power Core Pulse Orange (250 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic;

Systems advanced mid-range sensors, anti-hacking systems, crew quarters (common), data net, mk 2 trinode computer, mk 4 defenses, mk 6 armor; **Expansion Bays** launch tubes (2, each holding 1 AEV)

Modifiers +2 any three checks per round, +4 Computers, +1 Piloting; **Complement** 20

CREW

Captain Computers +25 (8 ranks), Diplomacy +16 (8 ranks), Engineering +21 (8 ranks), gunnery +13, Piloting +17 (8 ranks)

Engineer (1 officer, 2 crew) Engineering +21 (8 ranks)

Gunners (2 officers, 2 crew each) gunnery +19

Pilot (1 officer, 3 crew) Piloting +22 (8 ranks)

Science Officers (2 officers, 2 crew each) Computers +25 (8 ranks)

MULTIFOLD SEEDSHIP

Huge bulk freighter

TIER 11

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** poor (turn 3); **Drift** 1

AC 26; **TL** 25

HP 200; **DT** 5; **CT** 40

Shields medium 200 (forward 50, port 50, starboard 50, aft 50)

Attack (Forward) gravity gun (6d6)

Attack (Aft) heavy laser cannon (4d8)

Attack (Turret) flak thrower (3d4), high explosive missile launcher (4d8)

Power Core Nova Ultra (300 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic;

Systems advanced mid-range sensors, crew quarters (common), data net, mk 4 trinode computer, mk 7 armor, mk 7 defenses; **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (8, typically containing a small refinery and manufacturing hub), science lab, tech workshop

Modifiers +4 any three checks per round, +4 Computers;

Complement 30

CREW

Captain Computers +29 (11 ranks), Diplomacy +20 (11 ranks), Engineering +20 (11 ranks), gunnery +17, Intimidate +20 (11 ranks), Piloting +20 (11 ranks)

Engineer (1 officer, 4 crew) Engineering +25 (11 ranks)

Gunners (2 officers, 3 crew each) gunnery +22

Pilot (1 officer, 3 crew) Piloting +25 (11 ranks)

Science Officers (2 officers, 5 crew each) Computers +29 (11 ranks)



INFERNEX KEEP DIABOLICAL

Bristling with weapons—not to mention wicked-looking barbs—a Hellknight Keep Diabolical is among the most feared starships both within the Pact Worlds system and in deep space.

HELLKNIGHT SHIPS

Few vessels inspire more dread than a Hellknight ship. Built to be both technologically superior and fiercely intimidating, these craft are sleek, black, and festooned with forbidding horns, infernal insignia, and spikes—much like the armor and gear of their crew. More often than not, those who find themselves facing off against the Hellknights surrender before even a single shot is fired, hoping to curry favor with the ruthless law-keepers.

Above all else, the Hellknights use their vessels as a means of maintaining order in the vast depths of space. The majority of their ships are constructed by the Hellknight-owned Infernex Inc., which has a massive shipyard near the sun that some say is directly connected to Hell, with enslaved devils enchanting ship components at the whim of Hellknight signifer technicians.

If the situation is truly dire and supreme order is called for, the Hellknights can bring one of their Citadels to bear. These massive battle stations are the mobile headquarters of each Hellknight order, larger than almost any other vessel found in the Pact Worlds and capable of docking with up to four mighty battleships at once. Even more terrifying, these Citadels are Drift-capable, although only after a lengthy period of running their reactors at maximum capacity. To many Pact Worlds governments, the mere existence of these vessels is a dangerous provocation, but the Hellknights insist that they are necessary in light of recent threats to the system, and few

who remember the onslaught of the Swarm or the war with the Veskarium can bring themselves to argue the point.

INFERNEX BURNING NAIL

TIER 1

Tiny fighter

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

AC 16; **TL** 15

HP 35; **DT** —; **CT** 7

Shields basic 20 (forward 10, port 4, starboard 4, aft 2)

Attack (Forward) light particle beam (3d6), light plasma torpedo launcher (3d8)

Attack (Aft) coilgun (4d4)

Power Core Micron Ultra (80 PCU); **Drift Engine** none;

Systems basic short-range sensors, mk 1 mononode computer, mk 2 defenses, mk 3 armor; **Expansion Bays** none

Modifiers +1 any one check per round, +2 Computers, +1 Piloting; **Complement** 1

CREW

Pilot Computers +7 (1 rank), gunnery +5, Piloting +10 (1 rank)

INFERNEX INTERDICTUS

TIER 13

Huge cruiser

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

AC 28; **TL** 25

HP 255; **DT** 5; **CT** 51

INFERNEX INTERDICTUS

The Hellknights send in an Infernex Interdictus when they wish to stop other vessels in their tracks and bring in their crews alive. The combination of gravity gun and Drift shadow projector makes an Interdictus difficult to escape from.

**INFERNEX BURNING NAIL**

A standard fighter in the Hellknight navy, an Infernex Burning Nail offers both speed and firepower, though its lack of port and starboard weapons is a known weakness. Burning Nail pilots are trained to compensate for this flaw by employing daring piloting maneuvers.



Shields heavy 280 (forward 100, port 60, starboard 60, aft 60)

Attack (Forward) super x-laser cannon (3d4×10)

Attack (Port) light plasma cannon (2d12)

Attack (Starboard) light plasma cannon (2d12)

Attack (Turret) gravity gun (6d6)

Power Core Nova Heavy (200 PCU), Nova Light (150 PCU);

Drift Engine Signal Booster; **Systems** advanced mid-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 4 duonode computer, mk 5 defenses, mk 7 armor; **Expansion Bays** brigs (2), cargo holds (2), Drift shadow projector, medical bay

Modifiers +4 any two checks per round, +4 Computers;

Complement 42

CREW

Captain Computers +27 (13 ranks), Diplomacy +28 (13 ranks), gunnery +20, Intimidate +28 (13 ranks), Piloting +23 (13 ranks)

Engineers (2 officers, 6 crew each) Engineering +28 (13 ranks)

Gunners (3 officers, 4 crew each) gunnery +25

Pilot (1 officer, 3 crew) Piloting +28 (13 ranks)

Science Officers (2 officers, 3 crew each) Computers +32 (13 ranks)

INFERNEX KEEP DIABOLICAL**TIER 16**

Gargantuan battleship

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** average (turn 3); **Drift** 1

AC 31; **TL** 30

HP 440; **DT** 10; **CT** 88

Shields heavy 360 (forward 100, port 80, starboard 80, aft 100)

Attack (Forward) linked particle beams (16d6), hellfire torpedo launcher (2d10×10)

Attack (Port) heavy laser cannon (4d8), heavy laser cannon (4d8), micromissile battery (2d6)

Attack (Starboard) heavy laser cannon (4d8), heavy laser cannon (4d8), micromissile battery (2d6)

Attack (Turret) heavy laser net (5d6), heavy laser net (5d6)

Power Core Gateway Light (300 PCU), Nova Heavy (200 PCU);

Drift Engine Signal Basic; **Systems** advanced long-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 5 duonode computer, mk 9 armor, mk 10 defenses; **Expansion Bays** escape pods, guest quarters (luxurious), hangar bay, medical bay, tech workshop

Modifiers +5 any two checks per round, +4 Computers, +1 Piloting; **Complement** 200

CREW

Captain (plus 2 officers) Computers +32 (16 ranks),

Diplomacy +33 (16 ranks), Engineering +28 (16 ranks), gunnery +25, Intimidate +33 (16 ranks), Piloting +29 (16 ranks)

Engineers (6 officers, 12 crew each) Engineering +33 (16 ranks)

Gunners (8 officers, 8 crew each) gunnery +30

Pilot (1 officer, 10 crew) Piloting +34 (16 ranks)

Science Officer (6 officers, 5 crew each) Computers +37 (16 ranks)



INHERITORWORKS CATHEDRALSHIP

Massive, grandiose vessels, the Inheritorworks Cathedralships are the pride of the Iomedaeen navy. In addition to being capable of carrying 16 Brightswords within its hangars, a Cathedralship has the capability to be a formidable foe in its own right.

IOMEDAEAN SHIPS

The battle against evil is not confined to planets, moons, and space stations. Those who venerate Iomedae know they must be ready to fight among the stars and hold a light against the constant darkness. Few other faiths have fleets that even approach the size of the Iomedaeen navy. Like many of their other structures, the vessels used by the forces of Iomedae are meant to invoke a sense of purity and strength, with some of the largest looking like they are made from marble, with soaring buttresses and stained glass windows. The navy's headquarters are at Absalom Station, and they often share ships or otherwise work in concert with the Knights of Golarion to keep humanity's home safe from any danger. Iomedaeen vessels are commissioned from a dedicated subsidiary of Sanjaaval Spaceflight Systems called Inheritorworks.

Divided up into 11 fleets (sometimes called Acts), the Iomedaeen navy can respond to nearly any threat. Seven of the fleets are designated for general engagement, with enough vessels for system-wide maneuvers, as well as orbital and surface engagements. Of the remaining fleets, two are surface assault specialists, with vessels designed specifically to deploy ground-assault vehicles and troops. The final two fleets are for scouting and exploration, containing a smaller number of vessels with state-of-the-art sensors and fast engines for quick getaways.

The forces of Iomedae sometimes find themselves in conflict with the Hellknights, as while both are trying to bring order to the galaxy, their approaches could not be more different. Although their differences have not yet escalated into a full-on war, the two forces have traded fire on more than one occasion. Even more remarkable is when the two groups work together to defeat a threat of pure chaos, such as the Cult of the Devourer.

INHERITORWORKS BRIGHTSWORD

TIER 2

Tiny fighter

Speed 12; **Maneuverability** good (turn 1); **Drift** 1

AC 21; **TL** 18

HP 35; **DT** —; **CT** 7

Shields basic 40 (forward 10, port 10, starboard 10, aft 10)

Attack (Forward) light plasma cannon (2d12), light plasma torpedo launcher (3d8)

Attack (Aft) light laser cannon (2d4)

Power Core Arcus Light (75 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic;

Systems advanced mid-range sensors, basic computer, mk 5 defenses, mk 7 armor; **Expansion Bays** none

Modifiers +4 Computers; **Complement** 2

CREW

Gunner gunnery +8

Pilot Computers +11 (2 ranks), Piloting +12 (2 ranks)

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STARSHIPS

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CASTPLAYER
OPTIONS**INHERITORWORKS SHIELDCRAFT**

Iomedaeen Shieldcrafts serve as transports for platoons of crusaders journeying to the front in their fight against evil. These soldiers store their suits of powered armor in the ship's cargo bays on the voyage as they await deployment.

**INHERITORWORKS BRIGHTSWORD**

An Inheritorworks Brightsword's main weapon—a light plasma cannon—is mounted within a blade-shaped housing in the front of the vessel. This imposing feature acts as a deterrent to enemy ships when they spot a wave of Brightswords streaking through the sky.

**INHERITORWORKS SHIELDCRAFT****TIER 8**

Medium transport

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** average (turn 2); **Drift** 1

AC 25; **TL** 23

HP 100; **DT** —; **CT** 20

Shields heavy 280 (forward 160, port 40, starboard 40, aft 40)

Attack (Forward) persistent particle beam (10d6), tactical nuclear missile launcher (5d8)

Attack (Aft) flak thrower (3d4)

Attack (Turret) laser net (2d6), light particle beam (3d6)

Power Core Pulse Orange (250 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** advanced mid-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 2 trinode computer, mk 6 defenses, mk 7 armor; **Expansion Bays** cargo holds (2), guest quarters (2, common), medical bay

Modifiers +2 any three checks per round, +4 Computers, +1 Piloting; **Complement** 6

CREW

Captain Computers +20 (8 ranks), Diplomacy +21 (8 ranks), Engineering +16 (8 ranks), gunnery +15, Piloting +18 (8 ranks)

Engineer Engineering +21 (8 ranks)

Gunners (2) gunnery +19

Pilot Piloting +23 (8 ranks)

Science Officer Computers +25 (8 ranks)

INHERITORWORKS CATHEDRALSHIP**TIER 16**

Gargantuan carrier

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** poor (turn 4); **Drift** 1

AC 33; **TL** 30

HP 360; **DT** 10; **CT** 72

Shields heavy 360 (forward 90, port 90, starboard 90, aft 90)

Attack (Forward) particle beam cannon (3d4×10)

Attack (Port) railgun (8d4), railgun (8d4)

Attack (Starboard) railgun (8d4), railgun (8d4)

Attack (Turret) laser net (2d6), laser net (2d6)

Power Core Gateway Ultra (500 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic;

Systems advanced long-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 5 duonode computer, mk 10 defenses, mk 11 armor;

Expansion Bays hangar bays (2), medical bay, tech workshop

Modifiers +5 any two checks per round, +4 Computers;

Complement 145

CREW

Captain (plus 1 officer) Computers +32 (16 ranks), Diplomacy +33 (16 ranks), Engineering +28 (16 ranks), gunnery +25, Intimidate +33 (16 ranks), Piloting +28 (16 ranks)

Engineers (4 officers, 14 crew each) Engineering +33 (16 ranks)

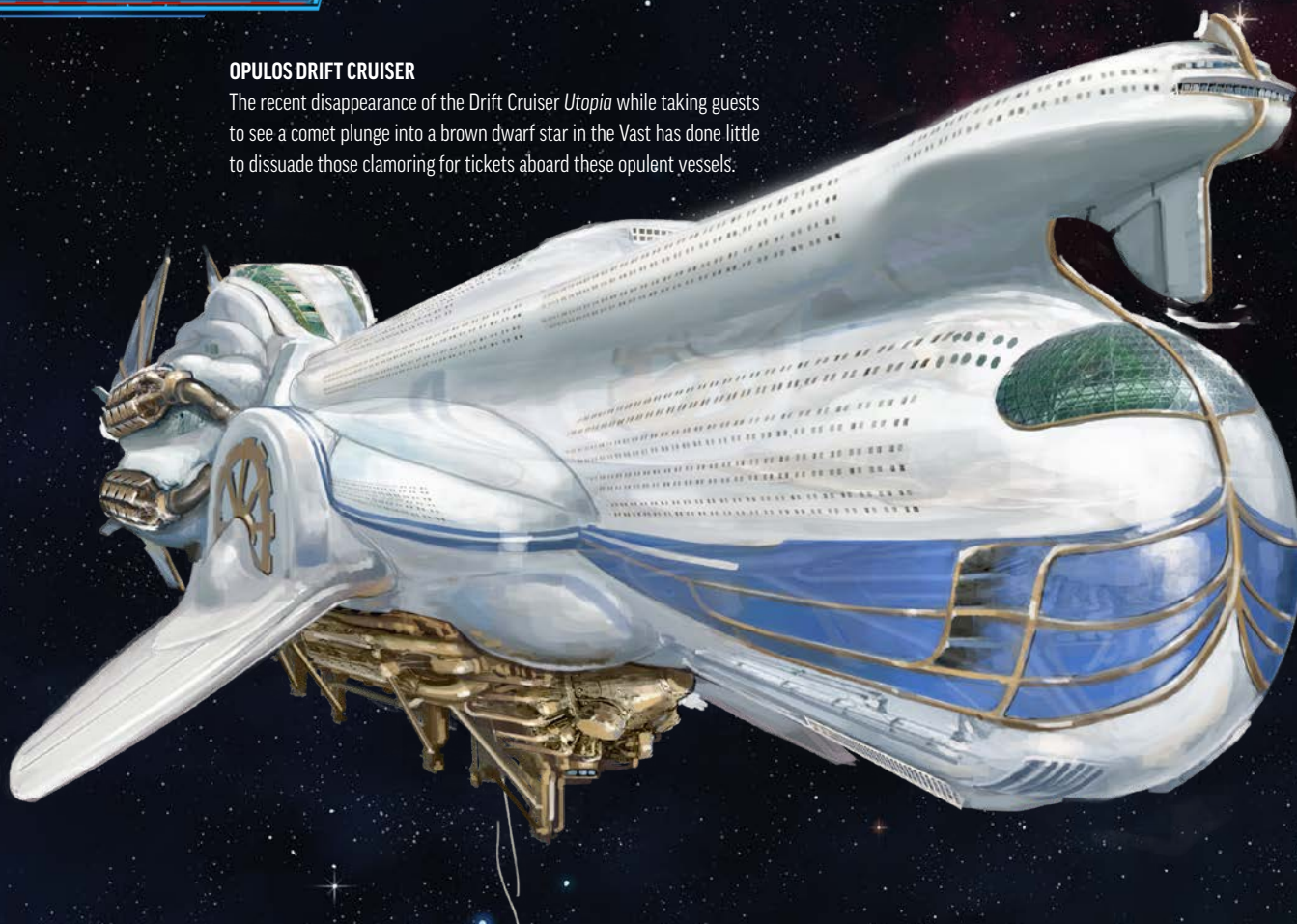
Gunners (6 officers, 5 crew each) gunnery +30

Pilot (1 officer, 10 crew) Piloting +33 (16 ranks)

Science Officers (6 officers, 5 crew each) Computers +37 (16 ranks)

OPULOS DRIFT CRUISER

The recent disappearance of the Drift Cruiser *Utopia* while taking guests to see a comet plunge into a brown dwarf star in the Vast has done little to dissuade those clamoring for tickets aboard these opulent vessels:



VERCITE SHIPS

The stars have always been a second home to the people of Verces, who explored the depths of space in their dirigible aetherships before many worlds even mastered the wheel. While the Augmented are still among the most common Vercite explorers, the pleasures of space travel are now enjoyed by those of any caste, as long as they have the credits to pay for it.

Verces is home to several of the most prominent and versatile ship manufacturers in the Pact Worlds, most notably Ringworks Industries, yet its original aethership designs never completely faded away. Instead, dramatic evolutions of these ancient vessels became the modern aetherships, high-end luxury craft known for their style and comfort, whose amenities often come at the cost of armaments and defenses. These vessels are designed for recreation and flagrant displays of status, whether that's jetting around in a Terminator-brand Star Drake racer or boarding one of the elite Opulos cruise ships that take guests on voyages to view amazing astronomical phenomena and once-in-a-lifetime cosmic events.

Bookings on these latter vessels, many fitted with ostentatious antique brass and upholstery older than the Pact Worlds government itself, are frequently made years in advance, while other vessels depart seemingly at the whims of their captains. Owing to the relatively small number of

publicly bookable Drift Cruisers, such berths are highly sought after. Only the ultra-wealthy can afford to own their own Drift Cruisers, often using them as mobile mansions or corporate headquarters, and the Opulos Corporation steadfastly refuses to reveal who may have purchased such vessels.

Even more than for luxury, Vercite aetherships are known for their speed. Designed more as toys for the prosperous than true exploratory vessels, smaller aetherships are often limited to travel within the Pact Worlds system but offer extreme real-space acceleration. From Redshift Revolution's two-seater X Series to Terminator's sleek Drake models, the shipyards at Skydock boast a wide variety of these vessels outfitted for various events and challenges.

TERMINATOR STAR DRAKE

TIER 1/4

Tiny racer

Speed 14; **Maneuverability** perfect (turn 0)**AC** 16; **TL** 13**HP** 20; **DT** —; **CT** 4**Shields** basic 10 (forward 3, port 2, starboard 2, aft 3)**Attack (Forward)** light laser cannon (2d4)**Power Core** Micron Light (50 PCU); **Drift Engine** none; **Systems** basic computer, basic short-range sensors, mk 3 armor;**Expansion Bays** none**Modifiers** +2 Computers; **Complement** 1

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TERMINATOR STAR DRAKE

Vercite pilots favor Terminator Star Drakes as their vessels of choice for the Absalom Run, a race from Verces to Absalom Station and back that occurs once every 3 years. The winner of the race becomes an instant celebrity throughout the system.



REDSHIFT PLEASURE SAIL

The most striking feature of a Redshift Pleasure Sail—its enormous solar sail—is more of a throwback to its original, antiquated design than an actually functional system. These luxury vessels are popular with the Pact Worlds' rich and powerful.

CREW

Pilot gunnery +5, Piloting +10 (1 rank)

REDSHIFT PLEASURE SAIL

TIER 3

Medium explorer

Speed 12; **Maneuverability** good (turn 1); **Drift** 1

AC 18; **TL** 17

HP 55; **DT** —; **CT** 11

Shields basic 40 (forward 10, port 10, starboard 10, aft 10)

Attack (Forward) coilgun (4d4)

Attack (Port) light laser cannon (2d4)

Attack (Starboard) light laser cannon (2d4)

Attack (Turret) flak thrower (3d4)

Power Core Pulse Green (150 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal

Basic; **Systems** basic computer, basic short-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 5 armor, mk 5 defenses;

Expansion Bays escape pods, guest quarters (good), recreation suites (HAC, trivid den)

Modifiers +2 Computers; **Complement** 4

CREW

Captain Computers +15 (3 ranks), Diplomacy +13 (3 ranks), Piloting +8 (3 ranks)

Engineer Engineering +13 (3 ranks)

Gunner gunnery +10

Pilot Piloting +13 (3 ranks)

OPULOS DRIFT CRUISER

TIER 11

Huge bulk freighter

Speed 6; **Maneuverability** poor (turn 3); **Drift** 2

AC 26; **TL** 26

HP 200; **DT** 5; **CT** 40

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

Attack (Forward) plasma cannon (5d12)

Attack (Aft) light EMP cannon (special)

Attack (Turret) flak thrower (3d4), flak thrower (3d4)

Power Core Nova Ultra (300 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Booster;

Systems advanced long-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 3 trinode computer, mk 7 armor, mk 8 defenses;

Expansion Bays escape pods (2, 12 pods), guest quarters (3 good, 1 luxurious), recreation suites (gym, HAC), shuttle bay

Modifiers +3 any three checks per round, +4 Computers;

Complement 26

CREW

Captain Computers +24 (11 ranks), Diplomacy +25 (11 ranks), Engineering +20 (11 ranks), gunnery +17, Piloting +20 (11 ranks)

Engineers (2 officers, 3 crew each) Engineering +25 (11 ranks)

Gunner (1 officer, 2 crew) gunnery +22

Pilot (1 officer, 5 crew) Piloting +25 (11 ranks)

Science Officers (2 officers, 3 crew each) Computers +29 (11 ranks)

UC GARDENSHIP

A UC Gardenship is a sight to behold drifting through space, a mass of bright green set against inky darkness and bringing life wherever it goes. Its foliage is protected from the harshness of vacuum by powerful (and nearly invisible) forcefields.



XENOWARDEN SHIPS

A cross between conventional starship design and massive plant creatures, the ships of the Xenowardens are undeniably unique. Grown in orbital nurseries owned by the Xenowarden-sponsored Unified Conservatory (UC for short), these vessels are living things. The larger vessels also have a form of consciousness, although it is closer to animal empathy than actual sentience. Xenowarden crews and captains regularly take part in a deep bonding ritual with their starships.

Technology is incorporated into Xenowarden vessels from the beginning, although they are fueled in ecologically conscious ways. These vessels draw on solar power to recharge their batteries, which use a specialized form of electrostatic algae to hold a charge. This has the unfortunate side effect of making their vessels extremely susceptible to radiation weapons, which can drain their power sources and leave the ships adrift and dead.

One of the most common vessels in the order's fleet is the Arkship. These vessels are formed of up to eight smaller Pod ships merged together. Most of them retain the ability to "shed" a few of their vessels to be used as shuttles when needed. This design also allows them to be very easily repaired. If one Pod is particularly damaged, it can be replaced with a brand-new, fully functional Pod in less than an hour.

The largest Xenowarden vessels are the Gardenships, marvels of bioengineering that are capable of supporting their crews without any power at all as long as they receive enough

solar radiation to sustain their hydroponic gardens. These vessels are still comparatively rare, and the Xenowardens view them more as ecological orbital platforms than conventional ships. Unfortunately, Gardenships take a long time to grow, and the bonding process can be grueling for some species.

UC POD

TIER 1/2

Tiny biomechanical interceptor

Speed 12; **Maneuverability** perfect (turn 0)

AC 16; **TL** 16

HP 30; **DT** —; **CT** 6

Shields basic 10 (forward 3, port 2, starboard 2, aft 3)

Attack (Forward) gyrolaser (1d8), light spore pod launcher (special)

Power Core Micron Heavy (70 PCU); **Drift Engine** none;

Systems basic mid-range sensors, hive joining, mk 1 mononode computer, mk 3 armor, mk 3 defenses; **Expansion**

Bays none

Modifiers +1 any one check each round, +2 Computers, +1 Piloting; **Complement** 1

CREW

Pilot Computers +7 (1 rank), gunnery +6, Piloting +11 (1 rank)

UC ARKSHIP

TIER 10

Large biomechanical destroyer

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Though they are composed of several UC Pod ships fused together, UC Arkships have a single sentience that acts in a very protective manner toward its component vessels. A crew must learn to comfort an Arkship when these pods are lost in battle.

UC POD

Sleek and maneuverable, UC Pods dart around the battlefield and harry their enemies with spore pod launchers, leaving larger ships to finish the fight. Pods tend to have more flighty empathetic responses, much like those of small birds.

Speed 8; **Maneuverability** average (turn 3); **Drift** 2
AC 28; **TL** 23
HP 190; **DT** —; **CT** 38
Shields medium 100 (forward 25, port 25, starboard 25, aft 25)
Attack (Forward) heavy laser array (6d4), heavy spore pod launcher (special)
Attack (Port) coilgun (4d4)
Attack (Starboard) coilgun (4d4)
Attack (Aft) coilgun (4d4)
Attack (Turret) laser net (2d6)
Power Core Pulse Orange (250 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Booster; **Systems** advanced mid-range sensors, crew quarters (common), mk 2 tetranode computer, mk 6 defenses, mk 9 armor; **Expansion Bays** cargo bays (2), hive bays (2)
Modifiers +2 any four checks each round, +4 Computers;
Complement 10

CREW

Captain Computer +23 (10 ranks), Diplomacy +24 (10 ranks), gunnery +16, Intimidation +19 (10 ranks), Piloting +19 (10 ranks)
Engineers (3) Engineering +24 (10 ranks)
Gunners (3) gunnery +21
Pilot Piloting +24 (10 ranks)
Science Officer (2) Computer +28 (10 ranks)

UC GARDENSHIP**TIER 10**

Huge biomechanical bulk freighter
Speed 4; **Maneuverability** poor (turn 3); **Drift** 1
AC 26; **TL** 23
HP 200; **DT** 5; **CT** 40
Shields medium 160 (forward 40, port 40, starboard 40, aft 40)
Attack (Forward) heavy laser array (6d4)
Attack (Aft) heavy laser array (6d4)
Attack (Turret) light spore pod launcher (special), light spore pod launcher (special)
Power Core Nova Heavy (200 PCU); **Drift Engine** Signal Basic; **Systems** budget mid-range sensors, crew quarters (basic), mk 3 mononode computer, mk 6 defenses, mk 8 armor; **Expansion Bays** hydroponic gardens (4), medical bay, synthesis bay
Modifiers +3 any one check each round, +1 Piloting;
Complement 27

CREW

Captain Computer +24 (10 ranks), Diplomacy +24 (10 ranks), Engineering +19, gunnery +16, Piloting +20 (10 ranks)
Engineers (2 officers, 3 crew each) Engineering +24 (10 ranks)
Gunners (2) gunnery +21
Pilot Piloting +25 (10 ranks)
Science Officer (3 officers, 4 crew each) Computer +24 (10 ranks)



SUPPORTING CAST

3



SUPPORTING CAST

This chapter presents a handful of organizations active in the Pact Worlds [and sometimes beyond], each accompanied by three NPC stat blocks of varying CRs to represent the group's members. Some sections depict specific factions, such as the Free Captains and the Hellknights, while others, such as the security forces and street gangs, can be used more generally. Each section also includes suggested encounters for the group.

Thanks to the flexibility of how NPCs are created in the *Starfinder* Roleplaying Game, the stat blocks presented in the following sections can be used to represent threats other than those they were specifically designed to represent with just a few minor modifications. Some tweaks, such as changing the race of an NPC, may be purely cosmetic, while others require choosing a different selection of spells or altering the finer details of a class graft (picking a different mystic connection, for instance).

NPCs OF OTHER FACTIONS

Though the factions presented in this chapter are key players in the Pact Worlds and PCs may interact with their members frequently, they are only a few of the many important factions there. Use the following guidelines to spark ideas when generating members of some of the setting's other influential organizations.



AbadarCorp

Both a massive corporation and an important sect of the Master of the First Vault's faith, AbadarCorp funds projects in a variety of fields and employs all manner of people. As such, NPC representatives of AbadarCorp can be just about any class, though its directors and managers are usually envoys or mystics.



Android Abolitionist Front

These agents of freedom seek to bring an end to android slavery in all its forms. While the majority of the AAF's members are androids, the organization is open to any who share the same goal. The cells that are most often encountered in the system consist of operatives and soldiers.



Augmented

A loosely organized social movement that believes cybernetics and other physical augmentations are the next step in evolution, the Augmented promote these ideals to all who listen—though not always peacefully. This faction has members of many races, who tend to be mechanics with exocortexes, or soldiers or technomancers with heavy body modifications.



Corpse Fleet

When Eox signed the Absalom Pact, a faction of the planet's navy went rogue. The Corpse Fleet now scours the stars, killing the living. Members of the Corpse Fleet are all undead creatures, including bone troopers (*Starfinder Adventure Path #1: Incident at Absalom Station* 56) and necrovites (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 80).



Knights of Golarion

Primarily a military organization with a close connection to the church of Iomedae, the Knights of Golarion focus on spreading justice through the Pact Worlds, sometimes clashing with local law enforcement. The Knights of Golarion are mostly human soldiers, many of whom have the star knight archetype (see page 186).



Starfinder Society

The Starfinder Society accepts people of all races and classes as long as they share the organization's hunger for knowledge and desire to discover more information about the Gap.



Stewards

The Stewards operate across the Pact Worlds, keeping the peace and upholding the alliances of the Absalom Pact while eschewing allegiance to other groups. The more diplomatically inclined Stewards are envoys, but operatives are sometimes required for sensitive missions that involve stealth.



Xenowardens

Self-appointed guardians of ecological diversity, the Xenowardens are seen by some as the enemy of civilization's progress. Most members of this faction are mystics with the xenodruid connection.

NPC CREATION

The *Starfinder Alien Archive* provides GMs with everything they need to create all types of NPCs from scratch, but when it comes

to populating an entire galaxy, more options are always better. Use the following guidelines to simulate NPCs with archetypes or multiple classes.

Archetypes

While it's easy enough to simulate an archetype by giving the NPC special abilities that are similar to the archetype's alternate class features, you might want to fully integrate an archetype into the NPC's class graft. In general, the NPC requires only the highest-level alternate class feature available for its CR to represent that archetype, but you can assume it has any lower-level alternate class features that are prerequisites.

For classes that give up selectable class features (such as envoy improvisations, mechanic tricks, and operative exploits), you can replace one of the highest-level selections with the archetype's alternate class feature. For classes that gain a standard class feature at a later level when modified by an archetype (as with the mechanic's override or the solarian's zenith revelations), you can do the same for an NPC with that class graft. For spellcasting classes that give up spells known, you can reduce the number of spells known from the highest-level spells they can cast by 1. Other specific changes that need to be made are described below.



Envoy

An archetype's 9th-level alternate class feature should replace the skillful special ability granted by the envoy class graft.



Mystic

An archetype's 9th- and 12th-level alternate class features should replace one of the highest-level spells the NPC can cast.



Soldier

Replace the additional special abilities granted by the soldier class graft with the archetype's alternate class features where appropriate.



Technomancer

An archetype's 9th-level alternate class features should replace one of the highest-level spells the NPC can cast.

Multiclassing

Player characters have the option to multiclass, so why shouldn't NPCs get the same choice? However, because NPCs receive class grafts instead of class levels, you will need to do a little clever manipulation with the system to make it work. In general, you shouldn't attempt to give an NPC more than two classes, as doing so often leads to an NPC that's underpowered for its CR.

To begin, choose the class that is most crucial to that NPC's concept; this is usually the one it would have the most levels in if it were a PC. Use the array required for that class graft, apply any adjustments, and give the NPC the listed skills. Ignore the required array and adjustments from the other class graft. If

AT-WILL SPELLS

Using the NPC creation system from the *Starfinder Alien Archive*, many spellcasting NPCs receive spells they can cast at will an unlimited number of times. At lower CRs, these are 0-level spells, which PCs also can cast at will. However, at higher CRs, these at-will spells can be 1st-, 2nd-, or 3rd-level spells. The NPC creation system was designed to quickly create monsters and other antagonists that function similarly to PCs but don't follow all of the same rules. As such, giving NPCs at-will spells simulates how often they can cast lower-level spells in a fight; this doesn't mean high-level NPC mystics spend their entire days casting *remove affliction* on the sick. If an NPC sticks around for multiple encounters in the same day and you need to know how often that NPC can cast each at-will spell, assume it can do so between four and six times per day.

the NPC has any skills remaining, give it the skills listed in the second class graft, especially skills that are important to the class abilities it receives from the second class graft. Apply the special rules for both class grafts, if applicable.

When it comes to gear, choose the best options provided by the two class grafts that fit the NPC's concept, using the NPC's CR to determine the items' levels. For instance, an NPC with both the mechanic and soldier class grafts can wear heavy armor and wield a heavy weapon, even if the mechanic class graft is more crucial to the character concept. Keep in mind that some class abilities require certain types of armor or weapons (such as the operative's trick attack).

Next, divide your NPC's total CR into two effective CRs whose sum is equal to the NPC's total CR; these divisions don't need to be equal. Assign the higher of the effective CRs to the NPC's most crucial class and the lower effective CR to the secondary class. Use these effective CRs to determine what abilities the NPC receives from each class graft, using the entry that matches the effective CR (or the next-lowest CR listed in the graft).

For instance, an NPC with an effective CR of 6 in the mystic class and an effective CR of 3 in the envoy class receives its connection's 1st-, 3rd-, and 6th-level powers and mindlink, as well as two 1st-level envoy improvisations and one special ability.

Archetypes and Multiclassing

The most complicated option available for NPC creation is giving the NPC multiple class grafts, at least one of which has some of its class abilities replaced with an archetype's alternate class features. To do so, follow all of the guidelines mentioned above, but note that the effective CR from the class graft with the archetype is equal to the level in that class, meaning that NPC receives the highest-level alternate class feature corresponding to that effective CR.

This option should be used sparingly; reserve it for NPCs whose concept is so narrow that it can be realized only with very specific special abilities.

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CULTISTS

Cultists follow a fringe religion, often one deemed dangerous or even illegal by the surrounding society. The most common and dangerous cults in the Pact Worlds are those devoted to evil deities such as Lao Shu Po, Nyarlathotep, Urgathoa, and Zon-Kuthon. However, many other cults exist, worshipping such diverse entities as archdevils (especially Asmodeus), demon lords (especially Lamashtu), the Devourer, and alien Outer Gods.

Regardless of the object of their worship, cultists must operate in the shadowy parts of society where their unwanted or illegal activities can go unnoticed. They lurk in frontier areas without strong authorities, such as the Diaspora or Fullbright on Verces, or behind innocent-seeming fronts within settlements or on space stations. Many stalk the poorer districts of Absalom Station, hiding within the multitudinous population and taking advantage of disaffected citizens.

A particular large and brazen cult might be more blatant about its activities, though the members still hide themselves away behind fortified walls and laser turrets when the authorities wish to speak to them.

EXAMPLE CULTISTS

Three example cultists are presented below, along with advice on how to use them as various sorts of NPCs.

Adaptation: The following cultists worship Urgathoa, but by adjusting their spells and abilities and changing how they are presented, you can use their stats to represent almost any sort of cultists, such as those of the Devourer, Lao Shu Po, Nyarlathotep, or Zon-Kuthon. A lone cultist can also represent an overzealous fan taking her love of a particular media personality to an extreme degree, even going so far as to commit crimes to get her idol to notice her.

Cult Initiate

Cult initiates see to the basic needs of the cult, quietly acquire resources, and mislead or kill those who ask too many questions about the cult's activities. They also learn about those who are interested in the cult, deciding whether those people should be inducted, thrown off the trail, or quietly eliminated. Sometimes initiates lead their own small groups of impressionable street gang members. Not all initiates are true believers, and they might be shaken out of their allegiance by persistent dialogue from the cult's enemies, but many are too committed to let go—often because they have already done terrible things in the cult's name.

Adaptation: A cult initiate can be the envoy of any religious order with a need for secrecy. This stat block can also serve as a drow smuggler by switching the race to drow (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 42).

CULT INITIATE

CR 4

XP 1,200

Human envoy

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; Perception +10

DEFENSE

HP 45

EAC 16; KAC 17

Fort +3; Ref +5; Will +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee survival knife +8 (1d4+4 S)

Ranged frostbite-class zero pistol +10 (1d6+4 C; critical staggered [DC 15])

STATISTICS

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

Skills Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Intimidate +15, Mysticism +10, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +10

Languages Common, up to 3 others

Other Abilities cunning liar, envoy improvisations (clever feint, quick dispiriting taunt)

Gear casual stationwear, frostbite-class zero pistol with 1 battery (20 charges), survival knife

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cunning Liar (Ex) The first time a creature would succeed at a Sense Motive check to disbelieve the initiate's lie, treat that creature's result as if it had rolled a natural 1 on its Sense Motive check.

Cult Killer

Cult killers obsess over how they can use death to further the interests of their grim deities. Many see their mystical training as being connected to the dark teachings of their patron deity, but some simply enjoy having an excuse to use their abilities to their full, lethal potential. In serving a cult, a cult killer tracks down and slays the cult's enemies, hopefully before those foes can interfere with the cult's actions. Cult killers also guard unhallowed sites against intruders and have the honor of killing sacrificial victims. A cult killer's solar weapon generally resembles a weapon the cult's deity favors, such as a scythe in the case of Urgathoa.

Adaptation: A cult killer can be part of a wall breaker choir devoted to the Devourer, traveling around the fringes of the Pact Worlds.

CULT KILLER

CR 6

XP 2,400

Korasha lashunta solarian

CE Medium humanoid (lashunta)

Init +3; Perception +13

DEFENSE

HP 90

EAC 18; KAC 20

Fort +8; Ref +6; Will +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee solar weapon +16 (1d8+1d4+11 S; critical wound [DC 14])

Ranged corona laser pistol +13 (2d4+6 F; critical burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities stellar revelations (black hole [25-ft. radius, pull 15 ft., DC 14], defy gravity, stellar rush [3d6 F, DC 14], supernova [10-ft. radius, 7d6 F, DC 14])

Lashunta Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

1/day—*detect thoughts* (DC 13)

At will—*daze* (DC 12), *psychokinetic hand*

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +18, Mysticism +13, Stealth +13

Languages Castrovelian, Common;

limited telepathy 30 ft.

Other Abilities solar

manifestation (solar weapon), stellar alignment

Gear freebooter armor II,

corona laser pistol with

1 battery (20 charges),

least gluon crystal

Cult Leader

A cult leader directs a particular cult, although she might answer to a distant organizer within a very large sect. A cult leader is always an exceptionally manipulative individual, often drawn to a dark patron as a shortcut to power or as a refuge from a world that doesn't recognize her true glory. Most cult leaders become addicted to abusing the near-absolute control they enjoy over cult members, either through direct orders on behalf of their deity or indirectly by carefully phrased teachings that cultists obsessively follow. This is especially true in the case of shirren cult leaders, who find deciding what lore to teach and what to save for themselves physically intoxicating.

A cult leader generally doesn't directly confront potential threats, preferring to have initiates and killers do the dirty work. Larger cults sometimes revolve around a circle of several cult leaders who protect one another only until one shows weakness.

Adaptation: This cult leader worships Urgathoa, but she could be a devotee of the Devourer or Zon-Kuthon with no changes. Other cult leaders' total skill bonus to Bluff checks is +16, and they don't have a skill bonus to Intimidate checks. A cult leader of Nyarlathotep has the star shaman connection, Bluff +16, Perception +21, and Piloting +16. A cult leader of Asmodeus or Lao Shu Po has the overlord connection, Bluff +16, and Diplomacy +21. A cult leader can also function as an influential evangelist serving a public religion.

CULT LEADER

CR 8

XP 4,800

Shirren mystic

CE Medium humanoid (shirren)

Init +1; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 30 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

HP 105 RP 4

EAC 19; **KAC** 20

Fort +7; **Ref** +7; **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities share pain (DC 18)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee carbon staff +14 (1d8+9 S; critical knockdown)

Ranged red star plasma pistol +14 (1d8+8 E & F; critical burn 1d8)

Offensive Abilities backlash (8 damage), sow doubt (4 rounds, DC 18)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

At will—*mindlink*

Mystic Spells Known (CL 8th)

3rd (3/day)—*fear* (DC 20), *mind thrust* (DC 20)

2nd (6/day)—*fog cloud*, *hold person* (DC 19), *inflict pain* (DC 19), *status*

1st (at will)—*charm person* (DC 18), *lesser confusion* (DC 18)

Connection mindbreaker

STATISTICS

Str +1; **Dex** +1; **Con** +4; **Int** +2; **Wis** +6;

Cha +2

Skills Bluff +21, Culture +16,

Diplomacy +16, Intimidate +16,

Mysticism +21, Sense Motive +16

Languages Common, Shirren, up to 2 others; limited telepathy 30 ft.

Other Abilities communalism

Gear silver AbadarCorp travel suit, carbon staff, red star plasma pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each)

ENCOUNTERS

A single cultist can be an isolated villain, but most work in concert with their fellow cultists to spread the "good news" of their faith, often through grisly or sadistic means. Almost any weak-willed NPC might be tempted into a cult by a persuasive enough initiate or cult leader, making for widely varied cultist encounters in addition to those listed here.

Teacher and Student (CR 7): One cult initiate, one cult killer.

Small Cell (CR 10): Three cult initiates, one cult killer, one cult leader.

Death Cult (CR 12): Four cult killers, two cult leaders.



CULT LEADER

FREE CAPTAINS

Anyone who regularly traverses the space lanes is aware of the threat posed by space pirates, and within the Pact Worlds, no pirates are as infamous—or as successful—as the Free Captains. More a coalition of independent starship captains than an organized pirate fleet, the Free Captains primarily operate out of the myriad floating asteroids of the Diaspora, but their influence stretches out to the Veskarium, Near Space, and even the Vast. An elected council of pirate lords serves as the organization's ostensible leaders, and any Free Captain "right and true" has the right to vote for council members and to present grievances and other business before the council. However, the Pirate Council's authority over individual Free Captains depends on the strength of the pirate lords' personal influence and the might of their individual pirate fleets.

What truly joins the Free Captains together is the pirate code they all share—a loose set of rules that nevertheless provides some structure to the pirates' depredations and serves as a unifying influence when the Free Captains are faced with outside threats from local and interplanetary security forces. Many of the pirate code's "rules" leave plenty of room for interpretation, however, and while one Free Captain might set prisoners free once she has relieved her captives of their valuables, another might be a cutthroat buccaneer with no compunction about taking innocent lives.

Piracy in the Pact Worlds is a serious concern for any corporation that needs to ship goods from one planet to another. While the wealthier companies are able to outfit their cargo ships with enough firepower to fend off raiders or hire mercenary escorts, smaller vessels need to be fast or stealthy to avoid the predations of space pirates. Most private citizens rely on Hellknight and Steward patrols to keep space safe, but those forces can't be everywhere at once.

EXAMPLE FREE CAPTAINS

Three example Free Captains are presented below, along with advice on how to use them in similar NPC roles.

Adaptation: Not all space pirates are members of the Free Captains, of course, and the following stat blocks and encounters can be used for buccaneers, freebooters, or pirates anywhere in the galaxy. Similarly, these stat blocks can be used to represent any hardscrabble starship crews eking out a living on the fringes of civilized space, whether smugglers, tramp traders, opportunistic scavengers, or even members of organized crime syndicates such as the Golden League. These stat blocks could also represent Starfinder Society members, if played with more interest in knowledge and exploration than raiding and plunder. They might also serve as ragtag military troops, such as a colonial militia or a frontier garrison.

Space Pirate

Space pirates are any rank-and-file crew members found aboard a pirate vessel. They may have taken to a life of piracy because of a criminal past or a lack of other opportunities, or because

they were press-ganged, or they may even have been born into a family or clan of pirates. Given the barest basics of pilot training, space pirates focus most of their abilities on combat and intimidation, serving as gunners for the ship's weapons and as members of boarding parties.

Some Free Captains aren't particular about the kind of crew members they recruit for their vessels, taking any bodies they can find. Others are looking for only the cream of the crop, but they are willing to train those who appear to have potential.

Adaptation: A space pirate can be a crew member on any starship, especially ones where the crew needs to be as good at fighting as they are at flying the ship.

SPACE PIRATE

CR 1

XP 400

Human soldier

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; Perception +5

DEFENSE

HP 22

EAC 11; KAC 13

Fort +3; Ref +3; Will +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee longsword +5 (1d8+3 S)

Ranged tactical semi-auto pistol +8 (1d6+1 P) or

frag grenade 1 +8 (explode [15 ft., 1d6 P, DC 10])

Offensive Abilities fighting styles (bombard), grenade expert (+10 ft.)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +5, Intimidate +5, Piloting +10

Languages Common, Sarcesian

Gear second skin, longsword, tactical semi-auto pistol with 30 small arm rounds, frag grenades 1 (2)

Free Captain

Those pirate captains with their own ships who are successful and gain the respect of established Free Captains are awarded full membership in the loose confederation of buccaneers that is the Free Captains, usually with a raucous ceremony on Broken Rock. A Free Captain whose initiation is attended by one or more pirate lords generally has a promising career ahead.

Most Free Captains command just a single starship and know every inch of their ships from fore to aft. They are usually beholden to or allied with a more powerful pirate lord. Free Captains are seldom encountered alone, as their ships and crews are never far away, if the captain can help it.

Adaptation: A Free Captain can be the captain of any starship, especially one involved in questionably legal (or outright illegal) activities like smuggling or blockade running. Replacing the Free Captain's Intimidate skill with Diplomacy makes a charismatic starship officer—one who is likely quite popular with her crew.

FREE CAPTAIN**CR 4****XP 1,200**

Kasatha envoy

NE Medium humanoid (kasatha)

Init +7; **Perception** +10**DEFENSE****EAC** 16; **KAC** 17**Fort** +3; **Ref** +5; **Will** +7**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** tactical dueling sword +8 (1d6+5 S)**Ranged** thunderstrike sonic pistol +10 (1d8+4 So; critical deafen [DC 15]) or

frag grenade II +10 (explode [15 ft., 2d6 P, DC 15])

STATISTICS**Str** +1; **Dex** +3; **Con** +0; **Int** +3;**Wis** +0; **Cha** +5**Skills** Acrobatics +15,

Athletics +15,

Computers +10,

Culture +10,

Engineering +10,

Intimidate +15, Piloting +15,

Sense Motive +15

Languages Common, Kasatha, Sarcesian**Other Abilities** desert stride, envoy improvisations (get 'em, quick dispiriting taunt), four-armed**Gear** defrex hide, tactical dueling sword, thunderstrike sonic pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each), frag grenades II (2)**Pirate Lord**

The Pirate Council of Broken Rock provides what little leadership and direction the pirates of the Diaspora will accept, but only the most infamous and successful Free Captains are considered pirate lords and nominated for positions on the council. This political process is fraught with backstabbing and betrayal, as the current members of the Pirate Council are often reluctant to share their power with those whom they consider newcomers.

Each pirate lord commands a fleet of starships and controls one of the innumerable asteroid bases, hidden dockyards, and pirate ports in the Diaspora. A few pirate lords own gaudy mansions on Broken Rock and spend a lot of their time lounging within them, delegating control of their fleets to trusted underlings. Other pirate lords tend to scoff at these hands-off pirate lords.

Adaptation: A pirate lord could be a flashy warlord commanding a personal fleet of starships or an organized crime boss. Alternatively, a pirate lord could be a famous pirate hunter, fearlessly tracking down wanted pirates and bringing them to justice.

PIRATE LORD**CR 7****XP 3,200**

Vesk solarian

LE Medium humanoid (vesk)

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +14**DEFENSE****EAC** 19; **KAC** 21**Fort** +9; **Ref** +7; **Will** +8; +2 vs. fear**Resistances** cold or fire 5**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** advanced doshko +17 (2d12+12 P) or unarmed strike +17 (1d3+15 B)**Ranged** red star plasma pistol +14 (1d8+7 E & F; critical burn 1d8)

Offensive Abilities flashing strikes, natural weapons, stellar revelations (black hole [25-ft. radius, pull 15 ft., DC 15], gravity surge [+17], stellar rush [3d6 F, DC 15], supernova [10-ft. radius, 8d6 F, DC 15])

STATISTICS**Str** +5; **Dex** +4; **Con** +2; **Int** +0;**Wis** +1; **Cha** +2**Skills** Athletics +14, Intimidate +14, Mysticism +14, Piloting +19**Languages** Common, Sarcesian, Vesk

Other Abilities armor savant, solar manifestation (armor), stellar alignment

Gear silver AbadarCorp travel suit, advanced doshko, red star plasma pistol with 4 batteries (20 charges each)

ENCOUNTERS

Free Captains can be encountered as boarding parties sent to seize control of disabled ships or in small gangs taking shore leave in lawless pirate ports or remote outposts on the fringes of society. Larger groups serve as crews aboard pirate ships in the depths of space, while the most powerful individuals might be part of a delegation from the Free Captains' pirate council.

Boarding Party (CR 5): Four space pirates.

Pirate Crew (CR 7): Five space pirates, one Free Captain.

Pirate Council Entourage (CR 9): Three Free Captains, one pirate lord.

**FREE CAPTAIN**

HELLKNIGHTS

Hellknights preserve law and order at any cost. They coordinate their efforts from massive citadel-ships, but most of their forces are deployed in smaller groups to handle minor disruptions. Different orders have different focuses and different methods, but they all share many commonalities. Hellknights might seek to brutally punish criminals and pirates, crush uprisings against stabilizing authorities (no matter how unreasonable or unpopular those authorities might be), or forcibly “civilize” frontiers they perceive as unruly.

EXAMPLE HELLKNIGHTS

Three example Hellknights are presented below, along with advice on how to use them as other similar sorts of NPCs.

Adaptation: The Hellknights presented below are from the Order of the Chain, though they can be adapted to represent any order by altering the abilities they gain from the star knight archetype (see page 186). A Hellknight team could also serve as a Veskarium security team protecting diplomats or vital shipments of a secure nature simply by making all the members vesk.

Hellknight Armiger

Hellknight armigers train under more experienced Hellknights until they succeed at the test that grants them the full rank of Hellknight. They have little to no leeway in interpreting their orders and strive to enforce all edicts given by their superiors.

Adaptation: A Hellknight armiger can function as an exceptionally disciplined Steward or bounty hunter. Alternatively, a Hellknight armiger could also be one of the soldiers of Castrovel’s lashunta city-states.

HELLKNIGHT ARMIGER

CR 5

XP 1,600

Damaya lashunta soldier (star knight)

LN Medium humanoid (lashunta)

Init +5; Perception +11

DEFENSE

HP 70

EAC 17; KAC 19

Fort +7; Ref +5; Will +6

Defensive Abilities armor mastery

OFFENSE

Speed 25 ft.

Melee tactical cryopike +14 (1d8+10 C)

Ranged *anchoring thunderstrike sonic rifle* +11 (1d10+5 So; critical deafen [DC 15]) or

shock grenade II +11 (explode [15 ft., 1d12 E, DC 15]) or

stickybomb grenade II +11 (explode [15 ft., entangled 2d4 rounds, DC 15])

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with cryopike)

Offensive Abilities challenge, fighting styles (bombard), grenade expert (25 ft.), heavy fire (+5 damage)

Lashunta Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th)

1/day—detect thoughts (DC 12)

At will—daze (DC 11), psychokinetic hand

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +11, Culture +11, Intimidate +16

Languages Castrovelian, Common, planetary language, up to 1 other; limited telepathy 30 ft.

Gear officer ceremonial plate (targeting computer), *anchoring thunderstrike sonic rifle* with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), tactical cryopike with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges), shock grenade II, stickybomb grenade II

Hellknight Signifer

Famous for the impersonal masks they wear, Hellknight signifers use a combination of magic and weaponry to enforce the law. Their masks help them maintain emotional distance from whatever matter is at hand and discourage appeals to any outside affiliation, creed, or race. These masks also typically provide the Hellknight signifers with data about ambient magic and unsecured communications and help them focus on their orders.

More practically, Hellknight signifers are specialists trained to handle spells and technology. Most of the time, this means providing support to other Hellknights or identifying and neutralizing enemy spellcasters or stranger threats. They remain watchful in combat, often demanding to know the nature of any trickery they don’t immediately recognize.

Adaptation: A Hellknight signifer can serve as an exceptionally disciplined mid-level Steward spellcaster. By changing the spells to focus more strongly on mind-affecting spells such as *charm person*, this character can be a mystic of the Sholar Adat on the *Idari*.

HELLKNIGHT SIGNIFER

CR 7

XP 3,200

Human mystic (star knight)

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Perception +14

DEFENSE

HP 90 RP 4

EAC 18; KAC 19

Fort +6; Ref +6; Will +10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee carbon staff +13 (1d8+9 B plus block; critical knockdown)

Ranged *apprehending corona laser pistol* +11 (2d4+7 F; critical burn 1d4)

Offensive Abilities anchoring attack, forced amity (DC 17), inexplicable commands

Mystic Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

At will—*mindlink*

Mystic Spells Known (CL 7th)

3rd (3/day)—*dispel magic* (DC 20), *suggestion* (DC 20)2nd (6/day)—*force blast* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *mystic cure*, see *invisibility*

1st (at will)—*command* (DC 18), *wisp ally*

Connection overlord

STATISTICS

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

Skills Culture +14, Diplomacy +19, Intimidate +14, Mysticism +19

Languages Common, Kasatha

Gear d-suit II, *apprehending* (see page 194) *corona laser pistol* with 2 batteries (20 charges each), carbon staff

Hellknight Commander

Hellknight commanders lead missions and determine how subordinate Hellknights should handle unexpected circumstances. They negotiate with authorities to determine their purview in a system with an organized government. Without a government to restrain them, Hellknight commanders take it upon themselves to institute their own merciless vision of order, regardless of the wishes of any folk who happen to already be there.

Hellknight commanders are accustomed to unquestioning obedience. As a result, they have little patience for rabble-rousers and are quick to condemn anyone who questions their methods without a sound legal argument. Many Hellknight commanders take pride in their ability to turn any combat into an opportunity for an object lesson to their troops.

Adaptation: A Hellknight commander can function as an exceptionally disciplined and militaristic mid-level Steward leader. Alternatively, a Hellknight commander can be the fierce captain of a warship.

HELLKNIGHT COMMANDER

CR 10

XP 9,600

Human solarian (star knight)

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Perception** +19

DEFENSE

HP 165 RP 5

EAC 23; **KAC** 25

Fort +12; **Ref** +10; **Will** +11

DR 5/—; **Resistances** cold or fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (jetpack, average)

Melee solar weapon +22 (2d10+18 S; critical severe wound [DC 19])

Ranged *apprehending hailstorm-class zero pistol* +19 (2d6+10 C; critical staggered [DC 19])

Offensive Abilities anchoring attack, flashing strikes, stellar revelations (black hole [30-ft. radius, pull 20 ft., DC 19], blazing orbit [3d6 F], supernova [15-ft. radius, 11d6 F, DC 19]), zenith revelations (wormholes [2, 5 rounds])

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +24, Culture +19, Mysticism +19, Sense Motive +19

Feats Lunge

Languages Common

Other Abilities solar manifestation (weapon), stellar alignment

Gear d-suit III (deflective reinforcement, *haste circuit*, jetpack), *apprehending* (see page 194) *hailstorm-class*

zero pistol with 2 high-capacity batteries (40 charges each), *minor gluon crystal*

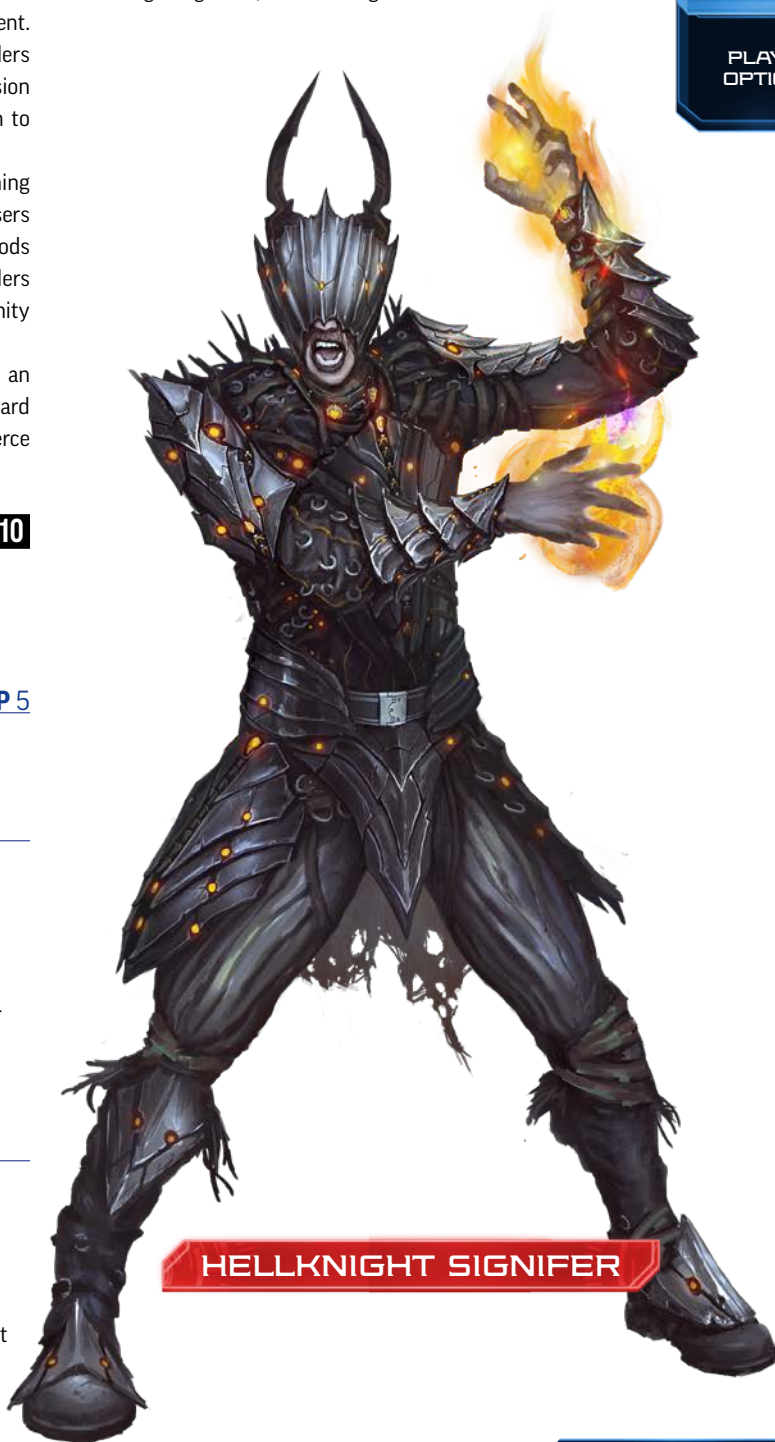
ENCOUNTERS

Hellknights almost always operate in pairs or larger groups—they can more easily maintain their intense discipline in the company of their peers.

Excursion (CR 10): Four Hellknight armigers, one Hellknight signifier.

Inquisition (CR 12): Six Hellknight armigers, two Hellknight signifiers.

Peacekeeping Force (CR 13): Six Hellknight armigers, three Hellknight signifiers, one Hellknight commander.



HELLKNIGHT SIGNIFIER

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CAST

PLAYER
OPTIONS

MERCENARIES

Mercenaries work for the highest bidder, generally with no questions asked (except by those who belong to the Skyfire Legion and a few other more principled companies). Mercenaries can serve the interests of almost any faction with enough credits, but most often they work for employers who can't employ a formal military force or who can't be seen getting their own hands dirty. Since their ultimate goal is simply to get paid, mercenaries are rarely willing to fight to the death unless they fear failure will ruin them completely anyway.

If approached with an appealing offer, some particularly ruthless mercenaries are willing to betray their employers, but their new loyalty is just as fickle. Many mercenaries know that changing sides in the middle of a job could ruin their reputations, so they are therefore willing to be bought off only in a way that they can plausibly deny later or that will make them so much money that they will be set for life.

There are countless mercenary groups throughout the Pact Worlds, ranging from large and acclaimed to small and obscure. Many groups specialize in certain types of missions; some take on only jobs that put them on the battlefield, while others prefer to stick to the shadows. Mercenary groups accept a variety of forms of payment, from hard credits to technological gear and weapons to magic items.

EXAMPLE MERCENARIES

Three example mercenaries are presented below, along with advice on how to use them in similar NPC roles.

Adaptation: Mercenaries can serve almost any business, faction, government, or organization, especially those concerned about being found out for their involvement in unsavory dealings. The Skyfire Legion, perhaps the most famous and most principled mercenary company, offers its services to colonists and others with legitimate interests outside the Pact Worlds. Skyfire Legionnaires are more often dragonkin and ryphorians rather than the races described here.

Mercenary Rookie

Even rookie mercenaries are usually recruited only after they have demonstrated prowess in one of any number of militaries or in a security role elsewhere. Many left their previous positions hoping for more freedom, more money, or more glory. As such, they tend to have their own ideas about how to get things done. They might show off or play fast and loose with their orders—at least until they are faced with a foe that seems truly dangerous. More successful mercenary rookies, however, tend to approach the task like they would military service with loftier motives, and they take pride in professionally following orders.

With a handful of successful missions under his belt, a mercenary is no longer considered a rookie, and he often has the scars to show for it. At this point, he is usually referred to as a grunt and might be working his way up the chain of command with an eye on becoming a captain or taking on another leadership role.

Adaptation: A mercenary rookie can be a well-equipped fighter serving any government (although if the rookie isn't working for the Veskarium, he is most likely not a vesk) or security for a major corporation.

MERCENARY ROOKIE

CR 6
XP 2,400

Vesk soldier

LN Medium humanoid (vesk)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

HP 90
EAC 19; **KAC** 21

Fort +8; **Ref** +6; **Will** +7; +2 vs. fear

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (35 ft. in armor), fly 30 ft. (jetpack, average)

Melee red star plasma doshko +16 (1d10+13 E & F; critical severe wound [DC 14]) or

unarmed strike +16 (1d3+16 B)

Ranged static arc rifle +13 (1d12+6 E; critical arc 1d6) or

cryo grenade I +13 (explode [10 ft., 1d8 C plus staggered, DC 14]) or

flash grenade II +13 (explode [10 ft., blinded 1d4 rounds, DC 14])

Offensive Abilities charge attack, fighting styles (blitz), natural weapons

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +18, Intimidate +13, Stealth +13

Feats Step Up, Step Up and Strike

Languages Common, Vesk

Other Abilities armor savant

Gear vesk overplate I (jetpack), red star plasma doshko with 1 battery (20 charges), static arc rifle with 1 high-capacity battery (40 charges)

Mercenary Technomancer

Mercenaries who specialize in technomancy round out a team's abilities with technical skills and magic. They often pay little attention to any aspect of the job that is not magical or highly technical, leaving that to others since it's not what they're being paid for. They rarely operate without rookies or other muscle to back them up and are prone to fleeing or surrendering when their allies are eliminated.

Mercenary technomancers love to experiment with assets such as unorthodox spells and hybrid items procured from exclusive contracts. Rivals sometimes use rare and interesting magic or technology to bribe a mercenary technomancer into pretending they never met.

Adaptation: A mercenary technomancer can serve as a black-market spellcaster serving the Golden League or an expert in illegal spells or items operating out of Apostae or the Diaspora, perhaps working for a drow noble house or aboard a vessel of one of the Free Captains.

MERCENARY TECHNOMANCER**CR 8****XP 4,800**

Ysoki technomancer

N Small humanoid (ysoki)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16**DEFENSE****HP 105 RP 4****EAC** 19; **KAC** 20**Fort** +7; **Ref** +7; **Will** +11**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** tactical knife +13 (2d4+8 S)**Ranged** advanced semi-auto pistol +15 (2d6+8 P)**Offensive Abilities** cache capacitor 1 (*unseen servant*),
magic hacks (magic negation, selective targeting),
spell cache**Technomancer Spells Known** (CL 8th; melee +13,
ranged +15)
3rd (3/day)—*arcing surge* (DC 20), *entropic grasp*
(DC 20)
2nd (6/day)—*caustic conversion* (DC 19),
inject nanobots (DC 19), *invisibility*,
microbot assault
1st (at will)—*holographic image* (DC 18),
*magic missile***STATISTICS****Str** +0; **Dex** +4; **Con** +2; **Int** +6; **Wis** +2;
Cha +0**Skills** Bluff +21, Computers +21,
Engineering +21,
Mysticism +16, Stealth +21,
Survival +16**Languages** Common, Ysoki,
up to 6 others**Other Abilities** cheek
pouches, moxie**Gear** advanced lashunta
tempweave, advanced semi-auto pistol with
24 small arm rounds, tactical knife**Mercenary Commando**

A mercenary commando is the best there is at quickly and quietly eliminating enemies and hazards for an employer, preferably leaving little or no collateral damage, evidence, or witnesses. Some lead teams of rookie mercenaries, but many operate alone or in small strike teams against well-researched targets. Teams that operate with commandos often demand high prices.

Commandos prefer to go in knowing all the angles, but they are very good at improvising when that simply isn't an option. Those who pride themselves on cold professionalism speak only to further their latest ploy, but the most storied commandos are those who take pleasure in playful banter with challenging foes, especially ones who survive to face them again another time.

Adaptation: A mercenary commando can be an assassin serving Lao Shu Po or a master Steward spy working a mission that cannot be officially acknowledged.

MERCENARY COMMANDO**CR 10****XP 9,600**

Damaya lashunta operative

N Medium humanoid (lashunta)

Init +8; **Perception** +20**DEFENSE****HP 150****EAC** 23; **KAC** 24**Fort** +9; **Ref** +12; **Will** +13**Defensive Abilities** evasion, uncanny agility**OFFENSE****Speed** 50 ft.**Melee** incapacitator +20 (3d4+12 B nonlethal; critical
staggered [DC 19])**Ranged** elite semi-auto pistol +20 (3d6+10 P) or
advanced shirren-eye rifle +20 (2d10+10 P)**Offensive Abilities** debilitating trick, trick
attack +5d8, triple attack**Lashunta Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th)
1/day—*detect thoughts* (DC 17)
At will—*daze* (DC 16),
*psychokinetic hand***STATISTICS****Str** +2; **Dex** +8; **Con** +2; **Int** +5;
Wis +3; **Cha** +3**Skills** Acrobatics +25, Bluff +20,
Culture +25, Disguise +20, Stealth +25 (+29
when using trick attack)**Languages** Castrovelian, Common, up to 5
others; limited telepathy 30 ft.**Other Abilities** operative exploits (cloaking field,
master of disguise [3/day, 100 minutes or 10
minutes, DC 19]), specialization (ghost)**Gear** freebooter armor III, advanced
shirren-eye rifle with 12 sniper rounds,
elite semi-auto pistol with 36 small arm
rounds, incapacitator with 1 battery
(20 charges)**ENCOUNTERS**

Mercenaries generally function in teams organized by mercenary companies, although a few prefer to operate alone or on small freelance teams.

Threat Assessment Team (CR 10):

Two mercenary rookies, one mercenary technomancer.

Strike Team (CR 12): Three mercenary rookies,
one mercenary technomancer, one
mercenary commando.

High-Tech Extraction Team

(CR 14): Two mercenary technomancers,
three mercenary commandos.

MERCENARY COMMANDO

SECURITY FORCES

Security forces can be found on nearly every civilized world, moon, habitat, or space station. They help keep the peace, maintain order, enforce laws, investigate crimes, and arrest criminals. They might be official police with the full backing of local government, private contractors who hire their services to the highest bidder, or corporate security more concerned with safeguarding company assets than upholding the law. Some security personnel might dedicate their lives to law enforcement and protecting and serving citizens, but others are as corrupt as the criminals they supposedly fight against and can be bought with the right bribes; sometimes both types of security personnel can be found within the same organization, making it difficult to tell who is trustworthy and who is not.

A security force usually has a strict region it patrols, such as a single building, a small town, or a district of a large metropolis. Personnel tend to work with other security forces at the same level—a police officer is expected to coordinate with another officer in a neighboring precinct when the need arises. However, there is often tension over matters of jurisdiction between different security forces when crimes occur in liminal spaces or over multiple regions. An investigator for a national security force searching for a criminal whose infractions threaten the government might butt heads with a corporate complex's head of security if that lawbreaker has holed up in the building's basement. In time, the two generally work out their differences, as they are usually both interested in seeing justice done, but sometimes these squabbles can lead to the criminal's escape.

EXAMPLE SECURITY FORCES

Three example security personnel are presented below, along with advice on how to use them as other similar NPCs.

Adaptation: Security forces can be found in the employ of almost any government, faction, corporation, or even criminal organization. They are most common in established civilized settlements, but they can also be found (usually in much smaller numbers) in border regions or on frontier colonies, doing what they can to enforce the law. The following stat blocks could be used for AbadarCorp corporate security, entrusted with guarding the company's offices and trading outposts. They could also represent the criminal investigation branch of a Hellknight order or even Stewards assigned to a locale to keep the peace. Outside of these specific factions, security force stat blocks could also represent uniformed military police or gendarmerie, shipboard security on a civilian starship, or even religious police dedicated to upholding and enforcing the dogma of a particular faith.

Security Guard

A security guard is a night sentry at a factory or other private facility, a frontier sheriff's deputy, or a rookie uniformed police officer. It can be a tough job, but security work at least offers a

steady income for those who don't want to turn to crime to make ends meet. Security guards are usually trained in defensive fighting and nonlethal tactics, enabling them to apprehend criminals rather than kill them outright.

Security guards are sometimes looked down upon by those of higher ranks within the same force, but they represent the backbone of the force. Without them, even the idea of safety and security would be laughable.

Adaptation: A security guard can be a bouncer at a posh nightclub, a strikebreaker, a criminal thug or enforcer, or even a rookie bounty hunter looking for her first mark.

SECURITY GUARD

CR 1
XP 400

Human soldier

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE

HP 23
EAC 11; **KAC** 13

Fort +4; **Ref** +2; **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical baton +8 (1d4+5 B) or

standard taclash +8 (1d4+5 S nonlethal)

Ranged pulsecaster pistol +5 (1d4+1 E nonlethal) or

flash grenade I +5 (explode [5 ft., blinded 1d4 rounds, DC 12]) or

stickybomb grenade I +5 (explode [15 ft., entangled 2d4 rounds, DC 12])

Offensive Abilities fighting styles (guard)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidate +5, Piloting +5, Sense Motive +5

Feats Improved Combat Maneuver (grappling)

Languages Common

Other Abilities armor training

Gear flight suit stationwear, pulsecaster pistol with 2 batteries (20 charges each), standard taclash, tactical baton, flash grenade I, stickybomb grenade I, binders (4), flashlight, personal comm unit

Security Specialist

Security forces often employ specialists with a variety of skills and abilities that regular security guards just don't have. Security specialists add spellcasting to their arsenal, blending magic and technology to fight crime.

A security specialist might be called upon to investigate crimes with a mystical bent, hack into a criminal syndicate's computer network, or provide magical combat support to traditional security personnel in the field. These spellcasters can gain a reputation for being weird or off-putting because of the nature of the forces they deal with on a regular basis, but many organizations find them to be invaluable resources.

Adaptation: A security specialist can be a corporate hacker or one employed by a government, or a mercenary technomancer for hire. If a security specialist is more of a criminal than a law-enforcement professional, he could be a hacker or spellcaster working for an organized crime outfit like the Aspis Consortium or the Golden League.

SECURITY SPECIALIST**CR 3****XP 800**

Android technomancer

LN Medium humanoid (android)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;**Perception** +8**DEFENSE****EAC** 13; **KAC** 14**Fort** +2; **Ref** +2; **Will** +6; +2 vs.disease, mind-affecting
effects, poison, and sleep**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (jump jets,
average)**Melee** tactical baton +5 (1d4+4 B)**Ranged** static arc pistol +7 (1d6+3
E; critical arc 2)**Technomancer Spells Known** (CL 3rd;
ranged +7)1st (3/day)—*magic missile*,
*supercharge weapon*0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 15), *energy ray***STATISTICS****Str** +1; **Dex** +2; **Con** +0; **Int** +4; **Wis** +1; **Cha** -1**Skills** Computers +13, Intimidate +8, Mysticism +8,
Sense Motive +13**Feats** Amplified Glitch**Languages** Castrovelian, Common, Kasatha, Shirren,
Vesk, Ysoki**Other Abilities** constructed, flat affect, magic hacks
(empowered weapon), spell cache (badge),
upgrade slot (jump jets)**Gear** casual stationwear, static arc pistol with
2 batteries (20 charges each), manacles,
personal comm unit, tool kit (hacking)**Detective**

Detectives are often the most skilled and experienced members of a security force, and their focus is on the investigation of crimes rather than day-to-day law enforcement. They attempt to ferret out the truth wherever it may hide, using intuition, persuasion, and their own powers of perception.

Detectives often work alone or with a single partner. The bond between two detectives can grow strong, with the two often eventually thinking as one as they work long hours to crack their cases.

Adaptation: Detectives can be an independent private investigators, selling their investigative expertise to any clients who have the money. Criminal organizations that suspect wrongdoing within their own ranks might also employ their own internal operatives to verify the loyalty of their members and enact retribution on behalf of the cartel when traitors are discovered.

DETECTIVE**CR 5****XP 1,600**

Shirren operative

LN Medium humanoid (shirren)

Init +7; **Senses** blindsense (vibration) 30 ft.; **Perception** +17**DEFENSE****EAC** 17; **KAC** 18**Fort** +4; **Ref** +7; **Will** +8**Defensive Abilities** evasion**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** tactical baton +10 (1d4+6 B)**Ranged** frostbite-class zero pistol +12
(1d6+8 C; critical staggered [DC 15])**Offensive Abilities** debilitating trick, trick
attack +3d8**STATISTICS****Str** +1; **Dex** +5; **Con** +1; **Int** +3; **Wis** +2;
Cha +1**Skills** Computers +12, Culture +17,
Diplomacy +12, Piloting +12, Sense
Motive +17**Languages** Common, Shirren;
limited telepathy 30 ft.**Other Abilities** communalism,
operative exploits (glimpse the truth,
uncanny mobility, uncanny pilot),
specialization (detective)**Gear** business stationwear, frostbite-
class zero pistol with 2 batteries (20
charges each), tactical baton, flashlight, laser
microphone, manacles, personal comm unit,
police cruiser, tool kit (hacking)**ENCOUNTERS**

Security personnel rarely work alone, preferring to operate in small groups so they can support each other if necessary. Some security forces are issued vehicles to aid their law-enforcement efforts. A security patrol might be outfitted with basic energcycles (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 228), while a field unit might be issued a police cruiser (*Core Rulebook* 229) for transportation.

Security Patrol (CR 4): Three security guards.**Field Unit (CR 6):** Four security guards, one security specialist.**Criminal Investigation Unit (CR 7):** Two security guards, one security specialist, one detective.**SECURITY SPECIALIST**

STREET GANGS

Street gangs look for opportunities to score credits and protect their turfs. Most claim territories in run-down neighborhoods of big settlements, particularly Absalom Station, Nightarch on Apostae, and the fringes of Verces's Ring of Nations. Akiton faces a particular proliferation of these gangs; there are few ways to make an honest living on this planet, so many of its small mining towns are overrun by criminals. The most successful street gangs often work for far-reaching employers such as the Golden League.

Street gangs usually get involved in all manner of illegal activities: engaging in petty theft, making and selling drugs, fencing stolen goods, and running protection rackets, to name a few. A respectable-looking member of the gang or an individual connected to the gang might operate a front for these criminal enterprises, giving the gang a veneer of legitimacy within the community.

Though they operate on opposite sides of the law, street gangs and security forces are usually found in close proximity. The presence of a street gang in a neighborhood is sometimes answered by an increase in security, but if the street gang is too tough, officers of the law looking after their own safety will refuse to tread on the gang's turf. Alternatively, members of a crooked security force might be working hand-in-hand with a street gang to cover up evidence of crimes in exchange for a handful of credits or other favors. Sometimes an officer of the law works with a criminal organization out of a fear for his life or the lives of his family. In either case, when a street gang is able to set down roots, it can rot the morality of a community from within.

EXAMPLE GANG MEMBERS

Three example gang members are presented below, along with advice on how to use them in similar NPC roles.

Adaptation: Street gangs can represent wasteland marauders on Akiton, aspiring space pirates in ports among the asteroids of the Diaspora, or smugglers flying between any parts of the Pact Worlds or beyond. However, by changing their alignment or circumstances, members of a street gang can also be used as a force fighting for freedom on an oppressed world.

Gang Tough

Gang toughs might be desperate survivors or violent individuals who thrive when their strength is rewarded. Many just want a quick path to money, no matter who they have to hurt to get it, but others work for gangs to simply keep themselves and their families safe. Regardless of their motives, they usually present themselves as unstoppable and utterly ruthless, fearing that any other type of behavior could be seen as weak. They brag and taunt in combat, hoping to scare foes into surrendering or simply fleeing.

On Akiton, toughs are usually crimson-skinned Akitonian humans (known as the Hylki), androids, or ysoki. In Nightarch

on Apostae, they tend to be half-orcs. On Absalom Station, a gang tough is equally likely to be of almost any race. On other planets, a tough is usually one of the dominant race of the world.

Adaptation: A gang tough can be a rough-and-tumble street vigilante or hired security at any business on Absalom Station or across the Pact Worlds.

GANG TOUGH

CR 1/2

XP 200

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Perception +4

DEFENSE

HP 13

EAC 10; KAC 12

Fort +4; Ref +2; Will +0

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee survival knife +5 (1d4+3 P) or
cestus battleglove +5 (1d4+3 B)

Ranged tactical semi-auto pistol +4 (1d6 P)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Athletics +9, Culture +4, Intimidate +4, Stealth +4

Feats Deadly Aim, Quick Draw

Languages Common

Gear flight suit stationwear, cestus battleglove, survival knife,
tactical semi-auto pistol with 27 small arm rounds

Gang Pusher

Gang pushers sell the illegal wares their gang collects, most notoriously dangerous and addictive drugs and cheap, shoddy implants. These augmentations might be simple pleasure stimulators or more practical devices of questionable workmanship. Some collect debts owed to the gang or trick marks out of money when subtlety is of more importance than force. Pushers can also be gang bosses who handle all the money their underlings collect by various unsavory means. These pushers might have machinists (see page 179) as elite toughs or personal guards.

Pushers often single out potential threats as soon as they enter the gang's turf, gathering information as thoroughly as reasonably possible before moving to intimidate and drive out the intruders. They spread rumors against any perceived threats, especially nosy adventurers. Most pushers seek to scare residents of their turf into silence regarding any real or potential crimes and thereby stall most investigations in the area.

Adaptation: Pushers can serve as street-savvy scouts and spies for most organizations. A pusher on her own could be a daring thief, stealing for the thrill of it.

GANG PUSHER

CR 2

XP 600

Ysoki operative

NE Small humanoid (ysoki)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +13

DEFENSE

EAC 13; **KAC** 14

Fort +1; **Ref** +4; **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical baton +8 (1d4 B)

Ranged static arc pistol +8 (1d6 E plus stun; critical arc 2)

Offensive Abilities trick attack +1d8

STATISTICS

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

Skills Acrobatics +8, Bluff +13, Culture +8, Engineering +13, Intimidate +13, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +13, Survival +8

Feats Veiled Threat

Languages Common, Ysoki, up to 2 others

Other Abilities cheek pouches, moxie, operative exploit (uncanny mobility), specialization (thief)

Gear freebooter armor I, static arc pistol with 1 battery (20 charges), tactical baton

HP 23

CN Medium humanoid (android)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +8

DEFENSE

EAC 14; **KAC** 15

Fort +4; **Ref** +4; **Will** +4; +2 vs. disease, mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee tactical dueling sword +7 (1d6+4 S)

Ranged static arc pistol +9 (1d6+3 E; critical arc 2)

Offensive Abilities overload (DC 14)

STATISTICS

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

Skills Computers +13, Engineering +13, Medicine +8, Physical Science +8, Piloting +13

Languages Common, up to 4 others

Other Abilities artificial intelligence (drone chop cycle), constructed, custom rig (arm), flat affect, upgrade slot (quick-release sheath)

Gear casual stationwear, static arc pistol with 1 battery (20 charges), tactical dueling sword

HP 35

CHOP CYCLE

CR –

N Medium construct (technological)

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

DEFENSE

EAC 11; **KAC** 13

Fort +1; **Ref** +1; **Will** –1

DR 1/–; **Immunities** construct immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Ranged azimuth laser rifle +6 (1d8+1 F; critical burn 1d6)

HP 17

STATISTICS

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

Cha –2

Skills Acrobatics +10

Languages Common, up to 4 others

Other Abilities mods (riding saddle), reduced actions (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 138), unliving

Gear azimuth laser rifle with 1 battery (20 charges)

ENCOUNTERS

Gang members normally favor encounters where they can overwhelm their enemies with intimidating displays of numbers.

Troublemakers (CR 4): Three gang toughs, one gang pusher.

Hit Squad (CR 5): Five gang toughs, one gang machinist.

Rumble (CR 7): Six gang toughs, one gang pusher, two gang machinists.

Gang Machinist

Gang machinists dismantle stolen items into parts that can be sold without being traced back to their original owners. To keep themselves in control of this valuable material, they use some of it (as well as purchased parts) to build dangerous drones as well as weapons, armor, traps, and all manner of other devices. These vital skills might lead the machinist to assume leadership of the gang, or they might simply make the machinist a powerful enforcer under a more persuasive and clever gang pusher ringleader.

A chop shop run by one of these machinists is a hotbed of illegal activity, but generally not obviously so from the outside. Anyone who wants to learn what is really going on within should expect stiff resistance in the form of gang toughs, traps, and surprisingly sharp digital security.

Adaptation: A machinist can be an aspiring mercenary not yet distinguished enough to join a respectable company or attract freelance work. A more altruistic machinist could be an agent of the Android Abolitionist Front or an acolyte of Triune.

GANG MACHINIST

CR 3

XP 800

Android mechanic



GANG PUSHER



PLAYER OPTIONS

4



ARCHETYPES

Archetypes allow players to focus on very specific character concepts when the choices of class and theme alone don't quite match up to their visions. All of the archetypes presented on the following pages can be applied to any class, using the rules for archetypes found on pages 126-127 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. Rules for how to apply archetypes to NPCs with class grafts can be found on page 167 of this book.

Many of these archetypes are related to specific factions within the Pact Worlds, but a character doesn't need to take the archetype associated with a faction to become a member of that faction. For instance, the Starfinder forerunner (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 129) and the Starfinder data jockey (see page 188) represent just two types of characters who are part of the Starfinder Society, but that organization employs a wide variety of agents to carry out its expeditions. Factions usually keep the training for their associated archetypes a secret from outsiders, but ex-members or those looking to make credits on the sly might teach these techniques to others.

CLASSES AND ARCHETYPES

Some combinations of class and archetype are quite obvious. For instance, spellcasting classes seem a perfect fit for the Arcanamirium sage archetype. However, since any class can take any archetype, players can create some unusual pairings. The guidance below discusses both straightforward combinations and a few ways to create interesting, if a little unorthodox, synergies.

Arcanamirium Sage

Of course, envoys, mechanics, operatives, and solarians of all types can benefit from being able to wear more than the standard number of hybrid and magic items at later levels. Along with mystics and technomancers, solarians receive Mysticism as a class skill (as does any character with the priest theme), allowing them to take full advantage of the magic item scholar alternate class feature.

A character who takes this archetype can benefit from the mercenary theme's increase to bulk limit and the xenoarchaeologist theme's (see page 137) innate familiarity with magic items of unknown provenance.

Divine Champion

Divine champions can arise from any class, though some classes are more likely for worshipers of certain deities. Mystics who take the divine champion archetype usually want to cast their connection spells more frequently.

The cultist (see page 147), dream prophet (see page 117), and solar disciple (see page 17) themes combine with this archetype to form some interesting character concepts.

Skyfire Centurion

Skyfire centurions who are envoys or operatives are usually the captains of starships, while others quickly form a bond with

their captains. Mystics with the healer connection often keep their bonded allies close enough to heal, while technomancers typically focus on magic hacks that help them deal more damage with weapons.

A character with the wild warden theme (see page 37) forms bonds with those he wants to help survive, while someone with the space pirate theme (see page 87) bonds with her crew.

Star Knight

As this archetype encompasses two separate organizations—the Hellknights and the Knights of Golarion—star knights come from all walks of life. Mechanics who choose this archetype usually use an exocortex to aid them in attacking the targets of their challenges. Solarians often manifest a solar weapon, as the heavy armor proficiency this archetype grants doesn't work well with solar armor.

A Hellknight with the bounty hunter theme is able to swiftly find those who break the law, while a Knight of Golarion with the dragonblood theme (see page 107) might pattern her behavior on a famed dragon from the lost planet.

Starfinder Data Jockey

Any class that receives Computers as a class skill benefits greatly from this archetype. Data jockey mystics who take the Akashic connection are able to retrieve information from all kinds of sources. Soldiers who focus on this archetype often specialize in the sharpshoot fighting style.

A Starfinder data jockey who works for a corporation as an agent (see page 47) can almost always find the information she is seeking. A character with the icon theme who takes this archetype is most likely a famous hacker, known among his fans by his infosphere handle.

Steward Officer

Stewards focus on diplomatic solutions to problems, turning to violence only when needed, and any class can gain benefits from this archetype. Mystics often focus on the empathy connection, and technomancers usually specialize in divination spells (especially those that allow them to speak alien languages). Soldiers who choose this archetype take the guard fighting style.

Though it plays against type, a Steward officer with the outlaw or gladiator (see page 57) theme would make for an interesting roleplaying challenge. Alternatively, the death-touched theme (see page 97) could give a Steward officer a touch of endurance when diplomatic options are no longer on the table.

ARCANAMIRIUM SAGE

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Much like the pre-Gap arcane academy of the same name, the Arcanamirium on Absalom Station is a prestigious institution of magical learning. Numerous ancient and alien artifacts are stored in the university's vaults, and many sages trained at the institution thus specialize in studying magic items. Arcanamirium sages learn to hack an item's magical field, which allows them to unlock powers unavailable to normal users.

Most Arcanamirium sages are mystics and technomancers who studied at the university, but other characters can be Arcanamirium sages, such as explorers who investigate ancient sites of magical power or adventurers who want to augment their abilities with magic.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The Arcanamirium sage archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 6th, 9th, 12th, and 18th levels.

Magic Item Scholar (Ex) 2nd Level

As an Arcanamirium sage, you have an almost instinctual grasp over magic and hybrid items. You gain an insight bonus equal to half your class level to Engineering and Mysticism checks to identify and repair hybrid and magic items, and you don't need *detect magic* to determine whether an object is a magic item or to identify a magic item. You can also decipher magical inscriptions that would otherwise be unintelligible or, as a full action, identify any spells encoded in a spell gem, even if you aren't a spellcaster.

You gain access to the spell *identify*. If you have the spells class feature, you add *identify* to your list of spells known, and treat it as a spell on your class spell list. If you already have *identify* as a spell known, you instead gain an additional 1st-level spell known of your choice from your class spell list. If you do not have a class spell list or spells known, you gain *identify* as a spell-like ability you can cast twice per day.

Additionally, in typical settlements, you can find and purchase any hybrid or magic item with an item level up to your character level + 2. As normal, the GM can restrict access to some items regardless of their level.

Spell Gem Manipulation (Su) 6th Level

Once per day, while holding a spell gem in your hand, you can cast the spell encoded within the gem using a spell slot of the same level or higher, just as though you were casting one of your spells known. The spell must be on your class's spell list and cannot require expensive materials as part of its casting. If the spell normally requires an expenditure of Resolve Points to cast, you must expend the same number of Resolve Points to use this ability. Using a spell gem this way doesn't expend the magic encoded within the gem. If you aren't a spellcaster, once per day you can instead cast a spell from a spell gem as though you were a spellcaster (expending

the magic normally), as long as the spell gem's item level isn't higher than your character level.

You also gain access to *augury*, using the same rules as for gaining access to *identify* in the magic item scholar alternate class feature.

Magic Item Attunement (Su) 9th Level

You can wear up to three hybrid or magic items at a time and have them all function normally.

You also gain access to *arcane sight*, using the same rules as for gaining access to *identify* in magic item scholar.

Recharge Magic Item (Su) 12th Level

Once per day, you can expend 1 Resolve Point to refresh a magic item's daily charges, even if the magic item has already refreshed its charges for that day. The item level of this magic item can't be higher than your character level. This doesn't affect magic items that don't have charges that refresh each day.

Greater Magic Item Attunement (Su) 18th Level

You can wear up to four hybrid or magic items at a time and have them all function normally.



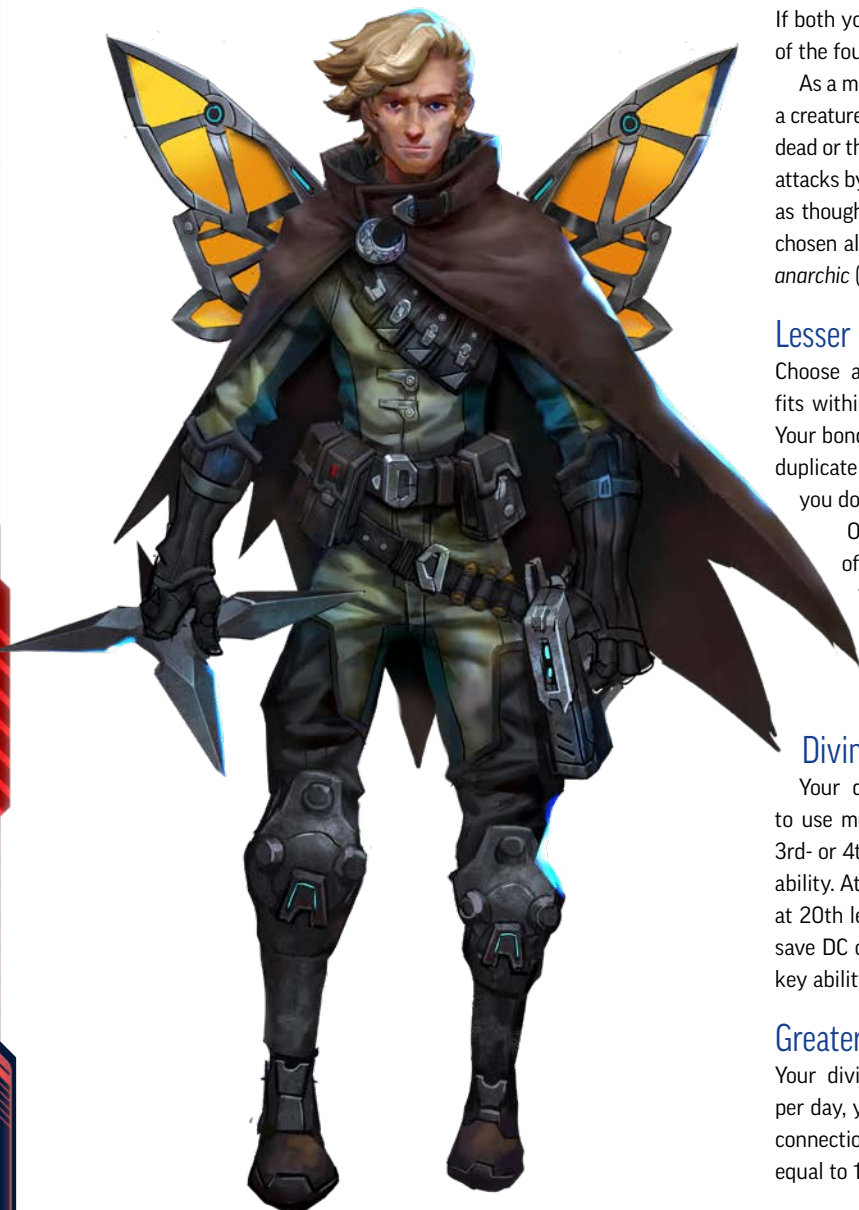
DIVINE CHAMPION

Most sentient denizens of the Pact Worlds reverence a deity, but few experience such a close connection with their gods as divine champions. A divine champion is a fervent defender of or crusader for a faith, becoming a living vessel for the deity's power through study and prayer. However, gods are mysterious and inscrutable, and they sometimes bestow this power upon mortals who don't understand why they were chosen.

Divine champions of all classes exist, but different deities favor champions of different classes. For example, many of Hylax's divine champions are envoys, while Iomedae prefers soldiers and Lao Shu Po favors operatives.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The divine champion archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, 6th, 12th, and 18th levels.



Divine Awakening (Su) 2nd Level

Choose a deity whose alignment is within one step of your own (see page 25 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*). If you have other abilities that require you to choose a deity (such as the priest theme), you must choose the same deity.

You are divinely protected, gaining a +1 enhancement bonus to saving throws with your lowest base saving throw bonus; if two or three of your base saving throw bonuses are tied for the lowest value, choose one of those categories to gain this bonus. This functions as and doesn't stack with the bonus provided by a *ring of resistance*, except the effect cannot be dispelled. At 6th level and every 4 levels thereafter, the bonus increases by 1.

Divine Judgment (Su) 4th Level

Choose chaos, evil, good, or law; your choice must correspond to a portion of your or your deity's alignment (or both, if possible). If both you and your deity are neutral, you can choose any one of the four.

As a move action, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to pronounce a creature you can see an enemy of your faith. Until the target is dead or the next time you take a full 8-hour rest, all your weapon attacks bypass that target's DR and ignore its energy resistances as though your weapons had the fusion corresponding to your chosen alignment (even if the target isn't a dragon or outsider): *anarchic* (chaos), *axiomatic* (law), *holy* (good), or *unholy* (evil).

Lesser Divine Power (Sp) 6th Level

Choose a connection (as per the mystic class feature) that fits within your deity's ethos (subject to the GM's discretion). Your bond with your deity has grown strong enough for you to duplicate the effects of some of the connection spells, though you don't actually gain any connection abilities.

Once per day, you can cast the 1st- or 2nd-level spell of your chosen connection as a spell-like ability. At 10th level, you can use this ability twice per day, and at 14th level, you can use this ability three times per day. The save DC of these spells is equal to 10 + the spell's level + your key ability score modifier.

Divine Power (Sp) 12th Level

Your divine connection continues to grow, allowing you to use more powerful magic. Once per day, you can cast the 3rd- or 4th-level spell of your chosen connection as a spell-like ability. At 16th level, you can use this ability twice per day, and at 20th level, you can use this ability three times per day. The save DC of these spells is equal to 10 + the spell's level + your key ability score modifier.

Greater Divine Power (Sp) 18th Level

Your divine connection becomes immensely powerful. Once per day, you can cast the 5th- or 6th-level spell of your chosen connection as a spell-like ability. The save DC of these spells is equal to 10 + the spell's level + your key ability score modifier.

SKYFIRE CENTURION

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With the advent of the Absalom Pact, the famed Triaxian dragonriders of the Dragon Legion took to the stars and became known as the Skyfire Legion, an elite and highly principled mercenary group that sells its protection to colonists and corporations operating beyond the Pact Worlds, where the Stewards cannot protect them. While many Skyfire legionnaires form a near-telepathic bond with dragonkin copilots, Skyfire centurions train to strengthen this connection even further, leading their allies and facilitating teamwork almost as if the members shared a single mind.

The Skyfire Legion has several training facilities throughout the Pact Worlds where centurions and other legionnaires can hone their skills. Every legionnaire trains with a partner, and centurions undergo additional, stricter regimens to help focus their minds and toughen up their bodies.

Not all members of the Skyfire Legion are centurions, and not all centurions have a dragonkin ally; the same teamwork techniques can be used with any intelligent creatures, even mechanical ones. Characters of all classes can become successful centurions, though most mystics and solarians lack the piloting ability to make full use of centurion abilities. Soldiers gain many combat feats, which makes them terrific centurions, while mechanics who choose their drones as their bonded allies can customize the drones for seamless teamwork.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The Skyfire centurion archetype grants alternate class features at 4th, 6th, 9th, and 12th levels.

Combat Bond (Ex) 4th Level

You can train together with an ally whose Intelligence score is at least 1, forming a combat bond between you and the target creature. This training process takes 1 hour, and you can have only one bonded ally at a time. If you form a new combat bond with a creature, any previously formed combat bond is lost. No creature can be the bonded ally of two centurions.

At 10th level, you can spend 1 Resolve Point to form a combat bond with an ally who can see or hear you as a standard action.

Whenever you gain a bonus from covering fire or harrying fire provided by your bonded ally (or vice versa), the bonus increases to +4. When you are the captain of a ship and successfully use the encourage action on your bonded ally (or vice versa), the bonus granted increases to +4.

Lend Expertise (Ex) 6th Level

With just a few words, you can share your training with a bonded ally. As a move action,

you can grant your bonded ally a single combat feat you have for 10 rounds, provided your bonded ally can see or hear you. The bonded ally must fulfill the feat's prerequisites and be able to use the feat. For example, a mechanic's drone can benefit only from feats that a drone can normally gain. If you have already granted your bonded ally a feat using this ability, the previous feat is lost.

Concentrated Fire (Ex) 9th Level

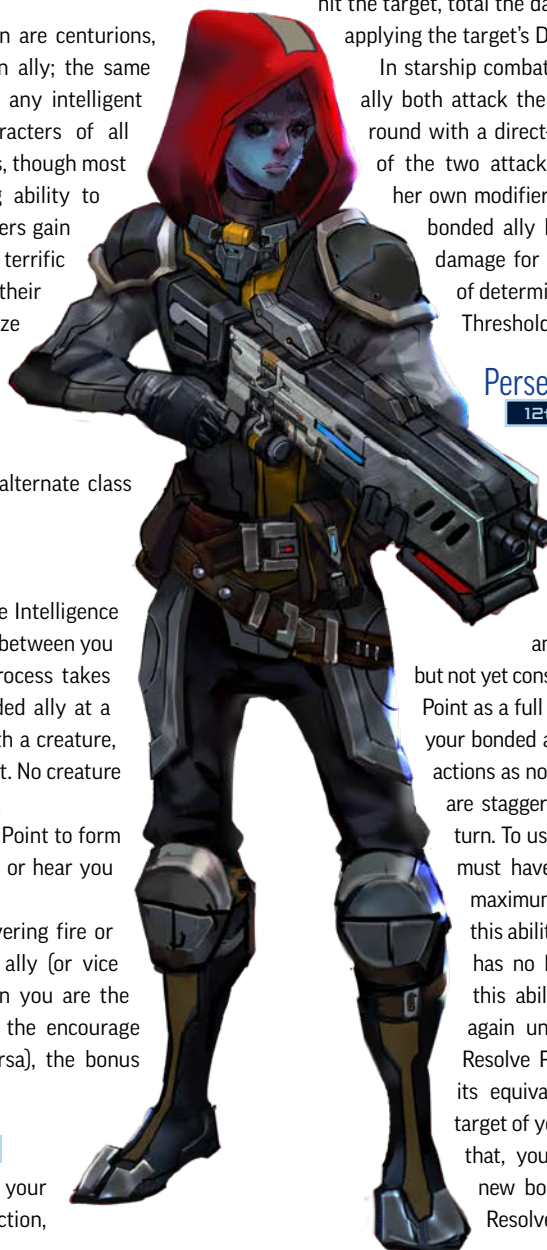
When you and your bonded ally both ready an action to attack the same target and choose the same condition for the readied action, when you and your bonded ally make those attacks, use the highest of the two attack rolls (each attacker applies her own modifiers to the roll). If you and your bonded ally both hit the target, total the damage for both attacks before applying the target's DR or energy resistances.

In starship combat, when you and your bonded ally both attack the same opponent in the same round with a direct-fire weapon, use the highest of the two attack rolls (each attacker applies her own modifiers to the roll). If you and your bonded ally both hit the target, total the damage for both attacks for the purpose of determining how the target's Damage Threshold affects the damage.

Perseverance (Ex) 12th Level

You can perform the first aid task of the Medicine skill as a move action on your bonded ally.

In addition, when you are adjacent to your bonded ally and your bonded ally is stable but not yet conscious, you can spend 1 Resolve Point as a full action to restore 1 Hit Point to your bonded ally. Your bonded ally can take actions as normal on her next turn, but you are staggered until the end of your next turn. To use this ability, your bonded ally must have fewer than one-quarter her maximum Resolve Points. You can use this ability if your bonded ally normally has no Resolve Points. You can't use this ability on the same bonded ally again until you have recovered your Resolve Points after an 8-hour rest or its equivalent, but if you change the target of your combat bond ability before that, you can use this ability on the new bonded ally, provided you have Resolve Points to spend.



STAR KNIGHT

The traditions of knighthood have survived the millennia. Numerous orders, including (but certainly not limited to) the Knights of Golarion and the Hellknight Orders of the Chain, Eclipse, Furnace, Gate, Nail, Pike, and Scourge, are extremely active in the Pact Worlds and beyond. These highly trained and renowned warriors are star knights, defenders of specific causes championed by their orders and ready to enforce their oaths with sword, plasma cannon, and even magic when necessary.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The star knight archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 12th levels. The star knight is an unusual archetype in that the 6th- and 12th-level alternate class features have multiple options, depending on what knightly order you belong to. If you don't belong to a specific order (or you belong to one not listed here), you receive the guarded attack and the willpower alternate class features; if you belong to one of the listed orders, you can still select these features if you wish.

Armor Mastery 2nd Level

You gain proficiency with light armor. If you are already proficient with light armor, you instead gain proficiency with heavy armor. If you are already proficient with heavy armor, you instead gain a fortification ability when wearing heavy armor or powered armor. Your fortification gives you a 20% chance that a critical hit is treated as a normal attack, dealing normal damage and not applying any critical effect. You roll your fortification percentage chance before the critical hit's damage is rolled. If you have a fortification ability from another source (such as a force field), you instead increase the chance of a critical hit being created as a normal attack by 20% (to a maximum of 100%).

Challenge 4th Level

As a champion of a knightly order, you can focus your fury and attention on a single foe, forcing it to face your wrath. As a full action, you can move up to your speed and make a single attack against a foe able to see and hear you. If you have the trick attack class feature and the weapon you use qualifies for a trick attack, you can make this attack as a trick attack. Whether or not you move or make an attack, you can attempt to demoralize that foe, as per the Intimidate skill task. If your base attack bonus is greater than your total Intimidate skill bonus, you can use your base attack bonus in place of your total Intimidate bonus for this skill check. If you succeed at this check, for the duration of the shaken effect, the target is also off-target for any attack it makes that does not include you as a target. Once you use this ability against a foe, regardless of the result of your demoralize attempt, you can't use it on that target again for 24 hours.

Guarded Attack (Ex) 6th Level

You have learned to use the strong plates and defensive abilities of your heavy armor to protect your weapon. When wearing heavy armor or powered armor, you gain a +4 bonus to your

KAC against disarm and sunder combat maneuvers. You lose this bonus whenever you make a full attack, as it is impossible to protect your weapons while doing so.

Willpower (Ex) 12th Level

Your dedication to your order and your advanced training has strengthened your mind against certain effects. Once per day, when targeted by a mind-affecting effect that requires a saving throw, you can roll twice and take the better result.

ORDER-SPECIFIC ALTERNATE 6TH-LEVEL CLASS FEATURES

Members of the Knights of Golarion and of the most common Hellknight orders each have one order-specific option that they can select for the alternate class feature at 6th level. Once you decide which 6th-level alternate class feature to take, you cannot change this decision.

Anchoring Attack (Su) 6th Level

A Hellknight of the Order of the Chain can choose the anchoring attack alternate class feature. As a standard action, you can apply the *anchoring* weapon fusion (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 192) to any weapon you wield. You can use this ability once per day, plus one additional time per day at 9th level and every 3 levels thereafter. The weapon fusion remains active until the weapon becomes unattended or is wielded by another creature, or until you take a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points. This weapon fusion does not count toward the maximum number of levels of weapons fusions a weapon can have at once.

Blazing Attack (Su) 6th Level

A Hellknight of the Order of the Furnace can choose the blazing attack alternate class feature. This acts as the anchoring attack alternate class feature, but it grants the *flaming* weapon fusion (*Core Rulebook* 194) as a standard action to a single weapon of 2nd level or higher that the knight wields.

Command (Sp) 6th Level

A Hellknight of the Order of the Nail can choose the command alternate class feature. As a standard action, you can cast *command* as a spell-like ability. You can use this ability once per day, plus one additional time per day at 9th level and every 3 levels thereafter. The save DC is equal to 11 + your key ability score modifier.

Create Darkness (Su) 6th Level

A Hellknight of the Order of the Eclipse can choose the create darkness alternate class feature. As a standard action, you can create a 20-foot-radius zone of darkness centered within 20 feet of you. The zone negates the effects of all nonmagical light sources in its area and lasts for 1 minute. You can see as normal within the zone, and you can dismiss the effect as a standard action. Unless otherwise noted, any magic source of light can increase the light level in the area as normal. You can use this

ability once per day, plus one additional time per day at 12th level and at 18th level.

Holy Attack (Su) 6th Level

A Knight of Golarion can choose the holy attack alternate class feature. This acts as the anchoring attack alternate class feature, but it grants the *holy* weapon fusion (*Core Rulebook* 194) as a standard action to any weapon of 2nd level or higher that the knight wields.

Pike Mastery (Su) 6th Level

A Hellknight of the Order of the Pike can choose the pike mastery alternate class feature. As a standard action, you can grant a melee weapon you wield the reach special property. Alternatively, you can combine a melee weapon that already has the reach special property with a ranged weapon you are proficient with, allowing the conglomeration to act both as a melee weapon with reach and as a ranged weapon. Whichever option you select, it lasts until the weapon becomes unattended, the weapon is wielded by another creature, you choose to dismiss the effect, or you take a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points. You can use this ability once per day, plus one additional time per day at 12th level and at 18th level.

Summon (Sp) 6th Level

A Hellknight of the Order of the Gate can choose the summon alternate class feature. As a standard action, you can cast *summon creature* (*Starfinder Alien Archive* 144) as a spell-like ability with a spell level equal to one-third your class level. You can select only a single lawful creature to summon with this spell. You can use this ability once per day.

Zone of Truth (Sp) 6th Level

A Hellknight of the Order of the Scourge can choose the zone of truth alternate class feature. As a standard action, you can cast *zone of truth* as a spell-like ability. You can use this ability once per day, plus one additional time per day at 10th level and every 4 levels thereafter. The save DC is equal to 12 + your key ability score modifier.

ORDER-SPECIFIC ALTERNATE 12TH-LEVEL CLASS FEATURES

Hellknights and Knights of Golarion each have a specific option which they can select for the alternate class feature at 12th level. Once the decision of which 12th-level alternate class feature to take is made, it cannot be changed.

In Hell's Name (Su) 12th Level

Hellknights of any order can choose the in Hell's name alternate class feature. As a standard action, you can pronounce a judgment against all nonlawful creatures within 20 feet of you. Each target that can hear you must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC = 10 + half your character level + your key ability score modifier) or be staggered for 1d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting, sense-dependent effect. You can use this ability once per day, plus one additional time per day at 18th level.

Shield Other (Sp) 12th Level

A Knight of Golarion can choose the shield other alternate class feature. As a standard action, you can cast *shield other* as a spell-like ability without having to spend a Resolve Point. You can use this ability twice per day, plus one additional time per day at 15th level and at 18th level.



STARFINDER DATA JOCKEY

Starfinder data jockeys are the Starfinder Society's foremost experts on the analysis, architecture, manipulation, and retrieval of data. They live for the thrill of exploration and joy of discovery, delving into databases and networks much like a field agent ventures into ancient ruins. Most data jockeys are part of the Dataphiles faction (for more on Starfinder Society factions, see Appendix 2 of the *Starfinder Society Roleplaying Guild Guide*).

Because of their affinity with computers and technology, most data jockeys are envoys, mechanics, operatives, or technomancers, but members of virtually any class can become successful data jockeys.



ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The Starfinder data jockey archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 6th, 9th, and 18th levels.

Fast Retrieval (Ex) 2nd Level

Whenever you have access to an infosphere or downloaded data set, you can use the Computers skill for any skill check to recall knowledge. Furthermore, you dabble in scientific study and have a thirst for knowledge in fields beyond your own, and your ability to create simulations and process data allows you to emulate skills that would normally be beyond your grasp. Select Culture, Engineering, Life Science, Medicine, Mysticism, Physical Science, or Profession (any one); whenever you attempt a skill check with that skill, you can treat half your ranks in Computers as your ranks in that skill for the check, if that would be better. You are considered trained in the skill for the purposes of this check. If you spend 1 Resolve Point as part of the check, you can treat your full ranks in Computers as your ranks in that skill for the check. At 8th, 14th, and 20th levels, you can select an additional skill to use with this ability. Additionally, if you gain a number of ranks equal to or greater than half your ranks in Computers in a skill you have selected with this ability, you can immediately swap out that skill and select a new skill from the list to use with this ability.

System Guru (Ex) 6th Level

Whenever you use Computers to attempt to destroy or repair a system module, detect a fake shell, disable or manipulate a countermeasure or module, gain root access, or hack a computer system, and the target computer's tier is no higher than half your level, you can roll twice and take the higher result.

Tactical Analysis (Ex) 9th Level

As a move action, you can analyze a creature's movement and defenses, trying to find a weakness. Attempt a skill check using the same skill you would use if you were trying to identify the creature (Engineering, Life Science, or Mysticism). You cannot take 10 or take 20 on this check, even if an ability would allow you to do so in combat. The DC for this check is equal to 15 + the creature's CR. If you succeed, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls against that creature until the end of your turn, and any weapon or spell attacks you make until the end of your turn ignore 5 points of the target's DR and energy resistances. Alternatively, you can spend a second move action to relay this information to your allies; until the beginning of your next turn, your allies' weapon and spell attacks can ignore 5 points of the target's DR and energy resistances, but allies do not gain a bonus to attack rolls.

Master of Lore (Ex) 18th Level

You can treat your full ranks in Computers as your ranks in all skills you have selected with the fast retrieval ability, and you don't need to spend Resolve Points to do so.

STEWARD OFFICER

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CAST

PLAYER
OPTIONS

The Stewards are interplanetary peacekeepers who enforce the Absalom Pact, which binds the Pact Worlds together in a tenuous alliance. Based in Absalom Station, the Stewards police space lines outside the territories of planetary governments, act as advisors and mediators in disputes, and end budding military conflicts with overwhelming force when necessary. The Stewards are as much diplomats as they are police, though violence is always a last resort for them. Because of the Stewards' dual role, their training includes conflict-resolution techniques, combat techniques, and techniques that combine the two approaches.

The majority of Steward officers are envoys with combat training or soldiers with diplomatic training, though solarians also make terrific Steward officers.

ALTERNATE CLASS FEATURES

The Steward officer archetype grants alternate class features at 2nd, 4th, and 9th levels.

Diplomatic Training (Ex) 2nd Level

You gain Culture and Diplomacy as class skills. For each of these skills that is already a class skill for you (or becomes a class skill) from a source other than this archetype, you learn to speak and read a new language. See page 41 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* for a list of languages spoken in the Pact Worlds and beyond.

You can use your Diplomacy skill for Intimidate checks to demoralize a target and your Culture skill for Life Science checks to identify humanoids and monstrous humanoids. When you attempt a Diplomacy check to change a creature's attitude but you fail the check, the creature's attitude worsens only if you fail the check by 10 or more.

Military Training (Ex) 4th Level

You gain one of the following feats as a bonus feat (you must meet all the prerequisites of the chosen feat): Advanced Melee Weapon Proficiency, Improved Unarmed Strike, or Longarm Proficiency. At 6th level, if you chose Improved Unarmed Strike at 4th level, you gain Improved Combat Maneuver. Otherwise, you gain the Weapon Specialization feat as a bonus feat for the same weapon type to which the bonus feat you gained at 4th level applies. If you already have all the listed feats, you can choose a bonus combat feat instead.

Demand Surrender (Ex) 9th Level

As a full action, you can ready an action to attack a foe if it takes any actions other than the following: change grips (from two-handed to one-handed), combat banter, drop an item, drop prone, sheathe a weapon, or total defense; purely mental actions such as a lashunta's limited telepathy ability also do not trigger the attack. As part of the full action, you can attempt to demoralize that foe; if you successfully demoralize the foe, you also gain a +1 morale bonus to your attack roll if the readied action is triggered. If one of your allies attacks that foe before the readied action is triggered, you lose your readied action

and your initiative count changes to the current initiative count for the remainder of the combat, as if the readied action had been triggered. Your allies can, however, also ready an action to attack your target without causing you to lose your readied action, provided that they choose the same trigger. If they do so and you have successfully demoralized the target, they also gain the +1 morale bonus to their attack rolls.

At 14th level, you can use this ability as a standard action. Alternatively, you can use this ability as a full action, readying a full attack and an attempt to demoralize the target as part of the action.



FEATS

The residents of various Pact Worlds settlements are often famed for expertise in specific areas of endeavor. While such oversimplified reputations are no more accurate in the Pact Worlds than any other system, there is truth behind some of these generalizations. Citizens of the Pact Worlds have honed their skills to develop many new ideas and techniques, including the feats presented below.

CLOSE COMBAT (COMBAT)

When you are attacking a foe in melee, you know how to maneuver to make it more difficult for other foes to target you.

- **Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +1.
- **Benefit:** When you hit an adjacent foe with a melee attack, as long as you are adjacent to that target, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to your AC against attacks from other creatures that are not adjacent to you until the beginning of your next turn.

DIVINE BLESSING

You gain power from the deity you faithfully worship.

- **Prerequisites:** Worship a deity of an alignment within one step of your own alignment (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 25).
- **Benefit:** Your benefit is determined by the deity you worship.

Abadar: When you make an attack as a standard action against a chaotic fey or chaotic outsider, your attack ignores any one form of DR, resistance, or immunity to damage the target has (your choice).

Besmara: You can attempt a disarm combat maneuver against an opponent to remove any item of 1 bulk or less that the target could draw as a move or swift action.

Damoritosh: When you score a critical hit with a doshko that doesn't have the wound or severe wound critical hit effect, you can replace any critical hit effect it normally has with the wound critical hit effect. If you score a critical hit with a doshko that normally has the wound or severe wound critical hit effect, you also apply the knockdown critical hit effect to the target.

Desna: Your deity sometimes grants you bursts of luck. Once per day, you can reroll any one failed skill check.

The Devourer: If you are knocked unconscious or killed by a creature that is a legal target for a weapon you are wielding, as a reaction you can make a single attack against the creature. You can make this single attack despite being unconscious or dead.

Eloritu: Once per day you can cast *identify* as a spell-like ability, attempting a caster level check (use your character level as your caster level: 1d20 + your character level), in place of the normal Engineering or Mysticism check (though you still receive *identify*'s +10 bonus).

Hylax: You gain limited telepathy, as per the shirren racial ability. If you already have limited telepathy, you gain the ability to treat any creature that has a friendly or helpful attitude toward you as if it shared a language with you when determining whether you can use limited telepathy to communicate with it.

Ibra: When you attempt a skill check to recall knowledge about a very difficult question, you receive a +2 divine bonus to your check.

Iomedae: When you make an attack as a standard action against an evil dragon or evil outsider, your attack ignores any one form of DR, resistance, or immunity to damage the target has (your choice).

Lao Shu Po: When you attack a flat-footed target in the surprise round of combat, if your attack hits, it deals 1d6 additional damage of the same type as its normal damage to a single target affected by the attack.

Nyarlathep: Once per day when an attack, effect, or spell imposes a condition on you, as a reaction you can delay that condition so it takes effect on you 1 round later. The condition then lasts 1d4 rounds longer than it would have if you had not delayed it.

Oras: Select three feats that you do not have but whose prerequisites you meet. Once per day as a move action, you can gain the benefit of one of these feats for 1 minute. Each time you gain a level, you can replace one of these three selected feats with a different feat that you don't have but whose prerequisites you meet.

Pharasma: When you make an attack as a standard action against an undead creature, your attack ignores any one form of DR, resistance, or immunity to damage the target has (your choice).

Sarenrae: The first time you deal fire damage each round, you can convert half the fire damage into holy energy damage. Fire resistance or immunity does not apply to the holy energy portion of the damage.

Talavet: As a move action, you can grant yourself a bonus as if an ally had succeeded at an aid another check or successfully used cover fire against a foe of your choice. This doesn't stack with any use of those options. Once you have used this ability, you can't use it again until you spend 1 Resolve Point during a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points.

Triune: You can use a computer without having a user interface or hacking kit simply by touching it. You must still succeed at a Computers check to hack it if you do not have authorized access. Additionally, you have limited telepathy that functions only with constructs with the technological subtype.

Urgathoa: Once per day as a swift action, you can force a creature of your choice within 60 feet that is subject to a disease to immediately attempt a save against that disease as if enough time had passed to fulfill its frequency. The subject suffers the normal consequences of a failed save against the

disease, but a successful save does not count toward a number of successful saves needed to end the disease.

Weydan: Whenever you first arrive on a new planet, you can select an appearance for yourself when you are on that planet. This becomes your natural appearance when on that planet (though you can use Disguise to alter this new appearance normally). This new appearance must be of the same type and subtype as your race, but you can change any other details. Anyone attempting to recognize you based on some other appearance must succeed at a Perception check with a DC equal to $20 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ your character level.

Yaraesa: You can roll a skill check to recall knowledge twice and take the better of the two results. Once you have used this ability, you can't use it again until you spend 1 Resolve Point during a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points.

Zon-Kuthon: When you cast a spell or make an attack that deals damage, you can grant that spell or attack the pain descriptor. When you damage a creature with a pain effect, as a reaction, you can cause it to become flat-footed for 1 round. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you spend 1 Resolve Point during a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points.

- **Special:** If you change which deity you worship, this feat gives you no benefit until you next gain a character level. You then receive the benefit appropriate for the deity you now worship, if your alignment is within one step of that deity's.

EXTENDED TELEPATHY

You have expanded your latent telepathic powers.

- **Prerequisites:** Limited telepathy racial trait.
- **Benefit:** Increase the range of your limited telepathy by 30 feet.
- **Special:** If you are a phrenic adept or have the Major Psychic Power feat and you also have Extended Telepathy, you can try to communicate telepathically with creatures you don't share a common language with, as long as the creature understands one or more languages. This requires a full action to initiate and a successful Mysticism check ($DC = 15 + 1\frac{1}{2} \times$ the creature's CR). On a failed check, you can't try to communicate telepathically with that creature again for 24 hours.

FOCUSED SPELLCASTER (COMBAT)

You have learned to casually ignore wounds that would interfere with a lesser spellcaster's concentration.

- **Prerequisites:** Combat Casting, ability to cast 4th-level spells.
- **Benefit:** If your spell would fail as a result of you taking damage either from a successful attack or from an effect that you failed a saving throw against during the casting of the spell, as a reaction you can spend a Resolve Point to prevent the spell from failing. You suffer the effects of the attack as normal, but as long as you remain able to complete the spellcasting after the attack, you successfully cast the spell.

KASATHAN BATTLE DANCE (COMBAT)

You are a student of the battle dances of kasathan legends.

You weave in and out of a fray with grace, moving your arms and body in a flowing motion that confounds your foes.

- **Prerequisites:** Dex 13, Mobility or trick attack.
- **Benefit:** When you take the withdraw action and have at least two hands free, none of the squares you move through are considered threatened by any opponent whose location you are aware of (see The Four States of Awareness on page 261 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*).
- **Normal:** When you withdraw, the square you start out in is not considered threatened by opponents you can see, but squares you subsequently move through may be.
- **Special:** A solarian with a solar weapon treats the hand holding the solar weapon as being free for purposes of using this feat.

MAJOR STAGE MAGIC

You wield illusions that misdirect, deceive, or entertain an audience.

- **Prerequisites:** Cha 15, Minor Stage Magic, Stage Magic, character level 7th.
- **Benefit:** Select one of the following 2nd-level spells: *holographic image*, *invisibility*, or *mirror image*. You can cast this spell once per day as a spell-like ability, using your character level as your caster level. The key ability score for this spell is Charisma. If you select *holographic image* with this feat and you have already selected *holographic image* with the Stage Magic feat, you can replace the spell selected with Stage Magic with another spell listed in the Stage Magic feat.

MINOR STAGE MAGIC

Entertainers and icons from entertainment houses such as the Hamisfore Theatorium on Absalom Station to Eox's Halls of the Living understand the importance of showmanship. From a famous mentor or through your own inventiveness, you have developed a minor magical trick to entertain or distract.

- **Prerequisites:** Cha 11.
- **Benefit:** Select one of the following 0-level spells: *dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, or *token spell*. You can cast this spell three times per day as a spell-like ability, using your character level as your caster level. The key ability score for this spell is Charisma.
- **Special:** You can select this feat more than once. Each time you do, you must choose a different spell from the list.

STAGE MAGIC

You have learned new magical tricks to deceive or entertain.

- **Prerequisites:** Cha 13, Minor Stage Magic, character level 4th.
- **Benefit:** Select one of the following 1st-level spells: *disguise self*, *holographic image*, or *unseen servant*. You can cast this spell once per day as a spell-like ability, using your character level as your caster level. The key ability score for this spell is Charisma.
- **Special:** You can select this feat more than once. Each time you do, you must choose a different spell from the list.

WEAPONS AND WEAPON FUSIONS

While many common weapons in the Pact Worlds are designed for broad uses, other weapons are more specialized, taking into account the system's distinctive cultures and unique problems.

WEAPON SPECIAL PROPERTIES

Some of the weapons detailed in this section use the following weapon special properties.

Lockdown

A construct reduced to 0 Hit Points by a lockdown weapon is not destroyed but simply immobilized until it regains 1 or more Hit Points.

Underwater

A weapon with this special property that is used underwater ignores the -2 penalty to attack rolls and deals full damage.

CRITICAL HIT EFFECTS

Some weapons have an additional critical effect that applies when you score a critical hit. A number of the weapons detailed in this section can impart the following critical effects.

Blind

The target must succeed at a Reflex saving throw or gain the blinded condition for 1d3 rounds.

Electrocute

The target must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or take 1d4 Dexterity damage.

TABLE 4-1: BASIC MELEE WEAPONS

ONE-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	BULK	SPECIAL
UNCATEGORIZED						
Sword cane, tactical	1	250	1d4 P	Bleed 1d3	L	Analog, operative
Sword cane, advanced	4	2,100	1d4 P	Bleed 1d4	L	Analog, operative
Sword cane, ultrathin	7	7,000	2d4 P	Bleed 1d4	L	Analog, operative
Sword cane, zero-edge	10	18,000	2d6 P	Bleed 1d6	L	Analog, operative
Sword cane, molecular rift	13	50,900	3d8 P	Bleed 1d8	L	Analog, operative
Sword cane, dimensional slice	16	160,000	5d8 P	Bleed 2d6	L	Analog, operative

TABLE 4-2: ADVANCED MELEE WEAPONS

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	BULK	SPECIAL
UNCATEGORIZED						
Xenolash, immature	4	2,430	2d4 A & S	Corrode 1d4	1	Analog, disarm, entangle, reach, trip
Xenolash, mature	10	17,000	5d4 A & S	Corrode 2d4	1	Analog, disarm, entangle, reach, trip
Xenolash, blooming	14	70,000	9d4 A & S	Corrode 4d4	1	Analog, disarm, entangle, reach, trip
Xenolash, seeded	18	409,000	9d8 A & S	Corrode 6d4	1	Analog, disarm, entangle, reach, trip

TABLE 4-3: SMALL ARMS

ONE-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
UNCATEGORIZED									
Nightarch needler, tactical	3	1,650	1d6 P	30 ft.	Injection DC +2	5 darts	1	L	Analog, injection
Nightarch needler, advanced	8	6,270	2d6 P	30 ft.	Injection DC +2	5 darts	1	L	Analog, injection
Nightarch needler, elite	13	44,980	4d6 P	30 ft.	Injection DC +2	5 darts	1	L	Analog, injection
Nightarch needler, paragon	18	369,000	8d6 P	30 ft.	Injection DC +2	5 darts	1	L	Analog, injection

TABLE 4-4: LONGARMS

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
PROJECTILE									
Kalo shredder, slipstream-class	3	1,610	1d6 S	30 ft.	Bleed 1d4	8 flechettes	1	1	Analog, automatic, underwater
Kalo shredder, cascade-class	7	6,630	2d6 S	40 ft.	Bleed 1d6	18 flechettes	1	1	Analog, automatic, underwater



Kalo shredder, torrent-class	11	26,700	4d6 S	40 ft.	Bleed 3d4	24 flechettes	1	1	Analog, automatic, underwater
Kalo shredder, deluge-class	14	74,300	6d6 S	60 ft.	Bleed 4d4	36 flechettes	1	1	Analog, automatic, underwater
Kalo shredder, monsoon-class	17	784,000	12d6 S	60 ft.	Bleed 4d6	48 flechettes	1	1	Analog, automatic, underwater

TABLE 4-5: HEAVY WEAPONS

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
PLASMA									
Starheart cannon, red star	3	1,300	1d6 E & F	100 ft.	Blind	40 charges	5	2	Bright, explode (5 ft.), unwieldy
Starheart cannon, yellow star	8	9,050	3d6 E & F	100 ft.	Blind	100 charges	5	2	Bright, explode (10 ft.), unwieldy
Starheart cannon, white star	13	48,100	5d6 E & F	100 ft.	Blind	100 charges	5	2	Bright, explode (10 ft.), unwieldy
Starheart cannon, blue star	18	360,000	9d6 E & F	100 ft.	Blind	100 charges	10	2	Bright, explode (15 ft.), unwieldy
SHOCK									
Anacite ion cannon, static	3	1,550	1d10 E	20 ft.	Staggered	20 charges	2	2	Line, lockdown, unwieldy
Anacite ion cannon, aurora	8	10,900	2d10 E	45 ft.	Staggered	40 charges	4	2	Line, lockdown, unwieldy
Anacite ion cannon, storm	13	52,900	4d10 E	75 ft.	Staggered	80 charges	5	2	Line, lockdown, unwieldy
Anacite ion cannon, tempest	18	441,000	6d10 E	100 ft.	Staggered	100 charges	10	2	Line, lockdown, unwieldy

TABLE 4-6: SNIPER WEAPONS

TWO-HANDED WEAPONS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	RANGE	CRITICAL	CAPACITY	USAGE	BULK	SPECIAL
PROJECTILE									
Shobhad horizon striker, tactical	1	440	2d4 P	100 ft.	—	2 rounds	1	2	Analog, sniper (500 ft.), unwieldy
Shobhad horizon striker, advanced	6	4,750	3d4 P	120 ft.	—	2 rounds	1	2	Analog, sniper (1,000 ft.), unwieldy
Shobhad horizon striker, elite	11	27,300	6d4 P	140 ft.	—	2 rounds	1	2	Analog, sniper (1,250 ft.), unwieldy
Shobhad horizon striker, paragon	16	185,000	8d8 P	160 ft.	—	2 rounds	1	2	Analog, sniper (1,500 ft.), unwieldy

TABLE 4-7: AMMUNITION

STANDARD AMMUNITION	LEVEL	PRICE	CHARGES/CARTRIDGES	BULK	SPECIAL
Flechettes	1	75	25	L	—

TABLE 4-8: SOLARIAN WEAPON CRYSTALS

SOLARIAN WEAPON CRYSTALS	LEVEL	PRICE	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	BULK	SPECIAL
Taoun crystal, least	1	235	+1 E	Staggered	—	Stun
Taoun crystal, minor	4	1,850	+1d3 E	Staggered	—	Stun
Taoun crystal, lesser	7	6,000	+1d4 E	Staggered	—	Stun
Taoun crystal, standard	10	17,500	+2d4 E	Staggered	—	Stun
Taoun crystal, greater	13	48,400	+3d4 E	Staggered	—	Stun
Taoun crystal, true	16	161,000	+3d8 E	Staggered	—	Stun

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

Statistics for each of the following weapons can be found on the weapon tables on pages 192–193. Weapons are listed in their associated categories, which group weapons that function and deal damage similarly.

Operative Weapons

Operative weapons can be used with the operative's trick attack class feature. You can add your Dexterity modifier in place of your Strength modifier to attack rolls made with these weapons.

Sword Cane

This thin blade comes with a scabbard that makes it resemble a stylish cane. Sword canes are popular on Absalom Station, where similar nonweapon items have some popularity as fashionable affectations. A sword cane can incorporate one of the following at the standard price for that item: 20 feet of retractable cable line, a personal comm unit, or a spotlight. A successful Perception check (DC = 15 + the weapon's item level) is required to identify a sword cane as a weapon when it is sheathed.

Plasma Weapons

Plasma weapons fire electromagnetically charged gases.

Starheart Cannon

Followers of Sarenrae designed these very bright weapons to defend isolated solar outposts from Corpse Fleet marauders.

Projectile Weapons

Projectile weapons provide reliable firepower, usually at a lower price than laser pistols and plasma cannons of comparable levels.

Kalo Shredder

Favored by the much-romanticized kalo hunters of Kalo-Mahoi, kalo shredders fire razor-sharp flechettes with nearly silent magnetism. The gun's distinctive organic design is grown from magnetic coral that grants you a +2 bonus to KAC against disarm combat maneuvers.

Shobhad Horizon Striker

Refined from traditional shobhad designs stretching back to long before the Gap, a horizon striker has remarkable range.

Shock Weapons

The electrical blasts emitted by shock weapons sometimes require a lot of battery power.

Anacite Ion Cannon

This heavy weapon was designed by Aballonian law-enforcement agencies for capturing criminal constructs without completely destroying them.

Solarian Weapon Crystals

The following solarian weapon crystals are distinctive to the Pact Worlds. See page 170 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook* for more about solarian weapon crystals.

Taoun Crystal

A *taoun crystal* helps a solarian overwhelm the senses of foes with intense flashes of light and electricity. When this crystal is set to stun, the damage dealt by the solar weapon is nonlethal.

Uncategorized Weapons

These uncategorized weapons originate in the Pact Worlds.

Nightarch Needler

Popular among the drow on Apostae, this needle gun can deliver deadly poisons. The weapon is so small you gain a +2 bonus to Sleight of Hand checks to hide it on your person.

Xenolash

A xenolash is a genetically engineered vine that weeps caustic, quick-hardening sap from the razor-sharp thorns along its length. Because the sap (rather than the weapon itself) entangles creatures, targets are not anchored to the xenolash. Grown in extraordinary conditions by Xenowardens and primarily sold only to those they trust, the plants derive their sustenance and amber-like sap from light, ambient energy, and atmospheric chemicals.

Ammunition

The following ammunition requires other weapons to fire it.

Flechettes

Flechettes are small, dart-like metal projectiles.

WEAPON FUSIONS

The following weapon fusions are popular in the Pact Worlds.

APPREHENDING

LEVEL 5

The *apprehending* fusion causes the weapon to grow spikes and overwrought iron fixtures, as befits its use by the Hellknights. When an *apprehending* weapon hits an enemy, you can activate the fusion as a reaction to perform a trip combat maneuver against that target with the same attack bonus as for the weapon attack. Additionally, the target must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC = 10 + half the weapon's item level + the ability score modifier you apply to attack rolls with the weapon) or be unable to cast spells or spell-like abilities for 1 round. Once the weapon has used this ability, it cannot use it again until you take a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points.

ASTUTE

LEVEL 3

The fusion causes a weapon to become etched with glowing circuitry and ringed with faint blue-black flames. Stewards often use *astute* weapons as they hunt down criminals within the Pact Worlds. The DC of Bluff checks to feint against you and to use the operative's trick attack ability against you increases by 2 while you wield such a weapon.

BONDING

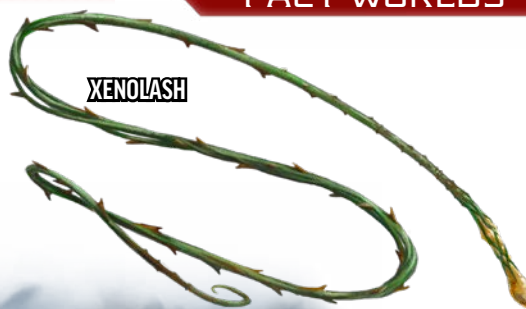
LEVEL 4

A creation of the Brethedan biotech firm Life Innovations, a *bonding* weapon melds into your limb when you draw it (its coloration changes to match your skin tone). You gain a

ANACITE ION CANNON



XENOLASH



ASTUTE FUSION



+2 circumstance bonus to your KAC against disarm and sunder combat maneuvers targeting the weapon.

INTERPOSING

LEVEL 5

You can add the *interposing* fusion only to a melee weapon. Developed and popularized by the Knights of Golarion, this fusion generally adds shining sword icons to the weapon. Whenever you hit an enemy with an *interposing* weapon, you and all adjacent allies gain a +1 enhancement bonus to AC against that enemy's melee attacks until the beginning of your next turn.

MANUFACTURING

LEVEL 4

Followers of the Prophecies of Kalistrade use *manufacturing* weapon fusions to ensure they are never without ammunition (or gouged by isolated traders for ammunition), even on long trade missions. This fusion often makes the weapon pearly white with gold accents. You can add up to 400 credits of UPBs to a *manufacturing* weapon as a swift action. When you do, the fusion's magic instantly manufactures ammunition inside the weapon worth an equal amount (which might mean recharging a battery) up to the maximum the weapon can carry. This ammunition is nonmagical and can be removed normally.

RATJAW

LEVEL 9

Famously linked to criminals who worship Lao Shu Po, the *ratjaw* fusion aids in disarming and robbing foes. On a critical hit, the weapon knocks an item of your choice out of the target's possession, as long as it's something that could be removed with a successful disarm combat maneuver. If the weapon already has a critical hit effect, when you score a critical hit, you can apply either the weapon's normal critical hit effect or this disarming ability. If the *ratjaw* weapon is a ranged weapon, the disarmed item lands in any square of your choice adjacent to the target. If the *ratjaw* weapon is a melee weapon, it draws the item to you, and you can grab the item with a free hand.

SENTINEL

LEVEL 3

Like most weapon fusions designed for use on AbadarCorp weapons, the *sentinel* fusion makes a weapon richly ornamented,

sometimes even gold-plated, and often adds icons of vault doors. Favored by colonists and corporate guards, once per day a *sentinel* weapon allows you to declare an area of up to 1,000 cubic feet as being under guard for up to 8 continuous hours. While wielding the *sentinel* weapon within an area under guard in this manner, you gain a +2 bonus to initiative checks and Perception checks.

TACTICAL

LEVEL 4

You can add the *tactical* fusion only to a ranged weapon. *Tactical* weapons are traditionally associated with the mercenaries of the Skyfire Legion and the close bonds they often form with one another. Such weapons typically take on decorations of crossed blades, bundles of arrows, or similar sets of weaponry. When you use a *tactical* weapon to provide covering fire or harrying fire, the bonus granted increases by 1. This ability of this fusion doesn't stack with other abilities that increase the bonuses provided by covering fire or harrying fire.

TATTOO

LEVEL 7

Popular among the Xun of the Golden League, a *tattoo* weapon can be hidden in the form of a tattoo on your body. If you already have tattoos, the weapon matches them in size and style when in tattoo form. When not in tattoo form, the weapon has images similar to its last tattoo form worked along its length as colorful decorations.

Detect magic and similar spells do not reveal the magical nature of a *tattoo* weapon in its tattoo form, though *true seeing* does, and with a close examination a successful Mysticism check (DC = 15 + half the weapon's item level) reveals that the tattoo is magical. A successful *dispel magic* spell targeting the tattoo causes the weapon to appear and fall at your feet. The weapon's bulk does not impair you while in tattoo form, and you can hide or retrieve the weapon as a swift action. While it is a tattoo, the weapon can't be damaged.

ULRIKKA DUSTER

LEVEL 2

Dwarven asteroid miners favor the Ulrikka duster fusion, which causes any weapon with it to take on an armored, stocky appearance. Attacks made with weapons with this fusion ignore half of a target item's hardness. Use of such weapons has helped more than one short-supplied dwarven mining crew remove the last bits of useful material from an asteroid while still remaining armed enough to fight off space pirates.

ARMOR AND ARMOR UPGRADES

Creatures throughout the Pact Worlds rely on armor to shield themselves from deadly attacks and hostile environments. This section presents some unique forms of armor and armor upgrades.

TABLE 4-9: ARMOR

ARMOR MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	EAC BONUS	KAC BONUS	MAXIMUM DEX BONUS	ARMOR CHECK PENALTY	SPEED ADJUSTMENT	UPGRADE SLOTS	BULK
LIGHT ARMOR									
Zeizerer diffractor I	2	650	+2	+2	+4	—	—	0	L
Hardened resin	3	1,200	+2	+3	+5	-1	—	1	1
Zeizerer diffractor II	6	4,150	+6	+6	+6	—	—	1	L
Zeizerer diffractor III	9	12,500	+11	+11	+7	—	—	2	L
Zeizerer diffractor IV	13	48,500	+15	+15	+8	—	—	3	L
Zeizerer diffractor V	18	340,000	+20	+20	+9	—	—	4	L
HEAVY ARMOR									
Hellknight plate, armiger	2	980	+4	+5	+2	-2	-10 ft.	2	3
Formian hide, basic	4	2,400	+7	+8	+2	-3	-5 ft.	2	2
Hellknight plate, lictor	5	3,300	+9	+10	+2	-2	-10 ft.	2	3
Formian hide, advanced	7	6,100	+10	+12	+3	-3	-5 ft.	3	2
Hellknight plate, maralictor	9	14,500	+16	+17	+2	-2	-10 ft.	4	3
Formian hide, superior	10	16,500	+15	+17	+3	-4	-5 ft.	3	2
Hellknight plate, paralictor	14	80,000	+21	+22	+3	-2	-10 ft.	6	3

ARMOR

The following armors provide specialized protection for wearers. These armors also provide all the environmental protections typical of armor presented on pages 196–199 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*.

Formian Hide

The vicious wars between lashuntas and formians drove many technomagical advances, including this armor made to emulate the chitinous skins of formians. The armor includes a helmet that boosts the wearer's natural telepathy; if you have the limited telepathy racial trait, you add 10 feet to the range of that ability. This increase doesn't stack with other effects that extend the range of your telepathy, such as a *psychic booster*.

Hardened Resin

Many insectile haans of Bretheda shun all but the simplest tools, but some skilled armorsmiths among them incorporate pieces of their own molted exoskeletons into simple protective shells. While the armor usually built to fit Large creatures, suits designed for smaller wearers can sometimes be found.

Hellknight Plate

The stern and unrelenting Hellknights are known as much for their distinctive plate armor as for their fearsome adherence to rigid order. This variant of ceremonial plate is predominantly black with protruding spikes, and each Hellknight order has its own distinct design.

TABLE 4-10: ARMOR UPGRADES

UPGRADE	LEVEL	PRICE	SLOTS	ARMOR TYPE	BULK
Descent thrusters	1	800	1	Any	L
Snarl barbs	1	1,500	1	Any	L
Flashblinders, mk 1	4	2,000	1	Any	1
Microspur spray	7	6,700	1	Heavy, powered	1
Flashblinders, mk 2	8	10,000	1	Any	1
Grandchild's cloak	8	10,000	1	Light	L
Haze field	9	13,000	1	Any	—
Flashblinders, mk 3	12	38,000	1	Any	1
Grandchild's cloak, greater	15	120,000	1	Light	L
Flashblinders, mk 4	16	180,000	1	Any	1
Ghostmarch unit	19	590,000	1	Light	1

Zeizerer Diffractor

Crafted by the talented smiths of the drow of Apostae, this armor is designed to be light and supple. Its refractive planes are all at the molecular level, resulting in armor that appears to almost absorb light. House Zeizerer is the main distributor of this armor to the rest of the Pact Worlds, but other drow houses have been known to manufacture their own versions.

ARMOR UPGRADES

The following upgrades are common throughout the Pact Worlds and are primarily created by groups within the Pact

Worlds, but many of these, or similar items, can be found beyond the system's edge.

DESCENT THRUSTERS

Developed by kasathan engineers long ago to help them navigate the steep cliffs of their native Kasath, descent thrusters are miniature jets that slow your fall. You fall at a rate of only 60 feet per round, and you take no damage upon landing. You can trigger decent thrusters as part of an action when jumping down, or as a reaction if you fall.

FLASHBLINDERS

CAPACITY 1

USAGE 1

The crystals used at the core of this upgrade are harvested from a slow-moving, geode-like beast that hunts the dark side of Verces and stuns its prey with flashes of light. You can activate this upgrade as a move action to emit a strobe-like burst of radiance. All creatures other than you within 20 feet must succeed at a Reflex saving throw (DC = 10 + half the upgrade's item level + your Dexterity modifier) or become blind for 1 round. A set of flashblinders recharges automatically after 1 minute.

GHOSTMARCH UNIT (MAGIC)

CAPACITY 5

USAGE 1/round

You can activate a *ghostmarch unit* as a swift action to gain the benefits of the *ethereal jaunt* spell until you spend another swift action to deactivate it or it runs out of charges. A *ghostmarch unit's* charges replenish each day.

This upgrade can be installed only in light armor.

GRANDCHILD'S CLOAK (HYBRID)

CAPACITY 10

USAGE 3/round

This upgrade is imprinted upon the interior of the armor in the shape of a curled rat. A *grandchild's cloak* uses a combination of holographic fields and illusion magic to render you invisible for a short period of time. You can activate a *grandchild's cloak* as a move action, and its benefits last until you spend another move action to deactivate it, it runs out of charges, or if you make any kind of attack (as described in the *invisibility* spell), whichever comes first.

The much rarer *greater grandchild's cloak*—which followers of Grandmother Rat stridently insist does not exist—functions as a standard *grandchild's cloak*, but it uses only 2 charges per round and its benefits do not end if you attack.

A *grandchild's cloak's* charges replenish each day. This upgrade can be installed only in light armor.

HAZE FIELD (HYBRID)

CAPACITY 10

USAGE 1/round

Haze fields were developed on Akiton to mimic the thick haze that forms from the dust of the dry seabeds of that world. You can activate a *haze field* as a move action, and its benefits last until you spend another move action to deactivate it or it

**HARDENED
RESIN**



**ZEIZERER
DIFFRACTOR**

runs out of charges. While active, the field creates a visual haze centered on you. This has no impact on visibility at short range, but you take a -2 penalty to all attack rolls and Perception checks against targets 30 or more feet away, and creatures 30 or more feet away take the same penalties to attacks and Perception checks against you. A *haze field's* charges replenish each day.

MICROSPUR SPRAY (HYBRID)

CAPACITY 3

USAGE 1

Eoxian corporations excel at technologies that use unliving materials, and the needle-sized self-replicating bone spurs in this upgrade are no exception. You can activate this upgrade as a standard action to launch microspurs in a 20-foot spread around you. All creatures in this area are affected by harrying fire. A microspur spray's charges replenish each day.

SNARL BARBS

This upgrade consists of chains and barbs that cover your armor. Frequently used by Kuthite warriors to enhance their fearsome appearance, this upgrade also snarls near misses in close combat. When an opponent attacks you with a melee weapon and misses, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls when attempting to disarm your opponent of the melee weapon used for that attack until the end of your next turn.

WELCOME
TO THE PACT
WORLDS

THE WORLDS

STARSHIPS

SUPPORTING
CAST

PLAYER
OPTIONS

TECHNOLOGICAL ITEMS

Technological items are ubiquitous in nearly every part of the Pact Worlds, though in many places, magic items and archaic items are used side by side with technology.

ANTIGRAVITY BELT

Most commonly used by those brave enough to travel to the high-gravity world of Aucturn, this belt uses a form of graviton levitation to essentially reduce gravitational pull. You can activate the belt as a swift action, and it operates until you spend another swift action to deactivate it or until it runs out of charges. You treat areas of extreme gravity as having high gravity, areas of high gravity as having standard gravity, and areas of standard gravity as having low gravity. This belt has no effect in areas that naturally have low gravity or zero gravity.

AUTOCLAW

This advanced device has adjustable arms that can be folded into multiple configurations, allowing you to bend, open, and twist objects made of metal and other durable materials. Powered by electric motors, an autoclaw takes 1 minute to configure for a specific task and has an effective Strength score of 30 (a +10 bonus) for the purpose of attempting Strength checks to break down doors and similar efforts; your own Strength score doesn't affect checks attempted with the autoclaw.

Autoclaws are frequently used in tasks beyond industrial uses. Free Captains and other space pirates use autoclaws to open stolen containers, while the Stewards' special tactical units use autoclaws to force doors open.

MAGBOOTS

Used by the brave souls who venture onto the exterior of Absalom Station to conduct repairs, these sturdy boots have powerful electromagnets built directly into the soles. These magnets can be activated as a move action, providing you a +5 circumstance bonus to Athletics checks made to climb metal surfaces, as well as +2 circumstance bonus to KAC against bull rush and trip combat maneuvers when you are standing on a metal surface. In areas of zero gravity, while wearing a pair of magboots, you can move your land speed across metal surfaces without having to attempt skill checks, and as long as you are

adjacent to an appropriate surface, you do not automatically move at the beginning of your turn each round. Magboots function until they run out of power or until you deactivate them as a move action, whichever comes first.

MAGNISCOPE

A magniscope is a set of goggles equipped with automated magnification-adjustment algorithms. A magniscope grants the same benefit as binoculars (see page 199), but using it requires only one hand and no actions.

PURIFYING PUCK

This circular device resembles the sort of tiny cleaning drone seen aboard space stations and larger vessels, but it has no independent programming. Law-enforcement officers use purifying pucks to clean up areas after they deploy smoke grenades and similar effects. As a standard action, you can activate a purifying puck and slide it across the ground a maximum of 30 feet (difficult terrain reduces this distance to 15 feet, at the GM's discretion). The purifying puck then sucks in all smoke and vapors within a 20-foot-radius spread over the next 4 rounds, completely dispersing the effect (such as from a smoke grenade or the *fog cloud* spell). If the radius of an effect is smaller than 20 feet, the time it takes a purifying puck to disperse the effect is reduced proportionally. If the effect contains any toxins (such as a cloud of poisonous gas), the time is doubled. A purifying puck can't disperse an effect that has a radius larger than 20 feet.

RADIATION BADGE

Because the invisible danger of radiation can lurk anywhere, dwarven mining consortiums often issue these small apparatuses to those exploring uncharted asteroids. When you are about to enter a square containing any level of radiation and you are wearing a radiation badge, the badge beeps audibly to warn you. A radiation badge is always on and functions for 7 days before it needs to be recharged (much like the environmental protections of a suit of armor with an item level of 1).

TOOL KIT

Xhinti Holdings, which has corporate offices on Absalom Station and factories on Akiton, produces a line of specialty tool kits that supplement those presented on page 221 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. Xhinti tool kits include the following: a climbing kit (grants a +4 bonus to Athletics checks when climbing), demolitionist's kit (grants a +4 bonus to Engineering checks when arming and disarming explosives), linguist's kit (grants a +4 bonus to Culture checks when deciphering writing), portable weather station (grants a +4 bonus to Survival checks when predicting the

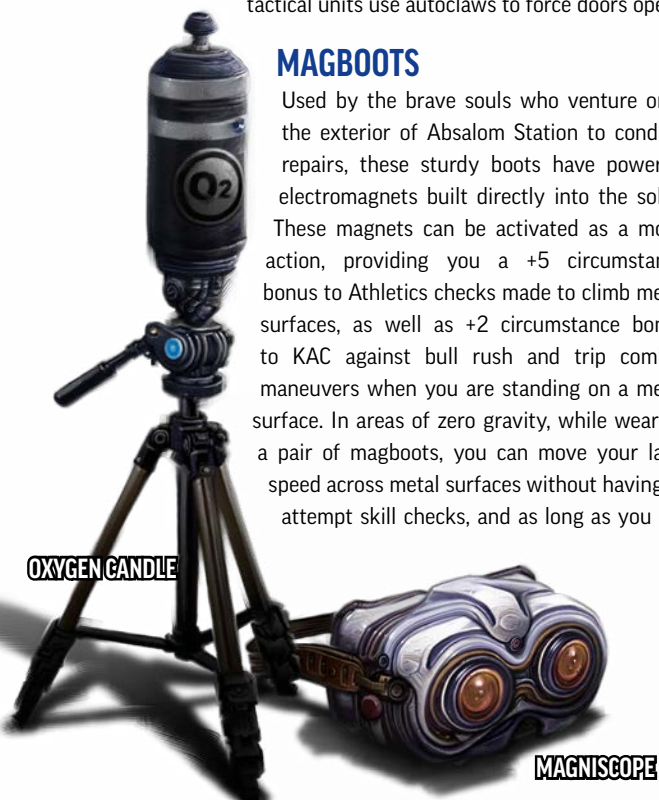


TABLE 4-11: TECHNOLOGICAL ITEMS

NAME/MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	HANDS	BULK	CAPACITY	USAGE
Radiation badge	1	100	—	L	—	See text
Tool kit	1	200	—	L	—	—
Magboots	2	750	—	1	20	1/hour
Magniscope	4	2,000	1	L	20	1/hour
Purifying puck	4	2,000	1	L	40	1/round
Tracking bug	6	4,250	—	L	20	1/hour
Antigravity belt	7	6,500	—	L	20	1/round
Autoclaw	8	9,000	2	1	40	1/round

weather), starship repair kit (grants a +4 bonus to Engineering checks when repairing the hull of a starship), and survivalist's kit (grants a +4 bonus to Survival checks when enduring severe weather or living off the land). When using a demolitionist's kit or starship repair kit for its specialized purpose, you don't take the -2 penalty to Engineering checks if you don't have an engineering kit.

TRACKING BUG

This tiny tracking device contains a miniaturized transponder that makes it easier to follow and locate quarry. Tracking bugs are usually sold on Absalom Station to private detective agencies and suspicious family members. You can hide a tracking bug on a creature as a standard action with a successful Sleight of Hand check to pick the creature's pocket (this usually can't be done during combat). You can hide a tracking bug on a vehicle or other conveyance as a standard action with a successful Sleight of Hand check opposed by the Perception checks of anyone searching the vehicle; you gain a +4 circumstance bonus to this check due to the tracking bug's size.

Once you plant a tracking bug, you can use a custom program (included in the tracking bug's price) to follow the tracking bug with a successful DC 20 Computers check using a computer, a comm unit, a mechanic's custom rig, or any similar computing device; the GM can alter this DC to reflect environmental conditions and other factors. The tracking bug's transponder has a 500-foot-radius range, and you must be on the same plane as the tracking bug for the program to function. When a tracking bug runs out of power, you can no longer follow it.

OTHER GEAR

The following items either don't require a power source of their own or don't need a technological item to fully function.

Binoculars

Often used by Starfinders and other explorers or scouts, this advanced optical device allows you to view distant objects. While using binoculars, you gain a +1 circumstance bonus to vision-based Perception checks against objects 30 feet or farther from you. In order to gain this benefit, you must continually adjust the binoculars' magnification settings, which requires using two hands and a move action each round.

Frictionless Gel

Sold in plastic tubes, this clear gel is a suspension of millions of microscopic spherical beads that reduce friction between objects. As a standard action, you can apply a dose of frictionless gel to your body to grant yourself a +4 circumstance bonus to Acrobatics checks to use the escape task. You must have at least one hand free to open the tube and apply the gel. A tube contains 5 uses of frictionless gel, and a single use lasts for 1 minute.



AUTOCLAW

Library Chip

Widely used by the Arcanamirium, the Starfinder Society, and other scholarly organizations, library chips are portable storage devices that contain a digital library of information on a particular subject (Culture, Engineering, Life Science, Mysticism, or Physical Science). You gain a +4 circumstance bonus to skill checks to recall knowledge with that skill when using a library chip in conjunction with a tier-0 computer (such as a comm unit) or better. A library chip counts as a downloaded data set for the purposes of using the skill that the library chip pertains to. While using a library chip, you can attempt untrained skill checks to recall knowledge on that subject if the DC is 20 or less.

Oxygen Candle

Included in almost every emergency kit scattered around Absalom Station's corridors, oxygen candles are chemical oxygen generators that smolder when ignited. When used in an enclosed space measuring 10 cubic feet, an oxygen candle releases enough oxygen for a single Medium creature to breathe for 10 hours (as opposed to 6 hours) or a Small creature to breathe for 20 hours. The candle provides proportionally more or less oxygen in smaller or larger enclosed spaces respectively. Additional creatures proportionally reduce the time the oxygen lasts. An oxygen candle is consumed upon use.

TABLE 4-12: OTHER GEAR

NAME/MODEL	LEVEL	PRICE	HANDS	BULK
Binoculars	1	50	2	L
Oxygen candle	1	20	1	L
Library chip	3	250	—	—
Frictionless gel	5	450	—	L

MAGIC ITEMS

Although many in the Pact Worlds rely on technological items every day, those seeking an extra edge rely on equipment powered—and sometimes formed—entirely by magic. This section presents magic items available throughout the Pact Worlds.

ABALLONIAN DRONE BOX

This item consists of six 1-foot-square circuit boards soldered together at their edges to form a box. One of the sides is hinged, forming a lid.

Although the box appears empty, it rattles occasionally, as if something inside is seeking to escape. While anacites across Aballon create these items, Those Who Wait prefer to stockpile

them for future use, but Those Who Become send as many of these boxes into the galaxy as possible for unspoken reasons.

When you speak a command word and open the lid of the box as a standard action, a collection of fist-sized microbots swarms out of the box and circles you, granting you concealment against all attacks for 5 rounds before they collapse into 1 bulk of inert scrap. This function can be used once per day.

The scrap can be used as the target of any spell with the word “junkbot” in the name, and the duration of such a spell increases by 1 round. The refuse left over at the end of the spell magically returns to the box, as does the scrap if it remains unused 4 hours after being created.

BOARDROOM ATTIRE (WORN)

This elegant tailored suit resembles a platinum AbadarCorp travel suit and has the same statistics as that armor. In addition, sigils of divination woven into the fabric of the suit subtly alert you to lies. When wearing a suit of *boardroom attire*, roll twice when attempting Sense Motive checks to detect deception and use the higher result. In addition, you never think a truthful statement contains deceptions, even if you fail your check by 5 or more.

BRIGH'S BOLT

This simple, shiny metal bolt is the size of a thumbnail and has an image of a tiny gear on its head. As a full action, you can affix a *Brigh's bolt* to a broken suit of armor, tool, vehicle, or weapon to negate the penalties of the broken condition for as long as the bolt is affixed. The bolt does not repair any damage sustained by the object and the object is still visibly damaged, so its resale value is reduced as normal for a broken item. If the item is repaired so as to no longer have the broken condition, the *Brigh's bolt* falls off; otherwise, it can be removed as a

full action. If an item to which a *Brigh's bolt* is attached is destroyed, the bolt is also destroyed.

ENCRYPTION TATTOO

The secretive members of the Android Abolitionist Front identify each other with invisible magical tattoos. When you are within 60 feet of a being with another *encryption tattoo* and activate your *encryption tattoo* with a code word as a move action, your tattoo becomes visible for 1 minute and

glows faintly. The tattoo closely resembles

the glowing circuit patterns prevalent on android skin, and is therefore particularly obvious on non-androids. The *agent encryption tattoo* is the standard type of *encryption tattoo*. Certain *encryption tattoos*, when activated with a different code word, also grant you damage reduction: *operative encryption tattoos* provide DR 5/–, *provocateur encryption tattoos* provide DR 10/–, and *master encryption tattoos* provide DR 15/–. This damage reduction doesn't stack with any damage reduction you already have. The damage reduction lasts for the 1 minute your tattoo is visible.

Although there is no limit on the number of times you can cause your *encryption tattoo* to appear, you can activate its power to gain DR only once per day.

An *encryption tattoo* doesn't count as a worn magic item, and it can't be disarmed or sundered. In addition, it can be installed in an android's racial armor upgrade slot.

LAWFINDER

This archaic, ornate compass is a holy trinket sacred to AbadarCorp, and its needle is shaped like a thin golden key. A *lawfinder's* needle always points toward the nearest settlement of at least 1,000 people; within such a settlement, the needle points to the primary center of government or civil administration for the settlement. This item can't detect a settlement more than 100 miles away, except for settlements with the bureaucratic quality (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 405), which a *lawfinder* can detect up to 1,000 miles away. If no such settlements are within range, the *lawfinder's* needle spins slowly.

As long as the *lawfinder's* needle points to a settlement or civil center, it grants you a +2 insight bonus to Survival checks to avoid getting lost.



ABALLONIAN DRONE BOX

PACT WORLDS SERUMS

Nearly all cultures in the Pact Worlds use *serums of enhancement*, vials of magic liquids described on page 225 of the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*. Eppro Enterprises, a popular manufacturer of energy drinks and restoratives on Verces, has expended millions of credits in promoting its "Pact Worlds" line of serums, each with individual effects and flavors that capture the essence of one of the Pact Worlds. These serums are also sold mixed into drinks at bars across the system. Whether you buy into the hype of Eppro's products or not, its Pact Worlds serums are reliable and effective. As with all *serums of enhancement*, these serums are effective when imbibed by living creatures and last for 1 hour.

Aballon Spark

This cool, sparkling fluid grants you a +2 insight bonus to Computers checks, and you can attempt checks with this skill untrained. Once while this serum is in effect, you can be healed by *make whole* or *mending* as though you were a construct.

Absalom Affable

When you imbibe this clear, syrupy fluid, you gain a +2 insight bonus to Diplomacy and Disguise checks. If you begin an attempt to gather information while under the effects of this serum, the attempt takes only 1 hour.

Akiton Rustrider

Upon consumption, this bitter, rust-red fluid grants you a +2 insight bonus to Athletics and Survival checks, and you do not take a penalty to Survival checks when riding a creature bareback. This serum turns a regular drinker's teeth and lips rust-red in color—a side effect that Eppro Enterprises can't quite overcome.

Bretheda Effervescent

When you drink this sweet, bubbling, yellow fluid, you find your memory expanded; you gain a +2 insight bonus to recall knowledge with the Culture, Life Science, Mysticism, Physical Science, and Profession skills and can attempt checks to recall knowledge untrained with these skills.

Castrovel Effloresce

This green, floral-smelling concoction grants you a +2 insight bonus to Life Science and Survival checks, and you can attempt Life Science checks and Survival checks to rear a wild animal untrained. While this serum is in effect, you always know which direction is magnetic north from your current location, if applicable (such as on most planets).

Diaspora Daredevil

Popular with pilots throughout the Pact Worlds, this serum is bright orange with tiny dark specks whirling within it. It grants

TABLE 4-13: MAGIC ITEMS

ITEM	LEVEL	PRICE	BULK
<i>Encryption tattoo, agent</i>	1	50	—
<i>Lawfinder</i>	3	1,200	L
<i>Brigh's bolt</i>	3	1,300	—
<i>Pact Worlds serum (all types)</i>	5	475	L
<i>Encryption tattoo, operative</i>	8	8,900	—
<i>Ratfolk belt</i>	9	12,250	—
<i>Aballonian drone box</i>	11	24,500	1
<i>Encryption tattoo, provocateur</i>	13	48,000	—
<i>Boardroom attire</i>	14	62,500	L
<i>Encryption tattoo, master</i>	18	360,000	—

you a +2 insight bonus to Piloting checks and to Computers checks when piloting a vehicle or when acting as captain, pilot, or science officer of a starship.

Eox Deliquesce

Eppro Enterprises doesn't include this serum in its public catalogs, but the serum's existence is an open secret. This shadowy fluid grants you a +2 insight bonus to Mysticism checks, and you can attempt checks with this skill untrained. While this serum is in effect, you can take a standard action to stop any bleed effect affecting you.

Idari Gold

Imbibing this translucent, golden fluid grants physical and mental grace. You gain a +3 insight bonus to Acrobatics and Sense Motive checks.

Triaxus Dragonsight

This warm, fiery-red fluid grants you a +2 insight bonus to Perception checks, and you can ignore concealment caused by dim light (as if you had low-light vision or darkvision).

Verces Glean

Eppro Enterprises markets this sparkling, white fluid as a favored drink of athletes. You gain a +3 insight bonus to Athletics checks. While under the effects of this serum, you must fail an Athletics check by 10 or more to fall, fall prone, or sink (as applicable), rather than fail by 5 or more.

RATFOLK BELT (WORN)

Ysoki are skilled at negotiating the cramped corridors of a starship or the access tunnels in a sprawling metropolis, but even the smallest ysoki sometimes encounter openings too small to enter. While wearing a *ratfolk belt*, you can move through an area as small as one-quarter your space without squeezing or one-eighth your space when squeezing. A *ratfolk belt* is made of stretchable nylon webbing, and it often includes clips for tools or weapons.



RATFOLK BELT



LAWFINDER

HYBRID ITEMS

Hybrid equipment blends technology and magic, with both elements critical to the item's function. The items on the following pages have close ties to cultures or organizations in the Pact Worlds.

ABLATIVE INSULATION

Civilization on Verces exists on the thin line between fiery heat and frozen desolation. Verthani's unique perspective on the elements led them to develop temperature-sensitive compounds with remarkable properties. *Ablative insulation* comes in a single-use canister containing enchanted fullerene-based powder. In a process that takes 1 minute, you can spray the contents on a creature to thoroughly coat it with the powder (though it automatically avoids orifices and sensory organs such as the eyes, mouth, and nose). The creature coated gains energy resistance to all energy types (which doesn't stack with any other source of energy resistance), and the *ablative insulation* wears away as it prevents damage. The coating lasts for 1 hour if not ablated away sooner. Multiple coatings don't offer any additional benefit (ignore all but the highest-level coating). Each canister contains enough material to fully cover a single Medium or smaller creature, with any excess wasted. When applied to a Large creature, the insulation provides only half the energy resistance (rounded down) and total points of absorption unless a second canister is used. If applied to a Huge or larger creature, the insulation is wasted without effect.

Mk 1: The creature receives energy resistance 5 to all energy types. The coating lasts for 1 hour or until it prevents a total of 20 damage, whichever comes first.

Mk 2: The creature receives energy resistance 10 to all energy types. The coating lasts for 1 hour or until it prevents a total of 40 damage, whichever comes first.

Mk 3: The creature receives energy resistance 15 to all energy types. The coating lasts for 1 hour or until it prevents a total of 60 damage, whichever comes first.

MIND GUARDIAN (WORN)

The microcircuitry contained within this adamantine ring records and magically reinforces your core personality. Once per

day when you first come under the control of a mind-affecting effect, such as *charm monster* or *dominate person*, you can act normally for the first round of the effect, after which you are staggered for 1d4 rounds and affected by the mind-affecting effect as normal.

You must wear a *mind guardian* at least 12 hours a day for 7 consecutive days before you can use its ability. After this, if the ring is not worn for 24 hours or longer, the mental patterns collapse and must be reestablished.

The lashuntas of Castrovel devised the *mind guardians* to protect the less mentally adept against outside control. Android engineers particularly skilled in the construction of self-aware neural networks assisted in the design. While most commonly found as a ring, a *mind guardian* can take the form of any compact piece of jewelry or personal adornment, but it functions only when in direct contact with the body.

MOTOSPHERES

Sold in blister packs of four (the price and bulk listed in Table 4-14 are for a set of four), *motospheres* are metal orbs that are each the size of a grenade and traced with glyphs. As a standard action, you can deploy one to four *motospheres* from the same set; each rolls into its own square within 15 feet of you and instantly transforms into a vehicle similar to a basic encycle (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 228) with the changes noted below.

If a creature or object occupies a square a vehicle formed from a *motosphere* would occupy, the *motosphere* doesn't transform. You choose each vehicle's initial heading as it transforms. After being deployed, a vehicle turns back into a *motosphere* after 1 hour, or as a move action you can turn it back into a *motosphere* by entering a series of commands on the vehicle's controls. A single *motosphere* takes 24 hours to recharge before it can be used again.

A vehicle formed out of a *motosphere* has a hardness of 7, and its hover jets allow it travel over both land and water (though not underwater). The vehicle has 14 Hit Points and becomes broken when it is reduced to 7 Hit Points or fewer. A vehicle that is reduced to 0 Hit Points turns back into a *motosphere* and can't be used until it is repaired (treat it as if it were broken).



NECROTIC MANTLE

Motospheres can be sold back only in their original pack of four for the normal 10% of the set's purchase price; a set that is missing even one *motosphere* (or containing one that is broken) can be sold back for 2% of the set's purchase price.

NECROTIC MANTLE (WORN)

Used by the commanders of the Corpse Fleet to conceal their unliving agents, a *necrotic mantle* is woven of bioactive fibers that mask the necromantic energies of an undead wearer and convert positive energy into something less harmful to that undead. While wearing a *necrotic mantle*, if you are undead, you have the aura of a living creature instead of an undead for the purposes of magic or technology that can detect undead. You receive a +4 divine bonus to saves against any spell or effect that targets undead, such as *control undead*. In addition, if you are undead and fail a saving throw against a spell that both affects only undead creatures and has an ongoing effect (such as *control undead*), you can attempt a second saving throw after 1 round with the same DC as the first. If you succeed, you gain the same reduction in effect as if your initial saving throw had been successful. Additionally, any effort to determine whether a *necrotic mantle* you are wearing is a magic or technological item requires the creature making the determination to succeed at a Will save (DC = 15 + your key ability modifier).

If you are undead and are by or in the area of an effect that restores Hit Points only to living creatures, you regain half the number of Hit Points instead of none. If that effect also damages undead creatures, you take no damage; this does not apply to effects that harm undead without healing living creatures.

PRESCIENT LENSES (WORN)

Prescient lenses blend quantum computing and divination magic to model, extrapolate, and display events happening in the next few seconds as translucent holograms. A pair of lenses has one charge, which is refreshed each day, and a creature can benefit from a single use of *prescient lenses* each day (with any subsequent attempt showing the same few seconds of time as the first daily use). *Prescient lenses* were originally as optical enhancements for the robotic anacites of Aballon and can be integrated into a robot for the listed price. Alternatively, they can be installed as a cybernetic eye augmentation for 1,000 additional credits.

Mk 1: You can study the image in the lenses as a move action and gain a +1 insight bonus to a single attack roll, ability check, or skill check attempted before the start of your next turn. Attempting an attack roll or check expends the charge.



TABLE 4-14: HYBRID ITEMS

ITEM	LEVEL	PRICE	BULK
<i>Ablative insulation, mk 1</i>	4	350	L
<i>Prescient lenses, mk 1</i>	4	2,150	–
<i>Tactokinesis gloves</i>	6	4,450	L
<i>Motospheres (pack of 4)</i>	7	5,600	L
<i>Ablative insulation, mk 2</i>	8	1,500	L
<i>Prescient lenses, mk 2</i>	9	13,900	–
<i>Necrotic mantle</i>	10	17,000	L
<i>Ablative insulation, mk 3</i>	12	5,500	L
<i>Mind guardian</i>	12	36,000	–
<i>Prescient lenses, mk 3</i>	14	77,000	–

Mk 2: These function as *mk 1 prescient lenses*, but you can instead roll the attack roll or check twice and take the better of the two results.

Mk 3: These function as *mk 2 prescient lenses*, but as a reaction you can instead reroll a failed attack roll, ability check, or skill check.

TACTOKINESIS GLOVES (WORN)

Tactokinesis gloves use an array of magical and magnetic sensors to extend and amplify the wearer's sense of touch. They were first developed in the Diaspora to allow miners to locate veins of metal by touch through the material of their space suits. It soon found applications for thieves and explorers alike. Using the gloves, you can perceive and manipulate objects close at hand without actually touching them, and you can even sense details hidden just below the surface.

While wearing a pair of *tactokinesis gloves*, you can use the Perception and Physical Science skills to examine a metal or technological construct or object within your reach, whether or not you can perceive the object with other senses. In addition, the gloves provide a +2 circumstance bonus to Engineering checks to assess stability or disable a device, and they count as necessary tools for such purposes. You can attempt such checks without directly touching the target, as well as use similar abilities that manipulate technology by touch, such as the overload mechanic class feature. In a zero-gravity environment, you can use the limited telekinesis provided by the gloves to pick up and move objects of up to 1 bulk without actually touching them. As a standard action, you can use the gloves to deliver a disruptive pulse to an android, drone, robot, or creature with the technological subtype. If the creature fails a Will saving throw (DC = 13 + your Dexterity modifier), it is dazed for 1 round. Once a creature has attempted a saving throw against this ability (regardless of the result), it is immune to this ability for 24 hours.

The range of this telekinesis is limited to your reach, as you must be almost touching the target to manipulate it. *Tactokinesis gloves* do not function through a force field.

SPELLS

The history of spells in the Pact Worlds is long and storied. Multiple schools of magic on Castrovel and Eox are believed to date back before the Gap, and Absalom Station's Arcanamirium can trace its origins to lost Golarion. Further, the Magefire Assault, the Silent War with the Veskarium, and the invasion of the Swarm all precipitated bursts of eldritch experimentation that have yielded numerous popular spells.

Some spells have histories with enough detail they can be traced back to their creators. The bone sage Mnephalon became famous for creating the spells *necromantic revitalization* and *reanimate* during the Magefire Assault. The robot priest of Triune 101001101 made the study of spells modifying junk an important part of their church, and created the *junksword* spell for their robotic champions. The more recent research team of Kipo and Telthybiak (a lashunta and a contemplative) are famous for creating spells that focus on strong sympathetic connections, such as their most well-known creations *control atmosphere* and *seeking shot*.

Among the most famous spell researchers in the Pact Worlds is the elven scholar Celthen Calenthora, who was already a powerful technomancer at the time the Gap ended. Calenthora is known to have developed *digital doorway*, but material found in her study in the days after the end of the Gap suggests she also created (or at least refined) *logic bomb*, *overload systems*, and *supercharge weapon* and might have been responsible for creating dozens of other spells during the Gap (with any attribution lost, as with all information on what happened during the Gap). Calenthora was a mature elf when the Gap ended, and she focused much of her later research on ways to use magic to enhance machines in hopes of discovering what happened during the earlier portions of her life.

Some of the spells devised by the famed magic minds of the Pact Worlds are presented below.

CONTROL ATMOSPHERE 4

School transmutation

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area 30-ft.-radius spread

Duration 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw Fortitude partial (see text); **Spell Resistance** no

You can alter the atmosphere within the spell's area to cause it to become more like the atmosphere of another planet. You can alter one aspect of the atmosphere—its corrosiveness, density, or toxicity. The possible effects of each of these changes are detailed below.

Corrosiveness: You can make the atmosphere corrosive. Each creature and object in the area when you cast the spell must succeed at a Fortitude save or take 5d6 acid damage. Creatures and objects that remain in the area take 3d6 additional acid damage every 10 minutes (Fortitude half).

Alternatively, you can make a normally corrosive atmosphere noncorrosive. In this case, the atmosphere within the spell's area deals no acid damage for the duration of the spell.

Density: You can make the atmosphere in the area one step thinner (going from severely thick to thick, thick to normal, normal to thin, or thin to severely thin) or thicker (going from severely thin to thin, thin to normal, normal to thick, or thick to severely thick). The spell cannot make an atmosphere thicker than severely thick or thinner than severely thin.

In addition to the normal long-term effects of being in an atmosphere thinner or thicker than a creature is acclimated to (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 396), each creature in the area of the spell when it is cast must succeed at a Fortitude save or suffer the immediate effects described below. This is true even for creatures with environmental protection from equipment (such as armor), as the air within the armor is affected on a failed saving throw. Creatures that do not need to breathe are not affected by changes in atmospheric density.

If the air is thicker than a creature is acclimated to, on a failed saving throw, that creature becomes sickened. For every step beyond the first that the air is thicker than the target's acclimation, it takes a -1 penalty to its save against this effect. If the air is thinner than a creature is acclimated to, on a failed saving throw, it is fatigued. For every step beyond the first that the air is thinner than the target's acclimation, it takes a -1 penalty to its saving throw against this effect. The effect ends if the creature moves out of the area, and it is not required to attempt a new saving throw upon reentering the area (instead it is subject only to the normal dangers of thicker or thinner air).

Toxicity: You can make the atmosphere toxic. Each creature in the area of the spell when it is cast must succeed at a Fortitude save or suffer the immediate effects described below. Creatures with environmental protection from equipment already active (such as armor) are not exposed to the toxic atmosphere. A creature that fails its save contracts bubonic plague (no save) and immediately moves to the weakened state. Creatures that enter the area of toxic atmosphere later are exposed to inhaled bubonic plague and follow the normal disease rules for contracting the disease and progressing on the physical disease track. The disease is nonmagical, and those infected are still infected when the spell's duration ends.

Alternatively, you can make a normally toxic atmosphere nontoxic. In this case, the atmosphere within the spell's area does not expose those who breathe it to any toxic disease for the duration of the spell.

DIGITAL DOORWAY 4**School** conjuration (teleport)**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** personal**Targets** you**Duration** 1 hour/level or until expended; see text

You gain the ability to step into a piece of electronic equipment currently connected to a communication or information network (such as a comm unit or a computer connected to an infosphere), converting yourself into digital information and traveling along the network. Once uploaded onto a network, you teleport out from any device within 3,000 feet of the device that you entered; if no such device is in range, you emerge from the same device you entered. You are instantly aware of all unsecured devices connected to the same network as the one you entered, and you can attempt a Computers check (DC = 15 + 1-1/2 × the item's level) to detect other devices (this does not require an action); a single check renders you aware of all devices whose DC to detect you exceeded. If the item is a computer, your Computers check result must also exceed the DC required to successfully hack it (*Core Rulebook* 214). This movement acts as the *teleport* spell, except there is no chance of missing your destination.

When attempting to enter or exit a computer with one or more countermeasures, you automatically trigger any countermeasures that are not successfully disabled. When you emerge from a computer, you can attempt one Computers check, with the result compared to the DC of each countermeasure in place on that computer (this does not require an action); you suffer the effects of all countermeasures with a DC higher than the result of your check. Some countermeasures triggered in this manner are exceptionally dangerous, as noted below.

Feedback: The digital virus uploaded into your data causes you to become exposed to the mindfire disease, but the disease has a save DC of 15 + half the item level of the destination device.

Firewall: You arrive at the destination prone, and you remain flat-footed and off-target for 1 minute.

Wipe: Your recent memories are scrambled, with minor elements removed, causing you to be confused for a number of rounds equal to half the item level of the destination device (minimum 1 round).

DIRECTED DENIAL OF STRENGTH ATTACK 2**School** enchantment (mind-affecting)**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)**Targets** up to one creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart**Duration** 1 round/level**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

You flood targets' minds with a magical effect similar to a computer virus that duplicates every sensation of lifting, carrying, and being burdened. Targets become encumbered, or they become overburdened if already encumbered.

FABRICATE SCRAP 0**School** universal; see text**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Effect** creates or converts 1 bulk of inert electronic equipment**Duration** instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates (object); Spell Resistance yes (object); see text You turn 1 bulk of inert matter, such as debris, dust, rocks, or other unattended 0-level items, into 1 bulk of junked electronic equipment suitable for targeting with spells such as *battle junkbot*, *handy junkbot*, *healing junkbot*, *junk armor* (see below), or *junksword* (see below). The junked electronics have no resale value and cannot be repaired into any functioning item. Any direct examination by a character trained in Engineering or Physical Science reveals the useless nature of the junk.

JUNK ARMOR 1**School** conjuration (creation)**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** touch**Target** at least 1 bulk of inert electronic equipment; see text**Duration** 24 hours (D)**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

You turn a pile of technological junk into a suit of light armor, or use it to upgrade a suit of light armor to heavy armor. You must target inert, nonworking electronic equipment of at least 1 bulk. Valid targets include a large broken computer system, nonworking or unconnected computer or robot parts, a destroyed robot or another such trashed mechanical system, or any related electronic components or combination of the above, as long as the junk is found in sufficient quantity.

You can cause the armor to be created on yourself or an adjacent willing or unconscious ally. Light or heavy armor you create requires proficiency to use without penalties as normal. If you use this spell to create light armor, the armor has an EAC bonus equal to your caster level, a KAC bonus equal to your caster level + 2, and a maximum Dex bonus equal to 1 + one-quarter your caster level. Using *junk armor* to temporarily turn light armor into heavy armor increases the armor's EAC bonus by 1 and its KAC bonus by 2, reduces its maximum Dexterity bonus by 3, and worsens its armor check penalty by 2.

JUNKSWORD 1-6**School** conjuration (creation)**Casting Time** 1 standard action**Range** touch**Target** 1 bulk of inert electronic equipment**Duration** 10 minutes/level (D)**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

You turn a pile of technological junk into a one-handed melee weapon that you can wield against your foes. You must target inert, nonworking electronic equipment of at least 1 bulk. Valid targets include a large broken computer system,

nonworking or unconnected computer or robot parts, a destroyed robot or another such trashed mechanical system, or any related electronic components or combination of the above, as long as the junk is found in sufficient quantity.

You are automatically proficient with this melee weapon, and you add 1-1/2 times your caster level to damage rolls with it (in place of a Weapon Specialization bonus). A junksword functions only for its creator, and once created it cannot leave your hand. Should you wish to sheathe it, the junksword obliges by collapsing into a wreath of junk that surrounds your hand like a glove.

You can grant your junksword additional abilities based on the spell's level. You can change one modification to your junksword as a move action, or you can completely reconfigure all of its modifications as a full action.

1st: Your junksword deals 1d4 bludgeoning and slashing damage and has the analog weapon special property. In addition, you can grant your junksword up to two of the following special properties: block, disarm, nonlethal, reach, or trip.

2nd: Your junksword deals 1d8 bludgeoning and slashing damage and has the analog weapon special property. In addition, you can grant your junksword up to three of the special properties from the 1st-level list.

3rd: Your junksword has either the analog or powered (capacity 30, usage 2) weapon special property (your choice). It deals 2d4 bludgeoning and slashing damage if it's an analog weapon, or 2d4 electricity damage if it's a powered weapon. In addition, you can grant your junksword up to three of the special properties from the 1st-level list, plus the staggered critical effect. If you select the powered option, your junksword's battery is integrated and cannot be removed, recharged, replaced, or used to power other devices.

4th: This functions as the 3rd-level junksword, but it deals 2d8 bludgeoning and slashing damage if it's an analog weapon or 3d4 damage if it's a powered weapon, and it gains the stunned critical effect (rather than staggered).

5th: This functions as the 3rd-level casting of *junksword*, but the junksword deals 3d10 bludgeoning and slashing damage if it's an analog weapon or 3d6 electricity damage if it's a powered weapon, and it gains the stunned critical effect (rather than staggered).

6th: This functions as the 3rd-level casting of *junksword*, but the junksword deals 6d6 bludgeoning and slashing damage if it's an analog weapon or 3d8 electricity damage if it's a powered weapon, and it gains the stunned critical effect (rather than staggered). Additionally, you can grant the junksword one of the following weapon fusions: *dispelling*, *entangling*, *ghost killer*, *merciful*, or *spellthrower*.

MENTAL BLOCK 3 3

School enchantment (mind-affecting)

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Targets up to one creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Duration 1 round/level

Saving Throw Will negates; see text; **Spell Resistance** yes

You cause targets of this spell to lose access to their procedural memory, preventing them from using any feat, extraordinary ability, spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability that requires an action of any kind. Each round at the end a target's turn, that target can attempt another Will save to end this effect.

MIGHT OF THE ELICOTH 1

School transmutation

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range touch

Targets one creature

Duration 24 hours

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

With a touch, you cause a surge of power to flow through the target's slow-twitch muscle fiber (or its equivalent physiology if it has no muscle fibers), increasing the amount of bulk the creature can carry by 3.

NECROMANTIC REVITALIZATION 1-6 1-6

School necromancy

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range touch

Targets one undead creature

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Will half (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

With a touch, you replenish the negative energies that animate your target, restoring a number of Hit Points. If the target regains all of its Hit Points as a result of this healing, you can apply the remaining healing to yourself, as long as you are an undead creature.

Necromantic revitalization restores a number of Hit Points to your target depending on the spell's level.

1st: 1d8 + your Intelligence modifier

2nd: 3d8 + your Intelligence modifier

3rd: 5d8 + your Intelligence modifier

4th: 7d8 + your Intelligence modifier

5th: 9d8 + your Intelligence modifier

6th: 11d8 + your Intelligence modifier

In addition, unlike with most healing, when you cast *necromantic revitalization* as a spell of 4th level or higher, you have two options to enhance its effects. The first option is to restore an extra 5d8 Hit Points with a 4th-level *necromantic revitalization* spell, an extra 7d8 Hit Points with a 5th-level *necromantic revitalization* spell, or an extra 9d8 Hit Points with a 6th-level *necromantic revitalization* spell. The second option is to restore a target that was destroyed within the past 2 rounds, bringing it back to its undead state with the number of Hit Points that would otherwise be restored by this spell. This spell can't reanimate creatures that were destroyed by effects that specifically target or have a special effect against

the undead (such as *wall of fire*) or creatures whose bodies were significantly mutilated, disintegrated, or otherwise obliterated. It also cannot restore an undead creature whose existence is tied to an object (such as a necrovite's electroencephalon) if that object has been destroyed.

Casting this spell doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity.

REANIMATE 5 6

School necromancy

Casting Time 1 minute

Range touch

Targets one dead construct or undead creature

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none, see text; **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

You can reanimate a dead construct or destroyed undead creature that has been dead or destroyed for no longer than 1 day per caster level. If the target had a soul, that soul must be free and willing to return; a target that wants to be reanimated receives no saving throw against this spell, but if the target's soul is not willing to return, the spell fails. Casting this spell requires you to create a complex representation of the target deceased creature worth at least 7,500 credits to serve as a blueprint regarding its reanimation. This object is consumed when you cast the spell. If the target is an undead whose existence is tied to an object (such as a necrovite and its electroencephalon), it cannot be brought back without a new version of that object (with at least the same price as the original).

A reanimated creature returns with no Resolve Points, no Stamina Points, and no spell slots (until it rests to recover them normally). It has 5 Hit Points. Any ability scores reduced to 0 are raised to 1 (though any ability score it normally does not have is unchanged). Diseases, poisons, curses, and computer programming or viruses that affected the target at the time of its destruction remain in effect after reanimation. The spell closes wounds and repairs lethal damage of most kinds, but if the body of the creature to be reanimated isn't whole, any missing parts are still missing when the creature is brought back to life.

This spell can reanimate constructs and undead but cannot raise outsiders or restore life to other creatures. Reanimated undead return to unlife as the same type of undead that they were prior to their destruction.

SEEKING SHOT 1

School divination

Casting Time 1 standard action

Range touch

Targets one weapon

Duration see text

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

You create a spiritual link between a weapon you touch and one target you can perceive with a precise sense at the time

of casting. The next attack made with that weapon against that target (as long as it is within 1 minute) ignores cover and concealment. If the attack is a ranged attack, it does not need a line of effect as long as some route exists between the weapon and the target (regardless of how circuitous that route is). The attack is subject to the normal penalties from range increments.



PACT WORLD RACES



In addition to the seven core races and the Pathfinder legacy races presented in the *Starfinder Core Rulebook*, the Pact Worlds are home to a vast array of sentient species. The following six races are connected to the system in some way.

ASTRAZOANS

These seven-limbed aberrations have the natural ability to change their forms. Recent research suggests they may have originated within the planet Apostae.

BANTRIDS

Recently awoken from stasis in mysterious towers on a shepherd moon of Liavara, these unusual creatures have a single rolling sphere instead of feet.

BORAIS

A unique form of undead, borais have similar appearances to the creatures they were in life and must still breathe, eat, and

sleep to survive. Many live on Eox, but they can be found just about anywhere.

KHIZARS

First born within the humid jungles of Castrovel, this race of telepathic plantlike people has also migrated to form colonies within the Ice Wells of Aballon.

SROS

The constructed sentient robotic organisms (or SROs) come in various shapes and sizes, some more humanoid than others. More than simple machines, SROs still contend with prejudice from some organic beings.

STRIX

Refugees from lost Golarion, strix are winged humanoids with nictitating membranes and nocturnal tendencies. They have since adapted to the rigors of space travel.

TABLE 4-15: VITAL STATISTICS BY RACE

RACE	AVG. HEIGHT	AVG. WEIGHT	AGE OF MATURITY	MAXIMUM AGE
Astrazoan	5-7 ft.	120-160 lbs.	16 years	80+2d20 years
Bantrid	3-4 ft.	70-100 lbs.	8 years	70+2d20 years
Borai	See page 211	See page 211	0 years	200+5d20 years
Khizar	6-7 ft.	150-250 lbs.	60 years	500+3d% years
SRO	3-8 ft.	45-200 lbs.	0 years	See page 213
Strix	5-6 ft.	115-150 lbs.	12 years	50+1d20 years

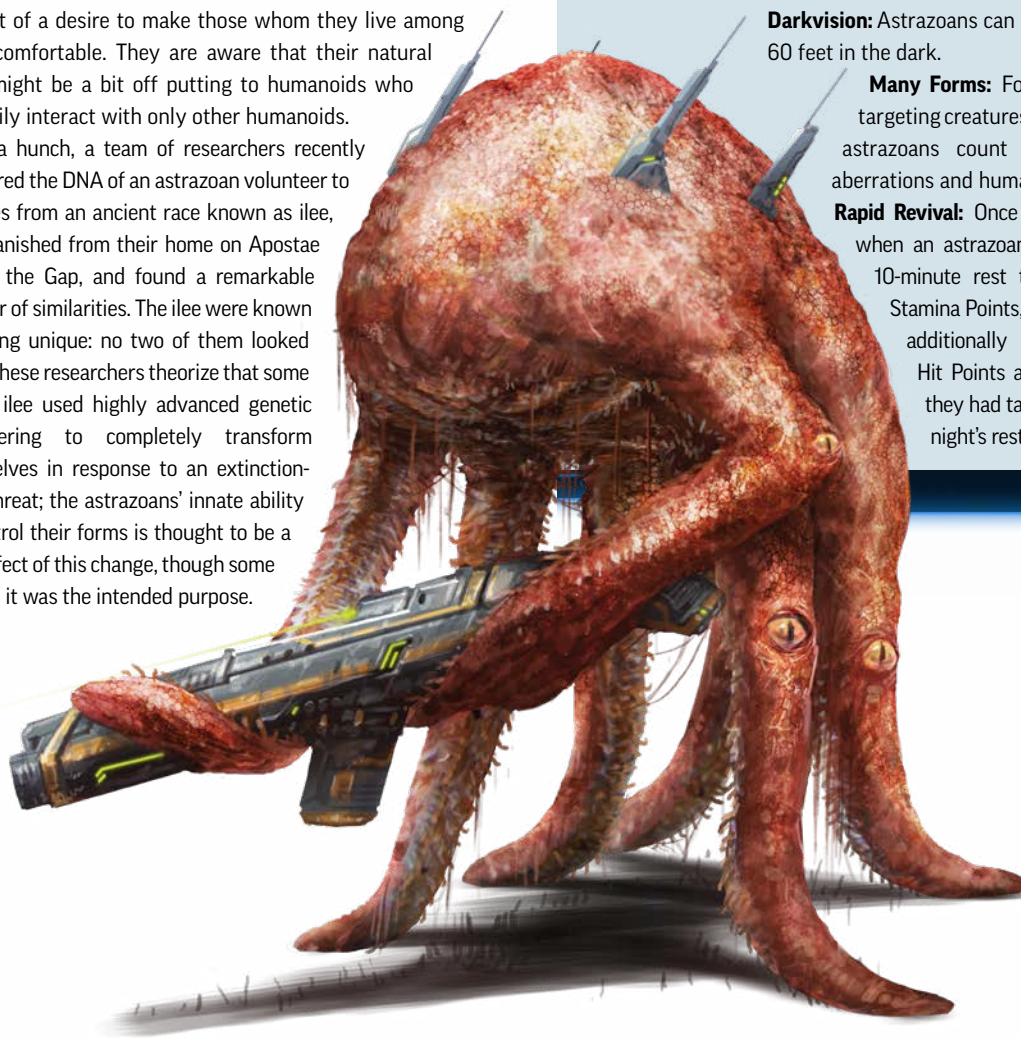
ASTRAZOANS

The shapeshifting astrazoans have lived as humans, lashuntas, verthani and many other races for the past few centuries, but their origins are shrouded in mystery. As even they have no records of their beginnings, it is widely assumed they came into being at some point during the Gap. They have little in the way of their own culture and strive to find their place in the galaxy.

An astrazoan in their native form resembles a seven-limbed, human-sized starfish, with a single visual sensor in the middle of each limb. Their skeleton is cartilaginous and their flesh jellylike, but an astrazoan can spontaneously mold and introduce pigment into their flesh to imitate the appearance of almost any creature of the same size. Astrazoans are capable of forming both male and female reproductive organs and thus are effectively hermaphrodites. Because most astrazoans live in humanoid societies with defined gender roles, it is common for them to develop a fixed gender identity, but just as many are gender-fluid.

There are very few astrazoans in the Pact Worlds (though no one can be certain of the exact number), and the majority of them reside on Absalom Station, Castrovel, Verces, and other areas where they can blend in with the local populace. They do so not for any sinister reason or even from fear, but out of a desire to make those whom they live among more comfortable. They are aware that their natural form might be a bit off putting to humanoids who primarily interact with only other humanoids.

On a hunch, a team of researchers recently compared the DNA of an astrazoan volunteer to samples from an ancient race known as ilee, who vanished from their home on Apostae during the Gap, and found a remarkable number of similarities. The ilee were known for being unique: no two of them looked alike. These researchers theorize that some of the ilee used highly advanced genetic engineering to completely transform themselves in response to an extinction-level threat; the astrazoans' innate ability to control their forms is thought to be a side effect of this change, though some believe it was the intended purpose.



RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Dex, +2 Cha, -2 Con

Hit Points: 4

Size and Type: Astrazoans are Medium aberrations with the shapechanger subtype.

Change Form: As a standard action, an astrazoan can physically alter their form to look like any Medium creature, as long as they have seen a similar creature before. They can attempt to either mimic a specific creature or look like a general creature of the chosen type. The astrazoan gains a +10 bonus to Disguise checks to appear as a creature of the type and subtype of the new form. The DC of the astrazoan's Disguise check is not modified as a result of altering major features or if they disguise themselves as an aberration or a humanoid (though the DC is still modified if the astrazoan attempts to disguise themselves as a different creature type). The astrazoan can remain in an alternate form indefinitely (or until they take another form).

Compression: An astrazoan can move through an area as small as one-quarter their space without squeezing or one-eighth their space when squeezing.

Darkvision: Astrazoans can see up to 60 feet in the dark.

Many Forms: For effects targeting creatures by type, astrazoans count as both aberrations and humanoids.

Rapid Revival: Once per day, when an astrazoan takes a 10-minute rest to regain Stamina Points, they can additionally recover Hit Points as though they had taken a full night's rest.

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BANTRIDS

Until recently, the small Liavaran shepherd moon named Hibb was believed to be uninhabited. With rolling hills covered in stubby grasslike protrusions and very few bodies of water, Hibb held little of interest for explorers. The moon's lack of natural resources and the pervasive stench that issued from the ground, which no manner of filtration could suppress, further contributed to Hibb not being colonized by the barathus—or anyone else in the Pact Worlds, for that matter.

However, less than 5 years ago, previously unnoticed machinery under Hibb's surface began to stir. All across the moon, apertures opened in the ground, from which rose tall towers with spiraling ramps. Heretofore unknown creatures emerged from these towers, their small visual sensors adjusting to the light of the distant sun. The members of this sentient species, who call themselves bantrids, had slumbered in stasis for eons before their ancient computers woke them. Because of the Gap and faulty data-storage drives, however, the bantrids had no knowledge of the solar system's current political climate and no recollection of why their people entered stasis in the first place. Some believe they were hiding from an imminent threat or natural disaster, while others posit that bantrids were the first sentient species in the system and that they put themselves to sleep to wait for others to interact with.

Bantrids have unusual anatomy. Their lower halves are nothing more than dense organic spheres. Bantrids move by spinning these foot-orbs using hundreds of thousands of cilia on the underside of partial sheaths that cover the orbs. Their upper torsos are stout columns that taper slightly at the top. Bantrids have no heads in the fashion most humanoids do. Instead, their visual and auditory sensors are located in the middle of their torsos, directly under small mouths containing a few teeth made only for chewing fruits and nuts. Bantrids have no noses and, in fact, no sense of smell at all. Near the apex of their torsos, bantrids have a pair of appendages that resemble large, flat hands with several thin fingers. Bantrids' skin often bears striped coloration along the length of their torsos and across their upper limbs.

Most bantrids are curious about the “new” galaxy they now find themselves in and are eager to learn about all the other sentient species that inhabit it. This leads them to rush (sometimes literally) into situations before fully understanding them. Some of their Pact Worlds neighbors find this trait endearing and happily bring bantrids into their businesses or starship crews, while a few others are put off by their appearance. Bantrids don't hesitate to write off those who don't accept them, and they easily move on to new opportunities.

Bantrid culture revolves around motion, from their ramped tower-dwellings to their treadmill-chairs. A bantrid who isn't moving starts to feel an overwhelming dread akin to claustrophobia. If this lasts too long, the bantrid will simply leave wherever they are at the moment, despite the social consequences. A restrained bantrid will keen wildly and hyperventilate, usually passing out.

RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Dex, +2 Con, -2 Int

Hit Points: 4

Size and Type: Bantrids are Small aberrations.

Anosmatic: Bantrids have no sense of smell and are immune to sense-dependent effects that rely on smell.

Balanced: Bantrids receive a +2 racial bonus to AC against trip combat maneuvers and can stand up from prone as a swift action.

Daredevil: Bantrids receive a +2 racial bonus to Acrobatics checks.

Darkvision: Bantrids can see up to 60 feet in the dark.

Swift: Bantrids have a land speed of 40 feet.

Bantrids have no gender and reproduce via a form of budding that creates tiny bantrids whose foot-orbs are not yet sufficiently developed to allow locomotion. These offspring must be carefully watched over until they can move on their own, which takes about 5 months.



BORAIS

Borais are an unusual form of corporeal undead. Instead of being a dead body animated by negative energy, a borai has a mostly dead body that retains the smallest sliver of its soul. The two are inexorably bound, as the body draws vitality from the soul while the soul uses the body to remain on the Material Plane. Some borais are the results of partially botched resurrection attempts, either magical or technological, while others were people who were simply too stubborn to fully die when their time came.

Borais appear much as they did in life, but their skin becomes pale and fragile, and dark veins of negative energy blossom across their bodies, a visual sign of the undead connection between their flesh and spirits. Borais still need to eat, breathe, and sleep, just like any living creature, but they age at radically slowed rates, allowing them to live for a few additional centuries. After that length of time, a borai's physical body deteriorates to such a degree that the soul can no longer sustain it; the borai then both dies (as living creatures do) and is destroyed (as undead creatures are). Scholars are divided as to whether these souls move on to their appointed afterlives or simply dissipate into nothingness; mystical attempts to contact these souls have unfortunately failed, leaving researchers frustrated in their pursuit of answers.

Though they can be created almost anywhere, the highest "birth rate" of borais is on the planet Eox, as many of the undead who live on that planet experiment with necromancy and undead-strengthening science. Those who come into existence elsewhere tend to migrate to Eox, as they are often viewed with fear and mistrust on other worlds. However, they soon find that similar prejudices await them on the dead planet, as they still require the same comforts as living creatures. A few borais from disparate former races have banded into a small coalition to petition the Pact Council for the official rights to an asteroid or small moon to create a home planet.

Some borais embrace their disconcerting aspects, finding employment as terrifying enforcers or imposing bodyguards, while others seek to overcome and erase the stigma of their undead nature by holding diplomatic positions or taking jobs where they interact with the public. A few borais attempt to hide their pale appearances with cosmetics and full-body clothing. These borais attempt to blend in with members of their original races, though this often results in heartbreak and feelings of betrayal from their friends.

RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Con, +2 Cha, -2 Wis

Hit Points: 6

Size and Type: Borais are Medium undead, but they do not gain normal undead immunities.

Darkvision: Borais can see up to 60 feet in the dark.

Deathly: For effects targeting creatures by type, borais count as both humanoids and undead (whichever effect is worse). They are immune to negative energy damage and gain a +1 racial bonus to saving throws against disease, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, and stunning.

Living Shell: A borai counts as a living creature for the purposes of what can affect him (such as magic healing). If destroyed, a borai can be brought back to his normal undead state by spells (such as *raise dead*) that restore life to his body as if he were alive.

Old Talents: Borais' not-quite-dead bodies still have some of their old racial traits. At character creation, a borai selects one of the following races as his original living form and gains the racial trait indicated in parenthesis for the selected race: android (upgrade slot), human (skilled), kasatha (four-armed), lashunta (limited telepathy), shirren (blindsense), vesk (natural weapons), or ysoki (cheek pouches). A GM can, at her discretion, allow a borai to choose another humanoid race, along with an appropriate racial trait. Additionally, when a borai attempts to disguise himself as a member of his selected race, the DC of his Disguise check is not modified as a result of disguising himself as a different creature type.

Resist Energy Drain: A borai takes no penalties from energy drain effects, but he can still be destroyed if he accrues more negative levels than he has class levels. After 24 hours, any negative levels a borai has taken are removed without the need for an additional saving throw.



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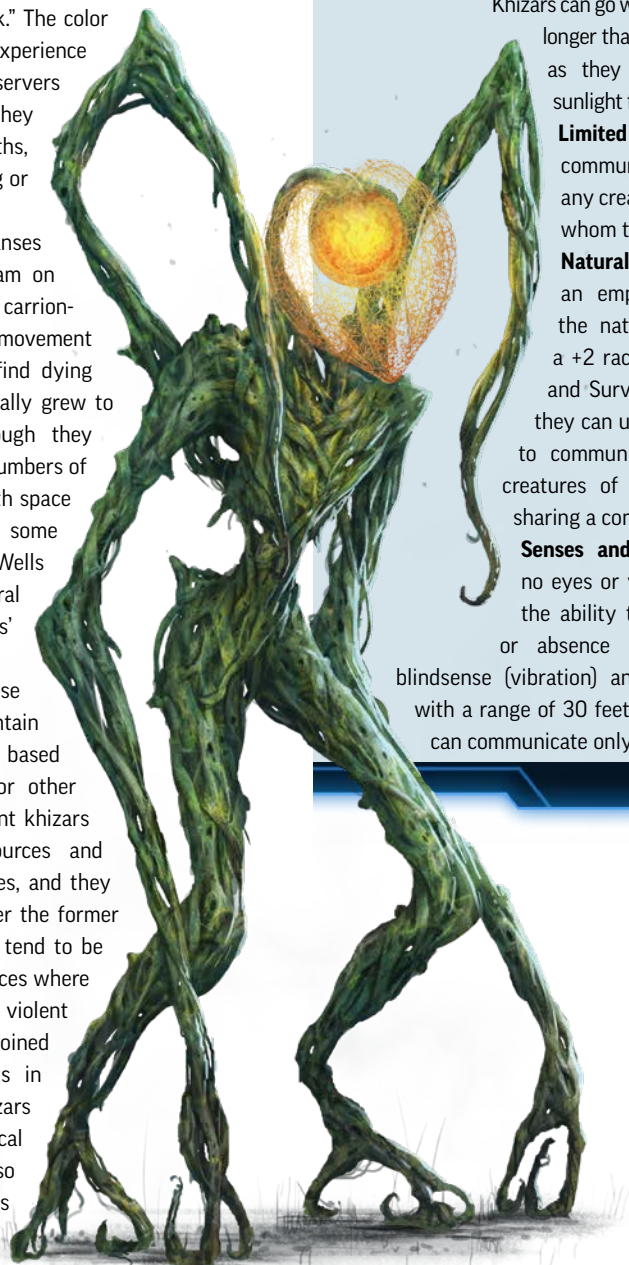
KHIZARS

Plantlike humanoids, the solemn khizars live in harmony with the natural environment, and many strive to protect the wilderness areas they inhabit. While this often brings them into conflict with other species and cultures, khizars are eager to learn about others' ways in an effort to understand them.

Khizars are humanoids with two arms, two legs, vestigial vines on their backs, and greenish-brown skin of tough cellulose fiber. They have hydrostatic skeletal structures and bleed a thick sap-like liquid if cut. Their limbs end in rootlike tendrils with some manipulative ability, but these are clumsier than a humanoid's fingers. Khizars' heads are actually complex seedpods; these tough, translucent membranes over woody latticeworks contain phosphorescent seed clusters that glow softly through the papery membrane, giving the species the nickname "lanternfolk." The color of this glow shifts as khizars experience different emotions, and canny observers can tell khizars' mood before they convey a word. Lacking mouths, khizars "taste" things by touching or handling them with their digits.

Originating in the wild expanses of the untamed continent Ukulam on Castrovel, khizars developed from carrion-feeding plants that used slow movement and crude empathic senses to find dying animals to feed on. They eventually grew to have full-fledged societies, though they hardly approach the population numbers of elves, formians, or lashuntas. With space travel becoming more common, some khizars have relocated to the Ice Wells of Aballon to protect those natural spaces from the native robots' encroaching megaplexes.

Khizars have a strong sense of individuality, but they maintain no gender or cultural divisions based on appearance, caste, wealth, or other indicators. The only things ancient khizars competed over were food sources and having new and novel experiences, and they tended to solve competitions over the former by embracing the latter. Khizars tend to be very protective of the natural spaces where they live, sometimes resulting in violent clashes, and many have recently joined or allied with the Xenowardens in defense of certain worlds. Khizars are oblivious to many physical differences in other species, so they judge people by their actions rather than their appearances.



RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Con, +2 Wis, -2 Dex

Hit Points: 6

Size and Type: Khizars are Medium humanoids with the khizar and plantlike subtypes.

Carbonic Respiration: Khizars breathe in carbon dioxide and exhale oxygen. In situations of slow suffocation (*Starfinder Core Rulebook* 404), a khizar reduces the effective number of creatures consuming air by two, unless no oxygen-breathing creatures are present.

Evergreen: For effects targeting creatures by type, khizars count as both humanoids and plants. They receive a +2 racial bonus to saving throws against mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, and stunning, unless the effect specifies that it works against plants.

Khizars can go without food for three times longer than other humanoids as long as they are exposed to natural sunlight for at least 4 hours per day.

Limited Telepathy: Khizars can communicate telepathically with any creatures within 30 feet with whom they share a language.

Natural Empathy: Khizars have an empathic understanding of the natural world, giving them a +2 racial bonus to Life Science and Survival checks. Additionally, they can use their limited telepathy to communicate with non-mindless creatures of the plant type without sharing a common language.

Senses and Speech: Khizars have no eyes or visual senses, other than the ability to perceive the presence or absence of light. Khizars have blindsense (vibration) and blindsight (life), each with a range of 30 feet. Khizars can't speak and can communicate only via telepathy.

SROS

SROS (short for “sentient robotic organisms”) are among the most advanced forms of robots, with internal circuits and positronic brains so complex that they, like androids, attract a soul and develop true artificial intelligence and free will. SROs are most common on Aballon, though they are different from the native anacites. Unlike androids, SROs do not have a unified appearance, and many are at best vaguely humanoid in shape, while others have shapes designed purely to assist in their primary functions.

In the Pact Worlds and many other regions, SROs have the same legal protections as androids, but sadly the bias many living creatures share against things that look similar to mindless machines means those protections are less widespread, and less respected, than for androids.

RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Str or +2 Dex (see below)

Hit Points: 2

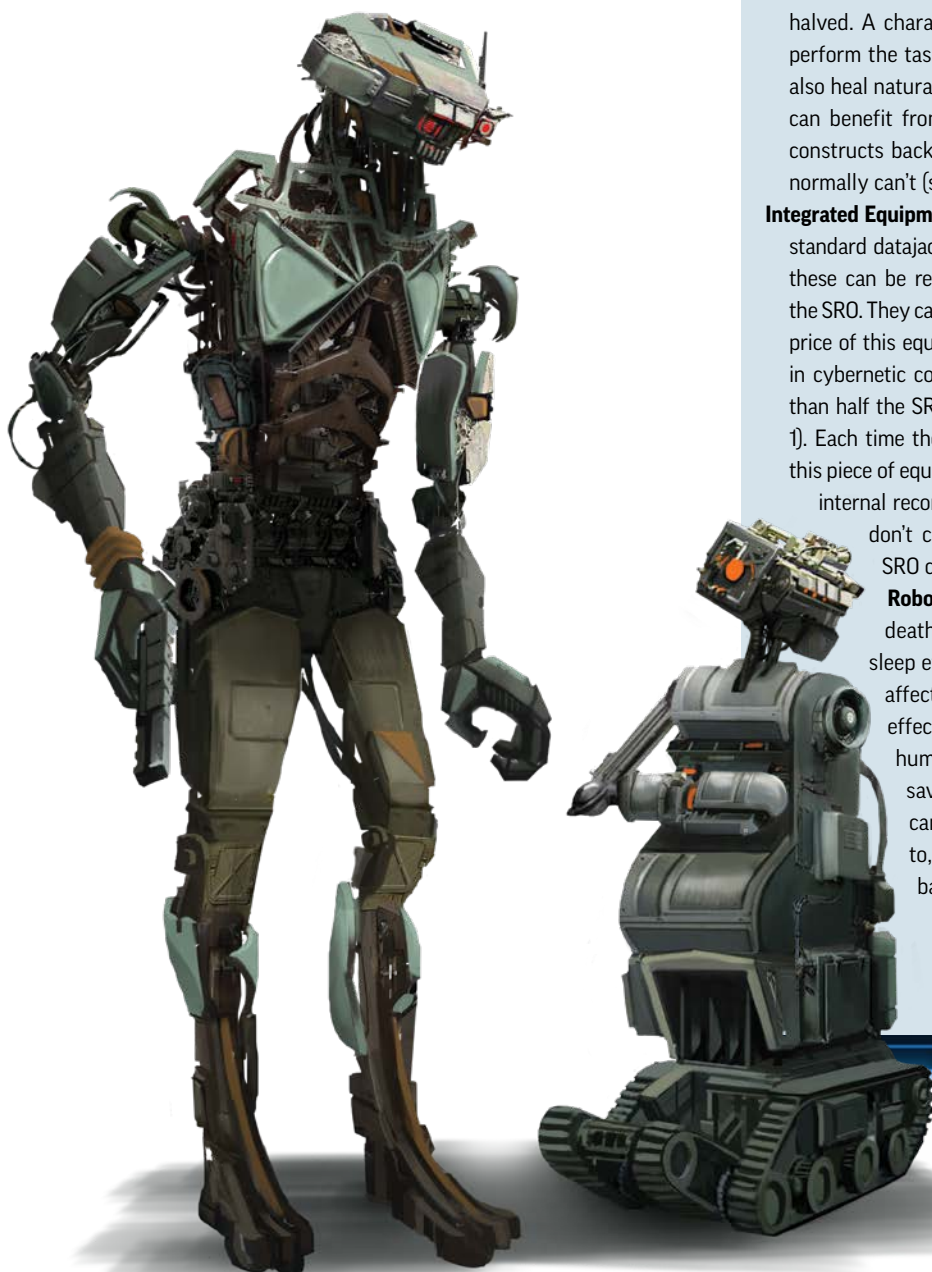
Size and Type: SROs are Small or Medium constructs with the technological subtype, though unlike other constructs, they have Constitution scores. Small SROs are agile (+2 Dexterity at character creation). Medium SROs are burly (+2 Strength at character creation). This decision is made at character creation and can't be changed.

Darkvision: SROs can see up to 60 feet in the dark.

Healing Circuit: In addition to being constructs and thus able to benefit from spells like *make whole*, SROs count as living creatures for the purposes of magic healing effects that work on living creatures, though the number of Hit Points restored in such cases is halved. A character must use the Engineering skill to perform the tasks of the Medicine skill on SROs. SROs also heal naturally over time as living creatures do, and can benefit from magic or technology that can bring constructs back from the dead, as well as effects that normally can't (such as *raise dead*).

Integrated Equipment: An SRO has an internal, integrated standard datajack and comm unit. If an SRO is helpless, these can be removed or destroyed without damaging the SRO. They can be replaced or upgraded for the normal price of this equipment. An SRO has an additional built-in cybernetic component with an item level no greater than half the SRO's character level (minimum item level 1). Each time the SRO gains a level, they can swap out this piece of equipment at no additional cost to represent internal reconfigurations. These pieces of equipment don't count against the systems in which an SRO can install cybernetics.

Robotic: SROs are immune to bleed, disease, death effects, poison, nonlethal damage, and sleep effects unless those effects specify they affect constructs. SROs can be affected by effects or spells that normally target only humanoids, but receive a +4 racial bonus to saving throws against such effects. SROs can eat and drink, though they don't need to, and they must recharge their internal batteries by entering an off-line mode that is similar to sleep for 8 hours every day. SROs do not breathe or suffer the normal environmental effects of being in a vacuum.



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STRIX

With their ebon feathers, murky eyes, and massive wings spreading behind them like angels' pinions, strix are imposing people to anyone not familiar with their kind. Pre-Gap accounts speak of a small and usually isolationist population of strix on vanished Golarion. Today, strix still tend to keep to themselves, especially in the race's most concentrated population in the Pact Worlds: a mysterious spire called Qidel, Aerie of the Sun, on Verces.

Non-strix entry into Qidel is highly regulated, and the strix are tight lipped about their culture within the structure. This has led some to speculate that Qidel's strix are little more than spies, but the winged people's generally magnanimous nature has prompted most civilized species to dismiss such suspicions as prejudiced nonsense. Despite their generous dispositions, strix sometimes struggle to integrate into wider Vercite culture. Accustomed to a communal culture, where everything from biotechnical engineering to child-rearing involves an entire community, strix often find the verthani's focus on individuality and personal achievement exhausting. As a result, many strix who leave Qidel have opted to leave Verces altogether and pursue adventure and learning offworld.

Strix's biological functions have long since adapted to living in dark places, whether it be Qidel or another such enclave elsewhere. As a result, their eyes are typically milky and lack pupils; furthermore, given their powerful necks and ability to fly, their ocular muscles rarely need to accommodate moving in their sockets. This results in strix constantly craning their heads in a birdlike manner that, along with the rest of strix's appearance, can make them seem eerie to other species.

Though they share little about their home culture even with trusted friends, strix are deeply distrustful of magic but are natural technophiles. They take to technology as easily as they can fly through the air, leading some to believe that strange and incredible technology must play a major part of the life in Qidel. They often heavily augment their bodies with cybernetics—some of their own creation—and can be invaluable as technomancers and mechanics aboard exploration vessels.

RACIAL TRAITS

Ability Adjustments: +2 Dex, +2, Int, -2 Cha

Hit Points: 6

Size and Type: Strix are Medium humanoid with the strix subtype.

Darkvision: Strix can see up to 60 feet in the dark.

Nightborn: Strix gain a +2 racial bonus to Perception and Stealth checks in dim light or darkness.

Strix Mobility: Strix have a land speed of 20 feet and an extraordinary fly speed of 30 feet with average maneuverability.

Suspicious: Strix receive a +2 racial bonus to saving throws against illusion spells and effects.

Tinkerer: Strix have a natural eye for technology and can craft such items at incredible speed. It takes a strix a base time of 2 hours to craft a technological item.



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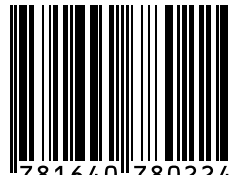
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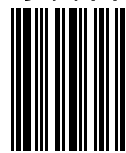
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