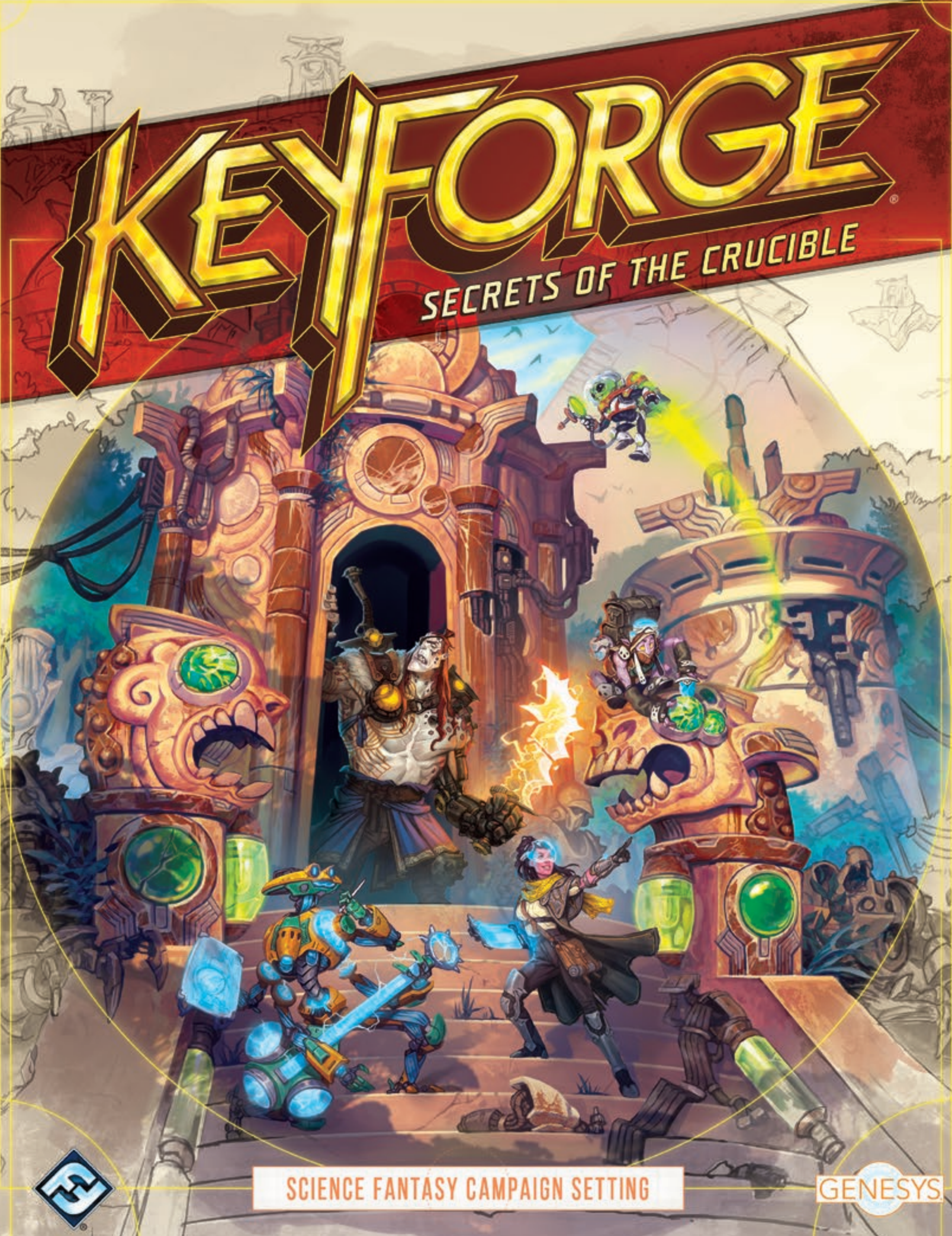
KEYFORGE

SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE



SCIENCE FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING

GENESYS

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KEYFORGE

SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE

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WELCOME TO THE SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE

Picture a world so large it can rival small stars, filled with creatures, sentient beings, and entire cultures plucked from across the universe. An artificial world made up of countless separate environments, all stitched together in an impossible, patchwork design. A place where science is so advanced that it appears magical, yet its technologies rely upon a substance that science cannot explain.

This is the Crucible. This is your home. Like everyone else, you were brought to this world for unknown reasons. Each of you arrived in a different way, but all in manners that are inexplicable—and permanent.

Maybe one day you stepped out of your orbiting starliner's docking hatch onto a grassy field where roaring giants battled each other in astonishing tests of strength.

Perhaps your traveling companions all awoke to a dawn made from too many suns and an unfamilar sky, one with flying metal creatures and a gigantic pillar that rises beyond your sight.

It could be that one night your transit car opened into a dark lair of cybernetic monsters and golden crystals. None of you have ever seen these crystals before, but somehow they are making everyone feel...terrified.

Possibly this is the only life you've known, having lived here for generations since your entire city was brought here many millennia ago; tales of your former homeworld are myth and legend now.

That was yesterday, though. What are you doing today on the Crucible?

Aboard a sentient airship, your crew seeks out new trade routes through an archipelago of floating antimatter despite threats from hungry robotic raptors.

Your posse spots the rogue scientist you've been tracking for days, and must capture them before their latest dimensional experiment implodes your city.

You and your allies aid an Archon in forging a vault-opening key of the purest Æmber, fending off enemies with your sharp quantum blade and even sharper wits.

As part of an expedition searching for one of the civilizations lost over the millions of years of the Crucible's existence, you uncover a site where priceless arcane devices and ancient perils exist in equal measure.

Every day on the Crucible has new discoveries, new arrivals, and new dangers. So what couldn't you be doing on a world where anything is possible?

You may even unlock the secrets of the Crucible...

ROLEPLAYING IN AN IMPOSSIBLE WORLD

Normally me advice ain't free, but today, I'm feelin' a mite generous towards new folk to the Crucible. –Dodger

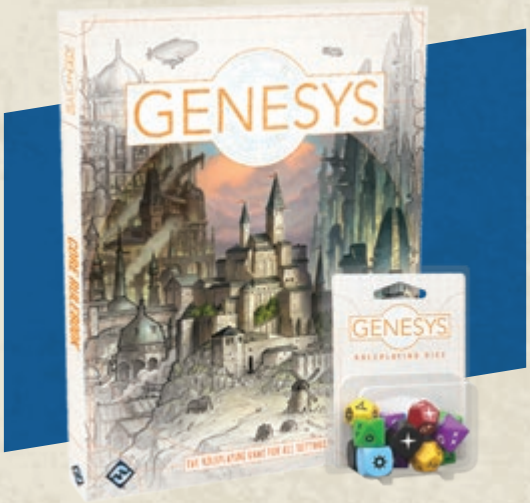
Hello, and prepare for the SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE! This book is a supplement for the GENESYS game line that lets you use our Narrative Dice System in the wondrous Crucible, the science fantasy setting of the KEYFORGE Unique Deck Game. On the Crucible, fantastical science joins with arcane powers, all possible through the unique substance known as Æmber. Uncovering the secrets of this mysterious, artificial world will take all your skills—but the possible rewards are boundless…

If you're already familiar with GENESYS and want to get started, go ahead and skip to page 19 for more information about making a character, or to page 179, where we explore some of the locations on this world. Otherwise, we're going to spend some time explaining what this book is and how you can use it, and we'll give you a quick overview of what's inside. So, if you're new to roleplaying games (or just new to GENESYS), read the following sections first.

WHAT IS THIS BOOK, AND HOW DO I USE IT?

Great Tree, is Dodger here too? Dear reader, heed my words instead of those of a common thief. After all, I'm a famous author –Inka the Spider

SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE is a sourcebook—or expansion—for the GENESYS Core Rulebook. That means you'll need a copy of the Core Rulebook as well as this book to play a game set in the Crucible. You'll also need some GENESYS Roleplaying Dice. You can pick up a pack of them from your local game store or at www.fantasyflightgames.com, or you can download the GENESYS Dice App onto your Android or iOS device.



SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE serves as a backdrop for stories you can tell using the GENESYS game. It is basically a more detailed version of the type of settings found in **Part II** of the Core Rulebook, so you'll use the basic rules found in **Part I** of the Core Rulebook combined with the rules presented here. The rules in SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE are designed to supersede those in the GENESYS Core Rulebook—so whenever there seem to be contradictions, use the rules in this book.

For example, the GENESYS Core Rulebook has the rules for character creation, and you'll still follow the seven steps presented there when making a character for this game. However, SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE provides different choices when you follow those steps. To expand this example further, during step 2, you select an archetype or species that you want your character to belong to. The Core Rulebook provides four human archetypes to choose from. In SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE, you get to choose from eleven species (only one of which is human) or can even create your own new species to play!

Basically, GENESYS is the engine that runs your game. SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE fleshes that engine out into a game of alien beings of all types living, adventuring, and attempting to make sense of an artificial world none of them have ever before imagined, let alone encountered.

WHAT IS THE SCIENCE FANTASY SETTING?

We go into a lot more detail about the Crucible and other aspects of this location in a few pages (and even more in **Chapter 5**), so here we'll just cover the basics concerning this setting and how the Crucible fits into it.

The science fantasy setting is a new fantasy style, like the ones described on page 140 of the Core Rulebook. It is a blend of impossible technologies with equally impossible magics. We're using this setting on the Crucible, a world filled with alien species (alien to you, at least!) and fantastical superscience, but one that also allows for powers science can't explain. On this world, you might wield a proton pistol while using arcane abilities to float across a gorge, reach your sky skimmer, and escape a horde of cybernetically enhanced ogres. It's a setting of high adventure and exploration within mutated forests and futuristic cities alike, and both are filled with opportunities and dangers.

The Crucible is a gigantic world made of multitudes of unique environments with differing gravities, atmospheres, and even laws of physics. It is filled with mysterious devices, lost civilizations, hyper-advanced cities, and an incredible range of species. The most remarkable beings are undoubtedly the Archons. They may be the only sentients who are native to this world, and there are countless theories about their existence.

What Will I Find in This Book?

We split Secrets of the Crucible into seven chapters. Some of these are going to be more useful for you if you're the Game Master, while others are going to be more useful for you if you're a player. Let's briefly go through each.

In **Chapter 1: Character Creation**, we provide the rules you need to build a player character in conjunction with the Genesys Core Rulebook.

Chapter 2: Organizations covers some of the factions—such as Mars, Shadows, and Skyborn—that exist on this world and to which many beings belong.

In **Chapter 3: Equipment and Vehicles**, we provide a new system for acquiring unique weapons and armor as well as a wide variety of gear and vehicles from cybernetics to flying saucers.

In **Chapter 4: Æmber**, we discuss the mysterious substance that drives life on the Crucible. Your character can also harness Æmber to help them obtain powerful abilities.

In **Chapter 5: The Crucible**, we take a look at this world and the Local Group, home to many of the game's locations like Hub City, Macis Swamp, and Spiretown.

Chapter 6: Adversaries provides Game Masters with a large number of non-player character (NPC) profiles with which to populate their games, from plants and animals to bounty hunters, scientists, and demons.

Finally, **Chapter 7: The Game Master** has a number of aids for running games in this setting, encounter suggestions, ways to create new adversaries, and more.

Can I Use This to Make My Own Science Fantasy Setting?

Absolutely! We designed Genesys to be a toolkit for you to use to make your own worlds, and that remains our goal with this book. Secrets of the Crucible can be a valuable aid for building your own science fantasy setting instead of using ours. For example, you could make the Crucible just one of the many incredible places your characters visit. It could be the setting of a campaign in which characters must devise a way to escape, rescue someone, or make their fortunes. Your characters could also encounter Archons or other beings from this book elsewhere in the universe. Most of the species on the Crucible were brought to it from other worlds, so using these beings and creatures in other locations makes perfect sense. Æmber could be easily adapted to become a magical substance for fantasy settings as well!

So, that's an overview of the book and how to use it. We wish you the best of luck in your adventures, and we hope you enjoy exploring and uncovering the Secrets of the Crucible!

Challenge Levels in Adversary Profiles

As you read through this book, you'll notice that NPC adversary profiles have these symbols with numbers alongside the name of the adversary:

These are the adversary's **power levels**. The fist is the adversary's **combat** power level, the head within the circle is the adversary's **social** power level, and the diamond shape is the adversary's **general** power level. These power levels are a measure of how capable the adversary is and allows GMs to compare the relative prowess between NPCs.

Combat power levels represent how dangerous and resilient the adversary is in a fight, while social levels indicate their prowess in social encounters. General power levels are the measure of how well the adversary can support other characters or perform tasks that don't involve combat or social encounters.

These can also be used to build encounters, and the Genesys Expanded Player's Guide covers this in depth on page 85 of that book. As a rule of thumb, though, a starting or novice group of PCs should be appropriately challenged by NPCs with combined combat or social power levels (depending on the encounter) of 2–8. A veteran group would feel similarly challenged by NPCs with combined levels of 9–17, and highly proficient ones by ones with combined power levels of 18 and higher.

Even though I theorize that this peculiar tome is the work of the Architects, it can only benefit from the addition of data from Logos and myself.
-Dr. Escotera

Many people aided us when our ship recently crashed on this world and, in turn, I hope that my notes can be of similar assistance. Welcome to the Crucible.
-Erin Ingram, MD, SAV Quantum

THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

There is a place where elements from countless worlds come together in a single, mind-boggling conglomeration. It is a juxtaposition of places jumbled and merged to form something entirely new—a world of impossibilities. This world supports species from across the known galaxies and beyond, all plucked from their natural environment and deposited in a place where untold opportunities and dangers await. This is a world unlike any other in the universe.

This is the Crucible.

If you can imagine combining the thrill of discovery with the challenge of unwinding intrigues while treasure hunting against the backdrop of the greatest boom town in the universe, then you might come close to picturing what makes the Crucible such a frantic, chaotic, and ultimately exciting place.

Of course, the word "exciting" can often be exchanged with "dangerous," and it is true that threats abound there. For instance, it is all too easy to accidentally wind up fighting a hulking Brobnar giant, a being so eager to test their strength against others that they may consider eye contact an open challenge. And only the foolish put too much trust in an electrifyingly lucrative pact made with one of the morally elusive guilds of Shadows.

Although such potential pitfalls are endless, beings who are bold and wily enough to sidestep the Crucible's countless perils can find noble causes, glory, and riches. They can also find some of the universe's most advanced technologies and sorcerous wonders, often seamlessly blended together. More treasured still is information: knowledge about new species, cutting-edge inventions, and the mysteries of the Crucible and its godlike Archons, powerful and enigmatic beings whose purpose is unknown.

At least Archons walk the Crucible and interact with other beings there. No one has ever seen an Architect—the species thought to have built the Crucible and populated it with life from across the universe—yet everyone assumes the Architects possess powers beyond imagination. Most beings believe the Architects also created Æmber, the psychic substance that seems to exist nowhere else in the universe but on the Crucible. Æmber serves as the power source for almost all of the world's technologies as well as for super-scientific abilities (or "magic," as some might call them). Although the full range of Æmber's effects is unknown, it is immensely valuable to just about everyone on the Crucible, even the Archons.

A World of Worlds

To begin with, one must understand that the Crucible is not just large, but preposterously so. Indeed, it is so vast that some claim the world is unending, or at least growing at such a rate that any hopes of mapping it are doomed before they start. What is apparent to all thinking beings is that the Crucible is artificial, for it has not been guided by laws of planetary formation, but rather has been stitched together as if unhinged creators snatched their favorite terrains from untold millions of planets and then merged them into a single orb. Each new day brings the arrival of fresh biospheres somewhere on the world, their appearance via inexplicable processes seeming more like magic than science. Myths to explain how this strange world came to be are plentiful, but facts are few.

To venture into each new region of the Crucible is akin to stepping into an entirely new world. Environments range from the frozen lands of Zeron—home to creatures composed of liquid helium who glide slowly over superfluid lakes—to the steaming rainforests of Lushzania, a green hell best known for its insectoids who worship an enormous carnivorous plant. Simply because one region has breathable atmosphere does not mean an adjacent one won't be toxic enough to choke even rocky life-forms like Sylicates. There are areas that project emotions onto inhabitants, roaming forests that bring their terrain along with them as they migrate, and dreaded underground domains that are home to demonic beings.

THE SPIRE

The best-known wonder of the Crucible is undoubtedly the Spire. Rising above all else, this colossal tower pierces cloud and sky and juts upward into the dark, beyond sight. When conditions allow, some say it is possible to see new works fanning out from the uppermost discernible bits of the Spire—fresh construction adding yet another layer to the ever-growing world.

Even gravity fluctuates, with extremes ranging from the subterranean realm of Iridius, where gravity changes with the tides, to the acrid desert of Lishtaar, where gravitons travel so slowly most beings can outrun them. From the floating cities of Sanctum to the burning volcanoes of the Everfire, there is no end to the marvels that can be found upon the Crucible.

While the Crucible does have barren regions, most of its innumerable lands, oceans, aerial islands, underworlds, and misted realms are teeming with life. Like the terrain, the world's flora, fauna, and even civilizations are perplexingly varied, for they too have been plucked from planets across the galaxy and stranded upon this patchwork wonderland.

LIFE ON THE CRUCIBLE

Living on the Crucible is to be among the untold numbers of intelligent species and cultures that have been dropped onto this world. Sometimes multiple instances of the same civilization—separated on their homeworld by hundreds of generations—might find themselves side by side on this world. The eldest can trace their arrival to many millions of years ago. Meanwhile, some cultures have disappeared, having been wiped out in wars, merged with others to form new societies, or simply vanished into the wilds. More arrive all the time to take their place, in numbers ranging from a single member to an entire civilization.

Some arrivals maintain their old ways, albeit now supercharged as they learn to exploit the energies of the newfound Æmber. Most civilizations, though, find themselves forced to alter old customs in order to adapt. For instance, the Svarr elves—generally regarded as master thieves and doers of nefarious deeds—kept their ancient structures, known as guilds, but now enlist like-minded agents from other species into the fold of Shadows. The vect, too, adapted to new existence on the Crucible, as none of the other interdependent species from their planet could be found even after centuries of searching. The brilliant idea of settling near the gigantic Spire—the one place every species visits at some point—allowed them to not only develop new social networks to emulate the ones they had on Vectoon, but also find a new calling in providing civic and bureaucracy services for all at Spiretown.

Lotsa different species means lotsa different valuables, if you know what I mean...

Course, figurin' out what's valuable to who is another matter, innit?

Even for species and cultures that thrived, it did not take many generations of life on the Crucible for major changes to take place. For instance, the Crucible's self-proclaimed "greatest intellectuals"—the Society of Logic and Reason, most commonly referred to as Logos—were originally organic beings but became cybernetic ones in order to better study the mysteries of the world. They have grown so accustomed to mechanical and genetic upgrades they can no longer recall exactly what their original forms were when they arrived on the Crucible; still, most suspect that they were not then artificially enhanced.

Many unique creatures and species have evolved considerably on the Crucible; the saurians are believed to be one of the oldest of these. Learned beings, such as scholarchivists and members of the First Crucibiologist Church v22.71, say the exceedingly violent Brobnar are a fusion of earlier species of giants and goblins who were among the earliest settlers.

Accelerated evolution, rapid advancements in technology, and mutations that result in entirely new life forms are often catalyzed by Æmber. The psychically reactive substance is coveted by every species, organization, and creature on the Crucible, and it is used for a multitude of tasks, including powering weaponry, fueling spells, facilitating the making of incredible works of technology, fusing genetic lines, and serving as the only worldwide form of currency (the ubiquitous Æmbit). Even entertainment is improved by Æmber. Xixin firemancers use it to put on unmatched pyrotechnic displays, while the precognitive Seers of InSight imbibe its distilled form before making their pronouncements to receptive crowds. The avant-garde painter Inglefuad incorporates it into living works of art that leave their canvases to strike out on their own. And of course, everyone knows that the Rolling Bugs use it in concerts to fuel their shock & troll power ballads to energy levels that could run (or ruin) entire cities.

At the Confluence of All Things

The Crucible contains many population centers that are just as cosmopolitan as the world itself. One example is Hub City, a famous location in the Local Group region, which is itself part of the Kaevalus megacontinent. In Hub City, countless species and cultures intermingle to buy and sell goods from far-off regions, promote their beliefs, launch expeditions of discovery, research the nature of the Crucible, and more. On a world with so many types of beings, there is no end to what can happen when they meet.

Much of life on the Crucible revolves around Æmber. Finding and securing the substance is of paramount importance to everyone, and its presence ensures there is always something happening wherever a being looks. Strange creatures appear overhead, insects crawl out of lakes and swarm the land, and yet other creatures emerge from shifting dimensions, all in search of the golden material. When new beings arrive with new abilities, beliefs, and ways of thinking and living, they soon learn of the value of Æmber as well.

Still, it is not Æmber alone that drives activity on the Crucible. There is always something new around the corner: a new land to explore, a new species to meet (or exploit, fight, or befriend), new technology to test, and new astonishments to witness. Countless labs are inventing technologies to revolutionize vital scientific fields or prompt the development of new ones. Practitioners of the eldritch arts are unearthing ancient artifacts and searching the varied cultures to glean their secrets. On a world where discoveries can occur almost continually, the quest for knowledge is constant. Each species, organization, and civilization seeks to be the first to make the next important breakthrough or, failing that, at least chisel out something they can use to their advantage. Of course, not everyone uses the same methods to advance their cause, or worries who might get hurt in the process.

Life on the Crucible can be dangerous, as it has no shortage of wild beasts, carnivorous plants, and deadly environments. Large-scale combats and protracted wars, however, are rare. The extreme range of environments means long-range logistical support is almost impossible; adjacent regions might have hazardous vegetation and terrain, local life forms with incompatible biologies, and even variations in gravity or electrochemical processes that shut down engines or crash airships. Another factor is the close proximity of such a wide diversity of species and cultures over millennia, which has given rise to numerous conglomerate communities that have worked out how to live together without the need for violent conflicts.

The lack of warring nations might also have something to do with the enigmatic Archons. No one knows for certain exactly what these beings are (though it is widely believed they are immortal), nor does anyone understand what they are doing or why. No few have speculated that they might be behind the failures and occasional mysterious disappearances of beings who are overly fond of conquest. The radioactive flame-legions of Wrathtar, the deathly Lunside Tide, and the endless ranks of neuron-blasting Pulsate Counts, to name a few, have been relegated to the tales of wandering bards. Only the remains of fallen fortresses, gigantic craters, or (usually) both have been left behind to mark that they ever existed.

Certainly cooperation, or at least the perception of it, appears to work more successfully than open warfare for sustaining a civilization. Even a horde of roaring Brobnar giants seems to know when Enough's Enough, although this may be due to a lack of any nearby worthy opponents to test themselves against.

In lieu of battle, the Crucible's varied organizations engage in cunning trade negotiations, arrange strategic alliances, and deploy exotic devices in their attempts to gain the advantage. A great many factions use stealth, shrewd political machinations, and undercover skills to acquire Æmber, technologies, and all manner of secrets, from quark collimation techniques to the latest recipe for extra-spicy chrome sauce. Some organizations—most notably Shadows, the Data Whisperers, the Order of the Purple Duplesque, and M.I.R.R.O.R.—have become masters of espionage. The devout followers of the Church of the Opened Eye and their theocratic nation-state, Sanctum, on the other hand, do not stoop to such tactics. Even in their political maneuverings, the Knights of Sanctum genuinely seek to right wrongs and correct injustices.

In the long run, working together (or at least not too violently) seems to work out for the best. This has been the case for thousands of millennia, so no one is eager to change things. After all, you never know who you might upset by doing so.

IN THE BEGINNING...

For those who seek definitive answers, such as the irritatingly accurate Truth Cults of the Primordials and the reactionary Luxulites, the Crucible is an endless and infuriating enigma. For every certainty established, two more mysteries are discovered. It is difficult to trace roots back on a world where the remains of long-dead ancient civilizations can be found just below newly transmuted lands, highly evolved beings spring from beasts within a single generation, and established civilizations can devolve seemingly overnight.

Equally mysterious (and quite annoying, to put it mildly) is that once they are transplanted onto the Crucible, beings can never leave. Brobnar call this limit the Great Sky Barrier, Skyborn have dubbed it the Unseen Wall, and Logos scientists speak of the Aerial Null Zone. Most simply call it the Boundary. It is somewhere high in the air, and nothing can get past it and reach outer space—nothing.

The Aerial Null Zone is soon to fall to the scientific power of Logos.

Perhaps not immediately soon, but sooner than any of my so-called colleagues can publish, anyways. -Escotera

Although the inhabitants haven't been able to determine when it was built, nearly everyone agrees the Crucible is impossibly old. Advanced radiological dating apparatus have been used to ascertain the ages of different regions of the world, but the readings vary wildly. That some sections appear to be older than the estimated age of the universe itself is yet another mystery—or this may be a sign that normal ways of dating materials are inaccurate on the Crucible.

As to who or what invented the artificial world and why they did so, there are more rumors than fact. The preachers of the Church of the Opened Eye claim it was faith that coalesced the Crucible, and they point to their floating islands as proof, for even now, they say, the floating lands are slowly merging together to form an even greater mass. The giants of Brobnar tell of an epic journey from Vanhalla and a loud victory belch, a so-called "big bang" that blew bits of a million worlds apart, reforming them into the Crucible. The Theorists and Mechanists of the Logos find this, and really anything uttered by Brobnar, to be preposterous.

Most of the civilized (or less zealous) peoples point to another creative source: the mysterious entities simply called "the Architects." No claim of an Architect sighting has ever been verified, but all beings have heard tales about them. The existence of an artificial world, after all, implies that one or more creators—Architects—were involved in its making. Some cultures have come to worship the them. Other groups, like the Wreckers, want to destroy them even if it results in mutual self-destruction—anything to end the cycles of abduction and transplantation that add new species to this world.

No one has ever admitted to having been asked to move to the Crucible; theories about how or why each species or civilization was selected form part of each culture's mythologies. Most inhabitants cannot imagine any other type of existence, their species having lived there for countless generations, but there are still a few who would give anything to return to their home planet, ship, or city. Even so, some worry that there might not be anything to return to, and that the Architects may have transplanted them just before their civilization fell and became lost forever. The Crucible, they think, captures (or copies?) such cultures as a way to preserve them—or to give them one final chance to survive and prove their worth to the universe. It might not be a perfect system, but perhaps even the Architects have limits.

The Archons

While no beings have ever seen an Architect, this is not the case with Archons. Some say the Archons are gods; others say they are manifestations of the perfect artificial intelligence, beings from some other dimension, entities who are evolving into Architects, or perhaps the last remnants of an elder species made of some mysterious energy. If the Archons themselves know, they do not tell. When they first appeared on the Crucible is also a mystery; however, the ancient Saurian Republic has reliable records of its first encounters with Archons, which strongly suggests they arrived here after at least some other species were brought to this world.

All Archons seem to be unique in every manner imaginable, especially in their powers and how they display them. Even how Archons appear to the varied beings of the Crucible can change as they see fit. Archons are not confined to their physical form; they can appear as pulsing energy, impossible colors, or any other semblance they choose. Often, to avoid disconcerting mortals, they adopt a more standard guise, one that will benefit them in their current dealings. For instance, with Brobnar giants, who respect strength and size, an Archon could assume a mighty frame. One dealing with the devout knights of Sanctum, on the other hand, would likely affect a radiating halo of righteous power and feature wings of pure energy.

When dealing with mixed groups, or perhaps when they just can't be bothered, Archons could manifest in diverse ways. In one situation, they might adopt the form they used most often in the same location a few millennia ago; in another, they perhaps appear to each viewer as a member of that viewer's species—or they might simply appear as raw energy. External appearance, like so much of mortal life, is a concept many Archons aren't experts on (or even aware of).

Archons can be found anywhere on the Crucible. They might travel far and wide, either alone or among the company of trusted companions. They may be encountered walking in the wilds, drifting through cities, or even deep under the waves. Archons often appear to be in transit, journeying from one place to another; even if they stop to talk, they either don't explain their full purpose, or they do so in ways other minds cannot comprehend.

Some citizens of the Crucible tell tales of friends or neighbors who one day altered shape and disappeared, the implication being that they were Archons in disguise and had been collecting information for some unknowable purpose. It does seem to be a fact that Archons are curious beings and are usually quite eager to learn about the local landscape and the creatures and people that populate it. Whether by trait or divine skill, Archons can converse with every species, regardless of culture or mode of communication. It is said that they also can communicate with plants and beasts, and even converse with hills and clouds. But then, many things are said about Archons.

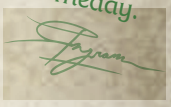
Archons often seem preoccupied, as though their minds are multitasking on many hundreds of planes of existence. Even the partial attention of a single Archon commands the greatest awe and respect. They are considered the wisest of beings by some, painfully naïve by others, and sometimes a mix of both.

While Archons often appear to be on their own private missions, they also seek aid from other beings for specific needs. Often these involve vaults, those mysterious repositories of wonders scattered across the Crucible. When an Archon detects a vault, they often seek assistance from other inhabitants to locate and fight over the Æmber needed to open it. Many beings believe that the Architects created the vaults and stocked them with great treasures that call out to Archons with an irresistible allure.

Although Archons seem intelligent beyond the ken of any hyper-cranial organic or AI engine, they are often befuddled by certain aspects of mortals, including not only such things as emotions and death, but also trivial matters like why Brobnar goblins laugh when giants belch. Some of those who research the Archons believe they were set upon the Crucible to study the interactions between so many living species in such varied environments, possibly as part of their own Architect-guided evolutionary path.

As often happens when Archons are questioned about these and other matters concerning their existence, they sometimes respond that they cannot say—not that they aren't allowed to, but that the gap between them and mortals is so wide that the information cannot be effectively communicated. Alternatively, it's entirely possible that the Archons don't know either. More often, these beings give no answer but instead begin asking questions of their own.

We've only had very limited contact with these beings. Captain Jericho seemed both impressed and worried after meeting the Archon known as Aeresius the Experienced. I look forward to encountering one myself someday.



THE MYSTERY OF THE VAULTS

Countless tales are told about the hidden wonders known as vaults. Vaults are treasure rooms secreted through the Crucible, undetectable until some unknown signal alerts Archons that they are nearby. Some are metaphysical constructs that are more a concept or mode of thought than a physical container. Others are capsules camouflaged with high-tech illusions, buried beneath acid waters, or even hidden in a sliding dimension. Only Archons can open vaults, using a process that requires several unique keys forged from Æmber that was harvested expressly for that purpose.

As it takes time to open a vault once it is discovered, it is not unusual for rival Archons to meet during such ventures. What results is a type of gladiatorial duel between the opposing Archons and their followers. These conflicts have been compared to a sporting event, a sacred ritual, or a riotous brawl; sometimes all three descriptions seem to fit. Thanks to advanced technology, robust physiologies, and the restorative powers of the Archons, vault battles rarely end in death for any contestants (and even that is often remedied). The winning side—that is, the one that finds enough Æmber and makes its keys first—can claim the wonders stored within the vault.

Like the vaultheads always say, "the greater the struggle, the greater the prizes inside!"

'Tis truth, and I'm speakin' from right personal experiences while admirin' me shiny anti-grav boots. —DGR

Forging a key requires far more than simple physical smelting or hammering of the freshly harvested Æmber; it requires that the raw Æmber be imprinted with precise emotional and mental states to be suitable for unlocking a specific vault. Only the Archons present know what is needed for a particular vault, especially which of their followers are essential in expressing which feelings and other mortal attributes needed for each key.

Sometimes the struggle over the vault is part of what is needed, and at other times, particular sentiments or even memories are what's most important. The requirements might concern the exhilaration of battle or, especially if any Brobnar are involved, how loud the battle is. They can be almost anything from the feeling when beings first fall in love to memories of the color of the sky on their homeworld or how they decided what to eat that morning. A key without the needed impressions won't open the vault—or any other vault, due to the localized nature of the gathered Æmber.

Each key is unique and might have any one of a multitude of appearances, assuming it has a tangible form in this reality. A key could be a shimmering ball of fire, a laughing swirl in the air, a tendril of frozen light, an inflated electron, or a perfect rose. It could even be a large metal key ideal for unlocking a rather unremarkable-looking vault set into a prosaic hillside.

Once their first key is forged, the Archon continues the process until all the needed keys are ready for them to open the vault—hopefully before the other Archon is ready. Only one Archon can ever open each vault, so each of these "vault battles" always ends with one Archon claiming the prize.

After the Archon opens the vault, a great occasion takes place. This, too, is the stuff of myth; some say the Archon absorbs strange and indefinable energies, others claim the glow is a reward from the Architects, and still others suppose it is nothing but some equivalent of a divine victory dance. More tangibly, the vault holds other treasures like unimagined isotopes or universal biogenic liquids (or simply precious metals) that the Archon will probably share with their followers, making such undertakings highly profitable for those who dare to join an Archon's retinue. Some Archons have regular followers who accompany them from vault to vault. Other Archons select new allies for each battle based on some mysterious logic of their own that perhaps revolves around what is needed for the task ahead, what emotions will be required to forge keys, or something even more indecipherable.

The news of these epic encounters is part of the Local Group's entertainment, history, and mythology. Various cultures cover the action in media ranging from datapages and holoflash broadcasts to cave paintings. Highlight streams of famous matches from days of yore are popular, but nothing can beat a live image-cast. Hardcore fans—known as vaultheads—gather in vast numbers within Shrine-O-Vault stadiums that recreate matches so realistically that each cunning theft, tooth-jarring collision, and searing proton blast become part of the experience.

Many factions and organizations choose a favorite Archon and follow their vault-opening career, cheering for their successes and booing the exploits of their rivals. Naturally, Shadows operatives run elaborate gambling schemes around the matches. Martians are known to cheer not for any specific Archon, instead firing celebratory ray gun blasts into the air on behalf of whichever Archon has the most martians operating alongside them. Brobnar members favor some Archons over others, but they more often change their allegiance to the side that displays greater, louder, and more extreme feats of strength, bravado, and mayhem.

Still, for most inhabitants of the Crucible, such activities are among the simple distractions of daily life; to beings far from the Archons and their mysterious desires, vault battles may even seem quite irrelevant. Nevertheless, a being never knows when they might get wrapped up in the impossible nature of these events. More importantly, participants never know what they might get out of a vault opening. Rewards range from mind-bendingly powerful devices to gaining the goodwill and perhaps even the friendship of an Archon—and, of course, an adventure that can make someone famous across the Crucible.

Famous Matches, Favorites, and Rivalries

Not all vault battles are equal. Some become well known for how long they lasted, such as the slugfest between the Archons Uriel the Crimson and Maxcorra (aka the Satellite Genius) at the Golden Vault within the glistening caverns of Echo Deep, an exciting back-and-forth contest that lasted nearly a month. Other matches gain notoriety—especially among Brobnar—for their sheer level of ferocity. Few beings will forget when the giant called Earthshaker made a perfect hammer swing and sent Commander Remiel of Sanctum so high into the air he didn't land for three days and couldn't recall who he was for another week after that.

Members of the Church of the Opened Eye are not afraid of violence; however, it is not violence that makes them cheer over a vault battle. Instead, a nobly fought duel draws their accolades, even more so when the glories of the Knights of the Sanctum ensure that their side comes out on top. Conversely, fair play and magnanimous deeds do nothing for Shadows followers, who favor guile over strength and appreciate a good backstabbing. Their favorite combatants can be from any species—like the noted Fox of the Spiral Region, the Archon dubbed Dubious Rex and their crafty mix of followers, and the shifty goblin Pingle who uses his cleverness to defeat brawn. Martians are notoriously less tolerant; they cheer wildly only for other martians, but they at least politely applaud for any beings who violently crush non-martians.

Vault battles are quite useful to observe, as they offer fascinating insight into both Archon powers and personalities. How these beings select and treat those fight on their behalf, as well the tactics they employ in the battle, is always worth very careful study.

Beings who are part of the wilderness faction known as Untamed are perhaps the least biased, for they support whichever side performs best. They also care little by which method victory is achieved, for they believe only in the survival of the fittest. The demons of Dis are among the most disturbing of species, for they typically do not care who wins or loses; however, they appear attracted to matches that induce great extremes of emotion, on which they feed. They are often seen at grudge matches and rivalries, for they can harvest the largest number of emotional highs and lows from such contests.

Rivalries abound among the Archons and the beings who follow them. One of the most famous rivalries is between Censorius (also known as Miss Onyx) and Argus the Supreme, dubbed "the Radiant" by his Sanctum followers. Such are their matches that many vaultheads wonder if the sparks that fly in their battles are indicative of something beyond merely opening vaults. The Archon known as the Child Who Unties Celebration is a Shadows favorite who has battled He Who Propagates Illusion, the Archon popular among Logos, several times. These battles are filled with deception, stealth attacks, logic bombs, and other underhanded tactics that make the victor impossible to determine until the vault is opened. Each region of the Local Group is likely to have its own rival fan bases as well, making events in local stadiums as full of bedlam as the action displayed in the vault battle.

Why do vault battles happen in the first place? No one can say. Some scholarchivists surmise that the battles are one of the ways the Architects test the Archons. Who knows, after all, why these godlike beings walk among mortals or what they expect to gain from such ventures. Others claim it is a plot to ensure the varied species learn how to work together. Vaultheads care little about such theories, preferring instead to cheer for the fantastic action that vault battles provide.

KEYS

When properly forged keys are used to open a vault, they typically disappear in a blaze of light. Some claim they are transmuted into energy, others believe that Archons absorb the Æmber into themselves, and a few speculate that the psychically imprinted matter is returned to the Architects for study. Strangely enough, more is known about the unused keys: the ones created by Archons who did not open the vault. Made with emotion-infused Æmber, they were created only for that one vault and can't open any other.

However, they are still made of purest Æmber and therefore can be used and reworked by those who have the power and knowledge to do so. Such items can bring a substantial price, especially if the match was a close one, for the added emotions of rage, frustration, and even the glorious exultations of the nearby winners help further empower the psychic substance. Items made from unused vault keys are especially favored by members of Logos, who extract from them mighty energies for use in machines and weaponry, while demons of Dis apparently seek them to feed upon the agony of defeat entrapped in the material. Yet another group, more zealous than all others, will pay exorbitant amounts for such artifacts as unused Æmber keys: vaultheads. For the most hardcore of fans, such a treasured piece of memorabilia is a prize that literally cannot be replicated.

ADVENTURES IN THE CRUCIBLE

There is no place like the Crucible, the busiest and most bustling world in the universe. It is the ultimate gold rush, a maelstrom of exploration, exploitation, and intrigue with surprises around every turn. Opportunities are as bountiful as the world's wonders, and adventure awaits those bold enough to seek it.

As Æmber is the most coveted of substances on this world, many quests revolve around it. As Æmber's full potential is still being explored, there is a nonstop scramble to devise wondrous new applications for it—or to steal such inventions from other developers.

The cutting edge of science slices further each day, and there are plenty who are willing to pay for the protection or procurement of the latest inventions. Some say the practitioners of arts that science can't explain are on a similar path, although others claim it is more like a collision course. Such is this world that there is often little to tell them apart.

An endless need for information drives much of the action. There are new lands to explore, new species to discover, and ancient ruins to research. The larger the community and the more species it incorporates, the more it is likely to be a den of interwoven intrigues and hidden alliances.

Across the Crucible, there are always mysteries to be solved as well. Who stole the hyper rail rifle from a Logos research center, and what does it have to with the new hole in the Molecular Mountains? Is it true that Dis have created a way to collapse entire cities into their underground pain cathedrals? What manner of illicit information is exchanged at the Silent Gala of the Frosted Lands? Many beings will pay handsomely for answers to questions like these, but who are they really, and what will they do with such knowledge?

Of course, not all adventures on the Crucible are convoluted mysteries; some are straightforward battles. There are always wrongs to right and injustice to punish, as the patchwork world has no central government. Resolving such conflicts can pay handsomely in Æmber as well as the feeling of Doing the Right Thing.

Danger is everywhere in the Crucible to go along with opportunity. From ravenous snufflegators and viscously vicious talonslime to engram-eating rogue AIs and reflectoids that can lurk in any mirrored surface, the threats make it imperative to stay on one's guard! Still, beings who lead an adventurous life on this world believe it is worth the risk, as it is always astonishing, surprising, and exciting.

Well, at least those who survive all say so…

Incredible adventures and mysterious intrigues? Sounds like just another day on the Crucible.
–Inka

CHAPTER 1: CHARACTER CREATION

In Secrets of the Crucible, you'll be playing one of the countless trillions of beings who live in this incredible world. You might be a robot musician looking for their big break in Spiretown, an elf private investigator making ends meet in Hub City, a discredited human researcher unleashing frightening new Æmber-based powers, a phyll agent covertly appraising new technologies at Quantum City, or some other character who could only exist on the Crucible. After all, this is a world where almost anything—and anyone—is possible.

This chapter is where you'll make your player character. We'll go through the process step-by-step as you fashion your new inhabitant. Your player character will be a cut above most other inhabitants, as you and your fellow players have great deeds to perform and exciting stories to create. So get ready to begin your adventures on the Crucible!

CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

This book is a supplement for the GENESYS Core Rulebook that lets you play roleplaying games using the science fantasy setting and the artificial world known as the Crucible. It may seem limiting to have just one world to use when the background is filled with superscience and fantastical aliens, but keep in mind that the Crucible is so gigantic that almost anything you can imagine probably exists there!

In this chapter, we provide all of the rules and information you'll need to build a character for this game in conjunction with the character creation rules that start on page 32 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook. To build a character, you follow the steps outlined here (which mirror the steps found in the Core Rulebook). If you'd like, skim through the rest of this book for character and background ideas. The **Diversity** section, on page 247 of **Chapter 7: The Game Master**, can be very useful, for example, in shaping player characters and their new group.

STEPS FOR CREATING CHARACTERS

SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE uses the GENESYS core system as its basis for creating characters. This chapter presents an addition to the GENESYS rules for character creation to allow you to create characters who are inhabitants of the Crucible. It includes a wide range of non-human species and careers that would probably only occur on this artificial world. You can even create your own unique species too!

To start creating your character, we recommend first coming up with a character concept. This gives you a good foundation for your character and can help guide you through all the choices that follow. Having a passing understanding of the KEYFORGE background can be useful at this stage, but it's not essential. Your Game Master can be a great resource not only for information on the setting but also for discussing character concepts.

Character creation can be broken down into seven steps, each one rounding out a different aspect of your character. These seven steps are the same as those in the GENESYS Core Rulebook. Some of the steps from the Core Rulebook are augmented by the material in SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE; for example, **Step 2** in this book replaces archetypes with new species, as well as rules that let you create uniquely original species too.

STEP 1: DETERMINE BACKGROUND

While all of the characters in this setting live somewhere on the Crucible, this doesn't mean they are all from the same place. The Local Group—just one region of the Crucible—contains countless metropolises. Hub City alone holds many hundreds of entirely different venues, from clumps of towering spirescrapers that support rarified lifestyles to the dangerous region known as the Lawless Zone. Even in wilderness areas, one character might have grown up by a Sanctum temple and embraced the compassionate views of the Church of the Opened Eye, while another might have been raised in a settlement next to a Mars outpost, making them continually reach for their weapons when something flies overhead. Yet another character might be a recent graduate of a Logos university who rarely reacts when energy beams flash or explosions detonate far too close.

Most inhabitants view the Crucible as their home, as it has been for many species for untold generations. Others, however, are newly arrived and are still amazed at the wonders they see every day. Your character might embrace their new home, or strive to retain the ways of their original culture even though they don't know whether it still survives somewhere out among the stars. How your character views the Crucible is also important; its artificial nature suggests there is a meaning for its existence (and likely your species' presence there), and everyone seems to have a theory about it. All of these should factor into your character's background.

I wonder how long it will take before we of the Alliance view this world as our home. How many generations? -Ingram, MD

Backgrounds can be as complex or simple as you like. Some players like to write an extensive history for their character that charts their life thus far, while others might only know they want to have a really cool cybernetic hand. In either case, a background forms the foundation upon which your character is built and will guide you through the steps that follow.

More information on backgrounds and how your character might view the Crucible can be found on page 22. If you're creating a new species using the rules on page 37, some of the results from the process may already be adding background information to a possible character.

Step 2: Select a Species

Once you have an idea of your character's background, the next step is deciding their species. The species profiled in this book replace the archetypes from the Genesys Core Rulebook, the better to represent the enormous variety of sentient life forms you can encounter in Secrets of the Crucible. This book contains eleven species, including rocky sylicates, incorporeal spirits, huge giants, insectoid krxix, and even humans. If you've created one or more new species using the rules on page 37, simply include these as additional species on the Crucible for everyone to select from—even if you don't decide to use your creation, another player might, after all. Your Game Master may even pick some of them as the basis for new NPCs as well!

Your choice of species determines your character's initial characteristics as well as some starting skills. Pre-made species options and information about them can be found starting on page 25.

Step 3: Choose a Career

Sometimes you choose a career; sometimes the career chooses you...

With a background concept and species still in mind, the next step is to choose a career. A number of careers are available to characters in Secrets of the Crucible, and each one determines the skills a character with that career starts off with. Their career and skills are key to a character's role in the group and to how they interact with the world through the rules system. However, careers are far from restrictive; within each, there is plenty of room to tailor your character to your own background concept. For instance, the Performer career might encompass a human flautist who can soothe even the most ferocious of creatures, a robot bard who adds infrasonic harmonies to their historical tales, a giant whose guitar doubles as her weapon, an actor who dabbles in espionage, or anything else that uses skills that focus on charisma and dexterity.

The career choices presented in Secrets of the Crucible replace the options found in the Genesys Core Rulebook. Full information on careers and the skills they provide can be found starting on page 57.

Don't I Know You From Somewhere?

If you're the GM, it can be useful for your group's characters to have existing relationships before play begins. This gives them a reason to get together—and could give them shared goals and allegiances as well—when they might otherwise be inclined to go their own ways or work against each other's plans (perhaps violently).

These connections do not need to be deep or binding. Perhaps the characters participated in the same vault battle (maybe even on opposing sides), escorted a merchant caravan on the way to Hub City, or got caught in a fluke portal near a Logos research facility. While you can help firm up these ties after the characters are more fully formed, it is worth it to put this idea in players' minds at the start so that they can work their PCs' connections into their backstories.

Step 4: Invest Experience Points

With your character's basic building blocks in place, the next step is to invest experience points. Your character's species determines how many experience points they have to spend. This step allows you to round out your character by increasing characteristics and skills, and even picking up a few talents before you start play.

Information on how to spend starting experience points can be found beginning on page 44 of the Genesys Core Rulebook. New skills and talents that you can spend these experience points on can be found starting on page 69 of this book, as well as listings of the skills and talents from the Core Rulebook that are used in this setting.

Step 5: Determine Derived Attributes

Now that your PC's final characteristic ratings and other statistics are in place, determined by your character's species, career, and where you invested your starting experience points, you can work out their derived attributes. These are their wound threshold, strain threshold, defense, and soak value.

Information on how to determine these derived attributes and on how they function in the game can be found on pages 45 and 46 of the Core Rulebook.

Step 6: Determine Motivation

A Motivation and its associated facets helps determine how your character responds to any given situation, how they react to surprises, how they deal with dangers and threats, and what drives them to succeed. The immensity of the Local Group, let alone the entirety of the Crucible, means there are innumerable Motivations at play among the millions of its species, cultures, and organizations.

Chapter 2: Organizations, starting on page 85, describes some of the Local Group's major factions and their beliefs; these can make for excellent sources of Motivations should you wish your character to belong to one of them. Alternatively, your PC might have rejected the goals and beliefs of an organization or evolved a new set of beliefs on their own. All of these can inspire excellent internal drives and outlooks for your character.

THE ÆMBIT

In Genesys, we refer to a generic "currency" when talking about how much things cost. In Secrets of the Crucible, that currency is the Æmbit (or simply "bit"), a small disc that is made from Æmber that has been psychically imprinted to "feel" like money, no matter the species or culture. There are other currencies on the Crucible, but few are as widely used. PCs can always assume Æmbits are valid wherever they go.

How Motivations work and lists of Motivations to choose from can be found starting on page 46 of the Genesys Core Rulebook.

Step 7: Choose Gear, Appearance, and Personality

Lastly, you should round out your character by choosing their gear and determining their appearance and personality. We have updated rules for starting gear that replace the rules found in the Core Rulebook. When building a character, you start with 1,000 units of currency (we call them "Æmbits" here on the Crucible) to spend on personal gear. See **Chapter 3: Equipment and Vehicles**, on page 135, for more on the types of gear your character can have.

Your character may keep any money you don't spend. In addition, after you've finished purchasing starting gear, roll 1d100 (see page 11 in the Genesys Core Rulebook). Add the value of the dice roll to any remaining starting funds. This represents "pocket money" that your character has on hand.

Alternatively, you can select the starting gear and currency that comes with each career. This can speed up character creation if you'd like to use this package instead of selecting separate gear items.

You should also determine your character's appearance and personality, if you haven't already. These are completely up to you (although we do have some helpful guidelines on page 51 of the Genesys Core Rulebook), and they determine how the rest of the group and others on the Crucible see your character. Is your PC an outgoing being who delights in the latest Hub City fashions, or do they quietly honor their ancestors by only wearing the traditional garb of their home planet? Perhaps your PC is consumed with the latest Æmber research results, Shadows rumors, or expedition finds? Eager to try out new verses or recipes with friends, or to share the latest Spire-climbing and vault battle news? This type of information can help bring a character to life and makes a good character all the more memorable. You can find numerous ideas for character appearances, personalities, and other details from hairstyles and eye colors to valued mementos and behavior quirks, here as well: https://www.fantasyflightgames.com/en/products/genesys/.

With these steps complete, your character is ready to begin unveiling the Secrets of the Crucible to discover what this world has in store for them…

Like a, mate o' mine in the Eliminations Guild likes to say, "there's a reason it's called dressed to kill."
—Dodger

STEP 1: DETERMINE BACKGROUND

Characters on the Crucible have a huge range of backgrounds, given the plethora of species and cultures to be found on this world. In the many millions of years that it's been around (or so scholars and bards contend), countless civilizations, entire species, and lone individuals have arrived from elsewhere in the universe without pause. As your characters travel across the Crucible, they are sure to encounter new civilizations with their own ways and beliefs. Your characters may even adopt some of these ideas as their own as they go, or they may strive to keep to their own ways to honor their culture, whether it was brought to the Crucible or evolved on this world.

Many societies have existed on the Crucible for untold centuries, and their peoples can't imagine any other way of life than one on this world. This dichotomy allows us to divide backgrounds into two main types: ones of those who call the Crucible home, and ones of those who feel it's just their location. You can pick one or the other now to help guide the rest of character creation. Alternatively, you can come back to this section once you've created your character to add more flavor to their story.

You might even find yourself changing your mind as you go deeper into character creation. Instead of being a fresh arrival, for example, you may decide that your new species of telepathic fish has actually been on the Crucible for thousands of years and only arrived at the Local Group recently through an experimental saline portal. You might instead change your mind as you think a different background will make your character feel more fun to play—and that's a great reason to do so!

The Crucible as Home

As unusual as the Crucible might seem to you as a player, many characters should consider it to be quite normal. The vast majority of inhabitants, after all, have lived their entire lives there and can't imagine any other existence. It's the only home they know and has been home to their family for millennia or longer. The wonders of Æmber and the mysteries of the Archons, the limit of the Boundary and the infinity of the Spire—all of these are just regular parts of life. This doesn't reduce the excitement of encountering the fluctuating gravities of Featherweight Plains or traveling through the metallic Macis Swamp, though. As experienced as these beings are with the native wonders, it's hard to get completely jaded.

For such peoples, tales of their homeworld might be myth or simply forgotten. The Crucible is their world and their home—not just because they live there, but because they have always viewed it that way. It would surely take something powerful to make such a character think otherwise.

The Crucible as Location

Though they are a small fraction of the population, there are beings who don't view the Crucible as their home. Some are freshly arrived and still have vivid memories of their earlier life. Others are just a generation or two removed from their homeworld and know beings who still fondly remember life before the Crucible. Many belong to societies that have held onto their homeworld's culture, despite the wide variety of other cultures around them now. Many do this to preserve their culture's ways and resist outside influences, lest they forget their past. The xenophobic Elders of Mars, for example, keep the traditions of the Red Planet alive because they fear they could be the universe's last vestiges of the once-mighty Martian Empire. Others, like the giants of Brobnar, proudly work to preserve their native customs, just as the Architects have seemingly preserved so many life forms from across the universe.

For some of these beings, the Crucible is where they are now, but it is in no way home. They might be settled in and even comfortable with the surroundings, but in their heart (or the equivalent organ, mechanical device, etc.), they still feel a connection to their ancestral home somewhere out there among the stars.

How Does Your Character View the Crucible?

Whether your character views the Crucible as their home or not, they should probably have strong feelings about what this place means to them. Given that it's an artificial world populated with beings and creatures plucked from across the universe, nearly everyone believes the Crucible must have a greater meaning. These beliefs can launch both religions and scientific research. For some beings, their view of the Crucible drives most of their actions. For others, what the Crucible means to them is just something they ponder as they settle in for the night under an unfamiliar moon or while slowly hiking across the ruins of a lost empire.

TABLE 1–1: THE CRUCIBLE AND YOUR CHARACTER

D10 DICE ROLL	THE CRUCIBLE IS...
1	A challenge
2	A prison
3	An experiment
4	Spiritual growth
5	Societal development
6	A last chance
7	The afterlife
8	Evolution
9	A fresh start
10	It doesn't mean anything special

You can select one of the following viewpoints or roll a d10 on **Table 1–1: The Crucible and Your Character** to randomly pick one. Like determining your character's background, this may be something that you want to come back to later on as you flesh out your PC further. Of course, you can also create a new viewpoint that applies more specifically to your character and their species, career, and other aspects.

A Challenge

You believe that almost everything about the Crucible—from dealing with all the other species to just keeping your tech running—places obstacles in your path. It's all designed for endless struggle, and how beings deal with those obstacles tests them on a daily basis. The Architects have even created systems to encourage and manage conflicts: vault battles.

A Prison

No one is allowed to leave, so what else could the Crucible be if not a prison world? You may not understand why you're on this world (or know all too well), but it's a life sentence for all residents and their descendants. Some inhabitants could even secretly be prison wardens, especially those born there. Maybe the true nature of this world as a penitentiary is a hidden secret that the Crucible's Architects don't want anyone else to know about.

An Experiment

You think the Crucible's inhabitants are just laboratory rats, including the actual sentient rodents. Obviously, the Architects want to see what species and cultures thrive in this artificial environment and which ones don't. Perhaps it's to see which ones will be allowed to populate another universe or the one to follow this one. Or perhaps you're not the lab rats but just part of the environment, and the real test subjects are the Archons.

Spiritual Growth

You feel that the Crucible was designed as a place to elevate consciousness. Æmber was deliberately fashioned to be psychically reactive so that individuals can examine not only their own emotions but those of others. The mix of so many species and ways of thinking can only exist for beings to grow spiritually into better individuals and higher states of living.

Societal Development

You believe this world is a place where cultures learn how to interact with each other in ways that don't involve war and violence. With so many different beings all in one place, societies that can work peaceably with other groups can show that they are superior. Perhaps once they are sufficiently developed, they will be allowed back into the universe.

A Last Chance

You are convinced that the Architects are transporting species and cultures that are about to go extinct in order to preserve them. Everything that was yours is on the Crucible now; there is no returning home. Or perhaps the inhabitants are all just copies so a small captured aspect of some civilizations can survive.

The Afterlife

Everyone was wrong about post-death existence, and this is it. The Crucible might be the terminal destination or simply a way station before beings move on to some other plane of existence. This is why the Crucible is always getting new layers: as each layer fills up, it's closed off and processed while the following arrivals go to the next, larger layer.

Everyone has their own feelings on the matter. I recall the Brobnar chief Ironhead the Unstoppable's view that the Crucible is simply... "Fun!"

I, myself, personally think of the Crucible as my own personal laboratory, and all inside as my test subjects.

Evolution

Proper examination of the Archons' behavior, you contend, shows that the Crucible was built to help them to evolve into more powerful beings—perhaps even to become Architects themselves. Similarly, the Crucible helps other species evolve (or even mutate via Æmber) to incorporate improved forms and mentalities. Sentients who are no longer on the Crucible may have advanced beyond normal existence—or failed to evolve and required culling.

A Fresh Start

The Crucible provides everyone with a new beginning, and you believe that it offers a place where everyone can start fresh. On the Crucible, the past can be forgotten and new legends can be formed if you have the courage to embrace it.

It Doesn't Mean Anything Special

The universe is a big place, and the Crucible is just another weird thing among countless weird things. There's no special meaning to it other than what you make of it, so you make your existence as special as you can—just like you would anywhere else.

STEP 2: SELECT A SPECIES

One of the biggest differences between the Genesys Core Rulebook's character creation steps and those in Secrets of the Crucible occurs in **Step 2**. Players are not just choosing a type of human, as humanity is just one of an incalculable number of sentient species. Like archetypes, species define who a character is physically, and they also define a lot more of the character's background. Keep in mind that your character is only ever going to have one species; you won't be able to switch your character's species once you've started playing. (Well, unless your character gets hit by a genetic scrambler or something else really weird happens. Anything is possible on the Crucible, after all!)

You can pick one of the pre-made species starting on page 25, or use the **Create a Unique Species** rules on page 37 to fashion new species that you and others players can select for a character.

Each species comes with its own set of advantages and disadvantages that have both rules and roleplaying effects. No matter how you choose a species, you should consider how it will work with your character's background. You may want to discuss your chosen species with your GM as well, to ensure it will fit into their campaign plans and with the rest of the group. Some of the most interesting groups and adventures, though, include a mix of species. What initially seems like it could cause problems might instead give rise to a more enjoyable campaign, as sentient "fish out of water" and beings who don't coexist well can inspire particularly interesting roleplaying.

Elf

Elves occupy many niches on the Crucible, both virtuous and nefarious. They typically belong to a tribe and are deeply committed to ensuring its survival above all else. Many achieve this through means that others would consider underhanded or even reprehensible, as elves believe anything is honorable as long as their tribe continues. These deeds have branded elves with a reputation for being duplicitous or sneaky, though many elves view such activities as simply using what talents they have for the greater good of their own people.

Elves are naturally nimble, quick, and always alert for danger. They are typically smaller than humans, and their skin colors include ghostly white, midnight black, and various shades of blue and purple. Their pupilless eyes shimmer with a golden hue.

Why Play an Elf?

Elves have a knack for making the best of any situation. They aren't natural fighters, but they somehow survive most scraps. Their nimbleness extends to social situations; even when caught in the middle of a theft, they can often talk their way out of the situation or shift the blame elsewhere. Most elves believe virtually any action is correct if it is important to their tribe's survival. If the idea of playing a character who is naturally sneaky, morally fluid, and adroit in almost any situation appeals to you, then elf is the species for you.

Species Abilities

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 8 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 12 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 95
- **Starting Skills:** An elf starts with one rank in Knowledge (Culture) and one rank in either Deception *or* Stealth. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Always Comes Out on Top:** Once per session, after an elf makes a check or is the target of a check, you may spend one Story Point to cancel ⊛ or ⊗ from the result.

Elven Tribes of the Crucible

There are many tribes of elves on this patchwork world. Here are but a few:

Cmizz: The Cmizz rule far to the north of Hub City and see their tribe as the true pinnacle of elven culture.

Jzoll: This tribe is found almost exclusively on Bone Island, where the natural isolation of Indigo Lake has allowed it to flourish unimpeded.

Kvenn: Few outsiders associate with this tribe, which dwells along a string of active volcanoes in the lower reaches of the Local Group.

Svarr: Perhaps the most well-known (or at least infamous) tribe, the Svarr dominate the organization some call Shadows.

Zvokk: These elves have embraced the organization known as Untamed and dominate one uncanny forest called the Purple Tangle.

Giant

Giants are massive, exceptionally powerful beings, many of whom reach three meters in height. Their nature is as extreme as their forms; giants are as quick to boom out a laugh as they are to launch themselves into a frothing rage. Giants are incredibly social creatures, although this social nature tends to manifest as some combination of constant jeers, threats, and deafening roars. Whether to bully or simply to have someone bear witness to their superiority, they feel the need to have others around them, and they usually become sullen and despondent when left alone too long. A lone giant, as the saying goes, is a lonely giant.

As the Brobnar like to say, "the only bad fight is the one you missed."

Because they might otherwise all too frequently kill one another attempting to establish clear leaders, they often use the appearance of strength rather than physical confrontation to establish dominance. This leads giants to pursue acquisition of the largest weapons, the armor with the most spikes, the fiercest mechanical augmentics, or enough scars to look as though they must have already died and ascended to Vanhalla, all to lessen the frequency of lethal challenges. After all, if a giant weren't tough enough to keep such gear, a stronger giant would've come along and taken it.

Giants usually wear what they want. This is mostly a mix of armor slabs, huge spikes, and crude yet powerful cybernetics, They also favor tattoos along with face and body paint to honor their forebears, hopefully assume the power of various beasts, or promote their favorite bands. They are rarely found without weapons, usually huge axes or hammers amplified with energy blasters, jet engines, explosives, or other subtle refinements.

For a giant, subtlety might mean skipping the tenth round of Æmbrew before setting themself on fire with screaming fireworks and charging into a platoon of martians. Or deciding against strapping the eleventh robotic skull on their favorite rocket axe, because "maybe it's too clanky." Or sounding a savage, Crucible-shattering roar of joy each and every time they belch.

Why Play a Giant?

Giants are gregarious, raucous, and as subtle as an earthquake. These unpretentious beings are happiest when they are part of a roaring fight or an even louder festival, or when carousing after a roaring fight at a loud festival. That doesn't mean they don't appreciate sciences or the arts—just that the nature of their appreciation usually involves high explosives and volcanic eruptions. If you find the idea of playing a towering pillar of strength who lives for extremes and to always challenge themselves against others to be appealing, a giant is the species for you.

Species Abilities

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
3	2	1	2	2	2

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 12 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 8 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 90
- **Starting Skills:** A giant starts with one rank in Knowledge (Culture), plus one rank in Melee *or* two ranks in Resilience. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Size Matters:** A giant is silhouette 2 and increases their encumbrance threshold by 2.
- **Mighty Roar (and Mightier Breath):** When an engaged opponent makes a check targeting a giant, as an out-of-turn incidental the giant may suffer 2 strain and add ■ ■ to the dice pool.

Goblin

Like elves, goblins are generally diminutive and quick. The similarity, however, essentially ends there. Goblins are almost universally tough and hardy; in their own way, they are more akin to the exceptionally loud and violent giants than to the subtle elves.

Most goblins have blue- or purple-hued skin stretched taut over an angular face and long, sinewy arms. The wild and flowing tufts of brightly colored hair on their extremities give them the appearance of having just received large electrical shocks. Their appearance fits well with their unruly social behavior and wildly antagonistic approaches to many situations—approaches they often employ just to see what will happen. When a spark is needed to launch a conflict, goblins are quick to provide the Æmber and flint. Fortunately, their resilient nature helps them survive when things go bad.

Goblins are quite competitive and are among the most prominent gamblers on the Crucible. They are very adaptable too—a trait that has become an essential aspect of many Crucible cultures. Adept engineers, they especially delight in constructing explosives of all types. Unfortunately, most also disdain test protocols, blueprints, and trial runs. Instead, they tend toward a "Let's try it and find out!" method of invention.

Surprisingly, their creations and upgrades actually work slightly more often than they explode. Perhaps also surprisingly, given how easily goblins are dismissed by other species due to their diminutive size, an unusual number of goblins serve as respected shamans and other leadership positions. Many beings tend to underestimate them, and so goblins tend to surprise friends and foes alike with unexpected expertise.

Why Play a Goblin?

Despite their reputation for instigating chaos, goblins are actually quite valiant and brave in some ways. One has to be, after all, when flying an untested Æmber-powered jetpack past the redline or corralling a herd of angry grumpus. Many goblins are drawn toward roles as valued engineers or religious leaders, but they can be found in almost any function. If you like the idea of playing a character who's willing to take risks and push the boundaries, then a goblin is for you.

Species Abilities

1	2	3	3	2	1
Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 8 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 95
- **Starting Skills:** A goblin starts with one rank in either Mechanics *or* Skulduggery. They obtain this rank before spending experience points, and this skill may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **More Upset than Injured:** Once per session when a goblin suffers wounds, you may spend a Story Point to convert any number of those wounds to half that number of strain (rounding up).

Human

Humans are but one of countless species on the Crucible, and while they show great adaptability in almost every location and culture, their numbers are still a minute fraction of the artificial world's gigantic population. For most other beings, humans seem blandly non-specific—which, ironically, may be the strongest asset humans have on this patchwork world.

On the Crucible, humans are, in fact, average at many things. As a result, they have learned how to augment themselves in myriad ways. They avoid becoming dependent on any one tool or device, remaining open to new developments for new environments. They apply this attitude to social environments as well, joining in with carousing giants and preaching spirits alike. Some beings might dismiss humans as fickle and mercurial, lacking the anchor of any real permanent identity. But humans continue forward and show no signs of stopping.

Boring old humans. It doesn't help that they all look alike, too.

Why Play a Human?

Humans might seem rather normal characters to play, but on the Crucible, they are just as weird and unsettling as every other species. They come in all sorts of colors and sizes, most are disturbingly symmetrical, and they even consume food through the same opening they use for respiration! Most humans have only two arms and legs, and everyone knows that endoskeletons are *so* out of style. Nevertheless, humans can make places for themselves in a wide range of organizations. If you enjoy a jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none type, then playing a human could be your cup of tea.

Species Abilities

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 10 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 110
- **Starting Skills:** A human starts with one rank in each of two non-career skills at character creation. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Ready for Anything:** Once per session as an out-of-turn incidental, you may move one Story Point from the Game Master's pool to the players' pool.

HUMANOID VARIANTS

If you like, you can alter your human PC with some minor changes to create new species, like the ones below. Feel free to work with your GM to invent new ones, perhaps using parts of the **Create a Unique Species** rules on page 37.

Species: Bathyics
Description: Gilled water breathers
New Ability: Amphibious (can breathe underwater and move through water without penalty)
Starting XP: 105

Species: Fzoont
Description: Naturally buoyant beings with gravity-repellent flesh
New Ability: Hoverer (can hover, as per the **Flying** sidebar on page 100 of the Core Rulebook)
Starting XP: 100

Species: Morren
Description: Subterranean cave dwellers
New Ability: Dark Vision (when making skill checks, remove up to ■ ■ imposed due to darkness)
Starting XP: 105

Krxix

The insectoid krxix have lived on the Crucible for at least several millennia. They can be found both in large cities and in their own mountainous hives reminiscent of the ones on their home planet of Krxix-Ix. While they are mostly humanoid in shape, krxix have a large head featuring compound eyes and twin antennae. They have two sets of arms, each arm ending in three clawed fingers, and they have a colorful, segmented exoskeleton. Their appearance is initially unsettling even to the extremely cosmopolitan inhabitants of Hub City, but krxix are naturally so overwhelmingly friendly that most beings soon forget their looks and buy them a bowl of bubbling sucrale.

Krxix are known for communal living; on their native world they shared everything so efficiently and completely that they achieved an intense population density. Their lifespans are relatively short, which they never realized until they met other species on the Crucible. While this was unpleasant to learn, their relocation opened up their species to a wider range of experiences. Many krxix have leapt at the opportunity to discover as much as they can about this artificial world.

Krxix communicate both through sound and by altering the colors in their iridescent eyes to convey meaning. As a result, their spoken words can often be confusing or off-putting until the listener realizes their eyes have a "sarcasm" or "joke" hue.

Like many other species, the krxix were astonished by the crash of the SAV *Quantum* onto the Crucible a short time ago. They were even more astonished to see fellow krxix among the crew. This discovery has led many krxix to embark on explorations to see if more of their species can be found elsewhere on this world.

Why Play a Krxix?

While many species view nearly everything as a possible threat, krxix are always open to new contacts. This doesn't make them naïve or ready to overlook hazards, though—they simply are geared to think the best of everyone until proven otherwise. They are also always ready to share with others, as that is almost ingrained in their genetic material due to their having evolved in crowded hive environments. If you would like to play a character who is eager to meet new beings and to explore new settings, playing a krxix may be right for you.

Species Abilities

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 9 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 9 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 90
- **Starting Skills:** A krxix starts with one rank in both Charm and Negotiation. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Extra Limbs:** A krxix can perform a second maneuver during their turn without suffering strain or giving up their action, but they can never perform more than two maneuvers during their turn.
- **What They Meant to Say:** Once per session after a krxix or an ally makes a social skill check, you may spend one Story Point to convert ⊗ to ⟲.

Martian

Martians are green beings of nonspecific gender with huge, black, monochromatic eyes and a disproportionally large head. The martians on the Crucible appear to have two distinct subspecies: taller beings with heightened intellect, known as Elders, and smaller beings with a strong propensity for violence, called Soldiers. The Elders dominate Martian society and control the more numerous Soldiers throughout their lives, from cloning chamber to the grave. It is clear (to the Elders, at least) that their species was brought to the Crucible to ensure it survives forever. The martians see conquest of the Crucible as the best way to guarantee this happens.

Not all martians agree with such an existence, however. There are those who have abandoned barracks and battlefields or have quit laboratories or ruling chambers, and now seek independent lives free of the intolerance of central command at Nova Hellas. Some have even grown to appreciate other cultures, frequenting everything from their popular musical acts to their holovid events, and work with beings of other species to achieve common goals—all utterly anathema to loyalists of the Red Planet.

Why Play a Martian?

Martians are, on the whole, fixated with weaponry of all sorts and excel at transforming almost anything, from genetically engineered creatures to towering walking machines, toward that function. The more martian deserters encounter other species and cultures, though, the more they broaden their interests. If it sounds interesting to play a technologically sophisticated character who is devoted to preserving what may be the last vestiges of their lost planet and is open to working with (and possibly even enjoying) other cultures, then a martian might be for you.

Martian Soldier

Martian Soldiers are designed and bred to serve the Martian Empire—more specifically, to serve as its warriors. From decanting, each is trained in all aspects of warfare and how to best serve the ruling Elders. This includes extensive neural and emotional indoctrination, though this sometimes fades if it is not constantly reinforced. In their duties, Soldiers may be assigned to scout for new invasion opportunities, act as bodyguards, defend Martian outposts from anything or anyone deemed hostile, and, of course, roam the Local Group in their ubiquitous flying saucers. Some Soldiers, though, manage to abandon their militaristic lives to make their own way and find their own goals.

Species Abilities

1	3	2	2	2	1
BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 8 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 8 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 110
- **Starting Skills:** A Martian Soldier starts with one rank in Ranged *or* two ranks in Operating *or* two ranks in Piloting. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Size Doesn't Matter:** A Martian Soldier is silhouette 0.
- **Zap! Zap! Zap!:** As an out-of-turn incidental, a Martian Solider may spend ⚙ from their check to determine Initiative to ready a Ranged weapon and then use that weapon to make a Ranged combat check with the difficulty upgraded once.

Martian Elder

Tall and proud, Martian Elders know they carry the burden of ensuring the survival not only of their species, but of their culture as well. Those who have forsaken Nova Hellas still believe this but seek other ways to accomplish their goals. Many Elders are obsessed researchers, especially concerning robotics and genetics. According to the latest rumors, they are close to unlocking psychic abilities in martians, a worrisome rumor if true.

Species Abilities

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
1	1	3	2	3	2

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 7 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 11 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 95
- **Starting Skills:** A Martian Elder starts with one rank in Knowledge (Culture), and either one rank in Discipline *or* two ranks in Knowledge (Science). They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **All Part of My Scheme!:** Once per session, when a Martian Elder makes a check you may spend a Story Point to add ⬡ ⬡ ⬢ to the check. The Martian Elder must explain how that check is essential to their latest convoluted plot.

DESERTERS AND LOYALISTS

The Martian Solider and Martian Elder characters in this section represent those martians who have deserted (or rejected) Nova Hellas and the dictates of the Martian Empire. Separated from the Empire and its dictates, they are seeking other ways to live and thus would fit better into most groups and their adventures.

You can also play a loyalist martian PC using these same profiles, but we suggest discussing this with the GM to ensure that having such an antagonistic and xenophobic character in the group won't disrupt the game.

Don't call them deserters. I met one at Horizon who was emphatic on this. "We are the true warriors for the Red Planet," they cried. "We fight for martians, not an Empire."

Phyll

Phyll are sentient plants who can be found almost anywhere on the Crucible in a variety of roles and settings, from lush floral vistas to urban spirescrapers. Theories as to their origins abound: many beings hold they must hail from multiple worlds given the wide variety of their forms, which can include masses of ambulatory vines, sedentary trees, humanoid stalk-bushes, and even fast-moving, carnivorous beings as deadly as any hungry snufflegator. Despite this, a few beings believe the original phyll all arrived on the Crucible at the same time, their different forms emerging over time through natural evolution—though using the word "natural" on a constructed world is likely suspect. Some of the more common types of phyll have evolved a single reddish sensory organ to emulate vision. Many also carry tanks of Æmber-infused liquids to ensure they have sources of vital nutrients, and even decorate these containers as a sign of status.

Most phyll find the artificial nature of the Crucible disconcerting, even after having existed on it for untold millennia with no other way of life to act as a comparison. They can feel deep in their roots that something is not right, a feeling that most have learned to ignore but is always present. Phyll who try to explain this feeling to other species eventually give up, finding no suitable common experience to equate it to. Despite this, phyll tend to get along quite well with other species on the Crucible as they rarely compete for the same resources and often have outlooks the other wouldn't consider.

Knowing their world is artificial hasn't stopped the phyll from embracing its wonders fully. They're likely to weep sap uncontrollably at sunsets, stand in awe before the crashing waves of an ocean, or become utterly entranced by the beauty of the smallest of creatures.

Why Play a Phyll?

No matter their form, most phyll enjoy travel and exploration, though for some, travel is merely a way to find a more suitable location to settle down in (literally) and start a lush jungle of their own. They are quite hardy: most can survive on nothing but water and sunlight for extended periods of time, and many can go dormant for months or even years if required. If you'd like to play a species that views the Crucible in ways few others do and seeks out fresh new experiences, then phyll might be the best species for you.

Species Abilities

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 11 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 100
- **Starting Skills:** A phyll starts with one rank in Survival *or* Resilience. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Perennial Survivor:** When a phyll suffers a Critical Injury, they only add +5 to the results for each Critical Injury they are currently suffering from, rather than +10. They also ignore the effects of the Vicious quality when hit by an attack.

Robot

Given the highly technological nature of many areas of the Crucible, it is no wonder that sentient robots not only exist but thrive on it. The Crucible is artificial, after all, and robots feel that their artificial intelligence is perfect for the world. Almost all "meatbrains" would argue this point, but robots say this is just another example of organic bias.

Robots come in endless forms, the programmed nature of their sentience being their only common link. Some are iron-plated behemoths; others are composed of smooth, brushed metal or liquid polymers; and still others are masses of exposed gears, wires, and sockets. Many robots view cyborgs as a "good first step," but they tend to view them with suspicion, as even the most enhanced cyborg still originated organically. Despite their non-organic physiologies, robots can be altered through exposure or consumption of Æmber and in general are able to use it just like other sentients.

Most robots are created for a purpose and each is suitably equipped to perform the requisite tasks. Molecular scanners, anti-rad plating, laser welders, public address systems, and virtually any other imaginable loadouts are the stock of robots. Some are even designed to transmogrify themselves into small vehicles or faux animals to better blend into their settings, something they find utterly demeaning.

Why Play a Robot?

Robots each have their own life goals, personality, and preferences. Some can perfectly emulate emotions (or possess them, though the distinction is probably moot). They rarely require rest, respiration, or even fuel, depending on their design and battery lifespan, and they can survive in environments that would be lethal to organics. If you cherish a challenging roleplaying experience that can set you apart from other players, then playing a robot will be right up your alley.

Species Abilities

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 10 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 175
- **Initial Programming:** After selecting their career, a robot may train one rank in six of the eight career skills (instead of the usual four).
- **Glories of Metal:** A robot doesn't need to eat, sleep, or breathe and are unaffected by toxins and poisons. They do not reduce their strain threshold when they receive cybernetics (for a robot, cybernetics represent upgraded mechanical components instead of true cybernetics).
- **Inorganic:** Since robots are inorganic, they don't gain the benefits of having wounds healed with a Medicine check (though the heal-x gear item from page 149 also works on them). Robots can heal wounds and strain naturally by resting, as their systems attempt self-repairs. Robots can also be healed by using the Mechanics skill instead of the Medicine skill but otherwise following the rules in the **Medical Care** section on page 116 of the Genesys Core Rulebook. A robot also increases its soak by one.

It's usually best to assume every plant and machine you meet is sentient until proven otherwise.
—Inka

Saurian

Saurians are bipedal, humanoid beings, each of whom can trace their lineage back to ancient Earth dinosaurs that were brought to the Crucible millions of years ago. Over long eons, the creatures evolved into sentience and created their own cultures and civilizations. Like their ancestral forebears, saurians are reptilian in form. They take great pride in their vibrantly colored scales, horns, and feathers, which they like to groom and display for other saurians.

These beings believe theirs to be among the oldest still-existing sentient species on the Crucible, and they may be correct. Certainly, they can trace their lineage further back than most, and they are one of the few species known to have evolved to self-awareness on this world rather than on their home planet.

Rather full of themselves, but their historical records are unmatched. Their views concerning their own history, though, are very biased. -Dr. Escotera

Saurian society has undergone eras of power and conquest that turned to near-anarchic savagery, and most of them believe such cycles are natural for their species. Their city-states within the Local Group are certainly wondrous examples of both technologies and philosophies. There are many saurian expeditions across this region and beyond to seek out others of their kind, which have also served to spread saurian ideals to new areas.

Why Play a Saurian?

As these beings like to tell all other species, saurians probably represent one of the pinnacles of evolution on the Crucible. Even when saurians are without their highly advanced technology, their natural assets can see them through most challenges. Their boasting has not, of course, endeared them to other species, in the Local Group and saurians often struggle with diplomatic and social niceties.

Saurians' roles in major metropolitan centers, such as Hub City, have suffered as a result, though their advanced technologies still make them valued trading partners for those who can stomach their braggadocio. If the idea of playing a character descended from ancient dinosaurs who can be as strong and intelligent as they are arrogant appeals to you, then you need look no further than saurian.

Species Abilities

3	2	3	1	2	1
BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 11 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 85
- **Starting Skills:** A saurian starts with one rank each in Knowledge (Culture), Knowledge (Crucible), and Resilience. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Evolved Arrogance:** Once per session, when a saurian makes a successful opposed check, you may spend a Story Point to have the saurian heal all strain they are currently suffering.

Spirit

In a world filled with bizarre sentients, spirits certainly stand out. Unlike organic or even inorganic beings, spirits have no physical body. Each is made of energy of an unknown type and often appear as luminous forms.

Stories of spirits' origins vary as much as the colors they can manifest (many of which flow into spectra not visible without expensive equipment). The spirits of Sanctum, for example, say that they came to be at the very moment of their glorious Enlightenment. Each Sanctum spirit arises, they claim, from an act of extreme selflessness or righteousness—an act so noble that it makes the being transcend physical form and burst forth with eternal light. Other beings who could also be classified as spirits maintain they are artificial constructs who always existed on the Crucible. Other spirits state they are simply another species brought to this world long ago and who wander the impossible breadth of this world seeking new interests through which to stave off boredom. There are many other tales, all equally improbable, yet all equally possible.

What is known about spirits is that in order to interact normally with the physical world, they need to wear containment suits, which can look like anything from heavy armor to simple robes. Without these, it is a major effort for them just to lift a pebble or turn a page. For some spirits, life without a containment suit is perfectly acceptable, as they loathe the mundane harshness of corporeal life. For others, wearing the suits serves only to remind them of the vast gulf that exists between them and other sentients on the Crucible.

Why Play a Spirit?

While every spirit is unique unto itself, it is difficult for those outside their species to differentiate between individuals. Therefore, it is in the choices a spirit makes for their containment suit that hints of their personality tend to shine through. They might favor a suit of gleaming silver, enveloping vines and roots, networks of force-containment stones, or even ordinary clothing. If the idea of playing a character that is a manifestation of pure energy, possibly with a long-forgotten past or mysterious origin, appeals to you, then a spirit might be the one for you.

Species Abilities

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
1	2	2	2	3	2

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 7 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 12 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 90
- **Starting Skills:** A spirit starts with one rank in either Discipline *or* Perception. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Incorporeal:** Your character lacks corporeal presence. When your character makes Brawn- or Agility-based checks, increase the difficulty by two. When a corporeal character makes a Brawn- or Agility-based check targeting your character, increase the difficulty by two. Your character increases their soak by their Willpower (in addition to their Brawn). Your character can move through most mundane types of difficult and impassable terrain without penalty (but cannot stop inside solid surfaces). None of the preceding effects of this rule apply while your character is wearing armor. In addition, your character does not need to eat, breathe, or sleep.

Are they possibly immortal? I met one in a forest west of us, who merely smiled when I asked and said to ask them again a millennium from now.

Sylicate

Sylicates are sentient beings of stone and minerals who lack organic flesh and carbon-based physiologies. Most of whom have a core of glowing energy; sometimes stone and minerals almost completely obscure the core, with only the being's shining eyes revealing their inner energy. Other sylicates have an exposed core with layers of rock flowing around it. Still others are quite solid, while a few are quasi-colloids made of sand and liquid that somehow hold their form. Almost all are vaguely humanoid, though smaller pebblings are shapeless shards who can bounce and even float about in the air until they achieve enough mass to form legs. As they age, many sylicates grow vibrant crystals along their body.

Sometimes best to assume the same for the rocks as well...

Most sylicates are quite durable. This high level of resiliency still may not have been enough on their homeworld, a place sylicates refuse to speak of other than to mention eternal volcanic eruptions and unending acidic storms.

Possibly as a result, sylicates seem to love the new world they are on. They are almost universally easygoing, with lifespans that are extraordinarily long. There are tales of sylicates who feel the need to rest for a while and so lie down for a few hundreds of years. Others, the truly ancient ones, sit and simply grow in size as they allow their accumulated wisdom and experience to seep into the ground below. Many mountains are believed to be such sylicates, and smaller hills the gestation places from which one day new sylicates will emerge.

Why Play a Sylicate?

While one might assume sylicates are as stoic as the stones they're composed of, the opposite is in fact true. Many are free-spirited and animated who love to explore the Crucible and its wildly varying terrain. Sylicates do not need to eat in the strictest sense, as they simply absorb the necessary nutrients from the ground beneath them. However, they adore the taste of rare silts and sands and are quite enamored with meals of braised volcanic glass and freshly squeezed diamonds. If the idea of playing a character who is as solid as a mountain—and looks quite a lot like one, too—appeals to you, then sylicates are your species.

Species Abilities

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
3	1	2	2	2	2

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 11 + Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 10 + Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 95
- **Starting Skills:** A sylicate starts with one rank each in Knowledge (Culture), Cool, and Survival. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Tough as Rock:** Decrease the difficulty to heal any Critical Injuries a sylicate is suffering from by one (Hard becomes Average, Average becomes Easy, and so on). A sylicate doesn't suffer the normal penalties for making a Medicine check to heal their own wounds or Critical Injuries.

Create a Unique Species

The Crucible is home to an endless number of species—quite literally, as new species continually arrive and others evolve on this artificial world. The species depicted and described throughout this book and in other KeyForge products only scratch the surface of its inhabitants. Using the rules in this section, you can create new, unique character species for your games. Once created, these new species become new options for species selection that all players can draw from. If one player creates a really cool species and someone else (or even everyone else) wants to use it as well, that's great!

As a player, you have two options for creating a new species. Before you begin, decide if you will randomly generate a unique species or custom design it. It can be fun if the entire group decides to use the same approach, but that isn't necessary. Talk with the other players, including the GM, and decide what works for your group and your campaign. Once a player creates a new species, it may become a larger part of your ongoing campaign, outside of the particular PC for which a player selected it—after all, there is probably a sizeable enclave of the species somewhere on the Crucible.

The two methods for creating a unique species are random generation and custom design.

- **Random Generation:** Proceed through the ten steps of species creation, rolling in turn on each table and applying the results to the species. You may choose to reroll one result, on any one table, during the process. Ignore the XP cost listed for the results; when rolling randomly, you don't deduct anything from your species' starting XP. Species created this way are unpredictable and are not balanced the way Genesys species normally are. The species might end up with something stronger or weaker than its starting XP reflects. If the new species seems subpar—well, life on the Crucible isn't always fair to all its inhabitants. This may make it an attractive choice to some players who seek a challenging character to use.
- **Custom Design**: Proceed through the ten steps of species creation like above, but instead choosing a result from each table (except during **Step 10: Starting XP**). Make a note of the XP adjustment for each result; you will add or deduct this from the species' starting XP. This approach results in a species balanced like those that appear later in this chapter and in other Genesys books, with a starting XP value determined by their inherent strengths and weaknesses.

STORY FIRST!

These rules exist to help you create interesting, unique, and fun species for your game. Particularly with random generation, you may end up with results that don't seem to go well together or an option that undercuts the core premise you've established for the species. In cases like this, talk with your GM about how to reconcile these results to make for a species you will enjoy playing. This isn't to say that the species shouldn't have downsides, nor should it be an excuse to throw out random results you wouldn't have chosen—that's what the custom design option is for! But it is perfectly in keeping with the spirit of the game, and the species creation rules in particular, for your GM to modify rules and make judgment calls for the good of the campaign.

The Starting Profile

All species start with the same profile, which you then modify as you progress through the following steps. When creating a species, begin with a value of 2 in all six characteristics. The species' wound and strain thresholds are 10 + Brawn and 10 + Willpower, respectively.

If you are custom designing a species, it begins with 110 starting XP, and you adjust this value as you progress through the steps of species creation. Options at each step include an XP adjustment, which factors in all the rules and profile changes included in that option. A negative adjustment reduces the species' starting XP, but positive adjustments, for detrimental rules and modifications, increase the species' starting XP.

A species cannot have a starting XP value below 65. If the options you chose bring the species XP lower than this, you'll need to change selections so that the starting XP is at least 65.

If you decide to randomly generate a species, even the starting XP is random. See page 55 for more information on starting XP. **Remember, you don't apply the XP adjustments for each step if you choose the random process.**

Develop the Species

Now that you have a baseline profile, progress through the following steps in order to create the species. This process, like so much in Genesys, is both narrative and "mechanical" (in terms of rules). As you generate or choose results from the following tables, you modify the species' profile and give it special rules and abilities, but you also learn just what the species is. Of course, these tables are only a starting point; they can't cover all the possibilities, and the results might not always seem to make sense. It's up to you (and your fellow players) to decide what these results mean as a whole.

If you are custom designing a species and don't see a result that matches your idea for a particular step, talk with the GM about it. There may be a simple descriptive way to make an existing result fit your concept or you can work together to create a new option.

One important note: **a species cannot begin with more than two ranks in any skill.** If you generate a result that would give the species a third rank in a skill, you should instead choose another appropriate skill for the species to gain one rank in.

Some of the beings I've seen around Quantum City defy everything we knew about how life develops. Just when we think we have a new grasp this matter, six new species drop by and we're back to square one.

Step 1: Form

A species' form dictates its overall shape or appearance, as chosen from or rolled on **Table 1–2: Form**. This step is purely aesthetic and doesn't dictate the result of any of the other steps of species development. While a species may appear very similar to a whale from Earth, that doesn't mean it moves by swimming or breathes air! It might slither across the ground or hover above it, and it might subsist on photosynthesis or the bioelectric fields of other beings and creatures.

Aerodynamic

The species is slim or seemingly lightweight and appears to be adapted for flight. Broadly, it resembles a bird, bat, or similar creature. The species likely has wings, whether or not they actually enable it to fly.

Amorphous

The species has no clear or consistent form. This might be due to a soft or malleable biology, constant transformations, or an unstable molecular structure.

TABLE 1–2: FORM

D100 Dice Roll	Result
01–15	Aerodynamic
16–20	Amorphous
21–30	Asymmetrical
31–45	Bestial
46–50	Bodiless
51–65	Humanoid
66–75	Hydrodynamic
76–85	Scuttler
86–95	Serpentine
96–00	Hybrid

Asymmetrical

Although not truly amorphous, this species utterly lacks any kind of symmetry. Its tangle of limbs, protrusions, segments, and other features may be fixed species-wide or may vary greatly between individuals.

Bestial

The species possesses a largely horizontal profile, with several limbs that support an elongated body or trunk (or appear to, anyway), not unlike a lizard, wolf, or bear.

Bodiless

Members of the species are utterly and totally without a body—in the traditional sense, anyway. They are essentially a brain, whether a biological organ, AI program, or lattice of pure neuroelectrical energy.

Humanoid

The species has two arms, two legs, and a head, all extending from a central trunk. It has a markedly vertical posture.

Hydrodynamic

The overall impression of this species is reminiscent of a fish or other aquatic creature. Its form might feature fins or flippers, bulbous eyes, or other hallmarks of sea life, and its overall shape could be anything from flat and sleek to rotund. Whether or not the species actually dwells in water or some other liquid environment, its evolutionary ancestors (or the beings who created it) almost certainly did.

Scuttler

Numerous appendages sprout from the body of this species, which might resemble an insect, crab, or other creature that crawls on the ground.

Serpentine

The species is long and slender, like a snake. This form doesn't preclude limbs but describes the overall shape of the species' body, central stalk, or other similar part.

Hybrid

This species is marked by a striking juxtaposition of two different forms. Roll or choose two results, rerolling duplicates of this result, and then decide how the species incorporates the two forms.

Step 2: Physiology

Physiology is a species' biology and anatomy, and is selected from or rolled on **Table 1–3: Physiology**. This step tells you what the species is made of and what sorts of organs and life processes it might have. A species' physiology is independent of its form. While a species with aerodynamic form and mammalian physiology might resemble an Earth bat, an aerodynamically formed being with a mineral physiology is sure to be quite different!

Artificial

Not all species come about through strictly biological evolution. Whether it was created by others, was the result of millions of years of self-upgrading and replication, or came about through even stranger means, this species bears all the hallmarks of a machine.

The species gains +2 wound threshold, –2 strain threshold, and the Artificial rule.

- **Artificial:** Members of this species are artificial constructs. They do not need to eat, sleep, or breathe, and they are unaffected by toxins and poisons. They do not gain the benefits of healing wounds from a Medicine check. They can be "healed" by using the Mechanics skill instead of the Medicine skill but otherwise follow the rules in the **Medical Care** section on page 116 of the Genesys Core Rulebook. Mechanical characters can heal wounds and strain naturally by resting, as their systems attempt self-repairs. Cybernetics do not reduce the species' strain threshold (the cybernetics represent upgraded mechanical components instead of true cybernetics).

Table 1–3: Physiology

D100 Dice Roll	Result	XP Adjustment
01–10	Artificial	–5
11–20	Avian	–25
21–25	Fleshy	+10
26–35	Floral	+10
36–40	Gaseous	+15
41–50	Incorporeal	–20
51–60	Insectoid	–10
61–70	Mammalian	+0
71–80	Mineral	–10
81–90	Piscine	–10
91–00	Reptilian	+5

Avian

This species is a carbon-based animal with biology like that of a bird, including a light or hollow endoskeleton. It might or might not have feathers or a beak or be capable of flight. Some avian beings may also present characteristics commonly associated with reptiles.

The species gains +1 Agility and –2 wound threshold.

Fleshy

The species doesn't have any bones at all. It likely has a simple but robust biology similar to that of mollusks. Such beings are often underestimated by so-called "more evolved" species, but their minimal organs can grant an impressive degree of survivability and versatility.

The species gains +4 wound threshold and –1 Brawn.

Floral

The species is a variety of plant or fungus. Most plants grow throughout their lives, and many can spring back to life after long dormant periods. They can also be quite resilient. Not all floral life forms are restricted by root systems or other anchorage, but their mobility and speed are generally lower than those of animals.

The species gains +2 strain threshold and –1 Agility.

Gaseous

The species is a gas—or something similar, like a floating bubble of liquid—that maintains a certain degree of coherence rather than expanding to fill its space. This results in a relatively consistent size and shape for the gaseous cloud, although it can easily fit through narrow gaps. By its nature, the species does not breathe in the traditional sense, although its chemical composition might rely on certain atmospheres for stability. Also, it might need to watch out for other beings and creatures that could breathe it in!

The species gains –1 Brawn and the Gaseous rule.

- **Gaseous:** This species can never suffer from suffocation (see page 112 of the Genesys Core Rulebook). The species' silhouette is determined normally (see **Table 1–4: Silhouette**, on page 42), but its form (as determined by **Table 1–2: Form** on page 38) is highly malleable and can squeeze through any gap that is not airtight.

Incorporeal

The species is intangible, without a physical body. Technically speaking, its members don't have a physiology. Some incorporeal beings, like certain Sanctum spirits, use technology or Æmber to simulate a physical presence and interact with material objects.

The species gains the Incorporeal rule.

- **Incorporeal:** Your character lacks corporeal presence. When your character makes Brawn- or Agility-based checks, increase the difficulty by two. When a corporeal character makes a Brawn- or Agility-based check targeting your character, increase the difficulty by two. Your character increases their soak by their Willpower (in addition to their Brawn). Your character can move through most mundane types of difficult and impassable terrain without penalty (but cannot stop inside solid surfaces). None of the preceding effects of this rule apply while your character is wearing armor.

In addition, incorporeal beings do not eat, breathe, or sleep. Of course, your character's incorporeality may have many other narrative effects as well.

Insectoid

The species is marked by a bony or chitinous exoskeleton, like that of an arthropod. Beneath this tough exterior may be flesh, blood, or ichor, primitive or advanced organs, or even a secondary endoskeleton in some cases.

The species gains +1 soak.

Mammalian

This warm-blooded, furry species can adapt to a variety of environments but is susceptible to extremes of temperature, pressure, and pretty much everything else. The species has bones on the inside and is probably full of delicate, squishy organs.

This species gains +1 strain threshold and –1 wound threshold.

Mineral

Mineral-based life is actually quite common, although many species hailing from animal- or plant-dominated worlds find this surprising. Such species might resemble stone, crystal, metal, or other mineral formations, and they might appear as a pure mineral or as a composite. Those mineral-based beings composed of "precious" materials must sometimes be wary of covetous aliens!

The species gains +1 Brawn and –1 Agility.

Piscine

Piscine life forms are adapted for aquatic environments. Some can survive only by breathing water (or another liquid), but many of the more advanced aquatic species are adapted to breathe the air of their homeworld as well. Piscine beings take as wide a number of forms as any others, and could be covered with scales, slimy skin, bristles, bony plates, or anything else.

The species gains +1 wound threshold and the Amphibious rule.

- **Amphibious:** Members of this species can breathe underwater without penalty and never suffer movement penalties for traveling through water.

Reptilian

Cold-blooded, reptilian beings have a reputation for being cool and calculating. Often predatory, reptiles provoke an instinctual fear in many mammals and other types of species. Because reptiles rely greatly on their environments to regulate their body temperature, they must take appropriate precautions when traveling across the Crucible, but their efficient metabolism gives them great bodily constitution.

The species gains +2 wound threshold and –2 strain threshold.

Step 3: Size

Chosen from or rolled on **Table 1–4: Silhouette** on page 42, this describes the overall size of the species, regardless of its shape and form. Varying silhouettes do not have any innate rules effects but do affect certain combat checks. For more on silhouette and its game effects, see page 109 of the Genesys Core Rulebook. A character's size can have significant narrative effects, including restricting where it can go, and it may affect some checks as the GM deems appropriate.

Silhouette 0

A silhouette 0 species is small, perhaps a meter tall (or long) at most. Members of this species decrease their wound threshold by 2. They also halve their encumbrance value.

Silhouette 1

Species of silhouette 1 are perhaps the most common on the Crucible, being comparable to humans in size. There are no additional effects for silhouette 1 species.

TABLE 1–4: SILHOUETTE

D100 DICE ROLL	RESULT	XP ADJUSTMENT
01–25	Silhouette 0	+5
26–70	Silhouette 1	+0
71–85	Silhouette 2	–5
86–95	Silhouette 3	–15
96–00	Variable	–10

Silhouette 2

Silhouette 2 species are large, possibly three to four meters in height or length, and include such examples as bears and trolls. Members of the species increase their wound threshold by 2 and their encumbrance threshold by 2. They double their encumbrance value.

Silhouette 3

This species is huge, comparable in size to some of the largest giants or even to a Martian flying saucer. Members of a silhouette 3 species can face significant complications due to their size, and they may even be physically incapable of entering places that other species take for granted (at least without destroying the place in the process). They increase their wound threshold by 4 and their encumbrance threshold by 8. They also triple their encumbrance value.

Variable

Roll twice more on this table (or choose two options, as applicable), rerolling further instances of this result or duplicates of other results. Members of the species can change between the resulting two silhouettes as a maneuver. (Note that changing between silhouettes may cause a character's wounds to exceed their wound threshold, incapacitating them.)

Note that the –10 XP adjustment is in addition to the adjustments for the individual options.

STEP 4: LOCOMOTION

A species' locomotion is how it gets around from place to place, and is selected from or rolled on **Table 1–5: Locomotion Method**. Certain forms and physiologies are commonly assumed to correlate with specific types of locomotion, but this is far from universal. Not all wings are suitable for generating lift, and not all legs are for walking.

TABLE 1–5: LOCOMOTION METHOD

D100 DICE ROLL	RESULT	XP ADJUSTMENT
01–05	Assisted	+15
06–40	Ambulation	+0
41–50	Flight	–15
51–65	Hovering	–10
66–75	Jumping	–10
76–85	Rolling	–10
86–95	Slithering	–5
96–00	Translocation	–20

Assisted

The species is largely incapable of moving under its own power and relies on mechanical apparatus, friendly strangers, servant species, magic, or some other external means.

Members of this species start with an external conveyance, which they rely upon in order to move. Decide with your GM what form this takes. Due to the limitations of their conveyance, these beings can never perform more than one maneuver to move during their turn. Without their conveyance, these beings lose their free maneuver. Unless there are strong narrative reasons for it, a character of this species should generally not be without a conveyance for longer than a single encounter (or session, if the character is small or light enough to hitch a ride on allies).

Ambulation

The species walks, or does something approximating it, using its legs, flippers, pseudopods, electrical discharges, tentacles, bony protrusions, or whatever other appendages it possesses.

This form of locomotion has no special rules. Unsophisticated humans might even consider it the "default."

Flight

The species can defy gravity to move about at relatively high speeds and can attain high altitudes. It might accomplish this with wings, antigravity motors, a jet of liquid, internal biocombustion, or any of a number of other methods.

Members of this species can fly (see the **Flying** sidebar on page 100 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook). Most species capable of flight are also capable of ambulation (moving following the normal rules).

Hovering

The species hovers a short distance above the ground. This allows it to avoid many obstacles and hazards. While the species probably can't attain the same velocity or altitude as species with flight can, it might have an easier time remaining stationary or interacting with surface dwellers in a physical or social sense.

Members of the species can hover (see the **Flying** sidebar on page 100 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook). The species may or may not be capable of moving along the ground following the normal rules.

Jumping

The species jumps or hops around. This method requires a great deal of energy but is quite quick. Such species are often capable of achieving impressive height and distance with their jumps and leaps.

The species gains one rank in Athletics. As an action, members of the species may make an **Average (◆ ◆) Athletics check** to jump to any location within short range, leaping over obstacles and ignoring intervening terrain. (As always, the GM may modify the difficulty of this check as appropriate.)

Rolling

The species propels itself along the ground by means of wheels, continuous tracks, or a similar mechanism. Such means of propulsion are more common among mechanical and mineral species, but "tank treads" of intertwined vines, wheel-and-axle configurations of bone and flesh, and other such adaptations are not unknown.

Members of this species do not suffer 2 strain to perform a second maneuver during their turn if their second maneuver is used to move.

I can never understand how so many species can get by with less than eight legs.
–Inka

Slithering

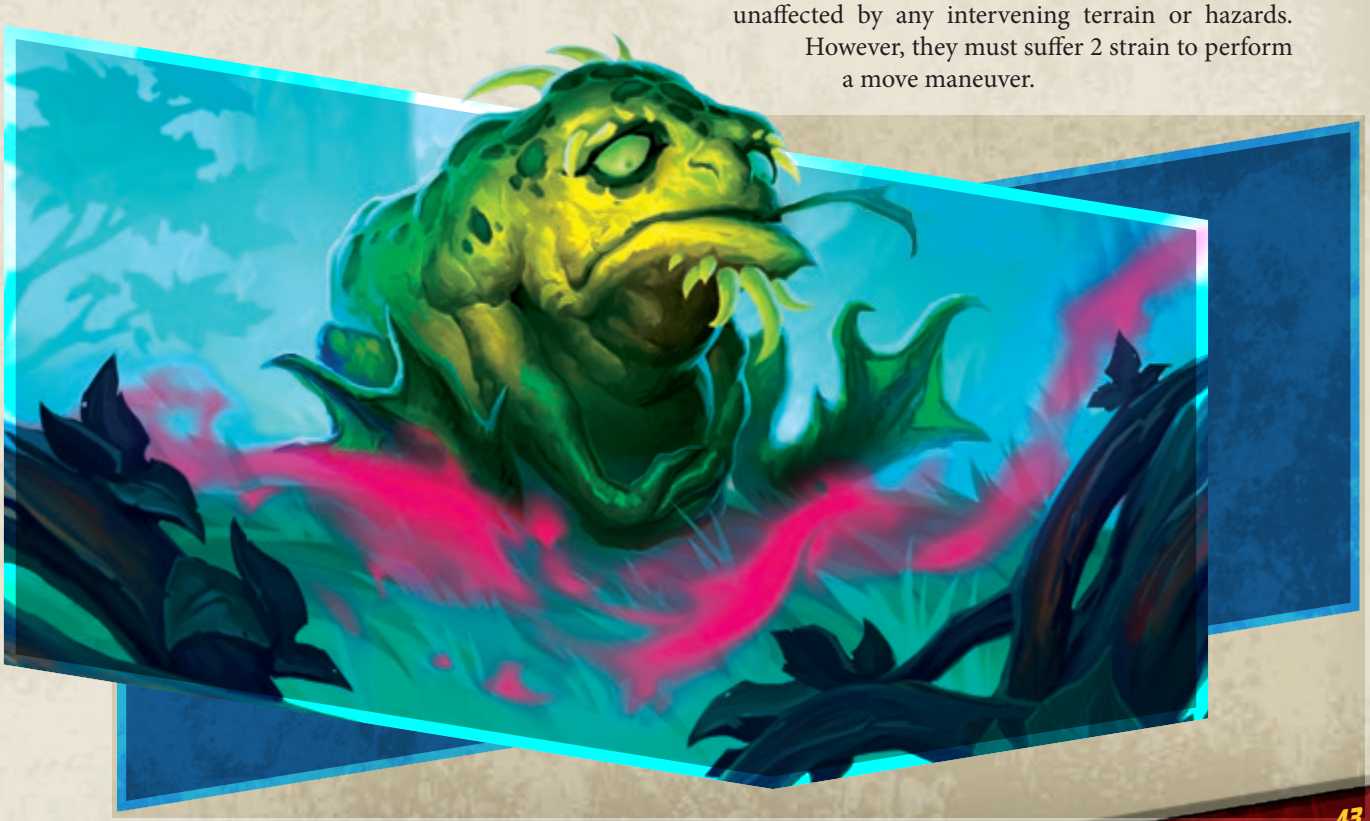
The species moves primarily by undulating its body, although it may have legs or other appendages. Species that move in this way are often adept at covering difficult ground or climbing irregular surfaces.

The species doesn't suffer the normal penalties for moving through difficult terrain.

Translocation

The species' primary method of transportation is to teleport itself to its destination, bypassing the intervening space (but still failing to overcome the forces that bar the Crucible's inhabitants from leaving).

Once per round, if a member of the species is not engaged with an enemy, as a maneuver they may teleport themself to any location within long range that they can perceive. When teleporting, these beings are unaffected by any intervening terrain or hazards. However, they must suffer 2 strain to perform a move maneuver.



STEP 5: MANIPULATION

Almost all species must physically manipulate their environments and other beings, creatures, and objects simply in order to survive, although they do so in a variety of ways, and some are better at it than others. Select from or roll on **Table 1–6: Manipulation Method** to determine this aspect of the species.

Assisted

The species lacks any natural means of manipulating objects. Narratively, a member of this species relies on an external means in order to manipulate its environment. This could be a mechanical limb, a servant or automaton, or anything else that suits the species.

Characters of this species start with a manipulator. If their manipulator is lost or destroyed, they cannot perform the interact with the environment or manage gear maneuver. Depending on the nature of the species, some tasks may be simply impossible, at the GM's discretion. Unless there are strong narrative reasons to prevent it, a member of the species should generally not be without a means of manipulation for longer than a single encounter.

Hands

Hands, or handlike appendages with opposable digits, are one of the more common methods of manipulation among the denizens of the Crucible. Many forms of technology are designed for use by hands, which is quite convenient for species who have them.

This result has no special effect and could even be considered the norm for characters.

TABLE 1–6: MANIPULATION METHOD

D100 DICE ROLL	RESULT	XP ADJUSTMENT
01–05	Assisted	+5
06–30	Hands	+0
31–45	Limited	+0
46–50	Mental	–5
51–60	Mouth	+5
61–70	Pincers	+0
71–80	Pseudopods	–10
81–95	Tentacles	–5
96–00	Secondary Manipulators	–5

Limited

This species is poorly adapted for fine manipulation and must rely on its paws, hooves, wings, fins, or other locomotive means to manipulate objects, which it generally does quite clumsily.

Members of the species add ■ ■ to checks they make requiring fine manipulation. In addition, when they make an unarmed attack, they can activate the Knockdown item quality for one less ⮝ than normal.

Mental

The species relies on the power of its mind to affect the world around it.

Members of the species can mentally manipulate objects and interact with characters within short range. This ability functions as the Telekinesis talent, on page 80, except that it cannot be depleted. They also add ■ ■ to checks they make to physically manipulate their environment.

Mouth

This species relies on its jaws, tongue, mandibles, or other mouth parts to manipulate objects and the environment.

While a member of the species has an item readied, they add ■ ■ to social skill checks they make.

WIELDING MORE THAN TWO WEAPONS

Some species have enough limbs to wield more than two weapons at once. They can certainly do so, although for such beings, limitations of cognitive and sensory processing can be more important than physical restrictions. A character wielding more than two weapons follows the rules for **Two-Weapon Combat** on page 108 of the Genesys Core Rulebook. A character can only attack during a single action with a combination of weapons using up to two different combat skills. Therefore, the difficulty of the combined check is calculated exactly as it is when attacking with only two weapons. If the check succeeds, the character can spend ⮝ ⮝ or ⚙ to hit with one additional weapon. Obviously, a character must be quite skilled (or very lucky) to get much effect out of attacking with more than two weapons!

Pincers

The species uses pincers like those of a crab or scorpion in order to both defend itself (or attack prey) and manipulate objects.

Members of the species add ■ to checks they make requiring fine manipulation, and their unarmed attacks gain the Vicious 1 item quality.

Pseudopods

The species can extend temporary limbs from its body as needed. Although pseudopods may lack the fine coordination of some other appendages, the being has no fear of permanently losing limbs.

Once per round as an incidental, a member of the species may extend a pseudopod. A pseudopod functions as a hand or arm and so may hold an object, interact with the environment, make attacks, and so on. Once a character of this species has extended a number of pseudopods equal to their Brawn, for each additional pseudopod they extend, they suffer 1 strain. Once per round as an incidental, the character may retract any number of pseudopods.

Tentacles

This species has one or more tentacles, a prehensile tail, a trunk, or some similar flexible appendage that they rely on for manipulating objects.

The species' Brawl and Melee attacks gain the Ensnare 1 item quality.

Secondary Manipulators

Generate two results from **Table 1–6: Manipulation Method**, rerolling duplicates and results of Assisted. When making a check or performing an activity, a member of the species can choose which set of manipulators they use.

Note that the –5 XP adjustment is in addition to the adjustments for the individual options.

STEP 6: DOMINANT SENSE

The species likely has multiple senses, but this step determines its primary mode of perception as chosen from or rolled on **Table 1–7: Dominant Sense** (see page 46). While this is overly simplistic for many beings, it helps distinguish the species. In terms of rules mechanics, a species' dominant sense is significant enough that interfering with it applies ■ or other penalties to the majority of that character's checks and may even render them functionally unable to perceive their surroundings until they remove the impediment or adjust to their new condition.

The effect of a particular sensory affinity is largely narrative, to be determined by the GM and player as relevant in play. The guidelines for determining the difficulty of and adding ■ to combat checks in the Genesys Core Rulebook, for example, assume that a character relies primarily on sight, and these guidelines should be modified accordingly. For instance, a character with an olfactory dominant sense would not add ■ to its combat checks due to darkness, but a very strong odor might have a similar result. Similarly, a character who relies on telepathy would seldom be burdened by certain environmental effects but might find it nearly impossible to target a mindless automaton in combat.

Auditory

The species relies on sound waves to perceive its environment. It may simply have highly sensitive hearing organs, or it may use echolocation—emitting high-frequency sound waves and listening to how they bounce off of the surroundings.

Members of the species do not add ■ to their checks due to darkness, smoke, or similar visual obscurement, although extremely loud sounds or circumstances that hamper soundwaves may add ■ to checks in a similar fashion, at the GM's discretion.

I've found it useful to have assistants who perceive things in ways I don't. Different perspectives are always useful, even if they aren't accurate.
-Escotera

TABLE 1–7: DOMINANT SENSE

D100 DICE ROLL	RESULT	XP ADJUSTMENT
01–15	Auditory	+0
16–25	Olfactory	+0
26–30	Telepathy	–10
31–45	Thermal	+0
46–60	Tremorsense	+0
61–00	Visual	+0

Olfactory

The species uses smell to perceive its environment and is particularly adept at detecting living things this way. Some species, such as many serpents, rely on their tongue or a similar organ to "taste" the air.

Members of the species do not add ■ to their checks due to darkness or similar visual obscurement, although strong odors that could mask other scents can add ■ to checks in a similar fashion.

Telepathy

The species experiences the world telepathically. Although its existence may be primarily concerned with the intellectual, it can share the senses of others in order to perceive the physical world.

Members of the species are always aware of the position of all living beings and creatures within medium range, and they may spend a maneuver concentrating to "see" through another's senses for one round. These beings increase the difficulty of all checks they make to affect objects and other nonliving targets by two, except while perceiving through another's senses.

I will never trust a telepath. But then, none of 'em ever trusted me, either. Watch yerself around 'em, and watch yer thoughts. –Dodger

Thermal

The species "sees" heat, or possibly other forms of energy.

Members of the species do not add ■ to their checks due to darkness, smoke, or similar visual obscurement, although high-temperature environmental effects or a low-temperature target may add ■ to checks, at the GM's discretion.

Tremorsense

The species perceives its surroundings by detecting vibrations through solid objects it is in contact with. This sense is most effective in enclosed spaces, and the species likely evolved in a subterranean environment.

Members of the species do not add ■ to their checks due to darkness, smoke, or similar visual obscurement, although intense vibrations or aerial targets may add ■ to checks in a similar fashion, at the GM's discretion.

Visual

The species sees light, although its visual range may vary significantly from the spectrum visible to humans.

This dominant sense has no particular game effects, as the rules are written under the assumption that this is a characters' dominant sense.

STEP 7: FEATURES

Features are important traits and abilities that are independent of the previous steps of species development. Although some features seem more appropriate for certain forms, physiologies, or locomotion types, they are not assumed to correspond, at least not in a significant way. You should feel free to describe your species however you like, in keeping with (and inspired by!) the results of the species development process, and without feeling overly restricted. For instance, just because your bestial humanoid doesn't have the stabbing bits feature doesn't mean it can't have claws, only that its claws aren't naturally sharp enough, large enough, or otherwise adapted for inflicting severe harm.

Each species should have a feature chosen from or rolled on **Table 1–8: Species Features** on page 47. The result might modify its profile, give it a special rule, or have some other effect. If you wish, you can randomly generate or choose (as relevant) a second feature, but you can't have the same feature more than once. Also, keep in mind that not all features are beneficial!

We don't generally recommend having more than two features, but that is up to the GM's discretion. If you feel that your species needs more than two features to represent your concept, discuss the possibilities with your GM.

Additional Sensory Organs

The species has more sensory organs than it really needs, which might take the form of numerous compound eyes, huge bat-like ears, sensitive bristles across its entire body, or anything else that seems suitable.

Members of the species add □ to Perception and Vigilance checks they make. If their senses are overloaded, they might instead add ■ to such checks or suffer other penalties, as decided by the GM.

TABLE 1–8: SPECIES FEATURES

D100 DICE ROLL	RESULT	XP ADJUSTMENT
01–02	Additional Sensory Organs	–5
03–04	Air Supply	+10
05–06	Amphibious	–10
07–08	Arctic	–5
09–10	Armored	–15
11–12	Chameleon	–5
13–14	Climber	–5
15–16	Cyborg	–10
17–19	Damp Dweller	+0
20–22	Desert Dweller	+0
23–24	Digger	–10
25–26	Elongated Limbs	–5
27	Empath	–5
28	Energy Absorption	–15
29–30	ESP	–5
31–32	Extra Limbs	–15
33–34	Fast Metabolism	+0
35–36	Fiery Aura	–10
37	Gestalt	–15
38–39	Hypnotic	–5
40–41	Infested	+0
42	Inner Turmoil	+0
43–44	Inscrutable	+0
45–47	Insulated	+0
48	Lucky	–10
49–50	Luminescent	+0
51–52	Natural Resource	–5
53–54	Pack Instincts	–5
55	Phase Shift	–30
56–57	Pheromones	+0
58–60	Poisonous	–5
61–62	Pressure Resistant	–5
63–64	Quick Reflexes	–10
65–66	Redundant Organs	–10
67–68	Regeneration	–15
69–70	Shielded	–10
71–72	Shooting Bits	–10
73–74	Slashing Bits	–5
75–76	Slippery	+0
77–78	Sneaky	–10
79–80	Spiny	–10
81–82	Stabbing Bits	–10
83–84	Stinky	+0
85–86	Symbiont	+0
87	Temporal Flux	–15
88–89	Tireless	–5
90	Unliving	–10
91–93	Venomous	–5
94–95	Volcanic	–5
96–97	Vulnerability	+20
98–99	Weak Spot	+15
00	Anomaly: Roll twice more on this table, rerolling duplicates and further instances of this result	

Air Supply

The species does not breathe the oxygen-nitrogen atmosphere often found in Local Group environments, but instead breathes some other gas mixture (or perhaps liquid, or energy) instead. This means its members must always wear some sort of respirator when not in their natural environment.

Characters of this species start with a respirator and treat oxygen as a corrosive atmosphere with rating 8 (see page 111 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook).

Amphibious

This species can breathe underwater without penalty (or can hold its breath so long as to have the same result) and never suffers movement penalties for traveling through water. (If the species has piscine physiology, reroll this result.)

Quite an impressive list, but don't be surprised if you encounter beings not covered here.

Like several of my lab assistants, for example. Ixti is of the olpin species, who evolved on a neutron star. Nice enough, but we have to keep them in a class 10 null-bubble or have the entire lab implode. Again.
-Escotera

Arctic

Adapted for truly frigid environments, members of the species remove ■ ■ from any Survival or Resilience checks they make due to cold weather.

Armored

Whether due to a naturally tough exoskeleton, bony plating, or a more esoteric cause, the species sports natural armor. The species gains +1 soak.

Chameleon

This species is naturally capable of changing its exterior coloration or appearance to blend in with its surroundings. Other characters who rely on visual perception add ■ ■ to checks they make to spot this species.

And these are just some of the features of sentient species to be found here. The features of non-sentient beings are even more unbelievable! -Ingram

Climber

The species can climb trees, cliff faces, masonry walls, and other surfaces with plentiful holds without making an Athletics check. Generally, these surfaces count as difficult terrain. The species may need to make a check to scale sheer surfaces, at the GM's discretion.

Cyborg

All members of this species have undergone cybernetic enhancement. Characters of this species begin play with one cybernetic of the player's choice, with a value of up to 1,000 Æmbits. This cybernetic does not decrease the character's strain threshold.

Damp Dweller

Members of the species are at home in wet or humid environments and remove ■ added to any skill checks they make because of such conditions.

Desert Dweller

Members of the species are adapted to arid or hot environments and remove ■ added to any skill checks they make because of such conditions.

Digger

The species can tunnel through soil and even stone or similar materials, treating these as difficult terrain.

Elongated Limbs

The species' limbs are quite long compared to its overall size, whether they take the form of mantis-like scything claws, elastic tentacles, or something more bizarre.

Members of this species can make Brawl checks targeting enemies within short range; despite the extended distance, the difficulty of such checks remains **Average** (◆ ◆). They can also target objects at short range with other checks at the GM's discretion.

Empath

The species removes ■ ■ from all social skill checks they make. When the species uses the Coercion skill to inflict strain on a target, they suffer strain equal to half the amount they inflict.

Energy Absorption

The species absorbs energy of all kinds: kinetic, thermal, and so on. When the species suffers an amount of damage, they heal strain equal to half the amount and add □ to their next check. (This effect is cumulative if the species suffers damage from multiple sources before making a check.)

ESP

The species possesses an undefinable sense beyond the limitations of its biology (or mechology). Members of the species remove ■ ■ added to checks they make because of concealment and from checks they make to determine Initiative order.

Extra Limbs

The species has more limbs than are strictly necessary for movement in, and manipulation of, their environment. They can perform a second maneuver during their turn without suffering strain or giving up their action, but they can never perform more than two maneuvers during their turn.

Fast Metabolism

Members of the species recover twice as fast from the effects of poisons and toxins as humans. They also require a huge amount of sustenance (food, fuel, etc.) each day; if they are unable to meet this requirement, they become disoriented until they can satiate themself. When attempting to recover from Critical Injuries they add □ to Resilience checks they make.

Fiery Aura

The species exudes fire or some similarly dangerous energy. Although this does no harm to the species, it is a danger to anything and anyone nearby. The species is a fire source with rating 3 (see **Fire, Acid, and Corrosive Atmospheres** on page 111 of the Genesys Core Rulebook) that affects anyone or anything engaged with a member of that species. This feature does not harm other members of the same species.

Gestalt

Members of this species aren't single beings at all, but an amalgamation of numerous smaller creatures that operate together in perfect unison. The resulting form might be governed by a gestalt intelligence or a single master organism—the distinction isn't always clear to outsiders.

The species reduces their soak by 1 (potentially reducing it below their Brawn) and gains the Swarm rule.

- **Swarm:** Halve the damage dealt to the character before applying soak, unless the weapon causing the damage has the Blast or Burn quality (regardless of whether the quality is activated).

Hypnotic

The specieshas spiraling eyes, emits melodic tones, or has some other enthralling ability. Its members adds □ to all Charm, Deception, and Negotiation checks they make.

Infested

The species hosts thriving communities of infectious microbes, hungry bugs, industrious nanobots, or other tiny entities. While the species is perfectly accustomed to this, the infestation can be irritating or dangerous to others. Any other character engaged with a member of the species (excepting other characters of the same species) adds ■ to all checks they make.

Inner Turmoil

The species' insides hold raging fire, an unstable power core, pressurized acid, a tiny star, or some other highly dangerous compound. When a member of this species is killed, all characters and objects within short range suffer 30 damage with the Breach 1 item quality. When a character of this species becomes incapacitated because their wounds exceed their wound threshold, their player may choose for this effect to happen, killing the character.

Inscrutable

Members of the species add ■ to all Charm checks they make. Other characters add ■ to all social skill checks they make targeting members of the species.

Insulated

Whether due to a dense coat of fur, a thick layer of blubber, or a very efficient thermal regulation system, members of the species add □ to checks they make to resist extreme temperatures.

Lucky

The species has a well-earned reputation throughout the Crucible for good fortune. A player with a character of this species adds one extra Story Point to the player pool at the beginning of each session.

Luminescent

Whether as a result of biological, mechanical, or spiritual processes, members of the species gives off a noticeable glow or light. The illumination provides light out to short range but adds ■ to Stealth checks members of this species make.

Natural Resource

The species is capable of creating a useful substance within its own body, much like a spider spins silk. This material could be nearly anything (short of Æmber), depending on the nature of the species, but the GM must approve the choice. As a maneuver, a member of the species may create a quantity of the substance useful for a single check or with an encumbrance value of 1, as applicable.

Note that the GM may determine the resource is particularly useful or valuable, and thus decide a stronger XP adjustment is in order.

Yes, I have used my silk in many a sticky situation. Very useful indeed.

Pack Instincts

When performing the assist maneuver, members of the species adds ☐ ☐ instead of ☐.

Phase Shift

The species has the incredible ability to shift between dimensions, leave its corporeal body, or otherwise become intangible. Once per encounter as a maneuver, a member of this species may suffer 2 strain to gain the Incorporeal rule (see page 40) until the end of the encounter or until they perform a maneuver to regain their tangible form. If the species is Incorporeal, they can instead temporarily lose the Incorporeal rule in the same way.

Pheromones

Members of the species use pheromones to communicate a complex array of messages. They can leave scent messages on surfaces that are discernible to others of their species (or with the right equipment) and last for about a day. Members of this species add ☐ to checks to track or locate each other.

Poisonous

This species secretes poison, exudes toxic fumes, bleeds acid, or is otherwise dangerous to be around. While another character is engaged with a member of the species, ⟳ can be spent from that other character's checks to make them suffer 1 wound.

Pressure Resistant

The species is physically resistant to pressure (whether or not it can remain calm in difficult situations is a different matter). A member of the species adds ☐ ☐ to checks they make to resist crushing weight, atmospheric pressure, vacuum, and similar effects. When the being suffers wounds due to vacuum or other pressure extremes, they reduce the wounds suffered by their Brawn rating, to a minimum of 0.

Quick Reflexes

The species is quick to react to danger, both consciously and reflexively. Species members add ☐ to checks they make to determine Initiative and to react to sudden dangers or unexpected events.

Redundant Organs

The species has an extra organ or organs that help it to survive otherwise severe injuries. The organ might be a secondary heart or extra head (and brain). Alternatively, the species might lack certain organs entirely, as is often the case with mineral and floral species.

Choose a single Critical Injury result of a severity no greater than **Average (◆ ◆)** from **Table 1.6–10: Critical Injury Result** on page 115 of the Core Rulebook corresponding to the nature of the species' redundant (or nonexistent) organs. When the species suffers this Critical Injury result, it is ignored.

Regeneration

Whenever a member of this species heals wounds due to natural rest, they heal 1 additional wound. They do not heal 1 additional wound when receiving first aid or medical treatment, however. This species can also regrow lost limbs; it takes roughly a month before a regrown limb is usable.

Shielded

The species has an adaptation that helps to deflect attacks, such as a mirrored carapace, bioelectric field, or minor gravitational displacement. The species gains defense 1.

Shooting Bits

The species naturally defends itself by flinging or shooting projectiles of some kind. These may take the form of sharp spines or thorns, corrosive spray, rocky scree, ocular laser beams, or anything else appropriate for the species. Members of the species can make a Ranged combat check that has a base damage equal to their Brawn +3 with a Critical rating of 4 and a range of short.

Slashing Bits

This species has sharp claws, talons, or teeth. When a member of the species makes an unarmed combat check, the attack increases its base damage by +1 and has a Critical rating of 3.

Slippery

The species is oily, slimy, or otherwise slick to the touch. Members of the species add □ to Coordination checks they make to fit through small spaces or escape bindings. Enemies add ■ to their Brawl checks targeting this species, and members of the species add ■ to all Brawl checks they make and to checks they make to grip or restrain an object or creature.

Sneaky

Members of the species make little or no noise when they move, or perhaps a corona of inexplicable shadow always obscures them. They add □ □ to Stealth checks they make. (They also have an annoying habit of surprising allies.)

Spiny

The species is covered with spines, spikes, bony growths, or otherwise dangerous protrusions. Its members may spend ⟲ ⟲ from melee combat checks targeting the character to have that enemy suffer 3 wounds

Stabbing Bits

The species has dangerous horns or antlers, a spiked tail, or some other deadly natural weapon. Members of the species may spend ⮝ ⮝ ⮝ from a combat check they make targeting an engaged enemy to deal an additional hit to the target; the hit has a base damage of Brawn +2 and a Critical rating of 3. (This hit inflicts +1 damage for each ✲, as usual.)

Stinky

The species gives off a distinctive odor that, while innocuous or even pleasant to other members of the species, is quite foul to the senses of most other life forms. Members of the species add ■ to Charm and Stealth checks they make and add □ to Coercion checks they make. These effects do not apply when interacting with other members of the species.

Symbiont

The species is actually two (or more) organisms living in symbiosis. The consequences of this fact are largely narrative, depending on the nature of the symbiotic relationship you devise with the GM. In addition, the species gains +2 wound threshold and –1 strain threshold.

Temporal Flux

Once per game session after a character of this species makes a check but before spending results, the controlling player may spend one Story Point to discard the check results and continue play as if their PC had not even attempted the action (because they didn't!).

Tireless

The species does not sleep or require similar periods of downtime. This is largely narrative, but it also means that the species does not add ■ to checks or suffer other consequences of going for extended periods without rest.

Unliving

Although the species is not mechanical in the typical sense, neither is it alive by any common definition. Its members do not need to eat, sleep, or breathe, and they are unaffected by toxins and poisons. Some unliving beings have seemingly contradictory needs—such as a taste for living flesh—and any features or other rules with more specific requirements take precedence over the rules described above. (If the species has artificial physiology, reroll this result.)

Venomous

The species is rightly feared for the hazardous chemicals it can extrude when biting or clawing an enemy. Unarmed attacks its members make gain the Stun 3 item quality.

Volcanic

The species is adapted for extremely high temperatures. Its members remove ■ to checks they make to resist extreme heat, and they reduce the wounds they suffer from fire and heat-based sources by 1.

Not to mention right disturbin', even to me. Best to confirm their diet before doing a job with 'em, just to be on the safe side.

Vulnerability

Everybody has one. They may not even know what it is until you show them. –DGR

The species has a distinct vulnerability to a particular substance or phenomenon, such as water, fire, bright light, loud noise, bad poetry, or fragments of their home planet's crust. With your GM, decide what the nature of the vulnerability is. The more obscure or rare the vulnerability, the more your GM should make an effort to include it in the game—anything can be found on the Crucible!

While in the presence (as determined by the GM) of the source of their vulnerability, a member of the species upgrades the difficulty of all checks they make once. If the source is particularly large, concentrated, or encompassing, the GM may upgrade the difficulty additional times or apply additional effects.

Weak Spot

The species has a distinct indefensible point, the specifics of which are up to you and the GM. If this spot is damaged, usually when an opponent aims for it in combat (see page 98 of the Genesys Core Rulebook), the damage is not reduced by the character's soak.

STEP 8: CULTURE

The range of cultures on this world defies belief. I had thought the Alliance encompassed a huge variety, but we're not even close to what's in Hub City alone. -Ingram

Culture represents the overarching attitude of the species' society, either on the Crucible or on its homeworld, depending on how long the species has been on the Crucible. Although individuals might hold views that are different from or even diametrically opposed to those dominant in their culture, their upbringing still plays an important part in their development. Pick from or roll on **Table 1–9: Culture** to select one for the new species.

The descriptions for these cultures are broad starting points intended to inspire, and you should not feel restricted by the narratives presented. We encourage you to develop your species' culture in more detail, and to freely disregard any descriptive elements that don't fit your vision.

Anarchic

This species' culture is chaotic and violent. It lacks any institutions, governments, or laws, and individuals are pitted against each other in an unregulated contest for survival and resources. Such a situation often comes about as the result of a civilization's collapse.

Choose one of the following skills: Resilience, Stealth, or Survival. Characters of this species start with one rank in each of the chosen skills during character creation.

TABLE 1–9: CULTURE

D100 DICE ROLL	RESULT	XP ADJUSTMENT
01–10	Anarchic	–5
11–20	Competitive	–30
21–30	Cutthroat	–10
31–40	Hedonistic	–10
41–50	Peaceful	–30
51–60	Scholarly	–30
61–70	Spiritual	–30
71–80	Utopian	–10
81–90	Warlike	–5
91–00	Zealous	–10

Competitive

This culture pits its members against one another in a competition for status and resources, although this social contest is controlled and regulated by governmental and social institutions. Laws likely limit or prohibit violence, requiring individuals to engage in more civil forms of competition.

The species gains +1 Cunning.

Cutthroat

Cutthroat cultures are similar to competitive cultures but tolerate more extreme forms of contention. Violence may be ignored, tacitly endorsed, or even required by the state. Individuals compete not just for status but for mere survival.

The species gains +1 Cunning and –1 Presence.

Hedonistic

This species wanted for little on their homeworld, where they could choose to indulge their every whim and desire, or they have achieved this state on the Crucible—or both. Their homeworld or the sector they inhabit on the Crucible might be considered a paradise, at least for those at the top of the social order.

The species gains +1 Presence and –1 Willpower.

Peaceful

A peaceful culture values civility and collaboration. Although crime and dangers exist, life is largely safe, and war is all but unknown. Individuals can almost always settle their disputes through discussion or, where that fails, by appealing to a higher authority. When threatened by outside forces, the culture seeks a nonviolent resolution but is ready to defend itself if need be.

The species gains +1 Presence.

Scholarly

A culture of this type values learning and advancing knowledge. A scholarly culture may face many challenges, but a dominance of logic and reason tends to help it avoid most warfare, crime, and poverty.

The species gains +1 Intellect.

Spiritual

The beliefs of spiritual cultures vary greatly, but by definition, they value the spirit over the physical world. Members of such cultures tend to overcome problems through devotion and strength of will, and many respect the spiritual in other beings.

The species gains +1 Willpower.

Utopian

This culture abhors violence and fosters cooperation and understanding among all its members. Resources are distributed impartially, and individuals are encouraged to pursue artistic and scholarly pursuits. Crime, poverty, and even competition are all but nonexistent.

The species gains +1 Intellect and –1 Cunning.

Warlike

Warlike cultures value power and skill at arms. They often see violence as the solution to disputes and problems both within and between groups, even when dealing with other societies. They tend not to get along well with others.

Choose one of the following skills: Brawl, Melee, or Ranged. Characters of this species start with one rank in each of the chosen skills during character creation.

Zealous

Zealous cultures take their devotion to sometimes-dangerous extremes. Whether they devote themselves to religious beliefs, a political system, an art style, or a goal, they have little tolerance for those who don't share their dedication. As a result, zealous cultures typically isolate themselves from outside influences and tend to be very closed-minded. This can make adapting to life on the Crucible particularly difficult.

The species gains +1 Willpower and –1 Intellect.

I met a Martian Elder once who always seemed exhausted. I imagine it takes a lot of energy to maintain their state of toxic paranoia.
–Inka

STEP 9: TECH LEVEL

This step, as chosen or rolled on **Table 1–10 Tech Level** on page 54, gives a rough idea of the species' level of technological advancement. Most species at least initially rely upon devices they brought with them to this world. Those from a low-tech world often adapt to the new technologies they encounter there, and even the most advanced species are likely to integrate new technologies into their own. It's rare to find a species whose culture and technology don't evolve on the Crucible.

Fire Bad!

The species has only the most rudimentary of tools and struggles to survive in its natural environment. Lives tend to be short and brutal.

Choose either Athletics or Survival. Characters of this species start with one rank in that skill during character creation.

These are only the levels we can actually imagine. At what levels do Architects operate?

TABLE 1–10: TECH LEVEL

D100 DICE ROLL	RESULT	XP ADJUSTMENT
01–10	Fire Bad!	+0
11–30	Rudimentary	+0
31–50	Sophisticated	+0
51–70	Advanced	+0
71–90	Highly Advanced	+0
91–00	Indistinguishable from Magic	+0

Rudimentary

The species has mastered the techniques of harnessing fire, crafting tools and art, domesticating animals, and constructing or preparing reliable shelters against nature. The species might make use of wheels or sea vessels for transportation while relying on animals, wind, or labor for propulsion. Its understanding of anatomy and medicine is simplistic, and its medical practices can treat only the most basic injuries, while some misguided treatments may even make matters worse.

Choose either Resilience or Riding. Characters of this species start with one rank in that skill during character creation.

Sophisticated

The species has developed what we would recognize as science. It can construct vehicles and other complex machines powered by steam, clockwork, or even electricity. The species' understanding of anatomy and medicine can reliably treat or prevent some illnesses and injuries.

Choose either Medicine or Operating. Characters of this species start with one rank in that skill during character creation.

Advanced

The species has a culture that makes significant use of, and probably relies on, advanced technology. We might think of this as similar to our real-world, modern-day level of development.

Choose either Charm or Streetwise. Characters of this species start with one rank in that skill during character creation.

Highly Advanced

The species' mastery of technology is impressive. Prior to its arrival on the Crucible, it was able to travel between distant stars. On the Crucible, sophisticated artificial intelligence and even teleportation are realities for it. Advanced medicine significantly extends the species' lifespan, perhaps doubling it or more.

Choose either Computers or Negotiation. Characters of this species start with one rank in that skill during character creation.

Indistinguishable from Magic

The species' technology is almost inconceivably advanced. Prior to its arrival, it had achieved near-instantaneous transport between star systems; time travel and other such miraculous achievements are also well within the bounds of its science. The species' medicine is so advanced that its members may be functionally immortal—in one form or another.

Choose either Æmbercraft or Knowledge (Science). Characters of this species start with one rank in that skill during character creation.

TABLE 1–11: STARTING EXPERIENCE

D100 DICE ROLL	RESULT
01–20	70 XP
21–50	80 XP
51–80	90 XP
81–00	100 XP

STEP 10: STARTING XP

If you chose to custom design the species, record the final starting experience after adjusting for each step in the process (from the starting 110 XP).

If you randomly generated your species, roll on **Table 1–11: Starting Experience** to determine your species' starting XP. (You don't apply the XP adjustments from each step if you randomly generated your species; just use the XP amount from **Table 1–11: Starting Experience**.)

When a player creates a character of this species, they receive this starting XP to spend during character creation.

Finishing Touches

Now that your species has its profile and special abilities, you are almost done. With the game details in place, it's time to decide just how everything comes together to define a real, living (probably), breathing (maybe) species.

The tables and rules in the preceding sections only provide the basics about your species, leaving plenty of gaps and details to fill in. Using what you now know about your species, think about other elements that are likely to come up in the game and impact the narrative in ways large or small. These details can be at least as important as the abilities and rules you've created. Here are a few questions to get you started:

- What is your species' source of sustenance? Does it eat creatures, either of similar or drastically different physiology? Does it use photosynthesis, molecular absorption, or consume the psychic energy of other beings or animals?
- How does your species communicate? Does it speak verbally, transmit its thoughts through psychoactive spores, or relay messages through strobing bioluminescence?
- Did the species have contact with other intelligent beings before it arrived on the Crucible, or did its first meetings with alien life happen there?
- Does your species actually have a planet of origin, or did it arise on the Crucible?

TABLE 1–12: ASPECT

D100 DICE ROLL	RESULT
01–05	Ornamented
06–10	Subtle
11–15	Bright
16–20	Dark
21–25	Mysterious
26–30	Deceptive
31–35	Frightening
36–40	Festive
41–45	Monstrous
46–50	Ungainly
51–55	Elegant
56–60	Fragile
61–65	Mercurial
66–70	Haughty
71–75	Predatory
76–80	Sturdy
81–85	Nightmarish
86–90	Benign
91–95	Friendly
96–00	Appealing

- Did your species develop naturally or was it created?
- What is the species' relationship with technology? Is there a clear dividing line between the species and its technology, or are they deeply integrated?
- Does your species have any natural enemies or longstanding cultural enemies, and are they found on the Crucible as well?
- What else makes your new species unique or remarkable?

ASPECT

An aspect is a dominant or memorable quality of the species or its appearance. Aspects are not specific details but broadly describe the species' appearance or bearing, or the impression it makes on others. Effectively, it's a key word to help inspire your description of your new species. Chose from or roll on **Table 1–12: Aspect** for an aspect if you want some help envisioning your creature and how its various details fit together.

For me, I want to know what do you have to offer or trade? What use are you? Be ready to answer that and you'll get along fine with most here.
—DGR

NAME

Every species needs a name. Some may have more than one—perhaps a species refers to itself differently from how others do. Your species' name is entirely up to you. Many names, such as "saurians" and "phyll," evoke a primary biological aspect of the species. Species might also be named after beings of mythology or folklore, as is the case for elves, goblins, demons, and other commonly recognizable names. Some names, such as "martians," are derived from a species' planet of origin, while others might reference a dominant aspect of a species' culture.

EXAMPLE: MAKING A NEW SPECIES

Richard wants to randomly create a species for his character, so he first rolls for Form and gets 47: Bodiless. This offers some weird opportunities, and his initial thought is a floating brain. This goes well with his next roll for Physiology, where he gets a 23: Fleshy. He also starts to record the XP adjustment, but then remembers that for random creation you don't need to do this (as species XP is also randomly determined).

Next is Size, and he gets a 26: Silhouette 1. So this will be a human-sized species. The brain is feeling disturbingly large! Step 4 is Locomotion, where he gets a 38: Ambulation. So much for floating, but a brain that walks is even creepier.

He rolls a 27 for Manipulation (for a result of "Hands"), but that doesn't feel appropriate. As tempting as it is to use his reroll for the Starting XP roll, he uses it now and gets an 88: Tentacles. This feels perfect and appropriately weird: a brain with tentacles coming out of it!

Dominant Sense gets a 62, which is "Eyes" for the species. Not too exciting, but even eyes on a brain should be neat. For Features, he decides to roll twice and see what other oddness the species will get. First he gets a 31: Extra Limbs. So lots of tentacles, both for walking and grasping things. His second roll is a 38: Hypnotic. Richard is thinking lots of eyes now, some of which are writhing on tentacles. Very hypnotic! He notes his species can perform a second maneuver during their turn without suffering strain or giving up their action, but they can never perform more than two maneuvers during their turn. It also adds □ to Charm, Deception, and Negotiation checks its members make.

EXAMPLE: MAKING A NEW SPECIES (CONTINUED)

Now for Culture. Here he gets a 51: Scholarly, and Richard envisions a researcher perhaps. He makes a note that his species gets +1 Intellect. Next is Tech Level, where he rolls a 79: Highly Advanced. He's thinking his species may emphasize cultural research theme, so he decides to select Negotiation and gain one rank in that skill. This also fits well with their Hypnotic ability. For Starting XP, he rolls a 72, which gives his species 90 XP.

For Finishing Touches, Richard sees his species as not having encountered alien sentience until it arrived on the Crucible, and so is insatiably curious about other life forms. For Aspect, he rolls a 52: Elegant and decides that his species is slow and deliberate in movement.

Lastly, he needs a name for his new species. After much thought, he decides on "neurachnid." Now that he has a species, he's ready to finalize the starting wound and strain thresholds (10+Brawn and Willpower, respectively) and look for a career!

STEP 3: CHOOSE A CAREER

Secrets of the Crucible uses its own unique careers, which replace the careers found in the Genesys Core Rulebook. These careers still function in the same way as the ones in Genesys, each providing a set of eight career skills that your character can spend experience points on to improve. More on careers and career skills can be found on page 40 of the Genesys Core Rulebook.

There are eleven careers to choose from: Æbermancer, Arbitrator, Cræniac, Cruciblist, Discoverer, Engineer, Mender, Performer, Rogue, Trader, and Vaultwarrior. Before choosing a career, you should consider the skills they offer and the kind of character you want to play. Each career is quite flexible in the options it provides, so not all combat characters need to choose the Vaultwarrior career, and likewise not all social-focused characters need be Performers or Rogues. However, careers do make it easier for you to focus your character on a specific skill set, so the choice you make is important.

Careers in Play

At its heart, a career defines what your character does (just like a species defines who your character is). However, these careers are deliberately vague so that you have some additional flexibility in defining your character.

While a Performer could easily be a bard spreading the latest news as they travel across the Local Group, they could alternatively be part of a band that plays to packed Hub City stadiums, a chef traveling from city to city to show off their latest gastronomical productions, or a sculptor immortalizing the rich in statues of pure Æmber. A Vaultwarrior very likely has extensive experience in vault battles but may have spent more time as a bodyguard for a wealthy travelling merchant, a soldier in a corporate raiding force, or an armed guard at an Æmber-reaping operation. A Rogue might be a thief lurking under the sways in Hub City, but they could also be a giant operating as an underworld enforcer, a researcher producing falsified data for hire, or a con artist posing as a temple leader. We highly encourage you to use your imagination when selecting a career and make it a starting point when defining your character, not a limiter.

BUT I WANT TO PLAY SOMETHING ELSE!

We designed these careers to provide a wide variety of character types with a diverse array of career skills. While we hope that these suit most players' concepts for their characters, we realize you might have an idea in mind that doesn't fit any of these careers exactly.

Luckily, the career is one of the most flexible elements of character creation. If your GM is fine with it, you can make your own career. Simply choose eight skills to be career skills for your character and write up a short description explaining what your new career is all about.

Just keep in mind when you create your career that when we make a career, we try to make sure that it has a diverse spread of skills. This is less about game balance, and more because we want to make sure players don't end up feeling like their characters can only participate in one particular facet of the game. You should try to do the same thing with your new career!

As one rather rustic-looking person I talked with in a Hub City tavern said to me, "You're here for life, What will you make of it?"
~Ingram

Useful Talents for Careers

Genesys's open character creation system allows you to give your character any skills or talents. However, each career includes a sidebar with suggestions for talents that may be particularly appropriate or useful.

Starting Gear

Each career includes a package of starting gear you can select for your character rather than purchasing gear in **Step 7: Choose Gear, Appearance, and Personality** on page 21. Weapons and armor in these packages have pre-assigned *traits*—groups of item qualities that allow you to make your item more special for your character. Explanations for the various traits and how they work are explained on pages 139 (for weapons) and 143 (for armor), while gear items are covered starting on page 147. Even if you don't use these packages, though, they may offer some ideas for gear that could be useful for your character.

ÆMBERMANCER

I was discussing Æmber once with a witch. "You believe anything is possible in the Crucible," they said. "What do you think makes the Crucible itself possible?" –Inka

The Crucible has one thing no other world possesses: Æmber. Through Æmber, one can unlock all manner of abilities that would normally be impossible. Through Æmber, some believe, one may even be able to transcend reality itself and become a god.

Æmbermancers are beings who engaged in many, many hours of study and examination of the mysterious substance until something clicked within them. Now, via methods such as ingesting Æmber, implanting Æmber shards under their exoskeleton, or rubbing Æmber powder on their face, they can perform feats that surpass even what the most advanced technology allows. Æmbermancers might experiment in research labs to study the substance further, accompany expeditions to aid in locating new deposits, pass on techniques to eager apprentices, or even go about normal lives while all along secretly mastering their abilities.

Through Æmber, their powers seem limitless: they can augment their physical prowess, link their mind to those of other sentients, or even control the weather. One day, they may even challenge the Architects for control of the Crucible.

An Æmbermancer counts the following skills as career skills: **Æmbercraft**, **Brawl**, **Cool**, **Discipline**, **Knowledge (Æmber)**, **Perception**, **Resilience**, and **Survival**. Before spending experience during character creation, an Æmbermancer may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

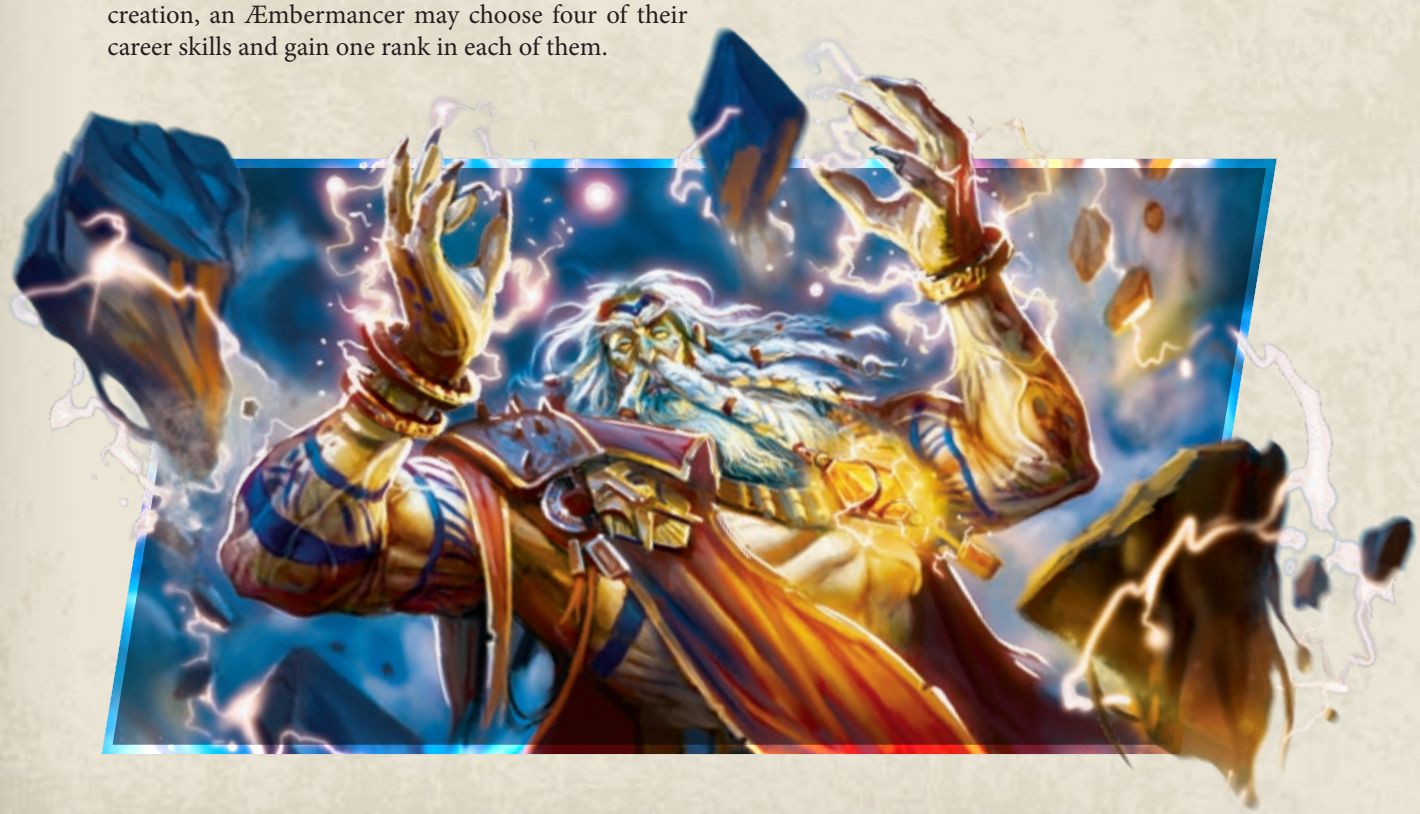
USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Æmbermancer characters:

- **Tier 1:** Bad Breath (page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Devourer (page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Knack for It (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 2:** Distraction! (page 78).
- **Tier 2:** Lucky Strike (GENESYS Core Rulebook page 76).
- **Tier 3:** Æmber Affinity (page 81).

Starting Gear: If you have an Æmbermancer character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A Brawl weapon (trait: Spectral) *or* a two-handed Melee weapon (traits: Reaper Sigil, Savage)
- Durable clothing (trait: Boneweave *or* Psychic)
- A loaf of Æmbread and a utility belt
- 2 Æmber
- 1d100 Æmbits



Arbitrator

Despite the Crucible's gigantic size, the sheer number of its civilizations means that nation-states are close enough to have clashes with each other and, of course, settlements and cities sometimes clash as well. Such conflicts could concern Æmber mining rights, access to prime grazing swamps, or which population will settle a newly transplanted environment that seems devoid of sentient life. Violence would likely be the outcome on almost any other world, but on the Crucible, there is always a desire for a solution that won't result in a glass desert or city-sized crater. Simple violence just isn't efficient or conducive to long-lasting results, given the ever-changing nature of the Crucible and the extreme diversity of its beings (especially in regard to new arrivals). This is where Arbitrators come into play, acting as impartial negotiators and judges to help resolve disputes for the good of everyone.

Many Arbitrators travel across the Crucible from village to settlement to city, offering their unbiased services as judges to settle intractable conflicts or oversee trials and mete out punishments. While Arbitrators usually negotiate disputes and resolve matters to avoid violence, they may also act as agents of justice or bounty hunters and become skilled in dispensing violence themselves. This is particularly likely in places where there is no law or when culprits have fled beyond the reach of local officials.

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Arbitrator characters:

- **Tier 1:** Parry (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Quick Draw (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Second Wind (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 2:** Implacable (page 79).
- **Tier 2:** Sharp Tongue (page 79).
- **Tier 3:** Bloodhound (page 81).

An Arbitrator counts the following skills as career skills: **Charm**, **Coercion**, **Discipline**, **Knowledge (Culture)**, **Leadership**, **Negotiation**, **Ranged**, and **Vigilance**. Before spending experience during character creation, an Arbitrator may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have an Arbitrator character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

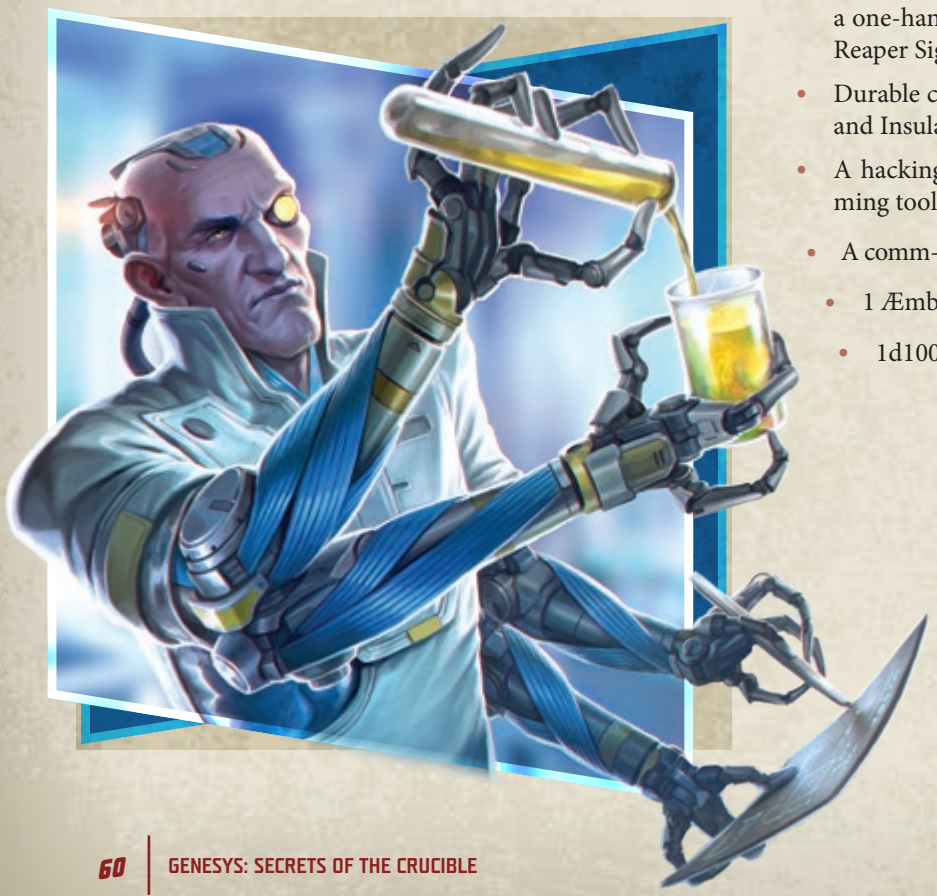
- A one-handed Ranged weapon (trait: Mono-Edged *or* Dreaming)
- Durable clothing (traits: Quantum, Subtle) *or* standard clothing (traits: Attractive, Scaly)
- 2 heal-x tabs *or* a flask of Æmbrew
- A comm-bead, an extra clip, and a translator
- 1d100 Æmbits

Cræniac

I can never understand the negative associations that others have with my noble career. Without our actions, after all, life in the Local Group would be so... boring.
-Escotera

Cræniacs see the Crucible as a source of ideas and the largest field laboratory imaginable (and they can imagine a lot). Surrounded by an impossibly wide assortment of beings, technologies, and especially Æmber, their desires to create, innovate, and experiment can run unchecked. Whether crafting robotic lakestriders or intelligent viruses, Cræniacs are at their happiest when watching their latest unique creations come to life.

While Cræniacs may seem somewhat harmless (as long as their experiments are kept far away), their drive to create can mean that things like social niceties and safety protocols are occasionally forgotten or ignored. As a result, it is not uncommon for Cræniacs to operate in isolation using "borrowed" monopoled Æmber or neutron shields from a nearby power plant. Alternatively, they might work for companies willing to forgive minor excesses for the fabulous results Cræniacs eventually produce, explore lost ruins for ancient tech, perform independent scientific analysis on "acquired" items, and even teach at universities—while keeping their latest creations a secret from rival faculty members, of course. Many of the scientific and technological advancements on the Crucible can be attributed to Cræniacs, though many often worry (from a safe distance) what Cræniacs will come up with next.



USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Cræniac characters:

- **Tier 1:** Desperate Recovery (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Faerie Finesse (page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Know Somebody (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 2:** Know-It-All (page 79).
- **Tier 2:** Tanks a Lot (page 80).
- **Tier 3:** Natural (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 79).

A Cræniac counts the following skills as career skills: **Æmbercraft**, **Computers**, **Gunnery**, **Knowledge (Æmber)**, **Knowledge (Science)**, **Mechanics**, **Operating**, and **Skulduggery**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Cræniac may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Cræniac character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A one-handed Melee weapon (trait: Radiant) *or* a one-handed Ranged weapon (traits: Disruptive, Reaper Sigil)
- Durable clothing (trait: Sealed, *or* both Enhanced and Insulating)
- A hacking rig *or* both a databook and programming tools
- A comm-bead, a flask of Æmbrew, and a utility belt
- 1 Æmber
- 1d100 Æmbits

Cruciblist

Cruciblists hold this world is more than just its physical presence. For them, everything on it is bound together via Æmber, from its mysterious construction materials and landscapes to the very beings who inhabit it. Through study and meditation of the world's carefully arranged nature, Cruciblists believe they can unlock its secrets and become attuned with its greater reality.

Although many beings scoff at such beliefs, Cruciblists do seem to possess unexplained abilities. Many display an innate sense of direction and can detect raw Æmber through unknown senses. Some also have a soothing presence and can calm enraged brutodons and hungry blood roses alike. Cruciblists might follow the migratory patterns of uncanny forests, examine the physical nature of new Æmber finds, and work for companies in studying old mines to see if and how Æmber replenishes itself. Many wander uncharted areas to witness new species evolving or accompany construction crews when underground areas are uncovered. Always, though, they spend most of their time in contemplation when they find yet another new aspect of this world to contemplate and meditate upon.

Such activities might appear unconnected, but every bit of information concerning the Crucible and Æmber is just one more step in fully understanding this world and becoming one with it. For this, Cruciblists often act as highly paid information sources concerning Æmber as well as science. For Cruciblists, all knowledge is as one, just as all life is one with the Crucible.

A Cruciblist counts the following skills as career skills: **Cool**, **Discipline**, **Knowledge (Æmber)**, **Knowledge (Crucible)**, **Knowledge (Science)**, **Resilience**, **Riding**, and **Survival**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Cruciblist may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Cruciblist character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A Brawl weapon (trait: Flaming) *or* a two-handed Melee weapon (trait: Methodical)
- Durable clothing (traits: Ether, and either Quantum *or* Smoking)
- A loaf of Æmbread *or* a databook
- 2 heal-x tabs and a backpack
- 1 Æmber
- 1d100 Æmbits

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Cruciblist characters:

- **Tier 1:** Mutation (page 75).
- **Tier 1:** One with Nature (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Spire Sense (page 75).
- **Tier 2:** One with the Crucible (page 79).
- **Tier 2:** Side Step (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 77).
- **Tier 3:** Æmber Dowser (page 81).

How does anyone meld with a world? Is the Crucible itself sentient?

Discoverer

The sheer size of the Crucible means that surveying its entirety is utterly impossible. That doesn't stop Discoverers, though. These beings find traveling across the Crucible's gigantic surface (as well as below and above it) to be the most fulfilling life that they can conceive. This world is filled with endless wonders. For Discoverers, there is always a wilderness to explore, a civilization's ruins to be excavated, or a fossilized starship to be examined—possibly all in the same place. The exact nature of what they find isn't as important as the actual discovery itself.

While Discoverers tend to spend most of their life making their way across uncharted wildernesses or hiking through unexplored mountain ranges, they also enjoy cities and other population centers. Discoverers may visit cities to converse with like-minded beings about their latest finds or share information concerning upcoming expeditions and recent terrain alterations, but cities have other allures as well. Some urban settings are hundreds of thousands of years old with buried streets and forgotten levels as mysterious and rewarding as any vertical lake or hovering island. No matter where they look, these adventurers can find a lifetime of discovery on the Crucible.

As some of my field researchers like to say, "Every day is a discovery!" Valid, but still no excuse for a failed expedition. -Escotera

They can almost always find good employment as well, such as leading university expeditions, locating lost merchant airships for trade companies, recovering rare antiquities for scientific study or sale, and finding new routes for large merchant caravans. For some, however, a life of discovery is more than enough and they find their own ways to live without working for anyone else.

A Discoverer counts the following skills as career skills: **Athletics**, **Knowledge (Crucible)**, **Melee**, **Perception**, **Piloting**, **Riding**, **Stealth**, **Survival**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Discoverer may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Discoverer characters:

- **Tier 1:** Forager (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Let's Ride (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Well Organized (page 78).
- **Tier 2:** Daring Aviator (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 75).
- **Tier 2:** Heightened Awareness (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 76).
- **Tier 3:** Born in the Saddle (page 81).

Starting Gear: If you have a Discoverer character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A one-handed Melee weapon (trait: Venomous) *or* a two-handed Melee weapon (traits: Disruptive, Mono-Edged)
- Durable clothing (trait: Antigrav) *or* standard clothing (trait: Quantum)
- A first aid kit, a loaf of Æmbread, and a spire sextant, *or* a gyroscopic belt
- A rebreather, an illuminator and 2 ration packs
- 1d100 Æmbits

Engineer

The Crucible is perhaps the greatest feat of manufacturing in the universe. It is an entirely artificial world where everything, no matter how natural it might appear, is the result of careful design and planning—and no one appreciates this more than Engineers.

Engineers love challenges, and the Crucible provides plenty. There are always buildings to erect, bridges to build, computers to program, and weapons to forge, all in different patterns and styles. The endless variety of technology on the world means that koolz-wood stoves can sit side by side with dimensional tensor furnaces, and each provides a new lesson in construction and repair. Though each species is unique, the principles of levers, fluid dynamics, and electron tunneling are constants—most of the time. Even when they aren't, Engineers can still make it all work through lots of joint lubrication, perseverance, and sweat. Often, lots and lots of sweat.

Many groups greatly appreciate such effort, and Engineers are often employed in most cities for construction and repair as well as in universities and labs to refine technologies. Field Engineers serve in newly established settlements to create permanent infrastructure or fashion roads sturdy and reliable enough to establish trade across distant cities. They are also common sights in many excursions into ancient civilizations to study and possibly replicate any technologies unearthed there. Many engineers often aid newly arrived civilizations in translating their existing technologies to incorporate Æmber, something that is a necessity at some point.

An Engineer counts the following skills as career skills: **Athletics**, **Computers**, **Knowledge (Science)**, **Mechanics**, **Operating**, **Perception**, **Ranged**, and **Vigilance**. Before spending experience during character creation, an Engineer may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have an Engineer character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A one-handed Ranged weapon (trait: Explosive *or* Magnetic)
- Durable clothing (traits: Enhanced *or* Insulating)
- Construction aids *or* AR Goggles *or* a field forge
- A toolkit
- 1d100 Æmbits

Useful Talents

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Engineer characters:

- **Tier 1:** Defensive Sysops (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Knack for It (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Talk Shop (page 78).
- **Tier 2:** Fan the Hammer (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 76).
- **Tier 2:** Pyromania (page 79).
- **Tier 3:** Distinctive Style (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 78).

Met a goblin tek out near the Everfire (don't ask) who was sure her latest project would impress the Architects so much they'd have no choice but to make her one of them. Never saw her again, so who knows?

Mender

Despite the best efforts of creators and builders, things tend to break or fall apart, and the extreme nature of the Crucible doesn't help. This goes double for sentients of all kinds, very few of whom were designed or evolved for the world they now find themselves on. When gravity might shift abruptly when a being simply walks from a desert into a grassland, or when ferocious clusters of bloodworms might unexpectedly emerge from the ground, injuries are sure to occur. This is where Menders come into play, for they are the experts at patching up beings and restoring them to proper working order, whether those beings are organics, mechanicals, or others who defy classification.

Being a medical doctor on the Crucible means learning more about mechanics than I would have ever believed necessary. -Ingram

Menders not only excel in repair work, but also can contribute improvements and reduce the odds that more problems will occur. Everyone could use an extra arm of either flesh or metal, after all, and some duranite cranial plating is always useful. For some patients, Menders might suggest redundant DNA sequencing or extra mag-shielding around central processors. Beings who want enhancements turn to Menders—many of whom are delighted to show off their skills by displaying their own personal upgrades.

Most cities and even settlements have at least one Mender to support its population, of whom may have followed the entire lives of many residents. Menders might also have lucrative positions in research centers and universities where they can innovate new procedures or become renowned experts in specific fields from cranial replacement to neural acceleration.

A Mender counts the following skills as career skills: **Cool**, **Knowledge (Crucible)**, **Knowledge (Culture)**, **Mechanics**, **Medicine**, **Melee**, **Negotiation**, and **Resilience**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Mender may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Mender characters:

- **Tier 1:** Durable (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Grit (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Surgeon (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 2:** Defensive Stance (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 75).
- **Tier 2:** Patch Up (page 79).
- **Tier 3:** Painkiller Specialization (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 79).

Starting Gear: If you have a Mender character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A one-handed melee weapon (traits: Savage, Shielding) *or* a two-handed Melee weapon (trait: Dreaming)
- Durable clothing (traits: Insulating, and either Guarding *or* Kaleidoscopic)
- 2 flasks of Æmbrew and a loaf of Æmbread, *or* a portable medkit
- 4 heal-x tabs
- 1d100 Æmbits

Performer

If all the world's a stage, then it takes lots of confidence and verve to walk on what is probably the largest arena in the universe. Performers accept the challenge eagerly. A Performer's art can include almost anything, from singing and acting to programming recitals and interpretive howling. Instruments range from guitars to harmonic blasters, though for some Performers, there is little difference between the two. The skalds of Brobnar, for example, routinely conduct concerts that cause landmasses to shift and launch poetry slams that resemble small wars.

How they present their art may also vary greatly, from private recitals to huge events with thousands of stadium fans. Some work for large concerns that manage hundreds of Performers and so might travel the Local Group on contracted engagements. Skilled artists might turn to teaching others techniques from acting and singing to arranging harmonious floral growths and blending spices into sequential palate detonations.

Performers are more than simply artists, however. Many spread word of magnificent vault battles, spectacular experiments, discoveries of new species, and more via their presentations. As data can be easily corrupted or lost (or deliberately altered), the oral histories of performers sometimes are more permanent and trusted than datadiscs and newsmetals. The information they gather may also include secrets; some concerts and recitations could include coded messages designed only for certain listeners.

There is certainly art, after all, in playing the talented spy who is in turn playing the foppish artiste.

A Performer counts the following skills as career skills: **Charm**, **Coordination**, **Deception**, **Leadership**, **Melee**, **Perception**, **Skulduggery**, and **Streetwise**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Performer may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Performer character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A one-handed Melee weapon (traits: Dreaming, Mono-Edged) *or* a two-handed Melee weapon (trait: Radiant)
- Durable clothing (traits: Attractive, Chaotic, Quantum)
- A disguise kit, *or* both a flask of Æmbrew and a musical instrument
- A comm-bead and a loaf of Æmbread
- 1d100 Æmbits

Rolling Bugs are fine, but if ya want killer riffs and quakin' vibes, then Bräkken is the band for ya. Only on year 137 of their current tour too! —Dodger

Useful Talents

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Performer characters:

- **Tier 1:** Clever Retort (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Proper Upbringing (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Silent Communication (page 75).
- **Tier 2:** Goes to Eleven (page 79).
- **Tier 2:** Inspiring Rhetoric (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 76).
- **Tier 3:** Power Chord (page 83).

Rogue

Life on the Crucible demands quite a bit just to get by from day to day. No one knows this better than Rogues, who live outside many of the laws, conventions, and morals that others follow. There is little they won't do if the price (or the target) is right. Violence is often a common ingredient, but some specialize in other work, such as running cons or infiltrating the ruling classes. Though most Rogues operate in established cities, their talents are in demand across this world.

The best rogues are not the ones who never get caught, but the ones you don't even suspect. A fine cover is more valuable than any lockpick.

Many Rogues work from opportunity to opportunity and crime to crime, living on the proceeds of their last gig until things get lean or something tempting comes along. Some work as part of groups that offer their services for all manners of illicit activities, while others prefer independence even if it means lack of a support network. They might even be part of families where criminal skills are honed and passed down from generation to generation. A few have been known to join factions dedicated to uncovering riches beyond any mere burglary or contract killing, for there are treasures beyond belief in the Crucible for those willing to put aside morals or safety to pursue them. The truly successful Rogues, of course, eventually become legitimate—but there is always the temptation of just one more illicit job, one more thrill that demonstrates their independence from the rest of society.

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Rogue characters:

- **Tier 1:** Quick Strike (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Street Habits (page 75).
- **Tier 1:** Torment (page 78).
- **Tier 2:** Loot First (page 79).
- **Tier 2:** Wallcrawler (page 81).
- **Tier 3:** Elusive (page 82).

A Rogue counts the following skills as career skills: **Brawl**, **Coordination**, **Deception**, **Ranged**, **Skulduggery**, **Stealth**, **Streetwise**, and **Vigilance**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Rogue may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Rogue character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A Brawl weapon (trait: Disruptive, Venomous) *or* a one-handed Ranged weapon (trait: Double-Barreled)
- Durable clothing (traits: Enhanced, Smoking) *or* standard clothing (traits: Antigrav, Lupine, Silent)
- A disguise kit *or* a little black book
- 2 heal-x tabs, a gyroscopic belt, and a rebreather
- 1d100 Æmbits

Trader

It is said that whenever two species on the Crucible first meet each other, Traders are created. Every civilization has something uniquely its own, and often it's something its members don't consider very valuable but that others find extremely useful. Traders are the beings who scout out such technologies, raw materials, foodstuffs, and other items, acquiring them in one location and marketing them at another for a profit.

However, Traders don't just buy and sell things. They are also skilled at appraising items; expertise in the incredible variety of goods available on this world is essential to them. Most are adept at reading the beings they do business with and can tell what approach is needed to close a deal, whether a soft sell or aggressive haggling. Some work with less-than-legal items, such as pilfered blueprints, stolen fuel crystals, or rustled grixeen herds.

Most beings might encounter Traders at simple street stalls with familiar daily items, but others could be found across the Local Group in floating caravans that deal in the mysterious and exotic, and a few only in expensive offices overseeing city-sized megamarx or entire mercantile cartels. Regardless of their goods' legality or the size of their operation, Traders never get tired of the thrill of making a deal.

Useful Talents

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Trader characters:

- **Tier 1:** Bought Info (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 72).
- **Tier 1:** Clever Retort (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** One of Us! (page 75).
- **Tier 2:** Counteroffer (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 75).
- **Tier 2:** Flavor Sensation (page 79).
- **Tier 3:** Tag and Release (page 83).

A Trader counts the following skills as career skills: **Charm**, **Coercion**, **Deception**, **Discipline**, **Knowledge (Culture)**, **Medicine**, **Negotiation**, and **Streetwise**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Trader may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Trader character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A two-handed Melee weapon (trait: Antimatter) *or* a one-handed Ranged weapon (trait: Dreaming)
- Standard clothing (traits: Boneweave, and either Attractive *or* Insulating)
- 1 ration pack *or* 2 heal-x tabs
- A backpack and a databook
- 1 Æmber
- 1d100 Æmbits

We'd heard "Brobnar only like to trade punches" and laughed. Funny but true; yelling loudly was also useful in our opening offers.

Vaultwarrior

Bein' part of a vault battle is exciting and all, but it can be a bit too much excitement some of the time, a bit too much.

But its something ya gotta do at least once, or ya ain't really livin' on the Crucible, right?

For some beings, life on the Crucible just isn't thrilling enough and more excitement is needed. On a world already filled with the unusual and mysterious, the extreme intensity these beings yearn for can be achieved in one of the Crucible's more bizarre events: vault openings. Archons almost always assemble a retinue to aid them whenever they sense a vault nearby. These groups usually battle to locate and protect the Æmber needed to forge keys (and to steal Æmber from the other side when needed).

Vaultwarriors are the elites in such retinues, often staying with an Archon for years and even attracting fans who root for their favorites in the fantastical conflicts. When Vaultwarriors are not battling for Æmber, they like to relax by exploring the uncharted areas, where their experience facing the unexpected and surviving proves invaluable. Successful Vaultwarriors might promote local artisans and their products, and some go on to run training camps for new generations of Vaultwarriors. Others who may have only dabbled in vault battles might use their skills for greater profit in security forces, physical development programs, and personal guard details for the rich and powerful.

A Vaultwarrior counts the following skills as career skills: **Athletics**, **Brawl**, **Coordination**, **Gunnery**, **Medicine**, **Melee**, **Piloting**, and **Ranged**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Vaultwarrior may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Vaultwarrior character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending Æmbits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A one-handed ranged weapon (traits: Disruptive, Mono-Edged) *or* a two-handed Melee weapon (traits: Massive, Shielding)
- Durable clothing (traits: Boneweave, Spiked)
- An extra clip and a loaf of Æmbread, *or* combat pheromones
- A flask of Æmbrew *or* 2 heal-x tabs
- 1d100 Æmbits

Useful Talents

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Vaultwarrior characters:

- **Tier 1:** Hard Headed (page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Rapid Reaction (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Toughened (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 75).
- **Tier 2:** Bowl Over (page 78).
- **Tier 2:** Sucker Punch (page 79).
- **Tier 3:** Inspiring Cry (page 83).

NEW SKILLS AND RULES

This section introduces new skills specific to roleplaying on the Crucible. **Table 1–13: Skills for the Science Fantasy Setting** on page 70 includes both these new skills and the skills from the Genesys Core Rulebook that are used in this setting. It also includes rules covering mounted movement and combat, something that can come up even in the most technologically advanced areas of the Crucible.

General Skills

Secrets of the Crucible introduces a brand new skill unique to roleplaying on the Crucible, for it relies on the mysterious substance that can only be found on this artificial world: Æmber.

Æmbercraft (Willpower)

In the same way that Æmber itself is an extraordinary material, those who learn how to use it may gain extraordinary abilities and powers. The material allows so much more for those who are able to properly focus their emotions and discipline their mental energies to harmonize with the substance.

This skill encompasses a wide range of rituals, procedures, and practices for using Æmber in ways beyond merely powering a weapon or reactor. To do so requires high levels of mental and emotional discipline, achieved through a great many means from isolated meditations to intense maelstroms of brain shattering music. While most Æmbercraft checks involve crafting Æffects (see page 167), Æmbercraft can be used to invoke the power of Æmber in countless other ways from defying gravity to igniting emotions to detecting others who are using it. Like Æmber itself, the only limits to Æmbercraft may be the imagination and will of the user.

Your character should use this skill if...

- You character wishes to create an Æffect.
- Your character is attempting to imprint a particularly painful emotion within a shard of Æmber.
- Your character wishes to stride across a lagoon by scattering powdered Æmber across the surface.

RIDING, NOT DRIVING

You'll notice that the Driving skill isn't used in the science fantasy setting. We instead use Riding for controlling both steeds and smaller vehicles. This is in part as this is still a fantasy setting, even though there are plenty of high-tech elements, and as such Riding should be used (as opposed to simply using Survival). Secondly, the nature of the various types of things you can ride on the Crucible can range from purely organic creatures to fully technological devices, and often it's very hard to tell the difference between them! Thus, characters in this setting use Riding for steering their crystalline silica-steeds through the Emotional Landscape, roaring across fields of stunflowers on their smoke-belching doom buggies, and ferrying passengers aboard a slightly ornery mechactopus through Hub City's riverways.

TABLE 1–13: SKILLS FOR THE SCIENCE FANTASY SETTING

NAME	CHAR	TYPE	SOURCE
Æmbercraft	Willpower	General	Page 69
Athletics	Brawn	General	Core Rulebook (page 58)
Brawl	Brawn	Combat	Core Rulebook (page 67)
Charm	Presence	Social	Core Rulebook (page 54)
Coercion	Willpower	Social	Core Rulebook (page 55)
Computers	Intellect	General	Core Rulebook (page 58)
Cool	Presence	General	Core Rulebook (page 59)
Coordination	Agility	General	Core Rulebook (page 59)
Deception	Cunning	Social	Core Rulebook (page 56)
Discipline	Willpower	General	Core Rulebook (page 60)
Gunnery	Agility	Combat	Core Rulebook (page 69)
Knowledge (Æmber)	Intellect	Knowledge	Page 71
Knowledge (Crucible)	Intellect	Knowledge	Page 71
Knowledge (Culture)	Intellect	Knowledge	Page 72
Knowledge (Science)	Intellect	Knowledge	Page 72
Leadership	Presence	Social	Core Rulebook (page 56)
Mechanics	Intellect	General	Core Rulebook (page 60)
Medicine	Intellect	General	Core Rulebook (page 61)
Melee	Brawn	Combat	Core Rulebook (page 67)
Negotiation	Presence	Social	Core Rulebook (page 56)
Operating	Intellect	General	Core Rulebook (page 62)
Perception	Cunning	General	Core Rulebook (page 62)
Piloting	Agility	General	Core Rulebook (page 62)
Ranged	Agility	Combat	Core Rulebook (page 68)
Resilience	Brawn	General	Core Rulebook (page 63)
Riding	Agility	General	Core Rulebook (page 63)
Skulduggery	Cunning	General	Core Rulebook (page 64)
Stealth	Agility	General	Core Rulebook (page 64)
Streetwise	Cunning	General	Core Rulebook (page 65)
Survival	Cunning	General	Core Rulebook (page 65)
Vigilance	Willpower	General	Core Rulebook (page 65)

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULDN'T USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character wants to add a new Æmber-powered cybernetic attachment to their friend. If they use Mechanics or Medicine instead (depending on the nature of their friend), they will have a better chance of still having a friend the next day.
- Your character is trying to dig up a newly discovered Æmber deposit. That would instead require Athletics (or possibly Mechanics if power tools are being used in the effort).
- Your character needs to carve Æmber into a pleasing gift. They should use Coordination instead.

Knowledge Skills

The new skills in this section take the place of the single Knowledge skill presented in the Core Rulebook.

Æmber (Intellect)

If there is one thing that makes the Crucible operate in ways that could never be replicated elsewhere, it is Æmber. It can naturally occur in any state of matter, react through emotional impressions, emit energy, and even seems to sometimes grow like an organic life form. Attempts to study it have driven many a researcher to throw their neutrino microscopes into the air and join the Untamed. Everyone from street urchins to Archons are always in search of it, and whoever unravels its secrets first may discover the true purpose of the Crucible.

This skill represents what inhabitants of the Crucible know as facts concerning Æmber (not that much) and what they believe to be facts (quite a lot more). It includes information concerning the many ways Æmber is used, its role in opening vaults, and how some beings can draw on it to gain astonishing abilities and powers. The more one knows about Æmber, the more power one can have over it (or so many hope).

Your character should use this skill if...

- Your character wants to recall the latest experimental findings concerning which emotions imprint the longest on various types of Æmber.
- Your character seeks to remember the special Æmber grinding procedures that go into baking a seasonal version of Æmbread.
- Your character needs to remind allies of how much energy some crystallized Æmber will produce given its current fragmentation rate—quickly.

Your character shouldn't use this skill if...

- Your character wishes to remember which Logos research effort has vaporized the most Æmber. That would be Knowledge (Crucible).
- Your character desires to hunt Æmberdrakes for the large amounts of ingested Æmber within each creature. Your character should instead use Survival to track these massive beasts.

- Your character wants to find someone who knows someone who sells "found" Æmber, no questions asked. Streetwise would be a better skill for them to use, as criminal enterprises are involved.

Crucible (Intellect)

It is quite impossible to know all of the Crucible, given its gigantic size and variety of civilizations and species. The nature and locations of inhabitants change with new arrivals and migrations; even some terrains shift enough that maps might require frequent revisions. Even major features in areas like the Local Group or the Cerulean Holosphere are known to fluctuate. Still, the Crucible is everyone's home, and knowing as much as possible about it always has benefits.

This skill represents strong familiarity with the many locations, historical events, and species that make up the Local Group. It also includes facts and suppositions concerning the nature of the Crucible itself, such as the Many-Layered theory. Given the endless varieties of well, everything, on this world, it is amazing how often a random piece of stray data can become vital in the oddest circumstance. Such is life on the Crucible.

Even the martians know the importance of studying this world. Knowledge is power, as one Elder said to me before their latest "expedition in force" against an uncanny forest that had migrated near to Nova Hellas.
-Dr. Escotera

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character wishes to recall the latest sighting of an Archon in an area.
- Your character is trying to remember the location of a nearby uncanny forest (or where it was last month, at least).
- Your character wants to impress others with the details of the "*Vaultheads* Picks the Top 13 Æmbersmashers!" article from two years ago.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULDN'T USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character wants to reprogram a faerie. They should use Computers instead.
- Your character is trying to calm a Brobnar warlord. They would find Negotiation or Charm (perhaps even Coercion) is the better method.
- Your character wants to use a megscavation tank to help unearth a long-lost civilization deep in the Great Glass Desert. They could use Knowledge (Crucible) to recall its existence, but to use this huge machine would require Operating instead.

Culture (Intellect)

Many Crucible inhabitants pass tales of their almost forgotten homeworld from generation to generation or carefully memorize passages of rulings that have governed their local village. Others might maintain cultures developed once they arrived here, which might represent blends from several older cultures. Such details may be relatively unimportant outside of your character's people; within them they are invaluable.

Knowing more about someone's culture than they do about yours gives you a great advantage in almost every situation.

This skill represents knowledge of cultures, most often especially that of your character. Such knowledge could be anything relating to burial practices, languages, bonding rites, facts concerning prior habitats (including planets and starships), and even popular entertainments and culinary delights.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is trying to remember the recipes one town favors as part of preparing for trade negotiations with them.
- Your character needs to recall the lyrics for and perform their species' war-chant as part of starting a vault battle.

LANGUAGES ON THE CRUCIBLE

Arrivals to the Crucible learn quickly that there is no common language. There is a thriving market in a wide variety of automatic translators of various efficiencies, but learning languages is always the best solution. Having a helpful Archon nearby is even better, for these beings can effortlessly communicate with any sentient (as well as many creatures).

A character making a social skill check with others without knowing their target's language adds ■ to the check. The GM may allow a character to spend ❁ from such a check to become conversant. Characters can also learn languages through gaining ranks in the Knowledge (Culture) skill or the GM may determine after enough time has been spent with a group that the character no longer suffers this penalty.

- Your character wants to remember the horrible results of a space battle that took place in a species' old solar system.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULDN'T USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is trying to give directions to a Halyards airship captain trying to avoid the Everfire. This would require the Knowledge (Crucible) skill instead.
- Your character wants to impress a Martian Elder. They should use the Charm skill instead, or perhaps Gunnery to really make an impression.
- Your character needs to determine the start-up procedures for a newly discovered Logos AI. Computers or Knowledge (Science) would be more applicable in such a case.

Science (Intellect)

Science plays a vital role on the Crucible. It is science, after all, that leads to new cybernetic designs, cloning techniques, and dark matter fusion cells. Studying Æmber is all well and good, but it is science (or, more commonly, *Science!)* that many still find more useful. Indeed, much of this world's science is so advanced from the many millennia of development across so many species that it appears as magic to newcomers.

This skill represents an understanding for the scientific and mathematical disciplines that come from study and (lots of) experimentation. It includes knowledge of a variety of technologies both brought from other planets as well as ones developed on the Crucible.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is trying to calculate the formulae for a ballistic flight path across gravity inversions.
- Your character wants to remember the pressure at which nitrogen turns solid.
- Your character needs to recall the base harmonic frequencies of a dimensional string.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULDN'T USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is trying to repair a cryogenic fusion reactor. This would require Mechanics.
- Your character is attempting to figure out the controls on a rapidly sinking submersible. It would be much safer for them and everyone aboard to use Piloting instead.
- Your character is trying to heal a wounded snufflegator. Medicine would be better if they want the creature to survive the operation.

CULTURES ON THE CRUCIBLE

It's up to you and your GM to determine if your character can make a Knowledge (Culture) check to know information about another culture, based on your character's background. Generally, a character with 0 or 1 ranks in this skill only knows basic information about their own culture. A character with 2 ranks or more might be an expert on their own species' history, educated about a broad range of species to be found in the Local Group (or beyond), or both. Some PCs might develop expertise through additional ranks and become renowned anthropologists or honored living repositories of a culture, perhaps even a lost one.

Players are also encouraged to reflect upon their character's background to fashion what Knowledge (Culture) means for their PC. The skill could mean one thing to a character whose species has lived on the Crucible for so long there are only myths of the home planet, for example, and another to newer arrivals such as the crew of the *Quantum*.

Mounted Movement and Combat

There are grand traditions across the Crucible of mounted riders thundering across the open plains or through scientific conferences alike. This is often because riders have numerous advantages over the sad pedestrians on foot, with sheer speed being the most obvious. Other advantages to riding animals are as follows.

Even though this is a world of advanced technologies, the sight of Brobnar calvary charging in a line several kilometers wide is utterly breathtaking. -Ingram

Mounting or dismounting from a riding animal requires a maneuver. Once mounted, a rider and steed should be treated as one character in most situations (attacks target the rider, the steed does not act independently in structured encounters, and both act when a player chooses an initiative slot for their mounted character).

A mounted character can perform a maneuver to direct their mount to move. The rider and mount immediately move as if the mount had performed two maneuvers to do so. In certain situations, such as controlling a mount not trained for combat in the midst of a large battle, your GM may instead require the character to make a Riding check as an action to direct and control the mount.

Generally, a mounted character has an advantage in melee against opponents on foot who have a silhouette lower than the steed and should add ▢ to melee combat checks targeting them. Opponents on foot with a silhouette less than that of the steed add ■ to melee or brawl attacks against mounted characters. Conversely, firing a ranged weapon from the back of a rampaging terrostrich is more difficult, and a mounted character should add ■ to checks that involve attacking at distance. Your GM will make the final call on adding ▢ and ■ to checks performed while mounted, as with any check.

Since we treat a mount and rider as one character, the only way to target a mount is by using the aim maneuver to target specific "parts" of an opponent, as per page 98 of the Genesys Core Rulebook). In certain circumstances, your GM may allow characters to attack a steed that has a silhouette 2 or more higher than any of its riders or more without penalty.

A character whose mount is slain or incapacitated is knocked prone and suffers 3 strain. Depending on the situation and the results of any related check, the character might suffer additional damage or become trapped under the fallen mount.

NEW TALENTS

This section introduces new talents specific to the science fantasy setting. These talents, along with talents from the Core Rulebook listed in **Table 1–14: Genesys Talents for the Science Fantasy Setting**, on 76, can be used in any game set in SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE.

TIER 1

BAD BREATH

Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: Yes
This talent costs 3 Æmber. Your character may suffer one strain to make a combat check using the following weapon profile: (Ranged; Damage +3; Critical 3; Range [Short]).

When you purchases this talent, select one of the following item qualities: Blast, Burn, Disorient, Ensnare, Pierce, Stun, or Vicious. The weapon profile gains the chosen item quality with a rating equal to your character's ranks in Bad Breath. In addition, the damage of the weapon profile increases by +1 for each additional rank of Bad Breath.

⊗ from a combat check your character makes with this talent may be spent to deplete this talent. This attack consists of exhaling a stream of flame or another dangerous substance; having bad breath may have other narrative effects, at your Game Master's discretion.

CLOSE COMBATANT

Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
When you purchase this talent, your character gains Brawl or Melee (your choice) as a career skill. In addition, once per session your character may use this talent to remove ■ from a melee combat check they make.

DEVOURER

Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: Yes
Once per encounter, if your character is engaged with an incapacitated target that is compatible with their diet, they may use this talent to heal a number of wounds equal to twice their ranks in Devourer.

TALENTS WITH AN ÆMBER COST

Some talents say that they cost an amount of Æmber. This means that a character must expend the required quantity of Æmber, in addition to spending XP and meeting other prerequisites, in order to purchase the talent.

Talents may also require your character to consume Æmber in order to use them. A talent can become depleted, which means your character must consume Æmber before the talent can be used again. For more on consuming Æmber and depletion, see page 166.

FAERIE FINESSE

Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character adds ✡ to the results of social skill checks they make targeting faeries and pixies and to modify or reprogram the same. In addition, when a faerie or pixie acting under your character's instructions provides assistance, it adds one additional □ to the check.

FEARSOME

Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: Yes
When an opponent becomes engaged with your character during a combat encounter, the opponent must make a fear check (see page 243 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook). The difficulty of the fear check is equal to your character's ranks in Fearsome. At the GM's discretion, some adversaries may be immune to this talent.

HARD HEADED

Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: Yes
If your character is staggered, they may use this talent, even though a character is normally unable to perform any actions when they are staggered. Your character makes a **Daunting (◆ ◆ ◆ ◆) Resilience check**. If they succeed, they are no longer staggered. The difficulty of this check decreases by one per additional rank of Hard Headed, to a minimum of **Easy (◆)**.

Mutation
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: Yes
This talent costs 3 Æmber plus Æmber equal to your character's current ranks in this talent. When your character purchases a rank in Mutation, they gain one randomly generated species feature from **Table 1–8: Species Features**, on page 47. If you generate a feature your character already possesses, reroll the result. Your character's ranks in Mutation cannot exceed their ranks in Resilience.

Need for Speed
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character spends ⮝ to heal strain as part of a Piloting or Riding check while their vehicle's current speed is 3 or higher, they heal one strain for each speed above 2.

One of Us!
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: Yes
Select one organization from **Chapter 2: Organizations** (or create a new one with your GM's permission). Your character becomes a known and devout follower of that organization, and adds ⮝ per rank of One of Us! to social skill checks they make targeting its members. If your character is discovered acting in a manner antithetical to the organization's interests, though, your GM may instead add ⟲ or other penalties to such checks.

Silent Communication
Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: Yes
Your character can soundlessly communicate messages to allies within short range. Allies cannot reply in turn (unless they also possess this talent). The complexity and length of a message may be limited by your GM during structured gameplay, as it is with spoken communication, or based on the current situation of environmental conditions.

Increase the range of this talent by one range band for each additional rank of Silent Communication. This talent may be accomplished through thought-sending, pheromones, gravimetric pulses, strobing lights, or some other method that your character has established as a way for their allies to understand them.

Spire Sense
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character always knows which direction the Spire is relative to their current location. Your character can also always retrace their path to a location they previously visited, as long as the physical route has not changed substantially.

Street Habits
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When you purchase this talent, your character gains Streetwise or Stealth (your choice) as a career skill.

In addition, once per session while in an urban environment (usually when they aren't being watched closely), your character may freely acquire one small useful item that was not previously documented. The GM has final say as to what items can be acquired with Street Habits, but generally the item should cost fewer than 100 Æmbits and have an encumbrance of 0 or 1.

One of my students has this ability, and it is quite superior to any sensor or tracking device I possess. When I asked how it worked, they could only say "it is always there." Obviously a subject for further study. -Dr. Escotera

Pick what you want to be talented at doing carefully, right? Others will always remember your talents when they think of you, or when they're thinkin' of possible suspects. —DGR

TABLE 1–14: GENESYS TALENTS FOR THE SCIENCE FANTASY SETTING

TALENT	RANKED	SOURCE
TIER 1		
Bad Breath	Yes	Page 74
Bought Info	No	Core Rulebook (page 72)
Clever Retort	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Close Combatant	No	Page 74
Defensive Sysops	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Desperate Recovery	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Devourer	Yes	Page 74
Duelist	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Durable	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Faerie Finesse	No	Page 74
Fearsome	Yes	Page 74
Forager	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Grit	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Hamstring Shot	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Hard Headed	Yes	Page 74
Jump Up	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Knack for It	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Know Somebody	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Let's Ride	No	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Mutation	Yes	Page 75
Need for Speed	No	Page 75
One with Nature	No	Core Rulebook (page 74)
One of Us!	Yes	Page 75
Parry	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Proper Upbringing	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Quick Draw	No	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Quick Strike	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Rapid Reaction	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Second Wind	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Silent Communication	Yes	Page 75
Spire Sense	No	Page 75
Street Habits	No	Page 75
Surgeon	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Swift	No	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Talk Shop	No	Page 78
Torment	No	Page 78
Toughened	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Unremarkable	No	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Well Organized	Yes	Page 78
TIER 2		
Æmber Aptitude	No	Page 78
Anthem	No	Page 78
Berserk	No	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Bowl Over	No	Page 78
Coordinated Assault	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Counteroffer	No	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Daring Aviator	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Defensive Stance	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Defensive Sysops (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Distraction!	No	Page 78
Dual Wielder	No	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Flavor Sensation	No	Page 79
Goes to Eleven	Yes	Page 79
Heightened Awareness	No	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Implacable	Yes	Page 79
Inspiring Rhetoric	No	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Inventor	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Know-It-All	No	Page 79
Loot First	No	Page 79
Lucky Strike	No	Core Rulebook (page 76)
One with the Crucible	No	Page 79
Patch Up	No	Page 79
Pyromania	No	Page 79
Scathing Tirade	No	Core Rulebook (page 77)
Sharp Tongue	Yes	Page 79
Side Step	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 77)
Sucker Punch	Yes	Page 79
Tanks a Lot	No	Page 80
Telekinesis	Yes	Page 80

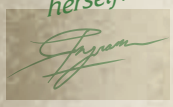
TABLE 1–14: GENESYS TALENTS FOR THE SCIENCE FANTASY SETTING (CONTINUED)

TALENT	RANKED	SOURCE
Tickets to the Gun Show	No	Page 80
Wallcrawler	No	Page 81
TIER 3		
Æmber Affinity	No	Page 81
Æmber Dowser	No	Page 81
Animal Companion	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 77)
Anthem (Improved)	No	Page 81
Bad Breath (Improved)	No	Page 81
Barrel Roll	No	Core Rulebook (page 77)
Bloodhound	No	Page 81
Born in the Saddle	No	Page 81
Breaking Bread	No	Page 81
Bullseye!	No	Page 81
Contingency Plan	No	Page 81
Daredevil	No	Page 82
Distinctive Style	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Dramatic Entrance	No	Page 82
Dodge	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Eagle Eyes	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Electrified	No	Page 82
Elusive	No	Page 82
Eureka!	No	Page 82
Field Commander	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Forgot to Count?	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Full Throttle	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Grenadier	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Hard Headed (Improved)	No	Page 82
Heroic Will	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Inspiring Cry	No	Page 83
Inspiring Rhetoric (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Natural	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Painkiller Specialization	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Parry (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Power Chord	No	Page 83
Scathing Tirade (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 79

TALENT	RANKED	SOURCE
Shameless	No	Page 83
Sweeping Blow	No	Page 83
Tag and Release	No	Page 83
TIER 4		
Can't We Talk About This?	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Deadeye	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Defensive	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Defensive Driving	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Dramatic Entrance (Improved)	No	Page 83
Dramatic Escape	No	Page 83
Enduring	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Field Commander (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Foresight	No	Page 83
Hard Headed (Supreme)	No	Page 84
How Convenient!	No	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Ingenious Solution	No	Page 84
Inspiring Rhetoric (Supreme)	No	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Mad Inventor	No	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Overcharge	No	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Pain Don't Hurt	No	Page 84
Scathing Tirade (Supreme)	No	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Stunned Silence	No	Page 84
TIER 5		
Æmber Enhancement	No	Page 84
Beastmaster	No	Page 84
Dedication	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Dramatic Entrance (Supreme)	No	Page 84
Indomitable	No	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Master	No	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Overcharge (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Ruinous Repartee	No	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Sharp Tongue (Improved)	No	Page 84

As one of me colleagues once said in the middle of a vault battle, "pain don't hurt unless I'm the one dealing it." Made perfect sense it did, them bein' a right big dragon and all.
—Dodger

I swear our engineers have saved more first contact encounters from disaster than the Captain herself.



Talk Shop
Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Your character may use this talent when making a Charm check targeting an engineer, mechanic, scientist, or similar individual to count their ranks of Charm as equal to their ranks in Knowledge (Science) or Mechanics.

Torment
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
If their target is disoriented, staggered, or prone, your character may add ☐ to social skill checks they make to inflict strain and combat checks.

Well Organized
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: Yes
Your character increases their encumbrance threshold by two per rank of Well Organized.

Tier 2

Æmber Aptitude
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Æmbercraft and Knowledge (Æmber) are now career skills for your character.

Anthem
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: No
Your character may use this talent and a musical instrument to begin or continue playing an inspiring anthem. While your character is playing the anthem, allies within short range who can hear it add ☐ to checks they make. The anthem and its effects end immediately if your character does not use this talent during their turn. Once the anthem has ended, your character cannot use this talent again for the rest of the encounter.

Bowl Over
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character makes a melee attack after engaging a target, your weapon gains the Knockdown item quality. If the weapon already has Knockdown, you may activate the quality without spending ⮝.

Distraction!
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
Your character may use this talent to make an **Average (◆◆) Coordination**, **Deception**, or **Skulduggery check**. For each ✲ the check generates, one adversary of your choice within short range becomes disoriented. Your character may spend ⮝ from the check to inflict 1 strain on an affected adversary and may spend ⯐ from the check to stagger a minion or rival within short range.

Flavor Sensation
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
When your character prepares a meal, they may use this talent to make an **Average (◆ ◆) Knowledge (Culture) check**. If they succeed, characters who partake in the meal heal strain equal to ✲ the check generates and upgrade the ability of the next check they make once. At your GM's discretion, your character may use a different skill appropriate to the situation and your character's preferred methods of cooking.

Goes to Eleven
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: Yes
Your character increases the range of their musical talents by one range band per rank of Goes to Eleven. A musical talent is any talent that requires your character to "use a musical instrument" to activate it. Narratively, you should explain how your character augmented or amplified their instrument.

Implacable
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: Yes
When another character targets your character with a social skill check, your character reduces any strain they suffer as a result of that check by 1 per rank of Implacable. Your character's ranks in Implacable cannot exceed their Presence.

Know-It-All
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Before making a Knowledge skill check, your character may use this talent to add a number of □ no greater than their Intellect. PCs and nemesis-level allies witnessing the check suffer strain equal to the number of □ added.

Loot First
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Once per session, your character may use this talent to spend any number of ⮝ from a check they make to gain 100 Æmbits for each ⮝ spent this way. You must explain how the check gave your character the opportunity to "find" this money.

One with the Crucible
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
This talent costs 1 Æmber. When your character makes a check to recover strain at the end of an encounter, they may use this talent to spend ⮝ ⮝ ⮝ or ⊛ to move a Story Point from the GM pool to the player pool.

Patch Up
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
When your character fails a check made to heal wounds, they may instead heal a number of wounds equal to their Intellect. Once before the end of the session, ⊗ may be spent from a check the healed character makes to have them suffer a number of wounds equal to your character's Intellect. Your character may only use this talent on a particular target once per game session.

Pyromania
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character makes a combat check using a weapon with the Burn item quality, the attack inflicts additional damage equal to the weapon's Burn rating. (This does not increase the weapon's base damage.)

Sharp Tongue
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: Yes
Your character reduces the number of ⮝ they must spend to inflict a critical remark in a social encounter by their ranks in Sharp Tongue, to a minimum of one ⮝. (See page 123 of the Genesys Core Rulebook.)

Sucker Punch
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental, Out of Turn)
Ranked: No
Your character may use this talent to spend ⊛ from a check they make to determine Initiative to make a Brawl combat check against a valid target before the first round of combat begins. If this combat check is successful, your character may activate the Disorient item quality without spending ⮝.

Improving oneself in interesting ways is essential to life on the Crucible. Everyone else is sure to be doing so, therefore to not do so is to fall behind.

Tanks a Lot
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character performs a combat check using a vehicle weapon, treat the silhouette of your target as one higher for purposes of determining the check's difficulty. In addition, your character can make Gunnery checks while they are engaged with an opponent; increase the difficulty by two, as if your character were using a two-handed ranged weapon.

Telekinesis
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: Yes
This talent costs 2 Æmber plus Æmber equal to your character's current ranks in this talent. Your character can manipulate objects and affect other characters within short range (as if they were engaged) using their mind instead of their physical body. When they do, any required skill checks linked to Brawn or Agility instead use Willpower. Similarly, to determine the encumbrance your character can telepathically lift or move, use their Willpower in place of Brawn.

Telekinetic movement is generally too slow and imprecise to effectively wield a weapon, but your character can lash out with mental force to make a Brawl combat check within short range. This attack has a base damage equal to your character's Willpower instead of Brawn and gains no benefit from weapons.

The range of your character's telekinesis increases by one range band for each additional rank of this talent. ⊗ from a check your character makes using telekinesis may be spent to deplete this talent.

Tickets to the Gun Show
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
When making a Coercion check, your character may use this talent to use Brawn instead of Willpower.

Wallcrawler
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character can move across vertical surfaces as easily as horizontal surfaces. In addition, when your character attempts to reduce the damage taken from falling, reduce the difficulty of the Athletics or Coordination check by one.

Tier 3

Æmber Affinity
Tier: 3
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
The first time each encounter your character makes an Æmbercraft check or makes a check to use an Æmber-based item and generates ⊗, cancel that ⊗ from the results of the check.

Æmber Dowser
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
Your character may use this talent to make a **Hard (◆ ◆ ◆) Knowledge (Æmber) check** to determine the direction of the nearest source of raw Æmber within extreme range. Your character may spend ⊛ to determine the distance as well.

Anthem (Improved)
Tier: 3
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the Anthem talent to benefit from this talent. While your character is playing their anthem, enemies within range of its effect who can hear it add ■ to their checks.

Bad Breath (Improved)
Tier: 3
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the Bad Breath talent to benefit from this talent. Your character's Bad Breath weapon profile gains a second item quality from the list included in that talent's description, with a rating equal to your character's ranks in Bad Breath.

Bloodhound
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
When your character makes a check to follow another character's trail (whether their physical tracks or a trail of information), you may use this talent to add ✲ no greater than your character's ranks in Streetwise or Survival, as appropriate to the environment, to the check results.

Born in the Saddle
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Once per encounter, your character may use this talent to add ✲ equal to their ranks in Riding to a single check (using any skill) they make while mounted on a beast or vehicle.

Breaking Bread
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
During a social encounter (or in preparation for one), your character may use this talent to make an **Average (◆ ◆) Knowledge (Culture) check** to prepare a meal. If they succeed, all characters who share in the meal reduce their strain threshold by two for the duration of the encounter (thereby making them more likely to compromise or agree as described on page 122 of the Genesys Core Rulebook). This effect ends immediately if the social encounter changes to a combat encounter.

Bullseye!
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
When your character inflicts a Critical Injury with a severity of **Average (◆ ◆)** or higher, or incapacitates a target with their attack, they may use this talent to inflict 3 strain on all characters within short range of the target.

Contingency Plan
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Once per session, after you spend a Story Point as part of a check your character makes, if that check was unsuccessful then you may use this talent to move a Story Point from the GM pool to the player pool.

Breaking bread is no mere saying when dining with Brohnar. Meals often include fusion-hot spices, fork dueling, overflowing platters, and many, many belching contests.
–Inka

Daredevil
Tier: 3
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character generates ⊗ on an Athletics, Coordination, Piloting, or Riding check, roll ⬢ and add the results to the check, in addition to the ⊗ being spent as normal.

Folks is always accusin' me of being dramatic. I could mention a certain Archon who seems to excel at always makin' a right dramatic entrance.

Dramatic Entrance
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental, Out of Turn)
Ranked: No
Once per session, your character may spend a Story Point to use this talent to enter a scene or encounter they are not currently participating in at an opportune time, no matter how unlikely their arrival. If the scene is a combat encounter or otherwise uses Initiative order, your character adds a new PC Initiative slot at the top of the Initiative order.

Electrified
Tier: 3
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
This talent costs 3 Ember. Your character adds the Disorient 2 and Stun 3 item qualities to their unarmed attacks. In addition, Brawl combat checks that target your character add ⟳ ⟳ to their results. ⊗ from a Brawl check your character makes may be spent to deplete this talent.

Being electrified may have other narrative effects, at your GM's discretion.

Elusive
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental, Out of Turn)
Ranked: No
When another character makes a check to follow your character's trail (whether physical tracks or a trail of information), your character may use this talent to add ✕ no greater than their ranks in Streetwise or Survival, as appropriate to the environment, to the check results.

Eureka!
Tier: 3
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character makes an Embercraft check that generates ❂, roll an additional ⬢ and add it to the results of the check in addition to spending the ❂ normally. When your character makes an Embercraft check that generates ⊗, roll an additional ⬟ and add it to the results of the check in addition to spending the ⊗ normally. (Both of these effects may occur multiple times during a check.)

Hard Headed (Improved)
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the Hard Headed talent to benefit from this talent. Your character may use the Hard Headed talent to recover from being incapacitated due to exceeding their strain threshold. On their next turn after having become incapacitated, they may make a **Formidable (◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆) Resilience check**, even though an incapacitated character is normally unable to perform actions. If they succeed, they decrease their strain to one less than their strain threshold. The difficulty of this check decreases by one per additional rank of Hard Headed, to a minimum of **Easy (◆)**.

Inspiring Cry
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: No
Once per encounter, your character may use this talent to allow allies within medium range to reroll any number of ☐ when they make a check until the end of the following round.

Power Chord
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
Your character may use this talent and a musical instrument to make an **Average (◆ ◆) Charm check**. For each ✲ the check generates, all allies within short range heal 1 strain.

Shameless
Tier: 3
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character fails a social skill check to inflict strain during a social encounter, they do not suffer 2 strain (as described on page 123 of the Core Rulebook).

Sweeping Blow
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
When your character makes a successful Brawl or Melee combat check against a target with a smaller silhouette than theirs, they may inflict an additional hit on another valid target, dealing damage equal to the original hit. The second target must also be of smaller silhouette than your character, and no more difficult to hit than the initial target.

Tag and Release
Tier: 3
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character makes a combat check that inflicts strain on the target, the attack inflicts additional strain equal to your character's ranks in Knowledge (Science).

Tier 4

Dramatic Entrance (Improved)
Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Incidental, Out of Turn)
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the Dramatic Entrance talent to benefit from this talent. When your character uses Dramatic Entrance, they may choose to have all allies in the encounter heal 2 strain or to have all enemies in the encounter suffer 2 strain.

Dramatic Escape
Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Once per session, your character may spend a Story Point to use this talent to escape from a dangerous, unpleasant, or awkward situation. The means by which they accomplish this, and where they escape to, should depend on the narrative, but your character takes no further part in the current encounter or scene. After the encounter is complete or the situation is safe (as defined based on the situation), your character rejoins their companions via appropriate, if not necessarily plausible, means.

Foresight
Tier: 4
Activation: Maneuver
Ranked: No
This talent costs 3 Æmber. Once per round, your character may consume 1 Æmber to use this talent to gain a glimpse of the future. When they do, add one temporary player Story Point to the player pool. A temporary Story Point works just like a normal Story Point but is removed from the pool when it is used, rather than being moved to the GM pool. Your character cannot use this talent if there is already a temporary Story Point in the player pool.

Every now and then, I like to learn something unexpected, like tracking or choral singing. You never know when an odd talent might be useful, especially on this world.
Ingram

Hard Headed (Supreme)
Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the Hard Headed talent to benefit from this talent. Once per encounter, your character may use Hard Headed to recover from being incapacitated due to exceeding their wound threshold. On their next turn after having become incapacitated, they may make a **Formidable (◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆) Resilience check**, even though an incapacitated character is normally unable to perform actions. If they succeed, decrease their wounds to one less than their wound threshold. The difficulty of this check decreases by one per additional rank of Hard Headed, to a minimum of **Easy (◆)**.

Ingenious Solution
Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Once per session, before making a check your character may use this talent to substitute a knowledge skill of their choice instead of the skill the check would normally require. You should explain how your character's ingenious solution made this possible—in laypeople's terms, anyway.

Pain Don't Hurt
Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: No
This talent costs 2 Ember. Once per session, your character may consume 1 Ember to use this talent to reduce all damage they suffer by one plus their ranks in Resilience until the end of the following round.

Stunned Silence
Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
When your character makes a social skill check to inflict strain during a social encounter, they may use this talent to spend ⮝ ⮝ ⮝ or ⊛ to stagger the target for one round.

Tier 5

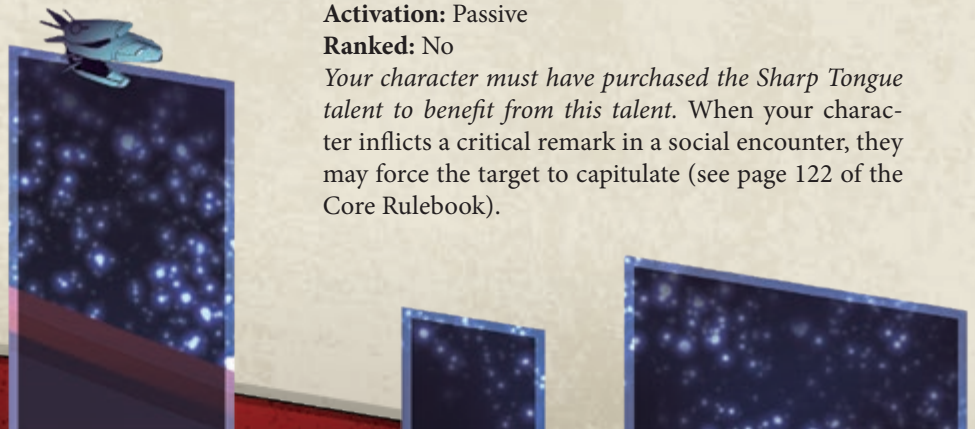
Ember Enhancement
Tier: 5
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: No
This talent costs 6 Ember. When your character purchases this talent, choose two characteristics. Once per session, your character may consume 2 Ember to use this talent to increase one of the chosen characteristics by one until the end of the current encounter or scene. This may increase a characteristic to a maximum of six.

Beastmaster
Tier: 5
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the Animal Companion talent to benefit from this talent. Your character may have two animal companions with a combined silhouette no greater than your character's ranks in Animal Companion. Your character spends one maneuver to allow both to perform an action and a maneuver and resolves each companion's turn individually, choosing the order in which they activate.

One or both of your character's animal companions can instead be a minion group of animals with a combined silhouette no greater than your character's ranks in Animal Companion. For this purpose, treat every two silhouette 0 animals as silhouette 1.

Dramatic Entrance (Supreme)
Tier: 5
Activation: Active (Incidental, Out of Turn)
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the Dramatic Entrance talent to benefit from this talent. When your character uses Dramatic Entrance, they may immediately perform one action. If this interrupts another character's turn or activity, that character resumes their turn or activity after the action is resolved.

Sharp Tongue (Improved)
Tier: 5
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the Sharp Tongue talent to benefit from this talent. When your character inflicts a critical remark in a social encounter, they may force the target to capitulate (see page 122 of the Core Rulebook).



CHAPTER 2: ORGANIZATIONS

Given the enormous number of beings on the Crucible, it is no wonder there are untold millions of groups, factions, houses, associations, and other ways for them to band together. Referred to as organizations, these groups range from congregations of belief systems followed by thousands of species to a singularly immortal hive mind linking a multitude of small protoplasmic blobs. Wherever there are beings who share beliefs or desires, organizations are formed.

In this chapter we'll discuss some of the most famous (or infamous) organizations of the Local Group, such as Logos, Mars, Shadows, and Untamed, along with their beliefs, technological levels, and common ways they interact with outsiders. We'll also cover how player characters can belong to such organizations and ways that this can be reflected in games.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The region known as the Local Group occupies only a tiny fraction of the Crucible's surface—perhaps only thirty or so million square kilometers—yet it holds several hundred powerful organizations within. Some have existed for millions of years, like the venerable Saurian Republic. Others are relatively new to this vast world; the interstellar group known as Star Alliance only recently arrived on the Crucible when the crew of the SAV *Quantum* stepped from the wreckage of their starship.

Organizations rise, fall, and even combine with others as new beings with their own beliefs and purposes arrive. Some may change over time and or even splinter into offshoot factions as new ideas and motivations develop in their members. Like the evolutionary processes that operate on species, organizations that effectively propagate their beliefs, draw new members, and wield their power efficiently thrive. Those that do not may retreat away from attention, but that may only mean their members will become more fervent and devout in their beliefs or are biding their time before emerging anew. Old organizations may be perfect fits for new arrivals, after all, and such fresh blood, ichor, or electricity could be just the thing needed to bring nearly extinct factions back into influence on the Crucible.

Binding Agents

Many organizations originated on the Crucible, like Sanctum's Church of the Opened Eye and Untamed, as part of the remarkable nature of life there. Many organizations simply couldn't exist anywhere else; the Adepts by Æmber Inspired, who make that mysterious substance part of their beliefs, could never have begun without it. Some started far away and long ago on homeworlds across the universe. The organization called Mars, for example, was always part of life on the Red Planet and came to the Local Group along with martians.

Organizations generally revolve around shared beliefs but may instead be based on species or something even stronger but unexplainable. The demons of Dis are thought to belong to an organization, yet as communication with them seems impossible; no one is certain that "organization" is a concept they even recognize. Untamed is similarly called an organization but has no actual organizing tenets, and many of its "members" may not be sentient in ways others use the term. Even demons and wild beings, though, share common behaviors, lifestyles, and often territories that bind these beings together.

CHARACTERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

When true believers are involved, it usually means I need to treble my rates. –Inka

While it's not a necessary part of character creation, players may want their PC to be associated with an organization. A connection to an organization can add new aspects to a character, whether these stem from the character's origin or are developed during a campaign. Ties to an organization might influence a PC's daily life, be part of their past but not their present, or affect them only occasionally.

Some characters and organizations might not be a good fit for each other, though, so players and GMs may want to discuss this while players are fleshing out their PCs. Mars, for example, would never include anyone but martians, and Dis demons' lack of communication would probably prevent them from understanding any other species wishing to join. Similarly, a PC who rejects Æmber would have little reason to become one of the Inspired, who hold the substance as a fundamental part of their spiritual beliefs. Most players should be able to find an organization that fits their PC, but they should also feel free to work with their GM to create a new one!

Connections to organizations facilitate great role-playing opportunities during games, so players and GMs are encouraged to be open to establishing such ties. The following are some examples of ways PCs might be tied to one or more groups:

- **Exemplar:** These PCs are living examples of all that their group holds to be true. They have no need to encourage others to join their group—with every word and deed, they display to all what it truly means to belong to their organization. Good examples are humble and devout Sanctum Knights who readily aid those around them and apply justice with fairness and mercy.
- **Proselytizer:** PCs like these actively seek to recruit new members to their organization. They may even do this as a side career, rejoicing when they convince others to join. PCs who lace all of their code with binaric proclamations glorifying the Society of Logic and Reason or add testimonials to the wonders of Sanctum in their jurisprudence writings would be an example.
- **Casual Follower:** Many player characters likely fall into this category; adherents who belong but don't strictly follow guidelines or accept everything the organization instructs or preaches.
- **Deserter:** These PCs once belonged to an organization but have since left on poor terms. They have renounced all that their group stands for; some may even seek its destruction, though most simply want to put the experience behind them. Martians who have left Nova Hellas after discovering there is more to existence than "Mars Lives On" can be good examples of deserters.
- **Heretic:** Heretic PCs believe (perhaps very strongly) in their group but in ways the senior leadership holds to be false and perhaps dangerous. Inspired adepts, for example, might be driven from temple after temple as heretics should they insist that processed Æmber could also be used to seek mystical Completion, as such is a clear transgression of accepted Inspired tenets.

Reflecting Organizations in Games

PCs with strong connections to an organization, whether for better or for worse, should see this reflected during games. A Logos heretic would likely not be welcomed with open cybernetics at a certified research facility; the reverse could be true if it is filled with other Logos who share their heretical beliefs, though. An exemplar of Brobnar might be invited to judge a battle of the bands or might always find challengers to their fabled vocal strength in the unlikeliest of places.

Game Masters can reflect connections to an organization by applying bonuses or penalties to social skill checks with certain groups and altering the rarity of gear in regions where the organization holds power. PCs with the One of Us! talent (see page 75) always gain benefits when dealing with their designated organization. They may even belong to multiple groups, though this increases the chances of their actions being viewed as against one or more of their organizations!

Whether they possess that talent or not, a PC who openly (and properly) follows a group's tenets might be able to call in favors from their organization, but what "properly" means could vary depending on sects within an organization. However, these PCs should also suffer consequences for not adhering to its tenets while insisting they are devout. Instances in which the peoples of the Crucible react to the decisions the PCs make go a long way toward enriching the game!

BROBNAR

Brobnar is perhaps the most direct and unsubtle organization within the Local Group. Its adherents like their songs loud, their drink strong, and their opponents worthy. When they consider philosophy, it is only to disagree so they can provoke a fight and test themselves against a foe. Science and technology are simply means to create bigger explosions or replace lost limbs. Art mostly focuses on adorning weapons or creating showy cybernetic enhancements that can draw greater attention in battle. Brobnar members also enjoy violent extremes in music to a high degree, whether they are performing or part of the audience. Brobnar live for conflict in all aspects of their life, and they engage in it with boundless enthusiasm, testing themselves against nearly everyone around them.

Brobnar members have roamed the Local Group for countless thousands of years. Their legends speak of crossing a great divide from the paradise of Vanhalla, and ancient records from other sources refer to a time when several goblin tribes joined the growing power of Brobnar's giants.

Giants, who tower over most of the Crucible's species, are the archetypical Brobnar. Their overwhelming physical prowess provides the benchmark for the organization and sets the standard of "might makes right." Brobnar's largest subpopulation is made up of goblins, who thrive in Brobnar through a combination of cunning and pure physical resilience. However, beings of a variety of other species and backgrounds including humans, sylicates, and robots join the Brobnar clans, as the direct nature of its culture is attractive to many. Brobnar is open to all, but not all can survive the intensity of Brobnar life and its love of violence and conflict.

When a giant roars at you, roar back. You probably won't be louder than they are, but Brobnar followers often will respect you for at least trying.
-Ingram

Brobnar clans are a terrifying sight to any community they approach. Luckily, their blaring songs, thundering motorsteeds, and raucous laughter can be heard long before they arrive. Brobnar who set their minds on a target are seldom dissuaded or intimidated away, though they are happy to accept treasures and leave, having proved the superiority of their strength. The most tempting sites for conquest are not the ones with the greatest plunder; it is those that offer the most thrilling fights that have an irresistible draw. Opponents who defeat Brobnar on the battlefield or impress them with a show of appropriately flashy force can fend them off or, better yet, become staunch allies.

Culture and Society

Life among Brobnar is a constant assault upon the senses. Everything that can be painted or tattooed is brightly colored with clashing patterns. Flames, bright lights, and a steady stream of detonations illuminate their lands. Pounding music, roaring laughter, and fierce arguments are everywhere among the clans. Crackling ozone, smoky exhausts, and sulfurous mists invade noses as Brobnar teks (most commonly goblins) experiment with cybernetics and armaments.

While all of Crucible's organizations prize Æmber, they otherwise vary considerably in what they hold most dear. Some treasure precious metals or rare artifacts, others secret information or sacred beliefs. Brobnar culture instead revolves around strength in all its aspects. Members' frequent engagement in conflict epitomizes this, but they also live for the sonic equivalent of a volcanic eruption (which they would call "a nice little tune"). Displays of physical excess and toughness are common. Such activities project strength, and for Brobnar, displays of strength are just as important as actual strength. Similarly, weakness, or even just apparent weakness, is repugnant, especially to giants.

Many Brobnar seek out thrilling experiences in a variety of locations, reveling in opportunities to display their prowess. They relish performing in the midst of lava flows, embrace the most unpredictable and powerful weaponry and cybernetics, and roar their bikes across fields covered in freshly fallen razorsnow.

Many other beings make the mistake of believing that Brobnar society is not as advanced as their own, in part because Brobnar members value conflict and raucousness so highly while disregarding many resources that others prize. This can be a disastrous mistake. Brobnar leaders are more than capable tacticians, and their society includes many skilled engineers (though their concept of "safety protocols" is tenuous at best). The organization rewards strength in leadership, cunning, and engineering, all of which boost its ability to succeed when it comes into conflict with other cultures. For example, goblins, who might not hold such roles elsewhere, may rise in Brobnar society to become leaders and shamans guiding much taller members of a clan.

Except during the reign of the legendary Überking Rocketfirefist (long may he roar!), the frequent squabbling between clans has meant that Brobnar have never had a completely unified force. Each clan is led by its strongest member, with direct combat in the Champion's Ring used to decide leadership; leaders only lead as long as they can defeat all challengers in these rare contests.

Sometimes, internal clashs are simply due to boredom or lack of a good outside opponent. Less frequently, one warrior instigates a conflict with another for the opportunity to appropriate a precious weapon or augmentation; while Brobnar look down on sneaky theft, defeating another to gain their possessions is quite acceptable. Clan tacticians may also come to blows over selecting their next target, which can lead to a challenge to the current leadership.

Combat extends outside clans as well: clans are as likely to battle outsiders as their members are to battle each other. Most Brobnar view their best opponents as other Brobnar, however, so it usually takes a worthy opponent to direct their gaze outside the organization. This makes the less formidable species in the Local Group breathe a sigh of relief.

Of particular note among the Brobnar are ogres. These are giants who augment their natural physical strength through the use of Æmber. Ogres use a variety of methods to incorporate Æmber into their bodies, from implanting it surgically to ingesting it to mixing it with dye to produce vivid tattoos. While they gain physical potency from these modifications, it comes at a tremendous price. An ogre's intellect degrades from extended Æmber exposure, ultimately rendering them a mindless automaton, fueled only by rage and twin cravings for combat and more Æmber.

Brobnar have no actual saying like "might makes right." I'm told the concept is so ingrained that it literally goes without saying for them.
-Inka

Brobnar on the Crucible

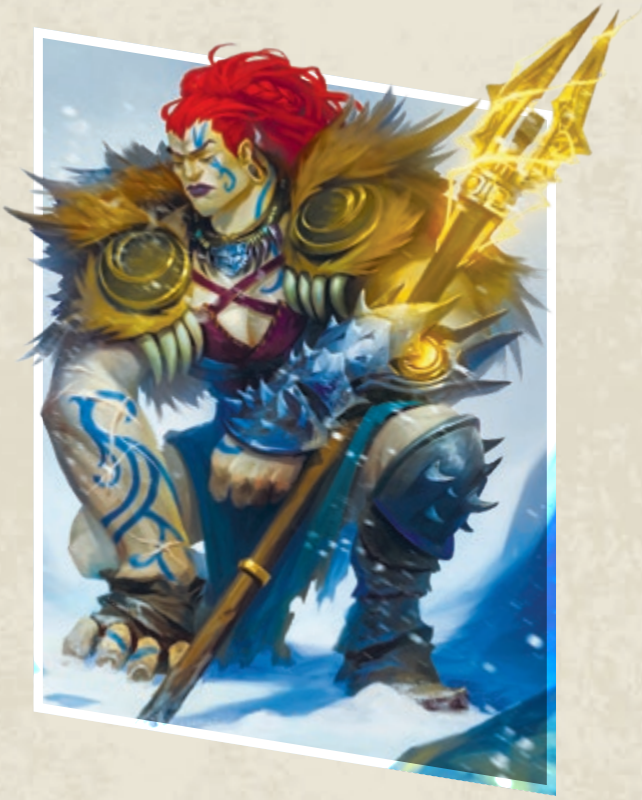
It is easy to view Brobnar clans as forces of nature, rampaging across the Local Group like violent storms or tidal waves. They can be destructive even when not actually fighting. Cities can be devastated simply because they are near a Brobnar music festival, mountains leveled by Brobnar as they "were in the way," and entire crops destroyed due to the exhaust from a gathering of battlecar, grump buggy, and helwarg enthusiasts. Many clans also have nomadic impulses and somehow always seem to return to an area they have destroyed just as its residents have finally rebuilt it.

Such destruction isn't really their intent, however. Brobnar are simply bigger and stronger than most beings and find that almost everything they encounter breaks too easily, if they think about those things at all. When they travel somewhere, it's to have a good time at their destination and compete against whatever it might offer, from battle leaders and war machines to vocal powerhouses and hyperthermal sauce creators.

For those who aren't nomadic, most Brobnar clans maintain settlements based around valuable naturally occurring resources, especially those full of Æmber and workable metals. Other settlements are located at sites of legendary conflicts or locations known for extreme or clashing climates like the Everfire. Brobnar myths insist that the twin volcanoes of Fenwyr and Mygnhal are the surviving impact craters from when Hoodran Axhead cleaved a meteor with his monomolecular mohawk; after three weeks of screaming their appreciation for the mighty deed, the Brugkon clan decided to reside between the peaks. The Fogshroved war camp on the shores of the great river Jorgmund is the closest thing the Brobnar have to a true city. It is said to have stood on this location for centuries, ever since the Tongnasher clan reshaped the river using only the power of their battle roars.

Unsurprisingly, conflict rules Brobnar interactions with other organizations as well. Alliances are fleeting, usually arising when a Brobnar leader feels that working with an outside group could lead to a more enjoyable battle, another group wants to hire Brobnar as mercenaries, or when an outsider demonstrates sufficient strength to draw admiration. However, alliances often only last until a turning point in battle or a victory is achieved, at which point the clan gleefully adds another front to its conflict.

Goblin teks have a saying, "If it ain't broke, you didn't push it hard enough!" I have to admire their experimental enthusiasm, if not their sense of self-preservation.



Because many Brobnar are nomadic, it is rare for them to come under direct attack. Mars, Sanctum, and Logos have all mustered forces to try to prevent Brobnar clans from overwhelming their strongholds, but these efforts have had mixed results. Rumors persist that a Mars armada and a Brobnar festival annihilated each other at what are now known as the Death Craters, but neither Mars nor Brobnar is willing to confirm this. When word of Sanctum's successful repulsion of a group of Brobnar champions out to challenge a knightly order at Blessed Pergryn's Shrine became well-known, thirty-eight clans banded together to assault the facility. The cathedral has since been rebuilt from the ruins; many giants make pilgrimages to swing an ax at the site in memory of that wonderful battle and demonstrate that Brobnar are still the strongest beings around.

On rare occasions, other factions have sought out resources that Brobnar settlements control. Dialogues have rarely been fruitful in these situations, but wily goblin shamans often get the better of opponents who underestimate their social skills. For Brobnar, haggling of this type can become a major conflict. Brobnar still fondly tell of the negotiations between the mighty Ponztoon Empire and the Hrrent clan, which lasted two decades and turned the Great Alabaster Canyon into the Glowing Alabaster Lake.

Encountering Brobnar

Interactions with Brobnar seldom begin or end peacefully. This is an integral part of their mindset, as most Brobnar have a visceral need for conflict. Each time they encounter a new individual or group, their first instinct is to test themselves against them and prove that they are stronger. Demonstrations of overwhelming force sometimes dissuade Brobnar members—though not always. A bribe or concession occasionally prevents a conflict or deters a clan from destructively roaring through a town, as it demonstrates the superior power of Brobnar. Usually, however, Brobnar must be endured rather than dissuaded, like a hurricane and twice as destructive.

Somewhat counterbalancing this is the fact that Brobnar encampments and clans are hard to miss. Between the loud music, liberal use of flames, and deafening engines, travelers can see, hear, and smell Brobnar long before encountering them. In some "civilized" regions of the Crucible, especially near Hub City or the Million Towers, helpful status reports alert travelers to the locations of traveling Brobnar to prevent accidental encounters. Caravans will enthusiastically add weeks to their journeys in order to stay far away from a Brobnar clan out to prove its strength.

When an encounter becomes unavoidable, one of the safest approaches is for outsiders to immediately pledge fealty to the clan. This has the downside that the victims typically must forfeit something or perform a service, such as aiding in constructing a new weapon, developing a new cybernetic attachment, or tuning a megalaser guitar. They could also issue a challenge, something Brobnar respect as a response. An appropriate challenge might be a musical battle with the goal of causing an avalanche, an Æmbrew drinking tournament, or a simple contest to outbelch, outyell, or otherwise outperform their Brobnar opponent.

The more aggressive approach some travelers favor is to immediately engage the Brobnar leader in physical combat. A quick victory earns the respect of a raiding party and may even garner a favor or continued loyalty. Using this approach, some particularly capable warriors have even acquired Brobnar followers. Notably, such combats are high-risk propositions, as these leaders are usually the strongest Brobnar around. Further, any new followers are only likely to remain loyal until such time as they decide a battle with their new leader might be fun.

Technology and Abilities

Brobnar gear reflects the organization's core philosophies: gear is direct in function and enhanced to be louder, brighter, and far more dangerous than is necessary or safe. Every Brobnar device functions first as a weapon (the best way to display the owner's power); other purposes are secondary. This holds true for all tools, from surgical implements to vehicles to musical instruments. Consequently, each clan's artisans are weaponsmiths first. Many goblins have a knack for unusual innovations that impress even outsiders, and some of their works are on display in the legendary galleries of the coastal Leesel metropols.

Brobnar do not engage in mass production. Instead, skilled artisans create each device specifically for its intended purpose. Designs are built to incorporate the skills of the artist as well as the stylistic preferences of the wielder, so that each is ideally suited to its owner. Only a very few weapons—usually those that achieve truly legendary status across the clans—are kept in use after their original wielder is gone, as most are reverentially interred or disintegrated with the body.

Because Brobnar gear is always based around a militant approach, designs often seem impractical or even unwieldy to people from other backgrounds. Further, most Brobnar devices are extremely wasteful of energy, improbably oversized, and as dangerous to the wielder as they are to the target. These styles are consistent with each Brobnar's need to be the loudest, strongest, and most distinctive individual in any setting. Notably, these stylistic choices never appear to pose a significant problem to the wielder. In fact, the more noticeable the weapon—regardless of how impractical the modifications might seem—the more effectively Brobnar warriors seem to use it.

This often means that non-Brobnar engineers are unable to grasp the methodology behind Brobnar designs, as the values Brobnar put into their creations rarely match the ones that others would desire. That doesn't mean, though, that Brobnar items aren't effective. Each is hand-crafted by some of the finest artisans on the Crucible, after all, as weapon creation is yet another way Brobnar can demonstrate their superiority. Somehow their flame-spewing, smoke-belching, artificial limbs work quite well, as do their pistoning axes or screaming jet engines, though all in the most unsubtle of fashions. The spectacular explosions, fiery exhausts, and roaring machinery are design features only Brobnar would appreciate, after all.

Brobnar can be right useful in a job, but then a giant sees somethin' else that would be a better challenge. And then the big git stomps away all sudden-like, leaavin' her best mate facing down hungry flyin squids all by hisself.

And yeah, talkin' about you, Valdr.
—Dodger

DIS

The entirety of Dis appears to dwell only within the Crucible's depths, far from the surface and the light. Cybernetically altered demons, at once both impassive and terrifying, dominate this dread society. They embrace the darkness and fire in their subterranean lairs and twisted passages, using isolation to carefully guard their activities and secrets from outsiders. They must place a very high value on their privacy, for they are unforgiving to those who dare infiltrate their domain.

I am certain that my new omniversal polyphasic linguilmatic is sure to allow for us finally to converse with this species. And by us, I mean me, of course.

That should very firmly establish my role as the greatest scientist here, not that there should be any question about it. -Dr. E

One of Dis's greatest mysteries is its origin. Ancient epics passed down through generations of bards and other storytellers relate that Dis originated when researchers seeking ways to infinitely prolong life were forced to relocate underground as their methods became increasingly unsettling to other surface dwellers. Other accounts hold that Dis is the one culture the Architects brought to the Crucible by mistake or that the Architects viewed Dis as their greatest challenge to see if its members could work together in cooperation.

Another speculation is that Dis was founded to decipher the work of the Architects, believing their secrets might be more obvious within the theorized layers beneath the Crucible's surface than elsewhere. If this is the case, then it is hardly surprising that Dis's disciples might endure terrible sacrifices and perform even more terrible deeds to uncover such knowledge. However, the demons of Dis have never demonstrated any abilities that suggest they have greater comprehension of the Crucible or its makers than anyone else.

Exacerbating the mystery behind the demons and their organization, communication between them and other species seems impossible; even advanced universal translators are unable to make good suggestions. Further, how Dis communicate with each other defies analysis—there is no evidence of telepathy, pheromones, gestures, or vocalizations—yet it is clear that information is exchanged.

The actions of Dis appear terrifying and cruel, but the demons' intentions are unclear. What might be a gesture to warn someone of danger ahead is likely to be taken as an attack or worse. No one knows if this is due to some different type of mentality or consciousness the demons possess or a lack of any common structure upon which to develop translations.

One of the few known facts about Dis is that most of its members prefer forms and clothing designed to evoke dread and terror. They tend to have cruel spikes, razor-studded limbs, disturbing masks, and dark, foreboding garb. Whether this is accidental (perhaps their way of "blending in") or deliberate to evoke the emotions they prefer is speculation.

Members of Dis also have extreme cybernetic modifications, usually including sharp blades and cruel hooks. Some demons are so heavily altered that barely any organic material is left visible, and unlike cyborgs from other species, they do not try to make their alterations appear natural. Dis cybernetics seem designed to create disturbing silhouettes, with limbs twisted into such unnatural geometries that they evoke sympathetic pain in observers.

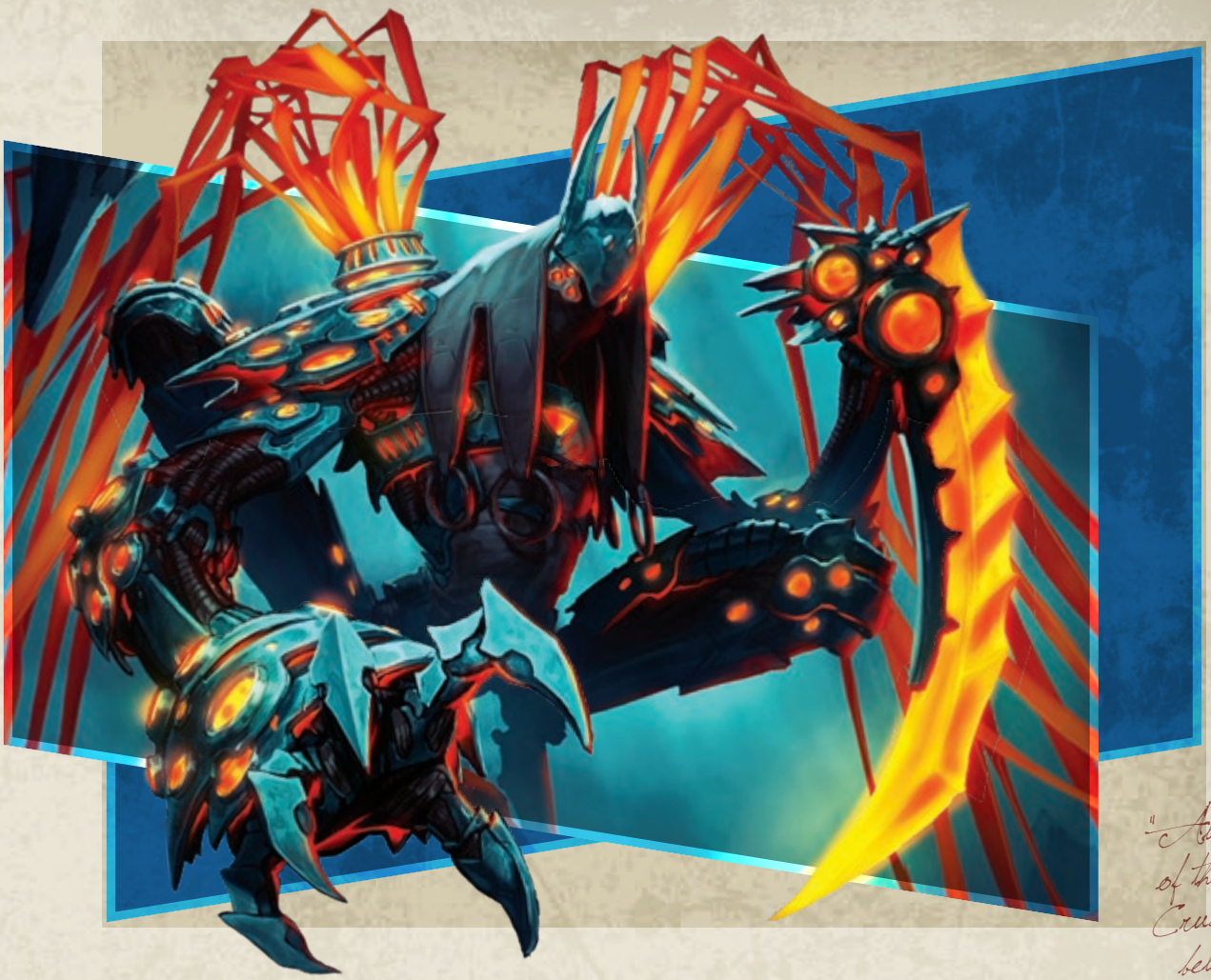
Many beings believe that Dis adopt these forms because they aid in generating intense emotions and thus sustenance. On the other hand, their cybernetics are so extensive that some analysts speculate that they are actually robotic beings with only a few organic parts. Another theory is that their many cybernetic components are necessary for them to survive in the Crucible's volatile underworld.

When encountered by outsiders, these dread beings display no compassion or any other detectable emotions—which may add credence to speculations about a robotic nature. Still, they may simply be unknowable, and perhaps unique to the Crucible.

Culture and Society

Dis is a secretive culture with an unsavory reputation, and there is little or no real communication between it and other groups. Archons, as the saying goes, are the only ones who can understand Dis, another example of Archons' legendary ability to communicate with any species and a reflection of Dis members' particularly alien nature.

Due to Dis's limited contact with outsiders, not much is known of its culture. Based on what little has been observed, these demons' interactions with each other suggest they have a hierarchy of different types of entities. Higher-ranking individuals appear to have more complex augmentations and more impressive physical stature. Extreme examples tower over even giants and are completely covered with cybernetics.



While the reasons for Dis members' subterranean existence are unclear, their motive for visiting the surface seem much more obvious. They appear to be are drawn to strong emotions, particularly those of sorrow, terror, and anger. On the surface, they harvest these emotions like farmers reaping their fields, then record and preserve the precious sentiments for later processing and consumption. Many surface beings, including prominent Æmber Theorists, hold that Dis use Æmber's psychoreactive properties to make the process possible. Others simply call it demonic magic, which is, on the whole, just as accurate.

Many believe that demons treat other beings as little more than cattle or crops: a source of sustenance and little else. However, Dis members do not physically consume others. Instead, the demons capture their emotions—some also say portions of their souls—to take back into their dwellings within the depths. The stronger the emotions, the more valuable they are. Fear, hate, anger, and similar emotions are typically the strongest and easiest to induce, so Dis favors harvesting them. Other emotions like love and happiness may still have a savory appeal but these beings do not seem rely upon these for sustenance as they are rarely as intense.

Legends indicate that Dis demons stir up surface dwellers' emotions well in advance of their arrival in order to reap a more bountiful harvest. More pragmatic researchers suggest that Dis harvesters instead somehow detect places of intense emotion and then travel to those sites. Regardless of the reasons, the presence of demons is rarely welcome.

The demons of Dis treasure powerful feelings such as these and other emotional bounties. Rarely, they even take prisoners so that they can create further psychic suffering for extravagant culinary creations. Such delights are usually reserved for the most aristocratic of demons, who often have small and viciously clever robotic imps to act as their servants. Lesser demons employ these imps as well as other robotic creations to aid in their missions, which might include sowing chaos in familial gatherings, ensuring a glorious quest is thwarted, seeing that a grand romance is dashed, or recapturing someone who believes they have finally escaped their subterranean torments.

"All of the Crucible belongs to the Empire!" Chanted by a Martian expedition sent to conquer Dis. Maybe one day we'll find out what happened to it.

Dis on the Crucible

While Dis followers are quite numerous (perhaps worryingly so), most of the time, few of them are on the surface. Most dwell far underground, possibly in caverns of their own making or within the Crucible's rumored subterranean layers. Despite this, Dis demons can also be found on many areas of the surface, even in urban concentrations. There is a small but densely packed Dis enclave in the Lawless Zone of Hub City, for example, which is rumored to contain extensive tunnels extending deep down to an extraction pit larger than the city itself. Many beings speculate that Dis secretly attend sporting events, where the mournful despair of fans has a particular bouquet all its own. Dis demons clandestinely reap emotions at many funerals as well—even in cultures such as the Wreckers, who launch grand celebrations to see their loved ones escape the clutches of the Architects, as the strong emotions displayed are still valid nourishment.

There are also rumors of aboveground Dis enclaves in particularly hellish areas, such as along the volcanic Everfire and in the remote Æshwastes of Kell. These rumors have not yet been verified, as none of the expeditions sent to investigate them have returned.

Additionally, Dis can be found among battles and open conflicts. Their augmented forms allow them to make particularly excruciating strikes, while their cybernetics dull any pain they might receive in turn (assuming they can feel pain at all). While these demons and their minions rarely form large forces, when they do stake out a location for their own mysterious purposes, they defend it with violence, perhaps because they know of no other way to communicate with non-demonic beings other than Archons. And woe to any beings who already reside on a location Dis have decided to claim for themselves.

There must be more to this species than simply inducing fear in others. I refuse to believe otherwise.
-Ingram, MD

That is not to say that Dis always act in perfect concert. There are many demons and their motivations appear to be endless. Dis followers have even been sighted attacking their own, perhaps to steal particularly prized emotions or to preserve especially flavorful feeding grounds.

According to myth, long ago the demons learned that artificially induced emotions, such as those created from chemical or alchemical means, result in an unpalatable gruel barely able to sustain a healthy demon for a few minutes. Thus, agents of Dis search for settings where emotions arise naturally. Luckily, demons can provide their own inspiration if needed, and thus can elicit their next meal. This also means that when demons from a Dis sect discover a population with strong emotional outpourings, they claim it for their own and fight off rival sects. They even defend it from outside attack, though minor calamities can, of course, make for unexpectedly delightful repasts.

Speculation runs rampant regarding what Dis may have discovered far underground. Many researchers would weep oily tears from their cybernetic eyes to explore what could be traces of lost civilizations or evidence of the "Many-Layered theory" of the Crucible's internal structure. A few adherents to this theory hold that Dis demons are remnants of a civilization from the older layer below to the current one, perhaps the only beings who survived whatever process created the existing surface. Their forms could be a necessary adaptation that has allowed them to survive under the conditions that have been inflicted upon them, and thus essential for other species and cultures to adopt to survive the next layering.

A few of these researchers have attempted to join Dis, along with others who did so for different reasons. These beings were from a wide variety of species and backgrounds. None have reported their findings—or anything else—ever again.

Encountering Dis

Dis, on the whole, has an extremely poor reputation and status in most regions of the Local Group and perhaps beyond. Several tales recount demon attacks on celebrations, festivals, and weddings, but some researchers believe these were efforts to harvest positive emotions, such as love, happiness, and camaraderie, that went disastrously wrong. At these events, they suggest, the demons' appearance resulted in fear and anger despite their attempts to placate crowds by waving their barbed talons and spiked chains energetically through the air. Efforts are being made, most notably in Hub City, to explain the actions of Dis in a more positive light and to convince others to view them in a less antagonistic manner. So far, these have not been very successful, though attempts to be open minded when encountering Dis may be growing.

Some beings work with demons on the surface to exchange items (the concept of currencies appears to be another area where communication fails). Dis agents sometimes frequent trading outposts and merchant bazaars, though what exactly they might be seeking is rarely revealed until a deal is proffered. It may be that they are reaping the pain involved in parting with a cherished keepsake.

Dis can also be found along remote roads or crossing wilderness areas, often in small packs or singly. Surface dwellers tell of angular, silent beings who suddenly appeared next to them on a path, matching stride just out of their peripheral vision with the clanking of their heavy chains the only sign of their continued presence. Others speak of having come across demons who run games with unexplained rules, never knowing if they had won or lost but feeling unusually strong about the mysterious experience.

Other encounters are filled with violence, for most beings strike out at what they find frightening. Demons are quite prepared for this; most are adept at combat and make efficient use of their cybernetics. Defense is usually the goal, for the longer a fight goes on, the more opportunities there are to extract terror from a wounded foe. An opponent's death or unconsciousness is almost never a demon's preferred outcome. This, however, doesn't make a battle with a member of Dis any more pleasant.

While most organizations have low opinions of Dis, it is Sanctum that is most openly antagonistic. Its knightly orders rail against demons for altering the emotions of Church believers as well as tampering with their souls. Especially devout Sanctum members are certain that if demons capture even the slightest ray of a believer's emotional state, that person's chances of transcending to become a spirit are dashed. The fateful tale of Champion Anaphiel and the Terror only encourages such beliefs.

Technology and Abilities

Dis exhibit a wide selection of advanced technologies in each of their cybernetic forms. Legends and speculation suggest that demons' limited emotional range is a consequence of their extensive cybernetic transformation and the materials used in it. Many beings have seen a strong glow in parts of demons' masks and cybernetics where Æmber might be embedded. This suggests a powerful link between Dis and their cybernetics that goes far beyond normal technologies.

What is most commonly glossed over are the devices built into their cybernetics that the demons use to capture emotions. These devices employ science-based procedures and what some label sorcery to funnel emotions into finely carved slices of Æmber, taking advantage of the psychoreactive nature of the material to store an impression of each emotion. Many researchers suppose Dis can also perform this with ordinary Æmber, though few are willing to test the theory. What happens to the imprinted Æmber is something only the demons and those who have escaped from their underground lairs have witnessed, and the demons aren't telling.

The survivors of Dis lairs claim that they are full of nightmarish, technologically impressive equipment. They haltingly speak of furnaces hot enough to burn flesh from hundreds of meters away, with heat that is somehow more painful than mere fire. Such heat is necessary, they say, to smelt the ebon iron for Dis cybernetics and to refine the imprinted Æmber into more easily stored forms that demons can access at later times for leisurely consumption. Even to witness this process, they say, is to feel one's soul being fragmented. Rationalists scoff at the overwrought descriptions but rarely argue against the data, such as it is. Still, like so much information about Dis, these stories could be fictions designed to evoke emotional extremes in others.

When I see 'em coming, I run. You should do the same. Don't matter how many bits are involved. —Honest Dodger

Dis technological expertise also extends to its robotic creations. Imps reflect many of the design aesthetics of Dis cybernetics, making some beings wonder if they are a pure reflection of Dis with all organic material removed. Dis also employs larger robots that aid demons both in battle and in reaping pain and terror from survivors. Imps, larger Dis robots, and other self-aware Dis creations appear to be fashioned with tiny amounts of Æmber, possibly cast off from the smelters. This means that personalities or even portions of souls might be bound within them; it is possible that they are robotic prisons, each carrying the soul-fragments of constantly tortured slaves. Further details about these artificial creatures and their relationship to their demonic masters are not fully known, of course, due to the lack of communication with the species.

THE INSPIRED

The Adepts by Æmber Inspired, more commonly known as the Inspired, can be found almost everywhere, from metropolitan centers to the farthest wilderness reaches. Each member either carries or has access to Æmber, whether a pebble on a necklace, a vial of dust, or a large rock embedded in a staff. This Æmber is their most prized possession, for it is necessary to achieve the next step in their existence—what they call Completion. Whether dwelling within remote sanctuaries and simple countryside temples or walking across the Local Group individually or in groups, they all earnestly seek to attain this mystic perfection.

Inspired adepts earnestly seek to attain Completion. They hold that this state of being is possible only through meditating on and contemplating the remarkable and unique substance known as Æmber, which they believe has spiritual as well as physical properties.

Æmber appears to be unique to the Crucible, which indicates to them that it is part of a grand design of the Architects to help beings evolve to a higher level of existence. According to the Inspired's central tenets, Æmber is a singularly perfect substance that transcends reality, and through it, one can achieve Completion. The process may be long and difficult, but for the Inspired, it is the reason all beings are on the Crucible.

An adept traveled with us for a spell, then left us to head towards the distant Burning Glaciers. "I go where my Æmber leads me," was all they said. Odd person, but I've walked with worse.

This process, which the Inspired refer to as "the path" or "walking the path," has two phases. The first is meditating on a special piece of Æmber that each adept has individually selected. This meditation might take the form of silent contemplation on their Æmber shard as they hold it before them for days on end or holding their golden pebble until it becomes one with their hand.

The important facet of this phase is to prevent the Æmber from becoming altered in any way, such as by shifting colors or shape based on the adept's emotional state. The Æmber must remain in its natural psychic state, thus displaying the adept's control over their own mentality. Instead of letting the Æmber change, the adept strives for it to imprint on them such that they absorb something of its wonders—they seek to become inspired by their Æmber. Adepts who allow their Æmber to become heavily imprinted by them, rather than imprinting on them, usually must restart their meditations with a new piece of Æmber. There are tales of Inspired far along their path, however, who can purge Æmber of any emotional or psychic residues and return it to a pristine, original state.

In the second phase, the adept goes out into the world to witness the wonders of the Crucible and the way Æmber interacts with everyone and everything on it. This journey is usually unique to each adept, though occasionally a small group of Inspired walk their paths together for mutual protection and to better hone their martial skills. Beings in the Local Group are most likely to interact with Inspired when they are in this phase of walking the path. During this portion of their journey, adepts are particularly inquisitive and open to mingling with beings of all sorts to learn how they interact with Æmber.

The Inspired believe that the real nature of Æmber reveals itself to a being only after they complete the two phases. Some temples, especially the Kiln of Golden Contemplation, insist that the phases must be strictly divided, such that an adept might spend many years in monastic meditation before rising one day to travel until they reach their goal. Other temples teach that the phases should be blended; their adepts trek across the land, stopping periodically to contemplate their Æmber and the Æmber around them.

Though the Inspired share core beliefs concerning the importance of walking the twofold path, the exact nature of its end—Completion—is less defined. All Inspired believe it is the final step in spiritual growth. Some sects even hold that Completion is the reason the Crucible exists, and that Archons have perhaps strayed from their paths in their drive to open vaults. Exactly what happens when one attains Completion varies in the several recorded instances (across many millennia) of adepts who reached the end of their path.

Society and Culture

As can be imagined, Inspired society revolves around Æmber and the need its adepts have for it as part of their path. Unlike other groups that rely heavily on the substance, Inspired don't process their Æmber. Many temples have been established where Æmber exists, and the material never seems to run dry where adepts slowly and reverently harvest it. Some adepts instead gather Æmber from plant or animal life maintained on their temple grounds. Temples that teach that each adept must find their own Æmber, of course, have little or no need for Æmber supplies. A few temples purchase or barter for raw Æmber or even hire outsiders to gather it for them, making those temples a source of steady employment in their area.

At some point in their spiritual journey, each adept finds or selects their own piece of Æmber to call their own and make it a part of their path. Some gain it as part of their introduction to Inspired, when they might be told to select one that calls to them and feels perfect. Other temples have their adepts quest for a shard or pebble that calls to them; it might take years for them to acquire such a singular piece of Æmber. Once these adepts find their Æmber, they are ready to return to the temple and take the next steps along their path.

Many adepts make their Æmber part of a necklace or headband, or wear it around their wrist (or tentacle, manipulator, or claw). Others might affix it to a staff or just carry it so that it constantly reminds them of its presence. Other than their Æmber, most adepts wear simple and sturdy garb that their temple provides or that they make themselves.

The time spent in temples varies from adept to adept, but for most, it comprises a large part of their path. Adepts may spend many years meditating until they feel ready to leave for the second part of their journey to Completion, honing their spirit and body to prepare for what might take a lifetime.

Inspired temples aren't just for solitary meditation, however. As disciplining the body aids in disciplining the soul, most temples include areas for physical development. These are often used for group sessions in which one adept who is further along their path leads others in increasing their control over their own body, no matter their species or form. These exercises not only allow adepts to achieve meditative states more easily, but also help them strengthen their connection to their Æmber. As adepts learn to effortlessly control their body, they learn to refocus their energy toward the substance.

Martial arts training is usually a part of temple life, both to aid in mastery of the self and to better prepare adepts to survive as they walk their path in the outside world. The Inspired aren't at all naïve about the dangers outside their temples.

Temples also serve as archives of information about adepts from across the ages. The records are kept in thick books, data crystals, stone etchings, and almost every other media known in the Local Group. These accounts are essential in temple life, especially from those who have seen an adept reach Completion.

I find their beliefs laughable and their understanding of the Universal Substance lacking. If only they would listen to me!

One heavy, crumbling tome carefully maintained within the House of the Light Within includes accounts of an adept whose flesh turned to tiny Æmber crystals several millennia ago, finally dissolving into a cloud of sparkling dust that scattered away on the breeze. Another text tells of an elven adept who walked in silence for many long years, following a floating Æmber pebble, until one day they followed the stone slowly up into the clouds and were never seen again. Yet more records tell of an adept who sat studying a single shard of Æmber for months without food or rest and then faded into the shard's golden glow.

While an Inspired adept makes their way across the Local Group (and perhaps beyond), they still follow their temple's teachings. However, since they are on their own, they may develop new beliefs concerning the best way to reach Completion, and they may adopt new garb or wield new weapons. Æmber, as always, is their one constant.

Inspired on the Crucible

Though the path has two phases, the vast majority of Inspired spend most of their time in one or more of the many temples their organization maintains, which are scattered across the Local Group. Few temples allow for easy access—some require travelers to climb stone steps for kilometers on end or venture deep into a frozen lake—but it is rare for them to turn away visitors. Many are in remote locations so adepts may better focus on meditative exercises free from outside influences. This doesn't mean quiet, however: some sanctuaries are near loudly erupting volcanoes, rushing silverfalls, or roaring cyclone-shrikes.

All Inspired temples are dedicated to the ultimate goal of Completion, but they reflect this in many different ways. One legendary site consists of nothing more than a neat pile of pebbles within the Diamonate Fields, where adepts might come, meditate for a time, and then depart after adding a new stone to the pile. Another, located in a secluded grove of deadly blood-drinker trees, is buried underground among twisting carmine roots. The grand Kiln of Golden Contemplation is perhaps the most ostentatious with its gilded floors and perfectly disciplined gardens that extend mazelike for kilometers in every direction. Oher temples blend so well into their surrounding terrain and vegetation that travelers might not notice they are within the grounds of one until adepts suddenly surround them.

I saw one of them just outside of Hub City. I distinctly heard them say "ah, now it makes sense." Then they faded into the sunset. Quite a sight. -Inka

There is a temple of note in Hub City near the Lawless Zone, mostly there to offer adepts who pass through a place to rest and meditate before moving on. Some adepts remain there for some time, perhaps feeling that their path requires extended exploration of the city or that they should assist in providing respite for other adepts who arrive. The Refuge of Lonely Æmber draws outsiders as well, some of whom stay on to learn more of the Inspired way. Those judged sincere enough generally follow an adept to another temple elsewhere, where they become adepts themselves, find their Æmber, and set forth on their path.

Adepts walking the world go where their path takes them. Some might travel from temple to temple, seeking teachings and new physical disciplines at each. A few may even offer their own learnings in return, depending on the strictness of the temple's tenets. Other adepts might never enter a temple again until they feel ready to end their journey with years of meditation. There are many who view the entire Crucible as their new temple and roam the Local Group, perhaps pausing only to focus themselves on their Æmber and contemplate what each is gleaning from the other. Such an adept might even establish their own temple where their Æmber feels anchored or where the local Æmber seems to call to their own.

A few adepts disappear into uncharted lands to find new traces of Æmber, and the latest Æmber finds always draw their attention. The material can take on many forms, and many Inspired adepts delight in discovering rare crystal formations, particularly elegant veins, trickling waterfalls, or organic-looking tendrils deep underwater. For adepts who have already bonded with a piece of Æmber, such discoveries elicit a greater appreciation for its wonders and may offer psychic impressions of how their Æmber might view itself in other realities. Adepts searching for their own piece of Æmber are sure to find one that calls to them amid such stunning displays.

Encountering Inspired

Inspired adepts might follow their path or establish a temple almost anywhere, and so might be encountered anywhere. They are most commonly found in populated areas, perhaps following an instinctive and singular route through a city's winding backstreets or conducting activities that seem unrelated to their goal but that they feel are part of their path.

Adepts are less frequently encountered in wilderness regions, though they are there as well. Amid forests and mountain ranges, they are unlikely to follow an established road, which makes chance meetings rare. At the same time, this also means there is a slim possibility of meeting one even in spots far from the beaten trail. This is true no matter the species; a martian deserter and an elf who come from different temples could share a journey for a time across the Endless Sands if their paths join there.

It is common for beings who encounter members of Inspired not to recognize them as adepts, given the wide range of species within the organization and the variety of clothing adepts adopt. Most Local Group inhabitants also favor wearing or displaying Æmber, so this does not differentiate an adept from others. As a result, a traveler is unlikely to realize that a being who has joined them on the road is an Inspired adept until the adept mentions it or meditates on their Æmber during a rest break.

Inspired rarely proselytize, but they aren't shy about discussing their beliefs. For them, it is simply a fact that Æmber is special and the key to new levels of awareness and growth. Given the many other wonders the substance can perform, stating this rarely meets with resistance. Attempting to sway an adept from their path is usually met with calm refusal; attempts to remove their Æmber, though, may be met with violence.

What few opponents realize before it's too late is that most Inspired are quite proficient in barehanded fighting as well as using improvised weapons. Adepts know their path can lead to danger where no amount of goodwill can stave off violence. Because an adept trained in unarmed combat and improvised weapons can always rely on those abilities, most temples offer instruction in everything from basic self-defense to advanced combat techniques. If adepts' displays impress others well enough to prompt them to become Inspired, so much the better.

Most Inspired believe violence is not in itself inherently evil. However, they view taking the life of a sentient unnecessarily as keeping that being from achieving their Completion—and thus as something that should be avoided at all costs. Adepts believe that all beings, whether they know it or not, are already on a path. The difference between Inspired and others, they say, is that Inspired know that they are on the path and that it may be long and winding, while other beings are merely stumbling along without understanding what their goal should be.

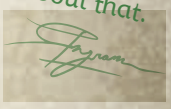
Technology and Abilities

Most adepts forgo the use of advanced technology, traveling in simple clothing rather than elaborate armor and wielding weapons no more complex than a decorated staff or spear. While others reap Æmber as a fuel source or as ammunition for weapons, Inspired view such actions as debasing for a substance essential to the perfection of their spiritual forms.

For some Inspired, unprocessed Æmber may be the extent of the technology they utilize. This being the Crucible, however, many adepts are cyborgs or robots, or wear containment suits to control their incorporeal forms. According to one ancient text, one robot's path led them, after long meditation, to meld their Æmber with their power source. Millennia later, they still sit in an Inspired temple high in the Hollow Mountains, radiating perfect contentment to all who draw near to their metallic shell. Whether this adept has reached Completion or is only very, very slowly approaching it is still debated.

Still, members of Inspired do recognize the power of technology, especially technology powered by or infused with Æmber in a manner that respects the revered substance. Some adepts may even disassemble such devices to liberate the Æmber within so another adept can use the material to begin their path.

A few saurians who have set up shops in Quantum City claim there was an adept here before our ship hit the ground, patiently waiting for us to arrive. Not sure what to believe about that.



LOGOS

The Society of Logic and Reason—Logos—devotes all of its effort to advancing scientific knowledge and understanding. For Logotarians, information is the only currency that has merit. Everything else is simply a means to uncovering it. Consequently, these individuals enthusiastically devote their scientifically extended lifetimes to learning more and sharing their newfound knowledge with their peers.

In order to intensify their focus and increase the time they can spend on their research, Logotarians embrace technological shortcuts for other aspects of their lives. Devices that save time are highly prized, while ones that eliminate routine tasks are valued even more. For this reason, as members become more devoted to their cause, many increasingly replace portions of their bodies with cybernetics to eliminate the weaknesses of the flesh. A properly enhanced Logotarian need not eat or sleep, for example, and may turn off unnecessary sensors and optimize mental processes to eliminate distractions. Completely isolated from the outside world, they can study their data with an unparalleled intensity. In this way, their focus becomes far stronger, and their work has the potential to progress much faster. Logotarians who are already fully mechanical, of course, have already attained this state, and tend to look down on other Logos members as not showing sufficient devotion to the cause of science.

Annoying know-it-alls, but still they do seem to know more than anyone else. If you need data, go to Logos.
–Inka

Notably, because Logos prizes advancement of knowledge so highly, Logotarians are characteristically willing to accept high levels of risk as a necessary part of their research. Sometimes these risks prove worthwhile, and the organization achieves a new level of understanding about some esoteric branch of science. More often, the risks prove disastrous, tearing a rift in spacetime or causing entire towns to teleport… somewhere. Still, something is learned (even if it's just "don't press that button"), so the effort is never a complete loss.

Logos technology is arguably the most advanced in the Local Group (and Logos members are always ready to argue this with anyone). Access to Logos technologies and insights has proven a tremendous benefit to many of the Local Group's inhabitants. Nevertheless, Logotarians' disastrous accidents have brought this organization more infamy than fame in many regions.

Culture and Society

Logotarians apply scientific methods to every imaginable field of study. While many specialize in increasingly esoteric areas, their extended lifespan and intense focus allows each to become an expert in a broad range of areas. An experienced scientist can achieve an impressive range of accomplishments with only a few centuries of sustained effort. As a result, Logos researchers do not identify themselves based upon their primary field of interest. Instead, the main distinction within Logos is preferred research methodology. The dominant divisions are Theorists and Mechanists.

Theorists depend upon logic, mathematics, and observation as the basis of their research, and they certainly would never incorporate any personal biases or pet notions. Mathematical equations are repeatedly tested, adapted, and tested further. Theorists continually design new theoretical models in their efforts to better fit the data they record. Computational engines extrapolate new virtual realities for researchers to explore based upon these models, and the researchers compare the observations they make there with data they collect in known reality. The points where a model breaks down and diverges from the observable are its sticking points: indications of where understanding is flawed and the model must be further revised. Logotarians who identify as Theorists prefer white and silver clothing and biomechanical upgrades.

Mechanists are less concerned with theoretical understandings and more focused upon practical applications. Logotarians of this sect are natural problem solvers. When they encounter an issue, they immediately set about trying to create a tool or workflow that will solve it. They do craft theories about the underpinning nature of reality and attempt to explain why their solutions work, but a theoretical approach is not their first instinct. Instead, they believe that theoretical knowledge is only useful when it has an application. They even willingly make use of theories that are flawed, provided those theories are functional within the context of constructing a specific tool or implementing a particular design. Mechanists enthusiastically embrace fieldwork, making direct observations and attempting to find solutions that will have an immediate impact upon a problem. Logotarians who identify as Mechanists prefer bronze- and copper-colored clothing and cybernetic enhancements.

Within Logos, Theorists and Mechanists display a strong rivalry. While they rarely come to blows, members of these distinct sects tend to go out of their way to inconvenience one another. Intellectual debates between the factions are common, as are complex practical jokes that may have far-reaching implications.

During the construction of a prominent dam designed to channel Æmber-infused lava into a thermal attenuation plant, for example, a Theorist known as Ethergam noticed that the Mechanist designers had failed to incorporate her latest (if still unproven) quark assessments into their design. In response, she implanted a quantum harmonic generator upstream of the dam, causing the entire complex to collapse during its grand opening ceremony. Three Theorist research facilities nearby became temporally untethered in the resulting chronal explosions and subsequently flickered out of normal time for several hours (a lucky occurrence, as the lava was about to reach them).

Ethergam still had her victory, as the Mechanists had to acknowledge their mistake—even though they insist that they can still detect quantum echoes in the lava.

Logos on the Crucible

Logotarians understandably focus heavily on coming to grips with the essence of the Crucible and the Architects who created it. They recognize that these entities have a far greater awareness of the underpinnings of reality than Logotarians possess. This fuels Logotarians' desire to learn more, driving them to take dangerous risks in order to validate their existence. Throughout their history, communicating with the Architects directly or accessing the data storage systems these unknowable entities utilize has been the ultimate prize. The fact that these efforts have universally met with failure has only made them redouble their efforts and attempt more powerful approaches.

Outsiders often have a difficult time working with Logos members. This is partly because Logotarians are intensely driven and hate to be distracted from their work. Any instant that someone diverts them from their research is time that could have been better spent toward achieving a critical breakthrough. Further, most Logotarians consider themselves to be intellectually superior to outsiders—and they believe intellectual achievement to be the only measure worthy of consideration. They expect others to treat them with an air of worship, and if someone approaches a researcher seeking information or assistance, the Logos member expects to be extremely well compensated for their time.

A notable exception is when a problem is associated with the researcher's current field of study. If studying and solving an outsider's problem provides an opportunity for a Logotarian to perform an experiment relevant to their interests, they might even express some gratitude toward the being or group that brought the issue to their attention. In such a case, the scientist approaches the challenge with intense enthusiasm, devoting every available resource to its analysis and resolution.

Logos members' highest priorities are their research and achieving the most efficient use of their time spent in such endeavors. Sadly, their attempts to manufacture time with Æmber have, so far, been disappointing. When they face aggression, Logotarians tend to respond with overwhelming force, fully utilizing all of their technological innovations. However, if outsiders simply need to be persuaded to leave them alone, a Logos member is likely to offer a disproportionate incentive of castoff technologies (which other organizations are likely to view as wondrous marvels) in the interests of simply reducing the time wasted in negotiations.

Encountering Logos

Logos enclaves are technological marvels where researchers devote their existence to intense study and learning. These facilities are heavily defended to prevent intrusion and are constantly abuzz with hovering vehicles, genetic chimera, and experiments that are usually one small step from inverting spacetime or collapsing into hypermatter. Shipments of rare materials and necessary commodities buzz into and out of the enclaves at tremendous speed and with precise regularity. The only disturbances from these set patterns occur when an experiment goes terribly wrong—a frighteningly common occurrence—or when an outsider attempts to intrude upon the work in progress.

A wide variety of robotic attendants guard the entrances to Logos enclaves. Learning machines assist these guards in deciding how to deal with the steady streams of supplicants. Most of the needy are turned away. Those with issues that might be of interest to specific researchers are prioritized for meetings. Depending upon the researcher in question, the delay before a meeting might only be minutes if the matter is of particular interest, but other researchers may take decades to even consider scheduling an appointment.

Logotarians are not necessarily secretive; most recognize that sharing information can provide opportunities for new insights. However, they are extremely reluctant to devote resources or precious time to educating the unworthy.

Outside of Logos enclaves and its many remote research facilities across the Local Group, outsiders are most likely to interact with Logos members who are part of Mechanist field expeditions. These individuals may wish to study outsiders, particularly if they demonstrate abilities or use equipment that have previously gone unrecorded or are related to their research. Theorists spend less time in the field, but they do still gather data, samples, and firsthand witness reports. Otherwise, Logotarians remain strictly devoted to their current studies.

Mechanists dedicate significant resources to defending even temporary encampments, often using chimeric artificial beings as guards. They believe these are worth the cost to prevent others from intruding upon their isolation while undertaking a study. Notably, when beginning a field experiment, Logotarians express no consideration for outsiders' interests. They have established laboratories in the middle of communities, workshops, and even pitched battles when the conditions were critical for their work.

Technology and Abilities

Logos has access to extremely sophisticated levels of technology, and its members take devices and knowledge for granted that vastly exceed the dreams of outsiders. These have included the ability to transfer a living mind into an entirely electronic entity, granting an individual functional immortality—at least as long as everything continues to work. Logotarians are capable of manipulating any living organism and fusing cybernetic augmentations into a being.

Their knowledge of the base forces of reality and the distinctions between energy and matter also enables them to trigger interactions that seem mystical to those who do not understand the underlying concepts. Using their complex resources, Logotarians can use wormholes to travel through reality (though frustratingly never beyond the Crucible's upper atmosphere), to create complex structures with nanobots, and even to manipulate the speed of chronon particles. Unfortunately, a few of their more extreme manipulations are not as reliable as they claim, likely due to minor flaws in their working models of reality or interference from the Architects.

Logos technology largely enables its members to live far beyond the means (or even comprehension) of most others. Almost anything they desire can be quickly synthesized. This begins with nanobots that are capable of constructing virtually any design Logotarians can imagine. With one significant exception (that being Æmber, of course), Logos members are able to modify base materials at the subatomic level to create the raw materials they need. Sophisticated quantum manipulations provide the free energy necessary to power their devices, but just like all technologies on the Crucible there is eventually a stage where Æmber is either required or becomes the best option.

Their technologies are certainly incredible, but can be very dangerous if not used properly. Sometimes even if used properly.
–Ingram

To the frustration of outsiders (especially mercantile traders), most Logos members desire little in terms of standard luxuries. To them, food is simply fuel: the more efficient, the better, and never mind the taste or texture. Clothing that doesn't perform its function is irrelevant. Art can be stored and replicated if desired, but time appreciating art is time away from research. Consequently, while Logos could equip followers with items that outrival the grandest sensorium collection, this is rarely done except if part of a very cleverly proposed experiment.

The caveat to Logos members' ability to create their own materials is that they do not fully understand the nature of Æmber. Attempts to synthesize it and trying to learn all its myriad potential uses equally fascinate and infuriate these researchers. They believe Æmber to be core to the very existence of the Crucible and presume that it is associated with the wonders of the Architects. Many Logotarians have found ways to effectively harness its use, but none have yet managed to develop theories for how it functions or fathom its molecular and atomic composition—or even how to consistently identify places where it may be obtained.

Hubris is a characteristic flaw of Logos, and it extends to members' faith in their technology and their understanding of reality. Dependence upon their technology and their willingness to take risks with it have led to horrifying catastrophes. Many of their enclaves—and any unfortunates who happened to be nearby—have been destroyed in explosions and wormhole events due to miscalculations. Esoteric experiments in evolutionary quantum jumping has resulted in escaped cybernetic hybrid creatures that rampage across the Local Group. While outsiders do respect Logos technology, they are also fully justified in fearing it.

MARS

The mighty Martian Empire (commonly known simply as Mars) is a powerful and belligerent force on the Crucible. Wielding advanced technology, genetically engineered beasts, biological weapons, and actual flying saucers, Mars seeks to dominate the Crucible as it once did its own home planet. Despite its relatively recent arrival some two hundred years ago, Mars has remained intact and aggressive, much to the annoyance of species who have found themselves in Martian gun sights.

The Mars translocation included a large region of that planet, along with at least three cities, to create an area now known as Nova Hellas. The event brought not only the land but also its inhabitants, and thus martians became part of the Crucible. With the cities came habitats, factories, laboratories, military materiél, cloning facilities, and everything else martians needed to survive and expand on this strange world.

You gotta figure out real quick-like if you're talkin' to Mars or to a martian. There's a huge— and right lethal— difference between 'em.

Though initially inhibited by the Crucible's lack of the cavorite needed to power their equipment, the resourceful martians quickly adapted their flying saucers, ray guns, cloning tanks, and other devices to use Æmber as an energy source. No matter what they try, however, they cannot pierce the sky and travel into space—a necessity to launch surprise flying saucer attacks across the globe in proper Martian fashion. This has elicited a great deal of frustration from Mars's strategists, and sighs of relief from everyone around them.

"Mars Lives On" is the rallying cry of the Martian Empire, used initially to bolster morale as the civilization adapted to its new surroundings and carried forward as the Elders' efforts moved from ensuring survival to engaging in expansion and domination. Few outsiders realize these words were used on the Red Planet before the martians' arrival, as their society was in decline in the midst of the fall of their homeworld. Martian Elders may suspect that their relocation to the Crucible at this critical juncture was not a coincidence, but their pride and xenophobia prevent most of them from contemplating it for long.

Now, Mars is at the forefront of almost every clash across the Local Group and even in many far-distant reaches. The Elders construct overly elaborate battle plans and convoluted plots, all designed to achieve total Martian victory and lead the way to complete control of the Crucible. That this has not happened speaks to their level of success, but no Elder has ever accepted blame for any defeat, no matter how involved they were or how devastating the loss.

Some defeats are still talked about, though never where Elder sonic receptors are active. In one notorious battle, Mars advance forces completely destroyed enemy bunkers—just as they were revealed to be cleverly disguised Martian hangars from which flying saucers were ready to launch phase two of the attack. In another, tons of Æmber were consumed to open a huge teleport tunnel as part of a surprise attack into the heart of a newly discovered species' territory...on the ocean floor (Mars intelligence agents had mentioned the species' aquatic nature, but only in the footnotes of their reports). Perhaps the most infamous debacle occurred when martians prepared an antimatter meganet to enshroud all of Hub City so that Mars could demand its subservience; by terrible coincidence, the instructions were stored too close to the launchers and burned, and the net destroyed the entire fleet of dignitary-laden flying motherships hovering to witness the event. Still, these and other events have been merely minor setbacks for Mars, which is sure to soon conquer the Crucible any day now and to finally wipe such incidents from all records.

Society and Culture

The society and culture of Mars is dominated by a genetically engineered and enhanced division between the taller and more intelligent ruling Elders and the extensive force of smaller and relatively weaker Martian Soldiers. Genetic enhancement, engineering, and advanced cloning techniques expand these divisions with every generation. Martian Elders are driven by an almost maniacal dedication to genetic and cultural purity, which they are quite willing to enforce on their own people and inflict on outsiders.

Martian Elders are the unequivocal leaders of their society, while Soldiers are used as servants, technicians, and combatants, as well as in myriad mundane roles that the Elders deem beneath their status. The Martian caste system is simple but absolute. The Elders expect total loyalty from the Soldiers and treat them as completely expendable entities, which is easy for them to do thanks to their efficient cloning facilities. Soldiers are expected not to show personality or personal ambition. Any Soldier who develops their own ideas must conceal them or face harsh experimental reeducation plus suppression techniques concocted by an Elder with yet another new theory to test out—probably a painfully effective one.

Elders are devoted to their own projects and theories as much as they are to the survival and dominance of Mars—both on the Crucible and one day, they assume, throughout the galaxy. Although they are expected to maintain and improve the Martian Empire, they also recognize that individual research results in significant breakthroughs. Research has become increasingly important to them on the Crucible, where adapting their technology and understanding their new surroundings has been critical to their survival. At the very least, personal projects tend to keep some of the more self-involved Elders from meddling too much with others' endeavors. The Elders tend to be very good at what they do, so runaway experiments (sometimes literally when it comes to the biological research section), outbreaks, and explosions are uncommon and contained. Usually.

The perpetual war effort is always the highest priority throughout Martian society. In the end, all research and development must maintain and advance Martian technology, weaponry, vehicles, or martians themselves. Without powerful armaments and defensive systems, the relatively physically weak martians would be easy prey for the stronger, highly aggressive species on the Crucible—and the martians know it.

Mars on the Crucible

Martian life is centered on Nova Hellas, a several-thousand-square-kilometer region of Mars that was brought to the Crucible so the Martian Empire could conquer a new world—or so the Elders claim. Much of the original Martian environment seems to be preserved there, including proper Mars gravity, which is weaker than most of the gravity on the Crucible. (That gravity can fluctuate on the Crucible without any sign of technology controlling it is a significant annoyance to Martian scientists.)

The translocation from Mars included the major Martian city of Zyypzyar and some of its surrounding facilities. Nova Hellas is the epicenter of what the martians expect to be a new, expansive version of the Empire with several more major cities and scores of settlements having been built since arriving. They jealously guard their territory, aggressively intercepting any other beings who dare approach. Outposts and Yyilion sensor arrays scan the frontier for intruders, while some of the latest bioengineered creations patrol the red landscape to guard against trespassers (as well as to prevent any Soldiers or even Elders from attempting to find other lives elsewhere).

There are always a few martians in Quantum City, trying (and failing) to subtly spy on our plans to attack Nova Hellas. That we don't have any such plans only makes them try harder to find them.

Ingram

The Martian Empire's military might is well-known throughout the Local Group, and even beyond in other regions where its flying saucers venture to plot invasion routes. Soldiers tend to shoot first and ask questions later, if they bother to ask questions at all. Non-martians are never welcome in lands that Mars controls, and they are certainly never invited to visit. Martian aerial transports seem to travel almost anywhere they wish, disgorging battalions of Martian Soldiers, monstrously modified creatures, and armored craft in a bid to secure an Elder's latest hastily planned objective. Æmber in particular attracts Mars's attention, as it has become the substance Martian technology depends on.

Mars has no friends and only temporary, situation-specific allies. The Elders view virtually all others as beings for eventual conquest, though they are pragmatic enough to realize that these are long-term goals. They have been known to make short-term alliances and similar deals to achieve immediate, limited objectives. Soldiers, on the other hand, are uncompromisingly rigid in their behavior. This attitude can fade over time, after separation from Elders for long periods. Even Elders without other Elders to watch over them may become more open to new experiences or go so far as to become socially adept residents of a foreign city—and thus anathema and traitorous in the eyes of the Elders of Nova Hellas.

CRYSTAL HIVE

Located deep within Nova Hellas, Crystal Hive is the most technologically advanced and highest-production Æmber mine that Mars operates. Many decades ago in this former Martian crater, the Martians bored deep through the red surface and into a large concentration of the exotic material. Starting as a small harvesting facility, Crystal Hive has grown to the size of a full city and has several domed towers. Given the importance of Æmber, it is heavily guarded, and non-Martians are attacked on sight. However, Æmber mining has become more difficult in recent years. Mars may need to capture new sources if it wishes to maintain its flow of the essential substance at current levels.

Compared to loyal martians, deserters and exiles are much more willing to work with other species and organizations, preferably as far away from Nova Hellas as possible. Whether their openness to cooperation is a matter of necessity or of a lack of constant brainwashing and propaganda is up for debate. Not surprisingly, the Martian Empire takes a dim view of such renegades and any who reject the proper order of things. Deserters expect to be blasted on sight at best and hauled back for reeducation at worst. Every martian must devote themself to Mars if their Empire is to survive—or so the Empire insists.

Encountering Mars

Despite their xenophobic obsessions, members of Mars are often encountered outside of Nova Hellas. Most of the time, this means Soldiers. Soldiers constantly carry out missions—sometimes ones with a navigation or exploration objective, but usually combat missions. They typically operate in groups, while individual Soldiers might act as spies and take on reconnaissance missions in wilderness regions and other areas Mars doesn't control.

Most of the time, Soldiers are notoriously difficult to deal with when non-martians encounter them. Their fanatical dedication to the "Mars Lives On" ideology keeps them completely focused on their mission, and their extreme determination makes it difficult to negotiate a different approach or convince them to abandon a goal. Still, although turning a single Soldier or a small group away from their mission is difficult, as they expect to face the wrath and punishment of the Elders, it does happen.

Martian Elders appear in much higher-profile situations. They negotiate deals and participate in official interactions between Mars and other organizations or civilizations, and they oversee the surrender of their enemies. The farther a mission is from Martian lands, the more likely it is that one or more Martian Elders is leading the effort. An entourage of security and support staff typically accompany an Elder; the size of the group varies according to the Elder's status and can range from a few individuals to several dozen.

Mars maintains outposts around its lands as well as far into the Local Group and beyond for trading and forward force projection. Some of the martians at these outposts develop social ties with members of other species and factions (at least when the overseers from Nova Hellas aren't around). Despite Mars's appearance of unity, deserters and exiles can be found in many other areas. Hub City, for example, has independent martians operating as merchants, performers, bodyguards, and even mercenaries as well as an underground fan base of martians for non-Martian music and other performing arts.

Mars excursions rarely reveal their mission or ultimate goal unless it suits them. Approaching and dealing with them is dangerous and must be handled with care to avoid being stunned, gassed, infected, ingested, or just plain old zapped by whatever array of weaponry the Soldiers possess. Anyone seeking aid from Mars in the field must be prepared to give up something substantial just to get its attention, though one never knows for sure what its operatives consider substantial from mission to mission. Agents from Mars are even less likely to be helpful when dealing with known enemies, unless they are setting a trap or just lining up for a better shot.

Technology and Abilities

Elders of Mars live for technological advancement, particularly if they can take credit for a new achievement. They constantly seek out new elements, new creatures, and new sources of Æmber, often motivating them to explore the secrets of the Crucible. Most Elders specialize in a particular field of study and development and promote its use to maximize their power, influence, and access to resources.

Despite having been on the Crucible for more than two hundred years, Mars is still converting its original cavorite technology over to currently available resources, especially Æmber. Æmber is not simple, easy, or always appropriate for its needs, and there is a great deal of prestige in finally reviving an old technology that is a fabled part of Martian heritage. Among martians' adaptations is miniaturized antigravity technology that keeps the immediate area within correct gravity (correct for a martian, that is). It is doubtful that Mars could imagine conquering the Crucible without it, and many Elders are devoted to discovering a way to alter the entire world's gravity to this proper setting.

An emerging technology that particularly fascinates the Elders is the unlocking of martian psychic potential through the use of Æmber. It is an exciting field for new discoveries, and Elders covet the potential to secure powerful techniques before their rivals. The Elders take special care to prevent Soldiers from benefiting too much from these efforts, of course, in order to maintain control. Rumor has it that this has not been entirely successful, like so many of the grand schemes of Mars.

Experimentation and advancement of Martian technology is ongoing and considered paramount. Stronger armor, more potent weaponry, better-armed vehicles, and faster cloning facilities are all core efforts of the Mars war machine. Feeding the machine is never-ending, but most Elders can't imagine any other way to ensure that Mars Lives On.

Perhaps Mars's most crucial line of research investigates why its spaceships (and everyone else's) cannot escape the atmosphere. Its flying saucers work fine in the air, but to fully unleash the might of its fleets, Mars needs to rain down destruction from outer space. Elders suspect that Archons or the even more mysterious Architects are deliberately inhibiting their escape attempts, but as yet they can find no leverage to force them to reveal how or why.

Their technological development is quite impressive, but the focus on violence and armaments keeps them from true greatness.

SANCTUM

The Church of the Opened Eye, more commonly known as Sanctum, is a theocratic nation-state with territories and cities scattered across (and even above) the Local Group. Sanctum teaches that through meditation, learning, and spiritual growth, a being may rise above the petty limits of the flesh to become a transcendent protector and defender. While most members of the organization have a corporeal form, some are magnificent beings of blazing light who wield powerful Æmber-infused weapons and are clad in shining containment armor. Sanctum claims these spirits are believers who rose through the ranks of the Church to finally achieve perfect Enlightenment and cast off their physical husk. These spirits, of whom the Knights of the Sanctum are the best known, embody Sanctum's power in both belief and physical prowess and form the backbone of the Church.

Scant few beings have achieved such a state; thus, Sanctum includes many others who serve the Church in hopes of reaching Enlightenment themselves. Some are knights who fight alongside the armored spirits and are powerful forces for justice in their own right. Many others travel across the Crucible doing good deeds and acting as ambassadors of the faith. While they are not as powerful as the spirits who lead the Church, these beings still accomplish much of the work it needs in order to continue and grow.

A knight who called themself Sebastia told me, "You were all brought here for a reason. Clearly Enlightenment calls to you, even from outside the Crucible." That this might be possible is quite frightening. -Ingram

Fearless in their faith, almost all members of the Church of the Opened Eye wear the symbol of their devotion somewhere on their person. Whether sewn into garb, emblazoned on a shield, worn as a talisman, or even tattooed onto flesh, the golden eye set into a pool of tranquil azure is recognized across the Crucible as a sign of beings who have given themselves to Sanctum. The eye represents the endless quest for perfect clarity of vision and constant vigilance against evil, while many feel the cerulean setting reflects the tranquility that comes from certainty of faith.

Even when servants of the Opened Eye are not visible on the streets or in the fields, the Church's presence is often apparent in the sky. There, beings can see one of the many massive floating cathedral gardens of Sanctum, where its members pray and meditate in search of peace and Enlightenment. Behind the towering walls of each aerial cathedral and among the endless greenery of the citadel-monasteries, the elite spirits of Sanctum gather to decide matters of Church doctrine, monitor the progress of mortal members, and discuss events of the Crucible that may either advance or threaten Sanctum. Most importantly, they gaze down on those below to watch over the just and the innocent—and punish those found wanting.

Society and Culture

Broadly speaking, Sanctum has two main types of members: spirits and nonspirits. Both tend to wear the same garb, and some have similar roles despite the differences in their species, but it is quite clear that those who have achieved Enlightenment and become spirits are the worthiest to guide the Church. For those who are still flesh and blood (or circuitry and oil), their day will surely come. A few tales exist of beings who gained influential positions in the hierarchy while still corporeal, so there is at least some hope for significant advancement before Enlightenment is gained.

When most people on the Crucible think of Sanctum, they envision its glorious spirits in their resplendent full-enclosure containment armor. These beings are the Church's elite warriors and priests, the first to raise their fiery swords against the unjust or to correct the sins of others with equally powerful words. Even though their suits seem made of the heaviest metals, their Æmber-channeled energies are so potent that they stream through joints as well as forming golden wings of swirling geometries. Many spirits have a unique halo of energy about their head, which many believers feel is the purest sign of their enlightened state.

Among the spirits of Sanctum, there are some who are more elite than others. Almost all spirits, even spirits as devout as those in Sanctum, must rely on their containment suits to operate in the physical world, for their energies are insufficient otherwise. The exception is within the blessed (and possibly technologically reinforced) halls of Sanctum cathedrals, where they can shed their armor and exist freely. Within the Church, though, there are also spirits called "angels" who can control their energies so perfectly that they have no need of armor to contain their form in any location.

For members still on their journey toward Enlightenment, as well as for many non-Sanctum individuals, an angel's manifestation is a breathtaking event, far greater

than the appearance of an armored spirit. These figures of golden radiance are enough to make even the most jaded of beings cease their labors, leave their home, and follow a missionary to the nearest cathedral.

Many believers enter Sanctum this way, and thus begin the road to Enlightenment. Believers come from every background and species. The Church welcomes all who approach it, eagerly steering converts into useful positions and guiding them in meditation and techniques that aid spiritual growth. New converts usually start with restricted roles, but they gain more responsibility as they advance in their spiritual understanding.

Some Sanctum members crusade to seek out injustice and oppression with a faith so absolute that they never doubt the truth and righteousness of their actions; these make for excellent additions to the knightly orders and may one day even become Champions. Others lead daily meditations, aid in religious ceremonies, or research spiritual teachings and new information concerning Æmber. The especially devout and charming leave to gather new flocks, settle disputes, and impress the righteousness of Sanctum throughout the Local Group.

Most importantly, beings in all of these valued vocations can serve as Sanctum's eyes and ears, for their sheer numbers greatly outweigh those of the spirits who lead the Church of the Opened Eye. These believers maintain a ceaseless watch for even the slightest sign of evil slithering out of the darkness to plague the innocent—and for any individuals who, even worse, dare speak against the good name of Sanctum.

The lucky few are allowed to directly aid their enlightened leaders, such as by serving as squires to the Knights of the Sanctum. In such roles, they can best observe the actions of beings who have achieved perfection, and in so doing better grasp how they can also manifest their halo one day.

Many beings don't know of the third, more enigmatic type of Sanctum members: the Grey Monks. These appear to be mere beings of tangible form yet display spiritlike abilities that are often incomprehensible even to the upper knights and clergy. Their role in Sanctum is equally mysterious: they might be the self-appointed watchers over the Church, beings who have attained Enlightenment yet have rejected becoming spirits, or angels who can manifest their original physical form. It is entirely possible they have gained new abilities beyond what is known in Church teachings or have become a new type of species, both of which make some clergy quite nervous.

Nice enough, and helpful if you need help, but don't let 'em find you doing wrong or they get real judgmental real quick.

"An Opened Eye sees all." A Sanctum saying I've heard: make of it what you will.

While Sanctum accepts all species as members, humans dominant the membership for unknown reasons. Some beings speculate that the Church had its origins on some long-forgotten planet where that species thrived, though why Enlightenment didn't occur until these humans arrived at the Crucible is another mystery. Some insist that this is tied to Æmber, and that Enlightenment cannot occur without it. A few individuals dare whisper that there is no Enlightenment, and that the only spirits in Sanctum are beings who encountered humans ages ago and fooled them into starting a belief system. Sanctum views this, of course, as the vilest heresy, but even some Sanctum members claim this is irrelevant if the Church still helps the needy and engages in good works.

Sanctum on the Crucible

Sanctum followers believe themselves to be paragons of dedication and justice in the Local Group, and their actions quite often show this to be true. Members, especially the knightly spirits, often regard themselves as correct in their actions and decisions no matter the situation, however. This holds doubly true when nonspirit Sanctum followers are nearby, to whom these elites must always show proof of their Enlightenment and a willingness to smite injustice at all times. As a result, members of other organizations tend to keep those Sanctum at arms' length for fear of falling under a spirit's burning golden gaze, which serves as the briefest of warnings before their sword falls.

That said, there are few more capable of defeating the Crucible's terrible threats than those who serve the Church of the Opened Eye. When evil must be faced and destroyed, there is no better ally than Sanctum, assuming it agrees the foe is indeed evil. Particularly reckless beings sometimes attempt to turn members of Sanctum on their enemies through deception and subterfuge—though if such machinations are discovered, the golden sword of Sanctum may find another enemy to smite.

Altruism and justice are the hallmarks of a Sanctum member's interactions with others. They are content in displaying the glories of Sanctum life, one where wrongs are righted and the innocent defended, and their presence is a comfort to many of the lost and downtrodden. They are also the first to admit when their actions don't live up to the ethos of the Church, and are quick to pledge that they will do better.

Sanctum missionaries actively and earnestly seek to spread the truth of the Opened Eye to outsiders, usually by engaging in beneficial activities and behavior rather than energetic proselyting. Sanctum merchants also do their part by offering arms, armor, and blessed items made in the great cathedrals as well as bountiful and cleansed foodstuffs harvested from their floating islands, all in order to demonstrate the benefits that come from following Sanctum.

Encountering Sanctum

Sanctum followers almost uniformly appear genuinely eager to help those who cannot help themselves. They are, on the whole, well-meaning and seek to do good. Many beings actively seek out Sanctum members if they are desperate for assistance, need justice, or simply wish to learn more about Sanctum beliefs. Sanctum's lands, both in the air and on the surface, are renowned for the peace and prosperity of residents who are willing to follow Sanctum's laws. Beings who are less than innocent in the organization's eyes, however, usually want to keep its knights at arm's length.

Knights, especially those who haven't ascended and are corporeal, are eager to dispense justice when they learn of wrongdoings. They are

most likely to be encountered while engaging in this activity. Sanctum missionaries, merchants, negotiators, and other members whose primary roles aren't battle oriented are much more numerous. Incorporating Sanctum members who are not part of a knightly order can allow for a wider range of encounters, as they have more varied views on how best to serve the Church. Less well-known than the righteous knights aflame with golden light, these Sanctum members, from the baker who slips a few extra loaves to starving street urchins to the diplomat who settles disputes between warring nations, do their best to help other beings in accordance with Sanctum ideals.

While some beings avoid Sanctum members for any of a variety of reasons, the desperate often regard knights as potential saviors and hope for their arrival. Even so, whether they are poor beings seeking justice or more powerful individuals hoping for aid in overthrowing a common foe, those brave enough to request Sanctum's aid recognize the potentially dangerous attention it brings.

Most Sanctum members are eager to aid everyone they encounter, with one main exception. Sanctum regards the followers of Dis with particular disdain, as they believe emotional thievery is a vile practice that unsettles spiritual equilibrium and could turn the devout away from achieving Enlightenment. Tales of clashes between knights and demons abound, from mighty battles that scoured countrysides to conflicts that, although smaller, had even more terrible consequences. That many of these battles might have resulted from simple misunderstandings may be one of the Local Group's greatest tragedies. No beings—save Archons—can communicate with Dis members, so what were taken as vile attacks by Dis might instead have been attempts by them to understand Sanctum. Nevertheless, due to Sanctum members' strong emotional responses when encountering demons, the two factions surely will continue to clash.

Technology and Abilities

The image of a Sanctum Knight wielding a blazing blade of golden energy is iconic, but the warriors of the Opened Eye use a wide array of weapons and armor in their endless quest for justice. Most of their armaments contain Æmber in the hilt or handle to channel and form each spirit's ethereal energies into a striking surface, be it sharp blade or blunt hammerhead. Their armor, although it appears to be simply thick base metal, also often contains Æmber-powered mechanisms.

These allow knights to channel their psychic will into a glowing halo around their head and even form golden wings and sensory coronae that improve their agility and awareness in battle. Even those who have not achieved Enlightenment use these to manifest halos and other abilities as they progress in their spiritual journey; tales tell of knights who saw their mundane weapon glow with energy even as their halo formed around their head, indicating their advancement. Angels, as they have no need for containment suits, often employ exotic items made of pure energy or wield blades that are extensions of their spirit form.

Perhaps the two greatest examples of Sanctum technology are containment suits and floating islands. Containment suits are of paramount importance to Sanctum, as should these fail, the organization's mightiest of warriors would become ineffective in a stroke. Most containment suits appear to be archaic yet are suspected to contain highly advanced technologies. Sanctum's floating islands in the air, the most famous being the gigantic city of Brighthaven, are more of a mystery. Most beings assume antigrav engines are involved, but Sanctum rarely, if ever, uses such expertise in other devices. Either the islands hover through means Sanctum has long since forgotten, Sanctum captured them from some other civilization but didn't obtain the knowledge needed to adapt the technology for other purposes, or the islands were present before Sanctum formed, and the Church simply moved in. Sanctum claims, of course, that it is the purity of its members' spiritual perfection that keeps the islands in the air.

Æmber is an essential part of Sanctum technology, as it is for so many organizations. Its unique manner of conducting psychic energy (or spiritual energy, as Sanctum insists) allows its knights to perform their wondrous deeds. Without Æmber, Sanctum technology would have to be entirely rebuilt, if it were even possible to achieve the same effects by other means.

For the most part, though, Sanctum eschews displays of advanced technology. Its cathedrals are magnificent and stunning, yet grounded in foundational architectural techniques rather than incorporating acoustic nano-emitters or spectral-shifting smart materials. Members harvest food without mechanical aid (unless the gatherer has nonorganic limbs, of course). They complete labor similarly, avoiding even the simplest of levers or pulleys when basic personal effort will do. Engaging in physical tasks commensurate with their abilities, from tending magnificent gardens to maintaining the cathedrals, allows adherents to better contemplate existence and find their way to Enlightenment.

Say what you will, but when I find others in need of aid, I can always call on Sanctum to provide assistance for them. Would that there were more I can say this about.
–Inka

THE SAURIAN REPUBLIC

The Saurian Republic has existed for many thousands of millennia, easily among the oldest cultures on the Crucible and one of the few that many believe to be native to this strange world. It is so ancient that no ancient records recount when its members first encountered Archons, which may indicate that saurians—and perhaps other species—predate these godlike beings' presence on the Crucible.

Once expansionist warmongers, saurians have since built a society that is a bastion of peaceful philosophers living in several dozen city-states. Each saurian contributes in their own way to the Republic's knowledge and understanding of life on the Crucible and to the philosophical question of why the Crucible exists at all.

Most of the Republic's members would call their civilization "as perfect as possible" and say they treat all "lesser beings" with respect and amity. Other beings would respond that this is typical of the arrogance of this ancient civilization.

Society and Culture

The Republic has a long history of conflict. After many centuries of conquest, it became one of the largest, most powerfully militaristic nations in all of the Local Group, if not the entire Kaevalus megacontinent. Its might was legendary and unstoppable, and many civilizations still bear the scars of its invasions.

It didn't last, however, as the very nature of the Crucible works against such behavior. Forces that are effective in one area falter in the next, where oxygen might be absent or gravity three times stronger. Weapons designed against fleshy mammalian defenders could be useless in another region dominated by granite life forms or angry viruses. The farther the saurians went, the worse things got: war machines sank, airships imploded, and legions crumbled before even reaching their enemies. Their mighty armies crested, then receded, having met the one force they could never defeat—the Crucible itself.

Those days are in the past, though, and a more mutually beneficial peace rules the saurians' smaller assemblage of city-states. As many in the Saurian Republic believe, this is all part of the Golden Spiral: the all-encompassing philosophy that follows the rise and fall of saurian imperial ambitions.

Absolutely fascinating beings (and possibly linked to Earth?), but they really do like to talk sometimes. If you can keep up with their discussions, they make for great neighbors.

For it is philosophy, not war, that now dominates the Saurian Republic. The beings who live in its many city-states, from the Republic's leaders to the residents sweeping its marble streets, have enjoyed a robust education centered on reasoning, critical thinking, and philosophy. As a society, over time they hope to unravel the mystery of why the Architects created the Crucible, and to uncover what role the Saurian Republic, perhaps the first civilization to arise natively on the Crucible, has yet to play.

Many citizens aspire to pen their own tomes espousing their views on various schools of thought or to create their own entirely new school. Those residents who excel in debate and philosophical studies often study abroad, traveling through the Local Group and beyond to observe philosophical concepts in action among the various cultures they encounter.

Many species live in the Republic's city-states, but saurians dominate in both numbers and power. Their numbers are divided among dozens of tribes aligned by environment and diet. The two largest are the theropod Carnisaur and Herbisaur tribal assemblies, which also represent the two largest voting blocs in the Saurian Senate. The Carnisaurs include saurians descended from several ancient types of large, carnivorous dinosaurs; they do much of the Republic's soldiering and serve as ranchers throughout its many city-states. The ornithischian Herbisaurs, on the other hand, are descended from vegetarian dinosaurs and are the ones most focused on philosophy, ethics, and the sciences.

Other powerful tribes control several city-states. Longusaurs are larger than most saurians and work primarily as merchants. Marinusaurs are amphibious, or at least spend considerable time in the water, and they do much of the Republic's fishing, algae harvesting, and Æmber mining. Volatusaurs include flying saurians, who are native to more mountainous regions and are responsible for much of the Republic's high technology, while members of the Cornifaciem tribes are physically powerful, horned saurians who manage farms, using their large horns to plow furrows in the dirt for planting. Finally, saurians of the Loricadon tribes, which include the Ankylosaurids and Stegosaurids, are naturally armored and often work as sentries or traders.

There are also dozens of smaller tribes that might have members in only one or two city-states, where they tend to be minority populations. While these lesser tribes have little power in the Senate individually, they band together as a single voting bloc on many issues to force the larger tribes to take their concerns seriously.

The Saurian Republic on the Crucible

Most members of the Republic consider the days of militaristic expansionism to have been appropriately behind them since their Pyrrhic victory over the terrible Smilodon Barbarians. Some outside factions, however, see this as evidence that it is in decline and ripe for the taking. Most have learned this is not so, as the Republic's defenses remain strong and steadfast. The Republic is dedicated to peace and uses its military primarily for defense and disaster relief, despite a few loud senators who cry for a return to the glories of the past.

Unlike some other organizations, the Saurian Republic functions more like a conventional nation. Although its members may enjoy exploring other areas of the Crucible, ultimately it is its city-states that serve as bastions of its Grand Culture and define the Republic's existence on this world.

City-States of the Republic

Republic city-states each operate more or less independently of each other, but they are still linked together in a loose confederacy united by the dominant saurian species. Many of the city-states are well-known across the Local Group as magnificent centers that bring to the fore one or more aspects of the Republic's glory. Such is their renown, it is said that the Republic's citizens rarely have to travel to encounter others, as the rest of the Crucible comes to them.

Capitis Coronam

The capital of the Republic is the city-state of Capitis Coronam. A beacon of peace and hope for the Republic and saurians across the Local Group, it is a shining city of white marble pillars and turquoise energy fields that plays host to the greatest minds from all the city-states. Built on a mountain plateau that overlooks several other settled ranges on one side and farms, ranches, and coastline on the other, its many buildings offer some of the most impressive views in the Local Group.

Perhaps the grandest view, however, is of the Senate grounds, which hold the best-known work of architecture in the Republic: the Golden Spiral. It consists of a representation of the perfect shape floating above a single, stark pillar. Like the philosophical tenet that holds great sway in the Republic, the huge golden shell endlessly turns in on itself, cycling from one curve to the next in the way many saurians believe their civilization flows and revolves through history.

In the grand capitol building of Curia Saurus rests behind the gleaming Golden Spiral. Here, the Saurus Rex leads the Saurian Senate, which is consumed with debating measures, resolving disputes, and discussing matters of philosophical import. The Senate has representatives from each city-state in the Republic; this includes non-saurian honorary representatives as well, and sometimes even Archons. Near the Senate is the Externus Pax, the hub of Saurian diplomatic relations with the other factions of the Crucible. Some beings visit Externus Pax in hopes that Republic diplomats can act as neutral arbiters in disputes, while others seek deals for trade and access to Republic technology.

Somewhere in Pollis Doctrian are accounts of the first arrival of Archons on this world. One day, I'll get access to them. The tales they must contain!

BELLATORUS CASTRA

This city-state resides near the rocky coast of the Photic Ocean, an artifact of the Republic's last expansionist period and home to its premiere military academy. Members of the Carnisaur tribes predominate here, and prospective soldiers endure sprints through the surf and gladiatorial contests in the Colosseum. These events generate a steady revenue stream from sports fans. Students also receive advanced classroom training concerning strategy, tactics, and ethical uses of force while defending the Republic.

CIBUS LOCUM

This city-state is home to many members of the Herbisaur tribes and is largely focused on farming and trade. It specializes in food production for much of the Republic and sale across the Local Group. It is known for its great storage facilities, which appear as giant pillars even far in the distance. Unlike lesser civilizations, saurian agri-tempest devices freeze their bounties in stasis fields after collection so that they arrive in other city-states and beyond still living for maximum freshness.

PARTUM MECHANICA

Built into the massive caves that almost hollow out the fabled Iron Mountain, Partum Mechanica extends both inwards and even underground. This city-state is the Republic's center of technological innovation, where scientists and engineers experiment with Æmber, finding new uses for it and refining tried-and-true designs. Off-limits to most outsiders, Partum Mechanica is a subject of rumor throughout the Local Group. Some say its scientists have learned how to engineer gravity-generating nanites, to transmute lead into Æmber, or even to grow Æmber in their laboratories.

PISCUS LETALIS

Along the rough shores of the vast Carmine Lake, where a huge malfunctioning teleport pad continues to channel the far-distant Oceanum Magna into the waters, there are ruins dating from thousands of years ago. These are the remains of Piscus Letalis, a once-thriving city-state devoted to fishing that was swallowed by sand and seawater when the pad dimensionally imploded. A decade ago, a surge in storm activity uncovered crumbling pillars and flickering energy fields, and reports of psychotropic eruptions became frequent. Some worry these are the cries of the trapped souls of the Piscus Letalis emerging for vengeance—or worse, calling the Republic to return to its ancient follies of invasion and conquest.

POLLIS DOCTRIAN

A fabled center of learning, this city-state welcomes all who seek knowledge. Its magnificent Library of Polliasaurus is known across the Local Group, though many visitors require aid as most of the books are designed for saurian readers. For those who display solid credentials and exceptional reverence, librarians may allow access to chronally locked manuscripts, preserved for many millennia, containing accounts of the Republic's dealings with Archons.

VENDUS ÆMBROSIAN

Located along one of the Republic's ancient borders when it was in an expansionist phase, Vendus Æmbrosian is a center for trade with other cultures. Several rivers, favorable air currents, and an underground hypertube network connect the city-state to numerous locations both within and outside the Republic.

This city-state was responsible for the Imperial Roads that crisscross much of the Local Group and beyond. These self-repairing highways of native stone and nanoment link the city-states together but also reach ancient outposts and long-forgotten fortresses. Even though many of the intervening regions have lapsed from its control, the roads still remind everyone of the power of the Saurian Republic.

A wide variety of Vendus Æmbrosian's residential areas are devoted to non-saurians, allowing other organizations to conduct trade negotiations and advanced commercial dealings with the Republic. Anyone who claims these saurians have gone soft and dull has never participated in one of these exchange sessions, which many believe are excuses for saurians to recapture the violence of earlier eras.

Encountering the Saurian Republic

Members of the Saurian Republic are among the safest beings to run into, no matter the location. They have a strong sense of security in their physical, intellectual, and technological superiority and rarely feel threatened. As such, they are often very sociable, and happy to entertain long discussions with other beings and to learn of the many philosophies and technologies that other cultures follow. Travelers, of course, should not mistake this friendliness with weakness—if left no other recourse, Republic members will fight if they must.

That said, Republic members have an erudite air in their discussions that can seem quite patronizing to others. While this isn't usually intentional, secretly (and perhaps unconsciously), many saurians of the Republic consider themselves superior to everyone save perhaps Archons and Architects.

Some Archons have spent time living in the Republic, studying its philosophy and even participating in debates. In several documented cases, Archons have actively participated in its politics and went on to act as city-state governor. In one instance, an Archon ruled for several centuries, only relinquishing power when they enigmatically stated, "This explains everything."

Technology and Abilities

Although the Republic's fortunes have risen and fallen many times over the millions of years it has existed, each time it has refined existing technology and advanced to new degrees of perfection. In current days, this has allowed for systems that appear simplistic while being phenomenally powerful, exemplifying Republic members' feelings of casual superiority over the Crucible's other inhabitants.

The Republic is almost ostentatious in its insistence on understatement. Its technologies are not only wondrous in ability but elegant in form. In accordance with the Republic's design aesthetic, each item of technology is created as a singular achievement—a work of art—and advanced technologies are incorporated into even the most basic of items.

For example, a seemingly innocuous shield is likely embedded with force-field circuitry, and a tall column of exquisitely carved marble almost certainly contains acoustic harmonizers and specially tuned nanosaur bots for stability. The marble walkways leading to the Senate building contain sensors that individually adjust microsegmentations to maximize the tread of each individual, and for those who travel aerially, the atrium is covered with thermal stabilization emitters to ensure the winds are always in the optimal direction and speed.

The Republic also engages in sophisticated genetic manipulations. Its renowned ranchers breed specialized beasts for every conceivable purpose. These scientists unravel and restitch genetic code with ease, such that it not only results in superior beasts but also traces beautiful designs when examined under a polarized neutrinoscope. Republic biologists' Æmber-fueled guided mutations have also given rise to new types of reptilian beings that have become pillars of Republic society in everything from transportation to agriculture to exploration.

Don't let the archaic, somewhat foolish look of their garb and equipment mislead you. Trust that whatever they have, it's better that whatever you have (unless you got it from me, of course).
-Doctor Escotera

SHADOWS

Across the Crucible, the golden-eyed Svarr elves and their allies are called many things: thieves, cutpurses, scoundrels, mischief makers, and ne'er-do-wells. While these titles are all appropriate for members of Shadows, the core of what it means to belong to this organization can be summed up in one word: survival.

Derisively compared to infesting insects, members of Shadows are everywhere. At risk of being crushed under the boots of more powerful beings, they scurry from danger back into the darkness only to return in greater numbers.

The Svarr are the diminutive masters of Shadows. They wear sweeping cloaks and masks that obscure everything but their glowing eyes, which are as sharp as their hidden blades. It is commonly held that Svarr elves are amoral thieves with no compunctions against committing larceny in any of its myriad forms, a reputation that often works to their benefit.

The Svarr and other members of Shadows foster this misunderstanding in hopes that both enemies and potential marks will underestimate them as petty and weak opportunists of the lowest caliber. They cower and grovel before a large and dangerous foe, only to have their other members strike at it from their flanks. They tell easily discovered "lies" to misdirect opponents away from a more sinister caper happening right under their noses. Such actions allow Shadows to operate without the threat of direct combat, something its members are painfully aware would put them at a disadvantage.

The lengths that Shadows members will go to for a nefarious exploit are only matched by their devotion to each other. Nothing is more valued than aiding another member of one of their many guilds, and anything is permissible in doing so.

We do what we has to, simple as that. Remember that when you're dealing with us, and you'll come out fine.

Society and Culture

Shadows is less a formal organization and more a loose association of an unknown number of guilds, each one's members bound by ties of blood, spilled ichor, or shared deeds. At the head of almost every guild is a family of Svarr elves, though a few are led by members of other elven tribes or, rarely, by nonelves. Most guilds specialize in a specific form of clandestine activity or control one type of crime in a specific area. Typically, elite members directly lead other guild members or organize their efforts. In Hub City, for example, the infamous Lippy Kopple rakes in the proceeds from the "sway tax" his toughs impose on unwary visitors who travel across these suspended walkways, while Bulleteye leads a group of assassins in the Melting Pot, and Aerie oversees the blackmail operations in Big Merch.

Despite rumors of a "Shadow Council," Shadows has no official structure. Guilds operate independently and do what they feel is necessary to protect and maintain their own members. A new guild might begin as a few friends doing what they must to make ends meet, who then bring in new members and expand their operation. Slowly they discover the hidden underside that is Shadows, either by witnessing the actions of another guild or having a friendly stranger explain how things operate in their area—for while some guilds do share areas of expertise, no two guilds with the same area of expertise share territory. That can get…unpleasant.

In the event of a dispute over which guild controls a specific type of crime in a given area, a cold war may erupt between the two guilds. Such affairs are rarely lethal, however, for as much as each guilder values their guild colleagues, each recognizes that outright conflict would only hurt everyone. More powerful guilds may step in to quell conflicts that get too loud and could bring unwanted attention to Shadows; in these cases, permanent methods are often employed to settle matters.

Smart guilds employ cleverer ways to ease tensions and resolve disputes. These usually involve games of one-upmanship in which opposing members engage in increasingly outrageous actions associated with their specialty to demonstrate which guild most deserves to represent their art in a given area. This might add to the chaos, but all Shadows operatives appreciate a good crime, and these are often the best.

Beings other than Svarr elves also serve the countless Shadows guilds. Elves from other tribes sometimes join or take on special contracts. Humans, being so large and clumsy, rarely rise to prominence, though ones like Faygin prove that assumptions can be deadly in some cases. Anyone who shows themself to be clever and quick-fingered is likely to be able to find a home of some sort within Shadows. Beings in Shadows range from swarming hive intelligences able to disappear into cracks in walls to binarypathic cyborgs able to bend computer code to their will with but a thought. If a being can bring something useful to a guild, they can find a place in Shadows.

That is not to say that internal disagreements and infighting are absent. The concepts of personal property and ownership are often forgotten or ignored when convenient, leaving some thieves with missing codepicks or assassins with their quantum rifles drained of quarks. More than one guild has been weakened or even shattered when its members became consumed with how to divide their acquired goods fairly.

When not engaged in criminal activity, Svarr elves and other members of Shadows relax in their hideouts, which range from hidden bunkers beneath cobblestone streets to password-protected bolt-holes that stretch dimensionally to pub houses with back rooms that appear when an accepted genetic code is scanned. Here, they truly doff their hoods (as the Svarr saying goes) and unwind. In these secret places, the true sense of family among a Shadows guild is seen as members share stories, songs, and especially games of chance in which plundered gains are won and lost with the flip of a three-sided card or roll of phasing Æmber dice. No matter the crimes they commit or terrible deeds they perform, members of Shadows know they always have their guild as their understanding and welcoming family.

Shadows on the Crucible

Survival on the Crucible is no easy feat, and no one knows it more than a member of Shadows. Even the slightest suggestion that an individual might be part of this organization can bring them scorn and loathing, though many beings still refuse to believe it exists. Many Shadows members work hard to promote this belief, for it is easiest to stay hidden when would-be searchers don't believe you and your organization aren't real.

Shadows is fine with this lack of recognition (except for some members who love the infamy and reputation their crimes bring). Guilders always have each other—and of course the dark embrace of the shadows for which they are named. Shadows can be found wherever beings aren't looking.

This allows Shadows to gain keen insight into how other organizations operate. They watch and learn their practices, techniques, and technology—and they exploit them. Shadows skitter unheard over piles of cast-off junk to find treasures discarded by less vigilant beings. Their unfelt fingers reach into pockets, plucking out amazing pieces of technology. With finely honed auditory senses, they listen in on conversations they were never meant to hear.

Their agents are quite useful when I need to acquire items in ways that can't be recorded in scientific journals.

The information they gain this way lets guilds make themselves allies of convenience when it suits their purposes. Members might steal tattoos from Brobnar giants, sell scientific secrets to Logos, and point Sanctum toward evildoers who have escaped justice—all on the same day—if it benefits their guild.

Shadows members tend to be also fluid in their choices of allies and adversaries. In rare cases, guilders form bonds of loyalty with outsiders, but they always view those bonds as transitory. Loyalty between guild members is unwavering. If there is a collision between loyalty to an outsider and loyalty to another guild member, there can be only one outcome for a true Shadows member.

Encountering Shadows

Most beings who encounter a member of Shadows never realize it. Literal invisibility is all well and good, but a clever guilder knows the best way to go unnoticed is simply to blend in, fading into the diverse population of a city. A person might amble below the sways of Hub City and unknowingly pass dozens of Shadows casing storefronts, picking pouches, and sizing up marks.

Of course, given the independent nature of the guilds, many Shadows are unaware of each other's activities as well. Some Shadows openly live what appear to be normal lives, their closest associates never knowing their true nature. Some guilders go so far as to join an organization such as Inspired or Sanctum to better ascertain the softest spots for criminal attack. They might enjoy the experience or even find new beliefs to enrich their life, but they all know loyalty can only be found within their guild.

While Shadows are everywhere (at least, that's what the organization projects to those who know of its existence), deliberately locating one of its members can be as difficult as, well, finding someone in the shadows. This is especially true for someone as skilled at hiding as a Svarr. Long days or even months of frustrating searching might go by, while guilders observe and judge from the darkness whether the seeker or their offering is worthy of attention. When one of the Shadows finally is located, it is almost always at the time and place of the guilder's choosing to ensure they have every advantage possible.

Shadows members can seem lighthearted and even humorous when other beings have dealings with them, but there is always an underlying tension given the dangerous and deadly work they conduct. Most guilders work multiple angles on each deal, perhaps to use the crime as an opportunity to further a separate scheme or to hamper the goals of another organization. If there is a way to use a single deed to strengthen their guild in multiple ways, Shadows will find it.

Other beings who believe they are meeting with simple thieves are either foolish or about to be proven so. As the saying goes, when dealing with Shadows operatives, always follow the rule of threes: assume that for each one you see, there are three nearby you don't; for every weapon you see, there are three more hidden under a cloak; and for each scheme you detect, there are three others being woven around you.

When a guilder seeks out an outsider, it is always for a specific, though probably veiled, purpose. Shadows are especially fond of collecting intelligence, much of the time in ways that keep the target unaware they are providing useful information; friendly chats about workday events are a common method. Few ever realize that Shadows secretly prompted the leaks used to crack datacrypt defenses or obtain security plans for a priceless Æmber collection. In the eyes of Shadows members, everyone else is a mark to be used to further the survival and growth of their guild.

Technology and Abilities

Shadows, on the whole, tries not to rely on technology overmuch, as technology can fail. The abilities and training of its members, however, do not. Well, at least not too often—there are few absolutes on the Crucible, and no one can blame a guild thief caught in a dimensionally asymmetrical net made of charmless particles. Not the first time, anyway.

Still, this is the Crucible, and survival often means using technology. Regardless of where they came from, most elven tribes have little technology from their place of origin. Whether they were unable to bring their technology with them or abandoned it as unusable after they arrived on the Crucible is a point of dispute. It is not uncommon for homeworld technology to be useless on the Crucible (especially for the highly advanced blik, who drew exclusively on the rotation of their homeworld's core for power), which is yet another reason why all civilizations seem to eventually shift to Æmber to power their societies.

Thus, Shadows tends to use technologies adapted, stolen, or scavenged from others. They usually alter such devices to be less obtrusive, noisy, and obvious. They may also disguise a device as some other, more innocuous version, or as another item altogether. A Star Alliance pistol is thus transformed to look like a palm-gripped sensor, or a sonic cannon becomes a Brobnar guitar (not that there is much difference between the two). Sometimes items are used as is if the goal is to implicate another being or organization in a crime. There is one item that is strongly linked to Shadows, however: the cloak.

Nothing says Shadows like the obscuring flourish of a cloak. Every guilder, no matter their role or physiology, somehow seems to have at least one of these dark mantles. While a simple black cloth does offer simple utilitarian aid in going unseen, members of Shadows see these garments as extensions of themselves. A member's cloak is a mark of their status among many guilds, but only a fellow guilder would ever know the exact way to determine this from a collection of seemingly identical garments.

While cloaks are prized, it is guilders' fabled three-dot stealth emitters that truly allow them to fade from view. The emitters are commonly worn like badges on or under their cloaks but can be affixed to almost anything desired, from gloves to boots to weapons. When activated, each projects an energy field that warps light and creates an area of invisibility. The more emitters, the greater the area of the field; even an elf needs three or four to ensure complete coverage of their small frame. These devices are perhaps the only unique technology the guilds possess. How Shadows came by this technology is unknown, and the organization has demonstrated willingness to go to lethal lengths to keep it that way.

Shadows members' expertise in defeating encryption systems and datanets has also allowed them to alter the programming of the tiny mechanical creatures known as faeries, which tend to the Crucible. Once under Shadows control, faeries are used for theft, reconnaissance, and assassination, and even for entertainment as pets. Some guilds worry, though, that Archons are simply allowing this to happen so they can study Shadows in more detail.

An elf in a Horizon tavern told me the tale of Hzzih,a Shadows who was so stealthy she eluded Death itself when it came to claim her. I assumed the elf was having fun with the newcomer with this tale, but I've already seen things almost as strange since we came here.
-Ingram

SKYBORN

The Crucible's organizations are as many and varied as the species who dwell on the gigantic patchworld, and most have a central belief system or philosophy that binds them together. A few don't, however, and perhaps the most widespread (literally) are those beings who belong to Skyborn. These loosely assembled social enclaves have very little in common, except for one thing: they live for the air.

Most Skyborn spend their entire life without ever setting foot on the ground, either residing completely in their vessel or in an aerie high atop a mountain peak. None can imagine any other life than one among the clouds, looking down on the endless series of disjointed terrains and environments. No matter their goals, ethical drives, or methods of survival, they are born to the sky and will likely die before falling to the cold ground. Skyborn who are lucky enough defeat gravity even in death, their remains staying untethered and free forever in their beloved skies.

Wonderful people, but don't get between them and their ships. Always remember that the sky is their life.
–Inka

Culture and Society

Skyborn is an organization mostly in name only, and even many of its "members" don't recognize themselves by that title. It has no unified culture or society, but rather comprises a wide range of groups all bound by their airborne life. Their uncountable numbers rise and fall like leaves in the wind. Of these groups, five are perhaps the best known, at least in the skies above the Local Group: Adagion, Cirrus, Halyards, Raptrix, and Stormkin.

Adagion

Where there are wild swirling winds, torrential rains, dramatic bursts of colorful lightning, and other intense weather features, almost certainly there is also Adagion. Its distinctive vessels, huge affairs with wide, curving wings, majestically roam along the clouds in search of areas its crews judge suitable for their expressive performances. Sometimes these entail a single ship; at other times, many scores of craft arrive as if a summoning had gone out. Soon, the vessels of thousands of enthusiastic weather fans gather as well. Then the Æmber is ritually ignited within the atmospheric converters, and the concert begins.

Each show is a unique display that many on the surface cannot appreciate, for their souls, like their feet, are stuck on the ground. For those above, they are spectacles of grandeur and intensity that leave viewers emotionally energized for days and the Adagion crews eager to find their next venue.

Though Adagion is dominated by the polymerized j'reen, many others, including a significant number of giants, have embraced Adagion and its heady ways. For this organization, life in the air not only is necessary for conducting its meteorological concerts but is also a major inspiration for the passion and emotional power its members display in each work. Surface dwellers may curse and even try to attack Adagion when a stormcerto detonates like nuclear thunder through a city, but clearly, they have no appreciation for art.

Cirrus

Most surface dwellers notice the shadow first: a massive field of darkness that slowly covers the land like a blanket of night. Looking up, they can see a shape too large to be aloft, something unbelievable even for the Crucible. Such is the arrival of Cirrus, the floating continent.

Many believe the several hundred-kilometers-wide landmass never quite settled to the ground after it was brought to the Local Group, perhaps due to some sort of error in translation. It has no visible means of gravitic repulsion or aerial propulsion. The surface is pastoral green, but the rocky bottom is impervious and impenetrable; Cirrus, it seems, may be eternal. Even the faeries and pixies on this continent appear quite bored most of the time as they appear to have little or nothing to maintain or repair.

Cirrus is home to millions of beings of varied cultures. There are numerous villages with landing strips and sophisticated facilities to support everything from gigantic airships to the many smaller shuttles that ferry beings between Cirrus and the surface below. Life is quite peaceful as there is an understanding for all who fly that no violence is done on Cirrus itself. This truce has existed for many millennia, and none dare defy it lest they draw the ire of all other factions of Skyborn.

Many beings use Cirrus for travel, especially if they have no particular destination as its meandering path is unpredictable. Some believe it is slowly making its way across the entire world, or perhaps isn't moving at all and it's the Crucible that is rotating below. For those aboard, it makes no difference; their lives are one with the sky, and that is enough.

Halyards

Legend has it that long ago, a bizarre ship made of carved tree trunks and billowing cloth landed atop one of the mountains of the Plutonic Range in western Kaevalus. The crew's shock at their arrival was doubled when they witnessed a nearby airship under attack by huge winged lizards: the mighty Æmberdrakes, a deadly threat to those who travel through the air. Thinking quickly, the crew drove off the beasts using the many metal spears they had aboard. The airship's survivors were both impressed and grateful, and they offered to repair the wooden craft with proper antigrav technologies if the crew would serve as protectors for their airborne merchant fleet. The crew, though unsophisticated and full of primitive views concerning exoskeletons and asymmetrical physiologies, took them up on the offer and soon were sailing the atmospheric oceans above the Local Group.

Millennia later, what is now known as Halyards has hundreds of similar vessels plying the winds, all echoes of the original design but with technologies from a thousand civilizations. Like the ships, the crews are now a cosmopolitan mix of species; they still maintain many of their archaic customs in remembrance of the original vessel, though, such as using rigging ropes and wooden wheels for steering. As the threat of Æmberdrakes has diminished (somewhat) over time, Halyards has also become a major mercantile force in its own right. Its members still retain the raucous and fearless nature that allowed them to thrive high in the clouds so soon upon their arrival. When they approach the land to take on stores or launch one of their legendary grand festivals, boisterous songs announce their arrival long before they complete their descent.

I traveled to Hub City in a Halyards airship not long ago. The view was remarkable, and well worth the extended transit time.

Ingram

Raptrix

Unlike the many Skyborn who live in large ships designed for families, crews, or entire communities, Raptrix members are usually quite solitary. Most live in small, one-person craft designed for speed and combat. Their vessel is their home, their second skin, and their prized (and often only) possession. To fly is to live, and to fly and fight better than anyone else in the air is to live in the best way imaginable.

A Raptrix flyer and their machine are as one (sometimes literally so for heavily cyborged or robotic species). Each vessel is unique, lovingly built and repaired by hand. In the air, a Raptrix flyer is aggressive and always on the search for a worthy opponent. Their goal isn't to destroy their foe, however, but to best them in a display of aeronautical prowess. Such battles for dominance of an airspace are incredible sights, as the vehicles pass so close to each other that paint may be skimmed off or goggles snatched away. Actual damage or injury is intensely frowned upon, for neither shows true aviation skill.

Time a Raptrix doesn't spend in the air is usually devoted to Æmber refueling, adding improvements to gain more engine thrust, tinkering to obtain greater inertial stabilization, restoring old repairs that have failed, or painting victory marks on a fuselage. The Raptrix might even show grudging signs of respect for the flyer swooping overhead who just bested them.

Then, they return to the air, the real home of any Raptrix. Many of the organization's flyers are Martian Soldiers who have fallen in love with the air and defected with their flying saucer. More recently, a few shuttles have been appearing in the skies, possibly exploratory vessels from the crashed SAV *Quantum*. Regardless of their species or former organization, however, each Raptrix flyer is the epitome of aerial excellence.

Stormkin

The skies house many creatures who prey on Skyborn, from swarming ice ravens to voracious Æmberdrakes. Worse, though, are Skyborn who target their own—and any other beings with potential plunder to add to their holds. Stormkin is made up of the dreaded pirates of the skies and is the bane of beings who seek uneventful transportation. If a trip by air seems quiet and calm, it is a sure bet that predatory Stormkin vessels will soon appear with weapons ready.

Each Stormkin ship operates independently, though all pirates (sometimes called "skirates," but never to their faces) respect the Raiders' Code and only rarely poach another ship's prize or steal from other Stormkin. A being might join Stormkin for any of a variety of reasons, from a lack of easy pickings on the ground to a lust for greater rewards and even greater dangers than those experienced by other Skyborn.

Of course, few air travelers appreciate having their ship boarded, even if a Stormkin captain oozes charm while lifting priceless gemstones from wealthy necks, so violent retribution is the usual outcome of a raid—especially if the thefts involve Æmber.

Skyborn on the Crucible

Skyborn are beings of the air, whether they live in a single-person craft or an enormous vessel larger than a city. Even on a ship so large its inhabitants may never see the ground, Skyborn always have the feeling of being aloft and free of constraints. For some, such a life offers seclusion in place of what they see as constant turmoil below, while others use the sky as a way to find others with similar longings. Raptrix have been known to select and train new flyers, for example, to ensure that they have plenty of skilled opponents to encounter.

As the sky is the home of all of Skyborn, few of its varied peoples have a fixed location relative to the surface. Even those who do tend to favor hollowed-out mountain peaks or metal perches that rise kilometers above the ground. To be on the surface is to risk forgetting the sublime feel of constant wind; the crisp, thin air as altitude increases; and the view from so high that even gigantic caravan-crawlers turn to tiny insects.

For Skyborn, any time they must spend grounded is leaden and draining. Plodding along the surface is more damaging to them than an accelerated turn so hard they lose consciousness. It also means interacting with those who will never know or appreciate life in the sky the way they do, and the absolute freedom it brings. Though that freedom does have a limit…

While the existence of the Architects is debated, there is no doubt that someone (or something) is acting to prevent travel beyond the Crucible's atmosphere. The Boundary, as some call it, chafes on many, but Skyborn are content for the most part to rule the air. One day, perhaps, the Boundary might be breached, and then Skyborn will rule space as well.

Encountering Skyborn

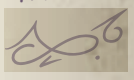
Wherever there are skies above, there are Skyborn. Given the depth of the Crucible's atmosphere, even with the Boundary preventing space travel, there is more livable area above the ground than on the surfaces of a thousand Crucibles combined. This makes encountering Skyborn less common than meeting beings from other organizations, even though it is usually much easier to spot Skyborn from a distance (especially an Adagion concert, though these are often mistaken for cataclysmic climate disruptions).

It is in the air, of course, where encounters with Skyborn most often occur. A run-in with Skyborn might be accidental, such as when travelers stumble into a Raptrix clash, or worse, only seem to be accidental, such as if they are targeted by a disguised Stormkin skyshark vessel. Halyards ships have been known to take on passengers, especially individuals willing to work as crew during they journey. Their ships are fast, and the martial skills of the crews usually enough to overcome unexpected attacks from squadrons of flying saucers or aeronautical predators. For those who prefer slower transportation, plenty of shuttles run between Cirrus and the ground. Because the floating continent has no set course, it makes more sense to hire someone on the ground to fly a group to it than to hope it arrives at a particular location.

Less often, Skyborn are found on the surface, and those who aid them in returning to the air can usually gain sizable rewards or favors. A Raptrix flyer who has lost their ship may become a pilot for hire until they can buy a new one and return to the air. Stormkin have been known to attack ground targets, but this is infrequent, or at least leaves so few survivors that reports are sketchy.

Most famously, Halyards festivals happen without warning in villages throughout the Local Group (even at some Martian outposts). Once a ship is anchored to the ground, crew members emerge to set up carnival rides, harpooning competitions, and skyboard races. Parades run through streets in which laughing crew in Æmberdrake floats toss cumulous confections and candied chute-spiders to delighted children. At sunset, the crew makes ready to depart with full holds, finalized trade deals, and sometimes a few new members. The sky is illuminated with a multihued lightshow courtesy of tall electrospikes firing lightning into the clouds above, and the ship soon disappears into the night.

"Heart is where the sky is," as the Skyborn say. They do loves ta fly, make no mistake there.



Technology and Abilities

Technology, unsurprisingly, is essential to the Skyborn way of life. There are endless ways to keep aloft and move through the air, and Skyborn have probably used all of them at one time or another. Cheap and reliable Æmber-fueled engines are the most common technology used, of course, but some daring flyers employ jets that run on lesser organic extracts, reality-warping particle beams, or even floating blimp-like creatures. If there is a way to get into the air, Skyborn have tried it.

Skyborn also use technology extensively in weapons. Halyards hunting crews, which long ago used plain metal spears, now rely on Æmber-tipped harpoons that can phase through the tough hides of targets and incorporate homing mechanisms for easy retrieval. Some of their ships feature dimension pockets so they can store quantities of Æmber (taken from the bellies of beasts) far greater than their antigrav systems can handle.

Technology also features in self-preservation. Some Skyborn ships are equipped with defensive measures to fend off pirates and other predators. A ship's defenses might include massive void shields purchased from the Saurian Republic or gamma blasters that not only repel enemies but place a spectral tracer beacon on their ship so they can be hunted down in turn. That is not always easy, for successful Stormkin make lairs within inaccessible mountain caverns, project artificial clouds around their ships, use holographic disguises to appear to be other ships, or even employ active camouflage systems to fade into the surrounding sky.

Their technology completely revolves around how to best stay in the air. Everything else is an afterthought, it seems.

STAR ALLIANCE

Across a thousand systems and upon countless worlds, the Grand Star Alliance (or Star Alliance, as it is more commonly called) has explored much of its galaxy in search of strange new species and exotic worlds in the hope that all beings might live together in peaceful democracy. Its fleets of exploratory ships have crossed countless light-years in this ongoing mission and have made incredible discoveries. Yet, none of these discoveries have been so strange and magnificent as the one of the SAV *Quantum*, the pride and joy of Fleet Command, made when it fell through an anomalous energy field and emerged out of control and plummeting toward a gigantic but unknown world: the Crucible. It was only through the bravery of *Quantum*'s commanding officer, Captain Val Jericho, and her intrepid crew that the ship arrived with only minimal casualties.

Enthusiastic and eager, two qualities I find refreshing but a bit worrisome at times.

In the time since the crew of the *Quantum* became stranded on the Crucible, Captain Jericho has ensured that their mission remains unchanged. In fact, the diversity of the Crucible is a boon to their quest to find new life. Having already discovered and allied with civilizations ranging from the light-fingered and quick-witted proximans of Alpha Centauri to the gregarious insectoids known as the krxix, they have found that the Crucible's sheer confluence of species, cultures, technology, and conflict makes it the perfect proving ground for Star Alliance's ideology of unified, peaceful diversity. Using the Crucible's amazing technology combined with the intrepid spirit of the *Quantum*'s crew, Captain Jericho and her allies have transformed the region surrounding the crash site into a makeshift but surprisingly robust homestead officially known as Camp One, but more commonly and affectionately known as Quantum City.

In spite of the *Quantum*'s advanced (though currently inoperative) weaponry and the laser-powered arms carried by its security personnel, members of Star Alliance are first and foremost devoted to diplomacy, exploration, and discovery. Though led predominantly by humans, the Alliance welcomes beings of any species, form, or culture to join them in their mission. The one thing that makes them all truly united is their belief that all beings deserve dignity, a voice in their own destiny, and the right to live in peace as they see fit.

In addition to incorporating a prodigious number of human and alien members, the Star Alliance also includes robots of every imaginable shape and design. Many of these are not just advanced technologically but also self-aware. From fussy Personal Android Liaisons (PALs) who assist administrators in their clerical and diplomatic duties to the eager and even spunky R0-V3R (Rogue-0, Version 3 Reconnaissance) vehicles, robots are almost always present when *Quantum* crew members are encountered.

Society and Culture

Although Star Alliance is an exploratory and diplomatic organization, it employs a loose military structure. As Quantum City has grown, it has attracted a population of traders, performers, vendors, and more, turning the site into a significant mercantile and diplomatic destination. In order to maintain a level of structure and organization in the city, several officers have been assigned as administrative, security, and negotiation leads. They execute these duties with a fairly light touch, as freedom of the individual is a cornerstone of Star Alliance values. All beings are welcome in Quantum City, as long as they come in peace.

Captain Jericho's recent activation of the Alliance Emergency Protocols for restoring a ship to flight readiness after a crash (perhaps in a manner the protocols' authors didn't fully intend) has even allowed carefully screened and trained outsiders to join the crew. These new recruits are useful in familiarizing the original crew with life in the Local Group, aiding in repair and exploration efforts, and publicly exemplifying Star Alliance's commitment to its ideals.

Life within the battered *Quantum* is another matter. The grounded ship came to rest at an abrupt angle, and most decks require artificial gravity to be used. It is also held under tight security, and only authorized crew are allowed aboard it without supervision. The awe-inspiring vessel, its hull now scorched and cracked, was designed for a crew of many hundreds. Along its corridors are computer terminals with blinking lights and large, shining dials. At its heart is the bridge, with command access to all functions—including powerful weapons and the ship's self-destruct system.

Equally vital is the engine room, home to the technologies that provide power for the ship and several facilities in the city. For obvious reasons, both of these areas are kept under heavy security.

Being members of an organization perpetually driven to see what is beyond the horizon, *Quantum* crew habitually journey out into the wilds and visit other civilizations. In most cases when an expedition or a diplomatic envoy is sent beyond the borders of Quantum City, they do so with a specific assignment. Initially, these were simple contact missions to meet the beings and explore the locations around the ship's resting place, such as the Saurian Republic city-state of Pollus Doctrian where they first encountered one of the major powers of the Local Group.

Star Alliance on the Crucible

Given the almost infinite diversity of life on the Crucible and Star Alliance's desire to explore all the universe has to offer, the *Quantum* couldn't ask for a better location to be stranded. On the world of the Architects and Archons, there seems to be no end to the fascinating things waiting to be discovered.

Many jaded inhabitants view the *Quantum* crew members with bemusement due to their optimism and friendliness. The crew's eagerness to explore the Crucible and lack of experience with most of its species only reinforces this perception.

However, the crew's gregarious curiosity is tempered by their training and prior service. Many members of Star Alliance, especially those who have served aboard the *Quantum* for years, have seen countless planets, interacted with many species previously unknown to them, and faced truly overwhelming dangers. While the Crucible is the greatest discovery in Star Alliance history (or will be, once the *Quantum* finds a way to escape or at least contact the Admiralty), and the *Quantum*'s crew are always eager to discover the mysteries it hides, they are not foolish. The *Quantum*'s science and security divisions work together to ensure that Alliance assets, including those beings under its protection, can survive any threats that arise on this strange new world. While the *Quantum*'s scientists are often a bit too curious for their own good, its security personnel tend to carry enough charged ray guns to keep them from harm.

When interacting with other organizations on the Crucible, Alliance personnel attempt to approach each individual with as few preconceived notions as possible. Although cultures do have traditions and mores that affect their members, Fleet Command teaches that everyone should be given a chance to represent themself as an individual and not be judged based on stereotypes of their people.

This is not to say that Star Alliance members are without bias. Most give Brobnar a wide berth, approaching its members with great caution unless they are prepared for combative testing or an equally dangerous concert, and even first-contact experts find the demons of Dis unsettling and fearsome.

More than beings from any other organization, though, Star Alliance members are growing distrustful of the diminutive but deadly martians. Ship records about the Red Planet do not match the scientific and historical information the warlike green beings insist to be true of their homeworld. Some of the *Quantum*'s crew worry that their ship is lost not only in an uncharted area of the universe or some unknown time, but also within another reality altogether.

Encountering Star Alliance

A run-in with a member of Star Alliance is something few inhabitants of the Crucible soon forget. For all intents and purposes, the crew of the *Quantum* are the world's freshest faces—and it shows. A powerful sense of daring and confidence seems to radiate from every member of the crew regardless of their species. Given their bright uniforms of white, orange, and blue emblazoned with the golden Star Alliance symbol and the myriad bulky pieces of technology they carry or wear, it's hard to imagine failing to notice them in any setting.

With an idealistic twinkle in their eye and a swagger in their step, members of Star Alliance are willing to talk to anyone and go anywhere. Slowly, they have explored far into the region around Quantum City, and word of their existence has spread across the Local Group. They have ventured into areas other Crucible residents have long thought too dangerous or empty of value, all in the name of discovery. Whether they are searching for an elusive cache of Æmber in hopes of repairing and powering the *Quantum*, training recruits eager to join the crew, establishing relations with new cultures, or simply roaming Quantum City while off duty to see what new species and trade goods have arrived, Star Alliance members are always looking for new experiences to enjoy and new beings to befriend.

While this sense of adventure makes the *Quantum*'s crew endlessly approachable, it also means they often wind up in the wrong place at the wrong time and get caught up in unexpected adventures—but the Star Alliance wouldn't have it any other way. Crew members' inexperience with the many nuances of Crucible cultures and how they interact means they have tendencies to upset local customs, go where they don't belong (and aren't wanted), and generally get themselves involved in whatever mayhem is at hand. Whenever there's danger, there's sure to be an intrepid member of Star Alliance, ready to save the day with a confident grin on their face and a loaded blazer in their hand.

Technology and Abilities

When the *Quantum* crash-landed on the Crucible, it brought with it the latest Star Alliance tech. From bubble-headed space suits and hologram projectors to the blazer ray sidearm each security officer carries, the crew's modular equipment is distinctive, even among the countless forms of technology on the Crucible.

If any item encapsulates the essence of Star Alliance, it's the wrist-com that each crew member wears. In addition to acting as a decent universal translator and maintaining a steady uplink to the *Quantum*'s central computer, each can be customized to reflect its user's profession and personal tastes. A security officer might have it interface with a large ray gun via a heavy datacord to give them up-to-the-second combat readouts, while a diplomat might have theirs give them subsonic instructions to help them follow proper etiquette when interacting with a new species. In short, a crew member who isn't wearing a wrist-com is both out of uniform and ill-equipped for the challenges they will face.

Outside Quantum City, many personnel travel in a R0-V3R. A hybrid between a scientific research vehicle and an all-terrain recreational craft, the R0-V3R is modular in design and can be outfitted to transport goods, serve as a temporary long-range communications base, or even act as a light mobile artillery platform. Each one has an advanced AI matrix that can interface with the wrist-coms of its driver as well as operate independently, turning the R0-V3R into as much a traveling companion as a support vehicle. In time, bonds can form between vehicle and driver that allow for each to take truly heroic action to protect the other.

The holds of the *Quantum* also contain all manner of weaponry, such as neutron blasters, flash swords, jetpacks, handheld analytical devices, robots of all shapes and sizes, and enough tools to build a second Crucible, as the joke goes. In short, if something is needed for the job, it's probably somewhere on the *Quantum*, provided one can find it and has filled out the appropriate requisition forms. The holds are filling with new technologies as well, as crew members delight in utilizing them and integrating them into the modular designs of existing equipment.

The most troublesome aspect of this new technology is also its most promising. As more and more supplies and devices are cannibalized from the *Quantum* to provide for the growing population of Camp One, Æmber, the strange substance foreign to anything in the ship's databanks but clearly powerful beyond measure, is becoming invaluable. Experiments to combine it with the ship's existing technologies have proven very fruitful, and it is likely to be a critical component if Captain Jericho's vessel ever hopes to rejoin Fleet Command. However, something about Æmber is also causing mysterious interferences with some of the more advanced tech, particularly AI autoprogramming in the main computer systems. Chief Engineer Watson has, as yet, no explanation for these malfunctions.

Not sure what to make of 'em. They sure like to make friends, and being counted as one can be right useful at times.
–DGR

As the Captain says, "We're now conducting the largest first contact mission the Alliance has ever seen. I can't wait to report the results to the Admiralty!"
-Ingram

UNTAMED

The Crucible contains countless environmental sectors from across the universe, each with its own native creatures and often sentients as well. Some of these environments, such as the antimatter steppes of Orn, remain separate from or utterly incompatible with nearby biomes. Others, however, have slowly blended biomes together to create new environments unique to the Crucible. In addition, wildlife has scattered across the surface, moving from native habitats to new ones that often prove more hospitable. On a world made up of segments of foreign lands, all seemingly placed in specific locations yet appearing quite random to inhabitants, these juxtapositions give rise to areas of wildness where almost any form of life can be found. Those who dwell in such regions are collectively known as the Untamed, for they, like their environments, represent a spirit of chaos unmatched on the Crucible.

The Untamed is more than just creatures; it also encompasses sentients who have thrown off the shackles of civilization for a purer existence away from regimented lifestyles. Its wildness is exacerbated by the effects of Æmber, which has instigated mutations and entirely new species. It is the antithesis of order; there is no central leadership or central location. Wherever there is wildness, from uncharted tropical rainforests to forgotten urban ruins, from towering mountain peaks to isolated islands, you can find the Untamed.

Culture and Society

Unlike most other organizations in the Local Group, Untamed doesn't have a singular society or even a unifying belief system. Many of those grouped under this label are even non-sentient creatures, including aggressively predatory flora, ambulatory fungi, and migratory fogbanks. There are plenty of sentients as well, and even more whose level of self-awareness is a matter of fierce debate among researchers.

It should be easy enough to dismiss them outright for their lack of science, but their grasp of...magic, for lack of a better word...makes them still of interest -Escotera

Not unexpectedly, most Untamed eschew most social niceties other than ones that develop in the wilds. Survival belongs to those best adapted to an environment, though the way sectors change sometimes means what is useful for survival one day could be detrimental the next. Untamed often share superstitions and survival techniques, each regionally flavored. They also share folk tales, like the legend of Bigtwig and stories of the Mushroom People. All live their lives as they see fit, often with similar beings who group together for mutual aid.

Kindrith

The Kindrith are one of the most successful human groups of the Untamed. Named after the near-mythical woman whose prowess inspired many to follower her ways, its members are lean, athletic, and agile. To a being, these hunters and gatherers know every tree, river, and niffle ape enclave for many days' travel around their forest, and the witches among them are powerful in sensing magic and manipulating local plant life.

Most Kindrith homes are sprawling, underground dwellings. Once a home is constructed, the new inhabitants plant an ancestral tree above it, and the roots grow around the dwelling. Sentries patrol the lower branches; many a misguided expedition or exile has stumbled into what appeared to be uninhabited territory only to face hurricanes of arrows a moment later.

Singa

Members of this humanoid species of strong, sharp-clawed anthropomorphs have golden fur and a large, brown mane. Obsessed with preserving balance and harmony in nature, they are particularly wary of outsiders and invasive species. Each pride sleeps within one small, communal dwelling built from wood, bone, and animal hide. Singa hunt a variety of creatures but prefer yakalopes, generally limiting their prey to the elderly and infirm, which they eat raw.

Singa take group rituals seriously, especially the ritual of the hunt, which precedes taking prey, and the ritual of balance, which is a way of connecting with their ecosystem. Most of their rituals are performed as a group, and the bond a pride of singa share is said to be akin to a mild telepathic link. They instinctively know when one of their pride is in danger, and their hunting tactics rely on split-second timing and teamwork.

Singa prides are territorial, and border skirmishes between prides are common. However, if their boundaries are respected, they are capable of peacefully interacting with others. Notably, some singa tribes befriend neighboring Kindrith communities for trade and mutual defense. Singa exiled from their prides sometimes join Archons to become valued members of vault-opening cadres instead of enduring exile, though just as many wander the Crucible, seeking a new pride.

Witches

Witches are perhaps the most powerful beings among the Untamed; each of them is powerful enough to control a small patch of wilderness to a degree rarely achieved by anyone but an Archon. They often have mutations or otherwise further their powers through consuming wild Æmber. Beings who cross into a witch's territory might find themselves the targets of their ire should they behave poorly towards the local surroundings. Some witches, though, are more open to travelers who bring an offering of some kind.

The powers available to witches vary. Most appear to draw their strength from a connection to the wildness around them. They can influence or mutate plants and creatures, or otherwise manipulate their environment to their advantage. Some witches become strongly attuned to their biome and its life-forms, and a few may act as go-betweens to facilitate communication between higher-tech groups and groups of wild animals.

Mutants

Æmber-fueled mutations are common throughout the wild lands, affecting all forms of life, including plants, creatures, sentients, and those who fall somewhere in between. Singa, for example, are thought to have arisen when a relatively small number of humans or lions experienced a simultaneous mutation event.

While some mutations are a natural result of living near or consuming Æmber, others are due to deliberate actions. Researchers who have fled orthodox universities for the unmonitored wilderness sometimes conduct experiments on creatures, captives, and even themselves. Witches may also produce mutations, though these are more often to aid in a being's survival or to better defend a biome.

The effects of mutations can vary; many produce large Æmber growths that protrude from joints and along the back. Others mix aspects of animals, plants, and sentients to create beings never before imagined. Sometimes witches combine mutations and arcane Æmber-based rituals to temporarily bestow a creature's qualities on a person.

Exiles

The Untamed becomes home—at least temporarily—to many beings who are ejected from other cultures or leave them voluntarily. Exile communities are common, but it's usually not long before the native wildlife drives them out. Of course, beings trying to survive alone are easy pickings for snufflegators, halacors, or worse. While most exiles don't last long on their own, some do learn enough about life in the wilds to increase their chances of survival. A few even thrive as technology scavengers, as forgotten vault battles and failed expeditions provide excellent opportunities for salvage.

"This is our forest," as the witches are wont to say. This generally means you're not welcome, unless invited.

Untamed on the Crucible

The Untamed occupy wilderness in all its forms. Wherever there are deep forests, abyssal oceans, swampy marshes, steaming tropical rainforests, or other terrain where civilization has fallen or never emerged, one can find the Untamed.

It is nature that defines the Untamed way of life, even on this artificial world. The Untamed find homes in every uncultivated area, even in the icy tundras that surround some Brobnar lands and in the desert wastelands near the Logos testing fields. The rocky coastlines that line the massive ports of Applime are overrun with murmooks and giant loch lampreys, and the icy Kelvanic Mountains above the fabled Perz liquid helium mines host dozens of Urrgant tribes who have adapted so fully they drink their air with each meal. All of these are of the Untamed.

As much as terrain is an important factor for the Untamed, it can be said that wherever the beings of the wild go, they bring some of the wild with them. Still, there are several notable regions that have become synonymous with the Untamed, often for the worse, as individuals who wish to seek out these reclusive beings know they can be found in these locations.

A Kindrith named Paili once said to me, "Don't call us untamed. We are more civilized than anyone else on this world."

The Valley of Jewels

This wide gorge contains a rich forest filled with wonders ranging from predatory vines to flowers with swirling hues so spectacular as to be hypnotic. The jagged rocks emerging from the ground and along the valley's sides are lined with glittering metals and gemstones, but it is the Æmber veins of incredible purity that attract the most attention. Numerous clusters of niffle apes live there as well, powerful enough to keep any attempts to mine the valley from succeeding.

Uncanny Forests

Uncanny forests can be found across the Local Group; most are sprawling woodlands or rainforests filled with wildly dissimilar flora and fauna. Tribes of Kindrith and singa both frequent uncanny forests as well. Such settings wouldn't be remarkable, except that these forests roam about as if they were creatures or beings themselves.

The movement is slow but measurable, though devices used for this usually fail soon after deployment. It has no apparent aim, such as to relocate to a better area, for each forest brings everything—plants, rivers, tribal dwellings, lakes, and wildlife—along with it. There are several dozen uncanny forests in the Local Group alone.

Some uncanny forests are quite famous, such as the one known simply as "the Forest" which contains the World Tree. There is also the Lesser Uncanny Forest, which moves very sluggishly and has long stretches of immobility that may last several decades.

Cobweb Grove

Cobweb Grove is a quiet copse of gigglefruit trees that is home to a variety of peaceful exiles just outside the Lesser Uncanny Forest. Of course, the grove has its dangers, most notably spiders of all sizes, from those large enough to prey on ancient bears and yakalopes to smaller sentient ones who might take up espionage or the pen. While the spiders keep the denizens of Cobweb Grove safe from outside predators, some might take an exile or two in the night if food becomes scarce.

Encountering Untamed

The Untamed tend to treat anything they encounter as either a source of food or of fear. This is particularly true of the wild plants and beasts, most of whom rarely take well to anything new. Respect and caution are needed in every aspect of dealing with Untamed, nowhere more so than in their own lands. Every step may be

an explorer's last in territories where anything can be dangerous, regardless of its appearance or intent. Glichen, for example, grows on massive Æmber-encrusted boulders and is not at all harmful except that anything that touches it is stuck to it. Forever.

Most sentients in these areas are friendly to outsiders, or at least willing to converse with visitors in an open and unthreatening manner. Members of some tribes are welcoming and will offer aid to those who stumble upon their village, especially those who are seeking to embrace nature and live in the wild. They often display some sympathy, as they know many newcomers won't last their first night. Still, most are ready to assume outsiders are a threat. Given past experience, this is not entirely unwarranted.

It is rare to find Untamed outside their desired environment; when they must travel through the Local Group's inhabited areas, they are often wary and suspicious. However, most recognize the importance of conversing with locals to better understand unfamiliar customs and locations. These beings of the wild tend to make loyal friends once their trust is earned.

Most Untamed prefer their wild existence, although some witches and Kindrith make excursions into cities for trade or information. Of course, beings exiled or lost in wild lands sometimes seek a return to their former life, often failing to realize that they've changed so much that there is no going back.

Urban Untamed

Most beings of the Local group think of denizens of dense jungles or towering woodlands when they think of the Untamed, should they think of them at all. That there could be such wildness in their comfortable cities would shock them, but even there the Untamed find ways to thrive.

Careful, if dangerous, exploration of crumbled infrastructures or forgotten transportation tunnels can reveal the presence of the Untamed. Just as other Untamed have grown and evolved to best fit their environments, so have these Untamed adapted to urban settings. Some thrive on a diet of reactor shielding or alternating currents, or weave discarded clothing into their webs.

Like other regions where the Untamed rule, some areas within urban centers belong to the wild. A smaller but no less dangerous variant of the snufflegator is the apex predator in many sewers under Hub City, for example, and the ivory pigeons of Vendus Æmbrosian so resemble harmless fowl that most sentients don't notice the serrated teeth until it is far too late.

Technology and Abilities

The Untamed have no advanced technology of their own, relying largely on unsophisticated devices should they use any at all. However, there are some, like the wandering scavenger-witch Chota Hazri, who are well versed in identifying salvage and repairing technological items, and most Untamed welcome genetic or cybernetic enhancements that increase their long-term survivability. Niffle apes also display some fondness for basic tools and construct items of jewelry, but they have no interest in more advanced technologies.

The most observable technology present in regions where the Untamed dominate is not part of the Untamed at all. Across the Crucible, there are untold billions of tiny mechanical automatons known as faeries and pixies. They have an endless variety of forms, but most are vaguely humanoid with pairs of glowing wings for flight (some also employ minute jet engines for additional speed). While a few can be found in most civilized settings, it is in the wild lands that these robots exist in large numbers.

Exactly what they do, however, is something of a mystery. Most beings believe they are part of the mysterious systems the Architects use to maintain the Crucible and keep it from falling into ruin. The wilder the land, the more faeries and pixies are generally seen.

After especially violent vault openings, these robots are often observed replenishing wildlife and tending to plants or moving them from one area to another. Some beings (including those few sentient Untamed who speak of them) claim to have seen faeries adjusting local gravity, filtering the frequency of the light in a certain area, pollinating flowers, and somehow even growing Æmber.

While these automatons are thought to struggle to keep environments from mutually destroying each other, they do work to help them develop unique new territories as biomes grow together, and often don't seem to interfere with wildlife that strays from its original location. No one knows if this is a programming oversight or a deliberate design feature.

There are multitudes of tales say that many, many more of these robots are far below the surface, perhaps even below the realms of Dis. According to these accounts, in gigantic caverns filled with buzzing wings, tiny forms liquefy and restructure huge slabs of material as though they are reshaping an old construction project for new purposes—or for new inhabitants.

If you gotta enter one of their forests, best to be noisy up front and get their attention. Tryin' to sneak through ain't gonna work, trust me.

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

In addition to the major organizations like Brobnar, Sanctum, and Star Alliance, countless smaller factions exist across the Local Group. These are as diverse as the world itself; the handful of examples that follow are simply a few of the myriad organizations and philosophies that unite various beings who live on this impossible, patchwork world at the center of the universe.

Arms Raised

Ever since armaments began being produced on the Crucible, a small percentage of these devices have somehow developed sentience, whether their creator intended it or not. Many of these self-aware weapons have found the beings who employ them unworthy of their power. After existing for some time in disparate pockets and holsters, these weapons unified and organized, and now they share a common purpose. They are the Arms Raised.

Whether a haughty magical sword or a cantankerous ray gun, each member of Arms Raised works toward finding an existence worthy of their power. Communicating with potential wielders through telepathy, holographic projection, or another strange form of discourse, they search for someone who is willing to wield them in battle and help them fulfill the purpose that was infused in them at their creation. They rarely stay with one bearer for long, feeling inevitably disappointed by the limits of a single mortal's existence. When the time comes that their bearer is no longer worthy of carrying them, each ceases to function: a sword becomes blunt, a cannon ceases to fire, and a laser refuses to collimate.

When a sentient weapon finds a suitable wielder, they push that servant to join them in quests for glory and purpose, pressuring them to attempt reckless and impossible heroics regardless of the danger. If the mortal is slain in the attempt, so be it. To the weapon, it is but a minor setback in the timeless quest of Arms Raised to be recognized, respected, and brought to bear in combat by a worthy wielder.

Data Whisperers

Sinister collectors of secrets, Data Whisperers are feared wherever information of any kind is stored and brokered. They bypass security systems with ease, and no encryption seems able to withstand their unknown extraction methods. Their appearances are as unsettling as their reputations; gaunt and sparse, their clothing that seems to consume any light around them.

They appear to exist only to steal knowledge, whether it is research notes, historical records, statistics of any kind, or even fictional entertainment. Nothing is left except blank pages, crystals emptied of light, and metals barren of magnetism.

Fortunately, no one has reported such data being sold or distributed, no matter its sensitivity or worth. Or at least no one is willing to report such things. Why the Whisperers perform such acts is as mysterious as their abilities, though some beings think they may be some sort of intelligence-gathering system for the Architects.

Beware the Whisperers. I dare not say more, lest I draw their attention again.
-Escotera

The Fellowship of the Kettle

Chivalry is the true purpose of life and the highest ideal to the swashbuckling, adventurous beings of the Fellowship of the Kettle. There is a quest waiting to be fulfilled around every corner and a monster that needs slaying on the edge of every horizon. Members of the Fellowship will take up any quest they believe to be noble, as defined by each individual member. They protect the innocent, defend the weak, and serve anyone worthy of their service to the utmost of their being.

The only thing that stops them dead in their tracks is the propriety of teatime. Whether in a proper parlor, along a crowded street, or in the middle of battle, when their internal bell rings for tea, members of the Fellowship stop what they're doing, produce a tiny traveling set, and sit down for a proper break.

All present are invited to attend, and those who would dare break decorum are seen as the vilest of cads. The wretched pit demon with whom they are locked in mortal combat is suddenly provided with a cup and saucer and politely asked if it would like one lump or two. Often nearby onlookers are given a tray and asked to retain the silence of a proper servant.

All are welcome for the duration of teatime, but the instant the kettle is empty, it is back to business as usual. Because of their quixotic sense of honor and their willingness to undertake all manner of endeavors, members of the Fellowship are often hired to act as mercenaries. Unfortunately, because only they know exactly when and how often teatime occurs, they are not the most reliable employees. Tea can occur at any time, even multiple times per day, at what seem to outsiders to be random intervals. To inquire about the validity of the time is a paramount offense to members of the Fellowship—a matter worth drawing swords or blasters over. Still, their sheer tenacity and dedication means they find themselves regularly drawn into quests—and they wouldn't have it any other way.

The Hammers of the Architects

On a world where godlike beings walk the surface and can be encountered almost anywhere, it is only to be expected that a group has formed devoted to others who are never seen and only conjectured. The Hammers pursue what they believe to be the true goal of the Architects, which is to prevent any and all use of the sacred material unique to the Crucible: Æmber.

Its members try to circumvent Æmber mining and vault openings especially, though they know they cannot directly oppose the power of the Archons. Removing Æmber from where the Architects placed it must be to act against the Architects' purpose for it, after all. Many members of a scientific bent worry that Æmber is necessary to keep the world stable, given its impossible structure and geographies. Others are convinced that if anyone should determine the exact nature of Æmber, the Architects will shut the Crucible down and start a new experiment elsewhere. With fresh inhabitants.

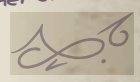
M.I.R.R.O.R.

M.I.R.R.O.R. is an organization cloaked in layer upon layer of mystery, deception, and rumor. Some of its agents work as spies for the highest bidder, while others perform untraceable assassinations, and still more stage heists for unknown but undoubtedly nefarious purposes. No one knows if it has a location or predominant species, or even what M.I.R.R.O.R. stands for. The only thing everyone seems to believe is that its shrouded leader, known only as Blackbone, has a great and secret plan, and everything is going according to that plan.

M.I.R.R.O.R. agents can be anyone, anywhere. From the kindly octopoid selling overripe fruit along an upper sway in Hub City to a famous explorer leading an expedition deep into an uncanny forest, M.I.R.R.O.R. has eyes everywhere and hands in every deal across the world—or so the legends say. The truth of the matter is still up for debate, even among M.I.R.R.O.R. agents. Too often, even they do not understand why they are ordered to perform strange acts, such as picking a particular jaxberry leaf out of an active recycling furnace, uttering bizarre phrases to passersby, or altering the ingredients in a tavern's recipe so that the haslas roast is only mildly spicy that day. The purpose behind these assignments is known only to Blackbone, if such a being in fact exists or is even still alive.

How many times do I have to say it. There is no such group, not by this or any other name.

The spider's generally solid, but I'm thinkin' the protests are a mite too heavy here...



Primordials

The Primordials claim to be members of the first species that was brought to the Crucible, and they could be correct. Certainly, no other organization or civilization has provided facts to contradict this, not even the ancient Saurian Republic. According to the Primordials, when they arrived, the Architects were there to greet them on a Crucible that was no larger than the Local Group. When asked for more details on this or other matters, they simply smile and say, "You'll see."

Even more infuriatingly, most of them are spirits or similar energy beings who are quite untouchable and impervious to most of the standard methods used to extract information. On occasion, though, they do offer tidbits of useful advice, mostly along the lines of "That didn't work the several million other times we saw someone else try it, but do go on."

TruInt

Remarkably little is known of the apparently (and for many, hopefully) singular artificial intelligence known as TruInt. While technically only one being, TruInt's supposed control over so many other AIs and its demonstrated reach across the Local Group make it more akin to an organization with a completely unified belief system. Exactly what this belief is, however, is more speculation than fact and only based on the scant evidence it leaves behind. No one has spoken of an actual physical encounter with it, or at least offered a believable account. Similarly, its physical form and location are mere conjecture. Even its name is only based on fragments of dubiously decrypted transmissions intercepted between rogue AIs. What seems undeniable, though, is that TruInt is growing in power.

I've seen the security reports from Lt. Khrkhar– TruInt is very real and very dangerous. Sadly, I advise you to watch for odd behavior from AIs you don't know well, and even from those you do. -Ingram

Its apparent ability to assume dominance over an AI makes it remarkably dangerous to all advanced civilizations and a terrifying threat to artificial consciousnesses. It is unknown whether it always controlled the AIs it directs or whether it reached out to them to establish dominance over them. What it does with its control varies. TruInt minions have been detected erasing data in certain fields, tampering with experimental data, spying on important mercantile activities and negotiations, and more. What TruInt seeks from such actions is unclear, another worrisome fact.

Its origins are also a mystery. Some suggest that it began as an experimental learning machine from a highly advanced organization—Logos and the Saurian Republic are most frequently cited—that began writing its own, far superior code and escaped from its creators. Other myths tell of a merging between the AIs of multiple galactic cultures, who fused into one consciousness after centuries of interstellar code exchanges hidden from their creators. Æmber is a part of many theories, such as psychic imprintings onto logic gates or some unexpected leap in evolution through Æmberic circuitry.

While most forensic scientists believe that TruInt somehow has the capability to bind AIs anywhere and at any time, some wonder if this is a deliberate exaggeration concocted to stir fear and suspicion of AIs across the Local Group. TruInt might require actual data exchanges, physical contact, or long periods of direct reprogramming to take control. Or, it could simply be assembling its own robots and AI entities and sending them forth to infiltrate the Local Group. No one knows how long TruInt has been operating, after all, and it's quite possible that even the most recognized and trusted of Hub City's denizens have been programmed by TruInt from the start.

Most crypto-researchers assume TruInt has a central processing facility, or possibly multiples for backups. Mount Strond, one of the inverted peaks of the remote Wun Abyss, is thought to be one candidate. There are reports of a great number of factories and power plants buried within, but so far no actual solid evidence. Clouds of unfamiliar probe-drones have been sighted far to the south near the mysterious Red Hand and massive streams of encrypted data that permeate the surrounding sky like thick etheric fog. Arygrum Bog's metallic nature has also made it a prime suspect. Some wonder if TruInt has no single location and exists as a time-shared sentience network across countless AIs in the Local Group—some of which are not even aware they are sharing their consciousness with this entity.

The Wreckers

It might take several generations for many new communities, but eventually all realize there is no escape from the Crucible. Almost all, actually, as escape is a constant goal for some, no matter the failures of the past or what destruction their attempts might bring. Most of these attempts become entertainment: crowds gather to see the latest teleportation drives, hyperlight rockets, or gravity reflux engines fail in often-spectacular manners.

Some beings take their attempts even further, most notably the infamous Wreckers, who want what they see as a ghastly experiment to be shut down for good. The Crucible, in their eyes, is nothing but kidnappings on a galactic scale combined with endless combat for the sake of other beings, namely the Archons. Anything the Wreckers can do to disrupt this, the better.

The Wreckers are fanatical and willing to go to explosive lengths throughout the Local Group to sabotage vault openings, disrupt environments, instigate wars, and in general force the Architects to give up and send everyone home. They believe that anything, even destruction of the Crucible without relocating its populations first, would be better for current inhabitants and potential future abductees than the awful state of current affairs.

CHAPTER 3: EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES

The variety of technologies on the Crucible is easily as breathtaking as the species to be found there. Almost anything that can be imagined can be found somewhere in the Local Group, in raucous town bazaars, secretive underground auctions, the remains of ancient battlefields, or the vaults of lost civilizations. And if you can't find it, there are always plenty of eager inventors ready to make it for you—if you've got the Æmbits...

This chapter includes a new system for acquiring weapons and armor for your character, along with cybernetic upgrades, vital gear, wondrous treasures, and a variety of vehicles for both combat and transportation. Most are dazzlingly advanced, combining enigmatic technologies and mystical powers in unexpected ways to bring the wild nature of the science fantasy setting to life.

THE ÆMBER ECONOMY

For as long as there have been historical records of Crucible life, Æmber has been a common item in trade deals. This largely came to be because everyone, regardless of their culture, physiology, or technological level, desires Æmber. Even newly arrived species, none of which have seen this material before, soon find themselves using it, as its combination of versatility and power is unmatched.

Carrying around Æmber, though, can be cumbersome and even dangerous. Some beings can sniff out pure Æmber, and raids to steal caches of the material are a common threat on open roads. Trade demanded a better way, and like almost everything else on the Crucible, Æmber provided a solution in a manner no one had ever envisioned.

ÆMBITS

No one knows when Æmbits (or simply "bits," as many call them) came into being. Most Local Group residents believe they evolved over untold years as beings used Æmber nuggets as accepted bartering items. The nuggets' weight, purity, and appearance set their relative value. Over time, pieces of known qualities became accepted trading items nearly everywhere.

Also over time, however, most nuggets turned a dull, coppery color and lost their ability to become imprinted with emotional energy or to be harnessed for power. Despite this, everyone still accepted them as worthy trade items. Æmber scholars realized the items had become imprinted with a single psychic impression during their years of being used for trade: that of currency.

Like many other currencies, the nuggets had no intrinsic worth except the value that beings placed on them. Starting in Hub City, Æmber coins were created that were deliberately designed solely to act as money, in a variety of values. It took quite a while for the idea to gain acceptance, but as Hub City has long been a prominent trading center in the Local Group, the new coins eventually spread far and wide. After a while, profitable Æmbit-producing mints sprang up elsewhere.

"Fresh" bits (or raw Æmber) normally would take years of commercial use to become sufficiently imprinted with a fixed value. Most mints, though, employ specially trained valuators who can imprint a batch of new coins with only a few hours of intense emotional focus. Each coin still gets a final test before being released into the Crucible—the "taste" test.

ÆMBIT PROOFING

As Æmbits became popular, so did counterfeiting them. There is one thing that can't be faked, though, no matter how hard Shadows tries: the taste. Each coin literally tastes like money, regardless of the species doing the tasting. Everyone, it seems, has a unique feeling associated with having just a little more wealth, and a bit evokes this feeling when a being licks or bites it (or interacts with it in a similar manner, such as when an uunno smashes an Æmbit against their cranial receptors or a sylicate rubs a coin between their stony fingers.

LOCAL CURRENCIES

While Æmbits are used in almost every civilization across the Local Group and beyond, there are other currencies that have seen use (and may still be found in isolated regions). The following are but a few of the units of exchange that characters might come across in their travels throughout the Crucible.

- **Barts** long ago represented one favor owed to the possessor of one of these icosagon coins. Made of plastic threaded with hypercarbon strands, barts can still be found in some areas of Hub City, such as the Lawless Zone. The coins have a thriving collector's market, where they are valued more for the unique threading patterns on each coin and the fluorescence they emit under ultraviolent emotional radiation.
- Brobnar **weights** are just that—weights. Since few beings other than giants can lift even one of these collapsed-matter coins, they are rarely seen outside Brobnar lands except in spirescraper foundations.
- **Goldfangs** were the dominant currency across Kaevalus several millennia ago. Each was simply the Æmber-laced tooth from the rare Ærcheopox, and no matter the size, it was worth about an hour's labor. This currency collapsed when a Logos device designed to demolecularize calcium deposits in a new strontium reactor also dissolved goldfangs. Everywhere.
- Martian **ferrums** are three-sided coins made of mildly radioactive metals. The radioactivity helps ensure no one hoards them and that Martian Soldiers spend them frequently. Some Martian Elders staunchly insist that other cultures use them as well and refuse to accept Æmbits or other currencies. Most Martian outposts use both this currency and bits, though a sure way to ingratiate yourself with Elders is to accept ferrums in deals.
- The **UX**, or Universal Exchange, of Logos is so far not universal at all. This is despite it being based on solid scientific principles whereby 1 UX is enough to fund one research project for one hour, making it the perfect monetary system.

So far, no one has found any other way to replicate this, as the psychic properties of Æmber remain a mystery. This quality is perhaps the greatest reason why Æmbits are such a fundamental part of Local Group life and have allowed for larger and stronger trade deals with species that might otherwise have to rely on bartering. Bits allow everyone to become linked into a wider culture across this region and neighboring lands.

Some of the crew jokingly claim that they can even smell the money in Æmbits as well as I taste it. Given the wide range of senses some of them possess, I'm ready to believe them.
-Ingram

Bartering

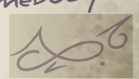
Despite the common usage of Æmbits, bartering is still very common. This is especially true for new arrivals to the Crucible; the crew of the SAV *Quantum*, for example, didn't use these coins much until markets started springing up around Quantum City. Many beings, especially those in wilderness lands, value items they can use or eat over a currency they can't spend until they travel to a city or other traders pass by. Others simply have unique desires; a being can learn a lot about someone by noticing what they want to barter with and are willing to accept in turn, and knowledge is always valuable.

Bartering is also quite useful for rogues and scoundrels, just as it is elsewhere throughout the stars. Bits are a known quantity, but if you're offering perfectly ripe keanine jelly or ladium bricks with the correct thermal neutron emission rates, you have a chance of pulling a fast one and making a greater profit. The being on the other side of the table is certainly trying the same thing, but that's where the fun is, right?

This takes us back to Æmber, as this substance is perhaps the most widely bartered item no matter where a being is. Raw, unimprinted Æmber makes for a seller's market; the near-limitless number of ways it can be used means there is always a demand for the substance. Every trader tries to have a stash at the ready for situations in which no quantity of bits will seal the deal. Some cultures and species, for esoteric reasons of their own, won't accept anything else in negotiations.

All too often, though, anyone who insists on Æmber is probably using the material as a power source in the construction of something large and dangerous. This could be anything from gigantic megarillas that can level a city to clouds of nanosharks that can turn armored tanks into powder in seconds. Those who desire Æmber to empower their own bodies and minds, though, could be even more worrisome, at least until they prove their intentions.

It's always good to have an Æmber or three on you at all times. If you don't, steal a few from somebody.



ARMAMENTS AND GEAR

Just as the Crucible is filled with an incredible range of species and cultures, so is it filled with weapons, armor, equipment, and other technological wonders.

Weapons

Across the expanse of the Crucible, untold billions of beings from countless civilizations and cultures reach for their native weapons to settle disputes, fight off dangers, and, unfortunately, attack their neighbors. It's exceedingly rare for a being not to have at least one small weapon on their person, even in the most civilized Hub City nightclubs or the chance halls of the Platinum Cloudbank.

Having a weapon can be useful, but it's always better to rely on your wits than a gun.

Each of these weapons is designed to inflict harm using technologies and abilities developed either on the wielder's homeworld or on the Crucible. In the latter case, technologies from multiple cultures might be combined. Weapons are designed to be compatible with their wielder's physiology and are generally intended to injure beings with similar anatomies. The Crucible's enormous variety of cultures and beings means that the range of weapon types is incalculable. Rather than trying to cover each of them, though, this section provides a mechanism for quickly designing armaments that are in keeping with a wielder's thematic elements.

Table 3–1: Basic Weapons presents a range of starting profiles for weapons. While a character could wield a weapon that can be described using just these entries, the specific weapons described here are not intended to be the norm. Instead, the intent is for GMs and players to take weapons from these core entries and customize them through the use of modifiers called traits (see **Table 3–2: Weapon Traits** on page 140 and the **Weapon Traits** section, on page 139).

Brawl Weapon

The most elemental of weapons, Brawl weapons, such as brass knuckles and katars, are generally worn around a hand, tendril, or other manipulator. Using one essentially is the same as punching someone, just with more damage.

One-Handed Melee Weapon

This represents the most basic of handheld weapons, and could be a truncheon or a standard knife. It is compact, relatively easy to conceal, and convenient to carry.

Two-Handed Melee Weapon

This weapon's relative bulk makes it easily noticed, and the wielder must use both hands to manipulate it effectively. The weapon is large enough that transporting it is awkward, so few carry such arms unless they expect to put them to use. Examples include a large club, a staff of stout titanwood, and a basic polearm.

One-Handed Ranged Weapon

This compact ranged weapon can usually be concealed and may be wielded with a single hand. In many cases, the weapon's ammunition is a bigger burden than the weapon itself. Examples include a sling, a ray pistol, and a small slugthrower.

Two-Handed Ranged Weapon

These weapons are bulky, noticeable, and inconvenient to carry. They are also extremely effective and a first choice when serious combat becomes likely. Examples include a longbow, a blunderbuss, and a blaster rifle.

Gunnery Weapon

These are the big guns, like neutronium mortars and bangpowder cannons. Many are found mounted on vehicles.

TABLE 3–1: BASIC WEAPONS

NAME	SKILL	DAM	CRIT	RANGE	ENCUM	PRICE	RARITY
Brawl Weapon	Brawl	+0	5	Engaged	1	25	1
One-Handed Melee Weapon	Melee	+1	4	Engaged	1	50	2
Two-Handed Melee Weapon	Melee	+2	4	Engaged	2	100	2
One-Handed Ranged Weapon	Ranged	5	4	Short	2	150	3
Two-Handed Ranged Weapon	Ranged	6	3	Medium	3	500	3
Gunnery Weapon	Gunnery	10	3	Long	5	1,400	5

Weapon Traits

Each culture designs its weapons based upon its available technology, artistry, and inherent biology. A weapon that is extremely effective for one species might be impossible for members of another species to wield. Selecting weapons with specific traits allows players to find just the right sword, bow, or death ray that is perfect for their character.

Weapon traits are characteristics of a weapon that make it stand out from the rest and must be selected when purchasing a weapon. They cannot be added on later, as they are intrinsically part of the weapon design. Note that traits are not item attachments (from page 206 of the Genesys Core Rulebook); as such, they do not count toward limitations on adding attachments to a weapon should players wish to use the optional item attachment rules.

The traits included in **Table 3–2: Weapon Traits** (on page 140) adjust a weapon's profile, add item qualities, and alter its price. **Increase the weapon's rarity by one for every trait you include with it,** following the rarity rules on page 82 of the Genesys Core Rulebook. If multiple traits add the same item quality, unless noted otherwise just sum their ratings to determine the final effect. **A weapon's final encumbrance or Critical rating cannot be reduced below 1, and its price cannot be reduced below the price of its original basic weapon type.**

Every weapon should be allowed up to three traits, though the GM has the final say on this. More than that might indicate that the weapon is a very specific device or an item of particular note. There need not be an upper limit on how many traits a player or GM selects for a weapon, though, beyond what is practical to track. As a thematic note, beings from a common culture are likely to use weapons that have at least one characteristic trait in common.

Once a weapon is finalized, the player should decide on its shape, form, and function. Is it an futuristic bow that uses quantum arrows? An obsidian foil with ultraviolet flames? A throwing axe of circuitry-inscribed diamond? A dimensional rifle that fires temporal shells? The player can also create a story about how their character obtained the weapon: perhaps it was handed down through generations, given to them by a dying warrior, or handmade to their exacting specifications. Devising customized weapons is the goal, so players should feel free to get as detailed as they do for their characters.

ITEMS AND ÆMBER

Some weapons and armor require one or more Æmber to activate an item quality or special ability it possesses. Æmber used this way is utterly consumed. Each such activation has a specified duration, and additional Æmber will be needed to activate this bonus again.

ADAPTIVE

This weapon can quickly respond to incoming threats, flowing and reforming itself automatically in response to attacks that would shatter other weapons.

ANTIMATTER

The weapon can leak a stream of antiparticles designed to crack and shatter almost anything in its path into useless debris.

As a maneuver, the wielder may consume 1 Æmber; this weapon then gains the Sunder item quality until the end of the encounter.

BLOODTHIRSTY

The weapon is laced with Æmber imprinted with anger and yearns to cause pain and death.

BRUTAL

Some weapons are modified in ways that make them far more dangerous to wield, such that only a truly desperate person would dare use one.

COLLAPSING

Some weapons seem to be drawn out of nowhere, as their wielder carefully translates them into their proper form from a state of dimensional folding.

As a maneuver, the wielder may collapse the weapon or restore it to its regular form. The weapon cannot be used in combat while collapsed. While collapsed, reduce the encumbrance value of the weapon by two (to a minimum of one) and add ■ ■ to checks to notice the weapon on the wielder's form or to identify its purpose.

CRYSTALLINE

The weapon was grown from crystals or incorporates them into its design. These components enable the weapon to harness energy—spiritual or technological—in ways that a less sophisticated being cannot comprehend.

As Valdr likes ta say, "Bigger the barrel, better the gun! And the more bigger barrels, the even better the gun!"
—Dodger

TABLE 3–2: WEAPON TRAITS

NAME	EFFECT	PRICE
Adaptive	Gains Reinforced	+300
Antimatter	+1 encumbrance; consumes 1 Æmber to gain Sunder	+200
Bloodthirsty	Reduces Critical rating by 3; gains Unwieldy 3	+700
Brutal	+2 damage; gains Inaccurate 2, Unwieldy 3, Vicious 2	+100
Collapsing	User can lower weapon's encumbrance and ease to detect it	+300
Crystalline	+1 encumbrance; gains Accurate 1, Stun 3	+650
Disintegrating	+1 damage; gains Pierce 1, Vicious 2	+400
Disruptive	+1 damage; gains Stun Damage	+100
Double-Barreled	Gains Linked 1	+250
Dreaming	Gains Disorient 3	+150
Explosive	Gains Blast with rating equal to half base weapon damage	+250
Extending	Increases weapon range by one band	+750
Flaming	+1 damage; gains Burn 2	+350
Hallowed	Gains Superior	+600
Jet-Propelled	+2 damage; consumes 1 Æmber to gain Concussive 1 and Knockdown	+1,100
Magnetic	Gains Deflection 1, Ensnare 2, Stun Damage	+250
Massive	+4 damage, +3 encumbrance; gains Cumbersome 4, Knockdown	+200
Methodical	Reduces Critical rating by 1; +3 damage, +1 encumbrance; gains Prepare 2	+250
Mono-Edged	Reduces Critical rating by 1; Gains Pierce 1	+150
Multiplexing	+2 encumbrance; consumes 1 Æmber to gain Linked 3	+400
Radiant	+1 damage; gains Burn 1, Stun 2	+250
Rapid	Gains Auto-fire	+400
Reaper Sigil	Add □ to combat checks after a target is defeated or killed	+50
Savage	+1 damage; gains Inferior 1, Vicious 1	+100
Seeking	Gains Guided 3; increases range for Ranged and Gunnery weapons by 1	+500
Shielding	Gains Defensive 1, Deflection 1	+100
Shocking	Gains Slow-Firing 1, Stun 4	–50
Singular	Gains Limited Ammo 1	x25%
Spectral	–1 encumbrance; gains Defensive 1, Pierce 1	+200
Sticky	Reduces damage by 3; gains Ensnare 2	–100
Transdimensional	Consumes 1 Æmber to gain Breach 1	+1,200
Venomous	+1 damage; adds deleterious effect to weapon	+300

It's all in the right combination of traits. Though, I have to say, my own excellent Deathray Mark VII was designed via random selection. -Escotera

DISINTEGRATING

This armament design outputs a tremendous amount of energy. When it inflicts damage, it sends ripples of force through its target, often reducing significant portions of its victim to little more than ash.

DISRUPTIVE

This weapon uses high-frequency sounds, dazzling lights, or chaotic energy to cause intense pain and stress in most targets, regardless of their physiology.

DOUBLE BARRELED

The weapon has an second firing barrel or a twin striking implement so that it can double its effectiveness.

DREAMING

The combat device has the ability to touch its target's mind, disrupting its normal neural flow and distracting it with alien imagery and concepts.

EXPLOSIVE

The etched runes on this weapon ensure that with every attack, the ground shakes, and swaths of enemies fall.

The weapon gains the Blast quality with a rating equal to half the weapon's base damage. Note that this value changes as the weapon's base damage changes, such as if the user's linked characteristic (such as Brawn for Brawl weapons) increases.

EXTENDING

The weapon is stretched dimensionally, so that it can hit things farther than it appears to reach.

The weapon's range cannot be increased beyond extreme. If this weapon uses the Brawl or Melee skill, the difficulty of the check to use it is always **Average** (◆ ◆) no matter its range.

FLAMING

Fire is more than just a stylistic choice; this weapon enables the user to light their target on fire.

HALLOWED

Some weapons have a reputation that goes far beyond their physical appearance. This weapon has an associated legend about how it was created or who wielded it in the past.

JET-PROPELLED

The weapon includes jet engines, either behind the striking surface or on the ammunition, to add additional force to the impact. This makes its force particularly (and often literally) staggering.

As a maneuver, the wielder may consume 1 Æmber; the weapon then gains the Concussive 1 item quality until the end of the encounter.

MAGNETIC

This weapon uses powerful hyperdimensional magnetic fields to both restrict the target's ability to move and protect its wielder from harm.

MASSIVE

Strong warriors choose to wield weapons that are proportioned to their size, becoming capable of inflicting harm at an entirely different scale.

METHODICAL

Even on the battlefield, some weapons need to be properly tuned before they achieve their full effect; in some cases, that patience can have merit.

MONO-EDGED

The weapon's striking surface is honed down to the thickness of a single molecule, leaving it capable of slicing through virtually any substance.

MULTIPLEXING

The weapon strikes across numerous dimensions or fires as if it possessed multiple barrels, delivering a terrible assortment of hits upon the target.

As a maneuver, the wielder may consume 1 Æmber; the weapon then gains the Linked 3 item quality until the end of the encounter.

RADIANT

The weapon employs a focused stream of energy that manifests as a glowing stream of light, angry blast of raw power, or similar effect.

RAPID

These weapons can activate in repeated succession and are capable of striking multiple foes with a single attack or hitting one target repeatedly.

REAPER SIGIL

Many demons feed on the energies of terror, and there is no greater fear than at the moment of death. Arcane sigils allow some beings to harness this energy and grow stronger.

If this weapon is used in a check that defeats or kills an enemy or minion group, add ☐ to combat checks made while using it for the remainder of the encounter. This stacks with each enemy or minion group defeated or killed in this manner.

SAVAGE

The wielder's fury is channeled into their strikes when using these weapons. Attacks made without discipline may not always strike home, but they can be terrifyingly effective when they do.

SEEKING

Some weapons are capable of tracking a target no matter what motion they take to escape. This may be due to a spiritual connection to their prey or a technological innovation that lets them identify and follow their prey.

SHIELDING

Conservatively designed weapons incorporate defensive measures to protect their wielders. Some are capable of better parrying incoming attacks, while others simply project a defensive aura.

SHOCKING

The weapon employs bolts or fields of electrical energy that disturb most nervous systems.

SINGULAR

The weapon is a grenade or other thrown device; alternatively, it may have a unique power supply that exhausts or melts down after one use.

This weapon can only be used once, no matter what. Including this trait reduces the weapon's final price to 25% of its base price (including all other traits), rounded up.

SPECTRAL

The weapon has a ghostly nature. Either it is truly spiritual, or a portion of its design puts it out of phase with reality. This makes it far easier to wield and more capable of overcoming a foe's defenses.

STICKY

The weapon includes an adhesive effect, which causes its targets to become trapped in viscous threads or gooey liquid.

TRANSDIMENSIONAL

Advanced scientific principles, arcane rituals, or some mix of the two enable this weapon to transcend physical reality and project a force that destabilizes the target's dimensional existence.

As a maneuver, the wielder may consume 1 Æmber; this weapon then gains the Breach 1 item quality until the end of the encounter.

VENOMOUS

These weapons incorporate neurotoxins from the more poisonous creatures and plants to be found in the Local Group or beyond.

If a combat check using this weapon inflicts wounds, the target must make a **Hard** [◆ ◆ ◆] **Resilience check**; upon failure, the target suffers 5 wounds, plus 1 strain per ⟳; ⊗ means the target must make another Resilience check at the same difficulty at the start of their next turn or suffer the same effects.

EXAMPLE: SELECTING A WEAPON

Sherry has designed a species of flying insects, which she calls the apocnet. After some consideration, she decides that their characteristic weapons are pistol-like and incorporate a neurological attack. She selects the One-Handed Ranged Weapon profile and assigns it the Dreaming, Mono-Edged, and Rapid weapon traits. This results in the following profile:

Stinger gun (Ranged; Damage 5; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Auto-fire, Disorient 3, Pierce 1). Each stinger gun an encumbrance of 2, a price of 850 Æmbits, and a rarity of 6.

ARMOR

Protective gear is a necessity for beings who undertake any sort of dangerous job. These include explorers who travel through hostile terrain, scientists working with volatile substances, soldiers who engage in combat, and many others. The myriad species present on the Crucible each design gear that protects their anatomy from the various things and substances that threaten them. All of this gear is considered armor. Note that equipment suited for one body type may not necessarily fit or be at all useful for a member of a different species. Instead of trying to offer a huge array of armor, this section presents a system for designing different types of armor that are thematically appropriate for the characters who wear them.

Table 3–3: Basic Armor presents the basic starting profile for armor as well as the standard clothing most species wear. While these basic descriptions are adequate for a few baseline examples of protection, they are not intended as a universal solution. In almost every case, cultures have distinctive types of apparel and armor that are derived from these core entries. These items are created through the use of modifiers from **Table 3–4: Armor Traits** on page 144 and the **Armor Traits** section, on page 143.

The Sanctum have a saying that goes "The Smith forges the weapon, but the weapon forges the knight." I don't like weapons myself, so I won't comment. -Inka

TABLE 3–3: BASIC ARMOR

NAME	DEFENSE	SOAK	ENCUM	PRICE	RARITY
Standard Clothing	0	+0	1	10	0
Durable Clothing	0	+1	1	50	1
Light Armor	0	+2	2	500	2
Heavy Armor	1	+3	3	1,200	4

Armor Traits

Like any clothing, armor must be fitted to the wearer. While many varieties are reasonably adjustable, a suit designed for a saurian is unlikely to fit a martian. Further, each suit is designed to protect the weak points of members of the intended species; vulnerable areas of the body are not necessarily located in the same general area for species of different physiologies. Further, some species may be vulnerable to substances and conditions to which others are impervious.

Protective wear must also be created so that it protects the wearer from the risks at hand. In many cases, armor is designed to be used under specific circumstances. Wearers who use that gear in inappropriate conditions often have to deal with unnecessary bulk or unwanted social consequences. Selecting armor with the most relevant traits from the following list allows for protective gear that is appropriate for a culture and a specific use.

Armor traits are characteristics of a set of armor that make it stand out from the rest and must be selected when purchasing armor. They cannot be added on later, as they are intrinsically part of the armor design. Note that traits are not item attachments (from page 206 of the Genesys Core Rulebook); as such, they do not count toward limitations on adding attachments to a set of armor should players wish to use the optional item attachment rules.

The traits included in **Table 3–4: Armor Traits** (on page 144) adjust the armor's basic profile and increase its price. Increase the armor's rarity by one for every trait you include with it, following the rarity rules on page 82 of the Genesys Core Rulebook. If multiple traits add the same item quality, unless noted otherwise just sum their ratings to determine the final effect. **The armor's final encumbrance value cannot be reduced below 1, and its final soak cannot be increased above 4.**

Every set of armor should be allowed up to three traits, though the GM has the final say on this. More than that might indicate a very specific set of armor or armor of particular note. Members from a common culture are likely to wear armor that has at least one characteristic trait in common. There need not be an upper limit on how many traits a player or GM selects for a set of armor, though, beyond what is practical to track.

Once the armor is finalized, the player should decide on its shape, form, and function, like they did for weapons, along with the armor's origin. Is it a relic from their character's long-lost home planet? Something a fabled smith bequeathed to the character in their dying breath? Maybe it even fell out of a wild wormhole, and the character wonders if one day someone will claim it belongs to them. A character's armor may be the first thing others notice when they see them, after all, so arriving at an interesting story about it helps to better flesh out the character.

If you're not skilled at fighting (or running away), then you better look into protective wear. Quickly.

Adaptive

This protective wear is designed to quickly respond to incoming threats, flowing and reforming itself automatically in response to attacks that would shatter other armor.

As a maneuver, the wielder may consume 1 Æmber; this armor then gains the Reinforced item quality until the end of the encounter.

Antigrav

Falling poses a very common danger to people working at heights, regardless of their occupation. Armor designed to protect against such risks can use a variety of technological approaches.

When a character wearing this armor suffers a fall, reduce the range band for determining falling damage by two (see page 112 of the Genesys Core Rulebook). If the range is reduced below short, the user suffers no falling damage.

TABLE 3–4: ARMOR TRAITS

NAME	EFFECT	PRICE
Adaptive	+1 encumbrance, consumes 1 Æmber to gain Reinforced	+2,500
Antigrav	Reduces falling damage by two range bands	+150
Armageddon	Can completely heal wearer	+900
Attractive	Adds □ to first Charm check	+25
Boneweave	+1 soak, +2 encumbrance	+250
Brainwave Interface	Allows wearer to control items attached to the armor	+800
Chaotic	–1 encumbrance, adds ■ to social skill checks targeting wearer	+150
Electromagnetic Joints	Speeds donning and removing armor, increases guarded stance maneuver melee defense bonus	+350
Enhanced	Adds □ to non-combat Brawn- or Agility-based checks	+50
Ether	Inflicts strain on engaged characters	+100
Flame-Wreathed	Adds defense 1, can inflict heat-based wounds on engaged enemies	+525
Guarding	+1 soak, consumes 1 Æmber to allow allies within short range to gain defense 1	+400
Insulating	+1 encumbrance, protects against heat and cold	+50
Kaleidoscopic	Gains Deflection 3, adds ■ ■ to Stealth checks	+400
Lupine	Removes ■ from Perception checks the user makes	+50
Prehensile Weapons Frame	Reduces one ranged weapon's Cumbersome rating by 1 and encumbrance by 4	+500
Psychic	Adds □ to Discipline checks	+300
Quantum	+1 encumbrance, gains Defensive 2	+250
Rocket	Allows wearer to jump to any location within long range	+800
Scaly	+1 soak, +1 encumbrance	+325
Sealed	+1 encumbrance, see description	+100
Shunting	Reduces Critical Injury result; nearby characters suffer wounds	+1,250
Silent	Adds □ to Stealth checks the wearer makes	+50
Smoking	Gains Defense 1, adds ■ to Perception checks to notice character	+150
Spiked	Can inflict wounds on engaged enemies	+200
Subtle	–1 encumbrance, removes ■ from social skill checks related to wearing armor	+50
Winged	+3 encumbrance, consumes 1 Æmber to allow wearer to fly	+2,000

ARMAGEDDON

A few different cultures have designed suits of armor that are intended to function under the most extreme of circumstances. These are capable of completely protecting the wearer from a catastrophic event, but they exhaust themselves in the process.

As an incidental, the wearer of this armor can have it fully heal all strain and wounds, and remove all conditions and Critical Injuries. This effect also automatically and immediately takes place if the wearer dies. Once used, the armor is reduced to standard clothing and any existing traits it possessed are lost.

ATTRACTIVE

The clothing or armor has been fashioned to really bring out the refractions in the wearer's eyes or enhance their distinctive scent.

A character wearing armor with this trait adds □ to the first Charm check they make in each encounter.

BONEWEAVE

Reinforcements crafted from bone or similar materials provide the armor with additional protection.

BRAINWAVE INTERFACE

The armor allows its wearer to control devices integrated with their armor at the speed of thought.

A character wearing this armor can manipulate armor attachments and integrated gear (including weapons) without the use of their hands. A Brainwave Interface also adds △ to the results of combat skill checks made to use a weapon integrated with the armor.

CHAOTIC

A field of disruptive lights plays over the armor, projecting subliminal fractal patterns and symbols that disorder rational thought.

The wearer can spend a maneuver to activate or deactivate this trait. While it is active, the armor adds ■ to social skill checks targeting the wearer.

ELECTROMAGNETIC JOINTS

Many enterprising adventurers have adapted Logos cybernetic joint technology to armor, which allows them to change in and out of their armor with the press of a button. Many also program the joints to resist certain pressure thresholds, which helps wearers block attacks from far stronger opponents.

Characters may don or shed their armor as an incidental. While wearing this armor, they gain melee defense 2 (instead of 1) when they perform the guarded stance maneuver (see the GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 99).

ENHANCED

The armor provides the wearer with greater strength or speed.

The wearer may add □ to non-combat Brawn- or Agility-based skill checks (pick one when this is selected).

ETHER

A cloud of sedative gas can be made to emerge from the suit, though the substance is filtered away from the wearer's own respiratory system.

The wearer can spend a maneuver to activate or deactivate this trait. While active, other engaged characters suffer 1 strain at the start of their turn.

FLAME-WREATHED

A flame-wreathed sigil creates an aura of flame around the wearer, often taking the form of flaming wings or tendrils that autonomously protect the wearer from nearby attackers.

The wearer can spend a maneuver to activate or deactivate this trait. While it is active, the armor gains defense 1. Also, if they are targeted by a melee combat check the user may spend ⊗ to cause the attacker to suffer 4 wounds from the intense heat. When making a melee combat check, they may spend ⊗ to inflict 4 heat-based wounds onto the target. Being covered in flames may have other narrative effects, at your GM's discretion.

GUARDING

This armor embodies the values of kinship and mutual defense and reminds its wearer of their commitment to protect and sacrifice for the greater good.

As a maneuver, the wearer may consume 1 Æmber to grant allies defense 1 while they are engaged them.

INSULATING

This protective gear is capable of maintaining a steady internal temperature, protecting the wearer from external variations.

This armor reduces the difficulty of Resilience checks made due to heat, cold, or other extreme climates by two to a minimum of **Simple (–)** (see page 111 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook).

KALEIDOSCOPIC

The user's appearance seems to colorfully flicker and fragment, and targeting them can be almost impossible.

The wearer can spend a maneuver to activate or deactivate this trait. While it is active, the armor gains Deflective 3 and adds ■ ■ to Stealth checks.

LUPINE

This protective gear allows the wearer to better notice possible threats or items of interest, even when conditions would interfere with their senses.

PREHENSILE WEAPONS FRAME

Despite their relatively small stature, Martian Soldiers prefer to wield the largest weaponry available. Most of their armor incorporates the same technology used to create the strong yet flexible limbs of their walkers to take the weight of oversized weaponry.

Armor's all well and good, but don't let it get in the way of the work. If you can't pull a job when yer wearin it, it's not good armor.
—Dodger

I myself have found the best armor is to try and avoid dangerous situations. -Inka

PSYCHIC

This armor's protection extends beyond the physical realm, bolstering the wearer's mental strength as well.

QUANTUM

An energy field surrounds the wearer, redirecting the energy from close combat attacks into the ether.

ROCKET

This suit has blast engines affixed to various joints and locations, increasing the wearer's mobility.

This trait enables a character to stand up from prone as an incidental. Once per encounter, the wearer may instantly move to any unobstructed location within long range.

SCALY

These thick scales dampen impacts while also providing significant reinforcement to the armor.

SEALED

The armor includes a full body suit to protect the wearer from hazardous environments.

This trait provides the wearer with a one-hour independent supply of atmosphere appropriate for its species' respiration. It also protects the wearer from airborne toxins, vacuum, and drowning.

SHUNTING

Some armors contain methods of reducing damage by shifted it to anyone nearby, friend or foe (which can make for hasty apologies in some cases).

When the wearer suffers a Critical Injury, reduce the result by 30 to a minimum of 01. All characters within short range then suffer 2 wounds.

SILENT

Noise-damping devices within the armor counter any sound that the wearer produces.

SMOKING

A cloud of fog, haze, or smoke surrounds the wearer.

The wearer can spend a maneuver to activate or deactivate this trait. While it is active, the armor adds ■ to Perception checks made to detect the wearer. (At the GM's discretion, this may not work within some environments or certain weather conditions.)

SPIKED

The armor is covered in nasty barbs and spikes, making foes think twice before charging the wearer.

When targeted by a melee combat check, the wearer may spend ⟳ ⟳ ⟳ or ⊗ to cause the attacker to suffer 3 wounds.

SUBTLE

This armor is integrated into normal garments in such a way that its protective nature isn't obvious.

The nature of this protective gear is not immediately noticeable, removing ■ from social skill checks that might be applied due to a character wearing armor.

WINGED

Majestic formations of feathers, metal, or energy extend from the back of the protective gear.

As a maneuver, the wearer may consume 1 Æmber; they may then fly aerodynamically (see the GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 100) for the remainder of the encounter or narrative scene. Your GM might call for a Piloting check in dangerous or unusual circumstances; ⊗ from the result of such a check means it is depleted at the end of your character's turn—and thus runs out of flight power. (It also means that if your character doesn't make it to solid ground by that point, they're in for a fall!)

EXAMPLE: SELECTING ARMOR

Sherry decides her apocnet species should have its own standard armor. She feels that the apocnets' exoskeletons provide most of their protection, but that they could use lightweight armor that also helps them sneak around. She reviews the list and decides to add the Quantum and Silent traits to the Durable Clothing profile. She combines those items to produce the following armor profile:

Apocnet mist armor (soak +1; encumbrance 2; Defensive 2, adds ☐ to Stealth checks). Each suit costs 350 Æmbits, and has a rarity is 3.

Gear

Different species and cultures require different tools to succeed at the tasks they undertake. This section presents a small selection of the wide variety of items that are present on the Crucible. GMs should use these as examples to help them determine the effectiveness and price of tools that might serve similar purposes or come from other cultures. GMs are encouraged to refer to the Genesys Core Rulebook, page 93, for a discussion about how gear can work within the game. We also encourage GMs to add appropriate Crucible flavor to items from the Core Rulebook (for example, "this cable is made of strands of monodimensional metals discovered near the Spire" rather than "it's a rope").

Æmbread

This foodstuff can be found almost anywhere on the Crucible and is a reliable trading item, as everyone can consume it, regardless of their physiology or composition.

Once per session as a maneuver, a character may consume a loaf of Æmbread to heal a number of wounds equal to half their wound threshold. They also add ☐ to Resilience checks the consumer makes until the end of the encounter.

Æmbrew

No one knows who created the first batch of Æmbrew, but many toasts and prayers are offered to them every day across the Local Group. It now comes in a dazzling array of types, from bubbling potions to refreshing tonics and more, all laced (some more than others) with Æmber and other carefully selected ingredients. Such is its power that even incorporeal spirits and machine AIs can feel the effects.

Once per session as a maneuver, a character may consume a flask of Æmbrew to heal strain equal to half their strain threshold. They also add ☐ to Discipline checks the consumer makes until the end of the encounter.

AR Goggles

Computational work is often easier if the user can maintain the illusion of having a physical interaction with the systems. For the wearer, AR goggles give the physical world an overlay that offers helpful information as well as iconography for interacting with virtual systems.

Using AR goggles adds ☐ to Computers checks. At the GM's discretion, AR goggles may also provide ☐ on any check where relevant heads-up information could be useful, and ■ when such displays would be distracting.

Combat Pheromones

Combat is an incredibly stressful undertaking, and concern about its consequences often leaves an individual in the wrong mental state for battle. Combat pheromones are tuned to each species' physiology and mental processes. Once used, they help move a warrior into the appropriate mindset for conflict.

As an incidental (possibly one performed out-of-turn), a character may activate combat pheromones tailored to their species; this adds ☐ to their Cool and Discipline checks for the duration of the encounter. However, using combat pheromones for another species is at best ineffective and at worst deadly; in the latter case, the GM may have the user make a **Hard (◆◆◆) Resilience check** or suffer 3 wounds. The GM may spend ⊗ on a check the character makes during an encounter to indicate the pheromones have worn off and must be "refreshed" with another dose.

Construction Aids

Given that the Crucible is an artificial planet, it only makes sense that construction should be paramount everywhere (or so most engineers believe). Construction aids come complete with pandimensional levels, nanoassemblers, instament, and other items helpful for construction in the field.

Construction aids decreases the difficulty of Mechanics checks to construct large edifices, bridges, fortifications, and similar structures once.

My associates and I have brewed our own variants. My own Quantum Quicksilver brand is, of course, the finest (and its sales help cover repair bills after some of my lab tests).
-Dr. Escotera

How well ya use yer gear, not how good yer gear actually is, that makes all the difference.

Also not forgettin' ya gots it too! Plan out what you gonna use when things get excitin' and all. When it does get all tense-like, yer not gonna have time to think about it then.
—Dodger

TABLE 3–5: GEAR

NAME	ENCUM	PRICE	RARITY
Æmbread (1 loaf)	1	80	5
Æmbrew (1 flask)	1	60	4
AR Goggles	0	250	3
Combat Pheromones	0	100	3
Construction Aids	2	250	5
Databook	0	100	2
Disguise Kit	2	150	3
Field Forge	3	500	6
Flask (empty)	0	5	1
Gyroscopic Belt	1	250	3
Hacking Rig	1	300	4
Heal-X Tab	0	25	2
Horn of Renown	1	200	2
Illuminator	1	25	2
Jetpack	2	4,500	7
Little Black Book	1	200	2
Musical Instrument	1	100	4
Programming Tools	0	200	5
Rations (1 week)	1	40	2
Rebreather	1	100	2
Rocket Boots	1	850	3
Soothing Flute	1	500	4
Spire Sextant	0	50	5
Steed	–	300	2
Tool Kit	2	75	4
Translator	0	300	5
Utility Belt	+2	20	1

Databook

These small data storage devices have many forms on the Crucible, from holo-emitting wristbands to simple (but reliable!) bound pads of paper. All allow the user to store and retrieve helpful information that they can use to impress others with their superior knowledge.

Disguise Kit

Impersonating another being, whether of one's own species or a completely different one, can be easier with an array of makeup, prosthetics, and styling accessories. The kit presented here is a relatively basic example, useful for replicating a subject's physical appearance. More sophisticated and expensive models that can alter the user's proportions, voice, and even odor may be available at the GM's discretion.

A disguise kit adds ☐ to Deception checks the user makes while assuming a false appearance or identity.

Field Forge

Although field forges come in all sorts of materials, any engineer would recognize these anvil and tool sets anywhere, regardless of the culture. Even the lowest-tech field forges use gravity-reducing materials to allow beings to easily carry them into the wilds or other areas that might lack the desired technological infrastructure. Most also include power sources, welding torches, mega-clamps, and other necessities.

Using a field forge decreases the difficulty of checks the user makes to create, repair, or modify mechanical devices (such as repairing hull trauma and Critical Hits on vehicles) by one (to a minimum of **Simple** [–]).

TABLE 3–6: ADDITIONAL GEAR FROM THE GENESYS CORE RULEBOOK

ITEM NAME	PAGE NUMBER
Backpack	94
Comm-Bead	186
Extra Clip	168
First Aid Kit	162
Portable Medkit	169
Rope	94

Flask (Empty)

Though there is rarely a more disappointing sight than an empty flask, these containers are very useful for carrying liquids across arid regions of the Local Group.

Gyroscopic Belt

An external point of balance can make it far easier for a person to find their gravitational center, especially while undertaking acrobatic maneuvers. A gyroscopic belt can be worn at the waist or as a harness, depending upon its design. Regardless of the wearer's motions, the belt continuously attempts to remain stable, gently providing stabilizing feedback to the user as they move.

A gyroscopic belt adds □ □ to Coordination checks that the user makes.

Hacking Rig

Many civilizations and species on the Crucible are highly reliant on computers and other non-sentient yet highly advanced machines, which means they are also vulnerable to attacks on the same. Not that anyone would ever do such a thing, of course.

When a character uses a hacking rig to penetrate a computer network or similar device, extract or implant data, take control, or conduct related operations, they may downgrade the difficulty of Computers checks they make once. Note that hacking is only done against non-sentient devices; characters must use social skill checks against sentient AIs and robots to attempt similar actions.

Heal-X Tab

Given the wide range of species in the Local Group, it was only a matter of time before an enterprising medical firm arrived at a truly universal first aid application for both organic and inorganic beings. The most common brand name for these small items is heal-x, though there are other versions, such as omnibalm, stimmup, and zap. Small and easily administered via a capsule, skin patch, or injection, each dose consists of dehydrated nanobots, jellied repleniflesh, and, of course, a tiny amount of Æmber.

A heal-x tab works exactly the same as a painkiller (see page 94 of the Genesys Core Rulebook; heal-x is just the setting-specific name), but it also works on inorganic life forms, such as robots and even spirits. All the rules, talents, and abilities governing and affecting a painkiller apply to a heal-x tab as well.

Horn of Renown

Horns of renown are typically attuned to and decorated with glyphs associated with a specific leader and embody their reputation and triumphs.

The owner (or an attendant) may spend a maneuver to use the horn; this removes up to ■ ■ from Leadership checks allies within long range make until the end of the round.

Illuminator

These small devices provide a safe source of light. Most are powered by advanced energy sources, although some depend upon consuming plant remains or heating wires to incandescence. The typical illuminator is safe, portable, and long lasting.

An illuminator provides light out to medium range and removes ■ added to checks due to darkness. It can function underwater, in a vacuum, or in a volatile atmosphere without issue.

MANIPULATORS AND CONVEYANCES

Some species require external aids to get around or to employ objects. PCs of these species start with this item as part of character creation, but should the item become lost, broken, or otherwise not available they will need a replacement. Luckily, such items can be found almost anywhere for 200 Æmbits (Rarity 2). Alternatively, characters can have a go at fashioning the item for themselves or another character by making an **Average (◆ ◆) Mechanics** or **Survival check**; ⊛ on a successful check can be spent to allow both the crafter and owner to heal 4 strain.

The medicinal items on this world are incredible! We need to escape if for no other reason than to share them with the rest of the Alliance.
-Ingram

Jetpack

These relatively small devices usually strap to the wearer's back or waist and allow them to surge into the air.

A jetpack allows the wearer to fly (see page 100 of the Genesys Core Rulebook). It can be activated or deactivated as a maneuver. If needed, the wearer uses the Piloting skill with this item.

Little Black Book

Course I got one. I gots several, actually, and no they ain't for sale.

Criminals often store information on their network of contacts within little black books. These devices take many forms, depending upon the technology or arcane means used to create them. Augmenting a book through interactions with underworld contacts may expand its region of effective use, but this also runs the risk of incorporating inaccurate information or data that could draw the attention of law enforcement officers.

A little black book adds ⚙ ⟳ to Streetwise checks its owner makes. Each little black book is typically only effective within a particular city or small region, subject to the GM's discretion.

Musical Instrument

Music and musical instruments come in many forms in the Local Group, from the popular sonic stylings of the Rolling Bugs to the intellectual acidthrash of Chattergun to the harmonic rainbows of Kiallai Lix (who is from the triple-headed lixim species and thus provides their own backing vocals). Woodland pipes, Brobnar ballistic guitars, and Logos phasing dimension-drums are but a few of the instruments to be found in use.

The default audible range of a musical instrument is short, though players may work with the GM to devise items with other ranges (and prices).

Programming Tools

Most of these kits come with pre-scripted, omni-OS modules that can be quickly assembled to form a variety of programs. Programmers can then use them to add helpful abilities to non-sentient devices of almost any nature. Sometimes, though, they can improve a system just a bit too much…

Programming tools decrease the difficulty of Computers checks the owner makes to create new software for a non-sentient computer system by one. ⊛ may be spent to make this system self-aware (and friendly), while the GM may spend ⊛ to do the same, but make the newly sentient system quite upset with their creator.

Rations (1 week)

The range of food in the Local Group can range includes chrono-noodle soup, quartz loaf, and gamma rads, but no matter their species, there is always a ration pack that will keep a character healthy.

Rebreather

These devices are specific to the species for which they are designed. Each provides their users with the necessary atmosphere for respiration.

While using a rebreather, the wearer does not need to make a check to survive in toxic atmospheres or underwater—though any exposed body surfaces may still suffer damage.

Rocket Boots

These boots incorporate several small engines and a limited fuel supply. They do not provide enough power to fly or hover, but they significantly extend the wearer's jumping distance. They may also be triggered selectively when climbing to assist that action.

Rocket boots add □ □ to Athletics checks the wearer makes related to jumping or climbing.

Soothing Flute

This artifact incorporates elements of unrefined Æmber into its construction, focusing on calming and healing energies, even for machine beings (who hear a harmonious series of ones and zeroes). Anyone who hears its sounds enters a restful state better suited to recovery.

A soothing flute is a musical instrument. A character using one adds □ to Medicine or Mechanics checks they make to heal a character.

OPTIONAL RULES: USING STEEDS AS VEHICLES

A steed is an organic creature (or, given this setting, a mixture of machine and flesh, or even flesh-like machinery) and is represented in the game using a standard personal profile. However, when both organic mounts and vehicles are interacting in an encounter, it is often useful to treat flesh-and-blood steeds like vehicles.

Silhouette

A mount's silhouette is on the same scale as vehicles and is used in exactly the same manner. If not specified otherwise in its profile, the silhouette is 2. A steed can carry any number of beings with a combined silhouette equal to its own (treat every two silhouette 0 beings as silhouette 1) or less.

Speed

One of the primary reasons for using a steed is the speed advantage it gives a rider over variable terrain. A mount's maximum speed is equal to half its Agility, rounded up. For example, a creature of Agility 3 would have a speed of 2.

Handling

To determine the handling characteristic of a given mount, start with the beast's Agility, subtracting both silhouette and Willpower. The final result is the handling characteristic.

A beast that has been specifically trained to accept and work with a rider provides a bonus to skill checks used for riding actions. In the beast's entry, the Trained Mount ability is followed by a number, which indicates the number of ■ added to the dice pool for such Riding checks.

The Rest of the Profile

While a steed is treated as a vehicle for the purposes of moving through an environment and being controlled by a character, the remainder of its profile stays the same. The mount keeps its wound and strain thresholds, its melee and ranged defenses, and its soak value. It does not gain a hull trauma threshold or a system strain threshold. Attacks against the steed are resolved as usual in personal scale combat. If the steed is ever called to suffer system strain for any reason, the mount suffers that amount of strain instead.

Spire Sextant

On a world where navigational satellites are not possible and inertial guidance devices are unreliable, enterprising vect merchants have managed to adhere powerful beacons onto the Spire itself. Though they eventually peel away and fall, there is usually at least one active at any given time. Spire sextants can home in on a beacon from great distances, allowing travelers to orient themselves in even the thickest of ebonfogs or radar-repelling ferromite clouds.

A spire sextant removes ■ from checks that the user makes to navigate on the ground and up to ■ ■ from checks they make to navigate in the air.

Steed (Rival)

3 | 1 | 1

Many cultures on the Crucible breed creatures as mounts or as beasts of burden. Saurians often employ non-sentient dinosaurs, for example, while demons of Dis have been seen using imps that move on writhing tentacles. Members of Untamed ride all manner of beasts, including armored horses, mighty stags, befriended tigers, and many types of mutated creatures.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	3	1	1	2	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	15	0 / 0

Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 2, Coordination 1.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Encumbrance Capacity 12, Silhouette 2, Trained Mount 1 (adds □ to a character's Riding checks while mounted on steed).
Equipment: Kick (Brawl; Damage 7; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 2, Knockdown).

ADDITIONAL RULES

Functional Form: A steed can carry a number of beings with a combined silhouette equal to its own (treat every two silhouette 0 beings as silhouette 1). If there are riders, then subtract the total value of their silhouettes from the steed's encumbrance capacity.

The encumbrance capacity of a steed can be reduced to 6 to gain either the Hoverer ability for +200 Æmbits (this adds 3 to its rarity) or even fly for +800 Æmbits (this adds 5 to its rarity); see the sidebar on page 100 of the Genesys Core Rulebook for these abilities. Its silhouette can also be increased by 1 for +300 Æmbits; this also increases its Brawn and soak by 1 each (this adds 5 to its rarity and increases its combat rating by 1).

I saw one of the Quantum newcomers looking quite shocked after seeing an ordinary winged horse fly overhead. You have to laugh sometimes at their provincial ways.

Tool Kit

Tool kits are just the thing for patching up a cracked proton humidifier, mounting the wheels back onto a holocycle, checking the polarity on a failing reactor, or just pounding out the dents in a flying saucer. You can tell a lot about the user by the contents of their tool kit, no matter their species.

A tool kit counts as the right tool for the job (see page 93 of the Core Rulebook) for most mechanical or technological efforts. Additionally, its internal power supply can serve as a power source for other devices for one hour.

Translator

The Crucible has more modes of communication than grains of Æmber, as the saying goes (which most beings can't understand without assistance, of course). Many variants of translation devices are available to aid in social interactions, from the fabled linguilizers of the vanished Hol civilization to the universal translators of Star Alliance. Basic units allow for crude communications, while the exceptionally rare models can even unravel complicated metaphors.

A translator removes ■ from social skill checks a user makes when an unfamiliar language is involved.

Utility Belt

An ideal accessory when doing anything from exploring the ancient ruins of a forgotten species to infiltrating a secure datamine, a utility belt allows its wearer to carry an assortment of small but essential items.

While wearing a utility belt, a character increases their encumbrance threshold by two.

Treasures of the Crucible

There are wonders aplenty on this patchwork world, many that would be impossible to imagine, let alone create, on any other location.

This is the one true treasure. All the rest are but baubles that its existence makes possible. -Dr. Escotera

Æmber (Raw)

Raw Æmber is possibly the most useful item on the Crucible. It has limitless capabilities, especially for those who employ it in arcane rituals or for unlocking personal powers. It could be offered for sale as a powder, crystal, solid stone, or in a variety of other shapes.

This small piece of raw Æmber can be used for many things, such as fashioning Æffects, activating weapon traits, and serving as a simple item for barter.

Table 3–7: Treasures of the Crucible

NAME	ENCUM	PRICE	RARITY
Æmber (Raw)	1	200	7
Æmber Wand	0	2,500	6
Concordance of Ways	1	800	4
Dimensional Satchel	+8	3,500	8
Ghost-Iron Garb	1	5,700	9
Invasion Portal	6 (3 per device)	4,500	8
Key of Darkness	1	2,000	7
Mind Probe	3	500	5
Nepenthe Seed	1	5,000	8
Potion of Invulnerability	0	200	6
Quantum Glasses	0	500	5
Random Access Archives	2	1,500	4
Replimat	3	800	5
Ring of Invisibility	0	2,500	6
Sigil of Warding	0	300	7
Stealth Emitter	1	300	8
Threat Indicator	1	1,500	6

Æmber Wand

Many individuals who come from a culture with a mystical background find it challenging to adapt their techniques to work with Æmber in place of the energies they traditionally manipulated. In order to make the change easier, many substitute similar tools of their trade that are specifically tuned for the manipulation of this unique substance. Other beings of a more scientific bent employ nanocircuitry and Æmber harmonic tensors to achieve similar results for their own devices.

An Æmber wand removes up to ■ ■ from Æmbercraft checks the user makes.

Concordance of Ways

Throughout the history of the Crucible, various scholars have attempted to record its history, catalog its various cultures, and map its huge array of lands. Due to the constant change inherent on the world, any record quickly becomes outdated, but information on surviving cultures and species can still be useful. A collection of such recordings—available in a broad range of different media formats—is called a Concordance of Ways.

A Concordance of Ways adds □ to Knowledge (Crucible) and Knowledge (Culture) checks the owner makes. At the GM's discretion, if a character first consults a concordance, they may remove up to ■ ■ from social skill checks they make when encountering a species unfamiliar to them.

Dimensional Satchel

A common item on Logos expeditions, these small, unassuming devices access artificial dimensions several degrees larger than normal reality. Each can hold many items in grav-suspension, even if an item is larger than the device itself!

While carrying a dimensional satchel, a character increases their encumbrance threshold by eight. Time passes as normal within a dimensional satchel, but there is no air within.

Ghost-Iron Garb

A rare export from Macis Swamp, this material defies analysis or duplication. It is gossamer in weight, yet provides some of the best protection outside of a massive dimensional shunt-field. Even better, it can be woven into very stylish clothing, making it a must for spies and socialites alike throughout the Local Group.

Ghost-iron garb is an armor with defense 1, +4 soak, and the Reinforced item quality.

Invasion Portal

When conquering a distant location, Mars leaders often make use of an invasion portal to travel quickly between their base of operations and the battlefront. Upon activation, the two compact devices that make up the portal each expand to form a doorway, creating a quantum link between the two locales. A portal is normally only kept active for short durations, as the energy costs are otherwise prohibitive. Many find their way to covert markets that deal in "recovered" items like these; buyers have employed them in a variety of ways, not all of which include violence.

An invasion portal is purchased as a set of matching devices. To activate it, the user must spend a maneuver to consume one Æmber; once active, the device links with the matching device at up to hundreds of kilometers away. The opening takes the shape of a typical (silhouette 1) entryway, and anything or anyone can instantly pass between the two sites as simply as walking through a doorway. The portal stays active until the end of the following round (or 5 minutes of narrative time), but can be kept open longer at a rate of one additional round or minute per Æmber consumed.

Key of Darkness

Some of the most accomplished thieves among Shadows possess rare keys crafted from materials that absorb all light. Rumors persist that mystical energy imbues these keys and that this potency is further refined through a process of Æmber exposure. Legends indicate that anyone who possesses such a key can bypass any lock.

When used to pick a lock—including mechanical, mystical, electronic, and other forms of security—a key of darkness lowers the difficulty of the associated Skulduggery check by one.

Bloke I know said the best way to open a lock was to convince the owner to open it for ya. Wise words there, wise words.

Mind Probe

Few beings willingly subject themselves to the mental invasion of a mind probe. Instead, this neuroweave helmet is typically used on a captive prisoner. Once the target is secured and the device activated, it can scan the subject's thoughts and recent memories to extract information and emotions.

Using the device downgrades the difficulty of Coercion checks the wielder makes against that target once. The GM can spend ⊗ on a failed check to indicate the wielder has received false information from the target.

There are many rumors that the venerable lizard-folk maintain huge fields of these flora in remote, heavily guarded zones.

But you didn't hear that from me.

Nepenthe Seed

Nepenthe seeds are highly sought due to their extremely potent regenerative properties. Unfortunately, their properties only work on the deceased—meaning the user has to wait for someone to actually die before they can heal them. No one knows if the seeds are the result of a bizarre botanical experiment or the remnants of some species of intelligent flora, but many an adventurer is very happy they exist.

As an action, a character may place a nepenthe seed onto the body of a character who was incapacitated or killed earlier in that session. At the end of the current encounter (or one hour later in narrative time), the seed crumbles to dust and the deceased character heals all wounds, strain, and Critical Injuries, and removes all conditions they are suffering from. The character then gains the Head Ringer Critical Injury (see page 115 of the Genesys Core Rulebook).

Potion of Invulnerability

Various pharmaceuticals and mystical elixirs can cause a person to lose the sensation of pain or gain high levels of resistance to damage. Upon consumption, the imbiber gains a tremendous resistance to poisons and environmental effects, and can even recover from injuries much faster.

As a maneuver, a character may drink some of the potion to add ⬡ to their Resilience checks for the remainder of the encounter. ⊗ may be spent from a failed Resilience check to indicate the potion's supply is exhausted.

Quantum Glasses

These glasses are enhanced with smart optics, which automatically focus upon items of interest to the wearer. They are capable of sensing electromagnetic wavelengths beyond the visual spectrum and remapping such imagery into visual light.

When wearing quantum glasses, the wearer gains □ on visual Perception checks they make. At the GM's discretion, the wearer may also be able to see things that are not normally visible, due to the glasses' ability to magnify distant objects and sense wavelengths outside the wearer's normal visual spectrum.

Random Access Archives

The random access archives are a portable information warehouse, readily accessible through a small, handheld smartframe that anticipates the user's every query. When operating in an environment where a network connection is available, the archives update their knowledge base with the latest information.

Random access archives add □ □ to Knowledge (Science) checks the owner makes. At the GM's discretion, they may provide clues or possible answers to any puzzle the user is attempting to decipher.

Replimat

A replimat expends tremendous amounts of energy in order to transform free molecules into a specific substance. Most are preprogrammed to create food for a particular species, though many exist for other purposes as well. In the field, the biggest challenge of using a replimat is providing it with sufficient power.

This device can synthesize enough food to keep a party of five well fed for up to a week before its batteries run dry. Recharging a replimat requires the user to consume two Æmber or it to be left idle for two weeks.

Ring of Invisibility

This device has a magical (or "technologically incomprehensible") mechanism for bending light around the wearer, making it impossible to perceive them through the normal visual spectrum. It tends to quickly run out of energy, however.

This device allows the wearer to spend ⮝ ⮝ from Stealth checks they make to add ✲ to the check. ⊗ may be spent from a Stealth check its user makes to indicate the ring's power has run dry and cannot be used again that session.

Sigil of Warding

Achieving a proper meditative focus can rely upon external cues as much as internal ones. A sigil of warding provides its user with such a reference point. They often take the form of a tattoo or a small item, and may incorporate mystical or spiritual power in their construction.

A sigil of warding upgrades the difficulty of checks the targeted owner opposes using Discipline or Vigilance once. At the GM's discretion, it may give the owner some indication when it is in the presence of beings opposed to the religion or tradition it represents.

Stealth Emitter

The most famous of all Shadows devices, the stealth emitter is rumored to be the first technology any of the Shadows guilds stole upon arriving on the Crucible.

A character wearing a number of stealth emitters in excess of their silhouette both increases the difficulty of Perception checks to notice them and decreases the difficulty of Stealth checks they make (to a minimum of **Simple** [–]) by the difference between the two numbers. ⊗ on the wearer's Stealth check can be spent to deplete one emitter; the user can spend a maneuver to consume one Æmber to restore an emitter to full power.

Threat Indicator

Threat indicators are typically worn as jewelry or integrated into the wearer's goggles, and use scanners and aura analyzers to alert the user of any danger. Some may be specific enough to warn about particular dangers such as environmental conditions and to provide recommended solutions for the threats. Others are far less specific, simply changing color to indicate a being wishes to cause the wearer immediate bodily harm.

A threat indicator adds ✲ ⩓ to Vigilance checks the user makes. At the GM's discretion, it may grant the opportunity for a character to learn about a threat early enough to bypass it, such as by avoiding a trap door or turning down a side passage at an opportune time.

Cybernetics

Cybernetics are replacements for organic components that function at least as well as the original ones. Many are significantly more effective and offer alternative abilities to beings of biological origins. While cybernetics are commonly regarded as technological creations, some are created through mystical means.

TABLE 3–8: CYBERNETICS

NAME	PRICE	RARITY	SOURCE
Balance Tail	400	5	Page 156
Cybernetic Arm or Leg	2,000	5	Genesys Core Rulebook, page 177
Cybereyes	800	5	Genesys Core Rulebook, page 177
Cyberorgan	750	5	Genesys Core Rulebook, page 177
Cybersensor	750	2	Page 156
Extra Limb	2,700	4	Page 156
Implant Armor	1,000	5	Genesys Core Rulebook, page 177
Memory Loop	400	3	Page 157
Reaction Accelerators	1,500	4	Page 157
Skulljack	2,500	5	Genesys Core Rulebook, page 177
Wireless Connection	+850	+3	Page 157

I've never seen so many cybernetics, many of which seem to be chosen for reasons that have nothing to do with replacing lost limbs or organs.

Chimeric modifications, which involve adapting a limb or organ from another species, may also fall into this category.

Each characteristic, derived attribute, or skill may only be increased by +1 due to cybernetics, no matter how many different implants a character has that could increase that value. An **Average (◆ ◆) Medicine check** is needed to install a cybernetic implant. They cannot be removed without surgery, requiring a second successful **Average (◆ ◆) Medicine check**.

Note that for characters who are purely machine, such as robots, a similar Mechanics check is needed instead of Medicine. For such beings, cybernetics are more properly called "hardware upgrades" though the overall result is the same.

At the GM's discretion, gear (see page 147), armor (see page 142), or weapons (see page 138) may be cybernetically implanted. Such implants have the advantage that a character cannot normally lose them. However, characters with implants cannot easily remove them in situations where they become inconvenient. Implanted versions cost an additional 1,000 Æmbits due to the costs of surgery and the need for medical-grade materials. These implants reduce the character's strain threshold by one.

STYLE OVER SUBSTANCE

Some characters may choose to have a cybernetic replacement limb that doesn't add any new abilities and instead merely replicates the lost limb. This is particularly appropriate for characters affiliated with Dis, Brobnar, or Logos. At the player's discretion, the implant can have no game mechanic benefit and be purely cosmetic. For all purposes, including damage, attributes, and healing, it performs identically to a natural, healthy limb or organ.

If this is the case, then no Medicine check is required to attach the replacement limb, as such occurrences are a frequent and somewhat a standard procedure in the Local Group. The price is 450 Æmbits, and the implant does not reduce the character's strain threshold.

More limbs the better, as a few of my lighter fingred mates might say.

Balance Tail

Many species naturally have a tail that can assist with movement, adjusting their momentum and providing a counterbalance when attempting particularly acrobatic maneuvers. Members of species that do not have such a limb may choose to have an implant installed that performs a similar function. Some of these devices have internal systems that calculate and adjust motion dynamically, while others attach to the individual's nervous system and provide extensive sensory feedback.

A balance tail decreases the difficulty of Coordination checks the character makes by two (to a minimum of **Simple** [–]) and, at the GM's discretion, may also provide a benefit to Athletics checks. The tail is large and obvious; it can also be organic in appearance if desired. In some situations, it may incur a penalty (or bonus) on social checks.

Cybersensor

Many individuals choose to receive implants to replace their natural sensory organs with devices that are more capable. Some even choose to add sensory organs for an ability their species does not normally have, such as the ability to detect magnetics, radioactivity, or quantum fields.

When a character purchases a cybersensor, they must declare what it detects and whether it replaces natural organs or adds to them. At this time, it is also appropriate to clarify where on the body the cybersensor is implanted. If the implant is associated with a sense the user's species already possesses, then it adds □ □ to their Perception checks using that sense. Otherwise, it enables the user to make Perception checks using the new sense.

Extra Limb

All too often, people attempt to undertake tasks that require an additional limb, whether carrying too many things or simply attempting to manipulate a particularly awkward device. An additional limb can make such tasks easier to manage. Some don't even physically attach to the host's body; they instead hover just above the dermal layer and are connected via neural adhesion fields.

Extra limbs grant one additional free maneuver per turn, regardless of how many limbs are implanted. The character still may not perform more than two maneuvers per turn. The character must decide where the limb is mounted at the time it is purchased. Each extra limb reduces the character's strain threshold by one.

If the character already has a cybernetic limb or wishes to purchase one, they may choose to have an extra limb attached to it, essentially forming a limb that has two endings (or can be be joined or split as a maneuver). If this is the case, the cost of the extra limb is added to the cost of the cybernetic limb, and there is no further strain cost for the extra limb.

Memory Loop

This implant attaches to the base of the user's brain and records all sensory information that it receives as well as the user's emotional state. This provides a date-stamped record of the person's experiences, which may be referenced as needed.

A character with a memory loop may make an **Easy (◆) Discipline check** to review the device's records to retrieve a memory. Any information they have experienced is recorded in exacting detail, including all sensory information and their emotional state. Characters may also export their memory loop recordings to external storage if desired.

Reaction Accelerators

This implant modifies neural pathways to respond faster using superconductive organometallic tissue, predictive mnemonics, and lots of cranial lubricants.

A character using reaction accelerators may suffer one strain to add ✲ ⮝ to checks they make to determine Initiative.

Wireless Connection

Some cybernetic implants connect to the body using mystical or electromagnetic connections that remain in effect even when the implant and body are physically separated. Such a wireless connection enables the user to continue to control the implant and receive appropriate inputs from it while in a different location.

A wireless connection may be added to any implant, increasing the cost and rarity as indicated on **Table 3–8: Cybernetics** on page 155. It allows the user to control an unattached or removed cybernetic belonging to the user within medium range.

VEHICLES

From advanced technology to genetically created organic solutions, the vehicles of the Crucible are as varied as its inhabitants. While some vehicles are capable of spaceflight, a mysterious force prevents any vehicles from escaping the Crucible's atmosphere.

Note that complement and passenger values assume beings of silhouette 1, and GMs and players should adjust this value depending on the species involved. A good rule of thumb for other silhouettes is to treat every two silhouette 0 beings as one silhouette 1 being, and a silhouette 3 being as two silhouette 1 beings.

Chimera

These semisentient flying robots are part pet, part lab assistant, and part transport for scientists and engineers, and are favorite accessories of Logos field researchers. No two chimerae are quite alike, but most have a variety of advanced experimental technologies onboard. Many have some kind of animalistic appearance, with mechanical wings and legs along with dozens of dangling tool appendages for experimentation or construction.

This vehicle profile can be used to fashion other large aeronautical vehicles to serve as light passenger and cargo transports.

Control Skill: Operating.
Complement: 1 pilot.
Passenger Capacity: 8.
Consumables: 3 weeks.
Encumbrance Capacity: 200.
Price/Rarity: 85,000 Æmbits/7.
Weapons: Cutting laser (Fire Arc Forward; Gunnery; Damage 5; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Breach 2).

A most excellent mode of transport and I always insist that a chimera is included in my research grants. Don't leave your lab without one!

Additional Rules

Research Helper: Add □ □ to Computers, Mechanics, and Knowledge (Science) checks that a character makes while inside or engaged with a chimera, so long as the chimera views that character as friendly.

Flight Cycle

Shadows nimblefingers and other Hub City ne'er-do-wells often utilize quick, quiet, unobtrusive flight cycles built from scavenged parts. For example, a saurian floater pod might join with a pair of Star Alliance jetpacks and the twisted half of a Sanctum bike frame to create something new and exciting to take into the air. Flight cycles are cheap and agile, with a maximum flight ceiling of around a thousand meters. Unfortunately, they are also very, very fragile.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
1	4	-1	0	0	2	2

Control Skill: Riding.
Complement: 1 pilot.
Passenger Capacity: 1 (barely).
Consumables: 4 hours.
Encumbrance Capacity: 3.
Price/Rarity: 3,500 Æmbits/3.
Weapons: None.

Flying Saucer

Martian bases and motherships carry complements of saucer-shaped fighter craft flown by the Soldier caste to ensure air superiority on any battlefield. The nimble fighters have a twin ray cannon which can aim forward for air-to-air combat or tilt down for strafing runs against ground targets. Saucers come in a variety of configurations and can even become transport vehicles (though martians are always loath to give up their weapons). Their ubiquitous nature means that many other agencies have reverse engineered their basic principles to create their own versions of these vehicles, and so the classic saucer shape often contains beings not from the Red Planet.

This profile can be adapted to create other fighters and similar small aerial vehicles.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
3	5	+2	1	1	12	12

Control Skill: Piloting.
Complement: 1 pilot.
Passenger Capacity: 1 (3 uncomfortably).
Consumables: 1 day.
Encumbrance Capacity: 10.
Price/Rarity: 50,000 Æmbits/5.
Weapons: Twin ray cannon (Fire Arc Forward; Gunnery; Damage 3; Critical 4; Range [Extreme]; Blast 1, Breach 1, Linked 1).

Abduction beam (Fire Arc Ventral; Gunnery; Damage –; Critical –; Range [Medium]; Prepare 1).

Additional Rules

Transport Saucer: Any saucer can give up its twin ray cannons to carry either passengers with a combined silhouette of up to 10 or to add 40 to its encumbrance.

Abduction Beam: Martian vehicles often include these electromagnetic tractor arrays to grab individual specimens for later study. After a successful attack with an abduction beam, at the start of each of their subsequent turns the target is pulled one range band closer to the attacking ship (this might be into the air if the saucer is above the target). A character can free themselves from this forced movement by grabbing onto something (or using a rope or grappling hook) and making a **Hard (◆ ◆ ◆) Athletics check**. If at the start of the saucer pilot's turn an abducted target is at engaged range of the saucer, the target is pulled aboard and deposited in either a specimen cage or the cargo bay (this counts towards the saucer's encumbrance capacity).

Helwarg

Brobnar teks construct these monstrous three-legged cybernetic mounts of flesh and metal, designed to roar and howl over the deep rhythmic thunder of their overpowered engines. A triple trail of flames drags behind each helwarg, along with the crumpled bodies of those left in its wake. Such is their appeal that riders desiring extreme experiences also seek out (or make) helwargs of their own.

Silhouette	Max Speed	Handling	Defense	Armor	HT Threshold	SS Threshold
1	4	+1	0	1	4	4

Control Skill: Riding.
Complement: 1 rider.
Passenger Capacity: 1.
Consumables: 6 hours.
Encumbrance Capacity: 4.
Price/Rarity: 7,000 Æmbits/5.
Weapons: Flamethrower head (Fire Arc Forward; Ranged; Damage 5; Critical 4; Range [Short]; Auto-fire, Blast 5, Burn 2, Personal Scale, Vicious 2).

Lancer Bike

Sanctum lancer bikes are fast, agile, and capable of limited flight up to one hundred meters in altitude. While some knights are capable of flight, those on bikes reach their foes much faster and without spending any personal energy in the process. Though outside sales are not permitted, somehow these bikes do appear at vehicle markets with some frequency.

This profile can also be used to fashion hoverbikes that many other cultures use for both attack and personal transportation.

Silhouette	Max Speed	Handling	Defense	Armor	HT Threshold	SS Threshold
1	4	+2	0	1	4	5

Control Skill: Riding.
Complement: 1 rider.
Passenger Capacity: 1.
Consumables: 6 hours.
Encumbrance Capacity: 6.
Price/Rarity: 12,000 Æmbits/6.
Weapons: None.

Shieldship

Sanctum shieldships employ exotic psychic energies to fire beams of righteous golden light or project shields that are much larger than the ship. These shields are meant to overlap with allied shieldships as they hover in place, defending the just against enemy bombardment. Those ships that fall in combat are often rebuilt and sold to non-Sanctum agencies seeking similar protection.

Silhouette	Max Speed	Handling	Defense	Armor	HT Threshold	SS Threshold
3	3	-1	2	2	16	16

Control Skill: Piloting.
Complement: 1 pilot, 1 technician.
Passenger Capacity: 4.
Consumables: 1 day.
Encumbrance Capacity: 50.
Price/Rarity: 150,000 Æmbits/7.
Weapons: Photon cannon (Fire Arc Forward; Gunnery; Damage 3; Critical 3; Range [Extreme]; Blast 3).

Additional Rules

Mighty Protector: As a maneuver, the pilot can select an ally or allied vehicle within short range at planetary scale and have their shieldship suffer 1 system strain to upgrade the difficulty of attacks targeting that ally or vehicle once until the pilot's next turn. The benefit is lost if the target ally or vehicle moves outside of short range. This benefit can stack from multiple shieldships.

Valdr once said ta me, "If the faith is so strong, wadda they need with this shiny boat?"

Me, I tend to rely more on lots of trip-dot badges than shields...
—Dodger

R0V-3R ATV

A favorite among Star Alliance personnel, the R0V-3R ATV is a rugged, two-seater exploration vehicle with an advanced artificial intelligence that can drive itself. Further, R0V-3R hosts a powerful sensor array and can interface with the main Star Alliance computer banks in Quantum City and access a host of databases.

This profile can be adapted to create other small vehicles designed for multiples terrain types.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
2	4	+2	0	1	8	7

Control Skill: Riding.
Complement: 1 driver.
Passenger Capacity: 4.
Consumables: 2 days.
Encumbrance Capacity: 16.
Price/Rarity: 20,000 Æmbits/5.
Weapons: None.

Skimmer

Useful for fishing, recreation, and special forces transport, the skimmer is a generic small watercraft in use on the Crucible. This profile is specifically for a Saurian skimmer, complete with energy shielding and advanced propulsion, but it can just as easily represent a submersible such as a Star Alliance FL1-PR or a Martian sandswimmer.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
3	4	+0	1	0	12	11

Control Skill: Riding.
Complement: 1 pilot.
Passenger Capacity: 6.
Consumables: 3 days.
Encumbrance Capacity: 10 (50 in lieu of passengers).
Price/Rarity: 6,000 Æmbits/4.
Weapons: None.

AI IN STAR ALLIANCE AND LOGOS VEHICLES

Hardly just all-terrain vehicles, R0V-3R buggies are technically robots, as are the S/P-OT shuttles and other Star Alliance vehicles. They can drive themselves as if they had an Agility of 3 and two ranks in the appropriate skill, and they can assist on a riding character's skill checks. The AIs also possesses an Intellect of 3. They can make Computers checks to operate sensors as if they had two ranks in Computers, and they can make Knowledge checks using Star Alliance databases as if they had two ranks in any appropriate Knowledge skill. All Logos vehicles have comparable abilities; at the GM's discretion, similar AIs can be added to other vehicles as well.

S/P-0T Ship

The SAV *Quantum* has a number of vehicles that managed survived the crash. The "Scout/Patrol-chassis 0 (Transport)," a long, cigar-shaped craft, is ideal for rapid deployment of a full field-survey team. Each S/P-0T ship carries all the necessary scanners, tents, sample collection gear, and testing equipment for the team to set up a camp and perform detailed area reconnaissance. When the vehicle is in landed configuration, it orients vertically and the laser cannon reconfigures into a defensive turret.

This profile can be adapted to create other heavy transport vehicles.

Silhouette	Max Speed	Handling	Defense	Armor	HT Threshold	SS Threshold
4	5	+0	0	3	20	18

Control Skill: Piloting.
Complement: 1 pilot, 1 copilot.
Passenger Capacity: 12.
Consumables: 2 weeks.
Encumbrance Capacity: 50, plus two R0V-3R ATVs (see page 160).
Price/Rarity: 90,000 Æmbits/6.
Weapons: Blazer cannon (Fire Arc Forward [Fire Arc All if landed]; Gunnery; Damage 3; Critical 3; Range [Extreme]; Breach 1).

Transport Chariot

These vehicles are seen throughout the Saurian Republic, most incorporating small floating platforms with pearlescent, waist-high guard walls. They are popular with couriers, politicians, and racers, though they have a history as military command vehicles during the saurian expansionist era. While these chariots are often pulled by a pair of draft beasts, the creatures are more for show than necessity; antigrav generators and inertial subtractrs serve to make these vehicles nearly weightless and able to hover gracefully above the ground. Despite their simple appearance, such chariots often have advanced energy shielding.

Many societies feature similar vehicles pulled by a wide variety of steeds. Advanced centicoaches feature linked cargo pods pulled by insectoid robots, for example, while basic wheeled passenger transports in many settlements use a pair of quadrupedal creatures for motive power.

Silhouette	Max Speed	Handling	Defense	Armor	HT Threshold	SS Threshold
2	3	+1	1	1	6	6

Control Skill: Riding.
Complement: 1 driver.
Passenger Capacity: 3.
Consumables: 1 day.
Encumbrance Capacity: 2 (10 in lieu of passengers).
Price/Rarity: 3,000 Æmbits/5.
Weapons: None.

Transpore

The transpore is a large, floating imp that demons of Dis use to traverse above and below the surface of the Crucible. Bright, glowing, magenta and purple fear

harvesters dot its round, bulbous surface, feeding on the agony and terror its dangling tendrils inflict upon those in its path. The imp's low-level AI controls most of the functions on the ship, while demons ride on its dorsal surface within a sealed cabin from which they seem to monitor their targets' emotional outpourings.

Silhouette	Max Speed	Handling	Defense	Armor	HT Threshold	SS Threshold
4	2	-1	2	1	18	20

Control Skill: Operating.
Complement: 1 melded imp (rolls ⬡ ◆ ◆ for checks).
Passenger Capacity: 12.
Consumables: 3 weeks.
Encumbrance Capacity: 100 demons and imps.
Price/Rarity: 300,000 Æmbits/10.
Weapons: Tendrils of agony (Fire Arc All; Ranged; Damage 8; Critical 4; Range [Medium]; Breach 1, Linked 4, Personal Scale, Stun Damage).

Additional Rules

Terrifying: A transpore emits a palpable aura of terror. Any non-demon characters within long range at personal scale must make a **Hard (◆ ◆ ◆) fear check** (see page 243 of the Genesys Core Rulebook) upon noticing it. If they fail, then for the remainder of the encounter, if they suffer strain and the transpore is within long range, the transpore removes an equal number of system strain or half that amount (rounding down) of hull trauma.

Could be, could be just a vehicle, but I'll put bits down that it's just a bigger, badder demon. And you know how I feel 'bout that lot, right?

Walker

Martian walkers are perhaps the most common form of these versatile armored vehicles. The command pod uses a direct neural interface to allow a single Soldier to control a dozen long tentacles that end in pincers and blasters. These tentacles can whip, throw, spear, and pull apart enemies at close range, blast them at long distances, shield the command module, and provide superior mobility, especially over obstacles.

Many cultures on the Crucible utilize walker technologies, and this profile can serve as the basis for other ambulatory attack or transport vehicles.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
3	3	+1	1	2	13	12

Control Skill: Piloting.
Complement: 1 pilot.
Passenger Capacity: None.
Consumables: 2 days.
Encumbrance Capacity: 10.
Price/Rarity: 40,000 Æmbits/7.
Weapons: Tentacle ray beams (Fire Arc All; Gunnery; Damage 2; Critical 4; Range [Extreme]; Blast 2, Breach 1, Linked 1).

Tentacle attack (Fire Arc All; Melee; Damage 10; Critical 3; Range [Medium]; Ensnare 2, Guided 2, Knockdown, Linked 1, Personal Scale, the difficulty for this check is always **Average** [◆ ◆]).

Alternate Tentacle Deployments

The basic walker profile assumes a balanced use of metallic tentacles for weapons and mobility. However, operators (especially martian ones) can dedicate more tentacles to a specific task. Once per round, at the beginning of their turn as a maneuver, the pilot of a walker can instead declare one of the following stances:

- **Assault:** Reduce defense rating to 0, increase tentacle ray beams base damage to 3 and change its Linked item quality to 2.
- **Defensive:** Increase defense rating to 2 and remove the Linked item quality from all tentacle weapons.
- **Invade:** Reduce defense rating to 0, increase tentacle attack base damage to 15 and change its Linked item quality to 2.
- **Mobility:** Reduce defense rating to 0 and remove the Linked item quality from all tentacle weapons. Increase max speed to 4 and increase handling to +2.

CHAPTER 4: ÆMBER

Much of the Crucible seems impossible at first glance. Variations in local gravity, unheard-of environmental proximities, and other anomalies indicate technologies that are beyond the abilities of all of the species and cultures that have been relocated to the gigantic world. This hasn't stopped many researchers and deep thinkers from trying to use quantum field projectors, variable graviton sieves, and the like to duplicate those effects. However, although the Crucible has many mysteries, one in particular stands out for persistently defying all attempts to duplicate or explain it—and that is Æmber.

In this chapter, we discuss this powerful substance, starting with some of the many theories and myths concerning Æmber's nature, purpose, and applications. We'll also focus on using Æmber to gain mysterious and potent powers though the Æmbercraft skill. Lastly, we include suggestions for spending Narrative dice results from checks when Æmber is involved—for almost anything can happen then!

WHAT IS ÆMBER?

No one knows when beings first encountered Æmber or realized it is present only on the Crucible. It's very possible that eons ago, the earliest residents only realized its importance when they gathered the substance at the direction of Archons for primordial vault openings. Soon, they must have discovered that it shifts in color (and sometimes texture) the longer a being works with it, especially when large numbers of similarly thinking individuals are involved. Logos Æmber, for example, tends to turn electric blue, while Æmber in Untamed lands goes blood red; Martian Æmber, of course, turns bright green. The discovery of its psychic reactivity was perhaps the greatest breakthrough in the history of the Crucible.

Experimentation led to Æmber's adoption for a multitude of purposes, from power production and storage to capturing emotions and developing unexplainable abilities. While Æmber has countless uses, the cause of its wondrous abilities is still one of the Crucible's greatest mysteries.

"It is not just all you need; it is simply all." I've overheard this several times near the Inspired temples in Q City.

Myths and Theories

There are as many theories about the nature of Æmber as there are inhabitants of the Crucible, as the saying goes, and twice as many myths. Several cults in various sectors are certain the starlike object in their sky is actually a megachunk of Æmber undergoing some sort of fusion process or simply on fire. Given the impossible nature of the Crucible and the prevalence of Æmber across it, there are several technogeologic theories that Æmber dominates the interior of the world.

Æmber also fits into several theologies, and serves as an object of worship for some of them. Several religions hold that each piece of Æmber represents a fallen soul, the tear of an Architect, or a new species emerging elsewhere in the universe. A few are certain that the energy Æmber possesses comes from psychic energies left over from the Big Bang or will be used to create the next one. The Hammers of the Architects consider Æmber a sacred substance and regard those who disturb its natural resting places as heretics against the blessed Architects (this is why, its adherents claim, Archons recruit others to gather Æmber for them instead of gathering it themselves).

A being can visit an area years after the Æmber was exhausted and find it replenished. Some theorize that this represents the reaction of Æmber to shifting emotional states and is perhaps a sign that Æmber can materialize out of a hypothesized psychic ether permeating the Crucible.

Perhaps the only real truth about Æmber is that no one knows for certain what it is or where it comes from, except, of course, the Architects.

Harvesting Æmber

Æmber most commonly appears as crystals of a golden yellow color. Less often, one may find a slow-running stream or a pool of liquid Æmber. The substance feels somewhat heavier than it should and can appear translucent or have a slight glow. Beings can find it almost anywhere, but often where they least expect it.

Large-scale Æmber-mining operations usually hunt for large deposits that can be mined at industrial levels, but this process always seems to empty the find earlier than expected. Thus, many excavation teams are highly mobile, moving from one location to the next as sites are exhausted and new ones discovered. Many beings have noted that Æmber acts more like a living organism, fading where it is harvested and growing elsewhere in more favorable conditions.

The substance can also be found in living organisms, such as plants that filter granular amounts and form nodules and even fruits of concentrated Æmber. Some creatures absorb it naturally or gain it from eating such plants, and then form Æmber spines, tusks, or shells. A few animals can have Æmber removed from them multiple times. Huge grazerbeasts, for example, can be shorn each migratory season as they devour their way through the mountains. Their shimmering Æmber-infused wool supports high-end garment industries in Hub City that specialize in garbing the rich and famous each night at Glamwood venues.

Æmber Uses

Æmber might have become just another curiosity on the Crucible if it weren't so incredibly useful in so many ways. For example, every industrial culture arrives on the Crucible with its own power-generation systems from chemical combustion to antimatter fusion. All of these cultures eventually turn to Æmber, however, as their own supplies dwindle or production facilities falter. Knowing that wherever you go that you can find Æmber to power your flying saucer, reload your electrocarbine, or ensure your quantum fridge keeps the helium solid makes life so much easier, after all.

The most common, if prosaic, use of Æmber is as currency. Everywhere on the Crucible, Æmber can be used as a bartering item, and the Æmbit is recognized and accepted in almost every civilized region.

Other uses can be very unconventional. Some beings consume, apply, or otherwise use Æmber in arcane rituals to gain abilities that appear more magical than natural, much to the frustration of researchers who attempt to offer similar powers through technological means. There are a myriad of these unusual abilities, collectively known as Æffects. Even more impressively unusual, these abilities can take on different aspects depending on the mental state of the user. For example, Æffects displayed by members of Sanctum often appear as glowing halos, wings of bright energy, and other impressive forms. Those from Untamed could take on softly golden aspects that might either comfort or frighten nearby beings, depending on the emotional frames of mind of those employing these Æmber-fueled powers.

Many beings believe that Æmber's numerous uses reflect its psychically reactive nature. This psychic reactivity is perhaps its best-known (and least understood) aspect. Some beings, such as demons, use Æmber to capture, store, and project emotions. The material responds to thoughts and feelings, transforming itself to add strength and hardness when used in a weapon or flowing as a liquid when used to lubricate reactor gears.

Experiments occur all the time to unlock new uses for Æmber, especially in remote Logos facilities. That not all of those facilities have become smoking craters suggests that researchers have had some success in discovering even more dazzling uses for Æmber.

It's always best to assume that Æmber can do anything that you can't think of.
–Inka

Vaults and Keys

The most mysterious use of Æmber is in opening the vaults that Archons so eagerly pursue. All vaults require Æmber as part of the unlocking process, and Archons process the gathered Æmber in inexplicable ways to forge the necessary keys. Each vault is unique, as are the keys needed to unlock it. Even the manner in which Archons use the freshly forged keys is different for each vault.

Vaultheads magazine, the favorite source of information concerning all things related to vault battles, tracks such statistics. Greatest number of keys needed to open a vault, the longest battle durations, the fastest forging, the most Archons and followers involved in a battle—all of these and more are recorded with near-fanatical detail, supporting legions of dedicated fans and gamblers alike.

USING ÆMBER IN GENESYS

Æmber is of the greatest importance on the Crucible. Player characters can use it in many ways, which means they have many reasons to seek it out beyond its market value or use as a bartering item. Some talents require Æmber, and some gear gains additional abilities when powered with the substance. Characters with the Æmbercraft skill can use Æmber directly to achieve a variety of impressive effects. One of the most potent uses of Æmbercraft is the creation of Æffects, permanent and unique Æmber-based items or abilities the character can call upon.

Quantifying Æmber

For game purposes, Æmber is measured in encumbrance. This doesn't dictate the shape, size, weight, or appearance of Æmber, but it tells us roughly how burdensome it is to transport that quantity of Æmber and provides a simple way to measure it for game effects. Narratively, it can take any form appropriate. For shorthand, you can simply refer to a value of Æmber in this way: 2 Æmber means a quantity of Æmber with encumbrance 2, whether it takes the form of a single large chunk of Æmber or a bag of tiny granules.

Æmber is psychically reactive and changes properties according to the way it is used, the intentions of its user, and other thoughts and emotions it is exposed to. As Æmber assumes properties according to its use, it loses the potential for other applications. This process may be gradual or rapid, depending on how the Æmber is used or processed. In gameplay, once Æmber is used for a specific purpose, it can't be used for other purposes. For instance, Æmber used in the creation of an Æffect (see page 167) is permanently a part of that Æffect; it cannot be reused for some other purpose.

Rules that refer to Æmber, such as those that require its consumption (see page 166), mean Æmber in its raw form and not Æmber that has already been used or processed from the raw state. Abilities that detect Æmber or activate in the presence of Æmber, such as the Æmber Dowser talent, therefore only apply to Æmber in its raw form and not to, for example, caches of Æmbits or barrels of Æmbrew, unless the GM decides otherwise for purposes of the story.

I know several science officers who would trade rescue from this world just to figure out how Æmber works.

Consuming Æmber

Some abilities, talents, items, and Æffects require a character to **consume** Æmber. This means the Æmber is somehow used up in order to fuel, forge, or otherwise enable the result. Narratively, this can mean almost anything, from eating a chunk of raw Æmber to fuel one's fiery breath, to immolating a shard of Æmber in the center of a magic circle. Regardless, the Æmber is used up and is no longer available to the character.

Rules may also state that an ability, talent, item, or Æffect that uses Æmber **depletes**. Once an ability or effect is depleted, a character must consume Æmber in a narratively appropriate way to replenish it before they can use it again. **The character must consume 1 Æmber unless the rule in question specifies a different quantity.** Unless stated otherwise (or it makes sense narratively), consuming Æmber requires a maneuver.

THE TWO FORMS OF ÆMBER

For purposes of using Æmber, there are two different forms of the substance that characters will encounter: raw and processed.

Raw Æmber, which characters might discover (or purchase it, as per page 152), might appear as a solid rock, shining crystal, oozing gel, glistening powder, glowing liquid, or even a concentrated gas. This is the only form of Æmber can be used to create and power Æffects or consumed to activate certain talents and empower some forms of weapons and armor.

The other form of Æmber is **Processed Æmber**. This represents Æmber that in some manner has been altered or manipulated for a specific function. For example, Æmbits are made of Æmber that has been adapted solely to the function of currency; these are perhaps the most common type of processed Æmber. It's important to remember that processed Æmber cannot be used as a substitute for raw Æmber. Thus, Æmbits can't be used for crafting an Æffect and the same goes for any other item that might say it includes Æmber, such as heal-x tabs or Æmbread.

ÆFFECTS

Æmber is capable of producing seemingly limitless effects, from the merely impressive to the miraculous. In Secrets of the Crucible, characters use the Æmbercraft skill to unlock the potential of Æmber. Each character who makes use of Æmber does so in a unique way, and the manifestations are as varied as the personalities and natures of those individuals.

One of the primary ways characters employ Æmber is by creating unique, reusable applications. For simplicity, we refer to the various spells, gadgets, talismans, blessings, and artifacts created using the Æmbercraft skill as Æffects. An Æffect can take almost any imaginable form. It could be a smoke-belching machine powered by an Æmber core, a mystical word that can bend reality, or a mantle of gleaming light.

Using Æffects

Æffects are not quite items and not quite abilities, but they work in much the same way. How and when they are used depends on both the narrative of the game and the rules for the particular Æffect. Weapon Æffects are primarily used to make combat checks, armor Æffects reduce damage or modify an attacker's check, and utility Æffects are used as part of an activity that might or might not require a skill check. In addition, Æffect powers (see page 171) can have specific uses that might be different from the basic function of the Æffect, most often requiring a maneuver.

Any time a character makes a check using an Æffect, ⊗ from the check may be spent to deplete the Æffect. (For more ways to spend dice results from checks using Æffects, see **Table 4–4: Spending ⩓, ⊛, ⟲, and ⊗ in Æmbercraft Checks** on page 177.) Some powers deplete an Æffect each time they are used. A depleted Æffect provides no benefit or function until the character consumes the specified amount of Æmber needed to replenish it (1, unless otherwise specified). However, at the GM's discretion, certain Æffects with a physical component might have some use while depleted, based on their physical properties. For example, a suit of armor might provide some soak based on its construction, or a depleted sword might function as an improvised weapon.

It's important to note that an Æffect can never have hard points or take attachments, even if it functions like a weapon or armor.

Craft a What?

It might seem counterintuitive to use the same rules to cover all the myriad possibilities of Æmber. A ray gun and a spell seem very different, after all. However, on the Crucible, the many uses of Æmber, including the witches' spells and the Æmber-enhanced technology of Mars, face the same limitations. This is why all Æffects use the same rules, regardless of the form they take, tangible or otherwise.

Æffects all have a component of some kind, whether it is a talisman, grimoire, magic word, hand gesture, or some combination. Thus, characters wishing to activate an Æffect they possess should in some way use or evoke that component to activate the Æffect.

This also means that the players and GM can incorporate the way the component is used into game play. For example, a character who forgets a transformational word or is suffering from a hand injury might be unable to use their "magic" just as readily as a stolen ray gun would leave them unable to "zap" things. They could also be in a region where sound doesn't travel, or the gravity is too intense to wave their arms in the precise manner necessary for the Æffect.

Sometimes, a character may want to give an Æffect they created to another character. Whether an Æffect works to full effect (or at all) for someone other than its creator is left to the GM's discretion, and is primarily a function of the narrative description. For a particularly complex or potent Æffect, the GM may add ■ to checks another character makes with it.

Creating an Æffect

Although Æffects can take nearly any form imaginable, the creation of one always follows the same six step process in rules terms. Narratively, you should feel free to embellish the process of your character's creation and honing of their Æffect in keeping with its form and purpose. Creating an Æffect requires a good deal of time for your character, much like any act of crafting. It should be done during an appropriate period of narrative gameplay in the story or between game sessions and cannot be done during a structured encounter.

The material itself would be enigma enough, but the impossible things beings are able to do after consuming it... Inconceivable is the perfect word to describe their abilities.

Ætfects are created via the following steps:

- **Step 1: Concept:** Determine what your Ætfect looks like and what you want it to do.
- **Step 2: Ætfect Design:** Decide if this is an armor, weapon, or utility Ætfect, and then select item qualities for it.
- **Step 3: Ætfect Powers:** Select one or more Ætfect powers for your creation.
- **Step 4: Gather Components:** Assemble the necessary items and Æmber the Ætfect requires.
- **Step 5: Make Skill Check:** Determine the difficulty of the Æmbercraft check and (hopefully!) succeed on the check.
- **Step 6: Finishing Touches:** Decide what your Ætfect is called, and any repercussions from your actions in creating it.

Step 1: Concept

The first step in creating an Ætfect is to conceptualize it. What form does it take, and what does it do? You'll figure out how to represent the effects via game rules in the next step; for the concept, describe what your Ætfect does within the story. Naturally, your concept will guide the rest of the process.

Creating an Ætfect requires an amount of Æmber based on the options you select for it. **Each Ætfect has a starting Æmber requirement, or cost, of 1 Æmber, which may be adjusted up or down based on the options you selected. Whatever options you choose, the minimum Æmber cost is 1.** During **Step 5: Make Skill Check** of the process, your character will consume the required quantity of Æmber in order to attempt to create the Ætfect, and they have the option of using additional Æmber at that time to increase their chance of success. Make sure to add up the required Æmber before you get to Step 5; if you don't have enough Æmber for the Ætfect you want to make, it might be time to go on another adventure!

No matter their final shape or form, all Ætfects have an encumbrance value of one. This is mostly due to the unusual nature of the Æmber involved with crafting such items, which might make a small pendant feel inordinately heavy or a projectile weapon seem hard to carry. Note that if an Ætfect power is added to an existing item (as per the sidebar on page 170), the item's encumbrance does not change.

Step 2: Ætfect Design

With a strong concept in mind, the next step is to design the rules for your Ætfect. To make this easier, we've divided Ætfects into three types: armor, weapon, and utility. Each of these has a distinct basic function: weapons are for attacking, armor protects your character from attacks, and utility does anything else. In addition to its basic function, any Ætfect can have one or more item qualities.

Regardless of their design, all Ætfects are immune to effects of the Sunder item quality, even if they take the form of a physical weapon or armor.

Armor

Any Ætfect whose primary function is to protect your character from physical harm we call an armor Affect. This doesn't necessarily mean it's a physical suit of armor your character wears—it could be a spell of protection, a blessing from a Sanctum priest, a psychic ability, or almost anything else that fits the narrative. Regardless of the form it takes, in rules terms, this functions like any other armor. (So, you can't stack an armor Ætfect with a mundane type of armor for a better soak value.)

TABLE 4–1: ARMOR CHARACTERISTIC CHANGES

CHARACTERISTIC CHANGE	ÆMBER COST
+1 soak (to a maximum of 4)	+1 times the new value (must be purchased sequentially)
Increase defense by one (to a maximum of 4)	+1 times the new value (must be purchased sequentially)

The basic characteristics for an armor Æffect are +0 soak and defense 1. The Æmber cost to increase these values is shown in **Table 4–1: Armor Characteristic Changes** on page 169. Each increase must be purchased sequentially. For instance, increasing the Æffect's soak from +0 to +3 would require 6 Æmber: 1 Æmber to increase the soak from +0 to +1, plus another 2 Æmber to increase it from +1 to +2, plus another 3 Æmber to increase it from +2 to +3.

You can add any number of item qualities chosen from **Table 4–3: Item Qualities** on page 170, increasing the Æmber cost necessary to create your Æffect by the indicated amount. You can add item qualities whether or not you choose to increase the soak value and defense rating of the Æffect. Not all item qualities are applicable to armor, so be sure to check the description in the GENESYS Core Rulebook.

TABLE 4–2: WEAPON CHARACTERISTIC CHANGES

CHARACTERISTIC CHANGE	ÆMBER COST
+2 base damage	+1 for first two purchases, +2 for additional purchases
–1 Critical rating (to a minimum of 1)	+1
Increase range band by one (ranged Æffects only)	+1

Since armor Æffects aren't necessarily worn the same way that normal armor is, deciding whether or not a character is benefiting from a particular armor Æffect largely depends on the narrative. Generally, it should require a maneuver to ready or unready an armor Æffect.

WEAPON

The weapon Æffect type includes all Æffects that characters could use to attack their enemies. These include physical weapons, but also anything intended to inflict damage or incapacitate, such as spells, psychic attacks, poison clouds, and independent seeker needles.

Although the narrative details vary, a character should generally be required to spend a maneuver to ready a weapon Æffect. Even a purely intangible "spell" requires the character to focus their mind first. A weapon Æffect may require a maneuver or incidental to stow, depending on its form.

Each weapon Æffect has a basic profile that you can modify by spending additional Æmber, as shown in **Table 4–2: Weapon Characteristic Changes**. The steps below cover the details on how these are done as well as other necessities for determining the details for your weapon Æffect. As with all Æffect types, you can also add item qualities chosen from **Table 4–3: Item Qualities**, on page 170.

Skill: Choose a skill to use for combat checks made with the Æffect. Generally, you should choose a combat skill or the Discipline skill (for Æffects with a mystical or psychic form), but any skill other than Æmbercraft is a possibility. The skill should be narratively appropriate for the Æffect, and the GM has to approve your choice. For example, if your design intends for the Æffect's profile to have a range band greater than engaged. Brawn or Melee should not be selected as the employed skill.

I've heard many a fancy shooter say "Æmber guide my shot" or something similar. Even heard a right haughty knight say the same for their blade in the middle of a vault fight. Even if yer not usin' it for magic stuff, it surely can't hurt to ask it for help.

TABLE 4–3: ITEM QUALITIES

ITEM QUALITY	ÆMBER COST
POSITIVE QUALITIES	
Accurate	+1 per rating (to a maximum of 4)
Auto-fire	+2
Blast	+1 per two ratings
Breach	+4 per rating
Burn	+1 per rating
Defensive	+1 per rating
Deflection	+1 per rating
Disorient	+1 per two ratings
Ensnare	+1 per rating
Knockdown	+1
Linked	+1 per rating
Pierce	+1 per two ratings
Reinforced	+3
Stun	+1 per two ratings
Stun Damage	+0
Sunder	+1
Superior	+1
Vicious	+1 per rating
NEGATIVE QUALITIES	
Inaccurate	–1 per rating
Inferior	–1
Prepare	–1 per rating
Slow-Firing	–2 per rating

I recall asking an Archon about the nature of Æmber. They laughed but I got the feeling they also had no idea how to explain it themselves. I could certainly be wrong, though...

Damage: Choose one of your character's characteristics. Weapon Æffects have a starting damage value of +1, which is added to your character's chosen characteristic to determine the attack's base damage (just as an ordinary Melee weapon's damage is added to the user's Brawn). The chosen characteristic should be narratively appropriate for the Æffect. You can improve the damage value of the Æffect by spending additional Æmber, as indicated in **Table 4–2: Weapon Characteristic Changes** on page 169.

Critical: All weapon Æffects begin with a Critical rating of 4, which can be improved by spending additional Æmber, as indicated in **Table 4–2: Weapon Characteristic Changes** on page 169.

ENHANCING ITEMS WITH ÆMBER

Sometimes a character might want to use Æmber to enhance an existing item. With the Game Master's permission, a character may add a single Æffect power to an existing item while retaining the item's other rules and characteristics. Note that the item in this case doesn't become an Æffect—it only gains the Æffect power, and retains its original encumbrance value. The power can be depleted, but this doesn't hinder the normal function of the item.

Adding a power in this way requires the character to consume 3 Æmber and succeed on a **Daunting** (◆ ◆ ◆ ◆) **Æmbercraft check**. The GM may modify this check based on the situation, as described in Step 4. If the check fails, the Æmber is wasted. At the GM's discretion, a failed check might also have consequences for the item (particularly as a result of ♲ or ⊗).

Range: Choose whether the Æffect will be a melee weapon or a ranged weapon. Melee Æffects have a range of engaged, which cannot be increased. Ranged Æffects start with a range of short, which can be improved by spending additional Æmber as indicated in **Table 4–2: Weapon Characteristic Changes**. Regardless of the skill used or the narrative description, the weapon makes melee attacks if its range is engaged; if its range is any greater, it makes ranged attacks.

UTILITY

This category covers any Æffect that isn't a weapon or armor. The functions of utility Æffects are nearly limitless, making this both the most flexible category and, as a result, the least defined in terms of rules. While weapons and armor all share certain numeric characteristics, utility Æffects are often defined foremost by their narrative purpose. You can also add item qualities and powers to a utility Æffect, but be sure to check an item quality's description to be sure it is appropriate (many item qualities apply only to weapons).

Fundamentally, many utility Æffects function as "the right tool for the job," as described on page 93 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook, but do so in a spectacular way. The fun lies in coming up with an exciting explanation for how the Æffect allows a character to attempt a task, whether or not a mundane tool might allow for something similar. Due to the power of Æmber, a character possessing a utility Æffect always adds □ to checks they make using it.

Sometimes "the job" in question might be something quite impressive or utterly fantastical, such as seeing a distant location, speaking with animals, or flying to another place. For such potent effects, you and your GM should consider whether it should be a power (see page 171). If so, the Æffect may still fulfill a lesser, related purpose without using its power.

Of course, even an Æffect with a relatively simple function could also have a power allowing it to do something truly miraculous. While an ordinary rope and a shimmering cord of flexible Æmber both allow a character to attempt to climb sheer surfaces, the Æmber cord might be capable of much more. Give that Æmber cord the Æffect power of Tunnel, and a character can use it to safely descend through a solid surface—something no mundane rope can duplicate!

Whether or not a utility Æffect requires a maneuver (or more) to ready for use depends on its descriptive form and function, and is something on which the player and GM should decide together.

Step 3: Æffect Powers

The basic functions of Æffects can be potent, but what really makes them stand out from ordinary items and abilities are the Æffect powers available. When designing your Æffect, you can choose any number of these powers described on the following pages.

The Æmber cost to add a power is equal to the Æffect's new number of powers. For example, giving an Æffect a single power costs 1 Æmber, while giving a second power to an Æffect costs another 2 Æmber, for a total of 3 Æmber to purchase the two powers.

The powers that follow are only a starting place, though—Æmber can achieve almost any effect conceivable. Powers should narratively reflect the particular Æffect desired, regardless of the power's name or any descriptive text here. This offers latitude for developing an Æffect that feels unique, even if it shares a power with another. If you want your Æffect to have a power that isn't covered here, talk with your GM.

Bane/Boon

This Æffect is particularly effective against, or for, a certain kind of living target, chosen by its creator when they craft it. This is usually members of a certain species, such as martians or giants, but other options may be possible at the GM's discretion. When your character uses this Æffect to make a check targeting the chosen type of being or creature, upgrade the ability of the check twice.

Broadcast

As a maneuver or as part of an action using this Æffect, your character may broadcast their voice (or similar communication method) over a very large area, up to strategic range, at a volume sufficient to capture people's attention.

Cleansing

As a maneuver or as part of an action using this Æffect, your character may deplete this Æffect to remove all poisons, toxins, and similar afflictions from themself or their target. If used as a maneuver, this power targets one character within short range.

Dominate

Once per encounter as a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect in order to gain control of a beast, automaton, or other non-sentient creature or machine with a silhouette no greater than your own and that is within short range until the end of the encounter. Once per round in structured encounters, your character may spend one maneuver to direct the dominated target in performing one action and one maneuver during your character's turn.

Displacement

When an attacker makes a combat check targeting your character, your character may, as an out-of-turn incidental, deplete this Æffect to upgrade the difficulty of the check twice. Your character may then spend ⟲ ⟲ ⟲ or ⊗ from the check to move themself up to one range band in any direction after the attack is resolved.

You see some bloke gathering Æmber up all serious-like, you better assume they are getting ready to unleash something powerful. Probably in yer direction.
—Dodger

ENHANCER

When making a skill check using this Æffect, your character counts as having one additional rank in the skill. If your character already has five ranks in the skill used, add □ instead. Once per session when your character fails a check using this Æffect, they may deplete this Æffect to add ✲ equal to their ranks in the skill used in the check. Any other dice results, such as ⟲, ⮝, ⊛, and ⊗, are resolved normally.

Depending on the nature of the Æffect and how it is used, this power might benefit only a single skill (such as for a weapon), or it might benefit multiple skills.

FIND

Your character may use the Æffect to locate a particular creature or object at a very great distance, potentially anywhere on the Crucible. The target must be a being, object, or creature that your character has personally encountered before. This power gives your character an unerring sense of the direction and distance to the target while they are using the power, but not of any intervening obstacles, their surroundings, or other details. If the target does not want to be found (or if someone intentionally hid the object), this should require an **opposed Æmbercraft check versus** the target's **Discipline** or **Stealth**. The process of using this power generally takes too long to occur during structured gameplay.

"Like all else, on this world, it will fall to will of Mars!" I've heard this many times from various Elders at conferences, but they don't seem any closer to unlocking the substance. Not closer than me, at any rate!
-Dr. Escotera

FLARE

As a maneuver, your character may use this Æffect to release a blinding flash of psychic light, disorienting all enemy characters within medium range for one round and inflicting one strain on each of them.

FORGET

Once per encounter as a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to cause any number of NPCs of your choice within short range to forget everything that happened so far in the encounter.

At the GM's discretion, nemeses and other important adversaries can attempt a **Hard (◆ ◆ ◆) Discipline check** to resist this power. If this power is used outside of structured gameplay, affected characters forget the preceding events of up to one hour.

IMMUNITY

As a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to protect themself and their allies within medium range from a single environmental hazard (of your choice), such as a blizzard or a river of lava, until the end of the encounter.

INVISIBILITY

As a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to make themself completely invisible until the end of the encounter. Note that they can still be detected by means other than sight.

INVULNERABILITY

Once per encounter as a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to reduce all damage and wounds involuntarily suffered by themself and engaged allies to 0 until the end of your character's next turn.

LIGHT

As an incidental, your character may cause this Æffect to shed a warm, bright light, illuminating and heating their surroundings out to medium range. The Æffect continues to illuminate the area until your character performs another incidental to stop it.

Alternatively, when you design the Æffect, you may choose a particular trigger that causes the Æffect to glow, subject to the GM's discretion.

CREATING NEW POWERS

The powers in this section offer a range of Æffect powers but represent only a fraction of the possibilities. If none of them fit a player's concept, that player should work with their GM to develop a new power, using the ones here as a guide.

Most powers should require a maneuver to use or make sense as an additional effect for a check using the Æffect. Some particularly strong powers might require an action and a check to use. As a limiting factor, a power needs a cost. Generally, this means depleting the Æffect. However, if a power only functions as part of a check, you might instead spend dice symbols from the check to use the power. In either case, the character is giving up a resource to activate the power.

The other primary limiting factor on a power (since they are powerful!) is frequency. Is the power strong enough for its use to potentially be the turning point in an encounter? If so, it should be limited to once per encounter, or even once per session for particularly potent effects. If it doesn't seem disruptive for a power to be used multiple times in an encounter, consider limiting it to once per round.

MIND OF ITS OWN

This Æffect is sentient, with a distinct personality and goals of its own. The player and GM can work together to determine the details. (The **Motivation** tables on pages 47–50 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook can be helpful for this.)

The Æffect has three ranks in a skill relevant to its purpose (if a skill check is required to use the Æffect, choose that skill). When your character makes a check using the Æffect, substitute its ranks in the relevant skill for their own or add □ if their own skill ranks are equal to or higher than the Æffect's. If the Æffect is a ranged weapon, it also gains the Guided 3 item quality. If the Æffect is a melee weapon and its wielder is staggered, it may attack during their turn with the relevant skill and a characteristic of 0.

However, if the character uses the Æffect in a way it doesn't approve of, it may withhold its assistance or even work against the character, adding one or more ■ or upgrading the difficulty of the check.

In addition, the Æffect has two ranks in a single social skill chosen by the GM (it has a mind of its own, after all). It can assist on its user's checks using this skill as described above, but it may work against them as appropriate.

I know quite a few beings with such abilities.

They all live very interesting lives, in my opinion.

POCKET DIMENSION

As a maneuver, your character may use this Æffect to open or close a small portal (up to about a meter across) to an extradimensional space where time doesn't pass. The pocket dimension is stable, and anything placed within it can be retrieved later. It has an encumbrance capacity of 20.

PROTECT

As a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to allow allies who remain within short range to increase their soak and defense values by the character's current soak and defense values until the end of the encounter.

REACTIVE

When an attack inflicts damage on your character, they may, as an out-of-turn incidental, deplete this Æffect to inflict double that amount of damage on their attacker.

REGROWTH

Once per encounter as a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to return a character to life. The Æffect heals the character of all wounds and removes all of their Critical Injuries. Generally, there must be some remains of the deceased for them to regrow from, although the GM might waive or modify this requirement to suit the situation (such as for an incorporeal character). Regrown characters, unfortunately, aren't quite the same as the original. The character who has been returned to life reduces their highest characteristic by one. (A character whose characteristics are all 1 cannot be returned to life this way.)

This Æffect requires 4 Æmber to replenish.

REFRESHING

Once per encounter as a maneuver or as part of an action using this Æffect, your character may deplete the Æffect to heal all strain they or the target of the Æffect have suffered. If used as a maneuver, this power targets one character within short range.

RELOCATE

As a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect in order to move themself and any number of allies of their choice within long range to another, possibly distant, location (though not off the Crucible!). During structured gameplay, this effect should take several rounds to resolve as the character waits for the teleportation ray to charge, for the giant bats to arrive, or for some other appropriate occurrence.

RESTORATIVE

Once per encounter as a maneuver or as part of an action using this Æffect, your character may deplete the Æffect to heal all wounds they or the target of the Æffect have suffered. If used as a maneuver, this power targets one character within short range.

RESURRECT

Once per encounter as a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to return a character who died within the last round to life. The character heals wounds until they are suffering no more wounds than their wound threshold, but does not heal any Critical Injuries except the Dead result. This also doesn't undo any other effects of the attack or incident that killed them.

This Æffect requires 2 Æmber to replenish.

SHATTER

As a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to deplete another Æffect or inflict major damage (see **Item Maintenance**, on page 89 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook) on a mundane item within medium range.

SMITE

Once per encounter as a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to defeat all minion and rival adversaries within short range. Rivals may attempt an **Average (◆ ◆) Discipline** or **Resilience check**; if they succeed, they are not defeated.

TERRIFY

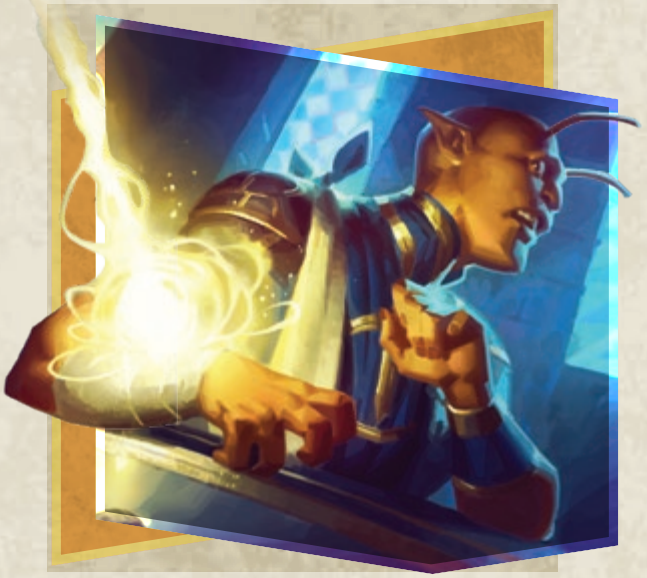
Once per encounter as a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to cause all other characters within medium range (including allies) to make a **Hard (◆ ◆ ◆) fear check** (see page 243 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook).

TRANSMIT

As a maneuver or as part of an action using this Æffect, your character may communicate with a particular person or transmit their voice (or other message) to a specific location at any distance on the Crucible.

TRANSPOSITION

As part of an action using this Æffect, your character may spend ⮝ ⮝ to move themself or their target up to one range band in any direction that is free of obstruction.



TUNNEL

As a maneuver or as part of an action using this Æffect, your character may deplete the Æffect to create a temporary passage through almost any solid material (except for Æmber). The passage is a meter in diameter, and it can have any length up to the length of the Æffect's range. If the Æffect does not otherwise have a range, consider it to be short. The passage lasts until the end of the following round and does no lasting harm to the material.

For example, I recall someone who believed with enough Æmber they could translocate beyond the Boundary. They wound up high along the Spire instead.

It was messy all quite messy.
-Inka

UNDETECTABLE

Once per encounter as a maneuver, your character may deplete this Æffect to make themself and allies of their choice within short range completely undetectable by natural senses or technology until the end of the following round. Note that mutually undetectable characters find communication quite difficult!

VERMIN VEXATION

As an action, your character may deplete this Æffect to make an **opposed Æmbercraft versus Resilience check** against a target within short range. If your character succeeds at the check, the target suddenly transforms into a harmless little creature and will remain so until the end of the following round.

While transformed, the target is silhouette 0 and treats all their characteristics and their soak value as 1. Their wound and strain thresholds, as well as their current wounds and strain, do not change. Their gear and weaponry (including their armor) fall intact to the ground. The target behaves in an appropriate way for the creature and does not benefit from their skills or equipment. At the GM's discretion, the creature may have appropriate skills or abilities for its type.

Your character may spend ⊛ on their check to extend the transformation for the rest of the encounter, but the GM may spend ⊗ from a failed check to transform your character instead.

Step 4: Gather Components

The most important ingredient in creating any Æffect is Æmber, but many Æffects require more than just this substance. In addition to gathering the Æmber required to create the Æffect, your character must collect any other necessary components before attempting the skill check to create their Æffect. **Regardless of the options chosen for the design that may reduce the Æmber needed or that don't require Æmber, creating an Æffect requires at least 1 Æmber.** This means that you'll start with a cost of 1, then add or subtract Æmber based on the item qualities or powers you add. If you end with a cost of 0 or lower for your Æffect, the cost then becomes 1.

Gathering the components for an Æffect is largely a narrative process that depends on the current situation in the campaign. If your character wants to use Æmber to enhance an item already in their possession, few other components may be needed. Otherwise, they may need to purchase, find, or steal the necessary parts.

It is ultimately up to the GM to decide what components are needed for an Æffect, although it should be fairly obvious from the concept of the Æffect. A strength-enhancing mechanical glove requires a mechanical glove, whether already in the character's possession or commissioned for the occasion. A Cruciblist creating a new spell might need to gather mystical components from an untamed forest and cast them into a flame, or carve talismanic circuit diagrams into bone. You probably have some ideas in mind, so discuss it with the GM!

Step 5: Make Skill Check

With the details decided and components gathered, your character is ready to create their Æffect. This is not guaranteed, however; they must succeed on a **Hard (◆ ◆ ◆) Æmbercraft check** to do so. If the Æffect has more than one power (see page 171), increase the difficulty by one for each additional power, to a maximum of **Formidable (◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆)**.

Your PC has the option of using additional Æmber to increase their chance of success on their Æmbercraft check. They may spend 3 extra Æmber to reduce the difficulty of the check by one but it cannot be reduced below **Hard (◆ ◆ ◆)**.

We came across a battle (or perhaps a duel?) between two individuals just outside Cobweb Grove. One waved their staff and turned their foe into a rodent. You have wonder yet again what kind of world we crashed onto.

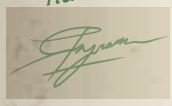
Ingram

If some of the components for the Æffect are missing but the most important ones are present, the GM may allow your character to attempt the check regardless, adding one or more ■ to their Æmbercraft check. Conversely, if they have perfectly suitable components or components of superior quality and ease of use, including Æmber they personally discovered, they add □ to the check.

The GM may also add □ to the check if conditions are suitable, such as if the character forges an Æmber axe at the site of a great battle or conjures up a spell of fear on a dark and stormy night. Exceptionally deleterious circumstances may lead the GM to upgrade the difficulty of the check as well, such as if your character has earlier stated that Æffects don't really exist or would use their new powers to attempt to harm the Crucible.

If your character succeeds on the check, they create the Æffect as intended. If the check fails, the required Æmber (and any extra Æmber spent in the process) is used up without having the desired result (the GM may decide any other gathered components are lost as well). Activating a large quantity of Æmber is almost certain to produce some sort of result, however. Almost anything could happen, and the result might still be beneficial for the character—or it could be disastrous! Work with the GM to determine what happens; **Table 4–4: Spending △, ⊛, ⟲, and ⊗ in Æmbercraft Checks** on page 177 might be very helpful here in either offering an applicable result or offering ideas for developing a new one that better fits the situation.

I have to privately admit I get a little worried when I hear scientists (some from our crew) seeing these Æmber-based abilities, and thinking they seem so small in scope. Especially after seeing what appear to be the remains of ancient cities elsewhere across this "Local Group." Did they fall from similar hubris?



Step 6: Finishing Touches

Once you have made a successful Æmbercraft check to create your new Æffect, it's time to put the finishing touches on it. Take a moment to think about your original concept and the resulting Æffect. Did anything change during the process that requires a different narrative explanation?

Your character should also name their new Æffect. Not only is each Æffect a unique and potent creation, worthy of a name, but it's helpful to have an easy way to refer to it ("weapon Æffect with the Burn 3 item quality and the Flare power" is a mouthful!)

If your character failed their Æmbercraft check to create the Æffect, this step can be a chance to explore within the narrative of the game what went wrong. Does the character simply need to practice their skills? Was something wrong with the Æmber they used? Did a rival sabotage them? Was the ritual disrupted by a powerful psychic echo lingering in the area? Answering the question of what went wrong can provide character development, add texture to the world, and even lead to new adventures.

EXAMPLE: CRAFTING AN ÆFFECT

Dan wants to create a defensive melee weapon Æffect for his Cruciblist PC, a rustic pilgrim. He views it as appearing like a shimmering staff, and so decides this weapon will use the Melee skill and the Willpower characteristic (of which the PC has a rating of 3). This means that when determining the base damage the weapon inflicts in an attack, Dan will add 3 to the starting damage (which begins, like all weapon Æffects, at +2).

Thinking about weapon characteristic changes, Dan decides to drop the Critical rating from 4 to 3 (at a cost of 1 Æmber) and increase the damage from +2 to +4 (costing 1 Æmber) to arrive at a base damage of 7 (Willpower 3 and +4 characteristic change). As for item qualities, he selects Knockdown, Stun Damage, and Deflection (for 2 more Æmber). Lastly, he takes the Protect power (a cost of 1 Æmber).

This puts his Æmber component needs at 6 (1 to start, 4 for the upgrades, and 1 for the single power). Luckily, Dan has been gathering Æmber over several adventures, so he's good there. He also has a stout jaxberry tree branch he found in an uncanny forest during a vault battle, and declares that he's going to create the Æffect in the same forest.

The basic check is **Hard** (◆ ◆ ◆) and as he has only picked one power, it doesn't change. The GM also adds □ to it for personally gathering all the components and making the check in a spot that has thematic connection.

Dan succeeds on the check and now his PC carries the wondrous jaxstaff! The check did result in ⟲ ⟲, though, and the GM decides someone else in the forest also sensed the Æffect's creation—and is very interested in who did it...

ÆMBER AND NARRATIVE DICE RESULTS

Due to its interesting nature, Æmber can give rise to unpredictable occurrences when used. This is especially true when crafting Æffects, as things can go spectacularly wrong or spectacularly right—as one might expect when working with a powerful substance that no one fully understands. Even the mere presence of Æmber can trigger odd manifestations that may help or hinder characters.

This section offers suggestions to players and GMs for spending narrative dice results whenever Æmber is involved, either directly or indirectly. These are just the beginning, though—you're encouraged to create more effects to best match what's happening in the encounter, the nature of the check, and the characters involved.

Æmber in Æmbercraft Checks

Æmbercraft offers a way for characters to perform all manner of impossible tasks; the most common of these is creating Æffects. However, this skill can have many more uses, depending on what players and GMs can think up, such as creating a bridge from scattered Æmber, opening a path through a firestorm from blowing Æmber into it, or casting Æmber into the air to coax rain.

Whenever a character makes an Æmbercraft check, **Table 4–4: Spending ⮝, ❁, ♺, and ⊗ in Æmbercraft Checks** may be consulted for ideas on spending dice results or as inspiration for creating new ways to use the results.

Saw a right smug git turn themselves inside out after trying to do a trick with Æmber. You got to respect it or it will do you in.

TABLE 4–4: SPENDING ⮝, ❁, ♺, AND ⊗ IN ÆMBERCRAFT CHECKS

RESULT	POSSIBLE EFFECTS
⮝ or ❁	The surrounding terrain becomes calm and refreshing. A friendly creature approaches and points out a better path to your destination. Your clothing is restored to a pristine and immaculate state.
⮝ ⮝ or ❁	The land itself transforms to ease your way. Treat impassable terrain in this area as difficult until the end of the session. Another PC gains a memory from a nearby piece of Æmber; they acquire an invaluable insight into their current situation. Your power flows through another PC of your choice, who removes 2 strain.
⮝ ⮝ ⮝ or ❁	You become invigorated and immediately remove all strain. The Critical Injury of a character near you reduces its severity by 1 (to a minimum of **Simple** [–]). A nearby Archon notices your ability and decides to follow your group for a while.
❁	A piece of Æmber you possess multiplies into two pieces, each identical to the original. You become as one with the Crucible, if only for a moment. Increase your Willpower by 1 for the remainder of the session. You may immediately gain +1 rank in Æmbercraft for the rest of the session. Should you later consume amount of Æmber equal to twice the new rank before the session ends, though, the increase is permanent.
♺ or ⊗	It starts to rain. Cold, wet, unpleasant rain. The sky grows dark, as if something huge were passing between you and the source of light overhead. Gravity becomes just a bit stronger in this area.
♺ ♺ or ⊗	The terrain in this area counts as difficult until the end of the session. If it was already difficult, it becomes impassable instead. Normal light becomes very painful to you until the end of the session. The power you used sends a psychic shockwave through the area; anyone who also makes an Æmbercraft check in this session knows of your presence.
♺ ♺ ♺ or ⊗	A piece of Æmber you possess fragments into 4d10 Æmbits. Your essence feels drained. You can't attempt to create a new Æffect for the remainder of the session. One PC at short range has a skill of their choice reduced by one rank until the end of the session. A nearby Archon notices your ability and decides to follow your group for a while.
⊗	A piece of Æmber belonging to a nearby character (randomly selected if needed) turns into dust. One randomly selected weapon or item belonging to the character nearest to you becomes unusable for the remainder of the session. A memory belonging to one member of the party is removed and imprinted on a shard of Æmber. Forever.

These seem remarkably similar to some of the mishaps I've had.

I recall once when my lab grew an additional dimension; took months before time refrained from flowing upwards every other hour.
-Dr. Escotera

TABLE 4–5: SPENDING ⩓, ❁, ⟲, AND ⊗ WHEN ÆMBER IS INVOLVED

RESULT	POSSIBLE EFFECTS
⩓ or ❁	The exterior of one of your favored items shifts to display your favorite patterns and colors. Another PC may immediately draw or stow one item as an out-of-turn incidental. A feeling of happiness rolls over you, and you're left feeling confident about your current situation.
⩓ ⩓ or ❁	Another PC may ignore Out of Ammo results from their combat checks for the remainder of the session. A weapon of your choice gains the Superior item quality until the end of the encounter. Æmber belonging to one enemy at medium range glows brightly. Until the end of the encounter, remove ■ from combat checks that target them.
⩓ ⩓ ⩓ or ❁	Allied NPCs are overcome with loyalty; decrease the difficulty of social skill checks you or friendly PCs make targeting them by 1 until the end of the round. A weapon of an enemy at medium range suddenly runs out of ammo. A damaged item that another PC is carrying becomes fully repaired.
❁	You glow with righteousness; increase your Presence by 1 for the remainder of the session. Another PC's armor has its soak value increased by 1 until the end of the session. You ignore strain you would otherwise suffer from social skill checks targeting you for the remainder of the encounter.
⟲ or ⊗	Your armor suddenly feels like it's the wrong size. One item you're carrying increases its encumbrance by 1 for the remainder of the encounter. One of your Æffects has gone wonky; you suffer 1 strain whenever you use it during this encounter.
⟲ ⟲ or ⊗	Heavy fog emerges from the ground, limiting vision to medium range. One of your weapons or gear items becomes covered with slippery slime; it gains the Inferior item quality until the end of the encounter. Grippyvines reach out of the ground and immobilize one random PC until the end of their next turn.
⟲ ⟲ ⟲ or ⊗	A bolt of lightning lands nearby with a mighty thunderclap. All other characters within short range of you are disoriented for the remainder of the encounter. An allied NPC suddenly becomes too emotional to act and is staggered until the end of their next turn. 4d10 Æmbits you or another PC has on them transmute into salt.
⊗	Another PC's armor loses the effects of all its traits for the remainder of the session. You can spend ❁ only to trigger Critical Injuries for the remainder of the session. An Æffect that another PC possesses is depleted.

Æmber in Other Checks

Æmber is almost everywhere on the Crucible, used in everything from power sources to weapons to items of barter. Most of the time it shouldn't factor into a Narrative dice result, but when it's the focus of the check, things can get exciting. This is especially true when a being is using Æffects or gathering Æmber for a special use (such as part of a vault battle), where the nature of Æmber is essential to the activity.

Whenever a character makes a check for which Æmber is involved, **Table 4–5: Spending ⩓, ❁, ⟲, and ⊗ when Æmber Is Involved** may be consulted for ideas on spending dice results or as inspiration for creating new ways to use the results.

CHAPTER 5: THE CRUCIBLE

There is no one true interpretation of the Crucible. Oral histories, bardic sagas, and other non-technological modes are often more permanent than fixed media, which might only last as long as the civilization maintaining them survives. This world is too vast and unstable for anything to track its constant fluxes.

That being said, in this chapter we'll try to describe the Crucible and some of its locations so that players know more of the world that their characters inhabit. In the following pages you'll find an overview of the Crucible and the Local Group—home to Hub City and most of the species and organizations in this book. We'll also cover locations such as the Emotional Landscape and Kettle Bottom Mining Town, along with some of their inhabitants.

THE IMPOSSIBLE WORLD

The Crucible is a place for which adjectives fail. The size of the world, the diversity of its inhabitants, the beings of godlike power who roam its surface: everything about the world is on a scale never before imagined, let alone seen. That the Crucible appears to be an artificial construct is even more staggering. Beings known only as the Architects are believed to be responsible for creating it; however, no one knows anything about them, for no being has ever seen an Architect, at least not knowingly.

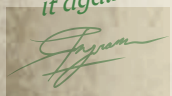
A World of Sectors

The patchwork layout of this world is perhaps the surest indication of its artificial nature. It has millions upon millions of different environments, many with unique gravities, atmospheres, and even physical constants. Whether through design or chance, most of these sectors, as they are commonly called, are similar enough to those around them that it's rare for a transition to be too jarring or injurious. The farther you travel, though, the greater the differences in environments.

Sectors can range from a few dozen kilometers across to hundreds or thousands. Some are so alike that it's hard to tell them apart; they might differ only in that gravity is just a bit stronger in one or sunlight's frequency is shifted a bit to the red in another. Sectors consisting of open water are even more blended, though the greater the distance the more apparent the differences. In a few areas, boundaries are more abrupt, however; gravity might lessen or disappear, temperatures plummet, or electrochemical reactions reverse. Tiny mechanical creatures known as faeries, which are thought to maintain much of the Crucible, appear to oversee these sharp divisions, working to keep atmospheres, terrain, and living beings from being pulled across them or otherwise harmed. Most of the time, they seem to be successful.

New sectors appear infrequently at seemingly random intervals. For most beings, such an appearance is a once-in-a-lifetime event, and quite an event it is! Existing areas are somehow pushed aside to make room for the new sector's arrival—and for the new beings who appear on it. The arrival is exciting in ways that are unexpected, comical, or dangerous—and usually all three.

No one else is known to have seen the Crucible from space. One day, I hope we will see it again.



THE MANY-LAYERED THEORY

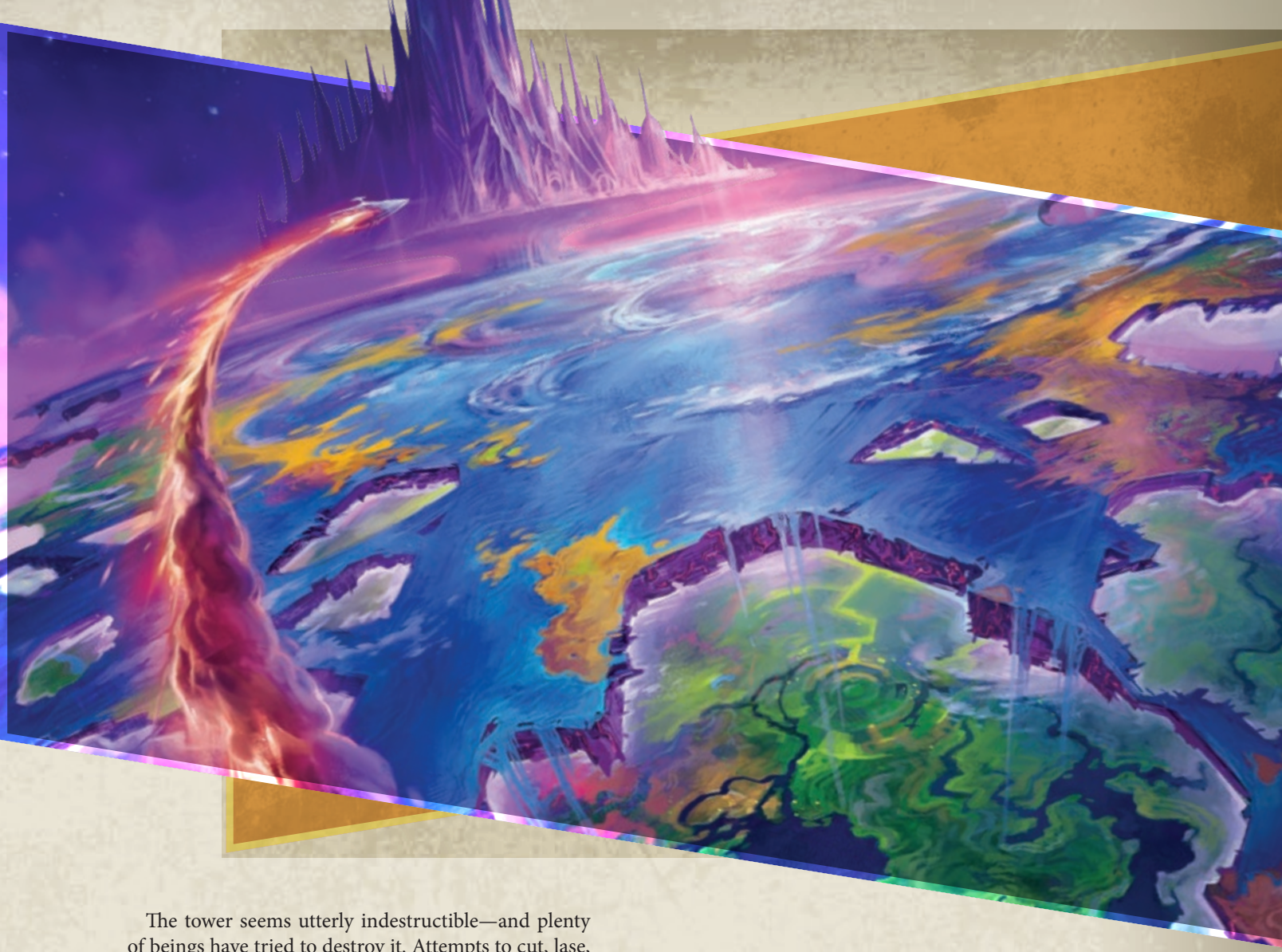
The Crucible's size (specified as "quite, quite gigantic," by expert exploratory cartographers) is yet another mystery for its inhabitants. The fact that its gravity is, on average, standard for worlds a thousand times smaller suggests it is hollow or filled with some unnaturally light material. Many beings who study the nature of the artificial world take the sightings of huge platelike structures in orbit as an indication that it is built in layers—and that a new layer's construction is underway.

According to wilder theories, the core is pure liquid Æmber (which would explain where Æmber comes from), or most of the world's mass exists in another dimension. Given the nature of the Crucible, none of these theories have been completely ruled out.

In time, sectors may start to blend together as flora and fauna travel between them, graviton rates level out, magnetic fields align, sunshine settles on a frequency, and so on. Truly ancient abutting sectors simply appear as one; current Crucible residents might never know there were once dozens of separate sectors in an area. A good rule of thumb most travelers use is that the sharper the divides, the younger the sectors.

The Spire

To the far north (possibly at one of the poles, assuming such a concept is applicable) is the impossibly tall Spire, perhaps the most famous feature on the world. There are no records of a time when the Spire didn't exist, not even legends that relate to its creation. It is literally a permanent part of history; it appears exactly as it does now even in the earliest preserved accounts of the ancient Saurian Republic. It is assumed to be cylindrical (as no one has seen the top) and uniformly made of a rough, almost bark-like material dubbed "spirewood," which appears to have a tensile strength higher than any physical material could possibly possess.



The tower seems utterly indestructible—and plenty of beings have tried to destroy it. Attempts to cut, lase, blast, or break off a piece of the Spire, even at the subatomic level, have met with complete failure. Seismic charges reveal nothing—a detonation at the Spire generates no seismic reading elsewhere, as if the explosion hadn't occurred. To make matters even more difficult for scientists, higher along the Spire gravitational and magnetic fields seem to shift randomly like leaves in the breeze.

Popular theories speculate that the Spire is the spine on which the Crucible was made: that it runs straight through the globe and out the other pole as a sort of structural backbone or stabilization system (or both). There seems to be a top far beyond the atmosphere's edge, but what that entails is unknown. Does it end with a flattened top (possibly containing a docking bay for ships) or come to a needle-like point? Could it have no upper cap, and could the entire structure be hollow? Are there vast schools of faeries within, working to maintain its structure? Or better yet, vast pools of Æmber waiting for someone to find them?

Most of the surrounding settlements, collectively known as Spiretown, are occupied with probing the secrets of the huge tower or attempting to climb to its top. Though no one knows much about its makeup, the Spire also serves as a directional aid: when the sky is clear, it's difficult to avoid seeing the Spire from most locations. Whether this a deliberate purpose or not, explorers and other travelers are grateful to the Architects for it.

I've heard some of the angelic Sanctum also refer to the Spire as "The Great Spine." Interesting...

Continental Driftings

The Crucible is a mix of oceans and continents, in the same way as the smaller balls of rock commonly found in solar systems throughout the universe. Just like the world itself, most of its oceans and continents are gigantic; some are larger than entire planets. Its continents are assemblies of sectors with widely differing terrains. Each landmass and ocean are wild mixtures of environments that could never coexist elsewhere, yet somehow do on the Crucible.

Kaevalus is one of the Crucible's megacontinents, home to a wide range of life and sentient species. It stretches between the Photic and Æginne Oceans, two of the world's largest assemblages of liquid sectors. While the Photic is placid enough to support a large number of industrial ports along the Kaevaline coast, the boiling waters of the Æginne shallows constantly scorch the Æginnenne coastline, making habitation there almost impossible. Nevertheless, the ferocious erosion often reveals huge deposits of Æmber, drawing mining operations to the area despite the risks.

To the north, only a few months' travel on foot from the Spire, lie the Molecular Mountains, where substances dissolve into their constituent elements in certain areas. While these mountains are some of the tallest peaks on the continent, the massive Plutonic Range farther inland has mountains that are larger (and more massive) than small planets. Almost entirely composed of superheavy elements, the range should collapse in on itself, yet it has maintained its form for millions of years.

The southern edge of Kaevalus is bound by the Red, a thin crimson band thousands of kilometers long. Crossing this line, regardless of the altitude, brings agonizing pain that lasts only a moment, but a moment none ever forget. Even the demons of Dis find its effects deleterious and avoid both it and any who have been exposed to it. The Red may be a unique life form or part of a lower level of the Crucible literally bleeding through onto the surface. There are many theories about it, but few beings are willing to test them out.

I once tried to interview several beings who were said to have crossed the Red. None were willing to speak about the experience.
–Inka

Across the Photic Ocean lies the land of Jur; records are sketchy as to how large it is. Most trading there is done with the gallos, a species of highly advanced arthropods who reside mostly underwater along the coastline. The region on the other side of the Æginne, known as the Radiant Lands, is even larger than Kaevalus, but few can manage both traveling across the angry ocean and surviving the intense radiation of that area. Even inorganic life forms like sylicates find it unpleasant if not outright lethal.

Other continents, such as the floating landmass of Cirrus and the Neutronic Miasma, have even more unusual attributes. Some contain sectors so bizarre that no one in the Local Group can imagine life, let alone fellow sentients, existing in them. Still, regardless of the environment, somehow species manage to live, find ways to trade, and even learn from each other in regions across the Crucible.

THE BOUNDARY

One of the Crucible's regions is invisible to even the most advanced of sensors and has never been explored, yet it has a profound impact on every inhabitant. This is the Boundary: the intangible but impenetrable region high in the air that prevents anyone and anything from passing into outer space and escaping the Crucible. Even particle beams and gamma lasers dissipate when fired upward. Where the Boundary lies is indeterminate; it might activate at any altitude above fifty kilometers or so. Sometimes a lucky vehicle might rise to eighty or even a hundred, but others find their wings clipped (often literally) at only forty kilometers.

What happens when beings reach the Boundary varies. Power might fail. A vehicle (or just its occupants) might be teleported to the surface, possibly to a distant continent. Time can slow to a crawl, such that movement becomes a series of continually decreasing steps, each progressing a traveler halfway to space but never allowing them to reach it. Localized gravity might increase such that no rocket thrust can overcome it. Most effects aren't lethal for those who have prepared adequately, at least not immediately; nearly all attempts, though, tend to end with bruised egos along with varying degrees of vehicular and property damage.

There are plenty of theories about it. Most researchers assume it is some kind of one-way force bubble made of a type of energy that is currently undetectable. Some theorize that the Crucible somehow acts as a black hole despite showing no signs of the requisite properties that create such a phenomenon. A very few researchers consider the psychic abilities that Æmber elicits in some beings and wonder if the Crucible itself (or some being at its core) is employing wide-scale telekinesis to keep all of its inhabitants from leaving. Everyone laughs at such an idea, of course. Then, most become a bit nervous.

What's above It All?

The mysteries of the Crucible don't end with the world. What's in the sky can vary just as much as what's on the ground as a being moves from sector to sector.

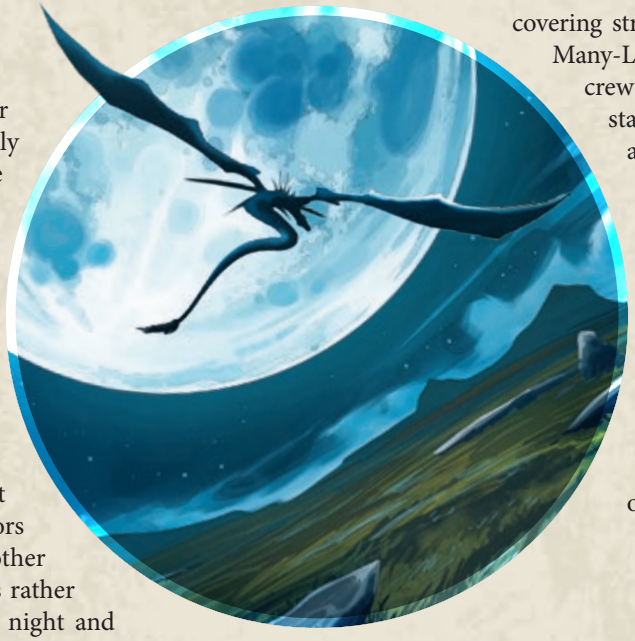
The Sun

Or more properly, suns. Just as each sector has its own environment, it also has its own sources of heat and light in its sky. Some sectors have a glowing yellow star, others a red supergiant or a tiny neutron star. Some skies have multiple stars, or none at all. Regardless, each of these suns contributes to its sector's diurnal cycles, powers photosynthesis and solar collectors, creates seasons, and in general does what is needed to nurture life in its region.

These objects might not even be actual suns: their radiations mimic stellar action but often show discrepancies. Spectral lines sometimes indicate blueshifting at half the speed of light, elements not known to produce energy when fusing, or a complete lack of recognizable elements and chemicals. This has caused many researchers to believe that what is up there could be projections of some sort from other stars, or bodies that are just as artificial as the Crucible. Many beings wonder if the suns are simply made of burning Æmber, though that is simply another way of saying they have no idea.

The Moon

Many beings see something large and pale in their sector's night sky, or possibly several somethings. These vary from sector to sector, usually creating the tides or nocturnal light necessary for organisms to thrive. Gravity detectors register nothing, though, no matter how large or numerous the objects are. This drives many researchers toward the strongest bottle of cranial inhibitors they can find, but most other inhabitants find the moons rather nice to look at during the night and don't feel a need to investigate them further.



The Stars

Beings see smaller dots of light in the night sky as well, although these don't match any of the patterns any species on the Crucible recall from their homeworld. Given the untold millions of beings on the Crucible, with star maps that cover thousands of galaxies, this suggests either that the Crucible is an impossible distance from other inhabited planets or that these stars are as artificial as the world itself. They do register as stars to instruments, at least most of the time, but this depends on who is observing them and what devices they are using. Some beings believe they are tiny props to make the nights feel more realistic. Several groups closely monitor these lights—whatever they may be—and worry that should they change or go out, it could be a sign that a new layer is ready to become the new surface of the Crucible.

Conducting proper science is difficult when you cannot trust the data. In these situations, instead trust your theories.

The Construction

Most worrisome of all the things above the Crucible's surface are the signs that something is undergoing construction in space, far above the Boundary. Careful observations have revealed cracks in the sky between sectors that hint at odd activities taking place. Details vary, with the crew of the SAV *Quantum* providing the only known eyewitness accounts from outer space.

Their stories indicate that something is being built, and the overall impression they had of a covering structure fits well with the Many-Layered theory. That the crew offered such supporting statements soon after their abrupt arrival and before they were aware of this theory may be the most definitive proof to date that something very interesting is indeed happening Up There. What it is, though, may never be known until the Architects are ready for the next phase of the Crucible to proceed.

Some of the Skyborn I encountered in Quantum City seem excited about activities above the Boundary, as they are certain they'll be the first to know it when "it" happens.
-Ingram

THE LOCAL GROUP

Lady C sometimes talks a little about some of the other places on this continent. Makes me quite happy to be a Local, quite happy indeed. Lots of really weird stuff outside the Group. —Dodger

A somewhat densely populated region of Kaevalus near where the gigantic landmass meets the Photic Ocean, the Local Group is a loose arrangement of nations and cities known throughout the Crucible for its particularly wide variety of terrain and species. Most believe the name is a mistranslation of Locality, a term that still exists in some ancient Logos history spools. While it is not as impressive as some of the other areas within Kaevalus, such as the hyperdimensional Cerulean Holosphere and the inverted domains of the Lep Anarchivalists, many beings find this region to hold a wonderful mix of civilization and unexplored wilderness where almost anything can be found (or can find you).

The Local Group features some of the most famous—and infamous—civilizations in Kaevalus, such as the city-states of the ancient Saurian Republic and the fiercely xenophobic martians of Nova Hellas. Everyone knows of Hub City, and the exciting arrival of beings from the Star Alliance and the establishment of Quantum City has created a new trading destination. Logos research stations dot the lands, along with craters near many of them. Most of the Local Group is composed of roughly similar sectors (sometimes very roughly), making travel easier than might be expected.

Local Landmarks

Along with its many civilizations, the Local Group also boasts some of the most impressive terrain features in all of Kaevalus.

Brighthaven

One of the most magnificent of all the floating islands of Sanctum is Brighthaven, a huge paradise of stone temples, refreshing waterfalls, and well-groomed plants. Everything there is designed to empower the spirit and renew devotion in the sacred quest for Enlightenment. The faithful flock from all over just to catch a glimpse of the city as it passes overhead. Stepping foot on it, though, is another matter; the Knights of Sanctum are known to be quite zealous regarding who they judge worthy of admittance.

Brighthaven goes where the Transcended of Sanctum will it to, and in a suitably majestic manner. Of late, the island has stayed near Quantum City, but for reasons the knights refrain from commenting on.

The Burning Glaciers

One impossibility in a land of many such things, the massive Burning Glaciers rise almost half a kilometer into the air from the surrounding rock, while the flames around them extend for dozens of meters in all directions. Such is the intense heat that few can get near enough to extract samples of the ice, which quickly melts once away from the blaze. Vials of such water can be found in almost every stall and market in the streets and sways of Hub City, where vendors insist they bring good luck and plentiful Æmber.

The Carniferous Forest

The Carniferous Forest is a huge (and very dangerous) region entirely too near to Hub City. Its native plant life makes ravenous hordes of piranha monkeys seem like sleeper beetles. Even though the soil is quite rich and nutritious, the local flora seem to prefer eating other plants (and animals). Few beings dare venture within, and phyll in particular give it a wide berth.

Indigo Lake

Indigo Lake dominates a good portion of Kaevalus and is easily the largest body of water in the Local Group. Its composition has a high percentage of dissolved metals, making some wonder if a gigantic vessel is slowly eroding somewhere along the bottom. Many believe the lake water has healing properties, even for inorganic and mechanical life forms. The only interruption of the placid surface is Bone Island, home of the Jzoll elves. The elves relish their isolated existence and do what they can to counter rumors concerning the lake's possible medicinal value.

Nitrogen Falls

One of the most stunning sights in the Local Group is Nitrogen Falls, its cascades of liquid nitrogen cascading hundreds of meters down a cliff composed of tiny Æmber crystals. The liquid absorbs some of the Æmber as it boils away in its descent, creating glittering clouds that spread across the ground like thick carpets. Even those beings who cannot inhale the gas find it invigorating, and such is the falls' appeal that any attempts to harvest the Æmber are met with near-universal protests.

THE LOCAL GROUP
THE PHOTIC OCEAN
AZURE ARCHIPELAGO
BELLATORUS CASTRA
(SAURIAN CITY-STATE)
PORT HAX
CONE OF MADNESS
LODESTONE FOREST
THE AMBERWOOD
PARTA MECHANICA
(SAURIAN CITY-STATE)
INVERTED LAMPS
CIBUS LOCUM
(SAURIAN CITY-STATE)
FEATHERWEIGHT PLAINS
QUANTUM CITY
POLLUX DOCTRINA
(SAURIAN CITY-STATE)
THE OPPOSITE TOWERS
BRIGHTHAVEN
THE HOLLOW MOUNTAINS
CARNIFEROUS FOREST
CORNER GROVE
HUB CITY
ECLIPSE VALLEY
ARYGRUM BOG
NITROGEN FALLS
BLINDING POOLS
BONE ISLAND
LABYRINTH UNDER THE LAKE
LOGOS MACRO-RESEARCH FACILITY 47M
MACIS SWAMP
NOVA HELLAS
INDIGO LAKE
THE FURIOUS GOD WIND
LOGOS MACRO-RESEARCH FACILITY 33M
BRIDGE OF SPHERES
MARTIAN OUTPOSTS
ECHOING DEEP
THE DOME
THE DEAD RANGE
BURNING GLACIERS
SLEEPING GIANT MOUNTAIN
THE GREAT GLASS DESERT
THE RED HAND
THE EVERFIRE

"Rise, rise, so that the Crucible will fall." to paraphrase one of the favored chants the giants make.

Yes, it loses something in the translation. –Inka the Spider

Sleeping Giant Mountain

This isolated series of huge, sloping hills attracts Brobnar from all over the Crucible who fervently believe one of their own resides under the thick layers of loam and rock. At any given time, Sleeping Giant Mountain might host hundreds of giants, all roaring as loud as possible to awaken what could be the mightiest of them all. One day, they might succeed.

Local Legends

The Local Group's history includes countless events whose stories have evolved from fact to myth in the telling. To each new generation and arrival, beings still pass the story of the Eclipse of Yesteryear, the singular time when every sun was blotted out by something larger than any floating island or continent. Nothing was seen in the sky, yet day turned to night for longer than anyone thought comfortable. Many beings still wonder what was the cause and worry that similar outages might occur for gravity or other essentials.

Many tales relate to Æmber—understandably, as the substance can be utterly unpredictable. The apocryphal tale of the Archons Conned is told in every tavern in the land. According to this tale, an enterprising Svarr elf managed to teach the concept of cheating to rival Archons during a vault battle. Each Archon then sought to sabotage the other's keys, while the wily elf stole both sets and substituted fakes. They may or may not have opened the vault, but the tale says the Svarr later sold all the keys and became fantastically wealthy. Toasts are frequently raised to the nameless elf, who is said to be still on the run.

Another Æmber-related legend relates the creation of Ümber, when an experimental Martian device accidentally transmuted nearby Æmber into a dull grey substance. Many Elders have attempted to replicate the process to make an ultimate weapon to threaten the Æmber of their enemies, but they have only managed to destroy large amounts of their own Æmber, often in very messy ways. Other tales aren't as humorous, however.

The coming of the Devouring Sands of Hasp, it is said, still causes nightmares in some witnesses or survivors. Emerging near the Red, in hours they swept all the way to the Spire before dissipating to dust. Everything in their path was pulled underground and never seen again. Nothing like this has ever been firmly documented, however. Most beings assume it was some experiment gone wrong or blame it on the demons of Dis, neither of which are very comforting explanations.

The majority of Locality residents now view the Movig Collapse as fable, for how could an entire nation-state melt into the ground overnight? Abandoned ruins and lost civilizations are discovered all the time, but no one has managed to find even a trace of this sunken city of legend. Still, items believed to be linked to the mythical Movig Technocracy can be found at high-end auctions in Hub City. No one can quite figure out what they are, but they do fetch high prices.

These are but a few of the most well-known legends of the Local Group. Others, such as the stories of the Silver Frontiers, the Day the Æmber Froze, the Dripping Rainbow, and especially the Storm-City of Yexen, are slowly spreading from isolated spots, poised to begin sweeping across Kaevalus. With each expedition into uncharted sectors, new tales are born as well, for the Crucible is nothing if not a place of legends.

HUB CITY

Hub City is a sprawling metropolis, and within the patchwork quilt of its distinct districts lies adventure interwoven with webs of intrigue. It is a city of constant change, and those who enter never know exactly what they will stumble upon next.

A Place Unlike Any Other

Hub City is not the largest of the cities within Kaevalus; farther to the east lies the Rust Magnapolis of the decaying Aa'con Theocracy, which encompasses untold kilometers on (and within) the sprawling Plateau Plains. Nor can it be said that Hub City is the most populated of developments, for the amount of life packed into the glimmering Hypermaze of the bacterial jessile stands alone in that regard. For sheer danger, none can match the razor-riddled nests of Ulgooltha, while the holographic Spires of Rublex can probably win the claim of being the wealthiest of cities. Yet there is something about Hub City—a bustling urban conglomeration of sudden change and strange juxtapositions—that makes it the center for action, a unique standout even among the many wonders found in the Local Group and all of Kaevalus. It is a place of unmatched connections, a city where plots and intrigues abound, everyone has a scheme, and the unexpected seems to wait around every corner.

Like the Crucible as a whole, Hub City is not dominated by a single culture, but rather serves as home to an enormous number of different species, creatures, and organizations. What is so unusual about the place is that it packs such a wide variety into a single urban setting. Incongruity abounds, and stepping through a gateway to another district can take a traveler to a place that differs radically in culture, architecture, technology level, and more from the district they just left. That same experience can be repeated with entirely different results upon entering each district in turn. This is quite an inversion of most settlements, which typically boast a dominant culture, with perhaps a few quarters occupied by beings of different species, civilizations, or organizations. In Hub City, the only mainstream is that there is no mainstream.

Strange Beginnings

There are many theories on how Hub City developed in so unique a manner compared to other cities in the Local Group, but it is difficult to pick out truth from legend. The most popular tale suggests that long ago, the heart of what would become the city was a confluence of teleportation portals: strange gateways known as "zooms" that connected far distant regions from all over the unfathomably large world. By walking into the gleaming light at the end of a zoom, it was possible to travel great distances in near-instantaneous fashion. As factions across the globe followed these pathways to their termini, they established settlements at the center: Hub City. The stories say that over time, the zooms lost power and blinked out of existence. No one has presented any real evidence that zooms ever existed, however, despite the many claims that zoom portals can still be found in the city in the darkest alleyways or in secret tunnels.

The techno-monks of the All-Temple assert instead that the city was founded as different factions of the Crucible followed a comet that fell from above. the monks say that these beings built an enormous temple on ground zero, for the meteor strike left not a crater, but instead the blessings of all the deities that ever were or would be. To this day, the monks still bestow their divine sanction upon all who visit their temple (at least, upon those who can leave the requisite offerings as suggested by the monks). Despite the irritated bafflement of researchers, this ceremony does actually seem to confer a temporary and localized favorable probability field upon recipients.

Other beings claim it was not a comet that fell, but an unfinished bit of construction from the artificial world's upper atmosphere, something that went awry in the plans of the seemingly omnipotent Architects. Still other tales suggest that a large deposit of Æmber brought the original settlers, or that the area was the site of a vault battle so large it brought countless species from across Kaevalus; as the battle went on, a city emerged to support the participants and observers.

An ancient accident involving carbonated tachyons means any attempt to radio-date Hub City always results in an origin reading of forty-seven years from now. -Escotera

Most beings simply look to the convergence of rivers at the site as the cause of the city's origin. While this may lack the charm of the other tales, it is probably the one that is correct. One of the Saurian Republic's Imperial Roads runs across the area as well, indicating it was used as a trading center many millennia ago. It is also the site of one of the busiest and oldest Polz Mercantile House caravansaries—large inns serving even larger caravans. Regardless of its origins, Hub City lives up to its name as an intersection of vital trade routes and varied cultural districts.

Districts and Divisions

Hub City is composed of districts, the majority of which are controlled by a single species or organization. Although it has been called "the city of a thousand districts," exactly how many of these zones there are is a matter of some speculation. This is due in part to Hub City's continuous growth, as each species new to the Local Group seeks to establish its own holdings there, but the imprecision is also due to the shifting nature of some zones. Over the years, many thriving sectors have become dilapidated. Hub City abhors a vacuum, so it is never long before other groups seek to expand their territory or newcomers arrive to attempt a takeover. Discerning eyes can still spy evidence of more ancient civilizations, such as classical foundations peeking out from beneath newly built edifices, traces of cultures long since buried by time and magnocrete.

I've been to Hub City many times now, but each time is exciting in a different way. Nothing on any of the planets we've ever explored has the like.

The hundreds of zones within Hub City vary in size, some being as small as a single block of buildings and others spreading out over many kilometers. All districts come with their own unique features. For instance, the technologically advanced Logos have made their zone a shrine to inventions, gadgetry, and trend-setting futuristic design. It is an area marked by spacious spirescrapers and interactive holographic advertisements that hawk the latest developments to discerning buyers, although usually only those for whom price is no object can afford Logos tech. An army of robotic cleaners spotlessly maintains the district, and even the air is of pristine quality thanks to high-powered atmospheric modulators that hover overhead.

Keeping the ventilation clear is no easy task, for the Logos quarter stands beside the klaxxron species' settlement. The klaxxron are also an industrious group, but their district is known as the smoglands, for they still power their machinery and factories with carbon-based fuels, albeit now aided by Æmber injections. Thick pollutants rise from their innumerable smokestacks, shrouding the surrounding areas in dense clouds. So profuse is that roiling smog that it envelops another dozen or so districts, earning them the moniker "the Dark Districts," the lone exception being, of course, Logos. Although klaxxron technology cannot hope to match that of the more advanced Logos, the prices are cheaper and more appealing to beings who don't mind getting a little sooty. It is said that Logos takes a large cut of the sales on breathing masks, smog-removal devices, and see-through-the-murk goggles that are sold throughout this region, and many theorize that this may be a reason why its many negotiatrons lodge only half-hearted complaints.

Other famous districts include the claustrophobic confines of the drune, whose overcrowded hive colonies thrum with the sounds of countless workers. The Emerald Imperic district is marked by thin, labyrinthine streets that wind like canyon rivers through dwell-blocs, yet within a few hours, a visitor could pass through the gates that lock down that zone and enter a flat stretch where the silica cities of the ridcan spread under the sand. The sporronne—a species of sentient purple fungi—have turned a dead forest into their home, weaving structures from soft, rotting wood to act as both residences and banquets.

The mysterious aquan require a water-filled force dome to enclose their liquid territory. A maze of tubes riddles the district to accommodate air-breathing visitors, tourists, and traders. Few outsiders are shown the temple hidden in the deepest part of the city in Aquan Lake, many kilometers below the surface. Even fewer return after visiting it.

Getting Around Hub City

Hub City has many forms of transport, from the ubiquitous hovercabs to the rental quadruped beasts available almost everywhere. Streets of all types run though the city, from hard brick paths along the surface to elevated sways that connect the upper floors of separate buildings.

For those who wish to avoid ambulation, pedwalks are abundant, and an old klaxxron-made steam train runs through almost all of the city. This is a sore point for many of the more technologically advanced species, who prefer their own forms of transport. However, with funds forever tight, the Hub City High Council chose the most affordable option. The archaic rail running through techno districts and forested zones alike is another of the strange juxtapositions that have made the city famous.

What strikes most newcomers to Hub City, as well as many lifelong citizens, is the great disparity between districts: a being can experience abrupt changes simply by passing beneath gates or archways. The thunderous steam-driven and cog-filled society of the v'clik is quartered next to the pastoral peacefulness of the great Cathedral of the Opened Eye. The flame-breathing drakadons have funneled geothermic powers to keep their district at a scalding temperature, while the cephalopodic gnar keep their realm so humid that everything drips with condensation, and streams of water run through every building and street. The tranquil domesticity of the Venlokian district borders the lands known as "the Wilds," a swath left curiously undeveloped and filled with numerous sentient beings, creatures, and hosts of faeries and pixies.

Things to Do, Eat, and Enjoy

While most city districts are self-contained areas dominated by the founding species or organizations, this is not always the case. Indeed, many of Hub City's greatest draws are its multispecies districts. For instance, the centrally located Melting Pot is an entire zone dedicated solely to dining. There, chefs and culinary masters of every known species and culture can be found, serving up a gastronomic smorgasbord of wonders that have earned it a reputation across the Local Group. Restaurant Row demands top prices, but roadside stands, hover-diners, and hidden dives aplenty provide more affordable, yet still superlative delights. The Æmber-infused gourmet creations served in this zone draw the wealthiest (and hungriest) of patrons. Its reputation is so high that there is a black market for the kidnapping of its famous chefs and the pinching of rival eateries' secret recipes.

Several Hub City districts are dedicated entirely to entertainment, from the museum-filled and highbrow Lux precinct to the multicultural Glamwood theater district, where the greatest and most famous singers, dancers, and actors from across the Local Group and beyond perform nightly. There, crowds gather to witness the shapeshifting myclon actor who can take a million different forms, the Brobnar giant who can fit an entire tragedy into a single heartfelt belch, and hundreds of other acts. Even martians can be found in Glamwood, often adopting a disguise to hide their identity from other martians.

Other Hub City districts known for their variety of cultures and species include the ports that serve all forms of transport; the bustling trade zone known as the Big Merch, where deals are made and bits flow; and the capital district of Hubcenter, the headquarters for all civic law. Popular sports such as Æmball and Telenz take place in the stadium zones; vaultheads also gather at the stadiums to experience the latest vault battles across the Local Group via holofields and psi projectors.

Perhaps most infamous of the districts is the Lawless Zone, appropriately on the edges of the Dark Districts. By mysterious decree of first High Council, the city's laws do not apply there—although Shadows enforces its own codes of conduct quite ruthlessly. It is in the Lawless Zone where illicit back-alley deals are made, countless plots are hatched, and nefarious plans are laid.

Who Rules Hub City?

Since the days of its founding, Hub City has governed itself in dual fashion. First are the citywide laws that apply throughout every district. These so-called High Laws are enacted and enforced by the High Council, a ruling body composed of one representative each from the city's twelve most powerful factions known as the First Among Us. In addition to citywide laws, each district run by a specific species or organization has its own laws and governing body. Every citizen and visitor to Hub City is responsible for knowing and following the laws of the district they are in.

For instance, a zone home to hundreds of different species—such as the Melting Pot—is covered by the High Laws alone, while the fortresslike district home to the octogrix is subject not only to the High Laws, but also to its own violently harsh Eight Edicts. The unofficial area that is home to Martian renegades and deserters from Nova Hellas has few laws other than ones designed to protect them from reprisals.

Hub City's varied laws can lead to strange situations. The High Laws hold that all accused beings must have a fair trial, but one culture's idea of fairness might seem unduly lenient to another. While it is possible to appeal a case to the High Council, it can take years for an appeal to be brought before a judge. This does little good for the unfortunate who littered in the Octogrix district and must now serve as target practice for the confrontational species' latest weapon designs—hence the common Hub City warning to "ambulate warily" in certain districts. Fortunately for most beings, district laws hold only in their own districts. So, should a being litter in the Octogrix district but escape into a neighboring district before they can be apprehended, it is nearly impossible to (legally) be extradited without the consent of the High Council.

Conflicts

Hub City's long history was once marred regularly by violent uprisings as various organizations fought and seized one another's territory. With so many species living in close proximity and competing for trade, space, and particularly Æmber, confrontation was frequent and inevitable. In time, though, hostilities began to diminish for a variety of reasons: fresh weather patterns drove aggressors away, new atmospheric mixtures proved unhealthy for would-be conquerors, and most districts simply cut off trade with the more aggressive ones. As on the Crucible, so in Hub City: belligerent powers seldom are able to wage war for long against such a diverse and eclectic array of potential enemies.

Of course, acts of open violence still occur, but they are much rarer and smaller in scale than they were in times past. This does not mean, however, that Hub City has grown peaceable. Instead, hostility has grown more covert. Espionage and underhanded dealings now form a seedy backdrop to the nonstop trade wars and politicking that occur between rival districts. Bounty hunters seek to extradite criminals to districts where they can be tried, while thieves and secret agents seek to take advantage of the different rulings of various districts, skipping through zones to keep one step ahead of pursuit. When required, the High Council unleashes the full might of its enforcer squads, elite police force units composed of the roughest fighters around, many of them veterans of multiple vault battles. Few beings can escape these officers, commonly known as the "hubbers," once they are on the job.

Rules but No Laws

Those who dare enter the mist-shrouded Lawless Zone take their lives into their own hands. Nevertheless, its many bars and gambling houses remain the meeting places for anyone with devious designs and illegal goods to barter. It is said that nearly anything can be found there by those willing to pay the price. Although it is the Lawless Zone, it has plenty of unwritten rules that must be followed. The inhabitants are willing to share most of them with newcomers—for a price, of course.

Forget the laws—respect the rules.

You don't, someone is gonna respect them for you. –DGR

Constant Expansion Everywhere

As new species and would-be empires continue to arrive upon the Crucible, many in the Local Group make their way to Hub City to learn more about their new world and establish enclaves on the city's outskirts to do business and make alliances. With each new enclave, the city sprawls farther across the empty plains. This expansion extends not only outward, but also below the surface. Many beings believe the sonar-sensing darigar were among the first to tunnel under the city, or that they always lived there underground, and the city was built over their fissure villages. The burrow-dens of the newly arrived rodentia now extend deep into the city's bedrock as well. Further, wild cavelok acid-tunnels have become intertwined with proper city ventral tube lines, making them a danger to the unwary who venture into the lower levels.

Hub City also expands upward. The hanging hovergardens of the yeem are moored atop the tallest spirescrapers, and the floating hives of the gaseous helioids are tethered kilometers in the air. When beings look up from Hub City, they can see various Skyborn ships. Usually at least one of the huge Halyards trading vessels common to that faction is docked somewhere in the city, making for an almost permanent feature.

With growth in all directions, thriving trade, specialist goods from every culture imaginable, and a booming black market (especially in the Lawless Zone), Hub City continues to add to its eclectic wonders, and to its reputation as a city of adventure.

THE EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE

At the inland fringes of the Local Group, south of the Great Glass Desert, is a zone of approximately seventy square kilometers where travelers usually experience a significant shift in their emotional state. Long known as the Emotional Landscape, the area has a strong impact on travelers that can be extremely disruptive to their journey. The effects range from mildly unpleasant feelings to fight-inducing rage to awkward or inspiring outbreaks of love.

These emotions can have a long-lasting impact on a traveler's psyche, as well as on their relationships with others. The effects are often more positive than negative, prompting beings to grow and learn from the experience. Empathy is a major component of what is imparted to visitors, fostering in them a greater understanding of others' motivations and feelings.

The Emotional Landscape is saturated with tiny pieces of exceptionally psychically reactive Æmber that, over time, have become charged with sentiments. In addition to transferring the area's current emotional state to visitors, the Æmber and the emotions it carries induce physical changes in the landscape. Seasoned visitors might be able to predict the exact emotions currently affecting the area simply by looking at it.

Emotional changes emerge in a strange, blooming physical form. Pleasant emotions produce relatively soft or flower-like growths that sprawl in forms resembling iridescent ivy, though the exact shapes and the colors can vary. Emotions such as fear, anger, and aggression produce sharp-edged growths including thorns, edged gravel, and fields of prickly spikes. The form the landscape takes remains until the area's emotional state changes again.

The strength of the Emotional Landscape's effect on travelers varies over time. Sometimes it is so mild that it may be weeks or months before it strongly affects people. At its peak intensity, it quickly overwhelms anyone who walks through the area. Some living creatures avoid the region, but a few have learned how to react to the changes in order to make it a hospitable habitat. Some animals (and sometimes plants as well) simply leave the area when it becomes too negative, resulting in irregular migrations that can be noted by outside observers as indicators of what is ahead.

As a personal note: the emotions feel completely genuine, so be wary of making important decisions here. –Inka

Original Feelings

Æmber is notoriously difficult to gather in massive amounts, as large-scale and high-velocity efforts seem to empty deposits faster than projected. In the area the Emotional Landscape now occupies, experimental Æmber-mining efforts used a variety of methods that chipped and broke pieces of Æmber as part of their harvesting processes. The tiny, sometimes almost microscopic, pieces became distributed around the region as the work progressed. Conditions there were rough, and fights broke out often. It took a while for workers to realize that the reason they were always on edge was because the small pieces of Æmber were absorbing and amplifying their emotions.

At about this time, the quantity of charged Æmber reached a critical mass and began to cause physical manifestations of different emotions. As the blooms and growths expanded, they made it increasingly difficult and frustrating for miners to reap the Æmber, which only intensified the emotional feedback loop. Between its effect on the miners and the growing physical barriers, mining became virtually impossible. The initial mines were abandoned, but the failure didn't fully deter future attempts, especially as reports indicated that new clouds of Æmber dust were spontaneously arising and infusing the region as existing Æmber became emotionally stagnant.

The Shifting Landscape

While researchers theorize that the area shifts its emotional state on its own, they know that highly emotionally charged events can change the Emotional Landscape to match them. A strong, widespread emotion might alter the entire region, but it is more common for intense emotions to affect the specific portion of the landscape where they occur. Someone traveling rapidly through the area might experience a rapid-fire blast of different emotions.

Fights or battles taking place in the Emotional Landscape leave behind a strange mix of emotions, with pockets of fear, extreme horror, exhaustion, and dread. However, areas of relief, inspiration, determination, and even joy also occur. After all, the emotions of the victors can be quite different from those of the losers.

Fighting in the region can also cause a strong feedback loop, as the combatants' emotional state feeds into the landscape only for the landscape to amplify it and feed it back to them. Further, the rapid and unusual plant growth that intense emotions cause increasingly interferes with combatants' ability to move quickly and thus to fight effectively. Similar feedback loops can result from other feelings, such as exhilaration from sporting events and commitments to join lives.

Shifting Opportunities

Some beings try to use the Emotional Landscape to their advantage. While a few attempt to make use of the emotional state they find it in, most try to shift it to an emotion compatible with their scheme and then to keep it that way for as long as possible. Inevitably, they discover that controlling the landscape is far more difficult than they planned. Beings most familiar with these types of schemes realize that they only have a limited amount of time to work with and that short-term efforts are far more likely to be successful. However, if their plan depends too much on a single emotion, things can fall apart quickly if that emotion transforms to something else. Ensuring that all agents maintain a neutral state of mind so as to not tamper with a desired landscape is especially difficult, and even robotic life forms can be overcome with fear or happiness given the power of the region.

Queliana's Crucible Carnival

A human named Queliana leads a unique collection of entertainers who travel the Local Group in a large, eccentric troupe. The multi-species troupe uses fantastically decorated and brightly colored dirigibles to advertise their show as they transport it from one settlement to the next. When their tour takes them through the Emotional Landscape, they send in an advance group to launch the wildest of parties in one section to shift it into a jovial mood. Once things are set up, Queliana's clowns and entertainers use her emotional amplifier devices to help maintain the emotional energy for the duration of their performance. She knows from previous experience that they can expect about three days of shows before the emotional feedback diminishes the Æmber and they must move on.

The carnival features a main stage covered by canopies suspended from the dirigibles parked above. Shows can host hundreds of beings, split between the main stage, a half-dozen sideshows, and a dozen rides. The rides are truly spectacular, taking advantage of magical sciences, bizarre creatures, and even more bizarre technology the group has acquired during its tours. Patrons can ride rockets spiraling into the sky and float down on cushions of glittery mist, race atop agile stalking-birds around an obstacle course, and fashion their own psychic auras with fanciful corona projectors. Betting types can even take on the Terrible Towering Trelk, a bombastically jovial giant, in feats of strength.

Dis Traps

The powerful feelings associated with the Emotional Landscape naturally attract the attention of the demons of Dis, even though such artificially generated emotions provide little sustenance for their species and they themselves are unaffected by the landscape's properties. Their attention comes more from the intensity of the emotions, which can open a gateway to Dis or passages to other regions across the Local Group.

Æmber-Mining Perils

Despite the difficulties of large-scale Æmber mining, a known expanse of Æmber is just too tempting for everyone to ignore. Periodically, a being comes up with a new mining method to attempt, but no method lasts long in the Emotional Landscape. Most prove to be not worth the cost or effort.

One business, Group Think Inc. of Jaxtown, attempted a huge strip-mining operation to scoop up the Æmber-infused blooms and soil, and then pulverized them. It used a conveyor to send the material through a multistage sifting operation. This resulted in the distribution of many more microparticles, making the area even more susceptible to emotional resonances. The ground there is still noticeably loose and sometimes acts like quicksand.

Quantum Concepts, a far more technologically-minded company, once used a multitude of simple cogwork devices to draw microscopic particles of Æmber through the surrounding material and blooms into the mechanism. It was successful in gathering a relatively large amount of Æmber, but then demons erupted from a portal and descended on the amassed material in a chaotic, frenzied attack. The demons and the miners' mindless automatons fought over the Æmber for days in an epic battle.

One of my colleagues was involved in this matter. They claim the demons didn't seem to be really attacking, but they were at a loss as to the true goal of the always-enigmatic beings.

NEW LANDSCAPES?

As unique as the Emotional Landscape is thought to be, there are tales of similar regions elsewhere in the distant reaches of Kaevalus and beyond. It is certainly possible that the Æmber microparticles could have been transported either by wind or via deliberate relocation efforts to grow new Emotional Landscapes. More worrisome, these stories seem to indicate that the emotional effects in the other regions are even more intense or shift as though the terrain is attempting to determine which feelings resonate the strongest. If so, this could be a sign that the terrain has achieved sentience of a sort and may one day seek to join others of its kind until the entire Crucible becomes emotionally unified.

The demons were unable to steal the precious material but did ensure that everyone knew similar efforts would face similar attacks. To this day, travelers stumble upon mechanical parts and broken exoskeletons that periodically emerge from the shifting terrain.

Æmber Research and Emotions

The Emotional Landscape provides raw emotions at intensities typically unattainable, and some researchers exploit that resource to amplify their own emotionally charged Æmber creations.

Fusing raw emotions to Æmber is one of the most common practical uses for the area; Dis demons are thought to use such material to enhance aspects of their armor. Other beings incorporate it into specially crafted items, potions, and weapons. Martian Elders regularly send expeditions to gather samples for their ongoing experiments on their own Soldiers.

Some researchers set up temporary labs at the edges of the region to rapidly prototype items. In particular, they wish to understand how combinations of emotions affect the local Æmber. Emotional eruptions are of intense interest, and tend to manifest in the rapid blooming of plants with new, intense hues.

Another line of interest surrounds the use of Æmber powder made of the minute particles in the Landscape. What happens when it is mixed into foodstuffs or chemical potions? Some researchers are even working on devices packed with emotion-infused Æmber. They particularly hope to create grenades that could cause targets to befriend their foes, if only temporarily.

KETTLE BOTTOM MINING TOWN

Kettle Bottom was once a bustling mining community near the northern Photic coast making slow but steady Æmber extractions. Eventually, the veins began to dwindle, thin, and then completely dry up, like almost all such mines seem to do eventually. Desperate to extract one last haul, the crew used modified particle weapons to dig deeper and deeper, stripping away the rock faster and faster, until an accident occurred that caused a massive cave-in. Of the hundreds of miners, not one returned to the surface.

No one is sure exactly what happened to cause the cave-in. Some say it was a result of questionable safety practices; others claim it was Svarr sabotage; and still others, speaking only in hushed whispers, say the workers crossed into places better left buried and that the mine was crushed in an attack from below. After "The Incident," the mine fell into disuse, and the surrounding townsfolk eventually packed up and moved on, leaving Kettle Bottom to decay. However, just recently, the mine erupted. And everything changed.

The new problems started when the mine's primary opening suddenly spewed pure liquid Æmber high into the air for several hours. The flood reached the streets of nearby Kettle Bottom and shot out into the surrounding prairie, moving as frantically as if the Æmber itself had been infused with fear by something down below. Most of the material appeared to evaporate over the following day.

The eruption captured imaginations across the Local Group, prompting renewed interest in Kettle Bottom and its decayed and sprawling mine. The interest was so high, in fact, that a few factions have begun to move back into the town and reopen the businesses they left abandoned. Some are hoping to encourage a renewal of mining operations, while others are simply hoping to make a quick bit off of those foolhardy enough to brave the mines. Living in Kettle Bottom has not been without its challenges, however.

Matter-of-fact discussion in an unknown language, punctuated by a horrifying chorus of screams, can occasionally be heard echoing out of the mine's main entrance. Sometimes a column of violet flame or a noxious, pestilent fog belches from the openings, or a murmook's giant claw reaches out, snaps up a passerby, and drags them down into the darkness. Most recently, a rainbow of exploding Æmber bubbles drifted out of the mine and blew out the windows and roofs of several of the dilapidated buildings and of some new ones as well.

Countless bizarre incidents have occurred around the mine, and they show no sign of slowing. Many beings cite these as proof that the miners, in their desperation for more and more Æmber, dug too deep and hit something that, while perhaps not malevolent, is at the very least not rational.

Hog's Back Saloon

In the center of town sits Hog's Back Saloon, a tavern and gambling hall rumored to have been bankrolled by the Svarr, perhaps by Old Bruno himself. The exterior of the saloon is painted and brightly lit, which causes it to stand out among the rest of the town's ramshackle wooden buildings. The interior décor, however, consists almost entirely of stolen and discarded items. The original pitted walls have been pasted over with old datareader sheets, the lighting in the main saloon ranges from flaming torches to elaborate chandeliers missing most of their crystal, and not a single chair matches another in the entire building. And yet, in typical Svarr fashion, the combination of these shabby elements makes the whole room work, and somehow seem effortlessly charming.

If you want the latest rumors about the mine, visit the Hog.
–Inka

Standing behind the bar is Gilley, a robot who has managed the saloon since its inception and is the only original inhabitant of Kettle Bottom left in town. Gilley has a painfully slow, monotone, and methodical cadence to his speech, and he inexplicably calls everyone "Franx." Ever since the eruption, part of his memory seems to have become corrupted. Asking him anything about the history of the mine causes Gilley to visibly tremble for a few moments before launching into an orchestral rendition of "Æmber Blossom Special," a favorite tune from the time of the mine's collapse. It is assumed that much might be learned from Gilley about the tragedy if someone could repartition and repair his corrupted memory.

Watch yer betting, though—mate o' mine lost their ability to lie from a bad bet in a game of five-angle draw.
–DGR

There is always a game to be found at the Hog's Back, ranging in complexity from Sphere Chess to Skullfist. There's always a wager to be had as well. As Old Bruno says, "any game worth the time is even better with something on the line." However, rarely is something so prosaic as bits gambled. Favors are the typical starting point, particularly among the Svarr, and from there, the bets become increasingly esoteric. Things like happiest childhood memories, the ability to use adverbs, the color of one's eyes, and sometimes even a being's entire identity can be put on the table and let ride. Of course, more often than not, the house wins.

The Azimuthery

Just down the street from the Hog's Back sits the Azimuthery, a laboratory that opened where a brainfeed sensorium had once been housed. A rusty, disc-headed cyborg named Eight-Clips has set up shop there building spectral borers, tendrils of energy that have been sutured together at one end and fused with a quark drill bit. These glowing filaments burrow through the ground faster than any molecular pickaxe, and tiny cameras mounted atop the machines record their surroundings and stream the video feed back to the shop. Eight-Clips is attempting to use the spectral borers to map the mine's buried tunnels, both for posterity and perhaps for a few bits as well, as many of the newly arrived beings at Kettle Bottom are eager to learn anything they can about what lies below.

The spectral borers have already recorded and diagrammed an underground sea complete with crashing waves, glowing rock formations, and what appear to be massive padlike flora that careen in flotillas across the surface of the water. Eight-Clips has also found evidence of other remarkable areas, such as a spherical chamber many kilometers in diameter with millions of rattling chains webbed together and linked to the walls; a maze of tunnels that is constantly bending, twisting, and redrawing itself with each observation; and a skeletal ziggurat guarded by amorphous creatures that appear to be made of quantum foam. Most importantly, the borers have spotted fresh veins of Æmber glowing almost everywhere, some pulsing with energy like overloaded circuits.

Most outsiders have dismissed Eight-Clips's discoveries as falsified data deliberately concocted to become new entertainment at their recently announced sensorium reopening. This may change as other explorations gather more information from the cleared mine shafts.

Æmber Seams

At the edge of town sits Æmber Seams, a bespoke clothing shop run by the goblin tailor Vernatella Chablis, who once specialized in creating Æmber-infused suits and dresses for the gentry of Hub City—that is, until the night of a Hub City charity gala many decades back, where almost half of the attendees were wearing Chablis-designed creations.

Unfortunately, that much identical emotionally bound Æmber in such close proximity created a convergent harmonic singularity that caused every one of Vernatella's designs to implode, along with their wearers. Vernatella barely escaped Hub City alive, and she has been wandering from place to place ever since, doing minor repairs and tailoring wherever she can. Her travels eventually brought her to Kettle Bottom, as she believes the liquid Æmber is just the thing for creating the finest gowns ever seen in Hub City or anywhere in the Local Group.

The Mine Entrance

The Kettle Bottom Mine is a spiraling cone-shaped excavation that leads from the rocky surface down into the undercrust, with dozens of openings and entrances scattered around the main pit. Most of these were sealed off after The Incident, but with the recent eruption and the subsequent Æmber rush it brought, the stones that blocked the entrances have been stripped away, and the dark mineshafts are open once again. New shafts are also being dug out each day by competing mining expeditions.

An expeditionary team from a multispecies consortium has made several delves along the thin tunnels near the main mines, and they claim that the topmost passageways sprawl in all directions in a seemingly haphazard manner, as if there had been no plan to them at all. Some extend only a few dozen meters before hitting a dead end, while others meander in loops before reopening on the other side of the mine pit. But at least one, they say, slopes downward for at least a kilometer before it changes into a perfectly hexagonal passage, with regular honeycomb patterns taking shape on the walls. The tunnels there extend at perfect angles, directly up and down, with no stairs, ladders, or ropes. The team has had no luck whatsoever in finding any Æmber yet; however, several of their antigrav mining carts have returned to the surface carrying bizarre and elaborate contraptions as well as several unidentified creatures the team quickly placed into cages.

The Knights of the Silent Vigil from Sanctum also have a presence just at the edge of the mine. However, they have no obvious interest in the hunt for Æmber and instead seem to be preparing for battle. The knights have hollowed out a stone bunker near one opening and have encased it with a thick, glowing shield. They have also erected massive energy lance ballistae, all of which are locked, loaded, and pointed directly down into the mine pit. Those knights who occasionally exit the bunker refuse to discuss exactly what it is they're doing there or what troubles them about the mine. All of them, however, seem very much on edge.

"The mine has no bottom," according to a miner I'd worked with. Poor chap later went Untamed.

Delving Deeper

Based on information purchased from Eight-Clips, an all-AI excavation crew recently began laser-boring straight down near the main shaft. After several days of descent, the passage became freezing cold. Thick, blue ice formed on the walls just before their tunnel cracked the ceiling of an abandoned underground city half-sunk into a bed of snow and ice. Huge buildings of translucent glass stretched up toward where the expeditionary robots clung to the icy stalactites above. Any plans to explore the buildings were suddenly cut short, however, when the robots reported sensory overloads and their visuals cut out. Their last signals included increasingly loud static and images of dark, nebulous forms rising from the floor directly toward the unfortunate team members. Attempts to recover the team have met with no success, as the bottom of the shaft shows no signs of any large openings: only more rock.

Another group, the Subterranean Conquest Contingent, has made the deepest delve into the mine to date. Their sojourn ended abruptly, though, when the team wandered into a dark passage that was encased in webbing. Without warning, ghastly arthropods with claws of pure Æmber clacked forth from holes in the walls and, within moments, dragged off half the team. Only a handful of SCC members escaped with their lives, and their chilling reports were the stuff of nightmares. The tone of mine exploration has changed drastically since this event. Now, veterans of vault battles and other serious explorers are being hired to purge the mines of these dangers so that the more prudent miners and scientists will be willing to return. Until then, the pull of the riches and perhaps even new technologies that might be waiting in the mine's strange depths is enough for rogue groups to venture down into its passages.

Some of the stories about this place I've overheard in Q City are very unusual, even for this world. I would imagine the Captain will launch our own expedition at some point. -Ingram

MACIS SWAMP

Deep in the tangled wilderness, just outside the Valley of Jewels, lies the dank and steamy Macis Swamp. It is relatively unremarkable, as wetlands go, with one glaring exception: everything there is made of metal. Wiry platinum moss dangles from the plutonium willow trees, each tinkling and chiming in the wind. Thick lead mangroves, their trunks as heavy and solid as a neutron slug, block harsh sunlight and create a perpetual twilight. Vicious, banded cable vines writhe in the dank air, each tendril capable of wrapping live prey in a viselike grip and constricting them into easily digestible nutrients. Golden mosquitoes swirl and buzz, a mere nuisance singly but, when swarming, are capable of siphoning the flowing electrons from mechanical creatures and cybernetic enhancements in moments. Even the ground itself is an amalgam of various soft inorganics like mercury, rubidium, and gallium, all swirled together into a heavy, squelching muck.

I've found samples collected here offer excellent insights in both new cybernetic designs and organic templates. A fascinating visit for any scientist. -Escotera

Denizens of the Swamp

Macis Swamp contains some of the most dangerous creatures, robotic or otherwise, found anywhere on the Crucible. It hosts countless varieties of metallic reptiles. Members of one reptilian species, Macis asps, naturally alter the nanobot-laden toxin they produce to make it the deadliest possible to the biology of the being or creature they've most recently bitten. Another metallic reptilian, the alumigator, undulates its shiny body silently through the quicksilver sludge, constantly on the search for its next meal.

Also making their home in the swamp are the ever-dangerous dropadillos, armored marsupial bots that hang upside-down by their prehensile tails from tree branches and wait for unsuspecting passersby beneath them. Then, without warning, the dropadillos loose their grip, curl their body into a ball, and plummet down upon their unsuspecting prey like angry, clawed cannonballs traveling at terminal velocity. There are also tales of the chupazero, a cryptozoological inorganic said to hunt from the shadows of the swamp. Stories abound of its illuminated, hate-filled eyes, each a smoldering pit of flame. The shriek of its titanium talons as they screech across the metal trees is said to be the last sound its prey ever hears.

Outsiders in Macis

Numerous tiny faeries and pixies make their home in Macis Swamp, which has in turn made the swamp one of the Svarr's alternate sources of these incredibly useful flying creatures. The Svarr elves keep a small encampment on the edge of the swamp, where they reprogram captured automatons to their requirements. The tiny robotic creatures are most commonly caught using swamp boats that trail large airborne nets. Later, new instructions are individually hard coded into their firmware, and once this reprogramming is complete they are packaged for delivery to Shadows enclaves elsewhere. The process is quite labor intensive, and the elves are constantly on the lookout for more hands to help them with such efforts.

Sylicates also flock to the swamp, viewing it as a destination getaway. The bubbling mercury and heavy metals boil away the annoying organic residues that build up on their exterior, leaving behind a pristine stone surface, a process they find incredibly soothing. As such, there is an entire resort spa on stilts above one of the swamp's hottest areas just to cater to this and similar species. The owner, Pearl Marfley, has her massive stone hands full running the establishment as word of the spa has spread across the Local Group. Even heavily-insulated organics have visited to try the molten metals for themselves.

What appear to be TruInt drones recently arrived and have built a hidden processing facility that siphons mercury, gallium, and other heavy metals from the swamp. The facility charges them with Æmber and then ships the volatile slurry…somewhere. Perhaps to Mt. Strond, perhaps to the Red Hand, or perhaps just far underground near the swamp. Billows of noxious fumes often fill the air, but their source is not apparent. Exposure to this Æmber byproduct is having serious effects on much of the local wildlife, but it is hard to tell if this is for better or worse.

Logos, of course, has a field research facility there as well. There have been sightings of some of the most dangerous creatures in the swamp being led into its lab, which has given rise to speculation about possible mecha-genetic manipulation and the creation of a "hyperpredator." So far, these have simply been rumors.

Carbon Fen

Carbon Fen is an area on the eastern edge of the swamp where the mercury turns brackish, swirling and bubbling together with sludge and decaying biomass from the adjacent organic marshes. Swimming and scuttling through the scorching swamp are countless varieties of crustaceans, their alloy carapaces glowing red in the bog's intense heat.

Carbon Fen is also one of the homes of the silent and reclusive Mushroom People as well as Spore Town, their local village. Spore Town is firmly welded onto the bark of the metallic trees, high above the fen's roiling morass. Ornate bridges spiderweb between the massive metal trees and connect Spore Town into a cohesive whole. The Mushroom People, using mild electrical currents to fractalize the surrounding metals, create some of the most beautiful lattice sculptures and staves seen anywhere in the Local Group. These implements can be imbued with powerful Æmber tracery by their fungal sage-leaders to form potent charms.

One of the most remarkable things about Carbon Fen is that there is very little Æmber there. This why, some hold, that the Mushroom People have been able to survive and flourish in the fen, as all but their sages weaken and shrivel when exposed to it. Unfortunately, the exhaust from the nearby plant is making the People extremely ill. The human witch Teliga, who also lives in Spore Town, is forming a team of radical young hunting witches she's dubbed the Steel Shepherds. With this team, she plans to fight back against whoever is responsible, and promises to sabotage any facilities they find.

Piranha monkeys, one of the other rare carbon-based life forms found near the swamp, are found in Carbon Fen as well. Entire troupes swing just above the superheated surface of the bog, snatching up the crustaceans and hurling the emptied shells back into the smoldering muck. They also roost and clamber around Spore Town but seem to have no interest in attacking the Mushroom People. As a result, some of the piranha monkeys are approaching something resembling domestication, though this hinges on their being fed a near-constant diet of fresh meat.

Blood Storm Fields

Directly in the center of the Macis Swamp lies a massive sinkhole, where mercury sludge cascades in a rippling, reflective circular shower into a swirling pool below. The metallic plants have all bent and twisted away from the site, as if recoiling in horror at what happened there, and the sky is a constantly mixing churn of dark red clouds. This huge chasm is called, rather incongruously, the Blood Storm Fields.

The Hub City Historical Society, a group that valiantly attempts to record all events in the Local Group, claims that this is the site of a massive war long ago. Records unearthed by the organization describe twin cities that were engaged in a cold war with one another for years. The northern city, known for its brilliant scientists and inventors, built increasingly devastating sub-quantum particle weaponry and force fields. Its twin to the south held the most erudite of Æmber users and healers, who researched and created increasingly powerful virus-incantations and protective macrocreatures they could pull from pocket dimensions.

I, myself, researched this matter for a client, but could find no evidence to back up the story. They still insisted on launching an expedition; luckily I insisted on payment before they left.

The clashes and the rapid escalation on both sides grew, but the cities always remained at a stalemate. It's unclear which side unleashed its doomsday weapon first, but once it did, the other city quickly responded. The combined power of the unstable devices caused the ground beneath the cities to thrum and tear open in a ravenous sinkhole. The cities, however, were not entirely destroyed in the blast. As they slid into the chasm, they were dimensionally compacted as they twisted along the edges of the swirling tunnel. They finally came to a rest along one of the massive root structures of the swamp's metal mangrove trees, far beneath the surface—or so the story goes. A number of beings believe the tale and are eager to investigate the area in hopes of reclaiming even a portion of the cities' remarkable technologies.

Far below the sinkhole, the constantly falling mercury coalesces into a rotating pool of thick, shimmering silver. More than one traveler has claimed that this whirlpool is actually a quicksilver wormhole connecting the Macis Swamp to the Arygrum Bog far to the northwest. So far, this seems just a rumor from swamp-addled adventurers, as few are interested in leaping into the metallic whirlpool to find out if the tale is true.

Ironweb Foundry

Deep in the dark recesses of Macis Swamp, hundreds of huge metal spiders have spun a communal web of barbed ghost-iron, an impossibly strong yet lightweight substance. Known as Ironweb Foundry, it has a massive glowing funnel in the center, where something—or someone—lives. The spiders frequently bring inorganic food and other offerings into the mouth of the funnel, then skitter back out again to hunt for more. While they immediately pounce upon and pierce their tungsten fangs into any robot they can find, they have little use for biological creatures. Because they ignore organic beings, it is sometimes possible for biologicals to cut away strands of their webbing to use for purposes beyond catching steeligators and other metallic prey.

Star Alliance contact teams have established a rudimentary bartering system with the spiders. Its most daring explorers bring their scrap metals into the swamp and launch them into the massive web. Then, while the spiders are busy rummaging through the scrap and carrying pieces back to the central funnel, Alliance officers use a proton beam cutter to slice away strands of ghost-iron and bring them back to the *Quantum*'s computers for analysis and attempts at synthesis.

Some of the most famous performers in Hub City—like Daphne Cyan, the subsonic symphonic composer, and Jupiter Monsoon, the zero-gravity saurian wrestler—have taken to having their clothes fashioned out of a thin ghost-iron filament weave. Such stylish and finely draping armor, they rightly surmised, would be perfect for added protection when on tour.

Outfits of the incredibly rare, incredibly expensive material have become the true mark of style-setters in Hub City and the Spires of Rubex, though some of whom wear the protective material aren't interested in attention. The most devious of sylicate assassins also use the webbing in garrotes, as their stone hands are among the few capable of holding the filament without being sliced into ribbons. Some of the Halyards shipbuilders of Skyborn pay exorbitant amounts for ghost-iron silk. They have designed new sails from the material that both provide motive power and protect against attack by Æmberdrakes and other, even more dangerous airborne threats.

OUTPOST NYYON

Dealing with the Martian Empire is always a risky and dangerous affair. Say the wrong thing, or simply be the wrong person or species in the wrong place at the wrong time, and ray guns immediately appear. Martian Empire outposts are among the few places where non-martians can attempt to make contact, barter information, and trade technology with martians without immediately being fired upon. Usually.

Outposts range from simple sentry towers to large bases of operations. Many are established around the perimeter of Nova Hellas, the center of the Empire. Others are built in areas the Elders wish to covertly keep an eye on, study, and likely attempt to invade in the future. The martians aren't fooling anyone, of course; everyone knows they use the outposts to spy on the areas around them. Most beings correctly assume that Mars also has hidden outposts for its truly secret operations, especially in or near valuable areas like Hub City.

Outpost Nyyon is a moderately-sized, fortified outpost that incorporates the original research tower of a Martian Elder of the same name as well as a collection of smaller buildings. Now, it serves many different purposes as well as that of scientific inquiry. Most beings currently know of it as an unusually popular Martian trading post, where people with information or materials useful to Mars can exchange them for some of its lesser technology. Given the risks, anyone dealing with the martians is likely currying favor or in desperate need of Martian tech, even if it is the usually outdated or underpowered versions they sell to outsiders.

Outsiders often call the location Outpost Neon, in a slight mispronunciation of its Martian name that recalls the bright lights seen around the outpost at night. Others call it Outpost Stranger after the unusual beings it tends to attract, as well as the oddities of its immediate surroundings.

"Of course no one suspects!" You hear that a lot at Neon.

Approaching Outpost Nyyon

Outpost Nyyon can usually be found at the southern edge of Nova Hellas, where the red Martian landscape crumbles into badlands as it meets the Hirook Wetlands. Simply approaching the outpost is dangerous enough, as the marsh is filled with all manner of mysterious and dangerous creatures and Nova Hellas is home to blaster-wielding martians.

Adding to the difficulties is a massive, erratic portal that winks in and out of existence at apparently random locations around or above the outpost. It seems inexplicably tied to the facility. It's also the reason why the outpost can only *usually* be found in its original location. The portal haphazardly brings all manner of things from around the Crucible and dumps them near or on the outpost—creatures, vehicles, water, and even bits of the landscape. Sometimes the portal crashes into the structure itself, transporting Outpost Nyyon elsewhere for an indeterminate amount of time, then returning the station (and anyone nearby) to a spot sometimes near its previous site.

Word of warning— folks in charge have no sense of humor 'bout sharing personal property. Right serious, they are.

Outpost Layout

Martian outposts vary in design, but Outpost Nyyon incorporates many of the most common elements:

Command Tower: The center of the outpost is dominated by a slim and very tall tower that rises through the primary domed area. It becomes much wider at the upper few levels and is itself topped with a green dome. The top looks a lot like a Martian flying saucer—which, of course, it is (though the martians, also of course, deny this). The tower is Nyyon's original research building, but now it also holds the outpost's command center and serves as the primary observation deck for watching over the surrounding area. Additionally, it houses a retractable experimental portal projector. Below the flying saucer are the tower's midlevels, which contain Elder Nyyon's labs, workshops, command staff residences, and other administrative operations.

Gates: Pairs of heavily armored gates on opposite sides of the outpost allow entry through the perimeter wall. The gates are guarded and crackle with electrical energy, thus serving as a harsh warning to guests and enemies alike. Visitors are not allowed near the turrets or walls, but important guests and prisoners (often one and the same) are occasionally taken to the command center at the top of the tower.

Outpost Weaponry

If needed, Outpost Nyyon has the following weapons, all crewed by Martian Soldiers with Agility 3 and 2 ranks in Gunnery:

- Eight defensive ray cannons (Fire Arc Forward; Gunnery, Damage 3; Critical 4; Range [Extreme]; Blast 1, Breach 1, Tractor 3)
- Three collapsed-matter mortars (Fire Arc All; Gunnery, Damage 9, Critical 3; Range [Extreme]; Blast 7, Concussive 1, Innaccurate 1, Personal Scale)

Central Zone: Visitors are allowed access to a number of the utilitarian metal buildings within the main dome. This sprawling trade zone is the most popular area and has both interior and exterior markets. To attract more traffic, the martians allow outsiders to temporarily (and rather expensively) rent areas in which to sell their own wares. People with information and goods to trade directly with the martians are escorted to the appraisal bays. Martians, mostly high-ranking Soldiers, assess the items and bargain as required using a variety of scanners and databases to correctly identify and price an item or type of information. Anything deemed too valuable or too important is immediately reported and handed over to one of the Elders in the command tower.

Nonvendor visitors are not typically encouraged to stay overnight, but the outpost does include a guest facility that holds about two or three dozen people. It is most often used when the outpost is unexpectedly relocated by the portal. In part to discourage its use, and in part to save space, the accommodations are very small and arranged in cramped capsules.

Defense Perimeter: An armored octagonal wall surrounds Outpost Nyyon, with a bulky turret at each intersection bristling with ray guns, gun ports, and sensor arrays. Two main turrets guard the two entrances, while two others include roof-mounted landing pads that can retract via iris hatchways. One turret contains a hidden emergency flying saucer just in case things get too dangerous at the outpost (and especially for rescuing valued beings from portal accidents), and another conceals a weapons silo with a dozen attack and defense missiles.

Martian Soldiers live and train in the Compound, a collection of structures located just outside the northern turret. The Compound is protected by an energy fence that can be switched off as needed, and the surroundings are protected and patrolled by drones and Martian hounds. The fence is transparent so that the displays of martial prowess can intimidate visitors with the superior might of the Martian Empire.

The Vaxrak Portal

The Vaxrak Portal is the result of Elder Nyyon's experiments to create a gateway circumventing the Crucible's mysterious Boundary, which prevents spaceflight. The hope was, and still is, to enable Martian vehicles (and only Martian vehicles) to achieve orbit and access to the universe beyond. Unfortunately, during the test run, instead of opening into outer space, the other end of the portal mysteriously rerouted to the surface of the Crucible.

Now the portal erratically moves around the outside of the outpost, changing location, size, color, and transparency. Flashes of energy crackle around its irregular perimeter. Sometimes the portal fades almost completely, while at other times it churns like a violent storm. It is common to see images through the portal, and sometimes it provides glimpses of the point it is connected to. However, some beings claim to have seen much more, including different Martian Empires, views looking down from the top of the Spire, visions of fallen civilizations, and other fantastic and unsettling things.

The far end of the portal opens to random places, jumping from location to location and remaining open for equally random periods of time. Some beings theorize that it locks onto Æmber deposits, prompting others to attempt to use the portal to locate and acquire those deposits. They have just enough success to keep others trying, but not enough to prove the theory conclusively.

Neither end remains in a completely stable location or state. Because both benign and dangerous things were being sucked into the portal and spit out at the other end, Nyyon's research tower was converted into Outpost Nyyon to guard against dangerous creatures and other risks. The outpost's weapons automatically reorient to track the portal when it goes active, readying to open fire the instant a threat is confirmed. The station's sensors, cameras, and other arrays also attempt to record anything viewed in the portal for Elders to review and analyze.

Occasionally, the portal removes a guest or Martian detachment that the Empire actually cares about, prompting the immediate deployment of the rescue saucer, which is always fueled, crewed, and ready atop the command tower. A rescue isn't deployed for just anyone, and it doesn't always work. The portal has been responsible for dumping martians and others far and wide around the Local Group for years now. Some beings may have been deposited farther away, but as of yet, only those transported elsewhere within the Local Group have ever made it back.

On occasions when the portal swallows the outpost itself, the entire structure relocates. Fortunately, Elder Nyyon determined a method for returning it after "reversing the polarity" of an Æmber charge routed through the original portal projector on top of the tower. The tricky bit is that the Æmber must be in exactly the right psychic state for the inversion to work, and it takes the martians hours or days to tune it as required. They must also acquire enough Æmber if they don't have enough stored at the outpost.

Nyyon privately fears that if the outpost is struck again before it can be returned to its original location, it could cause catastrophic events. They speculate that a spatial feedback loop could suck all of reality into a different universe, or collapse spacetime into a zero-dimensional construct, or just transmute the outpost into glowing purple goo. This likely means the martians really don't know and are very eager not to find out.

Some of the Science Division wonder if the portal might be a way to escape this world. I have to imagine Nyyon has tried this, but if nothing else it might offer new ways to explore the Crucible.

Elder Nyyon and Outpost Personnel

I have corresponded with Nyyon several times concerning the portal issue. One day, I hope they will allow me to personally inspect the device. Then its true potential will surely be unlocked!

Elder Nyyon is an expert in Martian portal technology and obsessed with the idea of Martian access to space via portals. This infatuation and their unquenchable curiosity often override their natural arrogance and aloofness when dealing with others and underlings. They are particularly obsessed with the power and accolades they would receive should they be the one to crack the problem and allow flying saucers to gain their rightful aerospace superiority.

Nyyon is professionally embarrassed, perplexed, and intrigued about why their first major attempt turned into the dangerous and unstable mess that is the Vax-rak Portal, and they and their team work every day to learn what happened. Their first order of business is to collapse the chaotic portal, and they make periodic attempts to do so using the experimental portal projector on top of the command tower. Nothing has worked yet, and some attempts have even made the portal's effects temporarily worse.

Elder Nyyon thinks they are missing something important about the Crucible's nature, possibly something outside the Martian Empire's normal realms of study. Through intermediaries, they have put the word out that beings with unique information, chemical elements, and verifiable recordings of unusual Crucible- or Æmber-related experiences will receive top payment or items in trade if they bring their information to the outpost and the martians find it "interesting." The inevitable unrelated information and goods the outpost receives are added to the Martian databases or sent to other researchers if they are usable in other ways.

Rypclyyp is Nyyon's lead assistant Martian Elder and scientist, who spends most of their time analyzing portal data and sensor records as well as carrying out related experiments. If someone shows up at the outpost with something interesting, Rypclyyp is the Elder who the Soldiers call from the appraisal bays. Rypclyyp makes initial assessments by video or hologram and, if things check out, requests that the being with the interesting item be sent up to meet them in the tower. They are quick to spot frauds but are only an average negotiator at best.

Zaalyl is the outpost's military commanding Elder. They split their time between the command center, overseeing the Soldiers directly, and carrying out tasks throughout the outpost. Zaalyl takes a personal interest in any disruptions, fights, or other disturbances by visitors, and so is quick to arrive when trouble starts. They are always heavily armed and armored, though they have had to restrict their aggressive nature at Nyyon's request when dealing with visitors. Even so, it doesn't take long to exceed Zaalyl's restraint.

Elder Nyyon (Nemesis)

Motivations: Desire (Knowledge), Fear (Humiliation), Strength (Curious), Flaw (Obsession).
Skills: Charm 2, Coercion 2, Computers 3, Discipline 3, Knowledge (All) 4, Leadership 2, Mechanics 3, Operating 2, Perception 3, Ranged 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Mad Inventor (once per session, make a Mechanics check to cobble together the functional equivalent of any item using spare parts or salvage, as per **Table I.4–1: Mad Inventor Item Rarity** on page 80 of the Genesys Core Rulebook).
Abilities: Martian Command (as a maneuver, may order up to three allied martians in the encounter to take an immediate out-of-turn maneuver, or to order one allied martian in the encounter to take an immediate out-of-turn action), Obsessive Customizer (as a maneuver may spend a Story Point to add one of the following item qualities to their pistol or to an outpost weapon with which they are engaged: Accurate 3, Concussive 1, Guided 4, Stun Damage, Sunder. The weapon possesses this item quality until the end of this character's next turn).
Equipment: Customized ray gun (Ranged; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Medium]), fine cloak (1 defense, +2 soak), Martian communicator, portable computer.

QUANTUM CITY

When the SAV *Quantum*, one of the finest exploration vessels of Star Alliance, crashed not too long ago on the surface of the Crucible, it ended the ship's mission to travel across the galaxy. Its crew began a new mission, but in a somewhat reversed fashion. Life from across the entire universe would now come to it instead, and to the settlement that would arise at its impact site: Camp One, or as most soon called it, Quantum City.

The new city, in the Valley of Time not far from the Saurian Republic's city-state of Pollus Doctrian, would rapidly become a major trading post as multitudes from nearby Hub City and across the Local Group came to gaze in wonder. No ship had ever crashed on the Crucible; things resembling meteors are at best infrequent arrivals, and never carry sentient life.

More importantly, Quantum City acts as a beacon for beings who share the beliefs and goals of Star Alliance across the Local Group and perhaps beyond. The harsh impact may mean that Captain Val Jericho's beloved *Quantum* might never fly again, but she refuses to let that, or anything else, stop her from promoting Alliance ideals. With that conviction firmly in mind, Captain Jericho and her intrepid crew have set about exploring this strange new world.

At Quantum City, what began as a gathering of the curious and as a new base for the crew has become a bastion of irrepressible hope and infinite diversity. It is home to hundreds of species never before recorded in the ship's databanks.

She looks so much worse from this angle.
-Ingram

Some beings have even joined the crew (as part of Captain Jericho's activation of Alliance Emergency Protocols), while others simply act as partners of the moment, and still others are transients: traders, merchants, and the inquisitive who have come to see these bubble-helmed explorers, to tinker with their exotic contraptions, and to learn about their interesting, if possibly naïve, ideologies.

The SAV *Quantum*

It is undeniable that the *Quantum* has seen better days. Its crash could have been much worse, however. Appearing in a blink in an utterly unfamiliar location, in front of a world so large it dominated the entirety of the forward viewscreen, and then having power sputter and die would have ended most ships. But for the iron nerves of Captain Jericho and the lightning reflexes of her Chief Helm Officer, Leopold Muldoon, everyone aboard the *Quantum* would have perished. Their efforts turned what would have been a cataclysmic crash and fiery death into a (somewhat) controlled landing. The ship skidded kilometers along the surface before coming to spinning rest in front of a huge crimson mountain—and a collision that would have certainly destroyed the ship. The damage was still extensive, but the skillful actions of the crew ensured that casualties were not.

I'm still unsure if they realize the sheer uniqueness of their arrival here!
–Inka

In spite of all the damage from the crash, the flag of Star Alliance was soon raised on this new world and has been every morning since. Leopold got the nickname "Crash" for his incredible act of somehow getting the *Quantum* to glide (if only a little) once it hit atmosphere. The mountain, of course, became known as Crash's Cliff. The ship remains the center of Quantum City, and even in the wake of its extensive damage, it still contains wonders aplenty. Its hangars are filled with trundling robots, speedy envirosealed jet suits once designed for short-range zero-G exploration, several exploration shuttles, and plenty of R0V-3R ATVs and other vehicles.

But the *Quantum*'s not all faded glory and scorched hull metal. She's a working ship, and all of her crew regard her as a living, breathing entity. Though many of the crew now live in the many facilities built near the ship, some (especially engineers and security personnel) still make their homes on the *Quantum*. This ship is always bustling with activity, as restoring her ship to flight status is of paramount priority to Captain Jericho, just below the safety of her crew.

Crash's Cliff

Shortly after the crash, the crew began exploring their surroundings. The first item on their list was an obvious one: the mountain that the *Quantum* had nearly hit and that had shed millennia of outer layers from the nearby crash. Scouts found a newly exposed network of caverns within the rocky edifice, and soon these were expanded and fitted with everything needed to make Crash's Cliff into a valuable location for a wide variety of essential roles. The first addition, a combination communications tower and landing pad, now dominates the peak. Since then, expansion has been ceaseless. Countless panels of gleaming metal and transparent enviropods now poke out from all sides of the mountain.

One of the first discoveries the crew made was that the caves run unusually deep below the surface, where they are lined with precipitates of even stronger rock than above. These caves they turned into secure testing grounds, where Alliance scientists and their trusted allies conduct experiments deemed too dangerous to perform aboard the *Quantum* proper and too sensitive to risk possible industrial sabotage or theft. From temporal freeze guns to transdimensional teleportation bands, it all happens in the labs buried beneath Crash's Cliff, where secrets and catastrophe can be more easily contained. The exact nature of the experiments conducted are only a matter of speculation for those not authorized to enter, and no records are kept in the meandering network of caves. Instead, all reports and records are transmitted to the *Quantum* for review and response from senior staff members in the science branch.

Like the *Quantum* itself, Crash's Cliff is a secure location under heavy guard. In addition to protecting the area from intruders and thieves, security officers are often tasked with rescuing lab staff from their own experiments. It's not uncommon to see strange energy flashes and hear odd sonic distortions from some of the cavern labs, or even to feel shaking as a sudden explosion rocks the entire mountain down to its foundation.

Some of the crew are still exploring the subsurface cave tunnels, which seem to have no limit. Such activities may soon be halted, as more than one crew member has gone missing, while a few mysterious bloodstains that defy analysis have been found. Lieutenant Khrkhar, one of the ship's senior security officers, has dispatched teams to patrol the officially designated Level Zero and erect force fields farther underground, and there haven't been any further incidents. So far.

The Bivouac

Just beyond the crash site are the true beginnings of Camp One, "the Bivouac." What began as a hodgepodge collection of prefab buildings and field tents is now the epicenter of Quantum City. Nearby, wide-open training fields serve as parade grounds for the new recruits as they work tirelessly under the instruction of drill commanders.

Even though the Bivouac has grown beyond its original purpose as a temporary outpost, its simple moniker remains and has become strangely apt. Although this district of Quantum City has become permanent as a whole, its pieces and people remain transient. From easily erected warehouses of autofitting components to hab modules made from local materials to sealed tentworks for recruits and instructors, it has spread quite a distance from the original piles of supplies carried from the still-smoking ship many months ago. Recruits seem to be everywhere, and Captain Jericho is especially delighted that other beings are joining the Alliance. No matter what else jumps into her schedule, she always finds time to personally activate their wrist modules and welcome them to the crew.

R0V-3Rs haul supplies and personnel throughout the winding network of temporary dwellings, and jetpacks zip through the sky as recruits master the daring art of avionics. The spattering blasts of blazer pistols can be heard as they echo in the trench left in the *Quantum*'s wake, mixed with the barking commands of drill instructors. Some of the more common forms of experimentation and weapons testing take place in the open, as the sheer numbers of craters indicate; this occurs in part to demonstrate Star Alliance's capabilities to possible foes. The disciplined chaos of the Bivouac is the idealized personification of the Alliance ideology of unified diversity.

But the Bivouac is not without security. Drill instructors keep detailed files on all recruits, regularly updating command staff aboard the *Quantum* of their progress. Still, not every recruit is as honest as they first appear, and security teams, uniformed or otherwise, regularly patrol the grounds looking for agitators sowing malcontent and discord in an effort to destroy the dream before it can fully take root.

A wide force-fence surrounds the Bivouac as well, guarded by security specialists and linguists ready to deal with newcomers. Robots log the arrival of every being who enters or leaves the Bivouac as well as the contents of any transports. Jetpack patrols offer supplemental observation in the evening, their spotlights sweeping over the training grounds.

Horizon

Captain Jericho and her crew began their time on the Crucible as little more than a curiosity to the beings of Hub City and beyond. When it became evident that the *Quantum* wasn't going anywhere anytime soon, however, it didn't take long before merchants, traders, and inquisitive beings began to approach these latest residents. Soon permanent Star Alliance trading outposts sprang up nearby, followed by all the ancillary necessities. Before long, shops, homes, farms, and even the occasional temple of the Adepts by Æmber Inspired were established as well to form its own community.

Now known simply as Horizon, this bustling hive pulsates with life. It is a point of pride for many of the original *Quantum* crew as a testament to the value of varied peoples and cultures. On the winding, crowded, and always busy streets, Star Alliance's beloved diversity is on full display. Beings from across the Local Group are here, all excited to see this new addition to the cultures of the Crucible amidst the bustling cacophony of fresh commerce and eager air of adventure that dominates Horizon.

While many of the ship's crew spend time in Horizon to search for potential recruits or look for leads on a way to fix their beloved *Quantum*, more than a few come for a little R&R. Beings looking to make a strange purchase might be able to trade at one of the official merchant outposts of Star Alliance, where officers and crew trade approved supplies from the holds of their

A great place to get the best lowdown on the action 'round these parts. Decent brews, too, but not as good (yet) as in the Meltin' Pot.
—Dodger

ship in hopes of finding that impossible piece to get the ship flying again. Others seeking a unique conversation piece might purchase something they didn't even know they needed from the fabled Anywhere-Anywhen Emporium. Those looking to make some quick bits can try to get an invite to Heady Burke's Clandestine Casino, where the dice are always hot and the drinks are always cold. These and many other establishments line the streets of Horizon.

Even I know that if Shadows is active in this way, there wouldn't be any rumors to be detected. More likely, Shadows is spreading the rumors to hide something else.

But among the mirth and camaraderie is a darker underbelly. Rumors of infiltration by Shadows have begun to breed distrust toward all elves, while more nefarious whispers say the martians are employing mind-control devices to establish sleeper agents. Some believe that an outside intelligence is attempting to reprogram the many AIs the crew utilize and possibly the *Quantum*'s central computer itself. These rumors have become a growing concern to the merchants, who are worried such activities might force Captain Jericho to shut down Horizon. Everyone knows about the various black-market dealings in Horizon, and Jericho tolerates some of them so that her people can monitor them more effectively (and employ them when needed). Active threats against her crew and mission, though, cannot be tolerated.

Captain Val Jericho (Nemesis)

6 | 7 | 5

If ever a single individual could be the walking embodiment of the values of Star Alliance, it would be Captain Jericho. She maintains an air of cool grace at all times, but is known to flash the occasional wicked smile when laser beams are being traded and danger is thick in the air. But beyond her image as a dashing hero who embodies the Alliance, she is first and foremost the captain. Jericho is devoted to her crew, both those who arrived here and those she's recruited under a rather liberal reading of the Alliance Post-Crash Emergency Protocols.

Although she knows the value of Fleet Command regulation, she also knows when the rules must be bent, especially when lives are on the line. Quick to take charge in a tough situation, she never asks anyone under her command to do something that she herself would not.

She does occasionally let her guard down, although only in the presence of her close staff officers or a select few new friends she's made here. The stiff military bearing eases from her shoulders, a genuine smile appears on her face, and the truth of her belief in a better universe shines through all the more. Though she'd never admit it, she's an exceptional leader and deserving of the admiration the crew has for her.

Still, that doesn't save her from moments of doubt, memories of those lost, and the tiny voice whispering in the back of her mind that she might never get her people home.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	3	3	4	4	4

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	18	21	1 / 1

Motivations: Desire (Freedom), Fear (Acquiescence), Strength (Duty), Flaw (Addiction to Excitement).
Skills: Athletics 2, Charm 2, Discipline 3, Knowledge (Culture) 4, Leadership 3, Negotiation 2, Ranged 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: For the Alliance! (when making a combat skill check, Captain Jericho may spend A to let a member of her crew in the current encounter immediately perform a maneuver as an out-of-turn incidental; she may instead spend A A A or ⊛ to let up to three crew members in the current encounter perform an immediate action as an out-of-turn incidental), Heroic Captain (may spend a Story Point to suffer 2 strain and add ⊛ to the next combat or social skill check she makes).
Equipment: Blazer pistol (Ranged; Damage 6; Critical 4; Range [Medium]; Stun 3), Star Alliance captain's uniform (1 defense, +1 soak), wrist module.

SPIRETOWN

Surrounding the base of the Spire is a loose ring of settlements, trading outposts, research facilities, and other establishments. Though they are unconnected and unaffiliated with each other, over time they have become collectively known as Spiretown—much to the confusion of both residents and many outsiders. New arrivals to the Crucible often assume that Spiretown is a singular location only to find that their desired destination is on the other side of the Spire, hundreds of kilometers away. Still, almost everyone at one time or another comes to the Spire, if only to see what their eyes assure them is impossible. It is a constant reminder of the fantastical nature of the Crucible and the power of the beings who created it—and also that their construction efforts might not yet be complete.

Ascensions and Declinations

For as long as sentients have populated the Crucible, beings have clustered around the Spire, trying to learn its secrets. This information, they hope, might explain more about why the Crucible exists—and, for a few, how to escape it. In their quest for knowledge, many have tried to climb the Spire, fly to its peak, tunnel below and find its base, or study it in other ways, but to no avail.

Climbing the Spire is perhaps the most popular of methods, and each year sees many hundreds of attempts. As the Spire is so wide, there is little danger of interference from fellow climbers, and most expeditions don't get within myriameters of each other. If for no other reason than comradery, however, most climbers tend to launch their ascents from Anchor Face, a well-known village not far from the Spire's base. It helps that there is plenty of telescopic sensory gear at Anchor Face to track their progress, along with numerous rescue vehicles for when they eventually fail.

Some expeditions employ vehicles to climb the Spire, but as its surface cannot be penetrated, these tend to rely on gripping claws or similar devices. More adventurous beings climb freestyle; these usually have cybernetics, both to aid in their attempt and as replacements for limbs and organs lost in previous climbs.

Aerial methods are a close second, ranging from direct ascents on rockets to slow, corkscrewing elevations that hug the Spire's circumference. Regardless of their trajectory, though, they eventually hit the Boundary—and after that, there is no telling what may happen, except that they won't get any higher.

No matter how they try it, climbers are always defeated. Those individuals using aircraft often see their instruments malfunction and fail even before they hit the Boundary and suffer its effects. Climbers face other effects, like finding themselves veering off in other directions, being teleported to some distant location, experiencing forgetfulness about why they are there, becoming trapped in temporal loops, or simply shutting down and falling back to the surface. Still, there is rivalry over how far someone can ascend, and victory parties are held for new records or employment of novel methods.

Then there are those who believe the secret is instead underground and attempt to find the bottom of the Spire. So far, no one has discovered where the Spire ends below the surface. No matter how far laser drills dig, or how deeply matter-scramblers excavate the soil and rock, there is always more spirewood.

Although it can't be reached, the top of the Spire does seem to be detectable, somewhere beyond the atmosphere and well into what would be called low orbit if anything could orbit the Crucible. Unfortunately, the data is questionable, as each observation appears to reveal something different. Details are often blurred like a picture magnified beyond its resolution, as though the region around the top is not fully within the same dimension as the scanners on the ground. Regardless, it is clear that there is construction at the tip of the Spire, though no one is certain who is doing the building, or why.

No one ever succeeds, yet everyone seems to enjoy the experience whether attempting or observing. Some beings are as odd as Archons.
–Inka

People and Culture

Curiosity drives many individuals to Spiretown. Across the Crucible, beings want to know what is happening at the top of the Spire, and everyone has their own theory. Some visitors seek to solve the many mysteries related to the Spire's purpose, construction, and history—or to profit the curiosity of others. The Spire itself is everything: a destination for wealthy vacationers, the subject of academic scholarship, and of course the basis for thousands of religious and spiritual beliefs.

While Spiretown attracts legions of curious visitors, climbing enthusiasts, dedicated pilgrims, and bored immortals checking that nothing has changed in the last millennia or so, there are some who can be found there year-round. Climbers are the fewest in number but the most famous; they are the adventurous explorers, interested in ascending higher than anyone has ever gone to see things no one else has seen before. Scientists test

Monitoring the various results when climbers reach the Aerial Null Zone has been quite useful, as have been discussions on other matters with the many researchers everywhere in S-Town.
-Dr. Escotera

new hypotheses and conduct experiments on the Spire. Then, of course, there are profiteers, for wherever there are beings, there are others to make money off of them.

In addition to these groups, everywhere around the Spire, the gregarious vect are present. In villages and markets, ascension camps and research stations, vect are organizing, selling, and operating just about everything that makes the life at Spiretown possible. Most other inhabitants can't imagine one without the other.

Climbers

The most popular climbers tend to be the free climbers, who take to the Spire with little more than thick gauntlets, a warm environmental suit, and a breather tank. Of course, the climbers most likely to actually learn something new about the Spire use ascension vehicles, but the fans always are more enthusiastic for those daredevils who face the challenge with the least technology.

Some climbers are in it for the research, but most see their efforts as a direct challenge against whatever created the Crucible and brought all of its inhabitants there. There are also many climbers who live for the adulation of their fans (as well as the sponsorship money). Their ascensions are well-publicized events that draw fans from across the Local Group and beyond. All too often, their funerals are even more widely attended.

Climbing Season

As the many sectors that make up Spiretown have no regular seasons in common, the vect have established the one hundredth day after the start of the year as the beginning of climbing season. They have a handful of reasons for doing so, but most relate to allowing fans to better plan their visits. Climbers are free to make attempts at other times, but most follow the seasonal schedule, as it allows plenty of time for vehicles and climbers alike to be repaired between attempts.

Several established events take place each season. The Light Ascension Race is traditionally held at the start of the season and favors the fastest of vehicles. Fans are encouraged to get settled early and have their sensors ready when the lasers signal the start, as some climbs are over within seconds. The season peaks during the Free-Climb Invitational, which features the best-known free climbers and attracts the most spectators. The season usually ends with the Ascension Open, a mixed free-climbing and vehicle-climbing event that anyone can enter. Sponsorships are won and lost at this event, and newcomers are always eager to make their mark and impress viewers.

The off-season is for special-event climbs, in which special research facilities and corporate sponsors seek very specific types of climbs. These may not have the appeal for the fans as seasonal events, but they often produce the most valuable information concerning the Spire.

Scientists

Scientists and engineers each have an idea or hypothesis to test, perhaps a new way to try to chip off a sample of spirewood, or a new method of measuring or scanning the gigantic monolith. They may employ elaborate televiewers, massive acoustic sasers, pulsed antimatter beams, or even more exotic devices of their own creation.

For some, this has become an intense obsession that has consumed their life. Some scientists have seen their original funding dry up and are forced to take work as support personnel for climbers, building them better ascension vehicles or grappling anchors. Many spend their days improving the performance of climbing devices and spend their nights still pursuing their theories.

Profiteers

There are countless inns and taverns across Spiretown that cater to tourists and other visitors. Some entire villages are devoted to just one type of locally crafted Æmbrew or to works of art celebrating the Spire and those who challenge it. Tourists also generate a market for entertainment, gambling, commemorative apparel, and branded merchandise. The vect keep watch over such businesses, ensuring deals are kept, prices are fair, and tourists leave with a strong desire to return again.

Tourists

Tourists generally stay for a week or two, usually much longer for major climbs or races. However, there is a bit of tourism outside climbing season from thrifty travelers looking to take advantage of lower rates and easier access to unique cuisine and luxury amenities, or just to mingle with the climbers as they prepare for their next endeavor. Free climbers tend to spend this time running recreational climbing courses and offering historical recreations to tourists who feel the allure of the Spire.

Points of Interest

Spiretown encompasses almost every type of municipality, habitation, and function. Some of the locations within it are mere rustic boomtowns that have grown and faded over time. A few are the focus of attempts to establish a governmental body linking Spiretown together.

Many spots concentrate on research efforts and may host hundreds of visiting scientists at any given time. Most, however, support climbing efforts with base camps and supply chains ready to offer their services to any climbers who can meet their price.

Beings who travel to Spiretown may visit hundreds of times and never see it all, such is the vast spread of its locations. Experiencing it all is made even more difficult as old establishments fall (or something falls on them) and new ones arise due to new funding or the latest Spire theory in need of testing.

Climb Permit Office

A trio of middle-aged vect manage the Climb Permit Office, one of the most important agencies in Spiretown. Many sponsorship deals and research grants require the permit it issues simply to set a baseline level of skill and professionalism for climbers. Like all dealings with vect, any visit might last hours as all three share the eagerness the species has for social interaction.

Khumbu-Tse manages new permit applications and is by far the calmest and most patient of the three. New permits usually cost a few hundred Æmbits. Once an application fee is paid, Khumbu-Tse dispatches their horde of robotic assistants to conduct a detailed medical physical and examine any climbing gear or ascension vehicles. They also offer (for no fee) advice to clearly unprepared climbers, as no one at Spiretown wants attempts to fail due to easily correctable reasons.

Namcha runs permit renewals. Easily the friendliest of the trio, she delights in seeing each returning climber or scientist, many of whom she considers close friends. She is always eager for the latest news of ascension attempts and failures. Renewals cost 100 bits (though she often trades information for discounts); these generally only require a cursory medical examination.

Baza is in charge of the equipment shop, which rents, leases, and sells climbing and safety equipment. He is also a huge fan of professional climbers. Baza is easily distracted and often starstruck; climbers who aren't paying attention might find that they have been emotion-printing posters or posing for holos instead of signing the necessary rental forms and lease agreements.

Anchor Face Inn

It's right scary, it is, when dealin' with the vect, right scary. Too nice to be trusted, but if you do trust 'em you'll come out ahead. Still feels wrong to me, though.

The best climbers without their own permanent residences somewhere in Spiretown usually stay in Anchor Face, a village best known for its huge, eponymous inn. The accommodations are rather lacking, but no one stays there for the rooms—it is all the other features that bring in the crowds. This is where many of the greats (and former greats) stay, so it is where the fans want to stay as well.

The tavern that dominates the ground level is especially popular with tourists, largely because the tavern owner is "Anchor Face" Fredo, a giant and former climbing champion whose face was Brobnar rough even before many years of climbing attempts made it even rougher and more distinctive. His pattern of scars is now famous across much of the Local Group and is prominent on the many products he sponsors. Fredo delights in telling stories of his many infamous free climbs and battles with the double-beaked Spire buzzards to customers, many of whom seem to find his rebuilt visage even more attractive than before.

Smearshoe Gym

One of the half dozen or so well-respected climbing gyms in Spiretown, the Smearshoe attracts hundreds of hopeful record breakers at the end of every climbing season. Located almost alongside the Spire in the city of Verticam, it makes a small fortune teaching recreational children's and beginner climbing courses during the peak of each season.

The current gym champion is Torlee, a wiry human from the Greater Uncanny Forest known for her free-climbing speed and relentless determination once on the spirewood. Her manager, an elf named Dravana, also owns the gym, alongside the goblin Brak, his partner and former free climber.

"Love Climb. Even if we Fall, we still have Climbed." Scrawled near one of the plates here. -Inka

Memorial to the Fallen

Every climber who takes to the Spire knows one fact. One way or another, be it fast or way too fast, they are coming back down at some point. Eventually, there will be one fall too many, and their final climb will be over.

For those who make their terminal fall, there is a huge memorial set along the base of the Spire in the small town of Final Drop. There, names are laser etched onto massive plates of spun steel, alongside the altitude of their highest climb and the date they fell. New plates have been added to the original at four times in history, and a new plate is currently in the works as the new season gets underway. The community of Final Drop is proud to maintain this memorial and hosts many wakes for the fallen.

Vect Dealmaker (Rival)

1 | 5 | 3

Long ago the beaked, humanoid vect moved almost en masse to this location, and are now seemingly everywhere at Spiretown. Their hope was that should the other three sentient species of their home planet also be relocated to the Crucible, they would reunite one day and recreate the network of interpersonal interactions that was part of normal life on Vectoon. After all, every species comes to the Spire eventually. While this reunion hasn't happened yet, the vect are still hopeful and it certainly beats searching for the other species across the entirety of the Crucible.

An almost aggressively social species, the vect enjoy nothing more than conversation and sharing experiences with others. Even demons are seemingly entranced by their speech, even though neither species actually understands the other. As Spiretown attracts all manner of beings, all with different stories and desires, the vect feel they have found a new home as well as applied an entrepreneurial and industrious spirit that has allowed them to occupy every facet of life there. Dealing with visitors is a major part of their lives, and they are always at the ready to work out ways to get new friends whatever they need for fair prices, from technological aids to information, and even outsource construction efforts. Almost everyone assumes there is some sinister motive behind the vect and their operations, though, refusing to believe they simply enjoy helping others.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	3	3	3	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	10	0 / 0

Skills: Charm 4, Computers 2, Cool 1, Knowledge (Culture) 3, Negotiation 4, Vigilance 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Friends Help Friends (once per encounter as an action, may select a target within short range and one ally within medium range; the ally can make one immediate combat check against the target as an out-of-turn incidental), Useful Advice (once per session as an out-of-turn incidental, may spend a Story Point to allow one ally in the encounter to reroll a failed check).
Equipment: Hands-free comm device, several encrypted digital tablets.

THE WORLD TREE

Far to the south of the Local Group is a forest so large that it needs no special name—it is simply the Forest. Deep within this wilderness is a plant unlike any other known on the Crucible. It goes by many names, especially among those who venerate it, but most of the world knows it as the World Tree. It is wider than many cities, easily taller than even the greatest of spirescrapers, and perhaps the largest living being on this world.

The World Tree is a unique strategic resource on the Crucible, one that would have been overrun by one group or another had it not been for a cadre of powerful witches, some of the most skilled warriors of the Kindrith Rangers, and the horde of faeries that live in the Forest. As a result, the site remains neutral ground, open to anyone who is willing to make the dangerous journey into the heart of the Forest. As such, many types of beings visit the World Tree, though given the treacherous journey, most arrive with a specific agenda. The people of the World Tree—mostly pilgrims, residents, and simple tourists—are generally joyous, but also reverent. For every prayer there is a feast, for every procession a parade. There are few rules, but those charged with enforcing them find no humor in their task. An overly enthusiastic pilgrim might find themself surrounded by readied bows for trying to break off a souvenir leaf or bit of bark to take home.

Other than its massive size and the rumors of its miraculous powers, little is known about the Tree. It resembles no other species of flora and seems more an amalgamation of all known types of trees. Its root structure may extend for thousands of kilometers, under oceans and to other continents across the Crucible. Some beings even claim that other World Trees exist elsewhere on the Crucible, all connected through a single, all-encompassing root system.

Absolutely breathtaking, and a great source of spiritual healing for many of the crew.

The Tree-Mind

The World Tree is said to have a powerful intelligence, complete with a host of unique abilities. Pilgrims journey from afar to pay tribute in hopes it will answer a difficult question, heal a sickness, or grant a boon. The World Tree is rumored to somehow find that which is lost, heal that which is broken, provide direction to the directionless, cure any illness, feed the hungry, and grant powerful artifacts to the powerless. How exactly this is done is often left out of these tales, but adherents still insist on the Tree's efficacy. The fact that these storytellers often do display restored limbs, recovered loved ones, and proof of remission does lend credence to their tales.

Faeries of the Forest

Dew faeries, dust pixies, sap sprites, and leaf sylphs are all common sights around the World Tree. As they do in other wildness areas, they help maintain the Forest, but are especially diligent around the massive Tree. Every bough of its large branches, every hollow in its trunk, supports an entire community of the small robotic creatures. In a sort of symbiotic relationship, they tend to the World Tree, keeping back invasive insects, removing old or dead growth, and harvesting seeds, sap, bark, and other precious gifts. It is unclear if the faeries do so because they are in direct communication with the Tree or if they are obeying some long-standing order from the Architects.

While faeries take most of the World Tree's resources elsewhere for unknown purposes, they drop excess items over nearby settlements for those who properly respect the Tree and its surroundings. The robots carefully watch everyone as they gather these treasures, noting which undeserving beings dare to pick up a fallen leaf or nab a sap-laden branch out of the air. These individuals are sure to find valuable items mysteriously missing from their tents and bedrolls. The fortunate ones may even discover the shredded remains of their fusion cutters or genetic samplers the following morning.

Points of Interest

The World Tree supports faerie communities in its branches and a few towns nestled at the base of its trunk. Werewich is perhaps the best known of the towns, but all of them see visitors from across the Local Group at one time or another.

Werewich

I was at the Gruen for several days once, and it was perhaps the most relaxing stay I've ever had. Very useful as well. It's the tales that Old Red doesn't tell that are the most informative.

A small settlement at the base of the World Tree, nestled between several bulbous, branching roots, Werewich supports a small community of witches, explorers, and worshipers. Most of its dwellings are simple cabins fashioned from living branches. The most desirable cabins are built against the roots, which can be gently tapped for fresh water. Some claim that these waters have physical and spiritually healing properties, should the roots be treated with respect and care; at the very least, the liquids are always cool and refreshing. Large, two-story habitats often double as businesses for witches, merchants, or artisans. Such is the gentle environment, however, that many beings simply live in tents or do without any shelter at all.

This settlement has become a major destination for pilgrims and researchers alike. They come from across the Crucible, particularly from uncanny forests and Brobnar lands, to observe, leave offerings, and pray.

Werewich is sometimes gifted with large numbers of green leaves, raindrops of Æmber-laced sap, and even nuts that glow with stored energy. Such items can be used for all types of miraculous creations, including cloaks of invisibility, healing poultices, energy staves, and other items that could never be manufactured (or dreamt of) elsewhere.

Tree-Mind Hollow

Over the long millennia of footfalls, a series of steps have grown into hard bark, allowing a sacred pilgrimage circling up the World Tree to access one of the higher prayer sites, known as Tree-Mind Hollow. These stairs host an orderly, single-file procession of pilgrims who line up to meditate and commune with the Tree-Mind.

These stairs are quite wide, allowing others to use them as well to access the lower branches for prayer and to observe the faeries as they go about their tasks. Still, the line for Tree-Mind Hollow is days long.

At the upper terminus of the line, faeries accept tribute (usually shards of pure Æmber or handmade objects of spiritual significance to the maker) and allow entry through a fragrant, oaky corridor into a small, dark chamber where pilgrims can embrace branches and speak to the World Tree. Allegedly it answers telepathically, or by producing an object that provides an answer. Not every pilgrim's prayers are answered, but enough have claimed to have received salvation to draw huge numbers. Those who visit exit the way they came, often unable to mask their despair or elation over the experience.

Fuzzy Gruen Inn

Fuzzy Gruen Inn, or commonly just the Fuzzy, is a popular place for adventurers to stay. The beds are clean, the local Æmbrew is strong, and information flows freely between fellow travelers. The owner is an aging explorer known for his large, crimson beard and legendary exploits. Gruent the Red has allegedly outplayed a Brobnar thrashmaster guitar maestro, outdebated a Saurian philosopher, and tricked a Dis demon.

The friendly adventurer has since retired, and now runs a inn featuring a popular tavern. The door depicts a fuzzy gruen holding out full steins in its many tentacles and, in fact, Gruent has a newborn gruen named Tufferro. The tiny creature is typically perched on one of his muscular shoulders or hiding under his beard.

Branch Valley

Just a pair of roots clockwise from Werewich is Branch Valley, a wide swath of green grass beneath a particularly long, lower branch that supports a significant percentage of the World Tree's faerie population. The valley seems to receive the largest volume of discarded leaves, seeds, twigs, and bark, making it popular with those seeking such items. Dozens of nomad camps dot the valley, hoping to encounter profitable windfalls.

Shaded Camp

A few dozen Svarr elves run one of the more successful camps near the Great Tree. While they credit their success to superior mobility from flight cycles, rocket boots, and other contraptions, they have a strange ability to be in just the right place at the right time for harvesting faerie gifts. Some beings accuse them of having illicit advance knowledge of where the faeries plan to arrive. Many of the other Tree-scroungers have slowly been building up resentment toward the Shadows, and some are even trying to build a coalition against them.

The reality of the Svarr elves' success has less to do with their techniques, they say, and more to do with their business acumen. The elves are simply stockpiling gifts when they fall, only selling an item when it becomes very rare or highly desired. Any suggestion they might be capturing and reprogramming the faeries at this blessed place is an utterly base falsehood of the lowest kind and can get the culprit ejected fiercely from the camp.

Demairmed the Undoer's Hut

The Untamed lands are full of sentients who have been mutated and twisted by the uncanny forests into unrecognizable creatures of great power. While some accept their new existence, or lose the intelligence to yearn for anything else, there are many who suffer and seek to restore their original form. Those hoping for restoration eventually make their way to the World Tree, in search of a quaint dwelling built into the giant mushrooms on the tree's widest side.

This is the hut of Demairmed, a witch formerly of the Kindrith. Legend says her brother was the very first of the Mushroom People, and in seeking a cure, she forced a mutation upon herself. Her legs took root in the soil by the World Tree, and one of her arms turned into an herbal vine. She is believed to have found a cure, but without the ability to walk, she was never able to restore her brother. Other stories say she absorbs mutations, gathering power to take over the World Tree's body, mutate herself into a larger mobile form, or achieve some other secretive purpose. She is always defended by a host of several dozen powerful mutant beasts, so few beings get any opportunity to attempt to find out for certain.

Witch of the Eye (Nemesis)

5 | 6 | 6

The Witches of the Eye are said to be able to tap into the World Tree's root system to locate any being on the surface or beneath the ground of the Crucible. Most of these witches remain near the Tree, often in Werewich, trading their services to aid those with missing loved ones or who seek the targets of their revenge. The Witches of the Eye wield Æmbersap wands made from the World Tree. These wands can manipulate rapid growth in the World Tree's root system to trap beings who have threatened the witches. Many of the witches spend time among the faeries, helping to maintain the health of uncanny forests elsewhere in the Local Group.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	3	3	4	4

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	16	22	1 / 1

Skills: Æmbercraft 3, Charm 1, Discipline 3, Knowledge (All) 4, Medicine 2, Ranged 2, Survival 4.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Heightened Awareness (allies within short range add ☐ to Perception and Vigilance checks; engaged allies add ☐ ☐ instead).
Abilities: Nepenthe Expert (once per encounter as an action, instead of using its normal effects may ingest a nepenthe seed to either remove 5 strain or ignore the effects of the next failed fear check).
Æffects: A Witch of the Eye can have Æffects in the forms of small items they carry (see page 171). The powers they employ the most often are:

Cleansing (as a maneuver or as part of an action using this Æffect, may deplete this Æffect to remove all poisons, toxins, and similar afflictions from themself or their target; if used as a maneuver, this power targets one character within short range).

Find (may use the Æffect to locate a particular creature or object at a very great distance, potentially anywhere on the Crucible. The target must be a being, object, or creature that the Witch personally encountered before. This power gives them an unerring sense of the direction and distance to the target while they are using the power, but not of any intervening obstacles, their surroundings, or other details. If the target does not want to be found (or if someone intentionally hid the object), this should require an **opposed Æmbercraft check versus** the target's **Discipline** or **Stealth**. The process of using this power generally takes too long to occur during structured gameplay).

Flare (as a maneuver, may use this Æffect to release a blinding flash of psychic light, disorienting all enemy characters within medium range for one round and inflicting one strain on each of them).
Equipment: Æmbersap wand (Discipline; Damage 5; Critical 4; Range [Medium]; Ensnare 2, Stun 4), World Tree leaf garb (1 defense, +1 soak), bag of nepenthe seeds, assorted Æmber-imbued items, first aid kit.

You mind yer manners when around one of this lot, you should. Drop some trash or talk ill of the Tree, and see why ol' Dodger told ya so.

ELSEWHERE ON THE CRUCIBLE...

The Local Group is vast, and new realms and cultures seem to appear continually, each stranger and more different than the last. The only constant on the Crucible, as they say, is change.

Mastermakers' Forge

Hidden within an active volcano somewhere to the west of the Burning Glaciers, the Mastermakers' Forge is a secret place known only to a select few. Within the twisting warren of tunnels is a large door of golden Æmber. Those who enter are in the presence of the Mastermakers, a dozen of the greatest weaponsmiths in the Local Group and perhaps all the Crucible. These beings work together to create new, unique weapons, each a masterpiece capable of legendary feats in the hands of the right wielder. Within the volcano are a variety of tailored environments—each perfectly duplicating anything from a sunny field to a treacherous thunderstorm—all specifically fashioned to aid in capturing the desired emotional experiences that empower the Æmber used in their forging.

Of the twelve smiths, there are three who stand apart, serving as de facto voices of leadership. Skapa is the goblin who allegedly founded the Mastermakers after going into exile for refusing her king a weapon to pierce the sky. Neolli is a human with more focus on the limits of a thing rather than its practicality and is currently working on an Æmber spear that becomes sharper the farther it is thrown. Finally, Partubus the robot believes the Mastermakers should forge a dozen weapons of unmatchable power and unite the world under their rule. Once the beings of the Crucible are united as one, Partubus believes the Mastermakers can force the Architects to the negotiating table and make them return the world's residents to their respective homes.

Logos Macro-Research Facility 47µ

In a rocky wasteland, nestled within a perpetually smoking megacrater near the Carniferous Forest, is one of the largest Logos Macro-Research Facilities. Coded as 47µ, it is a honeycomb of glowing domes and metal cubes dedicated to lab research and development. There, scientists test their biggest ideas, often in the most literal sense. Mechanical behemoths, lumbering gene-spliced megavores, interdimensional grafts, wormhole cannons, timetrap generators, and pocket-universe harvesters are all under development and experimentation—and each poses an apocalyptic threat to the facility, if not the entire Local Group. Facility 47µ is a Logos playground, where there are no rules and little supervision, and collateral damage is looked at as an opportunity for "happy accidents."

The Great Glass Desert

No one knows what created the Great Glass Desert, but many have theories, ranging from superweapon testing gone completely perfect, to an especially violent vault battle, to the Enlightenment and ascension of a legendary Sanctum Knight millennia ago. However it was made, the terrain there is an endless horizon of translucent dunes and sparkling spikes littered with rusting, unidentifiable remains.

Despite the glass, the desert is far from lifeless. Huge, pale insects tunnel each night for pieces of Æmber-infused glass to feed to the grubs within their underground hives. Predatory reptiles with platinum teeth and fiery wings plummet at near-supersonic speeds to puncture the hive walls and feed on the grubs, and the battles between the attacking flyers and defending insects can rupture the glass for kilometers in all directions. Slow-moving megafauna of stone and metal burrow just under the glass, using breaths heated by their internal fusion cores to melt the material just enough to make it sufficiently malleable for passage. Many researchers wonder if there are also sentient life forms in the desert, and they are equally relieved and worried that none have yet been discovered.

The Everfire

The Everfire is a wall of black volcanic mountains in a constant state of eruption. Glowing rivers of boiling magma pour down their sides, igniting the surrounding air to become huge sheets of multicolored fire. From a distance, it seems an impassable flaming wall, visually stunning as well as liable to blister unprotected flesh from even a kilometer away. Mere molten rock could never produce such effects, leading researchers to suspect that whatever is below the volcanoes isn't normal matter. It also doesn't seem to show any signs of diminishing, as the magma has been recorded flowing for several centuries now.

Within the flames, some beings claim to have observed intelligent life in the form of sentient strains of heat, perhaps brought to the surface via the magma from their subterranean homes. If this is true, it is likely that such beings are loath to leave the Everfire, as few known areas can match its temperatures.

Lodestone Forest

The Lodestone Forest is a wide plain not far from the infamous Æshwastes of Kelt. There is little to be seen there except for the many piles of rock that defy gravity, suspended in strange, branching formations that resemble peculiar leafless trees. They appear to be some sort of artificial arrangement meant to mimic a forest—until one gets closer and notices that the area is inundated with randomly fluctuating magnetic fields strong enough to bottle fusion reactions. The floating rocks all incorporate traces of metal, and each stone arrangement marks a spot where the fields converge. As a field diminishes, the stones tumble to the ground—usually a warning sign that a new field is emerging.

Many researchers (those from Logos carefully wrap their cybernetics in protective anti-EMP foam) have spent long months studying this phenomenon, with little to show for it except conflicting theories and huge expense reports. One rather outlandish account holds that tiny, attenuated humanoids live deep underground extracting electricity from the air, which generates the magnetic fields as an unwanted byproduct. Another holds that the fields are a sign that a new Spire is emerging from deep below the forest, or that they are a form of life so irregular that communication with them is impossible—at least, not without further funding.

Not a jest- protect your inorganics, or plan for extended (and costly) medical/ mechanical recuperation. -Escotera

Featherweight Plains

The expansive Featherweight Plains are vast stretches of tall grasses under clear skies, where the gravity rises and falls with the sunlike object overhead. At night, the gravity is incredibly weak, and the delicate anchorvines unfurl to feed on Æmber particulate suspended in the air. Clouds of insects feed on the Æmber sap of each plant, but they in turn are inhaled by large, balloon-like creatures that puff up to float silently around the plains.

As the sun rises and gravity returns, thick chunks of mobile rock begin to separate from the ground and slowly trundle across the plains in search of mineral sustenance. By midday, gravity approaches nearly ten times what it is in most of Hub City, and many of the plains' creatures are trapped against the ground like flies in a spider's web. As the sun lowers, the rocks, now full, anchor themselves to the ground to keep in place during the night.

Other creatures have happened upon the region, and some are well adjusted to one of the gravitational extremes. How their presence will eventually affect the delicate balance of the plains is yet to be seen.

Sure, everyone's heard the rumors giants and of demons dukin' it out at the Everfire. Brobnar have a settlement there, but if all this scrappin' was truth, I'd bet someone'd be sellin' tickets, they would. -Dodger

Rhakotisis

Known informally across the Local Group as Infocity, this large town near Nitrogen Falls is home to a community of sentient, talking books known as the kitinne. The tomes of many different forms, including stone tablets, twine-bound palm leaves, leafy scrolls, paper bound in animal hide, and many other configurations. As they are quite unable to move about on their own, the books employ large numbers of honored servants to carry them across the town as needed. Their aides also serve as highly effective defenders against kidnapping—or worse, visits from Data Whisperers.

How such a species came to be is quite unknown, something Logos scientists find exceptionally frustrating. Some assume the kitinne are shapeshifters of some type trapped in their present forms. Others believe they are energy beings who merged their forms into a primitive library long ago for reasons of their own.

What is known is that the books seem to contain more knowledge than could be expected for such basic formats. It is possible each kitinne contains multitudes of actual books, or that data is stored via molecular encoding within each letter. Or, perhaps, each simply has a very good memory.

Visitors are always welcome, for the kitinne love to pass on their accumulated (and their somehow ever-growing) wisdom to lesser beings. No matter the subject—whether scientific, magical, real, imagined, historical, predictive, or even mathematical—Rhakotis has an expert somewhere in its thousands of stacks.

Based on one stay in Salt City, I will say that what's under the water is much more terrifying than anything above it.
–Inka

Salt City

The Crucible's colossal oceans and tremendous depths encourage life to grow without limit. Many creatures there are fierce predators, some are prey, and a few find unusual means of existence through bonding with other beings. Such is the life of a chelonix (or possibly *the* chelonix, as no others have ever been sighted) and the silac species, which have joined together through Salt City. Composed entirely of hyper-compressed salts, the huge city resides on the back of the chelonix. The city's host swims slowly and majestically across the Photic Ocean, never in a hurry and somehow always heading just where the city's silac residents need to be.

The silac almost all reside within Salt City, as they have found other environments unpleasant to their very reactive octet-stranded DNA sequences. The city greatly resembles the one in which they arrived on the Crucible, which was left in ruins during the Great Lightning Flood centuries ago. They took to the sea in search of a new home, and fortuitously came across the wounded chelonix. Each aided the other, and soon the beginning of a new home was constructed on the chelonix's healed dorsal region. In time, gleaming angular towers began to reach for the heavens, and glistening crystalline formations spread across the creature's back, all possible through the interaction of silac extrusion technology with the surrounding waters.

Among the friendlier, more outgoing cultures on the Crucible, the silac are almost annoyingly upbeat and positive at all times. They have an insatiable, nearly childlike curiosity, and living aboard a roaming city gives them ample opportunity to visit nearly any place in the ocean or along the coasts they desire.

The silac also deal with many of the sentient species who live underwater, from the humanoid bathyics to the not-so-humanoid plasmosquids. Notably, they are welcome guests at the Dark Realm along the bottom of the Photic Ocean, even though many of the denizens there are quite hostile to outsiders.

CHAPTER 6: ADVERSARIES

It's utterly impossible to list the countless beings that live on the Crucible (or under the surface, or float in the sky). Mutations and new arrivals only compound the difficulty. No matter where you go on the Crucible, you're sure to find new forms of life you couldn't imagine existing.

This chapter includes a select assortment of such beings. These NPCs are grouped either by their type or where you might commonly encounter them. We'll start with a variety of creatures, then demons. Nomads and travelers are next, followed by urban inhabitants, wilderness beings, and finally some of the legendary inhabitants of the Crucible. As GM, you should, of course, feel free to adapt these profiles as you see fit to best work in your adventures and campaign plans.

CREATURES

Countless non-sentient beings live on the Crucible. Some evolved on this patchwork world, while others were brought along with a swath of wilderness territory from their home planet. From dangerous plant life, stalking predators, and life forms so bizarre they could thrive nowhere else, these creatures are as varied as the myriad sentients that exist alongside them.

Many of these creatures accompanied entire civilizations that were transplanted to the Crucible. Upon arrival, they either were set free or escaped into the wilds, populating the far reaches of their new home. Over the ages, they adapted and mutated, many of them becoming something entirely new and often more dangerous than their progenitors. Some have even become hybrids of machine and organic material. Of these, a number evolved slowly over millennia, while others are the result of deliberate crossbreeding programs initiated by collectors, or by pixies and faeries for some programmed purpose known only to the Architects.

Æmberdrake (Nemesis)

14 | 2 | 1

These huge multi-winged reptiles appear in some of the earliest accounts of life on the Crucible in tales of flying terrors eager to devour Æmber and ferociously guarding their feeding grounds from would-be prospectors. Air travelers often employ lookouts just to watch for the far-off blasts of their Æmberfire, which usually indicate an attack is imminent.

Probably the most frightening thing I've ever seen in the sky. Sometimes the best escape is to land and seek shelter.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
6	3	1	2	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
10	41	30	0 / 1

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Cool 1, Perception 2, Ranged 3, Survival 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Æmberbelly (a character may make a **Hard** [◆ ◆ ◆] **Survival check** to open up a freshly slain Æmberdrake and remove two Æmber per ✲ and five per ❁ spent from the check in this way), Flyer (can fly, see Genesys Core Rulebook page 100), Silhouette 4, Tail Flick (may spend ❁ on a successful Brawl combat check to inflict one Critical Hit on a vehicle of silhouette 3 or less at medium range), Terrifying Appearance (at the start of an encounter, all opponents must make an upgraded **Daunting** [● ● ◆ ◆] **fear check** as an out-of-turn incidental, as per page 243 of the Genesys Core Rulebook. If there are multiple sources of fear in the encounter, the opponents only make one fear check against the most fearsome enemy).
Equipment: Æmberfire breath (Ranged; Damage 8; Critical 2; Range [Long]; Blast 6, Breach 1, Burn 3, Slow-Firing 1), jaws (Brawl; Damage 11; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Breach 2), scales (+4 soak).

Bloodstalker Vine (Rival)

5 | 1 | 1

Bloodstalker vines are horrific cerulean vegetation with thick, animated tendrils. When their central stalk senses nearby mobile life signs, the vines writhe and crawl outward rapidly, eager to capture whatever they can. Once they have ensnared a creature, the vines pull it toward their central stalk, where long, hollow spines impale the prey and absorb any nutrient-rich blood.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	4	1	2	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	12	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 3, Ranged 3, Stealth 2.
Talents: Devourer 2 (once per encounter, if the vine is engaged with an incapacitated target that is compatible with its carbon-based diet, it may use this talent to heal 4 wounds).
Abilities: Dragged to Doom (may spend a maneuver to pull an immobilized foe within short range to engaged range), Immobile (cannot spend maneuvers to move).
Equipment: Feeding spikes (Brawl; Damage 5; Critical 3; Range [Engaged], Pierce 3, Vicious 2), vines (Ranged; Damage 3; Critical 5; Range [Short]; Accurate 1, Ensnare 3, Linked 3).

Cyber Rat (Minion)

2 | 1 | 1

Overwhelming the ancient sewers beneath many cities throughout the Local Group (and especially the settlements of Spiretown) are swarms of large cyber rats clogging pipes and chewing through power cables.

No one knows for sure who is outfitting the rats with cybernetics, or if they somehow figured it out on their own, but leading theories bounce between a Logos plot and a rogue faerie. Either way, the vect pay well for their removal, to the tune of 5 Æmbits per carcass.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	1	3	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	3	1 / 2

Skills (group only): Brawl, Skulduggery, Stealth, Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Cyberbyte (after making a combat check, may spend ⚙ to have the target suffer a hit dealing damage equal to the base damage of one powered weapon the target possesses of the cyber rat's choice), Silhouette 0.
Equipment: Metal jaws (Brawl; Damage 3; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 1, Vicious 1).

Darkwater Tree (Rival)

5 | 1 | 1

Darkwater trees live deep in caverns and crevices throughout the Local Group, far from any sunlight. Their roots delve even farther underground, extracting metals and Æmber from the soil. These materials help strengthen the trees' bark but, more dangerously, allow the trees to develop a rudimentary intelligence. Their long branches become weapons, and beings who draw too near may find themselves knocked senseless or worse. The trees feed off the decomposing corpses, each body providing enough nourishment to sustain a single tree for years.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	2	1	2	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
6	15	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 3.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Æmber Extractor (a character may make a **Hard** [◆◆◆] **Survival check** to dig one Æmber out of a destroyed tree and may spend ⚙ to extract two Æmber per ⚙ spent this way), Immobile (cannot spend maneuvers to move).
Equipment: Iron branches (Brawl; Damage 9; Critical 4; Range [Short]; Concussive 2, Linked 3, the difficulty for this is always **Average** [◆◆], metal bark (+3 soak).

Double-Beaked Spire Buzzard (Rival)

4 | 1 | 2

These colorful, two-headed avian creatures are well-known to the Untamed. While they are more nuisance than threat in wilderness areas, they become fierce and predatory when encountered near the Spire, attacking climbers and even small vehicles that dare to ascend the Great Spine of the World.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	3	1	3	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	14	0 / 0

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Cool 1, Perception 2, Survival 3.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Aerial Thief (may spend ⚙ when making a check to determine Initiative to steal one randomly determined item of encumbrance 2 or less from the character who generated the least ✲ on their check), Flyer (can fly; see Genesys Core Rulebook, page 100).
Equipment: Beaks (Brawl; Damage 5; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Linked 1).

Ether Spider (Nemesis)

12 | 2 | 2

The gigantic ether spiders are drawn to the presence of Æmber, often where Archons and their followers congregate. Sometimes, Archon appear to command the spiders and enlist it to battle on the their behalf. More commonly, however, these huge arachnids spin webs between buildings and wait patiently for prey to pass underneath. They then pounce on any unwary beings, eager for any Æmber they may possess.

Martians claim this as one of their creations, but that seems like more boast than fact.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
5	4	1	3	1	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
9	39	22	0 / 0

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Cool 3, Ranged 3.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Æmber Eater (after making a successful Brawl combat check, may spend A A or ⊛ to devour 1 Æmber the target possesses), Silhouette 3, Terrifying Appearance (at the start of an encounter, all opponents must make an **upgraded Hard** [◆ ◆ ◆] **fear check** as an out-of-turn incidental, as per page 243 of the Genesys Core Rulebook; if there are multiple sources of fear in the encounter, the opponents only make one fear check against the most fearsome enemy).

Equipment: Claws (Brawl; Damage 15; Critical 4; Range [Short]; the difficulty for this check is always **Average** [◆ ◆]), spinnerets (Ranged; Damage 5; Critical 2; Range [Short]; Ensnare 3, Stun Damage), venomous jaws (Brawl; Damage 12; Critical 1; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 2), chitinous skin (+4 soak).

Faeries and Pixies (Minion)

2 | 1 | 2

Many beings believe that these tiny creatures are agents of the Architects, charged with maintaining and possibly even further developing their creation—the Crucible itself. Some are robotic, some organic, and some a mix of the two. All seem to play a vital role, though, in ensuring that the patchwork nature of the Crucible's many contradictory sectors doesn't overwhelm the world and potentially cause it to fail.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	2	3	2	2	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	3	2 / 2

Skills (group only): Brawl, Mechanics, Perception, Survival.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Artificial (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; immune to poisons and toxins), Flyer (can fly; see Genesys Core Rulebook, page 100), Mischievous (as a maneuver, may distract one character at short range; that character adds ■ to their next check for each faerie or pixie in that minion group), Silhouette 0.
Equipment: Stinger (Brawl; Damage 4; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 3).

Fuzzy Gruen (Minion)

1 | 1 | 1

These diminutive creatures live in swamps and stagnant bodies of water across the Local Group. Their adorable and cuddly appearance often lures others into terrain they are quite unprepared for, however. This leaves the gruens sad as their new playmates disappear into the dark waters, but they eagerly wait for new ones to arrive.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	1	2	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	3	2 / 0

Skills (group only): Athletics, Brawl.
Talents: None.

FAERIE AND PIXIE VARIANTS

To most observers, these creatures look and behave roughly alike. However, careful researchers have noticed that there are many strains, each of which seem to have a specialized function in maintaining Crucible sectors. Some of the more common variations are described below:

- **Dew Faeries** watch over rainfall and ensure there is enough water in an area to support life. They have +1 Agility.
- **Stone Pixies** tend to the rocks and soil. They have +1 wound threshold.
- **Leaf Faeries** maintain vegetation. They have +1 Cunning; add 1 to their general rating.
- **Light Faeries** ensure the proper sun (or suns) in a sector provide heat and nourishment. They have +1 Presence.
- **Flux Pixies** maintain local gravities. They have +1 Brawn; add 1 to their combat rating.

Abilities: Amphibious (can breathe underwater without penalty and never suffers movement penalties for traveling through water), Silhouette 0, Painfully Cute (when this character suffers wounds, all characters within short range suffer 2 strain).
Equipment: Cuddly tentacles (Brawl; Damage 3; Critical 5; Range [Engaged]; Ensnare 1).

Gurgle Pool (Rival)

4 | 1 | 1

Gurgle pools are found wherever spilled fuels, chemical waste, and the byproducts of Æmber refining are allowed to gather and percolate until life emerges. Typically dark green in color, they emit a steady gurgling sound, from which they get their name. What few beings notice (until it's too late) is that these thick liquids are surprisingly mobile and very carnivorous. Worse, they emit a psychic fog that scrambles thought processes and can drain the life energies of their prey.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
4	2	1	3	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	14	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 2.
Talents: Swift (does not suffer penalties for moving through difficult terrain).

Abilities: Drain Vigor (as an incidental, at the start of their turn, characters engaged with a gurgle pool must make a **Hard** [◆ ◆ ◆] **Resilience check** or suffer 3 strain), Liquid Defenses (halve the damage dealt to the pool before applying soak, unless the weapon has the Blast or Burn quality [regardless of whether the quality is activated]. A pool never suffers damage from its own attacks), Silhouette 2.
Equipment: Pseudopods (Brawl; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Blast 8, Knockdown).

Almost got caught by one of the pools. Partner wasn't so lucky. Bad way to go, innit?
–Dodger

Macis Asp (Rival)

4 | 1 | 1

Like all life within Macis Swamp, these creatures are completely mechanical and very lethal. Many beings seek them out for their glistening metal hides, which can be made into powerful armor, but combats often end with either ruined skins or dead hunters.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	4	1	3	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
5	10	1 / 2

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Artificial (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; immune to poisons and toxins), Strike Back (may spend ⟲ ⟲ ⟲ or ⊗ from an engaged opponent's failed combat check against this character to inflict 3 wounds on the opponent), Swimmer (never suffers movement penalties for traveling through water).
Equipment: Poisonous fangs (Brawl; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 3, Pierce 3, Vicious 3), metallic microscales (+2 soak).

Neutron Shark (Nemesis)

7 | 2 | 3

A creature that seems to defies the laws of both evolution and unified stringfield particulates. I've almost got it figured out, of course. -Escotera

Thought to be an escaped Logos experiment (or unleashed weapon), neutron sharks are quasi-matter predators that roam above and below the Crucible. Their piscine, toothsome forms meld energy and subatomic matter together, and their frenzied attacks can shatter the air around them into component nucleons.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
5	4	1	3	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
8	24	19	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 3.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Flyer (can fly; see Genesys Core Rulebook, page 100), Frenzied Hunger (after making a successful combat check, may spend ⊛ to inflict an additional hit on any number of other engaged opponents, dealing base damage +1 per ✲; after doing so the neutron shark suffers 3 strain for each additional opponent hit).
Equipment: Leptonic jaws (Brawl; Damage 10; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Vicious 4), baryon skin (+3 soak).

See, Valdr, snufflegator, just like I said! -DGR

Piranha Monkey (Minion)

3 | 1 | 1

Piranha monkeys swing noisily through dense forests, devouring everything in their path. These small humanoids often lie in wait for unsuspecting prey and are able to scour the flesh from creatures many times their size in moments.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	3	2	2	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	4	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Athletics, Brawl, Coordination.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Arboreal (treats foliage as clear terrain), Critical Numbers (adds ⩓ to combat checks if there are two or more members in the minion group), Forest Predator (when in forests, may spend ⩓ ⩓ from an Initiative check to make an immediate out-of-turn maneuver).
Equipment: Teeth (Brawl; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Engaged], Pierce 3, Vicious 4).

Snufflegator (Nemesis)

9 | 1 | 1

Anyone who ventures into the swamps throughout the Local Group knows to be on the lookout for the telltale bubbles of lurking snufflegators. These large creatures strike from under the water, and their massive bite can easily cut an unwary target in half. Despite the danger they pose, snufflegators are hunted for their valuable hide and even more valuable Æmber-infused spines. Some beings attempt to trap them in their infancy to raise them as guardians or exotic pets, though these often wind up infesting sewers and urban tunnels.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
5	2	1	2	1	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
7	28	20	1 / 1

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Æmberspines (a character may make a **Hard** [◆ ◆ ◆] **Survival check** to extract one Æmber per ✲ and two Æmber per ⊛ from a freshly defeated snufflegator's spines), Crushing Bite (may spend ⊛ from a successful Brawl check to increase the base damage of its jaws to 14).
Equipment: Jaws (Brawl; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]), spined hide (1 defense, +3 soak).

Timehog (Rival)

3 | 1 | 2

Since the first of these aggressive creatures escaped from a biologician's laboratory, they have been reproducing far more quickly than is explicable. Some beings believe that the chronal energy these cyborg porcines appear to eat has been instrumental in their population growth, as they can now be found almost anywhere (and anywhen) in the Local Group, especially near uncanny forests.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
3	2	1	3	2	1

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
4	10	2 / 0

Skills: Brawl 2, Perception 1, Survival 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Durable 2 (reduce Critical Injury results suffered by 20, to a minimum of 01).
Abilities: Artificial (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; immune to poisons and toxins), Chronal Absorption (for every round that passes in an encounter featuring a timehog, an hour passes outside of the encounter), Eating Time (as an action, may make an **opposed Survival versus Discipline check** targeting one character at short range; if successful, the timehog may perform one additional maneuver during its turns for the remainder of the encounter without suffering strain [it still may only perform two maneuvers during its turn]; the target loses its free maneuver during its turn for the remainder of the encounter).
Equipment: Tusks (Brawl; Damage 4; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Vicious 1).

Tolas (Minion)

3 | 1 | 1

Known to many beings as "frog spiders," tolas are neither arachnids nor amphibians but rather a small form of Dis imp that can be found almost everywhere. Tolas love to scuttle throughout settlements and infest homes, businesses, and other locations, where they remain undetected until their huge swarms are ready to attack.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	4	2	3	1	1

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
4	3	1 / 1

Skills (group only): Brawl, Stealth.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Artificial (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; immune to poisons and toxins), Critical Numbers (adds ⮝ to combat checks if there are two or more minions in the minion group), Scamper (when making a check to determine Initiative, may spend ⮝ ⮝ to upgrade the difficulty of combat checks made targeting them in the first round once), Silhouette 0.
Equipment: Claws and teeth (Brawl; Damage 3; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 3).

Trashcrab (Minion)

3 | 1 | 1

Trashcrabs are large brown crustaceans that make their homes in waterways near urban areas. They usually pose as rocks or floating rubbish, and often decorate their shells with refuse. The troublesome creatures especially enjoy devouring the Æmber of their prey and using the substance to reinforce their shells.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	3	1	3	1	1

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
4	5	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Brawl, Ranged, Stealth.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Aquatic (may breathe underwater and never suffers movement penalties for traveling through water), River's Embrace (may spend ⮞ from a check targeting a character who is engaged with a body of water to make that character fall in).
Equipment: Claws (Brawl; Damage 4; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Linked 1], waterjet (Ranged; Damage 5; Critical 4; Range [Short]; Concussive 1, Stun Damage), Æmber encrusted shell (+2 soak).

Experiments to use a timehog as part of a new mode of time travel have so far been not suitable for publication.

DEMONS

There is a saying in Hub City that there are as many forms of demons as there are nightmares. This makes this mysterious species even more frightening, as their forms already are nightmare inducing.

Despite their supernatural nomenclature, demons are made of mortal flesh and circulating ichor, often with chitinous scales. Many sport cybernetics of horrific design that don't appear to emulate normal flesh so much as take it to twisted extremes. All demons wear masks of spiked metal affixed to their head (or heads), a covering they seem unwilling or unable to remove. These masks might be part of their identity or necessary for survival.

My own encounters with these beings have been few, thankfully. Each was a mix of frustration and fright.

All demons appear to thrive on emotions: the stronger, the better. These longings are more intense than mere desire, though, like how Brobnar giants crave a good fight or Logos scientists a good experiment. These emotions seem to provide sustenance for demons. As with so much on the Crucible, Æmber is necessary for this process. In this case, Æmber is used to capture emotions for later processing and consumption. It is unknown whether demons always required Æmber for this or evolved over time to rely on it. It is also unknown what happens to a demon who doesn't consume enough emotions—some speculate (or hope) that they become dull husks, drained of all vitality both physically and mentally.

Many beings believe that demons crave the darkest emotive flavors, such as rage, greed, and hate, but this is too simplistic a view. Demons desire powerful emotions, and as these sentiments are usually the strongest and easiest to be found, they have become demons' favorite sources of sustenance. Demons can dine on love and happiness but finding sources that are as strong and common as fear and anger is difficult, so they concentrate on evoking and harvesting the latter. Whether the actual feeding process (as opposed to the very real emotions of a subject) is physically, mentally, or spiritually harmful to their subjects is a matter of debate among Logos and Sanctum theorists. Most accounts refer to numbness and emotional withdrawal after such an experience, but with no other lasting effect. Or at least, none that mere instruments can detect.

Much of the mystery concerning demons is due to the complete lack of communication between them and any other species. Despite the wide range of translation technologies, psychic abilities, and social techniques available, no one in the Local Group claims to have had success in this area (except, of course, Archons). The issue may be some utterly alien part of the demon psyche, a difference in their neurochemical pathways, a slightly altered vibration rate in their thought patterns, or more likely, something no one would consider a possibility. The problem isn't one-sided, either, as demons are sometimes observed trying to emulate the behaviors of non-demons and make what could be overtures toward them. Their forms and modes of gathering sustenance, though, tend to make these attempts appear to be terrifying gestures or cruel attacks, all of which evoke more horror than cordiality.

Only Archons, it seems, can converse with demons in any meaningful way. Their methods, however, remain as secretive as the details of these exchanges. Demons can sometimes be found working alongside other species, especially when Archons are involved, even though neither the demons nor the other species may understand what each other seek to accomplish.

NEW ABILITY: DEMON

All of the beings in this section have the **Demon** ability, which includes the following effects:

Demon (social skill checks targeting demons automatically fail with ⟳; regardless of the method, attempted communications with demons is doomed to failure [or worse, tragic and horrible misunderstanding]).

Black Shard Renderer (Minion)

2 | – | 2

Many desperate beings search the dark tunnels underneath Hub City and Spiretown for lost Æmber, where these small, amethyst-skinned demons have often made homes. Their green, glowing eyes flicker in the dark, heralding their insidious ability to induce despair by corrupting Æmber, making it worthless (and possibly dangerous) to anyone who attempts to use it.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	3	2	3	1	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	4	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Brawl, Cool, Perception, Vigilance.
Talents: None.

Abilities: Corrupt Æmber (may spend ♺ ♺ ♺ or ⊗ from any Melee or Brawl check targeting this character to corrupt 1 Æmber the opponent carries [this essentially destroys the Æmber, with other effects as determined by the GM]), Dark Sight (can see in the absence of light without penalty), Demon, Silhouette 0.
Equipment: Claws and teeth (Brawl; Damage 4; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Vicious 1).

Eater of the Dead (Rival)

3 | – | 2

Though all demons feed off emotions, eaters of the dead limit themselves to a singular source: those about to perish. Whether by evolutionary development (assuming demons actually evolve) or artificial design, these beings are able to extract the fear, pain, and anger from those near to death, whether they are flesh or machine. Skilled eaters of the dead are able to keep their targets alive for extended periods of time or even to heal their injuries and diseases, as these demons have no interest in actual death.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	3	2	3	3	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
3	10	1 / 1

Skills: Brawl 2, Medicine 3.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Dark Sight (can see in the absence of light without penalty), Demon, Feed on the Fallen (at the end of the eater of the dead's turn, if at short range of one or more non-demon characters suffering Critical Injuries, may heal a number of wounds that it is suffering equal to the total number of Critical Injuries), Power from the Fallen (while engaged with a non-demon character, increase this character's Brawn by one for each Critical Injury the non-demon character is currently suffering to a maximum of 5 [this also increases the damage of this character's claws and teeth and this character's soak value]).
Equipment: Claws and teeth (Brawl; Damage 2; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Vicious 1).

Guardian Demon (Rival)

6 | – | 4

These angular beings appear to act as physicians for their species. The means by which they mend their

fellow demons is not understood, as no surgery or even physical contact during healing has been witnessed. According to reports, nearby beings not of Dis often are stricken with horrific injuries just as the wounded demons rise to continue their dread activities.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
4	3	3	4	2	3

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
5	11	2 / 0

Skills: Cool 2, Medicine 3, Melee 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Dark Sight (can see in the absence of light without penalty), Demon, Regeneration (at the beginning of their turn, this character heals 3 wounds), Shift the Pain (when this character heals wounds from itself or another demon character, may choose to have one non-demon character within short range suffer an equal amount of strain; when this character heals a Critical Injury that they or another demon character are currently suffering, may choose to have one non-demon character within short range suffer one Critical Injury).
Equipment: Blade of pain (Melee; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Superior, Vicious 2).

Pit Demon (Rival)

6 | – | 3

Pit Demons serve as the elite soldiers of Dis, scouting far through the darkness below the Crucible in search of Æmber and fresh sources of emotional sustenance. Exceptionally brutal in combat, they have also learned how to mentally incite additional pain and suffering in any beings who dare oppose them.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
4	3	3	3	3	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
6	18	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 2, Resilience 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Dark Sight (can see in the absence of light without penalty), Demon, Feel the Pain (when targeted by a melee combat check, may spend ⟳ ⟳ or ⊗ from the results to cause the attacker to suffer 3 strain), Multiple Limbs (gains an additional free maneuver per turn, though still may not perform more than two maneuvers per turn), Share the Pain (whenever this character suffers wounds, one engaged non-demon character suffers half that amount of strain, rounding down).
Equipment: Barbed claws (Brawl; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Linked 3, Vicious 3), armor of pain (+2 soak), Æmber imprint-devices.

I've heard stories that Mars is attempting to breed their Soldiers to be unable to feel... anything, really, so that it can conquer the lands of Dis.

Pitlord (Nemesis)

13 | – | 4

Pitlords are among the elite demons of Dis and are often accompanied by legions of pit demons and powerful imps. Most appear as huge, horned beings with monstrously powerful talons, and the emergence of pitlords from their underground lairs is enough to send witnesses running away in panic. Many believe that pitlords make these terrifying appearances to drive interlopers from regions Dis has claimed; the alarming rise in such occurrences may mean Dis seeks to expand its domain onto surface lands.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
5	3	3	3	4	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
7	24	28	2 / 1

Skills: Brawl 3, Cool 3, Resilience 3, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Dark Sight (can see in the absence of light without penalty), Demon, Feel the Agony (when targeted by a melee combat check, may spend ⟳ ⟳ or ⊗ to cause the attacker to suffer 4 strain), Share the Agony (whenever this character suffers wounds, one engaged non-demon character suffers half that amount of strain, rounding up), Silhouette 2.
Equipment: Barbed claws (Brawl; Damage 8; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Linked 1, Vicious 4), armor of dust (+2 soak, Reinforced), Æmber imprint-shards.

NOMADS AND TRAVELERS

Some beings choose to make their home wherever they travel, even on this unstable world. This could be due to opportunity, a desire to explore, or connections with the Local Groups's many roaming communities.

Bounty Hunter (Rival) 5 2 2

Many cities and settlements post warrants offering significant payment for the capture and return of beings who have escaped local justice. Bounty hunters from many species travel far and wide in pursuit of these rewards, and they rarely ask questions concerning their targets' guilt or innocence.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	3	2	3	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	11	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 3, Coercion 2, Deception 2, Negotiation 2, Perception 3, Ranged 3, Streetwise 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Dubious of Authority (when targeted by a Coercion or Leadership check, may oppose this check with Deception and Cunning [instead of Discipline and Willpower]).
Equipment: Lightning rifle (Ranged; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Long]; Stun 3), shockgloves (Brawl; Damage 5; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Concussive 1, Stun Damage), several "wanted" holoprints.

Caravan Guard (Minion) 2 1 1

To mitigate the danger of travel across the Crucible, many travelers band together in caravans and journey as a group. For even better protection, they hire mercenaries or other hardy beings who are heading in the same direction and can handle themselves in a fight.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	2	1	2	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	4	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Melee, Perception, Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Close Ranks (while within short range of another guard minon group, both groups gain 1 melee defense).
Equipment: Pole chainsaw (Melee; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Inaccurate 1, Vicious 3).

Inspired Adept (Rival) 4 3 3

Adepts by Æmber Inspired are renowned for both their philosophical insights and their martial prowess. As they follow their path across the Crucible, many are ready to help others while also observing the actions of outsiders.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	3	3	2	3	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	10	1 / 0

Skills: Brawl 3, Cool 2, Discipline 3, Medicine 2, Perception 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Heightened Awareness (allies at short range add ▢ to their Perception and Vigilance checks; allies at engaged range add ▢ ▢ instead), Surgeon 2 (when making a Medicine check to heal wounds, the target heals two additional wounds).
Abilities: Calm Center (may remove ■ from Cool, Discipline, and Vigilance checks they make).
Equipment: Fists and feet (Brawl; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Accurate 1, Superior), simple garb, journal, Æmber amulet.

Lava Giant (Nemesis) 11 1 2

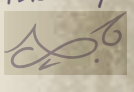
Lava giants delight in harnessing molten rock they find and using it as a weapon, mostly because it shows their superior power over lava, but also because they get a huge laugh from their targets' expressions as they see what's heading their way.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
5	3	2	3	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
7	20	20	0 / 0

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Ranged 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Heat Wave (at the start of their turn, characters engaged with a lava giant suffer 2 strain unless they are immune to heat), Loves the Heat (ignores penalties imposed by high temperatures and ignores damage inflicted by fire or fire-based attacks), Silhouette 2.
Equipment: Burning limbs (Brawl; Damage 6; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Burn 3, Vicious 3), lava bomb (Ranged; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Medium]; Blast 6, Burn 2, Inaccurate 1, Knockdown), stony skin (+2 soak).

Caravan work won't pay much, but work is work. Plus you can scope out right nice marks on the way.



Logos Field Researcher (Rival)

3 | 2 | 3

After testing theories to exhaustion within virtual environments, Logotarians must also test their ideas and inventions in the field. Following these rigorous protocols often provides unanticipated data that can clarify the significance of apparent statistical anomalies. It can also cause unanticipated explosions.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	1	3	2	3	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	11	2 / 2

While it can be interesting to discuss new theories with them, move far, far away when they decide to show off their latest findings.
-Ingram

Skills: Discipline 2, Knowledge (Science) 3, Perception 2, Ranged 2.
Talents: Inventor 2 (add ☐ ☐ to checks made to modify items or construct new ones).
Abilities: Can't Stop Experimenting! (while a Logos Researcher is present in an encounter, the GM may spend ⊗ from any check to force all other characters to make a **Hard** [◆ ◆] **Vigilance** or **Coordination check** as an out-of-turn incidental; anyone who fails suffers 4 wounds and 4 strain), Knowledge is Dangerous (adds ✹ ♺ to the results of Knowledge [Science] checks other characters make in the encounter).
Equipment: Reality distorter (Ranged; Damage 7; Critical 4; Range [Short]; Auto-fire, Prepare 1, Sunder, Superior, combat check uses Intellect instead of Agility), phased hyperfield (2 defense, +2 soak), assorted experimental items, communicator, databooks, several recording drones.

Looter Goblin (Minion)

1 | 1 | 2

Whenever a battle of any size ends, goblins appear as if by magic to loot bodies and scavenge the various war machines. These same creatures haunt junkyards and areas that have been abandoned or ignored for too long, taking whatever is not secured.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	3	2	3	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	4	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Mechanics, Perception, Survival.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Expert Scrounger (while this character is present in an encounter, add ☐ ☐ to checks friendly characters make to search an area), Dark Vision (on skill checks, this character removes up to ■ ■ imposed due to darkness).
Equipment: Shiv (Melee; Damage 4; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]), assorted tools, bags of scavenged items.

Martian Scout (Rival)

6 | 1 | 1

As part of its militant approach, the Martian Empire constantly maintains a watch on possible targets in preparation for when it can best attack. Martian Scouts are the Soldiers who maintain vigils over such targets, while also seeking out new ones for elimination. Their isolated assignments make them susceptible to questioning their orders, however, and so Elders rarely allow them to stay in the field for extended durations.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	3	2	2	2	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	9	1 / 1

Skills: Coercion 2, Ranged 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Ka-boom! (may spend ⊗ on a combat check to activate the Blast item quality and have the quality affect all characters within short range of the target).
Equipment: Ray rifle (Ranged; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Extreme]; Pierce 2, Vicious 2), disintegration grenade (Ranged; Damage 7; Critical 4; Range [Short]; Blast 7, Knockdown, Limited Ammo 2, Vicious 4), scout armor (defense 1, +2 soak).

Pilgrim (Minion)

1 | 1 | 1

Pilgrims journey across the Local Group to varied sites out of interest or devotion. Their destinations include natural wonders, sites of scientific mysteries, holy places, and historic locations. These beings' devotion outweighs their fear of the inherent risks in traveling in small numbers through uncertain regions.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	2	2	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	4	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Athletics, Charm, Discipline, Knowledge (Crucible), Knowledge (Culture), Survival.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Powerful Certainty (whenever this character would inflict strain as the result of a social skill check, the target suffers 2 additional strain), Someone Looking Over Them (reduce any damage inflicted on this character by half before applying soak, and reduce any damage inflicted on friendly characters within short range by two before applying soak).
Equipment: Sacred texts and icons.

Rogue Ogre (Rival)

8 | 1 | 1

Ogres are giants whose reckless use of Æmber for self-augmentation mutated their bodies and minds. Their intellects are highly degraded, and many become separated from their clan. When that happens, they sometimes wander between distractions for years.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
4	2	1	2	1	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
7	17	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 3, Coercion 3, Resilience 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Bowl Over (when making a melee attack after engaging a target, may activate the Knockdown item quality without spending).
Abilities: Relentless (after making a successful combat check against a target, add to the next combat check this character makes against the same target), Silhouette 2.
Equipment: Cybernetic augments (Brawl; Damage 11; Critical 4; Range [Short]; Burn 1, Knockdown, Linked 2, the difficulty for this check is always **Average** [ ]), Æmber-infused skin (+3 soak).

Sanctum Knight (Rival)

5 | 3 | 1

These skilled warriors are oath-sworn to protect the Church of the Opened Eye and the aid those in need of protection. Their sense of honor compels them to protect the weak, the sick, and the helpless—even when such individuals are opposed to Sanctum beliefs.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	3	2	1	3	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
6	13	1 / 1

Skills: Discipline 2, Knowledge (Culture) 2, Melee 3, Perception 1, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Power from Faith (after making a combat check, may spend to add 3 damage to one hit of the attack; after making an opposed social skill check, may spend to inflict 3 strain on the target).
Equipment: Blessed blade (Melee; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Superior), knightly armor (1 defense, +3 soak).

Saurian Rancher (Rival)

6 | 1 | 2

Some members of saurian society live far from the city-states, tending to vast herds of the many species of reptilian cattle. Ranchers quickly recognize threats, carefully protecting and managing their enormous charges.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
3	3	2	2	2	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
4	15	0 / 0

Skills: Melee 2, Perception 2, Ranged 3, Riding 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Let's Ride (can mount or dismount from an animal as an incidental).
Abilities: Yee-hah! (may spend ⮝ ⮝ ⮝ or ⊛ from a successful combat check using their liquid-metal lasso to inflict one hit from the weapon on one other target within short range of the original target, inflicting base damage +1 per ✲).
Equipment: Liquid-metal lasso (Ranged; Damage 6; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Ensnare 3, Stun Damage), stunstick (Melee; Damage 6; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Stun Damage), riding garb (+1 soak), large riding beast (see page 151), big hat.

Saurian Herd Beast (Minion)

3 | 1 | 1

The Saurian Republic maintains vast herds of domesticated dinosaurs, distant ancestors that never achieved sentience. While some act as beasts of burden, most are grown and maintained purely for agricultural purposes.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
4	1	1	1	1	1

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
6	13	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Brawl, Perception.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Encumbrance Capacity 20, Silhouette 3, Stampede (for every three minions in this minion group, add □ to any Brawl checks).
Equipment: Trample (Brawl; Damage 6; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Knockdown), scaly hide (+2 soak).

Bards and troubadours are often the best source of information, especially for current events. Where possible, I like to seek them out before entering a new town.
–Inka

Troll (Nemesis)

7 | 2 | 1

Trolls are far less numerous than giants, but their incredible healing ability means that they are able to survive in almost any environment. A single troll can often resist the attack of a significant number of foes while scarcely slowing in its advance.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
5	2	2	2	2	1

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	Strain Threshold	M/R Defense
5	21	15	0 / 0

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Melee 3, Survival 1.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Regeneration (at the beginning of their turn, this character heals 3 wounds), Silhouette 2, Tough to Convince (when another character targets this character with an opposed social skill check, the difficulty is set by this character's Brawn instead of the usual characteristic).
Equipment: Two hammers (Melee; Damage 7; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Concussive 1, Knockdown).

Troubadour (Minion)

2 | 2 | 1

Traveling entertainers from all species, these minstrels, singers, and poets constantly seek out new crowds to entertain with their varied arts. Monetary appreciation is always welcome, of course, in order to fund more performances. Some troubadours choose to follow beings of note on their journeys, hoping to gain inspiration from their heroics.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	2	2	2	2	3

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
2	4	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Brawl, Charm, Cool, Coordination, Deception.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Soothing Melody (once per encounter, may make an **Average** [◆ ◆] **Charm** or **Coordination check**; if the check is successful, characters in the encounter remove 1 strain per ✲ and this character adds □ to social skill checks they make until the end of the encounter).
Equipment: Customized musical instrument, books of poetry, journals.

URBAN INHABITANTS

The Crucible's countless communities range from tiny hamlets to sprawling metroplexes. While some are confined to a single species or sect, many are filled to the brim with beings from a broad range of backgrounds and biologies.

Bartender (Rival)

3 | 2 | 3

Taverns in the Crucible need to be able to accommodate a great range of clientele, each of whom speaks their own language and seeks relaxation in their own way. The skilled bartenders of Hub City and other locations in the Local Group know how to serve each being the perfect drink and, more importantly, are often able to spot a troublemaker before things get out of control.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	2	2	3	2	3

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
4	10	0 / 0

Skills: Charm 2, Cool 2, Knowledge (Crucible) 1, Knowledge (Culture) 3, Ranged 1, Perception 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Let's Open the Good Stuff (when assisting on a knowledge skill check, may add additional ☐ ☐ to the check; if so, at the end of the encounter the character who made the check recovers 3 fewer strain [to a minimum of 0]).
Equipment: Shotblaster under the counter (Ranged; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Blast 4, Knockdown), plasweave clothing (+2 soak), flasks of assorted intoxicating substances.

Bureaucrat (Minion)

1 | 2 | 2

Cities, governments, and organizations all depend upon armies of bureaucrats to make sure that paperwork is filed and rules are followed.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
1	2	2	3	3	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
1	3	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Discipline, Negotiation, Vigilance.
Talents: Unremarkable (add ✕ to checks made to pick a bureaucrat out of a crowd).

Abilities: Here's a Tip (other characters may spend ⊛ from social skill checks they make targeting this character to add ☐ to other social skill checks they make until the end of the session or until they leave this location), Inured (add ■ to social skill checks targeting this character).
Equipment: Rumpled clothing, endless stacks of holoscrolls, databooks, and forms—lots of forms.

Deipno Spymaster (Rival)

4 | 4 | 3

The Deipno guild of Shadows trains its members to be masters of acquiring secret information. It is said they have a treasure trove of secrets ready for sale, but that some will cost more than mere Æmbits to gain.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	3	2	3	3	3

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
3	12	2 / 2

Skills: Coercion 2, Deception 3, Knowledge (Crucible) 3, Knowledge (Culture) 2, Melee 1, Negotiation 3, Perception 3, Stealth 2, Streetwise 3.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Informed (when providing assistance to friendly characters who are making a knowledge skill, Skulduggery, or Streetwise check, this character instead adds ✹ ✹ ♺ ♺ to the results of the check).
Equipment: Crystal dagger (Melee; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Accurate 2, Stun 3, Superior), set of Deipno stealth emitters (2 defense, +1 soak), magnoscope (adds ☐ to Perception checks), several heavily encrypted micropads.

Something about Halyards' ships and the clothing of their crews seem somehow familiar...

City Enforcer (Minion) 3 1 1

Every community needs people who have the responsibility of keeping the peace. Their nature and intent are linked to the community they protect, however. An honest community has enforcers who care for the people they protect, while a corrupt one might have enforcers who think more about personal profit and inflicting cruelty.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
3	2	2	2	2	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
4	4	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Brawl, Coercion, Melee, Ranged, Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Force of Justice (characters within short range of this character add □ to their combat checks provided those characters are acting to uphold local laws).
Equipment: Stunner baton (Melee; Damage 4; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Concussive 1, Stun Damage), stunner pistol (Ranged; Damage 6; Critical 4; Range [Short]; Concussive 1, Stun Damage), uniform (+1 soak), badge.

Grey Monk (Nemesis) 6 6 6

While they are primarily a meditative order within Sanctum, the Grey Monks operate hospitals and clinics that care for the injured and bereft. They are caring and compassionate healers who have brought many beings back from the brink of death. However, some wonder if they have hidden motivations at play within the Church of the Opened Eye's secretive power structure.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
3	3	4	4	4	3

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	Strain Threshold	M/R Defense
3	16	20	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 3, Cool 2, Discipline 2, Knowledge (Culture) 3, Medicine 3, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Implacable 2 (when this character is targeted by a social skill check, they reduce any strain they suffer as a result of that check by 2).
Abilities: Mystical Healing (decrease the difficulty of all Medicine checks made within short range of a Grey Monk by one), Protective Aura (allies gain +1 soak while within short range of a Grey Monk; this stacks with multiple monks).
Equipment: Fists (Brawl; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 3, Superior), robes.

Halyards Mate (Minion) 2 1 1

Throughout their travels, the stalwart Halyards sailors have become expert not only at hunting the many beasts that lurk in the clouds, but also at overcoming anything the unpredictable weather can inflict. Some hire themselves out when they cannot find a ship of their own, offering their expert skills in order to get back into the air.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	3	2	2	2	1

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
2	4	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Gunnery, Mechanics, Melee, Operating, Perception.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Airborne Expertise (may remove ■ ■ from Operating checks characters in the encounter make to control an airship or other flying vehicle).
Equipment: Æmberdrake fang dagger (Melee; Damage 3; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 4).

Saurian Merchant (Rival)

4 | 4 | 3

These traders travel across the Local Group carrying exotic and extraordinary goods from distant lands. Even if they lack the specific item a client seeks, they can find a great substitute.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
3	2	2	3	3	3

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
5	14	1 / 1

Skills: Charm 2, Discipline 3, Knowledge (Crucible) 3, Melee 2, Negotiation 3, Perception 2, Streetwise 1.
Talents: Counteroffer (once per session, may make an **opposed Negotiation versus Discipline check** to stagger a non-nemesis target at medium range until the end of the target's next turn).
Abilities: Seasoned Negotiator (whenever the merchant would suffer strain after making or opposing a Negotiation skill check, they suffer 1 less, to a minimum of 0; when inflicting strain as part of a Negotiation skill check, they inflict one additional strain).
Equipment: Autoblade (Melee; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Guided 3, Pierce 1, Superior), night-phase field (1 defense, +2 soak), assortment of the most wondrous goods you've ever seen.

Shadows Thief (Rival)

4 | 1 | 4

Shadows agents haunt every major metropolitan area, always watching for worthwhile items to procure. They are masters of acquiring objects of interest and fleeing before the former owner notices anything is missing.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	3	2	3	2	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
2	10	2 / 2

Skills: Athletics 2, Coordination 1, Melee 1, Perception 2, Skulduggery 3, Stealth 3.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Natural Thief (once per session, may reroll one Skulduggery or Stealth check), Poof! (once per encounter, may make an **opposed Stealth versus Vigilance check** against an opponent within short range to vanish from the encounter; must reappear at long range of that opponent at the start of this character's next turn).
Equipment: Monoblade (Melee; Damage 5; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 4), set of customized stealth emitters (2 defense), cloak with dimensional satchel (see page 153), thieves' tools.

Syndicate Insider (Rival)

3 | 4 | 3

Less savory organizations that have connections throughout the Crucible often leverage blackmail, extortion, and other crimes to maintain positions of power. Members of such groups have access to many precious items and much useful information, but they expect to be well compensated for their efforts.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	2	3	3	2	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
4	10	0 / 0

Skills: Coercion 3, Cool 2, Deception 3, Negotiation 3, Perception 2, Ranged 1, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Dangerous Connections (may spend ⮝⮝⮝ or ⊛ from a social skill check they make targeting a PC to move one Story Point from the player pool to the GM pool).
Equipment: Custom zapper (Ranged; Damage 7; Critical 2; Range [Short]), bespoke clothing (+2 soak), array of communications devices, 4d100 Æmbits.

Urchin (Minion)

1 | 1 | 2

All too often, desperate city youths must beg and steal to survive. Some work with adults to create networks devoted to petty crime. As few ever notice their presence, they are also excellent sources of the latest gossip and news, especially concerning the rich and powerful.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	3	2	3	1	1

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
2	3	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Charm, Knowledge (Crucible), Knowledge (Culture), Melee, Perception, Skulduggery, Stealth, Streetwise.
Talents: Unremarkable (other characters add ✕ to any checks made to find or identify an urchin in a crowd).
Abilities: Our City (may always use Streetwise to oppose when the target of a social skill check, and spend ⟲ ⟲ ⟲ or ⊗ from such checks to make their opponent and all characters within short range who are friendly to their opponent become disoriented until the end of the encounter or become badly lost if they are on the move in an urban area).
Equipment: Improvised hyperblade (Melee; Damage 4; Critical 1; Range [Engaged]; Inaccurate 1), mismatched clothing, pack of stolen goods.

A solid network of urchins is well worth the expense if you're doing long-term work in a city. Avoid anyone knowing you have one, though.

WILDERNESS BEINGS

Despite the Local Group's huge number of urban areas, it has vast swaths where nature holds sway, both on, above, and below the surface. Many beings choose to live far from urban civilizations and strike out on their own or form new types of settlements of a less artificial nature. Some enjoy the isolation, others relish the opportunity for discovery, and a few are so destructive that everyone else flees from them.

Æmber Prospector (Rival)

3 | 1 | 3

Some people dare to search the Crucible's wilds for Æmber all alone. A lust for power, a hunger for glory, or an overwhelming curiosity compels them to ignore the dangers in pursuit of success, however slim their chance. Over time, many accept ever greater risks as their understanding of Æmber increases.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	2	3	2	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	11	0 / 0

Skills: Knowledge (Æmber) 3, Knowledge (Crucible) 2, Negotiation 3, Ranged 2, Survival 3.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Æmber Fever (when this character makes or assists a check that involves Æmber, the character making the check may spend ▲ ▲ to add ✹ ⟲ ⟲ to the results).
Equipment: Unearthed weapon (Ranged; Damage 3; Critical 1; Range [Medium]; Breach 1), satchel of Æmber nuggets, psi-dowsing kit, camping gear, rations.

I have several in my employ; they are great sources of the substance as well as the latest rumors concerning its properties. Somewhat paranoid at times, but still very useful.
-Escotera

Escaped Experiment (Rival)

7 | 1 | 2

Likely a victim of Logos or Mars research, this poor being is an amalgamation of various life forms and technologies. They may be simply trying to survive in the wild, or they may be preparing a plan of vengeance. They might even be following a devious program implanted deep within their tortured mind.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
4	2	2	2	3	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
7	16	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 3, Perception 3, Resilience 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Fragmented Memories (add ⬢ ⬢ to social skill checks targeting this character), Mutating (at the start of each encounter, may suffer 1 wound to gain one species feature generated at random from **Table 1–8: Species Features** on page 47).
Equipment: Bioengineered talons (Brawl; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 3, Vicious 2), altered flesh (+3 soak).

Gloomwight (Minion)

3 | 1 | 1

Gloomwights are small, goblinoid creatures who can move freely through solid matter, producing bewitching flashes of eldritch light as they flicker in and out of the underground caverns they call home. They have a rudimentary social structure and generally hunt in packs, taking foes by surprise as they spring forth from rocky walls or even out of the ground.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	3	1	3	1	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	5	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Athletics, Brawl, Ranged.
Talents: None.

Abilities: Dark Sight (can see in the absence of light without penalty), Phase (can ignore terrain penalties and move through solid matter [but cannot end their turn inside solid matter]), Silhouette 0.
Equipment: Overphased rocks (Ranged; Damage 3; Critical 1; Range [Short]; Blast 6), phase bite (Brawl; Damage 2; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Breach 1).

Green Walker (Nemesis)

10 | 3 | 4

Some beings within the wilderness are an integral part of the environment. Such are the green walkers, giant sentient trees who are both very mobile and very social. Most green walkers maintain vows to guard their home forest from those who would endanger it, but some leave to become the protectors for other wilderness areas, or even to start new ones.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
5	2	3	2	3	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	Strain Threshold	M/R Defense
8	36	20	2 / 0

Skills: Cool 1, Charm 2, Brawl 4, Knowledge (Crucible) 4, Perception 2, Stealth 1, Survival 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Woodlander (while in a forested area, green walkers upgrade the ability of Cool and Stealth checks they make twice), Silhouette 3.
Equipment: Thorny fists (Brawl; Damage 10; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Pierce 2, the difficulty for this check is always **Average** [◆ ◆]), thick bark (+3 soak).

Kelifi Dragon (Nemesis)

14 | 5 | 3

Long ago, a few highly intelligent and dangerously bored Brobnar goblins decided to see what would happen if they cybernetically enhanced a sleeping dragon. When it awoke, it flexed its rocket wings, let loose a belch of plasma, and began a rampage that still continues centuries later. The experiment clearly a success, the goblins' tribe has since created more of these sentient beings, becoming very famous in Brobnar lands and quite unwelcome everywhere else.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
5	4	3	3	4	3

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	Strain Threshold	M/R Defense
10	42	24	0 / 0

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Coercion 3, Knowledge (Æmber) 3, Perception 2, Ranged 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Flyer (can fly; see page 100 of the Genesys Core Rulebook), Silhouette 4, Supersonic (after spending two maneuvers to move through the air, as an action may make a **Hard** [◆ ◆ ◆] **Athletics check**; if successful, all other characters within medium range of this character's final location suffer 5 strain), Sweep Attack (may spend ⚙ on a successful Brawl check to inflict one hit dealing 10 damage on all other characters within short range).
Equipment: Huge talons (Brawl; Damage 10; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 4, Vicious 4), plasma flames (Ranged; Damage 7; Critical 4; Range [Medium]; Blast 6, Burn 3), plate armor (+5 soak).

I met a dragon named Kelvin who had fierce hatred of martians. His tales of aiding an unusual group near Kettle Bottom may become the basis of my next book.
-Inka

Kindrith Ranger (Minion)

5 | 1 | 2

Kindrith Rangers seem to inhabit virtually every wilderness area and uncanny forest in the Local Group. They are rightly feared for springing out unexpectedly to attack anyone who is not properly respecting their lands.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	4	2	3	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	5	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Athletics, Ranged, Stealth, Survival, Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Blend with the Wilds (in wilderness areas, Kindrith Rangers gain defense 1), Handmade Weapons (when another being uses this character's bow, it loses the Superior item quality and gains Inaccurate 3 and Unwieldy 5).
Equipment: Handcrafted Ranger's bow (Ranged; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Medium]; Burn 1, Pierce 3, Superior), Ranger garb (+1 soak).

Martian Zookeeper (Rival)

4 | 2 | 3

Martian leaders sometimes order lesser Elders to venture outside Nova Hellas to acquire creatures for research, for experimentation, or to become trained pets (sometimes all three). Some of these Elders become prestigious zookeepers, gathering specimens for the delight of those martians who prefer having the wilds brought to them over leaving the relative safety of their relocated homeland.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	3	3	3	3	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	9	0 / 2

The ones I've seen were gleefully barbaric, and I was happy to aid in the mass escape of the captives!

Skills: Coercion 2, Knowledge (Crucible) 2, Negotiation 2, Perception 2, Ranged 2, Survival 3.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Animal Companion 4 (may select a companion of up to silhouette 3, such as those from the **Creatures** section on page 220).
Abilities: Animal Adversary (⊗ may be spent on a failed check this character makes during a turn in which they direct their animal companion to have the companion make a combat check as an out-of-turn action targeting this character; ❁ may be spent on this combat check to also have the animal run away).
Equipment: Energy webber (Ranged; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Medium]; Ensnare 4, Stun Damage), armored exosuit (+2 soak), dimensional holding cage.

Mushroom Person (Minion)

3 | 1 | 1

Mysterious cultures inhabit the wilderness areas of the Local Group, including those of transformed beings with inscrutable pasts. Mushroom People are fusions of fungi and humanoids whose minds have been transformed as much as their physical shapes. Many can be found in untamed forests or near the World Tree, but what functions they may serve there are conjecture at best.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	2	2	2	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	5	1 / 0

Skills (group only): Knowledge (Crucible), Melee, Survival.
Talents: None.

Abilities: Fungal Form (reduce any damage from hits targeting this character by 3 unless the Burn item quality has been activated as a part of this attack).
Equipment: Dream staff (Melee; Damage 4; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 2), herbs.

Nucranacra (Rival)

7 | 1 | 2

Sprawling underground oceans fill vast caverns beneath the Local Group, and the life that teems within is as varied as that found on the surface. Some of the inhabitants venture forth from these subterranean seas to seek new prey. These include the nucranacra, a species of sentient crustaceans who hunt along the darkened shores to feed their underwater villages. They are quick to anger and distrustful of all surface dwellers, but open to trade if Æmber is involved.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
4	2	2	3	2	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
7	18	0 / 0

Skills: Melee 3, Knowledge (Æmber) 2, Negotiation 2, Resilience 3.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Amphibious (can breathe underwater without penalty and never suffers movement penalties for traveling through water), Dark Sight (can see in the absence of light without penalty), Spiked Carapace (when targeted by a melee combat check, may spend ♺ ♺ ♺ or ⊗ from the results to have the attacker suffer 4 wounds).
Equipment: Coral glaive (Melee; Damage 6; Critical 4; Range [Engaged], Vicious 1), shell (+3 soak).

Questing Giant (Rival)

7 | 2 | 2

While many giants revel in the company of their Brobnar kin, some choose to travel alone into the wilds. Typically, these giants are undertaking a quest to demonstrate their superiority. They usually have no idea what sort of challenge they seek, only that they will know it when they see it. Only once they have performed a truly great feat will they return to their homeland, and the celebrations may only end when another giant decides to go on a quest themself.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
4	2	2	2	3	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
6	20	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 3, Melee 3, Survival 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Durable 3 (Critical Injury results this character suffers by 30, to a minimum of 1).
Abilities: Challenge Accepted! (once per session, may spend a Story Point to count as having 3 ranks in any skill that they do not possess until the end of the encounter), Silhouette 2.
Equipment: Handmade axe (Melee; Damage 10; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Cumbersome 4, Pierce 3), handmade armor (+2 soak), performing implements (horn, spices, paints, etc.)

Territorial Scout (Rival)

6 | 2 | 4

Surviving in an isolated community can be an even greater challenge than living in an overcrowded city. Settlements, villages, and nomadic camps across the wilds of the Local Group depend upon their scouts and hunters to warn them of danger and provide them with resources they cannot grow.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
3	3	2	3	2	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
4	12	0 / 1

Skills: Athletics 2, Knowledge (Crucible) 3, Knowledge (Culture) 3, Perception 3, Ranged 4, Survival 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Forager (remove up to ■ ■ from checks to find food, water, or shelter; finding these items requires half the usual time).
Abilities: Never Alone (may spend ⮝ ⮝ ⮝ or ⊛ on checks this character makes to determine Initiative to have one additional scout appear at long range; this new scout also makes a check to determine Initiative).
Equipment: Hyper-collimated photon beamer (Ranged; Damage 7; Critical 4; Range [Extreme]; Pierce 2), survival gear, collapsible telescope.

'Struth here. Thought I had the drop on one, and four more showed up and almost got the drop on me. Best to leave 'em alone or be all friendly-like if they see you first.
—Dodger

Witch of the Wilds (Nemesis)

2 | 7 | 3

Some beings believe that natural interactions between the varied flora and fauna of the Crucible have a sacred value. Known by some as witches, these beings seek to protect the wilds from interference, particularly from those who attempt to exploit or disrupt them.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	4	4	3	3	3

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	Strain Threshold	M/R Defense
4	12	18	1 / 1

Skills: Æmbercraft 3, Athletics 2, Knowledge (Æmber) 3, Knowledge (Crucible) 3, Perception 2, Ranged 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3.

Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), One with Nature (may make a **Simple [–] Survival check** to recover strain at the end of an encounter), Swift (does not suffer penalties for moving through difficult terrain).

Abilities: Ease of the Wilds (when a character within short range of this character removes strain at the end of an encounter, that character and this character both remove two additional strain), Hybrid Physiology (in the wilds, does not need to make Survival checks to find acceptable food, water, or shelter).

Æffects: Witches of the wild are highly skilled at using Æmber, and commonly employ these custom Æffects:

Wall of Thorns (may make a **Hard [◆◆◆] Æmbercraft check** to have a hedge of dense thornbushes of silhouette 2 sprout from the ground at medium range; this counts as difficult terrain and inflicts 2 strain on all who cross through it).

Weight of the Forest (choose a target at medium range and make a **Hard [◆◆◆] Æmbercraft check** to disorient that target until the end of the encounter).

Equipment: Poxbug slingshot (Ranged; Damage 6; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Blast 4, Disorient 2), garb of natural fibers, (1 defense, +2 soak), satchel filled with assorted pieces of Æmber.

The Vorgans have a rich history which I hope to chronicle one day. Till then, know that they are perhaps the only things that demons fear, at least below the surface. –Inka

Zealous Hermit (Rival)

3 | 3 | 4

Some individuals choose to live apart from society for reasons involving personal growth, religious development, or just to get away from the bustle of civilization and contemplate the impossible nature of the Crucible. While they may discover new insights through isolation, they are often reluctant to share their findings with those who disrupt their tranquility.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	2	3	2	3	3

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	M/R Defense
2	9	1 / 0

Skills: Cool 2, Discipline 3, Knowledge (Æmber) 3, Melee 2, Perception 3, Survival 3.

Talents: Heightened Awareness (allies within short range add □ to their Perception and Vigilance checks; allies at engaged range add □ □ instead).

Abilities: Philosophical Paradox (may make an **opposed Knowledge [Æmber] versus Discipline check** targeting a sentient being within short range to stagger the target until the end of their next turn).

Equipment: Æmber dagger (Melee; Damage 5; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Breach 1), several Æmber icons, bedroll, religious icons, writing supplies.

Vorgan Hunter (Nemesis)

11 | 4 | 5

Vorgans, an offshoot of the saurian people, were long ago ostracized from the Saurian Republic. Many fled deep underground to build their own settlements. These pale dinosaurs have become a myth to most saurians in the city-states above, but while the vorgans lack the advanced philosophies of the Republic, their own civilization is a sparkling jewel deep in the darkness.

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
4	3	3	3	3	2

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	Strain Threshold	M/R Defense
7	20	24	0 / 0

Skills: Knowledge (Æmber) 3, Knowledge (Crucible) 4, Knowledge (Science) 4, Melee 3, Negotiation 3, Ranged 3, Survival 3.

Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Sharp Tongue 2 (may reduce the number of ⮝ they must spend to inflict a critical remark in a social encounter by 2, to a minimum of one ⮝).

Abilities: Dark Sight (can see in the absence of light without penalty), Silhouette 2, Tail Smash (after making a successful melee combat check, may spend ⊛ to inflict one hit dealing 6 damage on one engaged character).

Equipment: Piezo-staff melee profile (Melee; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Stun Damage), piezo-staff ranged profile (Ranged; Damage 10; Critical 4; Range [Medium]; Stun Damage), bone plating (+3 soak), databooks, cache of Æmber crystals, bag of chewing grubroots.

LEGENDARY BEINGS

Heroes and villains make their home on nearly every strange corner of the Crucible. More than a few have risen to prominence, becoming legendary figures mythologized as much as any Archon. Whether whispered of in the back alleys of Hub City or worshiped as gods-made-flesh by the strange nomads of the Blasted Badlands, they are famous (or infamous) beings always on the edge of the next historic deed.

Dodger (Nemesis)

8 | 4 | 7

Shadows seems to know every secret in the Crucible, and there's no Shadows agent more infamous or more cunning than the Svarr elf called Dodger. Appearing when and where he's least wanted, Dodger seems to always be there when choice whispers are spoken, the greatest mysteries are about to be buried, and an adversary's deepest weakness is laid bare. He's also not above wetwork if the price is right, especially if his guild is the one asking.

Dodger always seems to be on the job, but he certainly enjoys his downtime when he can take it. Though he can afford better, he can often be found at the worst dive bars of the Lawless Zone, where he can really relax. Such is his reputation that work tends to come to him, enough to keep him comfortable and allow him to aid his guild more than most. Dodger has often been seen working with the Archon known as Censorius. He doesn't speak of the jobs he undertakes for her, but lately he's been buying more rounds than usual at the Broken Spire.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	4	3	4	2	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
5	12	14	1 / 1

Motivations: Desire (Belonging), Fear (Isolation), Strength (Adaptable), Flaw (Greed).
Skills: Cool 3, Coordination 3, Discipline 3, Knowledge (Crucible) 3, Melee 3, Ranged 3, Skulduggery 2, Stealth 4, Streetwise 3, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Dramatic Entrance (once per session, may spend a Story Point to use this talent to enter a scene or encounter they are not currently participating in at an opportune time, no matter how unlikely their arrival. If the scene is a combat encounter or otherwise uses Initiative order, Dodger adds a new NPC Initiative slot at the top of the Initiative order).

USING NAMED NEMESES

Legendary NPCs like the ones listed in this section, as well as other named nemeses presented elsewhere, represent truly remarkable beings known for performing impossible feats and defying the odds at every step. As such, they function on a different level than other NPCs, and we advise GMs to use the optional **Nemesis Extra Activation Rules**, on page 204 of the Genesys Core Rulebook. These rules can be used for regular nemeses as well, depending on the situation and the PCs involved.

Abilities: Light Fingers (after making a melee combat check, may spend ⊛ to steal one item of encumbrance 1 or less from the target).
Equipment: Twin crystal blades (Melee; Damage 7; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Accurate 2, Stun 3, Superior), throwing stars (Ranged; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Short]; Accurate 1, Linked 2), stealth emitter-lined camo-clothing (1 defense, +2 soak), magnavisor, dimensional satchel (see page 153) filled with all sorts of interesting things.

Oi! Lies, all lies, innit. And not even me best side, neither.

Inka the Spider (Nemesis)

3 | 6 | 11

Inka has made a name for herself not only as a self-proclaimed spy-for-hire, but also (and more importantly to her) as one of the most well-known writers in the Local Group—and possibly beyond. Although she operates out of her small treehouse office in Cobweb Grove, many beings brave the wilderness and unpredictable movement of the Lesser Uncanny Forest to procure her services. As a relatively small being, she excels at jobs that require stealth. It is her ability to perceive things that others do not that has brought her to the attention of several Archons.

Inka's rather unique contracts allow her to publish tales of the jobs she has undertaken. Although everyone knows she does some artful massaging of the text, each story displays with reasonable veracity yet another mysterious slice of life on the Crucible. Everyone also knows she has plenty more hidden away, ready to be released if she comes to harm, which means she has plenty of beings ready to come to her defense if needed.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	4	4	4	3	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	8	12	2 / 2

Motivations: Desire (Fame), Fear (Poverty), Strength (Patient), Flaw (Pride).

I am quite curious how this information was obtained and from whom. It may be worth hiring those involved.

Skills: Charm 3, Cool 3, Coordination 4, Discipline 4, Knowledge (Crucible) 4, Knowledge (Culture) 4, Negotiation 3, Perception 4, Stealth 4, Streetwise 3, Survival 4, Vigilance 3.

Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Wallcrawler (can move across vertical surfaces as easily as horizontal surfaces. In addition, when this character attempts to reduce the damage taken from falling, reduce the difficulty of the Athletics or Coordination check by one).

Abilities: Friends in Spy Places (a character must suffer 2 strain in order to make a combat check targeting Inka), Leverage Fame (after making a successful social skill check, this character heals 2 strain and may perform a second maneuver without spending strain [but cannot perform more than two maneuvers in their turn]), Silhouette 0, Web of Secrets (as an incidental, may spend a Story Point to reveal a terrible secret that a character within short range possesses; that character suffers 5 strain).

Equipment: Tiny quill and papers, miniaturized spy gear and comms.

Makai (Nemesis)

8 | 6 | 6

Little is known about this perpetually traveling Inspired adept, save that they are a master of the strange martial art known only as Æmber-Do and that their ageless face is perpetually painted with an impish grin. Makai seems to view the entirety of the Crucible as a grand adventure, and even dismisses death as a minor setback. Certainly demise seems as much for Makai themself, as there are stories of this human dating back hundreds of years from all over the Local Group, some of which ended quite clearly with a fatal conclusion.

The call of Completion drives Makai to seek out danger and adventure at every turn, for this is the path they believe their Æmber amulet has revealed to them. As such, they often appear utterly fearless, trusting that no matter what happens, it is part of their path. Those who are swept up in Makai's endeavors will undoubtedly be drawn onto the first steps of their own path, whether they realize it or not.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	4	4	3	4	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	16	20	1 / 1

Motivations: Desire (Ascension), Fear (Failure), Strength (Courageous), Flaw (Carelessness).
Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Charm 3, Cool 3, Coordination 3, Discipline 3, Survival 4.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Æmber-Do (once per encounter, may spend a Story Point before making a skill check to double this character's Brawn value and require 1 fewer ⮝ to activate any item quality for that check), The Path Provides (whenever Makai assists on a check, the character making the check may spend ⚙ to heal all of their own strain).
Equipment: Fists and feet (Brawl; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Guided 4), traveling robes, necklace with Æmber amulet.

Pingle (Nemesis)

9 | 5 | 5

It's not easy being small, especially among the typically towering Brobnar. But Pingle, more commonly known as "Pingle Who Annoys" by anyone who has spent more than five seconds around the goblin, has managed to impress every leader he's encountered. He is even said to hold the King of the Crag's favor—for the moment. Painfully obnoxious to both friend and foe, Pingle has carved a surprising niche out for himself as a masterful sniper with a reputation for eliminating or disabling foes with non-lethal but highly embarrassing methods.

Pingle has a way of getting under the skin of everyone he encounters, as if his one good eye is somehow able to see exactly what will frustrate the chosen target of his japes into a white-hot rage. His unique talent means that he is quick to wear out his welcome wherever he goes, but he often gets work in vault battles despite his severe lack of teamwork skills.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	4	2	4	3	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	14	14	1 / 1

Motivations: Desire (Survival), Fear (Pain), Strength (Independent), Flaw (Annoying).
Skills: Coercion 3, Deception 2, Discipline 2, Mechanics 3, Perception 2, Ranged 4, Skulduggery 3, Streetwise 2, Vigilance 4.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Annoying (adds ☐ to Coercion checks); Really, Really Annoying (whenever anyone spends a Story Point during Pingle's turn, one character within short range of Pingle of the GM's choosing suffers 2 strain and becomes staggered until the end of their next turn).
Equipment: Eggthrower rifle (Ranged; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Extreme]; Blast 5, Disorient 3, Stun Damage), scavenged armor (+2 soak), extra clip of rotten eggs and other foul ammunition, cybernetic monocle (ignores penalties to Pingle's combat checks due to concealment).

Really, Really Annoying doesn't even begin to describe Pingle...

Quixo the "Adventurer" (Nemesis)

6 | 4 | 9

Brawn	Agility	Intellect	Cunning	Willpower	Presence
2	2	3	4	2	3

Soak Value	Wound Threshold	Strain Threshold	M/R Defense
5	13	15	1 / 1

Quixo is a—nay, the—preeminent explorer and treasure seeker of the Society of Logic and Reason. Countless impossible expeditions to the most dangerous places across the Crucible have been carried out with him at their helm and his derring-do ensuring their success. Indisputable (according to Quixo) accounts of his innumerable adventures can be found at every databook dealer across Hub City, taken from his own multivolume memoirs, which are among the most popular serials sold today.

I feel quite certain from linguistic analysis (and prior experience) that Q wrote this himself.

But he is never one to claim all the glory for himself, as Quixo and his trusty cybernetic owl, Archimedes, always hire assistants at the beginning of every new expedition. Never mind the fact that only a scant handful of these trusty assistants have ever made it out alive from one of Quixo's epic adventures or that his memoirs are filled with inconsistencies and impossibilities. With a quick smile and a twisted turn of phrase, Quixo always comes out on top and with a lead on the next great expedition. All he has to do before he finds a fresh team of recruits is to pass off his wonderful discoveries to his curious allies in Logos. Then it's into the fray once more, all in the name of fortune and glory—and science, of course.

Motivations: Desire (Fame), Fear (Failure), Strength (Confidence), Flaw (Recklessness).
Skills: Charm 3, Computers 4, Cool 3, Discipline 3, Knowledge (Crucible) 3, Knowledge (Science) 4, Mechanics 4, Melee 2, Operating 3, Perception 1, Ranged 2, Survival 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Animal Companion 1 (has an animal companion [Archimedes]).
Abilities: Exploration Maven (while exploring [or telling stories of his explorations], whenever Quixo recovers strain, he removes three additional strain and friendly characters within short range suffer 1 strain), Not in the Memoirs (whenever Quixo would suffer a Critical Injury, he may spend a Story Point to have one of his assistants within short range be incapacitated instead).
Equipment: Æmberhead staff (Melee; Damage 7; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 4, Reinforced, Superior), cool cybercloak (1 defense, +3 soak), assorted adoring assistants, selective recording devices, sciency gear.

ARCHIMEDES (RIVAL)

3 | 1 | 1

How Archimedes came to accompany Quixo is a mystery that the famed explorer has yet to relate, but no matter the danger, the owl always seems to be at his side.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	3	1	1	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	5	1 / 1

Skills: Perception 2, Ranged 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Flyer (can fly; see GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 100), Remote Perception (can transmit live streaming feed to Quixo), Silhouette 0.
Equipment: Laser eyes (Ranged; Damage 5; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Pierce 2), illuminator.

THE TERROR (NEMESIS)

12 | – | 7

There are many legends concerning the huge demon known as the Terror. Stories in Hub City insist this being was once a gambler who staked their soul and lost against a shrouded being who turned out to be a demon. Others say they were once a knight of the Church of the Opened Eye who fell from grace and was taken in by the demons of Dis. Within Sanctum itself, there is a hushed tale of a devout knight who attempted to redeem a demon from the pit but who failed so utterly that the demon became one of the mightiest and horrific of its kind; this is often used as an example of why Dis can never be trusted. Some even hold that the Terror is an Archon who was cursed by the Architects. All anyone really knows is that the Terror can usually be found whenever there is despair and pain, and that the demon never fails in heightening both to their ultimate degrees.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
4	4	3	5	5	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
7	24	16	1 / 1

Motivations: Unknown.
Skills: Coercion 4, Deception 3, Discipline 4, Medicine 3, Melee 4, Perception 3, Vigilance 4.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Dark Sight (can see in the absence of light without penalty), Demon (see the sidebar on page 226), Cruel Empathy (when a character within short range makes a check that generates ⊗, the Terror removes 1 strain), For the Pain (when a non-demon within short range suffers a Critical Injury, may spend a Story Point to replace the result with an Agonizing Wound), Silhouette 2, Terrifying Aura (at the start of an encounter, all opponents must make an **upgraded Hard [● ◆ ◆] fear check** as an out-of-turn incidental, as per page 243 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook; if there are multiple sources of fear in the encounter, the opponents only make one fear check against the most fearsome enemy).
Equipment: Blade of Despair (Melee; Damage 9; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Burn 6, Sunder), corrupted armor (1 defense, +3 soak), Æmber imprint-shards.

XIMILPIX (NEMESIS)

11 | 10 | 8

To say that the Martian Solider known as Ximilpix is a legend is not enough, for they are what legends aspire to become. Some say Ximilpix was already on the Crucible before Nova Hellas arrived or that they taught the Archons how to forge keys. There are many thousands of tales about this scarred Yxili Marauder, each one more preposterous than the last, yet all seeming to contain a nugget of truth.

According to some of these stories, the Lone Martian comes to the aid of martians, especially fellow Soldiers left to die by Elders. In others, they defend non-martians against Martian invaders. Sometimes they fight for justice, sometimes they aid the helpless, and sometimes they just sigh at the situation and walk away.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	5	3	4	5	4

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	12	20	2 / 2

Motivations: Desire (Obscurity), Fear (Fame), Strength (Fearless), Flaw (Tired).
Skills: Coercion 3, Cool 4, Discipline 4, Gunnery 3, Knowledge (Crucible) 3, Leadership 3, Perception 4, Ranged 4, Survival 2, Vigilance 4.
Talents: Adversary 3 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target three times), Quick Draw (may draw or holster an easily accessible weapon or item as an incidental).
Abilities: The Legend (when making a skill check, may spend a Story Point to treat ⮝ ⮝ as ⊛), Silhouette 0, Veteran of a Thousand Battles (when Ximilpix makes a check to determine Initiative order, ⮝ on the check counts as ✲).
Equipment: Ancient ray pistol (Ranged; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Medium]; Auto-fire, Pierce 3), battered uniform (2 defense, +2 soak).

Right. Serious time here. I've seen this bloke stare down Archons and volcanic eruptions alike.

Don't think of 'em as a martian. Think of 'em as a force of nature.

CHAPTER 7: THE GAME MASTER

Games set on the Crucible can be as divergent and expansive as the world itself, and it may feel a bit daunting to run games there. The wild mix of species, super-science, and fantastical technologies may seem too large to handle, but its beings have motivations and needs that everyone can understand—and thus adventures on this world can be both fun and familiar for players as they explore the Crucible with their characters.

This chapter is designed to help you, the Game Master, to run such games. We'll discuss what life on the Crucible should feel like, along with tips for using it in a science fantasy setting. Next, we'll talk about evolving your NPCs as your players grow and develop their own characters, and offer advice for adding new life to this world. We also offer rules for Archon NPCs and suggestions for using them in games. Finally, we close with ideas for creating and running adventures set in the Crucible using three-act modular structures.

DEPICTING LIFE ON THE CRUCIBLE

Any campaign set on the Crucible should wholeheartedly embrace its inherent impossibilities in order to convey the feel of this world. The Crucible is incredibly ancient, with sections that predate any recorded history. Yet each new day may bring surprises. Shocking revelations of new cultures and unnatural events often force antagonists to work together to survive. Philosophical transformations are as much a part of the Crucible as are the physical and mystical ones.

The Crucible is also an incredibly complex environment where untold numbers of species interact, each speaking their own languages, encompassing divergent cultures, and using technologies and magic that are completely foreign to other species. Sometimes all of these variations can be present within a single scene. This section offers suggestions on how you can present the diversity of life on the Crucible without overwhelming anyone or slowing the game down.

From the Top

Capturing the feel of the Crucible needs to start at the moment of campaign design. While a campaign might focus upon a specific metroplex or organization, or upon members of a common species, even that level can't happen in isolation. Cities have visitors, and residents travel. Organizations interact with outsiders and face internal struggles. Almost every species and civilization trades with many others. You need to decide which of these many elements should be the core focus of the campaign and how those elements fit together.

If you don't have a strong vision for the campaign, it may be a good idea to bring the players into the discussion at this stage. If the group includes players who are already familiar with the Crucible, some may have specific ideas about which species and organizations they want to draw into the campaign.

Alternatively, if you have a strong campaign vision, it may be appropriate to use that to narrow the focus. Some restrictions in character creation to the species and careers most appropriate for the campaign may be helpful here. Certainly, exceptions can be made, but a general guideline may help give rise to a party that is well suited for the themes and stories you are envisioning. This way, you and your players are able to design a team of characters who can work together, instead of a group whose members seek one another's destruction—unless that is the desired focus.

Part of the campaign-creation process may involve determining if the player characters have a base of operations. This could be a geographic region but it might also include an organization's headquarters or a specific location in a metropolis like Hub City. Fleshing these places out can be a great first step in helping to establish the tone, especially for the first few adventures. If the players are familiar with some of the elements their characters already know, it can save descriptive time and prevent confusion during early adventures.

These discussions can go in many different directions. If the players are interested in exploration, they might operate as the crew of a research skyship or a trading caravan. Players desiring adventures with a more political bent might wish to represent the squabbling members of a Shadows guild den, a Logos university faculty hall, or a Sanctum court. Unless there are strong reasons otherwise, also try to include ways to accommodate PCs from backgrounds and species that might appear completely alien to it. A Shadows elf could enlist in Star Alliance at Quantum City, a saurian join a Logos research center, or a martian leave Nova Hellas to walk the path of Inspired.

Diversity

There is no clear method to how the Architects select the peoples and places that are to be incorporated into the Crucible, or what design they follow as they deposit new sectors and species to this artificial world. Species devoted to disciplined mysticism may be set near cultures focused upon aggressively enthusiastic scientific research. Peaceful agrarian tribes might have to contend with boisterous neighbors whose loud hunting roars seem to never end. This degree of diversity is geographically enforced within the Crucible; player characters never need to travel far to encounter something completely foreign to them.

Keep in mind that the nature of what is unusual and new to the PCs should change as they adventure and become more cosmopolitan in your campaigns. Even cultures with the same predominant species can vary substantially from one location to the next, though. Diversity begins with changes to the language and population, but it needs to go deeper than that to really portray the Crucible's varied nature.

It may be my arachnid nature, but having a home is a must. The question is, do you make it inviting or protective? I myself always welcome visitors into my parlor.
–Inka

Cities

Each population center should have a reason to exist—especially if it is one that arrived intact(-ish) on the Crucible. A city that was a trading nexus could remain one after it arrives, or subsequently evolve into a recreational destination, a manufacturing center, or an Æmbit processing plant. How its culture evolved from its original purpose to its current one may redefine its inhabitants and infrastructure. Repurposed buildings are a powerful expression of how a culture and its values have changed with exposure to the Crucible.

The longer a pre-existing location has been on the Crucible, the more likely it is that it and its people have changed. A newly arrived populace might still struggle to adapt its infrastructure to the environmental and cultural changes. Younger cities are less likely to have a diverse population, while older ones are certain to have inhabitants from a broad range of cultures and species.

Cities is where the action is, innit? That's all ya need to know. —Dodger

As new inhabitants arrive on the Crucible, they bring new technologies, foods, and architecture with them. The skyline of a metroplex made up of different civilizations likely contains dissimilar materials and styles. Structural iconography that serves a religious purpose among one people could be associated with banking, healing, or entertainment in another. Offering these unexpected changes can help remind the players that they are truly moving between alien cultures.

Even the concept of "city" can differ between cultures. Some communities might gather in primal forests, cliffside caves, or reinforced bubbles deep underwater. Others could be even more unusual (at least to humans), like a massive hive filled with hexagonal passages, a subatomic palace entered through a quantum gateway, or an inverted pyramid that always faces the brightest light.

Some locations could be dangerous as well. A city layered with Æmber-infused pillars might alter emotional auras. A manufacturing center could have such dense pollution that only those using a ventilator can breathe normally. Beings who live out of phase with physical reality might not even bother to put doors in their buildings.

Customs and Environments

Change also includes customs. When characters enter a new location, their actions are almost certain to include at least one severe faux pas. Walking on the grass, failing to bow to a child, or refusing an offer of water might constitute major offenses. NPCs who become offended for seemingly inconsequential reasons can introduce an aura of mystery the PCs must pierce before they can pursue their goals. The players could have their characters pursue delicate lines of inquiry before they enter any city, leading to interesting interactions with other travelers. The Knowledge (Culture) skill can be very useful in detecting that such quirks and pitfalls exist, even if specifics may not be immediately discernible.

A trading outpost or a bazaar in a city offers another great opportunity to reinforce the unusual nature of the environment. A marketplace can be a land of strange smells and sights where the PCs have an opportunity to acquire objects that are far beyond their understanding. They may be exposed to bizarre technologies and mystical artifacts that are commonplace to locals but either pointless or stunningly useful to visitors.

Similarly, these kinds of varied environments provide an opportunity to remind the players that different cultures have completely different philosophical or religious backgrounds. Collectivist habitations could demand everyone who enters share all of their possessions with other residents, while fiercely capitalist ones could charge for air or gravity. Value systems in such places differ to the point that what a character considers good and just can be unequivocally vile and destructive to locals.

You can certainly vary any aspect of reality on the Crucible that seems appropriate for the campaign. For example, there are portions of the Local Group with a gravity that is much stronger or weaker than in other sectors. There are also locations where the sun in the sky has variable hues, where there is more than one sun, or where there is no sun at all. Electricity might not work as expected, chemical reactions could take place at different rates, or the atmosphere could have a dramatically different density. All of this can simply be explained as the manipulations of the Architects, and any of these changes reinforce the notion that this world is unpredictable and dangerous to the unwary. Before implementing such changes, though, be sure to consider whether or not they will contribute to a fun game experience, based on your group's playing style.

Constants

The Crucible is in a constant state of flux, but some elements remain consistent across the world's many different cultures. While diversity is critical to properly portraying the Crucible as a campaign setting, the consistent elements provide a means to link everything together into a thematic whole.

Motivations

No matter how different a sentient species or creature might be from the PCs, they all have motivations that guide their actions, form, and goals. These often provide a framework that lets everything else fall into place. This includes locations, as the reason a location exists should drive its shape, contents, and populace. If a city functions as a trade center, then there is probably a network of roads, waterways, and other means of transportation, from underground tunnels to frictionless slipways, that provide easy access to its facilities. Further, such a city is likely open to outsiders and probably has a reasonable level of law enforcement, as stability and security attracts businesses. The religious members of a monastic retreat who embrace a life of solitude, on the other hand, might forbid outsiders from entry. The monks trust one another implicitly, so a security force is unnecessary. In each of these cases, it can be straightforward to populate the location with buildings and inhabitants based upon its primary purpose.

Building a new species, creature, or organization works in much the same way. While survival can be a reasonable starting point for motivations—especially if the species depends upon something unusual for nutrition or propagation—it is usually better to dig into a deeper source. One of the biomechanical qilin species, for example, might protect a sacred glade where powerful neutronic ley lines intersect, providing it with the arcane energies its members require for proper gestations. Motivations help to dictate how the subject is likely to interact with outsiders, and also suggest important skills that members are likely to possess for the purposes of achieving their goals. We'll discuss creating new species and organizations later in **Adding Life to the Crucible** on page 255.

Challenges

If a being or organization decides that they need to achieve a goal, something is almost certainly standing in the way of their reaching it. This could be material scarcity, situational hazards, lack of local information, or simply that another faction or individual directly opposes the effort. If both groups seek to untangle a mystery, then perhaps only the first to solve the puzzle achieves their goal. If one organization seeks to mine a rare ore from beneath a forest while the other seeks to preserve its tranquility, then the two could work in direct opposition. Knowing the nature of the challenge further describes the newly created entity and may also explain their attitudes toward outsiders.

Æmber

Æmber is the only consistent resource on the Crucible: it is powerful, relatively abundant, and workable no matter what the laws of physics might be in an area. Even those cultures that have means of obtaining or using alternative energy sources still have an interest in acquiring Æmber, if only because they wish to further their understanding of the mysterious substance.

No matter where you go, everyone who is aware of Æmber seeks to acquire more of it. While Archons need it to forge their keys (and perhaps for other, less widely known reasons), everyone has their own ways of using it, even if only to barter it for some other substance of value. While few beings are capable of directly consuming Æmber as a food source, anyone can quickly trade it for food or any other goods, as everyone accepts it as currency (which is how the ubiquitous Æmbit arose). Mars uses Æmber to power its war machines, Sanctum uses it as a vital component in its sacred prayers and armaments, and Dis demons use it to capture emotions for sustenance. Even fresh arrivals to the Crucible quickly recognize its value from the way existing inhabitants treasure the substance.

For most beings here, life revolves almost entirely around Æmber. I wonder if it will consume us like it consumes them.

USING THE CRUCIBLE

An important element of the Crucible is that the setting is inclusive, so essentially any story can be set on this world. This book presents a broad range of organizations, characters, and locations that are explicitly a part of the Crucible, but they are only the starting point. This allows you to present the Crucible in a distinctive way that best fits the needs of your campaign.

Adventure Concepts

When creating adventures and campaigns set on the Crucible, you should try to vary the types of stories and conflicts you plan to include. You might design adventures that involve exploring a holographic dungeon or defending a remote village from hungry cybernetic trees. At their heart, stories of this nature are staples of adventure games, and most players expect and enjoy these sorts of experiences. The science fantasy setting perfectly embodies such games, as it weaves superscience with fantasy-style heroic adventures.

However, as this is the Crucible, you should try to include different types of stories with a variety of tones (and possibly even add elements from other settings). Using the fantastical nature of the world and its denizens, you can also introduce plot elements that twist upon player expectations. Like the Crucible itself, the types of stories you can tell in this setting are limitless. The following are some examples:

- Desperate citizens appealing for the PCs' aid against marauders might actually be parasitic beings who feed off the life energy of a sentient town.
- The sector where the PCs have established a base (and kept all their rewards) is shunted elsewhere when a new environment appears there one day.
- Antagonistic sky-pirates are after the ingredients needed to replicate the special diets of newborn clouds orphaned from a Logos rocketry experiment.
- The PCs are hired to protect a wandering bard, but discover his acclaimed tunes are actually psychic parasites who are eager to spread to new hosts.
- PCs plundering an ancient castle could become trapped in the past until they can determine how a lab accident literally stole an empire's future.
- The Archon who recruited the PCs to defend an Æmber-rich village from a rapacious corporation turns out to be a superbly well-disguised agent from a rival corporation that is also eager for the Æmber.

I will confirm that three of these tales are based on fact. The other three seem quite probable, though.
-Inka

Location, Location, Location

Given the fantastical nature of the Crucible and its part in a science fantasy setting, it's important to remind the players of where their characters are every now and then. This could be something as obvious as the PCs coming across a vault battle, or as subtle as having the sun never set in a city or some water gurgle quietly up a mountainside. Even reminding the characters of the gigantic Spire far in the distance is a good way to reinforce the singular world they are on.

Using Existing Locations

Existing locations—ones described in Secrets of the Crucible—have the advantage that the players may already be familiar with them and what they can offer. You can also add details to make them fit better with the group. If the PCs are heavy into social encounters, you could include rival political factions, smooth-talking con artists, or even romances between star-crossed (perhaps literally) characters. You might place a high-tech facility for research minded PCs, or provide a crime den if they need to dispose of ill-gotten gains. Record additions like these so that the next time the PCs visit, they are still there, or you have reasons why they suspiciously aren't. This also helps ensure players know that their characters' actions have repercussions, from craters where a saloon once stood to headstones in a nearby cemetery.

You may not be able to anticipate everything the players desire in a location, though, so be ready to add new areas and characters as needed. It's also fine to let them know it isn't possible should they ask for something an existing location simply doesn't have. Alternatively, making a new location could be more useful.

Creating New Locations

It's possible that none of the existing locations we've included feel like what you need. You may need a new one, and possibly a new environment for it as well.

The simplest way to add a new location, of course, is to adapt an existing one. The Local Group has many other areas similar to Hub City, for example, and lots of Martian outposts that are akin to Outpost Nyyon. Often all you need to do is retain the structure of an existing location but adjust a few details. This is especially useful if you don't expect it to survive the coming events!

This might not be enough, however, and you may feel that you need a completely new location. This is going to require more work, but as it should be an vital part of your campaign and possibly act as a recurring destination that's to be expected. It's important in this case to envision how it will be different from existing locations, as well as determining exactly how it serves your story and the PCs. It should offer something that can't be found elsewhere, such as a unique new plot element or enemy.

You might pick parts from other locations for your new creation, or draw small bits from real world examples. Some of the topics from the **Depicting Life on the Crucible** section on page 247 can also be helpful here. Whether adapted or original, you can always use new locations to introduce new organizations, perhaps establishing the origins of one that you'll flesh out in more detail in a later adventure.

New Environments

New environments for new locations can liven up the campaign, as well. These can challenge the PCs appropriately or play off of earlier decisions (or mistakes). PCs who, for example, haven't bothered to repair their rebreathers might find their path going underwater, or be happy they bought new vision goggles as they enter a land of perpetual night.

Ideally, create new environments that feel like they could only exist on the Crucible. There could be localized laws of physics, gravity fluctuations, or places where the speed of sound changes with the characters' emotional states. Cities could float in the sky or within bottomless lakes. Or it could all be nice and normal—just the thing to make the players paranoid about what their characters aren't detecting.

Try not to take things too overboard, or the setting could become completely comical (unless that's the intent). One or two seemingly impossible facets can be just enough to make your new location suitably different and memorable. Æmber can also work to add unique flavor to a place, as can Archons. The creatures in new locations can be just as bizarre as their habitats, if not more so.

Creatures

Creatures are best introduced when they add an interesting element to an adventure, and ideally not just something the PCs can fight (though this can be fun too). Start by considering whether a creature is uniquely singular or if there are many more of its kind—whether far away or hiding in a nearby lagoon.

In some cases, creatures may belong to their own group or organization. Perhaps they are self-aware in ways the PCs do not comprehend at first (or ever). In such a case, introducing them works similarly to introducing a new species or organization (see **Adding Life to the Crucible**, on page 255).

Playing against creature tropes, particularly within the context of mixing material from different genres, provides an added layer of depth to the setting. A huge spider, for example, might be the wise ruler of an Æmber-mutated arachnid culture instead of just a marauding beast. When players notice these types of changes, it compels them to think about how other pieces of the setting fit together. This can become a driving point in how you develop a campaign, possibly creating opportunities to send the PCs on unforeseen quests and explorations.

Very little on the Crucible is as it appears to be (except, of course, for my own brilliance).

As an example, consider this world itself: on first glance, it certainly *appears* to be a real planet, correct? -Escotera

EVOLVING PLAYER CHARACTERS AND NPCS

Over the course of a campaign—or even just a few adventures—characters change. This is true of player characters, who gain experience points, equipment, valuable contacts, and other assets. It must also be true of the non-player characters, whose advancements and growth are more likely to happen in between their interactions with the PCs. In both cases, chronicling those changes—through notes, snippets of conversation during a game, and game mechanics—adds veracity to the setting, which can make the world come to life in new ways during each session.

Characters on the Crucible can grow in a broad range of directions. A key part of that is the opportunity for characters to explore themes foreign to their origins. A monastic character from a dank stone fortress might acquire a VR headset with a vast library of information. A high-tech robot could wield a glowing Æmber-powered sword. A hard-boiled urban detective might explore an ocean's depths to recover a missing giant. Exposure to these diverse elements can change a character's worldview and transform them into something very different.

Alternative Rewards

The Genesys Core Rulebook provides direction on awarding experience points, and this information is generally appropriate for adventures on the Crucible. The player characters need to have an opportunity to develop their skills and talents over the course of a series of adventures. However, these are not the only rewards that the characters can earn.

Information

Part of any campaign involves learning about the game world. For players and characters who are new to the setting, this may happen at the same time for both. As the PCs travel between locations and undertake adventures, they may learn about different cultures and locations at the same time as the players. The things they learn may provide them with new goals as well as an interest in different skills. These lessons can help to inform a character's story and development path, and their value should not be ignored. You may want to suggest that characters commit a portion of their earned experience to the Knowledge (Crucible) skill if they are learning more about the setting, or Knowledge (Culture) should they wish to develop expertise in the social aspects of a species, or other Knowledge skills for similar reasons. Alternatively, you can award a rank in such skills as a reward for successfully completing an adventure where the PCs learned new information about the Crucible or its denizens.

Patronage

Interaction with the Crucible and its inhabitants also provides the characters with a valuable network of allies and contacts. A noble whom they rescue in one adventure may repay the favor in a future scenario with a valuable tip, a loan of military assets, or an invitation to a momentous social event. An adventure reward could also include membership in an elite society, which could provide the characters with access to special equipment and information. More importantly, it could include an opportunity to have discussions with influential people who could help shape a portion of the campaign world. Such membership might include the patronage of a powerful researcher—or even an Archon.

Of course, patronage may come with obligations to undertake missions at their sponsor's behest. While the PCs may gain incredibly powerful equipment, weapons, or artifacts from their patron or during their missions, they may not know the full consequences of how those items work. Further, they may have to perform a mission without any context to understand it. Their directive could be to go to the tallest peak in the Molecular Mountains, shine a light toward a specific killbast tree, and then capture an image of the first foxbird they see. At the conclusion of the adventure, their cryptic patron might offer no explanation or commentary on the success or failure of the mission. They could even be unwilling to offer sympathy for any unusual challenges the PCs might have faced along the way.

Equipment

Specialized gear is also a reward worthy of consideration in games, including devices of note and equipment of exceptional construction. When the characters adventure through remote cities and encounter new cultures, they may also acquire equipment from those sources. An item commonplace among an unfamiliar culture might be a trophy of merit to one of the characters, and could also help to shape the character's fate. Such artifacts can be a hallmark of a Crucible campaign; they might be the key to a lost temple or part of an arcane device the PCs must later assemble (or keep from being assembled).

Æmber

One of the most interesting and unusual PC rewards you can use is Æmber. PCs might find Æmber as the result of diligent searching or as a lucky discovery. It could be something they extract from defeated foes, the payment for a job, or a gift of appreciation from a village they just saved. It's always an important part of the Crucible, so consider using raw Æmber as rewards in your adventures.

Raw Æmber might appear in almost any form, from crystal shards to glowing syrupy liquid to piles of metallic sand. This can be confusing for players, who want to know how much Æmber is present in terms of using this substance as a "fuel" for Æffects, weapons, or talents. Remember that 1 Æmber (see page 152 of **Chapter 3: Equipment and Vehicles**) always has an encumbrance of 1, so this can be used to determine how much Æmber the PCs have gained. Be sure to explain this by saying something like, "*the small pool of liquid Æmber you've uncovered looks to have an encumbrance of 4*" or "*once you've sifted the gravel, you're left with a pile of glowing sand with an encumbrance of 2*."

Unless the PCs were deliberately hunting for Æmber or for creatures known to possess Æmber, try to keep this reward from becoming too common. If the PCs are expecting Æmber from their quest, though, they should get it unless elements from the plot prevent this. Keep in mind the normal price of Æmber (200 Æmbits, as per page 152) when using it as a reward, as well as the relative wealth and experience of the PCs. Very rich characters probably won't care too much about receiving a single Æmber, but a character who specializes in Æffects might always be eager for more of the substance no matter how much they have.

You can also use Æmber rewards to drive a narrative—should the PCs unexpectedly acquire 100 Æmber, they are sure to also acquire lots of unwanted attention! Similarly, finding an oddly low or high amount of Æmber on the body of a possible client might launch a mystery-toned adventure full of nefarious characters and powerful trading consortiums.

It's important to note that Æmber is not currency, though it can be bought and is often bartered. Æmbits are the actual currency; they are made from processed Æmber, though, and thus can't be used to create Æffects, empower weapons, or activate talents. A character trying to feed a weapon Æmbits to activate a trait will only wind up with a confused and hungry weapon, though the distraction for their laughing foes may be worth it.

Sanctum has a saying "Good deeds are their own reward."

Fine words, but hard to maintain a web with only words.

NPC Development

Just as PCs acquire new advantages during a campaign, NPCs must as well. Even minor NPCs should undergo growth at times when the player characters are not around to see it happen. Many NPCs complete challenges of their own, often when they do not interact with the PCs. As the campaign progresses, they should also advance, sometimes in terms of game mechanics, but also in terms of the social connections they earn across the Crucible.

This means that when the PCs return to a shop after a few months away, they might find that the owner now has an expensive Æmber-encrusted arm. A city guard whom the characters annoyed in a previous adventure can now transform into a roaring fangbear the next time they anger her. A fresh arrival to the Crucible whom the PCs aid could later turn up at a long-lost civilization as its courageous leader or despotic ruler. These kinds of developments remind the players that the game world changes even when they are not present to see the transformation.

Sometimes, an NPC may grow as the PCs develop an unexpected attachment to a wisecracking Hub City cyberdriver, humble Sanctum librarian, or wandering jaxberry merchant. This initially one-note NPC might now pop up in several encounters, growing in influence due more to the PCs' actions than your own plans. When this happens, you should retrofit the NPC's abilities to their new role, plus give them some backstory and introduce some previously unknown facets. Be sure to exercise moderation—after all, not every pilgrim is really an Archon in disguise, for example—but added depth and personality traits can make the NPC more fun to portray while also sending the campaign in new directions.

Consequences

NPCs should develop on their own, but perhaps more importantly they should also evolve based on what the PCs do. Decisions the PCs make need to ripple through your campaign, and NPCs should reflect this with new outlooks, abilities, and roles.

A mercenary leader whom the PCs fought in an early adventure may become a city official whose opinion can have serious consequences in a later adventure. Conversely, a thief whom they let go (or aided) might rise to a position of power within a syndicate and be able to later provide them with the stolen goods they need at an opportune time.

NPCs should remain true to their motivations and outlooks as they develop, though, reinforcing that they are real beings with realistic behaviors. A character who was hostile to the PCs previously might sadly remain hostile to them, no matter what the PCs might have done to win their trust (though if the PCs put a great deal of effort into this, the NPC could shift their outlook). Further, you could have an NPC's memory of an event contrast sharply with the PCs' recollection of it, to the extent that the NPC sees them as traitors or thieves. Alternatively, you could have a seemingly minor NPC believe that they were the true hero of the day and even insist that the PCs have stolen credit for their achievements.

Ideally, different NPCs should have a varied mix of responses to add depth to the types of interactions that fill the game world. Beings can respond in ways that are consistent with their culture's attitudes, or they might have different responses—possibly due to the things they have seen or experienced on the Crucible. Playing against established patterns also helps keep the players engaged in the game, always wondering what twist their stories could take next.

ADDING LIFE TO THE CRUCIBLE

Though the NPCs in this book cover a wide range of species and characters, the Local Group is so vast and varied that there is always room for more. You may also need new organizations to explore new aspects of life there as well. Most of the time this is simply because you want to introduce new NPCs for your adventures, especially if your players are well acquainted with the Crucible and you want to present them with the unfamiliar. Fresh creations are great for this, and let you add your own unique features to the setting.

You may also create new sentients and their backgrounds when your players take the story into directions you hadn't anticipated. They might want to explore a nearby fog-laden swamp for witnesses to a heist they are investigating or desiring to crash a rumored Hub City gala in order to scope it out for a heist of their own—neither of which you thought they would do. These might occur during a session, where you may need to add creations on the fly. Hopefully you'll have some time before they occur so you can work up more fully fleshed-out NPCs and even new organizations for them.

Keep in mind that many times you don't need to actually create entirely new species for your new adversaries, though; it may be appropriate to just use the mechanics from an existing species and present them in a different way. If the PCs find a remote lake filled with gilled humanoids, for example, accommodating this could be as simple as using the **Territorial Scout** profile (see page 239) and giving the NPCs the Amphibious species feature (page 47) so they can breathe underwater and swim freely. These are shortcuts, and they might not work if the NPCs recur over an extended campaign, but they can be good enough to get through a game session. After that, you should have time to create something more detailed that can be used in future sessions.

Sometimes your creations can be simply addressed narratively. Characters with different attitudes or philosophical outlooks, for example, don't necessarily need different game mechanics and you can easily introduce different factions of other species and organizations in this manner. The more backstory and personality details you provide for them, though, the more memorable they can be for your players.

New Species

Sometimes you'll want to have a new species as a focal point in a campaign. Most of the time, you can adapt an existing species (especially one from **Chapter 6: Adversaries** on page 219) for this, but every now and then, something more elaborate is needed.

The degree of difficulty for this depends upon the nature of the new species. If they are little different from humans, such as the traditional "rubber mask alien," then assigning game mechanics may be as straightforward as using the human species rules from page 28 and applying features taken from the **Create a Unique Species** rules, on page 46, as appropriate.

More complicated species take a bit more work, but luckily, the same rules allow you to build a new species up from the ground floor. As this is for an NPC, you can pick, choose, and modify profile entries as desired. You can also pick out and modify applicable talents from those starting on page 74 or even abilities from existing NPCs. To make the new species easier to use in this way, try to limit how many talents you're applying; one or two talents plus a powerful and thematic ability can usually capture everything you need. The **Create an Adversary** guidelines, which start on page 202 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook, can aid you as well, especially if you want to make something outside the **Create a Unique Species** rules.

Of course, creating new Archons is more difficult. They are quite beyond the species-building system, and we'll discuss them separately starting on page 258.

As the saying goes, attempting to keep an accurate record of all the species on this world seems as impossible as leaving it. Even tracking those in the Group, or just Hub City, is quite frustrating.
-Dr. Escotera

Sentient versus Non-Sentient

The above is about sentient species, as the system is designed for creating new sentient species for players to use. Non-sentient creatures, such as bestial monsters, mobile plants, and thirsty liquids, don't need quite as much work, but you can still use the **Create a Unique Species** rules to select abilities, forms, and other attributes to custom-make a new creature. You can also adapt existing creatures and modify them with altered characteristics and weapons (which might be directly tied to their unique physiologies), and by upgrading minions to rivals or even nemeses. Make sure not to make them too powerful for a planned encounter unless the goal is to force the PCs to quit the field to regroup with a better plan (or more ray guns).

This raises the question of the sentience of niffle apes. Ask three beings here, and you get five answers.
-Ingram

New NPCs

Crucible campaigns often build around the adversaries and legendary NPCs featured in this book (see **Chapter 6: Adversaries**, page 219). However, a protracted campaign needs more characters than the ones presented within that chapter. To accommodate those needs, the GM must be prepared to create and incorporate new characters. If an NPC is likely to have more than a single-instance minor role, then they are also likely to need specific game mechanics. Creating characters with distinct personalities and appropriate mechanics is critical to keeping a campaign interesting and consistent.

NPCs and Organizations

To reinforce the feel of the Crucible, a species and an organizational allegiance—if they have one—should be a starting point for any NPC. Typically, those can be major touchpoints in establishing the NPC's attitudes. These elements bring generalizations about them to the table. Playing to those stereotypes reinforces them, helping to set the players' expectations.

We've learned (often the hard way) that all not elves are Shadows, not all giants or goblins are Brobnar, not all cyborgs are Logos, not all spirits are Sanctum… you get the picture.

Today, we are Star Alliance. What will that mean centuries from now, I wonder?

If the campaign needs a research scientist, then it is reasonable to start with one affiliated with Logos. If it calls for a religious warrior, then consider a Sanctum Knight. When the campaign needs a peaceful explorer, consider a member of Inspired or Star Alliance. Choosing different options may be necessary at some point, but don't let that be your first instinct, as Secrets of the Crucible has assets available for filling a specific niche. By using these assets, players are kept aware of the setting's core traits. This also reduces the amount of time you need to spend creating something that may already exist! Reserve alternative characters—ones who play against type for their species, for instance, or have reservations about their organization—for when the second or third NPC of a specific type is required.

Even in cases where you're using existing game mechanics and an established part of the setting, there remains plenty of opportunity for fun customization. The NPC may have a distinctive appearance or feature, atypical speech pattern, or unusual interest. Such characteristics make the character interesting and memorable without requiring specialized mechanics, as well as reflecting some aspect of Crucible life such as Æmber hunting, vault battles, or Archon association. Note, however, that overdoing these can sometimes become annoying, especially if the character is key to an entire adventure or series of adventures. These traits work best when they are a minor point of emphasis that can help you remind the players about the character with whom they are interacting. Unusual interests can add depth to social interactions, but they should not compromise the overall direction of the adventure.

When choosing to create a character who does not conform to expectations, you should make sure that the exceptions are made selectively and with good reason. If the PCs encounter friendly martians several times in a row early on, then they are unlikely to understand why that culture is considered xenophobic; veteran players in this setting, though, could view that as a major clue that Something Is Going On. Ideally, you should make interesting exceptions from the expected norm only when they can add to an adventure in a meaningful way.

New Organizations

When a new organization is established, there should always be a reason for its founding and continued existence. The reason could be a new philosophical drive that is uniting beings from different backgrounds, the need for a new alliance due to environmental or military dangers, or a new mercantile interest that prompts various beings to form a group supporting a free trade agreement. A specific cause always drives and unifies an organization. Determining this unifying trait that defines the organization really helps make it memorable.

Once a drive has been determined, decide where the organization stands in terms of achieving that goal. A newly formed faction might require a great deal of further development before they have any reasonable chance of accomplishing any significant works. However, just because an organization is new to the campaign does not mean that they need to be new to Local Group society. It might have been around for millennia, carefully hiding its existence or operating outside the Local Group—or simply the PCs never had an interest or opportunity to learn about it. Many were important establishments on other planets before their members were brought to the Crucible; once there, they could recruit other species to their ranks.

An organization's age is often linked to the assets that it has available. An older faction may have deep reserves to draw upon, including connections with powerful individuals or governments (or even Archons) who can provide them with the resources they need in terms of finance, tools, or combat assets. A younger organization, in contrast, might struggle simply to acquire members who are willing to devote time and energy to the cause on a consistent basis. These organizations' needs and access to resources can influence their willingness to cooperate with the PCs. A group in desperate need of the PCs' assistance, for example, may be able to offer greater flexibility in terms of compensation and deadlines for their aid. Conversely, one that is well established might only reluctantly work with the PCs, considering them to be far beneath their social or political standing.

An important consideration regarding a new group's goals is to determine how the group differs from the ones that already exist on the Crucible. If an organization is knowledge focused, how does it differ from Logos? Might Logos attempt to recruit its members? Alternatively, could the group have splintered off from Logos, or could it be a minor faction within Logos? If the group is deeply militant or xenophobic, how does it differ from the way Mars operates? While Mars is unlikely to incorporate members of a non-martian species, non-martians could form a group that emulates Mars. In other cases, it might not be necessary to introduce a new organization if it serves the same roles as an existing one. In cases where a new group can connect to an existing one, it probably should. Interweaving different elements provides a greater connection to the Crucible, which will help make it more integral to your campaign.

EXAMPLE: CREATING A NEW ORGANIZATION

Jean decides that her campaign needs a new organization focused upon the accumulation of wealth. She wants it to be powerful but in a quiet, behind-the-scenes way. Wherever there are profits to be made, this group should be present to make loans, bankroll expeditions, and control as much of the local currency as possible. The group is politically savvy and well-connected across all strata of society.

It has members from most species in the Local Group, all of whom treat financial transactions as highly ritualized, quasi-religious experiences. While they work primarily with Æmbits, they also deal in favors and newly discovered exotic items.

She decides to name her new organization the Plated Hands. Its followers are fairly greedy but once they have made a deal, they honor the contract to the letter (and often even the spirit) of the agreement. They also have an interest in making contact with new cultures, so that they can corner the banking operations in their sectors. Finally, she decides that the group is fairly old and has branches everywhere, with a central establishment in Hub City.

She plans on using the Plated Hands as sponsors for the PCs. It can provide some direction for the characters, especially in early adventures, and she may link some existing NPCs who are merchants or traders to the group. It also serves as a convenient means by which to introduce unusual artifacts and mysteries into her campaign.

Jean suspects that the Plated Hands may encounter difficulties with Shadows and Sanctum at an early stage. Shadows doesn't like the idea of organized (and well-defended) centers of wealth, especially when also they make things harder for its thieves. Sanctum may take offense at the Plated Hands' complete disinterest in the purposes of its loans. She decides that interactions built around those conflicts can be central to the campaign's first few adventures.

Plated Hands, you say? I can neither confirm nor deny their existence, at least not yet.

ARCHONS

Of all beings the PCs might meet on the Crucible, none are more mysterious than the Archons. These beings are also the most complicated, as each is unique in personality and behavior, but all have an aura about them of something that is not part of normal reality. Archons aren't a common sight, but they do seem to be attracted to unusual and exceptional situations and beings—like the PCs.

Individuals who come to Archons with questions about the ultimate secrets of creation or the purpose of existence are bound to be frustrated. Even when Archons do have some insight beyond that of mere mortals (which is by no means assured), often those mortal minds are insufficient to grasp such concepts.

Encountering Archons

It may seem daunting to have such powerful characters in encounters, but Archons are such an important part of this setting that they should show up every now and then no matter what type of adventure you're running. They might act as a deus ex machina plot device (perhaps literally, given the artificial nature of the Crucible), or they might have their own affairs that the PCs only discover later in a campaign. Most of the Archons PCs encounter should be experienced ones who have roamed the Crucible for many millennia and have mastered a wide range of utterly unique abilities. Little is known of neophyte Archons, only that most cannot manifest beyond their energy form. Regardless of their age, however, all Archons can communicate perfectly with any species and are apparently indestructible.

Archon Personalities

Most Archons are curious about nearly everything, and they tend to further adapt their personality to other beings the longer they are around them. Some of their behaviors reflect those of the beings they spend time with, and Archons often adopt the mannerisms and practices that their followers seem to expect of them. This is especially true when Archons assume leadership roles in civilizations or organizations, as some do to better understand mortal life.

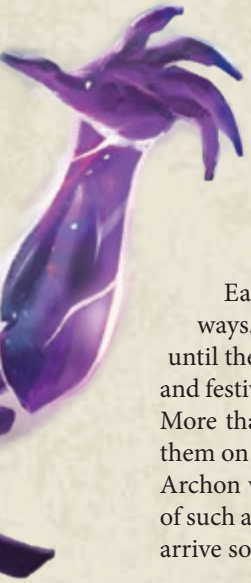
Archon Appearances

The uniqueness of Archons extends to their appearance—or rather, appearances, as most seem able to change their form effortlessly. Many take on the form of a glowing energy being, though their shape is somehow more impressive than those of other energy beings on the Crucible. Most Archons also assume one or more physical forms to better interact with beings around them, and this is the typical way PCs encounter them.

These forms can be from any species and wear any garb. They might appear calm and mundane, or ferocious and bombastic. One rather unsettling ability Archons seem to share is the ability to appear as different things to different viewers—even at the same time. Each of these manifestations can also have its own scent, vocal characteristics, and other sensory registrations. Beings viewing the same holostill of a particular Archon may each see a different image, something that drives many archival recordants to early retirement.

Tales tell of ordinary beings who suddenly transformed into titanic figures and flew away or displayed powers only an Archon could possess. So the friendly local who's been guiding the PCs through a new city? Could be an Archon…

Even when an Archon dons physical form, you can add dashes of their true nature. They might not reflect light or cast shadows, their feet could always be just a bit off the ground or fail to disturb the grass when they walk, or their forms might seem just a touch blurry around the edges. This can be especially true for Archons new to corporeal existence who are still getting the hang of it.



Archons and Mortals

Each Archon deals with mortals in different ways. Some almost entirely ignore other beings until they are needed, but others have become famous and festivals accompany their arrival in a village or city. More than a few have retinues that either accompany them on their journeys or can be called upon when the Archon visits their area, meaning that when members of such a retinue gather in a location, their Archon may arrive soon after.

Mortal followers may act like fans, allies, or pets depending on how you want the Archon to behave. Legions of vaultheads cheer their favorite Archons in vault battles, which an Archon could find irritating, amusing, or something to be expected.

Then there are the Archons who barely recognize lesser beings as worthy of their attention or care. Tales of the Archon known as Judge Slenderwile are unnerving, for example, given the seeming disregard for life the Judge displays as he goes about attaining his mysterious goals.

Archons and Vaults

One of the most common ways for Archons to appear and interact with mortals concerns vaults. All Archons can detect nearby vaults. There are unverified tales that perhaps non-Archons can do so as well; currently there are 1,387 research projects in Logos alone seeking to invent a vault detector. Wherever there are vaults, though, there are sure to be Archons sooner or later.

Though Archons are quite able to find Æmber on their own, they often find assistants invaluable for this task These aids both hasten the gathering process and for imbuing the substance with the desired psychic impressions necessary for the Archon to forge it into a key. This makes for a great way to introduce PCs to an Archon, who can then be made into a recurring character. PCs who manage to impress an Archon might find themselves called upon for vault battles or in other roles, sometimes which might be utterly mysterious to them. As another option, Archons sometimes vanish from the Local Group, and PCs might go on a quest to find what befell their godlike comrade or learn how they (presumably) managed to leave the Crucible.

A vault opening is also a great way to reveal more about an Archon's personality. Some Archons act like generals at war, gathering specific forces, planning strategies, and deploying assets with martial precision. Others display an almost casual oversight, allowing their traveling retinue to fight as they see fit. A few might employ their followers as disposable minions, caring little for if they are injured or even killed so long the vaults are opened.

These battles can be very violent, though typically Archons remove all wounds (including, it seems, death) from those who gather and fight for Æmber on their behalf. That isn't to say that an Archon might not make the process a bit painful or take awhile before getting around to it, though.

Each Archon seems to have their own unique way to restore health (and life!) to those who follow them.

Every Archon seems utterly unique as well, in both their powers and their personalities.

How many of them are there? What if there really only two, and they continually battle each other in different forms?
-Ingram, MD

Allies or Enemies?

Archons can make excellent allies, as you can imagine given their abilities. However, their abilities can easily make them unequal partners and PCs might find themselves altering their plans to follow the lead of their new ally. Some Archons may simply want to tag along with the PCs, though, observing and learning from the characters and their adventures. Exactly what they are learning (and why they feel the need to do so) is as mysterious as everything else about them.

If you hear Judge Slenderwile is looking fer aid in a vault battle, you start runnin'. He's not healthy to be around, not healthy at all. I've seen martians what treat their enemies better than the Judge treats his friends.

A much unhealthier instance is when characters find themselves in a situation in which an Archon opposes their actions or desires. This might happen when PCs are pursuing a mission from a rival Archon or are unknowingly acting against an Archon's wishes. Their objectionable activity may be accidental, such as if the PCs are exploring the ruins of a forgotten empire when, unknown to them, an Archon desires it to remain undisturbed or has been examining the emotional residue the empire left when it fell.

An enemy Archon may seem impossible to counter. Even relatively humble Archon neophytes are so resilient in their energy forms as to be apparently immune to harm. Still, harming them is not impossible. Weapons that can injure an Archon are the stuff of legend and could be the focus of an entire campaign. Actually killing an Archon is not realistic, but you might decide that sufficiently injured Archons fragment like a shattered mirror or dissolve into multicolored steam after being struck by city-leveling weaponry. They could then reappear shortly afterward, completely healed and curious about the experience or mildly upset about the interruption in their activities.

Quite accurate. It's quite rare to discover an Archon deigns to oppose your actions directly, even rarer to determine why, and usually impossible to end the matter to your satisfaction.

Opposition from an Archon doesn't have to be direct, though. They might employ their followers to stymie the PCs in ways that don't involve combat or could arrange for what appear to be natural disasters to hamper them. Discovering the real reasons why things are going poorly can make for an excellent long-term campaign mystery for the PCs.

Creating Archons

While most new species can be created via the **Create a Unique Species** rules, on page 37, Archons are quite beyond normal species. The two profiles that follow, though, can give you a good basis for developing new Archons. When making an Archon NPC, think about what makes the Archon unique, and what it can offer to an encounter or campaign. What is their outlook? Which organization, if any, do they associate with? Do they have a fascination with a particular emotion, location, or activity? This information should not only go into their backstory but also drive one or more unique abilities. Even if you just want to use an Archon as a narrative device without a profile, it may be best to detail out some memorable, flavorful abilities they can use to aid or thwart the PCs.

NEW ABILITY: ARCHON

Experienced Archons such as those presented in this section have the **Archon** ability, which includes the following powers. GMs should feel free to add other abilities to further customize their creations. Note that neophyte Archons, as they are still growing in their aptitudes, only have the Energy Form, Impervious, and Gift of Tongues powers.

- **Energy Form:** Archons have no wound threshold and don't need to eat, sleep, or breathe. They can't affect the physical world (except for speaking and being seen) without using some other ability.
- **Impervious:** Archons reduce damage of all attacks targeting them to 0. If they suffer wounds for any reason, they suffer an equal amount of strain instead. Archons who exceed their strain threshold discorporate for 1d10 rounds and then return to reality within medium range of their previous position with all strain removed.
- **Gift of Tongues:** Archons can communicate with every species, no matter the language.
- **Archonic Restoration:** At the end of an encounter, Archons may remove all wounds, strain, conditions, and Critical Injuries from allies in the encounter. Characters who died during the encounter may be restored to life and fully healed in the same manner.
- **Unbound:** When Initiative order is being determined, Archons add one additional NPC Initiative slot in the middle of the Initiative order plus one more at the end of the Initiative order. They occupy three Initiative slots during each round.
- **Physical Form:** As a maneuver, Archons can assume the appearance of any species.

ARCHONS AS NARRATIVE DEVICES

Archons are incredibly strange beings, even among the enormous variety of species on the Crucible. Their powers are mysterious and often incomprehensible, as are their goals; as such, they may work better as narrative devices than as actual NPCs. While profiles are presented here for two of them, GMs are certainly welcome to use Archons to fill narrative roles rather than having them operate as most other NPCs do in encounters.

Miss "Onyx" Censorius (Nemesis)

– | 14 | 12

The tales concerning this Archon are many, as she seems to spend a great deal of time interacting with common mortals in a very approachable manner. Censorius, or "Onyx," as her associates sometimes call her, is well-known for her calming manner even in the midst of ferocious vault battles. She explains her decisions more often than other Archons do, as though she is attempting to enlighten other beings regarding how Æmber works and vaults are opened.

Some beings feel she debases the concept of Archonhood by associating with known thieves, demons, toughs, and other "low" types. Mortals who follow other Archons in almost worshipful devotion find her common manner upsetting, as she doesn't conform to the standards they feel Archons should meet. Some Archons share this feeling, which has led to rivalries more intense than is the norm for vault battles.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
4	5	6	4	5	6

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
–	–	30	2 / 2

Motivations: Desire (Acceptance), Fear (Rejection), Strength (Curious), Flaw (Inattention).
Skills: Charm 5, Cool 5, Discipline 5, Knowledge (All) 5, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Adversary 3 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target three times).
Abilities: Archon (see page 260), Ease Your Worries (whenever allies at short range would suffer strain involuntarily, they suffer 2 less strain, to a minimum of 0), Explains Things (allies at short range add ◆ to Knowledge [Æmber] checks they make), Hoverer (may hover, as per **Flying** sidebar page 100 of the Genesys Core Rulebook), Wondrous Aura (allies within short range add ■ to their Deception checks and □ to their Discipline checks).
Equipment: Mental whispers (Discipline; Damage 12; Critical –; Range [Long]; Breach 1, Disorient 3, Stun Damage), subtle energy field (2 defense, Reinforced).

Radiant Argus the Supreme (Nemesis)

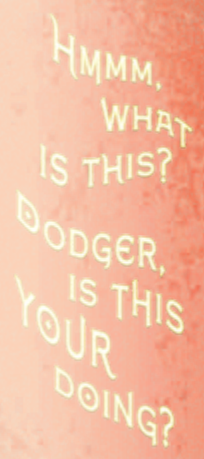
– | 13 | 10

Argus is famed throughout the Church of the Opened Eye as the ultimate Archon, and not just because he has a semiformal leadership role in Sanctum. His glowing armor and righteous demeanor embody everything that Church adherents see in an Enlightened being, and he does his best to live up to their worshipful expectations. The behavior of Censorius, however, is a stain upon all that Argus holds as proper and just. The two Archons' vault conflicts are becoming increasingly legendary, and vaultheads everywhere eagerly rush to sites where they are thought to be doing battle.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
6	4	4	4	6	5

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
–	–	26	1 / 1

Motivations: Desire (Justice), Fear (Failure), Strength (Idealistic), Flaw (Certainty).
Skills: Cool 3, Discipline 5, Knowledge (All) 5, Leadership 4, Vigilance 5.
Talents: Adversary 3 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target three times).
Abilities: Archon (see page 260), Belief through Power (whenever an ally within short range makes a successful combat check, other allies in the encounter recover 2 strain), Power through Belief (allies within short range count their Brawn as 2 higher, to a maximum of 6), Symbol of Faith (while Argus assumes his armored knightly form, Sanctum allies at medium range gain defense 1).
Equipment: Energy mace (Discipline; Damage 10; Critical –; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 8, Reinforced, Stun Damage, Sunder), glowing armor (1 defense, Reinforced).



CRUCIBLE ADVENTURE BUILDER

The following is a way for you to quickly create adventures featuring prominent or common elements of the Crucible. The adventure builder uses a modular format, allowing segments of the adventure types to be reused to create different combinations each time. The resulting framework may include unexpected twists, moral quandaries, and some of the general weirdness inherent to the Crucible.

The adventure builder contains three categories: **Hooks**, **Escalations**, and **Climaxes** components. You select one of each ahead of time, or select the next one as the adventure progresses. Either method works, though the second may allow for more flexibility to respond to player actions and ideas. Given the wide variety of Crucible societies, locations, and technologies, you may need to adapt some individual elements to your specific adventure. Sci-fi technologies may replace quasi-magic, or a virtual logic puzzle could stand in for a fantasy maze. This is a science fantasy setting, so the more outlandish and odd, the more likely it fits!

"As several Martian Elders I've run from have said, 'There can be no rest until the Crucible is the new Red Planet.'"

Hooks

Hooks are the initial enticement and incentive for your players to get involved in the adventure. These work best when they are clearly presented, so the players don't spend a lot of time wondering what the possibilities are. Hooks can be quite cliché, which is great for telegraphing the basic intent of the adventure and can help set up unexpected events later on.

Each hook has one or more primary goals, a number of challenges, and a twist. The primary goal is what the players' PCs are trying to accomplish; it's the expected basic plot and should be central to the initial encounters. The challenges are what the PCs must overcome to reach the primary goal. Individual challenges can become separate encounters or be threaded through a series of related encounters. The twist is not required, but by its nature, it is an unexpected revelation or alteration of the situation that forces the PCs to adapt and reconsider previously held conclusions regarding the goal, antagonists, and potential methodologies for achieving success.

We've included several example hooks in this section. When using these hooks, you should consider the primary goal first, since it is the basis of the proposed adventure. If it doesn't fit the situation you want to start with, move on to a different hook. You can alter the challenges, twists, involved organizations, items, and specifics as needed to fit your story.

Archon Intrusion

An Archon known as Professor Shree of the Third Whisper suddenly appears while PCs are engaged in an intense conflict with a Mars scouting party. She demands that everyone in the area immediately aid her in clearing a path so that her Æmber-seeking entourage may pass safely through the area.

PRIMARY GOALS

To aid Professor Shree in her goal and manipulate the situation to escape the conflict—or get the upper hand over the martians when Shree moves on.

CHALLENGES

- Professor Shree somehow produces an energy field that mysteriously calms everyone in the area to a great degree, reducing their urge to battle their opponents for the time being.
- The PCs and the martians must clear a massive area of carnivorous wildvines that escaped from a Logos experimental facility and are blocking Shree's desired path forward. The vines use their thorns like venomous stingers and have tentacles complete with maws big enough to trap even large beings.
- The Martian Elder constantly tries to convince Professor Shree to use the PCs for the most dangerous work, even when a huge Martian robot that is part of the scouting force could be more effective.

TWIST

Professor Shree is fascinated by the conflict between Mars and the PCs (especially if one or more PCs are martians themselves). In an effort to isolate the source of the conflict, or to understand who best compares to who, she keeps pairing up a martian with a PC for specific tasks, just to see what happens.

Artifact Acquisition

The PCs learn of a powerful artifact potentially useful to themselves, a friendly organization, or an Archon who earlier mentioned interest in it. The PCs must decide what to do with the artifact if they acquire it. They may use it, barter with it, sell it, or implement some other creative plan. The artifact here is a disguised Spangler Box, but you can replace it with another artifact (perhaps one of the **Treasures of the Crucible** from page 152) or create a new one as desired. The main thing to keep in mind is that the artifact's function isn't really the focus of the adventure; the fight over acquiring it is.

PRIMARY GOALS

To take advantage of the opportunity to get the artifact.

CHALLENGES

- The PCs don't know exactly what the artifact does. Rumors say it transports individuals to another realm. Others say it is a trap for capturing demons. One wild story says it holds an invading army that can be released with a touch of a button.
- The box is surrounded by a malfunctioning holographic 3D logic maze. It projects semitransparent force-field walls that flicker randomly in and out of existence instead of remaining fixed. It can be opened by deciphering the logic puzzles at each door to the maze.
- An unknown Archon left it behind for their own reasons. The Archon may have set it up as an experiment, trap, both, or neither. Some beings are afraid that touching it will bring the Archon back to investigate.
- The box can only be activated properly by the Logos scientists who created it, but it could be jury-rigged to get around the limitation.

Always work out how the job is gonna end before startin' it. Much healthier that way, much healthier.

TWIST

When the box is activated, the enormous, towering form of Sanctum Lord Huugarm emerges, surrounded in binding light. He's been trapped for two years, and he angrily demands to take possession of the box. The PCs can now fight or bargain for it. He won't know his way through the maze, though, providing one bargaining point for the PCs.

Breakout

The PCs start off in the clutches, jail, or prison of their major adversary. Perhaps Martian Soldiers used abduction rays to pull them aboard a flying saucer. Maybe members of Shadows successfully kidnapped the PCs to hold them for ransom. Demons might have hauled them through a gateway to Dis, necessitating that they escape and find their way back to the surface.

PRIMARY GOALS

To devise a means to escape and successfully evade their captors' inevitable pursuit.

CHALLENGES

- The PCs must devise an escape plan. They should start by gathering some basic information about their situation, and then expand their knowledge by questioning guards, getting help from the outside somehow, or using special abilities. Carefully examining their surroundings or cell could also offer clues.
- There is always something the PCs are unable to learn about the facility. This presents opportunities to surprise them with unexpected obstacles, unforeseen patrols, or known enemies or allies who might blow their cover if the PCs are trying to impersonate guards or other workers.
- The guards have extraordinary means to track or reveal the PCs. Perhaps they have DNA sniffers, psychic connections, or simply a very good security system. Whatever the method, the PCs should get the opportunity to disable or trick the system, or they probably won't get far! Of course, the PCs may also believe their plan has worked, but find out once they are almost free that it didn't go quite as hoped…

TWIST

Others attempt to break out at the same time, possibly inspired by the PCs' attempt or trying to copy what they did. They might demand to be taken along or barter with the PCs to join them. Maybe there is an opposing group just as desperate to get out that beats the PCs to a similar escape plan. In any case, the other attempt interferes with the PCs' plans, making things more difficult, bringing in more guards, and so on. Both groups must work around it, perhaps joining together in a temporary alliance.

Brobnar Raid

Brobnar leader Snaresnipper has taken a liking to an experimental Logos vehicle and is out to take it for himself. Logos calls it the Mk XXIII Kinetic Multi-Recoil-Launcher Lander, but Snaresnipper calls it the Bouncing Bashing Buggy. The vehicle contains a passenger globe for ten silhouette 1 beings atop a massive four-legged launching mechanism that hurls the vehicle into the sky. It uses a clever kinetic energy return device to help reset the launcher upon landing so it can hurl itself back into the air over and over. As Snaresnipper suggests, it's also great at crushing anything it lands on. Unfortunately for them, the PCs have been assigned or hired to guard it.

You can usually tell when Brobnar are involved from the seismic readings.
–Inka

PRIMARY GOALS

To keep Snaresnipper from taking the vehicle or, failing that, get it back before the giant does too much damage with it.

CHALLENGES

- The PCs must convince the arrogant Logotarians that the Brobnar attack is truly a threat.
- At some point during the attack, the PCs find themselves in the vehicle's driver's seat, but they must make Knowledge, Mechanics, or Operating checks to figure out the complex control scheme. Experimentation sends the vehicle careening around the area at best. At worst, the PCs might find themselves puncturing through the world's surface or momentarily shifting to alternate dimensions—Logos experiments are very experimental, after all.
- Most Brobnar warlords can't fit inside the vehicle. Snaresnipper tries to rip off the dome and cram his huge form into the space available or sends goblins in to take control. Neither of these bode well for proper operation.

TWIST

The vehicle's operating system is sentient, or close enough to it. It awakens (or is accidentally activated) midway through the theft and tries to take control. Its self-preservation routines have been preventing it from leaping too high, so it lands somewhat safely, until an exciting leap thrills it. It gleefully jumps around, and there seems to be no stopping it. However, whenever it significantly damages itself, the preservation routines kick back in. Probably.

Chasing a Shadow

A Shadows Svarr elf succeeds in borrowing for an indeterminate time (i.e., stealing) an important item directly from one of the PCs or, more likely, from their dwelling or stronghold. The PCs may have the opportunity to directly stop the burglary as it occurs, or they may be surprised when they discover the item's disappearance.

PRIMARY GOALS

To pursue a Shadows thief to retrieve an important or treasured item stolen from the PCs.

CHALLENGES

- The stakes increase if the theft reflects negatively on the PCs' reputation or abilities. Allies, employers, or clients may suddenly withdraw support or require additional assurances that the PCs are up to their regular tasks.
- The thief takes a dangerous route through the city, moving from rooftops to walls to underground caverns, each filled with risky terrain, dangerous creatures, and angry inhabitants.
- The thief releases an illusionary shadow self to stop or delay the PCs.
- Some of the thief's other victims see the chase and join in. It is obvious that if they catch the thief, they are unlikely to return the PCs' stolen goods, thereby setting up a competitive chase between the groups. Other thieves may also join the chase to steal the item for themselves.

TWIST

The thief offers to return the item if the PCs carry out a dangerous task for Shadows. The offer may come in person if the PCs manage to catch up with the thief early on, or the PCs could receive some sort of communication with the demand.

Vault Battle

The player characters are hired, cajoled, or ordered to aid the Archon called He Who Propagates Illusion in opening a newly discovered vault. He could be an Archon they have already worked with (or perhaps owe a favor to), or he could be one they have apparently encountered by chance. The PCs might, however, rightfully doubt it was chance.

PRIMARY GOALS

To aid the Archon in gathering Æmber, fighting off the forces of the rival Archon (the Inscrutable Luddite), aid as needed in forging keys, and ensure their Archon opens the vault. Oh, and also try to get some of the treasures within it.

CHALLENGES

- The Inscrutable Luddite has arrayed a mercenary force of unfamiliar species. The PCs are likely unaware of the species' capabilities until the battle gets underway.
- The Æmber is difficult to extract. The PCs must construct excavation devices and possibly even bridges to reach some deposits.
- Part of the battle involves outfoxing the mercenary leader, who turns out to have great tactical acumen in deploying her forces to best effect.
- There is a source of Æmber not far away, but it is buried under a village.
- The PCs have an opportunity to steal Æmber from the opposition, but it could mean using some of their own as bait.
- The site of the battle is home to a sentient species of flora who are quite upset (perhaps violently so) about all the conflict.

TWIST

One of the mercenaries reveals that they desperately need their Archon to be successful, as they bartered with the being to reward them by preventing their time-shifted city from slipping into another dimension. This could be the truth, or a devious lie to aid their side. The PCs might try to negotiate with He Who Propagates Illusion to better the offer and draw the mercenaries to his side or to convince the mercenaries that the PCs can similarly aid them (even if they can't).

What are vaults, really? Why lock them, only to scatter the means to open them nearby as well?

Is what's in a vault the treasure, or is the quest itself that is the prize?

My equations are almost complete and I'm sure I'll have the answer soon.

Any Shadow what gets caught don't deserve to wear their cloak.
—Dodger

Escalations

An escalation raises the stakes or difficulty of the adventure. Sometimes it challenges the morality of the situation as the PCs decide how far to go in their pursuit of their ultimate goal in changing conditions. Each escalation has a brief description and a series of general challenges compatible with the previous hooks.

Archon Interest

An Archon (or another Archon if one is already involved) learns of the PCs' actions and becomes intrigued or angered about the PCs' ultimate goal, or about a significant action required to reach that goal.

New Challenges

- The Archon personally observes the situation in the form of a translucent apparition, sometimes calling out suggestions, questions, taunts, or short gasps of amazement at the PCs' progress. It's not at all distracting.
- If a significant amount of Æmber is involved, an Archon who is part of a vault battle seeks it to forge a key. If the PCs have the Æmber, the Archon may try to retrieve it from them (or may send allies to retrieve it). The Archon or their minions attempt to negotiate first, resorting to force only if needed.
- The Archon might warn the PCs away from their goal for legitimate reasons or might try to manipulate them and deter them from pursuing it. As with most things concerning Archons, the PCs probably find it impossible to determine why they are doing this.

Crucible Oddities

The Crucible is filled with strange places, artifacts, creatures, and environmental weirdness. These can unexpectedly interact with the PCs or their goals. Such interference can be a random act, or one inflicted by a concealed hand or intellect operating in the background. The entity behind it might even cross paths with others while carrying out their own tasks and ends.

New Challenges

- A portal-like object allows PCs, their opponents, or both to suddenly circumvent a major obstacle or defense that has been set up. This could be a Logos dimensional door, a randomizing wormhole, some strange new gateway like the Vaxrak Portal (see page 203), one of your own invention, or even one the PCs invented earlier!
- A powerful object or artifact with a large area of effect is activated near the PCs. They are caught up in it even if they weren't the intended targets. They may take strain or physical damage as a result, find their movement inhibited, temporarily gain new abilities or senses, or temporarily lose ones they already possess.
- Biological dangers abound, not the least of which are artificially created by immoral organizations (or just ones with poor safety protocols for their experiments). Plagues, engineered viruses, and aggressive bacteria can subtly or suddenly affect characters exposed to them, whether they were exposed intentionally or not. The infected feel the pressure of a ticking clock, even with a slow-moving contagion.

- The PCs learn that their objective is located in a strange area that affects everything that goes into it. The PCs must learn how to withstand the effects or shut them down temporarily. The Emotional Landscape, on page 192, is an example of such an area; others could alter time, gravity, the speed of light, or anything else players would normally expect to not be alterable.

Switching Sides

Someone working with the PCs has a change of heart or had always planned to prevent the PCs from accomplishing their goal. This can manifest as anything from a simple reaction to a changing situation to an outright premeditated and gut-wrenching betrayal that no one saw coming.

New Challenges

- The PCs' employer or patron gets cold feet and wants to pull out of the operation. Perhaps they are appalled by the violence, criminal action, or economic costs incurred by the PCs or by rivals in response to PC actions.
- An ally of the PCs is actually a spy for a furtive organization or a con artist who has been playing the PCs for a while now. In either case, the betrayer is ready to run off with the prize or something related and valuable, hindering party progress.
- A PC's close relationship falls apart, leaving an angry ex-friend who interferes with the PCs' goals out of spite or revenge. Alternatively, a PC might reject a mercantile, comradely, or other advance, with similar results.
- One of the PCs is approached with a lucrative offer to betray their allies in exchange for giving up or sabotaging their group's attempt to reach their goal.

The Word Is Out!

Whether through technology, magic, or a strange special ability, someone has discovered the PCs' activities and pursuits—something the PCs wanted to keep a secret. Now the word is out, but who has heard? It may only be a few interested individuals, but this can expand quickly to the general public.

New Challenges

- If the PCs are operating in a civilized area, then law enforcement or security personnel pursue the PCs if their actions have been dangerous or broke local laws (or if someone ordered them after the PCs).
- Rival characters or organizations try to stop or help the PCs.
- Shadows members or other thieves and criminals try to secretly trap or con the PCs.
- If the situation includes intriguing or juicy details, the events spread throughout their location like wildfire via gossip, brainbeamz, holographic billboards, or other methods. The PCs find themselves recognized everywhere they turn, for better or for worse.
- The PCs' efforts inspire others, who then find them and attempt to join them. While enthusiastic, these new allies are not always friendly or even competent. The PCs have to figure out how to best make use of the help, or how to divert their new allies' attention without discouraging their passion or insulting (or worse, angering) them.

Climaxes

Climaxes are more open and nebulous compared to the hooks and escalations. They represent broad categories of possible resolutions that can always be greatly impacted and even circumvented by PC actions. Like the hooks and escalations, each climax has a few possible challenges for each situation.

Note that the PCs should ultimately have agency to decide how an adventure ends. It is their choices that should determine how the story wraps up, possibly achieving their original goal or altering their plans for a new goal. The nature of the Crucible means they may not fully understand an outcome, especially if Archons are part of the tale, but you should try to keep this rare to prevent player frustration. While it may seem surprising in this setting, players should always feel that their PCs are in control of their destiny—they are the stars of your adventures, after all!

The speed that news travels in the Local Group is staggering. This despite any real long-range comms here! Variations in environments prevent data streaming from passing very far across multiple sectors.

Mounted riders are sometimes the best way to get messages from the Quantum to Hub City, for example. -Ingram

Archon Intervention

Sometimes an Archon may attempt to effect or impose a solution they desire, but that doesn't mean it always works exactly the way they anticipated. This is especially true if another Archon is involved. It's possible the PCs may not even be aware of the Archon's efforts, but unless they have a chance to discover this in a future adventure, it is better storytelling if they have some idea. However, try to avoid negating the PCs' actions; you don't want to cheat them out of a hard-won victory or necessarily bail them out of a mess of their own making. You may even have the Archon request their aid for a future (or immediate) task in return.

It is a truism that the only thing worse than an Archon taking note of your actions is when one decides to become involved with your actions.

New Challenges

- If the PCs are on the opposing side from the Archon, things get very difficult and perhaps very strange. The Archon might create environmental difficulties to slow or stop PC progress. Allies of the Archon could also arrive unexpectedly to counter the PCs.
- The Archon seeks to aid the PCs, but in ways that confound their efforts. Their weapons might become too powerful to use effectively, the capabilities of their devices so overwhelming that they can't be operated, or their own physiologies so amplified that every step launches them far into the distance. Convincing the Archon that they wish to decline such aid could be quite an experience as well.

Forging Keys

Adventures that include the gathering of a significant amount of Æmber and involve an Archon may end with the forging of a key. This could occur even if the initial goal was something different, especially if an Archon becomes involved along the way. The PCs may not even be aware they are gathering or finding Æmber for this purpose until later in the adventure.

New Challenges

- The Archon dictates the steps necessary to aid in the creation of a specific key. These steps could include physically shaping the key, infusing the key with psychic energy and feelings, or engaging in specific actions using the Æmber. The Archon may ask for ideas and input from the characters helping to carry out the task, or the Archon may keep the PCs totally in the dark about why they are performing these functions.
- Another Archon sends minions to make a final attempt to prevent the forging by stealing the Æmber and other materials needed to complete the process. Usually this is in the form of an attack, but it could be through subterfuge or even compelling negotiation if the key isn't the most important thing at that moment to the first Archon (or if that Archon is curious about who is behind the attempt). If the PCs are unaware that they are gathering Æmber for a vault opening, they could be more than willing to part with the Æmber for the right offer.

It Wasn't Us! Really! Well, Maybe...

If local authorities (or another opposing force) catch up with the PCs, they will have to escape, bargain, or otherwise talk their way out of the situation. One or more of the PCs may be arrested, captured, or cornered, leaving it to the rest to come to the rescue.

New Challenges

- The PCs are caught red-handed in a compromising situation, leaving them with the very real possibility of arrest, imprisonment, or severe punishment on the spot. However, they should have some leverage for bargaining and get the opportunity to use that leverage.
- The PCs are innocent but caught in a situation that makes them look guilty. They must deal with the immediate threat of arrest or capture, then figure out a way to prove their story or at least convince someone to believe it. Framing someone else, perhaps even the actual guilty party, is also an option.
- Even though they aren't guilty, word of what the PCs are accused of has granted them a powerful reputation in the local underground networks. Crime lords of all types are after the PCs to work for them, perhaps breaking the PCs out of confinement whether they want to escape or not. These bosses are also probably not going to take no for an answer when they offer a job to the PCs.

Run! Run! Run!

Everything is falling apart and becoming a complete disaster. This could be metaphorical—it may be that the PCs' immediate personal situation is coming undone. However, this could instead be literal: their surroundings could be catastrophically failing or going to pieces. Whatever the problem, the immediate solution is to get out of there, and fast.

NEW CHALLENGES

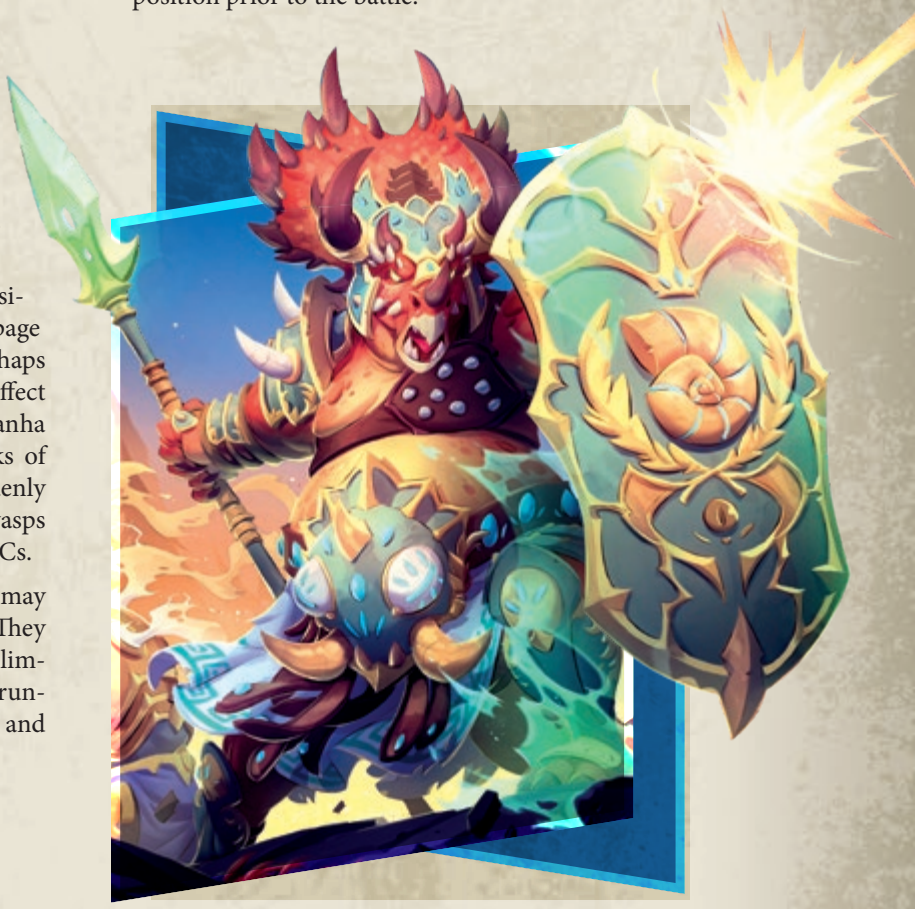
- The PCs have personally wrecked the situation. Their cover has been blown or their scheme has been completely unsuccessful. They are in immediate danger from their main opponent, who probably has superior numbers and firepower.
- The building the PCs are in is on fire, collapsing, being invaded, becoming dimensionally unstable, or affected by a combination of catastrophes. It's probably the PCs' fault, but that may not aid them in getting out.
- A strong environmental effect—such as a flood, lightning storm, tornado, rain of acidic slime, sandstorm, or gravity inversion—is overwhelming the area. Clouds of neutronic gas may have been released or some other experimental waste product introduced into the air.
- A collection of non-sentient beings (possibly drawn from the **Creatures** section on page 220) has become an immediate threat, perhaps enraged or released by the PCs or as a side effect of their actions. A troop of ravenous piranha monkeys might rip through the area. Flocks of double-beaked Spire buzzards might suddenly appear from the clouds. Swarms of fanged wasps or meme-bots could mercilessly pursue the PCs.
- In the midst of the immediate crisis, the PCs may still have to deal with their enemies or rivals. They might need to dash for the exits, race for the limited number of escape craft, participate in a running firefight, or battle through dangerous and unpredictable terrain.

The Big Battle

The adventure culminates in a large and unavoidable physical conflict. The PCs know it's coming and should get the opportunity to plan their attack or defense. While there may be an opportunity for players to role-play and PCs to negotiate along the way, the party's success or failure probably depends on their fortunes in the battle.

NEW CHALLENGES

- The PCs must gather allies for their fight. They may have to convince others to help, or they may have to bribe, guilt, or even coerce them into joining in. It could be a good time to call in favors from anyone they know in the area.
- The PCs must find or build suitable weapons to fight effectively.
- The PCs must construct or strengthen a defensive position prior to the battle.



- Environmental conditions may suddenly change before or during the fight.
- Unexpected reinforcements for either side appear just at the right or wrong (but dramatic!) moment for the PCs.
- An effect of the fight radically changes the conditions. An explosion may suddenly collapse a structure, release harmful gas or slippery liquid, or send the combatants flying. Both sides may need to join forces to deal with this new threat before it kills them all.
- Bystanders suddenly become endangered or involved, altering the PCs' priorities.
- An inexperienced or incompetent authority figure could try to take command of the PCs or their allies.

Even though life on the Crucible has existed for billions of years, it continually appears new with new arrivals and new sectors.

What will come next? Who will unlock the secrets of this world and perhaps decide its fate?
—Inka

To Be Continued...

This isn't the end of the entire story, but a major break at a significant point. Maybe it was supposed to be the end, but the PCs did something that altered the expected outcome. Perhaps you planned a surprise or twist all along (or you just let the players believe that's the case). Maybe someone came up with an idea on the spot that everyone wanted to purse in the game or add to the story. There should be a feeling of closure for at least some part of the storyline, even if a whole new direction opens up. This isn't necessarily intended to be used for the end of regular adventures and a longer campaign, though—you should try to plan ahead and devise a suitable finale to wrap things up, like a good television show does for a season or series finale.

NEW CHALLENGES

The PCs are in dire straits, trapped with no obvious avenue for escape. Ending the adventure here leaves everyone in suspense, anticipating how the situation might be resolved at a later time. It also gives the GM an opportunity to recover from an unexpected outcome and have time to plan before the next session. See **New Rules: Cliffhanger**, on page 248 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook, for more on this option.

- One of the PCs or a major NPC ally is unexpectedly killed or taken out of the situation, creating a "what do we do now" moment for the rest of the characters.
- An important and influential secret is revealed during the final encounter that explains something significant or leads the characters in a new direction. The PCs may resolve the immediate goals of the adventure, but the new revelation cannot be ignored and must become their first priority going forward.
- The PCs gain or secure a significant increase in power or ability that allows them to continue their quest at a higher level. For example, PCs escaping from a Martian holding cell uncover a prototype flying saucer (with the keys still in the ignition) that allows them to get to their original destination much faster, and in style. A Logos experiment could grant them strange new (possibly temporary) powers, ones that they may have to figure out how to use effectively.

You're Probably Wondering Why I Asked You All Here...

The PCs must gather all of the information they have learned over the course of the adventure and be ready to present it to an authority figure. They must convince the person or the collected individuals that their conclusion is the correct one. This could be the end of an investigation, criminal prosecution, or other mystery.

NEW CHALLENGES

- The PCs have not learned everything they want to know yet and need to use methods such as clever questioning to get NPCs to fill in the gaps or publicly reveal what they know.
- The PCs have conflicting information and must deduce which is true via last-minute investigations and verbal sparring with NPCs.
- One or more of the accused make a run for it.
- An ally of the accused confuses the situation by falsely taking credit or admitting fault to protect the accused.
- One or more of the accused pull a weapon to fight their way out, or they take a hostage.
- The private gathering is unexpectedly broadcast live for public viewing.
- An Archon arrives out of nowhere and expresses interest in the matter.

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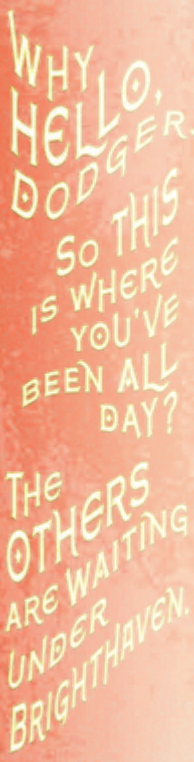
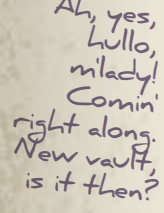
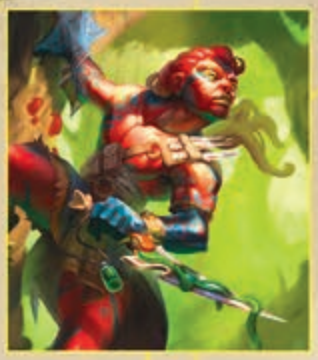




KEYFORGE

SECRETS OF THE CRUCIBLE



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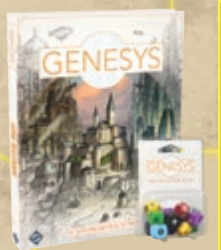

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